

GAMT 作文七宗罪

第一宗罪：无因果联系

The author commits a fallacy of causal oversimplification. The line of the reasoning is that because A occurred before B, the former event is responsible for the latter. (The author uses the positive correlation between A and B to establish causality. However, the fact that A coincides with B does not necessarily prove that A caused B.) But this is fallacious reasoning unless other possible causal explanations have been considered and ruled out. For example, perhaps C is the cause of these events or perhaps B is caused by D.

第二宗罪 Insufficient-sample

The evidence the author provides is insufficient to support the conclusion drawn from it. One example is logically unsounded to establish a general conclusion (The statistics from only a few recent years are not necessarily a good indicator of future trends), unless it can be shown that A1 is representative of all A. It is possible that.... In fact, in face of such limited evidence, the conclusion that B is completely unwarranted.

第三宗罪：错误类比 (based on a false analogy)<横向>

The argument rests on the assumption that A is analogous to B in all respects. This assumption is weak, since although there are points of comparison between A and B, there is much dissimilarity as well. For example, A..., however, B.... Thus, it is likely much more difficult for B to do....

第四宗罪 all things are equal<纵向>

The author commits the fallacy of “all things are equal”. The fact that happened two years ago is not a sound evidence to draw a conclusion that.... The author assumes without justification that the background conditions have remained the same at different times or at different locations. However, it is not clear in this argument whether the current conditions at AA are the same as they used to be two years ago. Thus it is impossible to conclude that....

第五宗罪 Either-Or choice

The author assumes that AA and BB are mutually exclusive alternatives and there

is no room for a middle ground. However, the author provides no reason for imposing an either-or choice. Common sense tells us that adjusting both AA and BB might produce better results.

第六宗罪 survey is doubtful

The poll cited by the author is too vague to be informative. The claim does not indicate who conducted the poll, who responded, or when, where and how the poll was conducted. (Lacking information about the number of people surveyed and the number of respondents, it is impossible to assess the validity of the results. For example, if 200 persons were surveyed but only 2 responded, the conclusion that... would be highly suspect. Because the argument offers no evidence that would rule out this kind of interpretations,) Until these questions are answered, the results of the survey are worthless as evidence for the conclusion.

第七宗罪 gratuitous assumption

The author falsely depends on gratuitous assumption that.... However, no evidence is stated in the argument to support this assumption. In fact, this is not necessarily the case. For example, it is more likely that.... Therefore, this argument is unwarranted without ruling out such possibility.

开头段模板 The conclusion endorsed in this argument is that... Several reasons are offered in support of this argument. First of all 'what's more' of equal importance is that. At first glance, the author's argument appears to be somewhat convincing, but further reflection reveals that the conclusion is based on some dubious assumptions and the reasoning is biased due to the inadequacy and partiality in the nature of evidence provided to justify the conclusion. A careful examination would review how groundless this conclusion is.

结尾段模板 To conclude, this argument is not persuasive as it stands. Accordingly, it is imprudent for the author to claim that. To make this argument logically acceptable, the author would have to show that. In addition, to solidify the

conclusion, the author should provide concrete evidence as well to demonstrate that. Only with more convincing evidence could this argument become more than just an emotional appeal.

选择性样本攻击 A threshold problem is that the author provides no evidence to claim that the general group as a whole is of the same characteristic. The example cited, while suggestive of this trend, is insufficient to warrant its truth because there is no reason to believe that the sample is representative of the whole general group. One need only observe A to appreciate the truth that such evidence would be clearly unrepresentative of the entire general group for obvious reasons. In fact, in face of such limited anecdotal evidence, it is fallacious for the author to draw any conclusion at all.

样本数量攻击 Another problem that seriously weaken the logic of this argument is that the survey cited is based on too small a sample to be reliable. Offered in support of the argument, the only evidence is that. Unless it can be shown that the sample is typical of all general group, the fact that is groundless for claiming that.

