



1 Learn the Skill

It is important to review arguments to identify claims supported by **faulty reasoning or evidence**. Faulty reasoning involves arguments that are not logical. Faulty evidence may involve inaccurate, insufficient, or irrelevant information, or it may appeal to readers' emotions to support a claim. For example, authors may try to make readers feel afraid or feel as though they belong to or are superior to a particular group.

2 Practice the Skill

By practicing the skill of identifying faulty reasoning and evidence, you will improve your study and test-taking abilities, especially as they relate to the GED® Reasoning Through Language Arts Test. Read the information and study the table below. Then answer the question that follows.

- Gluten is a protein found in wheat flour. The examples in this table are intended to support the claim that avoiding gluten increases energy and weight loss.

a A generalization with too little information is faulty reasoning. For example, "Three friends have gone gluten-free, and they feel great. Going gluten-free improves your health!"

b Authors also may try to make readers feel patriotic. This emotional appeal is considered part of bandwagon appeal.

Faulty Reasoning	Explanation	Example
Inaccurate cause and effect	Suggesting that events have a cause-and-effect relationship because the events occur together	After I removed gluten from my diet, I lost weight.
Irrelevant information	Providing evidence that does not relate to the claim	One in 100 people cannot digest gluten. Like them, you could gain energy by eating gluten-free foods.
Inaccurate either/or situation	Suggesting there are only two options or viewpoints when there are more	If you want to have more energy, you must remove gluten from your diet.
Faulty Evidence	Explanation	Example
Bandwagon appeal	Arguing in favor of an idea because the idea is popular	Join the thousands of people who have found better health, gluten-free!
Scare tactics	Exaggerating a danger or using threatening language	Do you want to be condemned to a future of obesity and disease?
Testimonial	Supporting an idea by featuring the endorsement of a celebrity	Performer Miley Cyrus believes in the benefits of going gluten-free!

USING LOGIC

Some authors exhibit bias—they write about only one side of an issue or ignore information that contradicts their claims. Biased arguments are unreliable. So are arguments without enough support.

- Why is the fact that one in 100 people cannot digest gluten irrelevant to the claim that gluten-free food increases energy?
 - The fact inaccurately suggests an either/or situation.
 - The fact is intended to persuade readers to give up gluten because many people have removed gluten from their diets.
 - The fact is stated in strong language intended to frighten.
 - The fact does not give any indication of the likely effects of gluten on an individual with his or her own health needs.

3 Apply the Skill

★ Spotlighted Item: DRAG-AND-DROP

DIRECTIONS: Read the passage and the question. Then use the drag-and-drop option to complete the boxes.

GIVE TO THE DUDLEY MEMORIAL SHELTER

- 1 When animal rescue officers found Lady, the tiny poodle mix was dirty, scrawny, and trembling with fear. Rescuers estimated that she had been cruelly abandoned in the empty house for at least a week. Can you imagine what it must feel like to find yourself in a strange place, without food or water, completely alone?
- 2 No creature should have to go through what Lady went through, and thanks to the care of the dedicated staff at the Dudley Memorial Animal Shelter, Lady is on the road to recovery. But without your financial support, other animals will not be so lucky. Please consider a donation to save an animal in need.
- 3 Celebrities such as singer Sarah McLachlan have long been heroes for animal rights, and our own hero, Damian Ferri, says "Supporting helpless animals has given me as much personal satisfaction as it has helped save abused and abandoned animals."
- 4 You, too, can make a difference for animals in need by donating to support our care, outreach, and education efforts, and you can rest assured that 80 cents of every dollar you donate will go directly to the care of the animals in our charge or to community actions to promote animal welfare.
- 5 According to the American Pet Products Association, approximately 62 percent of American households own pets. Show the animals in your life that you care by contributing to the Dudley Memorial Animal Shelter. Through the generosity of so many people like you, who care deeply about animals, we are able to help unfortunate creatures that cannot help themselves.

2. Drag and drop each detail into the correct box.

Irrelevant Information

Inaccurate either/or situation

Bandwagon appeal

Appeal to sympathy

Testimonial

Details

Can you imagine what it must feel like to find yourself in a strange place, without food or water, completely alone?

But without your financial support, other animals will not be so lucky.

And our own hero, Damian Ferri, says "Supporting helpless animals has given me as much personal satisfaction as it has helped save abused and abandoned animals."

According to the American Pet Products Association, approximately 62 percent of American households own pets.

