

Domain 2 of 4

Cri

## Overview

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The Critical Analysis and Reasoning Skills (CARS) section is unique among MCAT sections — it requires no outside knowledge. All information needed to answer questions is contained within the passages. The section includes 53 questions in 90 minutes across 9 passages drawn from humanities and social sciences.

CARS tests three core skills: Foundations of Comprehension (30%), Reasoning Within the Text (30%), and Reasoning Beyond the Text (40%).

### Foundations of Comprehension

- Identify the main idea and central argument of the passage
- Understand the author's purpose and intended audience
- Recognize the meaning of words and phrases in context
- Identify the overall structure and organization of the passage
- Understand explicit claims and supporting evidence

■ **Exam Tip:** Read the passage actively. Ask yourself: What is the author's main claim? What evidence supports it? What tone or bias is present? Answer these before looking at questions.

### Reasoning Within the Text

- Identify logical relationships between ideas (cause/effect, compare/contrast)
- Evaluate the strength of arguments and evidence
- Recognize assumptions underlying the author's argument
- Identify implications of statements within the passage
- Distinguish between facts, opinions, and inferences

### Reasoning Beyond the Text

- Apply passage ideas to new situations or scenarios
- Evaluate how new information would affect the author's argument
- Strengthen or weaken the author's claims with outside evidence
- Predict the author's response to hypothetical situations
- Generalize from specific examples to broader principles

■ **Exam Tip:** For "strengthen/weaken" questions, the correct answer directly addresses the author's central argument — not peripheral details. Eliminate answers that are irrelevant to the main claim.

## Passage Types and Strategies

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Humanities passages (philosophy, art, literature, ethics) often present nuanced arguments with multiple perspectives. Focus on the author's stance and how they evaluate competing views.

Social sciences passages (psychology, sociology, economics, political science) often present research findings or theoretical frameworks. Pay attention to methodology and conclusions.

### **Time Management Strategy**

- Allocate approximately 10 minutes per passage (including questions)
- Read the passage in 3-4 minutes, then answer questions in 6-7 minutes
- Flag difficult questions and return to them after completing easier ones
- Never leave a question blank — there is no penalty for guessing
- Practice with timed passages to build reading speed and comprehension