Loaded question 和诚实性攻击 What's more, the methodology of the survey is problematic for two reasons. For one thing, we are not informed whether the survey provided only 3 alternatives. If it did, the respondents, who might very well prefer another choice not provided in the survey, might be forced to give up their preferences. For another thing, we are not informed whether the survey response were anonymous or even confidential. If they were not, regardless of whether the responses were truthful, the respondents might supply responses favored by their superiors who might conduct the survey. Both events would lead this survey unreliable, let alone about drawing the conclusion that.

样本代表性攻击 Moreover, a possible methodology problem in this argument is that of bias. At first place, the term 'so many' is too vague to be statistically meaningful. Even if by 'so many' the author means 'nearly all', perhaps workers who were more interested than others in the survey might be more likely to respond to the questionnaire—possibly because they found the questionnaire more attractive. Lacking in the information about the number of workers surveyed and the number of

respondents, it is impossible to assess the validity of the survey. For instance, if 1000 workers were surveyed but only 10 responded, the result should be highly suspect. Because the author fails to account for other interpretations such as this, the survey would be useless in concluding that.

样本时效性攻击 Last but not the least, it is necessary to point out another flaw that significantly undermines this argument that the author neglects to indicate how recently the survey was actually conducted. When used to generally claim a particular group, the samples should be close enough to support the generalization, so as to prevent historical changes from invalidating the generalization. All we know is that the survey is recently published. The less recent the survey itself, the less reliable the results to demonstrate that.

必要性攻击 At first place, the author unfairly assumes that A determined solely by B. While B is a seemingly important element in determining A, it is hardly the only or even necessarily required element. This assumption overlooks other crucial criteria in determining A—such as C, D, to list just a few. Accordingly, without accounting for these potential factors, the author concludes too hastily that these prescriptions cited are the best means of achieving goals.

充分性攻击 At second place, the author's solution rests on the assumption that B is sufficient to give birth to the desired goals. However, if it turns out that A is due to a combination of factors, some of which will remain unchanged in the future, such as C and D, mere B might have no stimulating impact on A.

时序性因果攻击 Firstly, the author engaged in 'after this, therefore, because of this' reasoning. The line of reasoning is that because A before B, the former caused the latter. However, this reasoning is fallacious unless other possible causal factors have been considered and ruled out. For example, perhaps C. Yet another possibility is that D. As a result, any decision aimed at addressing the problem of B must be based on more thorough investigation to gather data in order to narrow down and locate the actual cause of B.

同时性因果攻击 Secondly, the author's solution rests on the assumption that A is

the cause of B just because A coincided with B. However, a mere positional correlation does not necessarily prove a causal relationship. In addition, all other prospective causes of B, such as C and D, to list just a few, must be ruled out. Lacking detailed analysis of the real source of B, it would be sheer folly to attribute B to A.

忽略他因攻击 Thirdly, the author has focused only on B. A more detailed analysis would reveal that other factors far outweigh the factor on which the author focuses. For example, C and D. Lacking a more comprehensive analysis of the causes of A, it is presumptuous on the part of author to claim that A determined sole by B.

因果倒置攻击 At last, it is possible that the author has confused cause with effect respecting A. Perhaps B was a response to A. Since the author was failed to account for this possibility. The claim that is completely unwarranted.

差异概念攻击 To begin with, we must establish the meaning of the vague concept A. If the term were synonymous with B, the evidence cited would strongly support the argument. However, A may be defined in other terms such as C and D. Accordingly, the author has drawn the conclusion too hastily due to the ignorance of other definitions of A.

范围内推攻击 What's more, the most egregious reasoning error in this argument is the author's use of evidence pertaining to a general group as the basis of a particular B. Even if the reasoning may be sound in general sense, the particular situation that B is involved in may not be representative of the entire general group. It is possible that. If this is the case, the claim that is ill founded.

