GMAT Focus Edition: Critical Reasoning Architecture

A tactical guide to structural workflows for maximizing accuracy on GMAT Critical Reasoning question types.

1. Assumption Questions: The Negation Test Matrix

An assumption is the unstated link that holds an argument together. If you negate the correct assumption, the logic of the entire argument must shatter.

The Operational Path:

- Isolate the exact Conclusion and the supporting Premises.
- Identify the logical gap (e.g., changing from "high revenue" in premise to "maximum profit" in conclusion).
- Apply the Negation Test to target choices: Turn positive statements into negatives, and negative statements into positives.
- The Golden Rule: The option that completely invalidates or breaks the conclusion when negated is the correct answer.

2. Flaw & Weaken Formats: Scope Shift Trackers

- Weaken and Flaw questions exploit structural vulnerabilities, primarily focusing on subtle conceptual shifts between facts and claims.
- Track Sample to Population: Watch for arguments making a sweeping generalization about a group based on an unrepresentative sample.
- Track Correlation vs. Causation: Do not let an argument assert that because A and B happen together, A must cause B. Look out for reverse causation or a third confounding variable.
- Track Percentages vs. Real Numbers: An increase in market share percentage does not automatically equate to an increase in absolute volume if the entire market shrank.