

## GMAT READING COMPREHENSION WORKING NOTES ETC.

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laws remain too rigid to permit rapid multi-family residential conversions, or the structural costs of retrofitting outdated commercial HVAC and plumbing systems for individual apartments prove entirely cost-prohibitive."

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### 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.

## WORKING NOTES – 3: ARGUMENT ANALYSIS AND ALASKA PASSAGE ORGANISATION

VERB NOUN  
STATES BE

What is the function of a given part of the passage in question?

Attention

DISCOURSE MARKERS

HABIT: NOTE TAKING

Scientists long believed that two nerve clusters in the human hypothalamus, called suprachiasmatic nuclei (SCNs), were what controlled our circadian rhythms. Those rhythms are the biological cycles that recur approximately every 24 hours in synchronization with the cycle of sunlight and darkness caused by Earth's rotation. Studies have demonstrated that in some animals, the SCNs control daily fluctuations in blood pressure, body temperature, activity level, and alertness, as well as the nighttime release of the sleep-promoting agent melatonin. Furthermore, cells in the human retina dedicated to transmitting information about light levels to the SCNs have recently been discovered.

Four critical genes governing circadian cycles have been found to be active in every tissue, however, not just the SCNs, of flies, mice, and

Please note that vocabulary DOES NOT MATTER, consistency DOES. Whenever you read a passage,

FOR EVERY PARAGRAPH:

- ID 'topic sentence': main thought, main idea, ... CLAIM/HYPOTHESIS, ...

usu. at the start - -but it can be anywhere in the paragraph

2. ID any minor claims on which the argument depends

3. ID The remnant is support for one or more of the PREMISSES

A set of PREMISSES (statement) connected in a hierarchy of graphs/directed:

selectively bias -- cherry-picking ([1] [Vox article on the current replication crisis in psychology](#))

the problems:

1. the main claim/root node is flawed--which you can find by looking at the language use (extreme language is one clue, a toy sentence being, *It is absolutely **not possible** for an LLM to think the way humans 'think'*. (i)
2. one of the minor premisses or leafs in the tree is flawed.
3. the evidence turns weak when presented with some counter-examples or something that represents an exception, an disruption.
  1. Suddenly, students who were scoring in the range 50 to 60 percent have started scoring 85 tp 90 %. What explains this?
4. CAVEAT: avoid ideas that presume questionable **ethics**, e.g., do not question authority (Company and AI).
5. "All other things being equal" cf. the Latin phrase "ceteris paribus" in the domain of philosophy, for example.
6. Don't assume foul play (see point 4).

SKELETON OF ALASKA PASSAGE

TOPIC SENTENCE EVIDENCE

TOPIC SENTENCE EVIDENCE QUALIFIER EVIDENCE

BASED ON EVIDENCE, POLICY RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION BULLETED

DNA: undeniable proof that the accused was present at the crime scene etc.

METACOGNITION, COGNITION: these are tested on the exam.

STRATEGY FOR RC: SPEND 2:30 - 2:45 AND ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN ONE GO, SPENDING 30-40 SECONDS PER RC QUESTION.

ATTENTION--READING TO IGNORE; SKIM SCAN RICHARDS CLOSE READING etc.

"THIS IS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL TOURIST SPOT IN ALASKA." (ii)

Like 'think' in (i) above, the meaning of 'most beautiful' will be debated, which is beyond the scope of our purposes for the GMAT.

[1] <https://www.vox.com/2016/3/14/11219446/psychology-replication-crisis>