不随时变攻击 Moreover, the author unfairly assumes that A will remain unchanged over the next decades. However, a mere recent one-year A is insufficient to claim that. Statistics form such limited anecdotal evidence is not a good indicator for this trend. In addition, it is possible that in the future, should this trend greatly fluctuate or even reverse, the adopting of the author's proposal might give birth to B, for whatever reason, which might have a negative impact on C1 and, in turns, C2. Admittedly, this argument would be even weaker and weaker each day as time goes by.

错误类比攻击 Additionally, it is highly doubtful that strategies drawn from A are applicable to B. However, differences between the two clearly outweigh the similarities, therefore making the analogy much less than valid. For example, C and D all affect A but virtually absent in B. Similarly, E and F, which significantly influence B, have no impact on A. Accordingly, problems such as these show that A and B are dissimilar in ways relevant to the likelihood that B will experience the same consequence if it adopts A's strategies.

非此即彼攻击 Last but not the least, the author unfairly assumes that a reader must make an either-or choice. However, the argument fails to rule out possibility that adjusting A and B might produce better results. Moreover, if the author is wrong in the assumption that A and B are the only causes of the problem, thus the most effective solution might include a complex of other factor changes—such as C and D, to list just a few. In any event, the author provides no justification for the mutually exclusive choice imposed on the reader.

Argument 范文

1. The following appeared in a memorandum from the business department of the Apogee Company.

“When the Apogee Company had all its operations in one location, it was more profitable than it is today. Therefore, the Apogee Company should close down its field offices and conduct all its operations from a single location. Such centralization would improve profitability by cutting costs and helping the company maintain better supervision of all employees.”

Discuss how well reasoned... etc.

In this argument the author concludes that the Apogee Company should close down field offices and conduct all its operations from a single, centralized location because the company had been more profitable in the past when all its operations were in one location. For a couple of reasons, this argument is not very convincing.

First, the author assumes that centralization would improve profitability by cutting costs and streamlining supervision of employees. This assumption is never supported with any data or projections. Moreover, the assumption fails to take into account cost increases and inefficiency that could result from centralization. For instance, company representatives would have to travel to do business in areas formerly served by a field office, creating travel costs and loss of critical time. In short, this assumption must be supported with a thorough cost-benefit analysis of centralization versus other possible cost-cutting and/or profit-enhancing strategies.

Second, the only reason offered by the author is the claim that Apogee was more profitable when it had operated from a single, centralized location. But is centralization the only difference relevant to greater past profitability? It is entirely possible that management has become lax regarding any number of factors that can affect the bottom line such as inferior products, careless product pricing, inefficient production, poor employee expense account monitoring, ineffective advertising, sloppy buying policies and other wasteful spending. Unless the author can rule out other factors relevant to diminishing profits, this argument commits the fallacy of assuming that just because one event (decreasing profits) follows another (decentralization), the second event has been caused by the first.

In conclusion, this is a weak argument. To strengthen the conclusion that Apogee should close field offices and centralize, this author must provide a thorough cost-benefit analysis of available alternatives and rule out factors other than decentralization that might be affecting current profits negatively.

2. The following appeared in a memorandum issued by a large city's council on the arts.

"In a recent citywide poll, fifteen percent more residents said that they watch television programs about the visual arts than was the case in a poll conducted five years ago. During these past five years, the number of people visiting our

city' s art museums has increased by a similar percentage. Since the corporate funding that supports public television, where most of the visual arts programs appear, is now being threatened with severe cuts, we can expect that attendance at our city' s art museums will also start to decrease. Thus some of the city' s funds for supporting the arts should be reallocated to public television."

Discuss how well reasoned... etc.

In this argument the author concludes that the city should allocate some of its arts funding to public television. The conclusion is based on two facts: (1) attendance at the city' s art museum has increased proportionally with the increases in visual-arts program viewing on public television, and (2) public television is being threatened by severe cuts in corporate funding. While this argument is somewhat convincing, a few concerns need to be addressed.

