

GMAT READING COMPREHENSION

The Language Fellow

1. Read to ignore.
2. Make an outline/structure of the passage.
3. Reduce to logical form.
4. Focus on information (usually verbs) that moves the passage further; it can be a narrative.
5. Visual stretches of the passage help you locate look-up information, like copy-and-paste details.
6. Read for the argument:
 - a. What is the main idea?
 - b. Why has the author written the passage? Or, why does the passage exist?
 - c. How is the argument structured? Mark use of space as well as logical structure (which is more abstract).

Example:

He has been teaching this subject for so many years. Therefore, he must be very good at the subject.

He must be very good at this subject. He has been teaching it for so many years.

Note: both of the sentences (very short arguments) serve to express the same causal relationship. The second one does not have a marker ('therefore') that establishes this causal relationship and it does not have to have one—that is a characteristic of the English language.

AI Studio

Generate an example that maps the Toulmin model to this example. Make the argument a dense, detailed passage.

To demonstrate how the Toulmin model functions in real-world writing, here is a dense, academic-style argument about urban planning and economic policy, followed by a detailed mapping of how each sentence fits into the model.

The Argument: A Dense, Detailed Passage

"Given that municipal commercial property tax revenues in major metropolitan areas have plummeted by an average of 25% over the last four years due to permanent hybrid work schedules, city planners must transition vacant downtown office spaces into mixed-use residential zones to prevent municipal insolvency. This adaptive reuse strategy shifts the local tax base from shrinking commercial office leases to stable, long-term residential property values. As historical data from post-industrial 'Rust Belt' transitions demonstrates, cities that proactively adapt their spatial layouts to new macroeconomic realities experience significantly faster fiscal recovery and lower rates of municipal bankruptcy. Therefore, this spatial conversion strategy is highly likely to stabilize local municipal budgets over the next decade, unless local zoning laws remain too rigid to permit rapid multi-family residential conversions, or the structural costs of retrofitting outdated commercial HVAC and plumbing systems for individual apartments prove entirely cost-prohibitive."

The Toulmin Mapping

Below is the breakdown of how the passage above maps to the six elements of the Toulmin model.

1. Grounds (Evidence)

- **The Text:** *"Given that municipal commercial property tax revenues in major metropolitan areas have plummeted by an average of 25% over the last four years due to permanent hybrid work schedules..."*
- **Function:** This is the raw data and established fact that serves as the starting point for the argument. It establishes the current reality that demands a response.

2. Claim (The Thesis)

- **The Text:** *"...city planners must transition vacant downtown office spaces into mixed-use residential zones to prevent municipal insolvency."*
- **Function:** This is the main assertion. It is the proposed action that the author is advocating for based on the evidence.

3. Warrant (The Logical Bridge)

- **The Text:** *"This adaptive reuse strategy shifts the local tax base from shrinking commercial office leases to stable, long-term residential property values."*

- **Function:** This explains *why* the grounds connect to the claim. It answers the question: *How does converting offices to residential zones solve the problem of falling commercial tax revenues and prevent insolvency?* (By shifting the tax base to a more stable asset class).

4. Backing (Support for the Warrant)

- **The Text:** *"As historical data from post-industrial 'Rust Belt' transitions demonstrates, cities that proactively adapt their spatial layouts to new macroeconomic realities experience significantly faster fiscal recovery and lower rates of municipal bankruptcy."*
- **Function:** If a reader doubts the warrant (doubts that spatial layout changes actually stabilize municipal budgets), the backing provides the empirical proof. It uses historical precedent to validate the underlying logic of the warrant.

5. Qualifier (The Degree of Certainty)

- **The Text:** *"...is highly likely to..."*
- **Function:** The author avoids using absolute terms like "will definitely" or "is guaranteed to." By using "highly likely," they recognize that economic forecasting is complex and not an absolute certainty.

6. Rebuttal (The Exceptions)

- **The Text:** *"...unless local zoning laws remain too rigid to permit rapid multi-family residential conversions, or the structural costs of retrofitting outdated commercial HVAC and plumbing systems for individual apartments prove entirely cost-prohibitive."*
- **Function:** This identifies the specific scenarios where the argument falls apart. It proactively addresses counter-arguments (legal hurdles and engineering costs) that an opponent might raise, making the overall argument more realistic and robust.