Through the generosity of so many people like you, who care deeply about animals, we are able to help unfortunate creatures that cannot help themselves.

**1 Learn the Skill**

When you classify evidence as valid or invalid, you evaluate the evidence to determine whether it supports a claim effectively. **Valid evidence** is relevant, or directly related to the claim. It must also be reliable. Reliable evidence comes from a trustworthy source, such as an expert in the field. Reliable evidence is fair and complete.

Evidence can be **invalid** (not valid) for several reasons. Evidence that does not come from a reliable source is invalid. Similarly, evidence that does not relate directly to the claim is invalid. If evidence does not fully support a claim or reflects faulty reasoning, it is invalid. Being able to classify evidence will help you decide whether an argument is convincing.

2 Practice the Skill

By practicing the skill of classifying valid and invalid evidence, you will improve your study and test-taking abilities, especially as they relate to the GED® Reasoning Through Language Arts Test. Read the passage below. Then answer the question that follows.

SOLAR IS THE SMART WAY TO GO

The sun is an abundant source of energy. Every hour, more energy reaches Earth from the sun than humans use in a year. Harnessing the energy of the sun to power and heat our homes makes sense for our environment and our economy.

Solar energy is a renewable, nonpolluting resource. Unlike burning fossil fuels, changing solar energy into electricity or heat does not produce greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming. If we do not take steps to switch to energy sources such as solar, we could soon find ourselves on a planet with unpredictable weather, unstable food supply, and widespread political upheaval.

Developing solar energy also makes sense from an economic perspective. According to the Solar Foundation's National Solar Jobs Census 2012, the solar industry added 13,872 jobs from September 2011 to September 2012. That figure represents a 13% growth rate in employment in the industry. At a time when employment in other industries is lagging or shrinking, "going solar" is a strategy with no downside!

a The author says that without solar energy, the planet could face terrible consequences. The author ignores other options for dealing with global warming. Incomplete evidence often signals bias.

b Most issues have pros and cons. The statement suggests that the author is ignoring opposing viewpoints, and the evidence is likely incomplete.

USING LOGIC

Remember that appeals to emotion or ethics are not necessarily invalid forms of evidence. However, consider whether support would be strengthened if the author included facts or specific information.

1. Which statement is valid evidence in support of the author's argument that solar energy is good for the economy?

- A. "Every hour, more energy reaches Earth from the sun than humans use in a year."
- B. "Developing solar energy also makes sense from an economic perspective."
- C. "... the solar industry added 13,872 jobs from September 2011 to September 2012."
- D. "At a time when employment in other industries is lagging or shrinking, 'going solar' is a strategy with no downside!"

3 Apply the Skill

★ Spotlighted Item: DRAG-AND-DROP

DIRECTIONS: Read the passage and the question. Then use the drag-and-drop option to complete the chart.

ADOPT A SHELTER MUTT

- 1 Shelters have all shapes and sizes of lovable mutts, purebreds, all-American cats, shaggy dogs, puppies and kittens, teenagers and oldsters. Your chances of finding a wonderful companion who matches your lifestyle, family, and home are excellent! About 25 percent of these animals are purebreds. However, if you're looking for a truly one-of-a-kind pet unlike anyone else's, animal shelters offer the best selection anywhere of smart, healthy, lovable mixed-breed cats and dogs. According to the Humane Society of the United States, mutts are America's dog of choice, accounting for nearly 60 percent of all pet dogs. What's more, their numbers are increasing for good reasons. As dog trainer and author Brian Kilcommons explains, "mixed breed dogs are often healthier, longer-lived, more intelligent, and of more stable temperament than purebreds because of what geneticists call 'hybrid vigor.' "...
- 2 A "second-hand" pet in no way means second-rate. On the contrary, shelter workers have often observed that many shelter animals seem to sense what they were up against and become among the most devoted and grateful companions. ...
- 3 Dogs, cats, and small mammals like guinea pigs, rabbits, and rats end up in shelters because of circumstances beyond their control. They're victims of a death, an illness, a divorce, or a move that didn't include them. Or they were displaced by a new baby. Or their owners just didn't learn how to train them. ...

The simple fact is that there are many more animals needing adoption than there are homes for them. So when you adopt from a shelter, you become part of the solution to the overpopulation crisis.

From the apsofdurham.org article WHY ADOPT A SHELTER PET?, accessed 2013

2. Drag and drop the evidence into the correct location on the chart.

Invalid	Valid

Evidence
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