To begin with, the argument depends on the assumption that increased exposure to the visual arts on television, mainly public television, has caused a similar increase in local art-museum attendance. However, just because increased art-museum attendance can be statistically correlated with similar increases in television viewing of visual-arts programs, this does not necessarily mean that the increased television viewing of arts is the cause of the rise in museum attendance.

Moreover, perhaps there are other factors relevant to increased interest in the local art museum; for instance, maybe a new director had procured more interesting, exciting acquisitions and exhibits during the period when museum attendance increased, in addition, the author could be overlooking a common cause of both increases. It is possible that some larger social or cultural phenomenon is responsible for greater public interest in both television arts programming and municipal art museums.

To be fair, however, we must recognize that the author' s assumption is a special case of a more general one that television viewing affects people' s attitudes and behavior. Common sense and observation tell me that this is indeed the case. After all, advertisers spend billions of dollars on television ad time because they trust this assumption as well.

In conclusion, I am somewhat persuaded by this author's line of reasoning. The argument would be strengthened if the author were to consider and rule out other significant factors that might have caused the increase in visits to the local art museum.

3. The following appeared in a report presented for discussion at a meeting of the directors of a company that manufactures parts for heavy machinery.

"The falling revenues that the company is experiencing coincide with delays in manufacturing. These delays, in turn, are due in large part to poor planning in purchasing metals. Consider further that the manager of the department that handles purchasing of raw materials has an excellent background in general business, psychology, and sociology, but knows little about the properties of metals. The company should, therefore, move the purchasing manager to the sales department and bring in a scientist from the research division to be manager of the purchasing department."

Discuss how well reasoned... etc.

In response to a coincidence between falling revenues and delays in manufacturing, the report recommends replacing the manager of the purchasing department. The grounds for this action are twofold. First, the delays are traced to poor planning in purchasing metals. Second, the purchasing manager's lack of knowledge of the properties of metals is thought to be the cause of the poor planning. It is further recommended that the position of the purchasing manager be filled by a scientist from the research division and that the current purchasing manager be reassigned to the sales department. In support of this latter recommendation, the report states that the current purchasing manager's background in general business, psychology, and sociology equip him for this new assignment. The recommendations advanced in the report are questionable for two reasons.

To begin with, the report fails to establish a causal connection between the falling revenues of the company and the delays in manufacturing. The mere fact that falling

revenues coincide with delays in manufacturing is insufficient to conclude that the delays caused the decline in revenue. Without compelling evidence to support the causal connection between these two events, the report's recommendations are not worthy of consideration.

Second, a central assumption of the report is that knowledge of the properties of metals is necessary for planning in purchasing metals. No evidence is stated in the report to support this crucial assumption. Moreover, it is not obvious that such knowledge would be required to perform this task. Since planning is essentially a logistical function, it is doubtful that in-depth knowledge of the properties of metals would be helpful in accomplishing this task.

In conclusion, this is a weak argument. To strengthen the recommendation that the manager of the purchasing department be replaced, the author would have to demonstrate that the falling revenues were a result of the delays in manufacturing. Additionally, the author would have to show that knowledge of the properties of metals is a prerequisite for planning in purchasing metals.

4. The following appeared in an announcement issued by the publisher of The Mercury, a weekly newspaper.

"Since a competing lower-priced newspaper, The Bugle, was started five years ago, The Mercury's circulation has declined by 10,000 readers. The best way to get more people to read The Mercury is to reduce its price below that of The Bugle, at least until circulation increases to former levels. The increased circulation of The Mercury will attract more businesses to buy advertising space in the paper."

Discuss how well reasoned... etc.

A newspaper publisher is recommending that the price of its paper, The Mercury, be reduced below the price of a competing newspaper, The Bugle. This recommendation responds to a severe decline in circulation of The Mercury during the 5-year period following the introduction of The Bugle. The publisher's line of reasoning is that lowering the price of The Mercury will increase its readership, thereby increasing profits because a wider readership attracts more advertisers. This line of reasoning is problematic in two critical respects.

