

Argument - 10

The citizens of Forsythe have adopted healthier lifestyle. Their responses to a recent survey show that in their eating habits they conform more closely to government nutritional recommendations that they did ten years ago. Furthermore, there has been a fourfold increase in sales of food products containing Kiran, a substance that a scientific study has shown reduces cholesterol. This trend is also evident in reduced sales of Sulia, a food that few of the healthiest citizens regularly eat.

The argument concludes that the citizens of Forsythe have adopted healthier life styles. It is mainly dependent on the responses to a recent survey, an increase in sales of food products containing Kiran, a substance that supposedly reduces the blood cholesterol and a decrease in sales of Sulia. Despite the apparent cogency of the argument, the argument is quite weak and questionable as it is fraught with many illogical assumptions.

Firstly, the primary evidence presented was the responses to a recent survey which shows that the people are conforming more closely to government nutritional recommendation than they did 10 years ago. The primary concern was whether the survey was a representative or not. To be representative, it must be conducted on a wide spectrum of people. No hint was given in this argument to substantiate that fact. Even if it is representative in the selection of subjects, of course, one should not rule out the possibility of the results being unrepresentative, as the responses may not actually reflect their actual behavior, as people tend to be hypocritical while responding to surveys. They are bound to dilute truth as it can be easily guessed from the knowledge of mob-psychology. Moreover, if people conform to government standards more closely that they did ten years ago, it does not mean they are with healthy diet habits. Maybe the deviation was so much ten years ago that even after they are better than, it doesn't mean they are good enough to be considered good. Improbable it might seem, the government standards themselves might not be good enough.

Moreover, by generalizing about healthy lifestyles basing on survey that studies the nutritional habits is likely to be a hasty generalization, as healthy food habits are just one aspect of healthy life styles. In fact, healthy life style is an all embracing term that includes many healthy habits such as, good exercise, timely meal consumption and, if we are to add more, the absence of unhealthy habits such as smoking, etc.

Even if we accept that dietary habits alone constitute healthy life style, another point we should consider is the example given in support. The argument overtly states that the four

fold increase in sales of food products with Kiran. Though it may be true that cholesterol increase is one factor that may results in cardiac problems, we should not underestimate its value in sustenance of health. In fact, it sustains our bodies for shorter periods if we fail to take nutritious food. Moreover, reduction of cholesterol substances is not the only criterion of healthy diet. People need to take food that gives them all necessary ingredients to be healthy. In the same way, evidence given about sulia is also not convincing as the argument assumes that healthy people are healthy because they don't consume the substance.

Finally, the citation of the evidence about the reduction of Sulia's sales is certainly illogical. This is because we have to assume that 'not taking Sulia' is the reason for health of the people. The argument states Sulia is a food item that few of the healthiest people regularly eat. It might be possible the substance is needed only in such small quantities that we don't need to take it regularly. Or, it may be possible that there are other reasons for the health of the people in question. Ignoring these possibilities, we should never come to a conclusion about healthy life styles basing on the reduction in sales of one substance like Sulia.

Having considered all these, we can, without any hesitation, conclude that the argument is quite weak and illogical. If the argument had contained information to prove that the survey results are representative, to prove the vital importance of Kiran over shadowing the importance of other essential ingredients and to prove the fact the reduction in sales of Sulia is an important healthy life style, the argument would have been cogent and strong. In the present form, it is quite weak and unsubstantial.

PART - IV
The Pool of Issue Topics

When you take the analytical writing section of the GRE General Test, you will be presented with two Issue topics from this pool. Because the wording of some topics in the test might vary slightly from what is presented here, you should read your test topics carefully and respond to the wording as it appears in the actual test.

Present your perspective on the issue below, using relevant reasons and/or examples to support your views.

1. "Money spent on research is almost always a good investment, even when the results of that research are controversial."
2. "A school or college should pay its teachers at the same rate in all disciplines, regardless of differences in salaries for related fields in the world outside of school. For example, entry-level teachers in mathematics and in the arts should receive the same pay, even if outside of school, math specialists earn a much higher salary on average than do specialists in the arts."
3. "Creating an appealing image has become more important in contemporary society than is the reality or truth behind that image."
4. "Instead of requiring students to take courses in a variety of disciplines—that is, courses ranging from the arts and the humanities to the physical and biological sciences—colleges and universities should allow students to enroll only in those courses that will help prepare them for jobs in their chosen fields. Such concentration is necessary in today's increasingly work-oriented society."
5. "No matter what the situation, it is more harmful to compromise one's beliefs than to adhere to them."
6. "The greatness of individuals can be decided only by those who live after them, not by their contemporaries."
7. "In most societies, competition generally has more of a negative than a positive effect."
8. "In the age of television, reading books is not as important as it once was. People can learn as much by watching television as they can by reading books."
9. "The intellectual benefits of attending a university or college are vastly overrated: most people could learn more by studying and reading on their own for four years than by pursuing a university or college degree."
10. "Scholars and researchers should not be concerned with whether their work makes a contribution to the larger society. It is more important that they pursue their individual interests, however unusual or idiosyncratic those interests may seem."
11. "Such nonmainstream areas of inquiry as astrology, fortune-telling, and psychic and paranormal pursuits play a vital role in society by satisfying human needs that are not addressed by mainstream science."
12. "Because learning is not a solitary activity but one that requires collaboration among people, students of all ages will benefit academically if they work frequently in groups."
13. "To be an effective leader, a public official must maintain the highest ethical and moral standards."
14. "Government should not fund any scientific research whose consequences, either medical or ethical, are unclear."
15. "Government officials should rely on their own judgment rather than unquestioningly carrying out the will of the people whom they serve."
16. "While some leaders in government, sports, industry, and other areas attribute their success to a well-developed sense of competition, a society can better prepare its young people for leadership by instilling in them a sense of cooperation."
17. "Society does not place enough emphasis on the intellect—that is, on reasoning and other cognitive skills."
18. "The study of history places too much emphasis on individuals. The most significant events and trends in history were made possible not by the famous few, but by groups of people whose identities have long been forgotten."
19. "Imaginative works such as novels, plays, films, fairy tales, and legends present a more accurate and meaningful picture of human experience than do factual accounts. Because the creators of fiction shape and focus reality rather than report on it literally, their creations have a more lasting significance."