



Spot the Assumption – 60 mini-arguments to master verbal reasoning for the OC & Selective Schools tests

The Importance of Reading Comprehension and Critical Thinking

Reading comprehension goes beyond recognising words and recalling facts. True comprehension requires inference: spotting unstated assumptions, hidden premises, and gaps in reasoning. This skill underpins success in every subject and helps with everyday decision-making. **It is also crucial for the Thinking Skills section of the OC/Selective tests.**

The benefits go far beyond tests. When students learn to identify assumptions, they become sharper critical thinkers, clearer writers, and more discerning consumers of information. They learn to question claims, weigh evidence, and construct stronger arguments of their own.

Where Many Students Go Wrong

- **Surface-level reading:** Only noticing the explicit statements, not what's implied.
- **Assumption confusion:** Restating the claim instead of naming the hidden premise that links the premise conclusion.
- **Weak counterexamples:** Giving unrealistic or irrelevant scenarios.
- **Missing the bridge:** Failing to identify the logical connection assumed between the reasons and the conclusion.
- **Accepting at face value:** Not testing whether the reasoning holds.



Tips for Parents

- **Keep sessions short (2–5 minutes) and informal.** For example, over dinner or in the car. This document has heaps of mini passages.
- **Encourage curiosity, not criticism:** “I wonder what the author is assuming here?”
- **Celebrate good questions,** even when the answers aren’t perfect.
- Make up your own real-world examples (news, ads, everyday conversations).
- **Model the thinking aloud:** do one together, then let your child try.

Guiding Questions

Here is a worked example that demonstrates how to solve these types of problems.

Below are some questions you should be thinking as you read the mini passages:

- What **unstated idea must be true** for this argument to work?
- Can you think of a realistic situation where this **wouldn’t hold**?
- What is the author **taking for granted**?
- How could we **strengthen this argument** so it’s more convincing?

Let’s read the argument below with these questions in mind.

Argument: “School uniforms improve academic results, so banning casual clothes will raise grades at our school.”

Step 1 – Identify the Assumption

Question: What must be true for this to hold?



Answer: That clothing choice is a primary driver of academic performance and that no other factor (teaching quality, resources, motivation, socioeconomic factors) outweighs it.

Step 2 – Provide a Counterexample

Question: Give a realistic example that breaks the claim.

Answer: A well-funded private school with uniforms but inexperienced teachers and outdated textbooks might still have poor results, while a public school with casual dress but excellent teaching could achieve high results.

Step 3 – Strengthen the Argument (Bonus)

Question: How could we make this more convincing?

Answer: Compare similar schools (same demographics/funding/teaching quality) where the key difference is dress code, and include evidence about how uniforms affect learning behaviours.

Good luck and happy learning! If you have questions about this document, please reach out to us at support@testacademy.com.au or call us on +61 490 451 408. Whilst this document is completely free for private learning, it is strictly copyrighted.

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- **Level 2: Passages 16-35**
- **Level 3: Passages 36-50**
- **Level 4: Passages 51-60**
- **Solutions for all passages**



60 Practice Questions

Instructions: For each passage, do three things:

1. **Identify** the assumption (the hidden premise).
2. **Provide** a realistic counterexample.
3. **Suggest** how to strengthen the argument.

Level 1: Getting Started (Passages 1–15)

Passage 1: “My neighbour’s dog barks every morning at 6 am. Dogs are clearly early risers by nature.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:



Strengthen:

Passage 2: “Sarah got an A on her maths test after studying for three hours. Long study sessions guarantee good grades.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:



Strengthen:

Passage 3: “The new pizza place has a line out the door every day. It must serve the best pizza in town.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:



Passage 4: “Tom’s team won the championship after he joined. Tom must be the key to their success.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:



Passage 5: “Students who eat breakfast score higher on tests than those who skip it. Eating breakfast improves academic performance.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:

Passage 6: “My phone battery lasts longer when I use a blue case instead of a red one. Blue phone cases improve battery life.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:

Passage 7: “The library is always quiet, so libraries are the perfect place to study.”

