

## TU104

### Critical Thinking Basics Exercises

#### *Exercise 1*

Divide these items into two groups of five items, each such that all the items in one group have a feature that none of the items in the second group have. Describe the feature upon which you based your classifications.

1. You shouldn't buy that car because it is ugly.
2. That car is ugly, and it costs more than \$25,000, too.
3. Rainbows have seven different colors in them, although it's not always easy to see them all.
4. Walking is the best exercise. After all, it is less stressful on the joints than other aerobic exercises.
5. The ocean on the central coast is the most beautiful shade of sky blue. It's greener as you go north.
6. Her favorite color is yellow because it is the color of the sun.
7. Pooh is my favorite cartoon character because he has lots of personality.
8. You must turn off the lights when you leave the room. They cost a lot of money to run, and you don't need them on during the day.
9. Television programs have too much violence and immoral behavior. Hundreds of killings are portrayed every month.
10. You'll be able to find a calendar on sale after the first of the year, so it is a good idea to wait until then to buy one.

## **Exercise 2**

For each passage in this exercise, identify which of the items that follow best states the primary issue discussed in the passage.

1. Let me tell you why Hank ought not to take that math course. First, it's too hard, and he'll probably flunk it. Second, he's going to spend the whole term in a state of frustration. Third, he'll probably get depressed and do poorly in all the rest of his courses.
  - a. Whether Hank ought to take the math course
  - b. Whether Hank would flunk the math course
  - c. Whether Hank will spend the whole term in a state of frustration
  - d. Whether Hank will get depressed and do poorly in all the rest of his courses
  
2. The county has cut the library budget for salaried library workers, and there will not be enough volunteers to make up for the lack of paid workers. Therefore, the library will have to be open fewer hours next year.
  - a. Whether the library will have to be open fewer hours next year
  - b. Whether there will be enough volunteers to make up for the lack of paid workers
  
3. Pollution of the waters of the Everglades and of Florida Bay is due to multiple causes. These include cattle farming, dairy farming, industry, tourism, and urban development. So it is simply not so that the sugar industry is completely responsible for the pollution of these waters.

- a. Whether pollution of the waters of the Everglades and Florida Bay is due to multiple causes
- b. Whether pollution is caused by cattle farming, dairy farming, industry, tourism, and urban development
- c. Whether the sugar industry is partly responsible for the pollution of these waters
- d. Whether the sugar industry is completely responsible for the pollution of these waters

4. It's clear that the mainstream media have lost interest in classical music. For example, the NBC network used to have its own classical orchestra conducted by Arturo Toscanini, but no such orchestra exists now. One newspaper, the no-longer-existent Washington Star, used to have thirteen classical music reviewers—that's more than twice as many as the New York Times has now. H. L. Mencken and other columnists used to devote considerable space to classical music; nowadays, you almost never see it mentioned in a major column.

- a. Whether popular taste has turned away from classical music
- b. Whether newspapers are employing fewer writers on classical music
- c. Whether the mainstream media have lost interest in classical music

5. This year's National Football League draft lists a large number of quarterbacks among its highest-ranking candidates. Furthermore, quite a number of teams do not have a first-class quarterback. It's therefore likely that there will be an unusually large number of quarterbacks drafted early in

this year's draft.

a. Whether teams without first-class quarterbacks will choose quarterbacks in the draft

b. Whether there is a large number of quarterbacks in this year's NFL draft

c. Whether an unusually large number of quarterbacks will be drafted early in this year's draft

6. An animal that will walk out into a rainstorm and stare up at the clouds until water runs into its nostrils and it drowns—well, that's what I call the world's dumbest animal. And that's exactly what young domestic turkeys do.

a. Whether young domestic turkeys will drown themselves in the rain

b. Whether any animal is dumb enough to drown itself in the rain

c. Whether young domestic turkeys are the world's dumbest animal

7. The defeat of the school voucher initiative was a bad thing for the country because now there won't be any incentive for public schools to clean up their act. Furthermore, the defeat perpetuates the private-school-for-the-rich, public-school-for-the-poor syndrome.

a. Whether there is now any incentive for public schools to clean up their act

- b. Whether the defeat of the school voucher initiative was bad for the country
- c. Two issues are equally stressed in the passage: whether there is now any incentive for public schools to clean up their act and whether the private-school-for-the-rich, public-school-for-the-poor syndrome will be perpetuated

8. From an editorial in a newspaper outside Southern California: "The people in Southern California who lost a fortune in the wildfires last year could have bought insurance that would have covered their houses and practically everything in them. And anybody with any foresight would have made sure there were no brush and no trees near the houses so that there would be a buffer zone between the house and any fire, as the Forest Service recommends. Finally, anybody living in a fire danger zone ought to know enough to have a fireproof or fire-resistant roof on the house. So, you see, most of the losses those people suffered were simply their own fault."

