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QUESTION 1

Biologist: Humans have five fingers because we descended from a fish with five phalanges in its fins. Despite our prejudices to the contrary, our configuration of fingers is no more or less useful than several other possible configurations, e.g., six per hand. So, if humans had descended from a fish with six phalanges in its fins and had six fingers on each hand, then we would be just as content with that configuration.

Which one of the following, if true, most strengthens the biologist's argument?

- A. Everyone is equally content with our present configuration of fingers.
- B. Humans are never equally content with two things of unequal usefulness.
- C. Humans are always equally content with two things of equal usefulness.
- D. The perceived usefulness of our configuration of fingers is an illusory result of our prejudices.
- E. At least one species of fish had six phalanges in its fins.

Correct Answer: C

Another Strengthen the Argument question, so let's try to spot an element that needs a bit of extra support. It's a strange argument: The biologist asserts that having five fingers is merely a developmental coincidence, and that we'd have six fingers on each hand if our marine ancestor had six phalanges. Moreover, we'd be just as happy with six fingers as we are with five. This last part is based on the assertion that there's no difference in usefulness between having six fingers and having five. That's a connection that's a bit tenuous, so chances are that our strengthener will relate to this in some way.

We may ask ourselves: "What if there are other differences that might affect our finger satisfaction?" After all, usefulness is only one possible criteria that might determine how happy we are with our finger configuration (perhaps there are aesthetic concerns as well). The author assumes this is not the case; that is, that no other considerations affect our perceptions in this matter, and that equal usefulness is enough to ensure equal contentedness.

QUESTION 2

Four boys -- Fred, Juan, Marc, and Paul -- and three girls -- Nita, Rachel, and Trisha -- will be assigned to a row of five adjacent lockers, numbered consecutively 1 through 5, arranged along a straight wall. The following conditions govern the assignment of lockers to the seven children:

Each locker must be assigned to either one or two children, and each child must be assigned to exactly one locker.

Each shared locker must be assigned to one girl and one boy.

Juan must share a locker, but Rachel cannot share a locker.

Nita's locker cannot be adjacent to Trisha's locker. Fred must be assigned to locker 3.

If Trisha is assigned to locker 3 and Marc alone is assigned to locker 1, then which one of the following

must be true?

- A. Juan is assigned to locker 4.
- B. Juan is assigned to locker 5.
- C. Paul is assigned to locker 2.
- D. Rachel is assigned to locker 2.
- E. Rachel is assigned to locker 5.

Correct Answer: B

As soon as you see that we're given new information -- and two pieces, yet! -- you should think to set up a little sketch for the purpose of this question, adding what you already know to what you're told. We see that one of the shared lockers must be #3.

QUESTION 3

Moralist: TV talk shows are contributing to the moral decline in our country. By constantly being shown the least moral people in our society, viewers begin to think that such people are the norm, and that there is something wrong with being morally upright. TV talk show host: Well, if there is such a decline, it's not because of TV talk shows: we simply show people what they want to see. What can be wrong with letting the viewers decide? Furthermore, if restrictions were put on my show, that would amount to censorship, which is wrong.

The moralist's and the TV talk show host's statements provide the most support for holding that they disagree about whether

- A. TV talk shows should be censored
- B. people's moral standards have changed
- C. TV talk shows influence people's conception of what is the norm
- D. TV talk shows, by presenting immoral guests, are causing a moral decline
- E. it is wrong not to let the viewers decide what they want to see

Correct Answer: D

First up is a Point-At-Issue question, so we need to read carefully to figure out what these two are arguing about. The moralist believes that TV talk shows are the cause of moral decline in our country -- they broadcast the least moral people, thus causing viewers to question the legitimacy of higher moral standards. The talk show host's first sentence gets right to the heart of the debate: If there is a moral decline, it's not caused by TV talk shows. Her support for this position is interesting (she argues that talk shows represent an effect, not a cause, of immorality), but is not as central to her opposition as her blunt first statement. Comparing the first sentence of each argument brings to light the issue captured in option [TV talk shows, by presenting...], namely: Does presenting immoral guests on talk shows cause a moral decline? The moralist says "yup"; the host says "no way."

QUESTION 4

So-called "engineered foods," usually in powder or liquid form, consist of protein that is distilled from natural sources



and supplemented with vitamins and minerals. Although the amino acids contained in such products stimulate the production of growth hormones, these hormones produce growth in connective tissue rather than in muscle mass; this does not improve muscle strength. Hence, athletes, who need to improve their muscular strength, should not consume engineered foods.