Assumption:



Counterexample:

Strengthen:

Passage 8: “Every successful businessperson I know wears expensive suits. Wearing expensive clothes leads to business success.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

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Strengthen:

Passage 9: “My grandmother lived to 95 and ate bacon every day. Bacon must be good for longevity.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:



Passage 10: “Students who sit in the front row get better grades. Sitting in front improves academic performance.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:



Passage 11: “This restaurant has five-star reviews online, so the food quality must be excellent.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:



Passage 12: “My headache went away after I drank green tea. Green tea cures headaches.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:

Passage 13: “All the popular kids at school have the latest smartphones. Having a new phone makes you popular.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:

Passage 14: “The plants in my garden grew better after I started playing classical music for them. Classical music helps plants grow.”

Assumption:



Counterexample:

Strengthen:

Passage 15: “My lucky pen helped me pass every test this semester. Lucky charms improve test performance.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

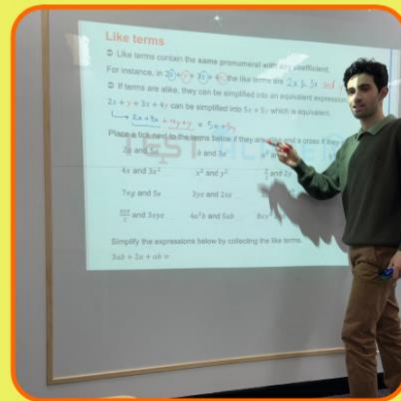
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Strengthen:



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Level 2: Building Skills (Passages 16–35)

Passage 16: “Countries with higher chocolate consumption have more Nobel Prize winners per capita. Eating chocolate makes people smarter.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:

Passage 17: “Students who attend private schools have higher SAT scores on average. Private education is superior to public education.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:

Passage 18: “Companies that offer free snacks have more productive employees. Free snacks boost workplace productivity.”



Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:

Passage 19: “Cities with more bookstores have lower crime rates. Reading prevents criminal behaviour.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:

Passage 20: “Organic food sales have increased while autism diagnoses have also increased. Organic foods must cause autism.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:



Strengthen:

Passage 21: “Professional athletes who meditate perform better in competitions. Meditation improves athletic performance.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:

Passage 22: “Students who take music lessons have better maths scores. Learning music improves mathematical ability.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:



Passage 23: “People who own dogs live longer than those who don’t. Dog ownership extends human lifespan.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:



Passage 24: “Countries with more McDonald’s restaurants have stronger economies. Fast-food chains drive economic growth.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:



Passage 25: “Teenagers who play video games have faster reaction times than those who don’t. Video games improve reflexes.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:

Passage 26: “Hospitals that play soft music in patient rooms have shorter average stays. Music therapy speeds recovery.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:

Passage 27: “Students who drink coffee before exams score higher than those who don’t. Caffeine enhances test performance.”

Assumption:



Counterexample:

Strengthen:

Passage 28: “Neighbourhoods with more trees have lower rates of depression. Trees improve mental health.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:

Passage 29: “Companies with female CEOs have higher stock performance. Women are better business leaders than men.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:



Passage 30: “People who read novels have better empathy scores than those who prefer non-fiction. Fiction reading develops emotional intelligence.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:



Passage 31: “Schools with later start times have students with higher GPAs. Delayed school schedules improve academic performance.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:



Passage 32: “Cities that invest more in public art have lower unemployment rates. Art spending creates jobs and economic growth.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:

Passage 33: “Students who participate in sports have higher graduation rates than those who don’t. Athletic participation prevents dropping out.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:

Passage 34: “Restaurants that use locally sourced ingredients have higher customer satisfaction ratings. Local ingredients improve food quality.”

