

Classic Flaw

<p>QUESTION STEM KEYWORDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • flaw / flawed • most vulnerable to criticism on the grounds that it • questionable technique employed • the reasoning in the argument / the reasoning above 	<p>POPULARITY About 3-5 questions per section</p> <p>WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A provable description of what the argument did wrong</p> <p>ROLE OF THE LOOPHOLE Classic flaws are just fancy, predictable Loopholes. The correct answer to a Classic Flaw question is your classic flaw Loophole.</p>
<p>QUESTION STEM EXAMPLES</p> <p>The reasoning in the argument is most vulnerable to criticism on the grounds that the argument</p> <p>Which one of the following most accurately describes a flaw in the reasoning of the argument?</p> <p>Which one of the following is a questionable technique employed by the producer in responding to the critic?</p>	<p>TL;DR STRATEGY</p> <p>You already have a Loophole; hopefully, it was formed around one of the classic flaws.</p> <p>Go find an answer choice that describes this classic flaw.</p> <p>BACK-UP PLAN</p> <p>Is this what's wrong with the argument?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If yes, choose it. • If no, cross it off. • If you're not sure, leave it for later.

CLASSIC FLAW GAME PLAN

Classic Flaw is a seemingly omnipresent question type. And you already know all about the classic flaws! The Classic Flaws Chapter incorporated them into your initial understanding of argumentation, so you have a natural leg up on the competition. You've been calling out classic flaws in your CLIR Loopholes, cementing Classic Flaw questions 100% into your wheelhouse.

The correct answer to a Classic Flaw question describes where the stimulus went wrong. You must find the argumentative choice that secured their downfall. If your Loophole did not identify a classic flaw, don't fret. Many Classic Flaw questions have Loophole Flaw answer choices mixed in. When you can't identify a classic flaw in the stimulus, your Loophole is often all you need.

One Classic Flaw curveball: recognizing how each of the classic flaws is expressed in the answer choices. Just like Method, the wordiness level on Classic Flaw answer choices can be high. Luckily, Classic Flaw is very predictable. The Amazing Flaw Chart is here to make Classic Flaw answer choices not half bad:



If you are having trouble with Classic Flaw questions, head back to Chapter 7, The Classic Flaws. All of the classic flaws are explained in detail there!

THE AMAZING FLAW CHART

CLASSIC FLAW

Bad Conditional Reasoning

Bad Causal Reasoning

Whole-to-Part / Part-to-Whole

Overgeneralization

Survey Problems

Possibility ≠ Certainty

False Dichotomy

Straw Man

Ad Hominem

Circular Reasoning

Equivocation

Appeal Fallacies

Irrelevant!

Percentages ≠ Numbers

ANSWER CHOICE EXAMPLE

“mistakes something that is necessary to bring about a situation for something that in itself is enough to bring about that situation”

“mistakes the cause of a particular phenomenon for the effect of that phenomenon”

“assuming that because something is true of each of the parts of a whole it is true of the whole itself”

“makes a sweeping generalization... based on evidence drawn from a limited number of atypical cases”

“uses evidence drawn from a small sample that may well be unrepresentative”

“confuses an absence of evidence for a hypothesis with the existence of evidence against the hypothesis”

“assumes without warrant that a situation allows only two possibilities”

“misdescribing the... position, thereby making it easier to challenge”

“rejects a claim by attacking the proponents of the claim rather than addressing the claim itself”

“presupposes what it sets out to prove”

“relies on two different uses of the term”

“cites the evidence... in direct support of a claim that lies outside their area of expertise”

“uses irrelevant facts to justify a claim”

“takes no account of the relative frequency of... in the population as a whole”

ANSWER CHOICE KEYWORDS

- necessary / precondition / required
- sufficient / enough / ensure
- effect / result & cause / causal
- two things occur in conjunction
- one thing happens after another
- individual member of a group
- parts of a whole
- group as a whole
- generalizing illegitimately
- few instances to all instances
- particular case / atypical cases
- small / biased / unrepresentative sample
- merely possible... actual
- probably true... certainty
- has not been shown... not true
- excludes alternative explanation
- only two possibilities
- misdescribes
- easier to challenge
- impugns / questions / attacks
- character / motives of proponents
- source argument
- presupposes what it seeks to establish
- restates claim / conclusion
- term / word in two senses
- imprecise / ambiguous / vague
- appeals to / cites
- outside area of expertise
- irrelevant / not relevant
- percentages / absolute numbers
- relative frequency

REAL CLASSIC FLAW EXAMPLE

28.3.20



REAL LSAT QUESTION REDACTED

OK, first, relish the moment. This is probably the best LR question of all time (or at least my personal favorite). Now that you've relished, translate.

Game show host: Humans aren't better at investing than apes; they don't get better returns on their investments. We gave \$1,350 to five stock analysts and one chimp. The chimp made \$210 after a month. The next best analyst made \$140.

Why not populate the New York Stock Exchange with apes in glasses? Well, look at the wording of the conclusion. It's extremely general and the sample is comically limited. They've concluded about "humans" and "apes" from one ape, five people, and one set of investments tracked for one month. This stimulus overgeneralizes in about a million different ways. Overgeneralization is the flaw here.

The ape could be unrepresentative of apes in general. The five analysts could be unrepresentative of humans in general. The month-long return could be unrepresentative of investment returns. Most people invest in things for far longer than a month. Remember, this was done *on a game show*.

* Now, we're going to think really hard about whether apes are better at investing than humans. No wonder I turned down Harvard Law School to do this.

LOOPHOLE

What if one should not overgeneralize all the things?

Since it's Classic Flaw **EXCEPT**, we want to choose the one answer that is *not* what's wrong with the stimulus. We're going to check off four flaws in the answer choices; those are the incorret answers. We'll choose the one answer we can't check off.

A) *So generalizes from one chimp to apes. Is this what's wrong with the argument? Yes! Awesome, it's one of the overgeneralizations. Flaw checked off.*

B) *So they never offer evidence saying chimps are capable of investment reasoning. Is this what's wrong with the argument? No, the problem with **B** is that the chimp still gets better returns even if they don't understand how. It doesn't matter if they reasoned their way to those returns or chose them at random! They're making more, which is all the conclusion cares about. Since this is Classic Flaw **EXCEPT**, we want the one thing the argument didn't do wrong. **B** is out of left field, so we'll keep it around.*



EXCEPT questions are easiest to handle by process of elimination. For **EXCEPT**-specific strategy, check out the Answer Choice Strategy Section.

C)

*So generalizes from five people to humans. Is this what's wrong with the argument? Yes! **C** mirrors **A**. Perfect, more overgeneralization. Flaw checked off.*

D)

So generalizes from one short-term investing experiment to investing. Is this what's wrong with the argument? Yes! Another overgeneralization. Flaw checked off.

E)

*So it doesn't consider long-term performance of the chimp vs. the analysts. Is this what's wrong with the argument? Yes, but it's a little more difficult to see why. **E** doesn't use the word "general," but it's still calling out how the one-month timeline is unrepresentative of investing. Maybe the analysts would have gotten a higher return than the chimp in the long run. The conclusion would crumble. Flaw checked off.*



B is the correct answer. The four wrong answers are all flaws in the stimulus. We couldn't check **B** off, so it's correct.

CLASSIC FLAW CHALLENGE

20.4.18



Where's the answer key?

You'll find the answer key for all the Challenge Questions at the end of the chapter on page 357.