

PolicePrep Comprehensive Guide to Canadian Police Officer Exams

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Inductive Reasoning

Inductive reasoning is the process of reaching general conclusions based on observing a number of specific instances. Using these observations you conclude that something or a group of things is generally true. For example:

Observances:

“I’ve noticed that every time I eat crab, shrimp or squid, I get a stomach ache.

Conclusion:

Therefore whenever I eat seafood, I will get a stomach ache.”

The argument above starts with specific observances (eating crab, shrimp and squid) and comes to a very general conclusion about what can or can’t be eaten (all seafood). The conclusion is supported by the previous observations.

Common Errors

When answering questions like this, it is a mistake to include information that is not in the question to reach a conclusion. The answer may be correct in life but, if not drawn from the information in the question, do not include the evidence in your decision making process. Below are examples of conclusions that may be true in life, but are incorrect because they are not based on the information above.

Incorrect conclusion #1

I will get a stomachache from the seasoning I use.

Incorrect conclusion #2

I will get a stomachache from eating in a hurry.

Base your answers strictly on the information that is given to you in the question.

Deductive Reasoning

Deductive reasoning is the process of reaching specific conclusions based on a general observation, rule or belief. A general rule, observation, or belief is stated and you are able to determine whether specific actions or results will occur. For example:

General Rule:

“I have an allergic reaction to all nuts, which causes my throat to close.”

Conclusion:

“If I eat cashews my throat will close. If I eat walnuts my throat will close.”

Instead of reaching broad generalizations or conclusions, determine if a specific example fits the data.

Common Errors

As mentioned above, it is incorrect to include information that is not in the question to reach your conclusion. The answer may be correct in life, but if the information is not drawn from the question, you should not include it in your decision making process. Below are examples of conclusions that may be true in life, but would be incorrect because they are not based on the information above.

Incorrect conclusion #1

If a bee stings me, my throat will close up.

Incorrect conclusion #2

I am not the only person in the world who has this allergy.

Base your answers only on the information that is available to you in the question.