Assumption:



Counterexample:

Strengthen:

Passage 35: “People who live in walkable neighbourhoods weigh less than those in car-dependent areas. Urban design determines body weight.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:

Level 3: Advanced Critical Thinking (Passages 36–50)

Passage 36: “Countries that mandate financial literacy education have citizens with higher savings rates and lower personal debt. Financial education creates better money management nationwide.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:



Strengthen:

Passage 37: “Hospitals implementing mindfulness training for staff show reduced patient mortality rates. Meditation practice by healthcare workers saves lives.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:

Passage 38: “Nations with higher rates of bilingualism score better on international innovation indices. Speaking multiple languages drives technological creativity.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:



Passage 39: “Companies that allow remote work report 23% higher employee retention rates. Flexible work arrangements prevent employee turnover.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:

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Passage 40: “Regions with higher rates of renewable energy adoption have experienced faster economic growth over the past decade. Green energy investment drives economic prosperity.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:



Passage 41: “Universities with larger endowments produce graduates who earn higher lifetime salaries. University wealth determines alumni success.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:

Passage 42: “Neighbourhoods that implement community gardens show 15% decreases in property crime rates. Gardening programmes reduce criminal activity.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:

Passage 43: “Schools serving predominantly plant-based lunch menus report improved standardised test scores compared to those serving



traditional meals. Vegetarian diets enhance cognitive performance in students.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:

Passage 44: “Cities with higher population density have lower per-capita carbon emissions. Urban living is inherently more environmentally sustainable.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:

Passage 45: “Countries that invest more heavily in early childhood education programmes demonstrate higher rates of social mobility across generations. Pre-K spending breaks cycles of poverty.”



Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:

Passage 46: “Companies that publicly commit to diversity goals show stronger stock performance over five-year periods. Diversity initiatives drive financial success.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:

Passage 47: “Nations with mandatory military service have lower youth unemployment rates than those with all-volunteer forces. Conscription provides economic benefits for young people.”



Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:

Passage 48: “Hospitals that employ more nurses per patient bed demonstrate significantly lower rates of medical errors and patient infections. Nursing staffing levels directly determine patient safety outcomes.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:

Passage 49: “States with stricter gun control laws show lower rates of firearm-related deaths per capita. Gun legislation effectiveness is proven by mortality statistics.”



Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:

Passage 50: “Countries with universal healthcare systems have higher average life expectancy than those with privatised medicine. Public healthcare delivers superior population health outcomes.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:



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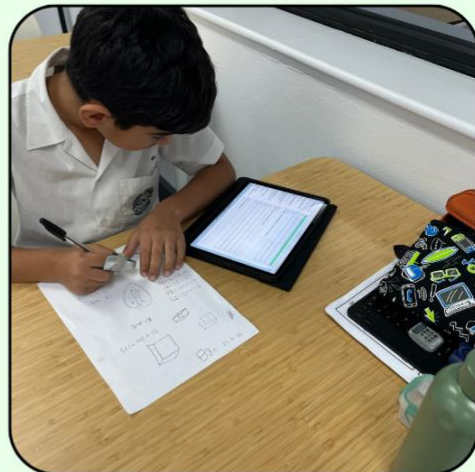
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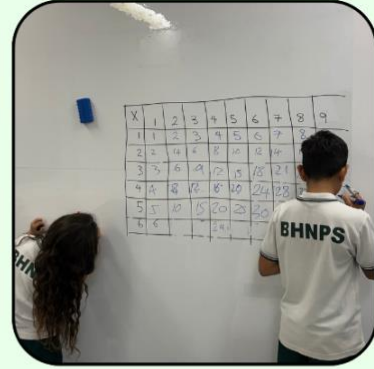
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22 May 2025, 9:04 p.m.

Hard Reading Questions for Year 4
22 May 2025, 8:58 p.m.

Year 4 Simple Addition Scenario Questions
1 May 2025, 11:03 p.m.

Addition and Subtraction Word Problems for Year 4
Assigned by Arya Adami

Question 1

Question: A cheerful bunny found 3 carrots in the garden and then discovered another 2 carrots hidden under a bush. How many carrots does the bunny have in total?