The argument depends on assuming which one of the following?

- A. An increase in muscle mass produces an increase in strength.
- B. People who are not athletes require neither stronger connective tissue nor muscle strength.
- C. If an engineered food does not improve muscle strength, there is no other substantial advantage to athletes from consuming it.
- D. Consuming engineered foods that provide nutrients that can be obtained more easily elsewhere is unhealthy.
- E. Growth of muscle mass enhances muscle strength only when accompanied by growth of connective tissue.

Correct Answer: C

Here's another assumption question, so let's zero in on the components of the argument. The last sentence (signaled by the Keyword "Hence") contains the conclusion: Athletes looking to improve muscle strength should not consume engineered foods. The first sentence is largely irrelevant to this conclusion, but the muscle issue comes up in the second sentence, where we learn that the amino acids in engineered foods stimulate growth hormones, which causes growth of connective tissue but not muscle mass. The argument seems to make sense if increasing muscle mass is the only possible benefit from engineered foods--but what if there are other benefits? Wouldn't it then be reasonable to infer that even athletes who are interested in increasing muscle still might benefit from these foods, and should consider consuming them? This alternative possibility would wreak havoc with the argument, so the author must be assuming that outside of increasing muscle strength, consuming engineered foods confers no benefits at all to athletes.

QUESTION 5

Thurgood Marshall's litigation of *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1952—the landmark case, decided in 1954, that made segregation illegal in United States public schools—was not his first case before the U.S. Supreme Court. Some legal scholars claim that the cases he presented to the court in the sixteen years before his successful argument for desegregation of public schools were necessary forerunners of that case: preliminary tests of legal strategies and early erosions of the foundations of discrimination against African Americans that paved the way for success in *Brown*.

When Marshall joined the legal staff of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1936, the organization was divided on how to proceed against the legal doctrine that for forty years had promoted "separate but equal" facilities for African Americans in educational institutions, in public transportation, and various other civic amenities. One approach was to emphasize that facilities were not in fact equal and to pursue litigation whose practical goal was the improvement both of opportunity for African Americans and of the facilities themselves. A second, more theoretical, approach was to argue that the concept of separate but equal facilities for the races was by its very nature impossible to fulfill, rendering the doctrine self-contradictory and hence legally unsound. Marshall correctly believed that the latter approach would eventually be the one to bring repeal of the doctrine, but felt it necessary in the short term to argue several cases using the former approach, in order to demonstrate the numerous ways in which segregation prevented real equality and thus to prepare the courts to recognize the validity of the theoretical argument.

While Marshall enjoyed several successes arguing for the equalization of facilities and opportunities in such areas as voting practices and accommodations for graduate students at public universities, it would be twelve years before he evolved a strategy for arguing against pervasive discriminatory practices that enabled him to make the leap from individual instances of inequality to the broader social argument needed to later invalidate "separate but equal." In 1948, Marshall litigated *Shelley v. Kraemer*, in which he convinced the court to outlaw housing discrimination practiced by private parties. Although the court had previously supported such practices implicitly under a doctrine that excused



private dealings from the legal requirement for equal protection of citizens under law, Marshall presented sociological data demonstrating that, in sum and over time, these individual transactions constituted a pattern of insupportable discrimination. Marshall later used this strategy when arguing against individual schools' enrollment restrictions in Brown; scholars argue that his successful use of the strategy in Shelley prepared the court to accept such data as convincing evidence for finding "separate but equal" insupportable on its face.

It can most reasonably be inferred from the passage that Marshall's legal strategy for attacking the "separate but equal" doctrine

- A. sought to answer critics within the NAACP
- B. suggested Marshall thought the court would never accept the validity of a theoretical argument
- C. satisfied the requirement that cases first be argued in lower court
- D. presumed that the court could only gradually be convinced to overturn the "separate but equal" doctrine
- E. reflected Marshall's preference to seek practical goals

Correct Answer: D

The first five words of the question stem clearly scream "Inference," and we need to remember that an inference may stem from several parts of the passage, or from a careful paraphrase of a single reference. The latter is really the case here. Marshall's legal strategy against the "separate but equal" policy is discussed at the end of 2; he felt that it would be "necessary in the short term" to argue against individual injustices—a clear implication that time would be needed for the argument against "separate but equal" itself to prevail "eventually." This "short term/eventually" contrast supports reference of option [presumed that the court could only gradually...] to the idea of overturning the policy slowly.

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