

GRE AWA Practice Test 1 - Argument

Question 1

In surveys, Mason City residents rank water sports (swimming, boating, and fishing) among their favorite recreational activities. The Mason River flowing through the city is rarely used for these pursuits, however, and the city park department devotes little of its budget to maintaining riverside recreational facilities. For years there have been complaints from residents about the quality of the river's water and the river's smell. In response, the state has recently announced plans to clean up the Mason River. Use of the river for water sports is therefore sure to increase. The city government should for that reason devote more money in this year's budget to riverside recreational facilities. Write a response in which you examine the stated and/or unstated assumptions of the argument. Be sure to explain how the argument depends on the assumptions and what the implications are if the assumptions prove unwarranted.

Question 2

The following is taken from a memo from the advertising director of the Super Screen Movie Production Company. "According to a recent report from our marketing department, during the past year, fewer people attended Super Screen-produced movies than in any other year. And yet the percentage of positive reviews by movie reviewers about specific Super Screen movies actually increased during the past year. Clearly, the contents of these reviews are not reaching enough of our prospective viewers. Thus, the problem lies not with the quality of our movies but with the public's lack of awareness that movies of good quality are available. Super Screen should therefore allocate a greater share of its budget next year to reaching the public through advertising." Write a response in which you discuss what questions would need to be answered in order to decide whether the recommendation and the argument on which it is based are reasonable. Be sure to explain how the answers to these questions would help to evaluate the recommendation.

Question 3

The following appeared in a letter from a firm providing investment advice to a client. "Homes in the northeastern United States, where winters are typically cold, have traditionally used oil as their major fuel for heating. Last year that region experienced twenty days with below-average temperatures, and local weather forecasters throughout the region predict that this weather pattern will continue for several more years. Furthermore, many new homes have been built in this region during the past year. Based on these developments, we predict a large increase in the demand for heating oil. Therefore, we recommend investment in Consolidated Industries, one of whose major business operations is the retail sale of home heating oil." Write a response in which you discuss what questions would need to be answered in order to decide whether the recommendation and the argument on which it is based are reasonable. Be sure to explain how the answers to these questions would help to evaluate the recommendation.

Question 4

The following appeared as a letter to the editor from the owner of a skate shop in Central Plaza. "Two years ago the city council voted to prohibit skateboarding in Central Plaza. They claimed that skateboard users were responsible for litter and vandalism that were keeping other visitors from coming to the plaza. In the past two years, however, there has been only a small increase in the number of visitors to Central Plaza, and litter and vandalism are still problematic. Skateboarding is permitted in Monroe Park, however, and there is no problem with litter or vandalism there. In order to restore Central Plaza to its former glory, then, we recommend that the city lift its prohibition on skateboarding in the plaza." Write a response in which you discuss what questions would need to be answered in order to decide whether the

recommendation and the argument on which it is based are reasonable. Be sure to explain how the answers to these questions would help to evaluate the recommendation.

Question 5

The following appeared as part of an article in a Dillton newspaper. "In an effort to bring new jobs to Dillton and stimulate the city's flagging economy, Dillton's city council voted last year to lower the city's corporate tax rate by 15 percent; at the same time, the city began offering generous relocation grants to any company that would move to Dillton. Since these changes went into effect, two new factories have opened in Dillton. Although the two factories employ more than 1,000 people, the unemployment rate in Dillton remains unchanged. The only clear explanation for this is that the new factories are staffed with out-of-town workers rather than Dillton residents." Write a response in which you discuss one or more alternative explanations that could rival the proposed explanation and explain how your explanation(s) can plausibly account for the facts presented in the argument.