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Level 4: Expert Analysis (Passages 51–60)

Passage 51: “Longitudinal studies over three decades show that societies with higher interpersonal trust correlate with stronger democratic institutions, lower corruption, and more robust economic growth. Social trust fundamentally determines national success.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:



Passage 52: “Meta-analyses of randomised controlled trials indicate that mindfulness-based interventions reduce symptoms across anxiety, depression, PTSD, and addiction, with effect sizes comparable to pharmaceuticals. Mindfulness is a universal therapeutic mechanism.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:



Passage 53: “Economic analysis shows that cities implementing congestion pricing reduce traffic, improve air quality, and increase public transport usage while funding infrastructure. Road pricing is optimal urban policy across all contexts.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:

Passage 54: “Cross-national time-series analysis shows countries with carbon pricing reduce emissions more effectively than those relying on regulation alone, while maintaining competitiveness. Market-based climate policy is empirically superior.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:



Passage 55: “Neuroimaging studies consistently show bilingual individuals have enhanced executive function (working memory, cognitive flexibility, inhibitory control) compared to monolinguals. Second-language acquisition reorganises cognitive architecture.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:

Passage 56: “Systematic reviews show reducing class sizes from 25 to 15 significantly improves achievement, especially for disadvantaged students, with lasting benefits. Small classes are the most cost-effective reform.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:

Passage 57: “Epidemiological evidence indicates people with strong social connections have 50% lower mortality risk than the socially isolated,



comparable to quitting smoking. Social relationships are a primary determinant of health.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:

Passage 58: “Agricultural research shows regenerative farming practices (cover cropping, diverse rotations, reduced tillage) increase soil health, yields, and carbon sequestration while lowering inputs. Regenerative agriculture solves multiple global challenges.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:

Passage 59: “Comparative justice studies show restorative justice achieves higher victim satisfaction, lower recidivism, and reduced costs



than punitive approaches across contexts. Restorative practices should replace conventional criminal justice.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:

Passage 60: “Comprehensive economic modelling with climate projections shows aggressive action to limit warming to 1.5°C yields net benefits (avoided damages, innovation spillovers, health co-benefits) exceeding costs threefold. Climate action is economically imperative.”

Assumption:

Counterexample:

Strengthen:



Solutions

Level 1 Solutions (1–15)

1.

Assumption: One dog's behaviour represents all dogs' natural tendencies.

Counterexample: Many dogs sleep in (e.g., older indoor dogs following owners' routines).

Strengthen: Survey diverse breeds/owners; cite research on canine circadian rhythms.

2.

Assumption: Study time directly causes performance; three hours is “long”; Sarah generalises to everyone.

Counterexample: Ineffective three-hour cram vs an efficient 30-minute session.

Strengthen: Compare like-for-like methods; define “long”; control prior knowledge/test difficulty.

3.

Assumption: Popularity (long lines) equals quality.

Counterexample: Lines due to slow service, tiny venue, or lack of alternatives.

Strengthen: Compare reviews, critic ratings, repeat visits while controlling price/location/service speed.

4.



Assumption: Tom's arrival caused the success; no other changes mattered.

Counterexample: Better coaching, other recruits, weaker competition.

Strengthen: Analyse Tom's stats; before/after team metrics; isolate his role in key wins.

5.

Assumption: Correlation = causation; breakfast is the only difference.

Counterexample: Breakfast correlates with family stability/resources.

Strengthen: Control socioeconomic/sleep factors; run randomised breakfast vs no-breakfast trials.

6.

Assumption: Case colour affects battery; nothing else changed.

Counterexample: Different materials/age/usage patterns or settings.

Strengthen: Test identical phones/cases differing only in colour under controlled usage.

7.

Assumption: Quiet is the key factor for all; all libraries are similar.

Counterexample: Some learn better with background noise; poor lighting/seating.

Strengthen: Survey outcomes by setting; include individual learning preferences.

8.



Assumption: Clothes cause success rather than success enabling expensive clothes; sample is representative.

Counterexample: Casual dress tech founders succeed; some in suits don't.

Strengthen: Compare similar professionals differing only in attire; test client trust effects.

9.