While it is clear that increased circulation would make the paper more attractive to potential advertisers, it is not obvious that lowering the subscription price is the most effective way to gain new readers. The publisher assumes that price is the only factor that caused the decline in readership. But no evidence is given to support this claim. Moreover, given that The Mercury was the established local paper, it is unlikely that such a mass exodus of its readers would be explained by subscription price alone.

There are many other factors that might account for a decline in The Mercury's popularity. For instance, readers might be displeased with the extent and accuracy of its news reporting, or the balance of local to other news coverage. Moreover, it is possible The Mercury has recently changed editors, giving the paper a locally unpopular political perspective. Or perhaps readers are unhappy with the paper's format, the timeliness of its feature articles, its comics or advice columns, the extent and accuracy of its local event calendar, or its rate of errors.

In conclusion, this argument is weak because it depends on an oversimplified assumption about the causal connection between the price of the paper and its popularity. To strengthen the argument, the author must identify and explore relevant factors beyond cost before concluding that lowering subscription prices will increase circulation and, thereby, increase advertising revenues.

5. The following appeared as part of an article in a magazine devoted to regional life.

“Corporations should look to the city of Helios when seeking new business opportunities or a new location. Even in the recent recession, Helios's unemployment rate was lower than the regional average. It is the industrial center of the region, and historically it has provided more than its share of the region's manufacturing jobs. In addition, Helios is attempting to expand

its economic base by attracting companies that focus on research and development of innovative technologies.”

Discuss how well reasoned... etc.

In this argument corporations are urged to consider the city of Helios when seeking a new location or new business opportunities. To support this recommendation, the author points out that Helios is the industrial center of the region, providing most of the region’s manufacturing jobs and enjoying a lower-than-average unemployment rate. Moreover, it is argued, efforts are currently underway to expand the economic base of the city by attracting companies that focus on research and development of innovative technologies. This argument is problematic for two reasons.

To begin with, it is questionable whether the available labor pool in Helios could support all types of corporations. Given that Helios has attracted mainly industrial and manufacturing companies in the past, it is unlikely that the local pool of prospective employees would be suitable for corporations of other types. For example, the needs of research and development companies would not be met by a labor force trained in manufacturing skills. For this reason, it’s unlikely that Helios will be successful in its attempt to attract companies that focus on research and development of innovative technologies.

Another problem with the available work force is its size. Due to the lower than average unemployment rate in Helios, corporations that require large numbers of workers would not find Helios attractive. The fact that few persons are out of work suggests that new corporations will have to either attract new workers to Helios or pay the existing workers higher wages in order to lure them away from their current jobs. Neither of these alternatives seems enticing to companies seeking to relocate.

In conclusion, the author has not succeeded in providing compelling reasons for selecting Helios as the site for a company wishing to relocate. In fact, the reasons offered function better as reasons for not relocating to Helios. Nor has the author provided compelling reasons for companies seeking new business opportunities to choose Helios.

6. The following appeared in the health section of a magazine on trends and lifestyles.

“People who use the artificial sweetener aspartame are better off consuming sugar, since aspartame can actually contribute to weight gain rather than weight loss. For example, high levels of aspartame have been shown to trigger a craving for food by depleting the brain of a chemical that registers satiety, or the sense of being full. Furthermore, studies suggest that sugars, if consumed after at least 45 minutes of continuous exercise, actually enhance the body’s ability to burn fat. Consequently, those who drink aspartame-sweetened juices after exercise will also lose this calorie-burning benefit. Thus it appears that people consuming aspartame rather than sugar are unlikely to achieve their dietary goals.”

Discuss how well reasoned... etc.

In this argument the author concludes that people trying to lose weight are better off consuming sugar than the artificial sweetener aspartame. To support this conclusion the author argues that aspartame can cause weight gain by triggering food cravings, whereas sugar actually enhances the body’s ability to burn fat. Neither of these reasons provides sufficient support for the conclusion.

