

Whole-to-Part & Part-to-Whole PARTS ≠ WHOLES

THE PLAY-BY-PLAY

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|--|----|--|
| <p>1. Crazy person says a member of a category has a property.</p> | OR | <p>1. Crazy person says a category has a property.</p> |
| <p>2. Crazy person concludes that the category itself also has that property.</p> | | <p>2. Crazy person concludes that a member of that category also has that property.</p> |

Imagine that you have the best kind of pie, a pumpkin pie. You cut a normally proportioned piece of pie for yourself. That piece of the pie is vaguely triangular, right? Now you turn to a friend and tell them that since this piece of the pie is triangular, the whole pie is triangular. The friend you say this to is no longer your friend.

Now, imagine you have the same piece of pie in your hand and you look at another friend and say that since the whole pie is circular, this piece of pie you have in your hand is circular. You've now lost two friends.

That's Whole-to-Part, reader. It's a friend-losing proposition.

The examples in this chart may sound more reasonable than the pie example, but they rest on the exact same classic flaw in reasoning. You can never assume from wholes to parts or from parts to wholes.

LOOPHOLE

What if wholes don't necessarily equal parts?

Here is an example of Whole-to Part in a real LSAT stimulus:

17.3.16



PART

WHOLE

<i>a Starbucks location</i>	<i>Starbucks Corporation</i>
<i>Mars</i>	<i>the solar system</i>
<i>stop signs</i>	<i>government property</i>
<i>a member of the mock trial team</i>	<i>the mock trial team</i>
<i>bricks in a building</i>	<i>the building</i>

The bolded portions here look like a big neon Part-to-Whole light to the expert test taker. When you go from premises about all the parts of something having a property to a conclusion about the whole having that property, the Loophole is simple. In this case, all the elements of the design were not original, so the author concluded that the design itself couldn't be original. But what if no one had ever mixed those design elements exactly that way before? The combination of parts could be original. This is why Part-to-Whole doesn't work. Composition of the parts is something in itself.

Overgeneralization PART ≠ ALL THE PARTS

THE PLAY-BY-PLAY

1. Crazy person talks about something having a property.
2. Crazy person concludes that a bunch of other things also have that property.

Let's return to our pumpkin pie. Imagine you cut yourself a generous piece of pie. It's about the size and shape of your palm. Then you turn to your last remaining friend and tell them their piece is also the size of your palm. They look down at their piece. You then say that all the pieces in the world are the size of your palm. No friends left.

Overgeneralization takes something small and turns it into something big. It occurs when you have premises about

something specific — say, a hot temperature. A temperature could be hot, could be cold, could be pleasantly temperate.

To overgeneralize, you take a premise about hot temperatures and conclude about temperatures in general.

A COLLECTION OF OVERGENERALIZED PAIRS

These pairs overgeneralize a part of a spectrum to everything on that spectrum:

SMALL PREMISES	BIG CONCLUSION
<i>[adjective] + thing</i>	<i>thing</i>
<i>cold rooms</i>	<i>rooms</i>
<i>moderate caffeine intake</i>	<i>caffeine intake</i>

These pairs overgeneralize a part of a category to all the parts of a category:

SMALL PREMISES	BIG CONCLUSION
<i>one category member</i>	<i>all category members</i>
<i>Grover Cleveland</i>	<i>all forgettable presidents</i>
<i>Comic Sans</i>	<i>any other font</i>

Check out a few examples of Overgeneralization:

- Liana was quite **clever in her paper on shark anatomy**. So Liana is a **clever person**.
- We got **better** results at **70° rather than 60°**. So the **hotter** our lab, the **better** our results will be.
- **Pellegrino** tastes like adventure water when chilled. Thus, **all water** tastes like adventure water when chilled.

LOOPHOLE

What if we can't generalize from this one thing to a bunch of other things?

This is how Overgeneralization is deployed in a real LSAT stimulus:

42.2.12

REAL LSAT QUESTION REDACTED

It's a big Overgeneralization to apply facts about bread and my auto insurance to a claim about *all prices*. A lot more things have prices than just what was listed, so you can't take these tiny premises and make such a big claim.

* Pay close attention to this classic flaw. It's become extremely common on recent tests.

* This stimulus always gets me. I just love imagining a wayward politician actually saying this to people.

Equivocation

HOMONYMS UNLEASHED

THE PLAY-BY-PLAY

1. Crazy person uses a word or idea, intending one of its possible meanings.
2. Crazy person concludes something using the other possible meaning of the word or idea.
3. Hilarity ensues.

Imagine you're talking to someone you just met at a networking mixer (*blech*) since you don't have any friends left after Overgeneralization. You start telling this person about how great your arms look after this new workout plan. Your arms are just on point, top shape. Then you conclude that your top-notch arms mean you're ready to intervene in a complex foreign political conflict you don't truly understand. The mixer person is never going to become your new friend.

You started off your argument using the word "arms" to discuss the things that are attached to hands, and then you conclude that argument as if you initially introduced "arms" to mean things like tanks and machine guns. Like seriously! This is a thing people actually do in a subtler way on the LSAT and in real life.

Equivocation happens when the author changes the meaning of a word throughout an argument. You have to be on your toes to catch Equivocation. At first glance, it may look like nonsense words. Look closer. Put yourself in the author's shoes. Tune in to where the author thought they were going, and you'll learn to love Equivocation.

Equivocation may also seem like a deliberate pun. But fun puns don't get a reasoning pass on the LSAT. Any time a word changes in meaning, it's Equivocation.

LOOPHOLE

What if we shouldn't let words change in meaning?

Check out how Equivocation has been presented in a real LSAT stimulus:

19.2.1



The word "exploit" changes in meaning throughout the two bolded premises. The management consultant means "exploit" as in use to its fullest extent. The company uses "exploit" to refer to its more negative definition: to unfairly take advantage of someone. Poor management consultant.



I used to really dislike Equivocation because I didn't understand it, but now I think it's phenomenal. It's so funny. Equivocation stimuli look strange at first, but once you learn to cut through the confusing wording, they're totally doable.



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