Assumption: One person's longevity was due to bacon.

Counterexample: Genetics, activity, social ties may dominate.

Strengthen: Large cohort studies controlling lifestyle/genetics/diet.

10.

Assumption: Seat location causes grades; students are otherwise similar.

Counterexample: Motivated students choose the front; moving seat \neq changing effort.

Strengthen: Randomly assign seats or track outcomes after enforced seat changes.

11.

Assumption: Online reviews accurately reflect food quality and are authentic.

Counterexample: Fake/paid reviews; ratings driven by service/ambience.

Strengthen: Verify reviewers; check multiple platforms; compare critic reviews and personal tasting.

12.



Assumption: Green tea caused relief; no other factor mattered.

Counterexample: Time, hydration, caffeine, rest.

Strengthen: Controlled comparisons vs other beverages/placebo; replicate across sufferers.

13.

Assumption: New phones cause popularity; correlation = causation.

Counterexample: Wealth/popularity enables phone ownership; many unpopular students have new phones.

Strengthen: Track status before/after getting a phone; control for income and social skills.

14.

Assumption: Music caused growth; other gardening factors unchanged.

Counterexample: Better care/season/fertiliser coinciding with music.

Strengthen: Controlled trials with identical plants; keep all else constant; measure growth.

15.

Assumption: A pen has causal (even supernatural) power.

Counterexample: Comfort/confidence effects, not magic.

Strengthen: Not scientifically strengthenable; instead study confidence-boosting rituals' effects.

Level 2 Solutions (16–35)

16.



Assumption: Chocolate causes intelligence; correlation = causation.

Counterexample: Wealthy countries eat more chocolate and fund education/science.

Strengthen: Individual-level trials controlling education/income; study neurological effects directly.

17.

Assumption: School type causes scores; students are otherwise comparable; SAT = quality.

Counterexample: Private school students often have more resources.

Strengthen: Control socioeconomic/parent education; use multiple quality measures.

18.



Assumption: Snacks cause productivity; workplaces are otherwise similar.

Counterexample: Snack-offering firms may also pay better/manage better.

Strengthen: Before/after within the same firm; matched-company comparisons.

19.

Assumption: Bookstores/reading reduce crime.

Counterexample: Book-rich cities may be wealthier with better services.

Strengthen: Individual-level reading vs offending; evaluate reading programmes' effect on crime.



20.

Assumption: Parallel trends imply causation.

Counterexample: Diagnostic changes explain autism trend; consumer preferences explain organics.

Strengthen: Cannot strengthen; avoid post hoc fallacy—seek causal research.

21.

Assumption: Meditation causes better performance; athletes are otherwise similar.

Counterexample: Meditators may already be more disciplined.

Strengthen: Random assignment or pre/post within-athlete designs.

22.

Assumption: Music lessons cause better maths; cohorts otherwise similar.

Counterexample: Music students often have more academic support.

Strengthen: Randomly assign to music vs other activities; track pre/post maths results.

23.

Assumption: Dogs cause longevity.

Counterexample: Healthier, wealthier, more active people can keep dogs.

Strengthen: Study effects of acquiring a dog controlling baseline health/income.



24.

Assumption: McDonald's causes growth (not vice versa).

Counterexample: Chains follow growth rather than create it.

Strengthen: Examine local economies before/after entry with proper controls.

25.

Assumption: Gaming improves reflexes; teens otherwise similar.

Counterexample: Fast-reflex teens may choose gaming; sports can also hone reflexes.

Strengthen: Pre/post reaction tests; randomised training vs control.

26.

Assumption: Music causes faster recovery; hospitals otherwise similar.

Counterexample: Music hospitals may have better staffing/tech.

Strengthen: Before/after in the same hospital; random assignment to music vs quiet.

27.

Assumption: Caffeine boosts performance; cohorts otherwise similar.

Counterexample: Coffee drinkers may prepare differently; some get jitters.

Strengthen: Placebo-controlled trials; within-student comparisons.

28.

Assumption: Trees cause better mental health; areas otherwise similar.