The first reason that aspartame encourages food cravings is supported by research findings that high levels of aspartame deplete the brain chemical responsible for registering a sense of being sated, or full. But the author’s generalization based on this research is unreliable. The research was based on a sample in which large amounts of aspartame were administered; however, the author applies the research findings to a target population that includes all aspartame users, many of whom would probably not consume high levels of the artificial sweetener.

The second reason that sugar enhances the body’s ability to burn fat is based on the studies in which experimental groups, whose members consumed sugar after at least

45 minutes of continuous exercise, showed increased rates of fat burning. The author's general claim, however, applies to all dieters who use sugar instead of aspartame, not just to those who use sugar after long periods of exercise. Once again, the author's generalization is unreliable because it is based on a sample that clearly does not represent all dieters.

To conclude, each of the studies cited by the author bases its findings on evidence that does not represent dieters in general; for this reason, neither premise of this argument is a reliable generalization. Consequently, I am not convinced that dieters are better off consuming sugar instead of aspartame.

7. The following appeared in the editorial section of a corporate newsletter.

"The common notion that workers are generally apathetic about management issues is false, or at least outdated: a recently published survey indicates that 79 percent of the nearly 1,200 workers who responded to survey questionnaires expressed a high level of interest in the topics of corporate restructuring and redesign of benefits programs."

Discuss how well reasoned... etc.

Based upon a survey among workers that indicates a high level of interest in the topics of corporate restructuring and redesign of benefits programs, the author concludes that workers are not apathetic about management issues. Specifically, it is argued that since 79 percent of the 1200 workers who responded to survey expressed interest in these topics, the notion that workers are apathetic about management issues is incorrect. The reasoning in this argument is problematic in several respects.

First, the statistics cited in the editorial may be misleading because the total number of workers employed by the corporation is not specified. For example, if the corporation employs 2000 workers, the fact that 79 percent of the nearly 1200 respondents showed interest in these topics provides strong support for the

conclusion. On the other hand, if the corporation employs 200,000 workers, the conclusion is much weaker.

Another problem with the argument is that the respondents' views are not necessarily representative of the views of the work force in general. For example, because the survey has to do with apathy, it makes sense that only less apathetic workers would respond to it, thereby distorting the overall picture of apathy among the work force. Without knowing how the survey was conducted, it is impossible to assess whether or not this is the case.

A third problem with the argument is that it makes a hasty generalization about the types of issues workers are interested in. It accords with common sense that workers would be interested in corporate restructuring and redesign of benefits programs, since these issues affect workers very directly. However, it is unfair to assume that workers would be similarly interested in other management issues—ones that do not affect them or affect them less directly.

In conclusion, this argument is not convincing as it stands. To strengthen it, the author would have to show that the respondents account for a significant and representative portion of all workers. Additionally, the author must provide evidence of workers' interest other management topics—not just those that affect workers directly.

8. The following appeared in the opinion column of a financial magazine.

“On average, middle-aged consumers devote 39 percent of their retail expenditure to department store products and services, while for younger consumers the average is only 25 percent. Since the number of middle-aged people will increase dramatically within the next decade, department stores can expect retail sales to increase significantly during that period. Furthermore, to take advantage of the trend, these stores should begin to replace some of those products intended to attract the younger consumer with products intended to

attract the middle-aged consumer.”

Discuss how well reasoned... etc.

Sample essay 1:

The argument that department retail sales will increase in the next 10 years and thus department stores should begin to replace products to attract middle-aged consumers is not entirely logically convincing, since it omits certain crucial assumptions.

First of all, the argument ignores the absolute amount of retail expenditure of middle-aged and younger consumers devoted to department store products and services. Although younger consumers spend a smaller percentage of their retail expenditure to department store products than do the middle-aged consumers, they might actually spend more in terms of the absolute amount.