- a. Whether there were things the fire victims could have done to prevent their losses
- b. Whether insurance, fire buffer zones, and fire-resistant roofs could have prevented much of the loss
- c. Whether the losses suffered by people in the fires were their own fault

9. "Whatever we believe, we think agreeable to reason, and, on that account, yield our assent to it. Whatever we disbelieve, we think contrary to reason, and, on that account, dissent from it. Reason, therefore, is allowed to be the principle by which our belief and opinions ought to be regulated."

— Thomas Reid , Essays on the Active Powers of Man

- a. Whether reason is the principle by which our beliefs and opinions ought to be regulated
- b. Whether what we believe is agreeable to reason
- c. Whether what we disbelieve is contrary to reason
- d. Both b and c

10. Most people you find on university faculties are people who are interested in ideas. And the most interesting ideas are usually new ideas. So most people you find on university faculties are interested in new ideas. Therefore, you are not going to find many conservatives on university faculties, because conservatives are not usually interested in new ideas.

- a. Whether conservatives are interested in new ideas
- b. Whether you'll find many conservatives on university faculties
- c. Whether people on university faculties are interested more in new ideas than in other ideas
- d. Whether most people are correct

11. The winner of this year's spelling bee is a straight-A student whose favorite subject is science, which isn't surprising, since students interested in science learn to pay attention to details.

- a. Whether the winner of this year's spelling bee is a straight-A student
- b. Whether science students learn to pay attention to detail
- c. Whether learning science will improve a student's ability to spell
- d. Whether learning science teaches a student to pay attention to details
- e. None of the above

12. YOU: So, what do you think of the governor?

YOUR FRIEND: Not much, actually.

YOU: What do you mean? Don't you think she's been pretty good?

YOUR FRIEND: Are you serious?

YOU: Well, yes. I think she's been doing a fine job.

YOUR FRIEND: Oh, come on. Weren't you complaining about her just a few days ago?

- a. Whether your friend thinks the governor has been a good governor
- b. Whether you think the governor has been a good governor
- c. Whether the governor has been a good governor
- d. Whether you have a good argument for thinking the governor has been a good governor

### **Exercise 3**

Which of the lettered options serve the same kind of purpose as the original remark?

#### **Example**

Be careful! This plate is hot.

- a. Watch out. The roads are icy.
- b. Say—why don't you get lost?

#### *Answer*

The purpose of (a) is most like the purpose of the original remark. Both are warnings.

1. I'd expect that zipper to last about a week; it's made of cheap plastic.

- a. The wrinkles on that dog make me think of an old man.
- b. Given Sydney's spending habits, I doubt Adolphus will stick with her for long.

2. If you recharge your battery, sir, it will be almost as good as new.

- a. Purchasing one CD at the regular price would entitle you to buy an unlimited number of CDs at only \$4.99.
- b. I shall now serve dinner, after which you can play if you want.

3. To put out a really creative newsletter, you should get in touch with our technology people.

- a. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.
- b. To put an end to this discussion, I'll concede your point.
- c. You'd better cut down on your smoking if you want to live longer.

4. GE's profits during the first quarter were short of GE's projections. Therefore, we can expect GE stock to fall sharply in the next day or so.

a. Senator Craig apparently thinks what he does in private is nobody's business but his own.

b. The dog is very hot. Probably he would appreciate a drink of water.

c. The dog's coat is unusually thick. No wonder he is hot.

5. How was my date with your brother? Well . . . he has a great personality.

a. How do I like my steak? Well, not dripping blood like this thing you just served me.

b. How do I like the dress? Say, did you know that black is more slimming than white?

6. The wind is coming up. We'd better head for shore.

a. They finally arrived. I guess they will order soon.

b. We shouldn't leave yet. We just got here.

7. Ties are as wide as handkerchiefs these days. That's why they cost so much.

a. Belts are like suspenders. They both serve to keep your pants up.

b. Football is like rugby. Given that, it is easy to understand why so many people get injured.

8. Daphne owns an expensive car. She must be rich.

a. This dog has fleas. I'll bet it itches a lot.

b. This dog has fleas. That explains why it scratches a lot.

9. Dennis's salary is going to go up. After all, he just got a promotion.

a. Dennis's salary went up after he got a promotion.

b. Dennis's salary won't be going up. After all, he didn't get a promotion.

10. Outlawing adult Web sites may hamper free speech, but pornography  
must be curbed.

a. The grass must be mowed even though it is hot.

b. The grass is much too long; that means it must be mowed.