Counterexample: Leafy areas often wealthier/safer with better services.

Strengthen: Add-trees interventions; track movers between areas; control confounders.

29.

Assumption: CEO gender causes stock performance; firms otherwise similar.

Counterexample: Progressive, well-run firms both hire women and perform well.

Strengthen: Pre/post around CEO changes; control industry/size; use broader success metrics.

30.

Assumption: Fiction reading causes empathy; readers otherwise similar.

Counterexample: More empathetic people may prefer fiction.

Strengthen: Assign fiction vs non-fiction reading programmes; measure empathy pre/post.

31.

Assumption: Later starts cause GPA gains; schools otherwise similar.

Counterexample: Later-start schools may be better resourced.

Strengthen: Same-school schedule changes; matched-school comparisons with controls.

32.

Assumption: Art spend lowers unemployment; cities otherwise similar.



Counterexample: Prosperous cities fund art and already have low unemployment.

Strengthen: Track outcomes after spend changes; compare similar cities with different art budgets.

33.

Assumption: Sport participation causes graduation; students otherwise similar.

Counterexample: Joiners may be more engaged/ supported.

Strengthen: Pre/post for at-risk students joining sports; matched comparisons.

34.

Assumption: Local sourcing itself drives satisfaction; restaurants otherwise similar.

Counterexample: “Local” venues may also have better chefs/standards/prices.

Strengthen: Blind taste tests; track ratings when switching to local, holding other factors constant.

35.

Assumption: Walkability causes weight differences; residents otherwise similar.

Counterexample: Health-conscious people choose walkable areas.

Strengthen: Study movers; compare similar individuals across neighbourhood types with controls.



Level 3 Solutions (36–50)

36.

Assumption: Mandates cause behaviour change; countries otherwise similar; correlation = causation.

Counterexample: Cultures valuing saving and strong safety nets may both mandate and save.

Strengthen: Pre/post mandate analyses; cohort tracking; control cultural/economic factors.

37.

Assumption: Mindfulness training reduces mortality; hospitals otherwise similar.

Counterexample: Training coincides with broader quality upgrades.

Strengthen: Before/after within hospital; cluster randomised trials; identify mechanisms (communication, error reduction).

38.

Assumption: Bilingualism causes innovation; nations otherwise similar.

Counterexample: Immigration/trade diversity may drive both.

Strengthen: Firm/individual-level studies; mechanism tests; policy changes and subsequent outcomes.

39.

Assumption: Remote work drives retention; firms otherwise similar.

Counterexample: Remote-friendly firms may already be progressive/high-benefit employers.



Strengthen: Pre/post policy changes; control compensation/management; track switchers.

40.

Assumption: Renewables cause growth; regions otherwise similar.

Counterexample: Educated, well-governed regions adopt renewables and grow.

Strengthen: Difference-in-differences around major investments; mechanism mapping (jobs, energy costs).

41.

Assumption: Endowment size drives alumni earnings; students otherwise similar.

Counterexample: Selectivity/family background/location drive earnings.

Strengthen: Compare similar students across universities with different endowments; pre/post funding shocks.

42.

Assumption: Gardens reduce crime; neighbourhoods otherwise similar.

Counterexample: Community engagement (not gardens per se) reduces crime.

Strengthen: Pre/post in same area; control other initiatives; test mechanisms (surveillance, cohesion).

43.

Assumption: Plant-based menus cause cognitive gains; schools otherwise similar.



Counterexample: Progressive schools may improve on multiple fronts simultaneously.

Strengthen: Pre/post menu changes; control demographics/resources; run nutrition RCTs.

44.

Assumption: Density itself lowers emissions; places otherwise similar; accounting is complete.

Counterexample: Energy mix/industry/transport systems drive differences, not just density.

Strengthen: Control energy sources/infrastructure; track changes as density rises; include consumption-based emissions.

45.

Assumption: Early childhood programmes cause mobility; nations otherwise similar.

Counterexample: Tax/health/social policies may be the real drivers.