Even if middle-aged consumers are spending more than younger ones in department stores, the argument ignores the possibility that the trend may change within the next decade. Younger consumers might prefer to shop in department stores than in other types of stores, and middle-aged consumers might turn to other types of stores, too. This will lead to a higher expenditure of younger consumers in department stores than that of middle-aged consumers.

Besides, the argument never addresses the population difference between middle-aged consumers and younger ones. Suppose there are more younger consumers than the middle-aged ones now, the total population base of younger consumers will be bigger than that of the middle-aged ones if both of them grow at the same rate in the next decade. Thus there will be a bigger younger consumer base.

Based on the reasons I listed above, the argument is not completely sound. The evidence in support of the conclusion does little to prove the conclusion since it does not address the assumptions I have already raised. Ultimately, the argument might have been more convincing by making it clear that the absolute population of middle-aged consumers are higher than that of the younger consumers and the number

will continue to grow in the next decade, and that the middle-aged consumers will continue to spend more money in department stores than younger consumers do in the next decade.

Sample essay 2:

The argument that retailers should replace some of the products intended to attract the younger consumers with products intended to attract the middle-aged consumers is not entirely logically convincing, since it ignores certain crucial assumptions.

First, the argument omits the assumption that the business volumes of both the middle-aged consumers and the younger consumers are the same. If the business volume of the middle-aged consumers' 39% is smaller than that of the younger consumers' 25%, the retail sales will not increase during the next decade.

Second, even if the business volumes of both the middle-aged consumers and the younger consumers were the same in the last decade, the increase of the middle-aged people in the next decade is not the same as the increase of the retail expenditure, for the retail trade depends more on such factors as the economic circumstances, people's consuming desire.

Finally, the argument never assumes the increase of the younger consumers within the next decade. If the younger consumers increase at the same rate and spend the same amount of money on the goods and services of department stores, the retailers should never ignore them.

Thus the argument is not completely sound. The evidence in support of the conclusion that the growing number of middle-aged people within the next decade does little to prove the conclusion—that department stores should begin to replace some of their products to attract the middle-aged consumers since it does not address the assumptions I have already raised. Ultimately, the argument might have been strengthened by making it clear that the business volumes of both types of consumers are the same and comparable, that the increase of a certain type of consumers are

correlated with the increase of the retail sales, and that the growth rate of the younger consumers are the same as that of the middle-aged consumers.

Sample essay 3:

Based on an expected increase in the number of middle-aged people during the next decade, the author predicts that retail sales at department stores will increase significantly over the next ten years. To bolster this prediction, the author cites statistics showing that middle-aged people devote a much higher percentage of their retail expenditure to department-store services and products than younger consumers do. Since the number of middle-aged consumers is on the rise and since they spend more than younger people on department-store goods and services, the author further recommends that department stores begin to adjust their inventories to capitalize on this trend. Specifically, it is recommended that department stores increase their inventory of products aimed at middle-aged consumers and decrease their inventory of products aimed at younger consumers. This argument is problematic for two reasons.

First, an increase in the number of middle-aged people does not necessarily portend an overall increase in department-store sales. It does so only on the assumption that other population groups will remain relatively constant. For example, if the expected increase in the number of middle-aged people is offset by an equally significant decrease in the number of younger people, there will be little or no net gain in sales.

Second, in recommending that department stores replace products intended to attract younger consumers with products more suitable to middle-aged consumers, the author assumes that the number of younger consumers will not also increase. Since a sizable increase in the population of younger consumers could conceivably offset the difference in the retail expenditure patterns of younger and middle-aged consumers, it would be unwise to make the recommended inventory adjustment lacking evidence to support this assumption.

In conclusion, this argument is unacceptable. To strengthen the argument the author

would have to provide evidence that the population of younger consumers will remain relatively constant over the next decade.

