

1. The actor's part in the film turned out to be _____: he had only one line, and by the time the film appeared in theaters, even that line had been removed.

A. fascinating

B. exhaustive

C. ambiguous

D. adept

E. trivial

2. People tend to think of science as a gradual , steady accumulation of facts that has been ongoing for centuries. So it is often imagined that today scientists are (i) _____an established mountain of knowledge. That idea is (ii) _____: the vast majority of nature's secrets have yet to be revealed.

Blank (i)

- A. hoping to demolish
- B. criticizing the presence of
- C. adding tiny grains to

Blank (ii)

- D. exhilarating
- E. feasible
- F. unfounded

3. A few decades from now, if the sea level rises as most scientists expect it to, fresh, high-quality drinking water will be much more (i) _____ within 60 miles of the ocean than it is now. Seawater will have (ii) _____ coastal rivers, lakes, and groundwater, turning (iii) _____ water into brackish water.

Blank (i)

- A. scarce
- B. refined
- C. salty

Blank (ii)

- D. surpassed
- E. tainted
- F. depleted

Blank (iii)

- G. potable
- H. tepid
- I. turbid

Select TWO answer Choices.

4. Although scientific progress leads to constant revision of ideas, one observation that has remained _____ over the years is that there are a lot of insects in the world: some 950,000 species have been identified.

- A. robust
- B. deliberate
- C. strong
- D. perplexing
- E. baffling
- F. specious

Reading Comprehension

Skill: Main Idea Questions

Although **pathogenic organisms** constantly **alight** on the skin, they find it a very **unfavorable** environment and, in the absence of injury, have great difficulty **colonizing** it. Species that typically live in soil, water, and elsewhere rarely **multiply** on the skin. Undamaged skin is also unfavorable to most **human pathogens**. The skin is too acid and too **arid** for some species. The constant **shedding** of the surface skin layers further **hinders** the establishment of **invaders**. The most interesting defense mechanism, however, **results from** the metabolic activities of the resident flora.

Although pathogenic organisms constantly alight on the skin, they find it a very unfavorable environment and, in the absence of injury, have great difficulty colonizing it. Species that typically live in soil, water, and elsewhere rarely multiply on the skin. Undamaged skin is also unfavorable to most human pathogens. The skin is too acid and too arid for some species. The constant shedding of the surface skin layers further hinders the establishment of invaders. The most interesting defense mechanism, however, results from the metabolic activities of the resident flora.

1. The primary purpose of the passage is to

- (A) offer an analysis of metabolic processes
- (B) detail the ways in which bacteria and fungi can be inhibited
- (C) describe mechanisms by which the skin protects itself against pathogens
- (D) analyze the methods whereby biological systems maintain the status quo
- (E) provide a specific example of the skin's basic defenses against pathogens

For years, the **leading** theory for what caused the Younger Dryas (a **dramatic reversal**, about 12,900 years ago, in a global warming **trend**) was a release of water from **Glacial Lake** Agassiz. The theory **posited** that this meltwater flooded into the North Atlantic, lowering the **salinity** and **intensity** of surface waters enough to **prevent** them from sinking. **Ocean currents** were changed in such a way that northward **transport** of heat in the ocean **diminished**, and the North Atlantic regions **plunged** back into near-glacial conditions. However, evidence has **emerged** that the Younger Dryas began long before freshwater flooded the North Atlantic. Additionally, the temperature changes **induced** by a shutdown in the North Atlantic heat conveyor system are too small to explain the Younger Dryas.

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2. The passage is primarily concerned with

- A. presenting evidence that undermines an explanation
- B. explaining the nature of a climatological phenomenon
- C. questioning the timing of a particular event
- D. discussing a new explanation for a phenomenon
- E. suggesting revisions to a popular theory

Critical Reasoning

Identifying Assumptions

Identifying Assumptions

An assumption is simply an unstated premise in an argument—though it's not mentioned, it's *necessary* for the argument's conclusion to be true.

Here's an example:

On Tuesdays the sandwich shop closes at 5. It's 5:30, so the sandwich shop is closed.

What's needed in order for the example's conclusion to be true? It must be Tuesday. This is the assumption. If the assumption is false, and today is actually Wednesday, the conclusion doesn't follow from the premise, and nothing definitive can be reasoned.

Here's a more difficult example:

An invasive species of beetle that kills a variety trees with devastating speed has been found in the state park. Therefore, the park's forest is threatened, and we must use all available resources to eliminate this pest as quickly as possible.

The premise of a tree-killing beetle's presence in a state park seems to lead naturally to the conclusion that the forest faces imminent danger and that desperate measures are required. However, notice the shift between the premise and the conclusion. The premise concerns the threat the beetle poses to a variety of trees and the conclusion applies this threat to a forest. The assumption is that the forest is made up of the variety of trees the beetle kills.

Methyltetrachloride (MTC) is a chemical found in some pesticides, glues, and sealants. Exposure to MTC can cause people to develop asthma. In order to halve the nation's asthma rate, the government plans to ban all products containing MTC.

1. The government's plan to halve the nation's asthma rate relies on which of the following assumptions?

- (A) Asthma has reached epidemic proportions.
- (B) Products containing MTC are not necessary to the prosperity of the American economy.
- (C) Dust mites and pet dander can also cause asthma.
- (C) Exposure to MTC is responsible for no less than half of the nation's asthma cases.
- (D) Exercise and proper nutrition are helpful in maintaining respiratory health.

Because no employee wants to be associated with bad news in the eyes of a superior, information about serious problems at lower levels is progressively softened and distorted as it goes up each step in the management hierarchy. The chief executive is, therefore, less well informed about problems at lower levels than are his or her subordinates at those levels.

2. The conclusion drawn above is based on the assumption that

- (A) problems should be solved at the level in the management hierarchy at which they occur
- (B) employees should be rewarded for accurately reporting problems to their superiors
- (C) problem-solving ability is more important at higher levels than it is at lower levels of the management hierarchy
- (D) chief executives obtain information about problems at lower levels from no source other than their subordinates
- (E) some employees are more concerned about truth than about the way they are perceived by their superiors