Strengthen: Cohort analyses; pre/post policy adoption; interaction with broader welfare settings.

46.

Assumption: Diversity commitments cause performance; firms otherwise similar.

Counterexample: Well-managed firms both commit and perform well.

Strengthen: Event studies around commitment dates; measure actual diversity outcomes; control industry factors.



47.

Assumption: Conscription reduces youth unemployment; countries otherwise similar.

Counterexample: Labour markets/policies differ; benefits may be context-specific.

Strengthen: Individual outcomes of conscripts vs non-conscripts; policy switches; skills transfer analyses.

48.

Assumption: Nurse ratios cause safety; hospitals otherwise similar.

Counterexample: Well-funded hospitals have both more nurses and better tech.

Strengthen: Track outcomes as staffing changes; control case-mix/resources; instrument for staffing.

49.

Assumption: Laws cause mortality differences; states otherwise similar.

Counterexample: Culture/demographics/urbanisation/enforcement vary widely.

Strengthen: Pre/post within state; control trafficking/enforcement; use multiple violence metrics.

50.

Assumption: System type drives life expectancy; countries otherwise similar.

Counterexample: Lifestyle/diet/social supports confound comparisons.

Strengthen: Matched-country or mover studies; system transitions; examine specific quality/access metrics.



Level 4 Solutions (51–60)

51.

Assumption: Trust causes institutions/growth (not vice versa); correlation over time = causation.

Counterexample: Strong institutions and prosperity may create trust.

Strengthen: Natural experiments/instruments; track shocks to trust and subsequent outcomes; mechanism studies.

52.

Assumption: One universal mindfulness mechanism; studies comparable; little moderation by culture/individual differences.

Counterexample: Mechanisms vary by condition; effects vary by population/implementation.

Strengthen: Condition-specific mediation; network meta-analyses; moderators of benefit.

53.

Assumption: Congestion pricing works in all cities; benefits outweigh equity costs; alternatives are inadequate.

Counterexample: Limited public transport can make fees regressive.

Strengthen: Segment by city traits; equity safeguards; compare to alternative demand-management.

54.

Assumption: Pricing drives reductions across contexts; regulation vs markets are separable; observed effects not confounded.



Counterexample: Strong institutions enable both pricing and reductions; weak pricing yields little effect.

Strengthen: Quasi-experiments; heterogeneous effects; policy-mix interactions; behavioural channels.

55.

Assumption: Bilingualism (not selection) causes neural/EF differences; lab effects translate to life outcomes.

Counterexample: Pre-existing advantages and SES differences.

Strengthen: Longitudinal/twin designs; dose–response with proficiency/age of acquisition; real-world transfer tests.

56.

Assumption: Effects are uniform; costs fully accounted; teacher quality constant.

Counterexample: Reductions without enough quality teachers can backfire; other reforms may drive gains.

Strengthen: Compare cost-effectiveness to other reforms; study implementation capacity; long-run cost tracking.

57.

Assumption: Social connection itself causes health; measures capture quality, not just quantity.

Counterexample: Healthy/wealthy personalities both connect more and live longer; stressful ties can harm.

Strengthen: Causal designs (instruments/natural experiments); biological pathways; interventions that build quality ties.



58.

Assumption: Regenerative practices work everywhere, quickly, and with simultaneous benefits.

Counterexample: Transition periods may reduce yields; regional variability is large.

Strengthen: Long-term, multi-region trials; economic transition support; trade-off analyses.

59.

Assumption: Restorative justice fits all crimes/populations and protects public safety.

Counterexample: May be unsuitable for serious violent/repeat offences or where victim participation is not feasible.

Strengthen: Stratify by crime/offender; victim-choice safeguards; blended models with clear criteria.

60.

Assumption: Models predict long-run costs/benefits accurately; tech/innovation proceed as assumed; discounting/risks are set appropriately.

Counterexample: Transition shocks, uneven regional impacts, slower innovation.

Strengthen: Sensitivity analyses (discount/risk/tech paths); distributional analysis; compare multiple modelling frameworks.