9. The following appeared in the editorial section of a local newspaper.

“This past winter, 200 students from Waymarsh State College traveled to the state capitol building to protest against proposed cuts in funding for various state college programs. The other 12,000 Waymarsh students evidently weren’t so concerned about their education: they either stayed on campus or left for winter break. Since the group who did not protest is far more numerous, it is more representative of the state’s college students than are the protesters. Therefore the state legislature need not heed the appeals of the protesting students.”

Discuss how well reasoned... etc.

The conclusion in this argument is that the state legislature need not consider the views of protesting students. To support this conclusion, the author points out that only 200 of the 12,000 students traveled to the state capitol to voice their concerns about proposed cuts in college programs. Since the remaining students did not take part in this protest, the author concludes they are not interested in this issue. The reasoning in this argument is flawed for two reasons.

First, the author assumes that because only one-tenth of the students took part in the protest, these students’ views are unrepresentative of the entire student body. This assumption is unwarranted. If it turns out, for example, that the protesting students were randomly selected from the entire student body, their views would reflect the views of the entire college. Without information regarding the way in which the protesting students were selected, it is presumptuous to conclude that their opinions fail to reflect the opinions of their colleagues.

Second, the author cites the fact that the remaining 12,000 students stayed on campus or left for winter break as evidence that they are not concerned about their education.

One obvious rejoinder to this line of reasoning is that the students who did not

participate did so with the knowledge that their concerns would be expressed by the protesting students. In any case, the author has failed to demonstrate a logical connection between the students' alleged lack of concern and the fact that they either stayed on campus or left for winter break. Without this connection, the conclusion reached by the author that the remaining 12,000 students are not concerned about their education is unacceptable.

As it stands, the argument is not well reasoned. To make it logically acceptable, the author would have to demonstrate that the protesting students had some characteristic in common that biases their views, thereby nullifying their protest as representative of the entire college.

10. The following appeared in the editorial section of a local newspaper.

“In the first four years that Montoya has served as mayor of the city of San Perdito, the population has decreased and the unemployment rate has increased. Two businesses have closed for each new business that has opened. Under Varro, who served as mayor for four years before Montoya, the unemployment rate decreased and the population increased. Clearly, the residents of San Perdito would be best served if they voted Montoya out of office and reelected Varro.”

Discuss how well reasoned... etc.

The recommendation endorsed in this argument is that residents of San Perdito vote current mayor Montoya out of office, and re-elect former mayor Varro. The reasons cited are that during Montoya's four years in office the population has decreased while unemployment has increased, whereas during Varro's term unemployment declined while the population grew. This argument involves the sort of gross oversimplification and emotional appeal typical of political rhetoric; for this reason it is unconvincing.

First of all, the author assumes that the Montoya administration caused the unemployment in San Perdito as well as its population loss. The line of reasoning

is that because Montoya was elected before the rise in unemployment and the decline in population, the former event caused the latter. But this is fallacious reasoning unless other possible causal explanations have been considered and ruled out. For example, perhaps a statewide or nationwide recession is the cause of these events. Or perhaps the current economic downturn is part of a larger picture of economic cycles and trends, and has nothing to do with who happens to be mayor. Yet another possibility is that Varro enjoyed a period of economic stability and Varro's own administration set the stage for the unemployment and the decline in population the city is now experiencing under Montoya.

Secondly, job availability and the economic health of one's community are issues that affect people emotionally. The argument at hand might have been intentionally oversimplified for the specific purpose of angering citizens of San Perdito, and thereby turning them against the incumbent mayor. Arguments that bypass relevant, complex reasoning in favor of stirring up emotions do nothing to establish their conclusions; they are also unfair to the parties involved.

In conclusion, I would not cast my vote for Varro on the basis of this weak argument. The author must provide support for the assumption that Mayor Montoya has caused San Perdito's poor economy. Moreover, such support would have to involve examining and eliminating other possible causal factors. Only with more convincing evidence could this argument become more than just an emotional appeal.