

Woven baskets characterized by a particular distinctive pattern have previously been found only in the immediate vicinity of the prehistoric village of Palea and therefore were believed to have been made only by the Palean people. Recently, however, archaeologists discovered such a "Palean" basket in Lithos, an ancient village across the Brim River from Palea. The Brim River is very deep and broad, and so the ancient Paleans could have crossed it only by boat, and no Palean boats have been found. Thus it follows that the so-called Palean baskets were not uniquely Palean.

Write a response in which you discuss what specific evidence is needed to evaluate the argument and explain how the evidence would weaken or strengthen the argument.

The argument that sides with woven baskets not being uniquely Palean provides statement of the Brim river being very broad and deep, therefore suggesting that no inhabitant could have crossed the river because there were no boats. This can weaken the argument because there could have been a time when the water level was not very deep or not very broad. The sentence suggests only that the river is currently deep and broad.

Could the basket have floated across the river accidentally? Or is it a possibility that there was some sort of device similar to boats that was woven and used as a flotation device to get from one side of the river to the other? Weaving was not only a strategy for sustaining the formation of a basket but also a strategy used to create huts for shelter prior to construction of actual homes. To strengthen the argument, it will be helpful to study further the process of weaving, and for there to be more evidence of whether or not the basket could have itself floated.

There is strong evidence that the baskets are uniquely Palean because until there was one found across the river, archeologists had only found this artifact in the village's immediate vicinity. Outside of the fact that the argument states that the river could not be crossed, is there any other evidence to suggest that the palean baskets are not unique? For example, if resources on either side of the village were similar, it could be quite likely that someone who wasn't Palean could have woven a basket as well.

The following appeared as part of a letter to the editor of a scientific journal.

"A recent study of eighteen rhesus monkeys provides clues as to the effects of birth order on an individual's levels of stimulation. The study showed that in stimulating situations (such as an encounter with an unfamiliar monkey), firstborn infant monkeys produce up to twice as much of the hormone cortisol, which primes the body for increased activity levels, as do their younger siblings. Firstborn humans also produce relatively high levels of cortisol in stimulating situations (such as the return of a parent after an absence). The study also found that during pregnancy, first-time mother monkeys had higher levels of cortisol than did those who had had several offspring."

Write a response in which you discuss one or more alternative explanations that could rival the proposed explanation and explain how your explanation(s) can plausibly account for the facts presented in the argument.

An alternative that could rival the proposed explanation for individual's levels of stimulation could be the type of situation that a monkey encounters. Data around levels of stimulation in various situations, like encountering an unfamiliar monkey, encountering an unfamiliar mammal, and so on could present a different explanation. The explanation could especially be different if we take into account differing hormones and their levels when various birth orders are stimulated.

If the study found that during pregnancy, a first time mother monkey had higher levels of cortisol than did those who had several offspring, how does this relate to birth order? There is no direct relationship to the pregnant monkey's birth order. It could seem obvious that a monkey who is pregnant for the first time is more stimulated because of the changes in their body that they are experiencing for the first time.

Last, there is no relationship built in this argument around a first time mother and a first born. How is it that the first time mother and the first born baby have highest levels of Cortisol? This argument could be the strongest case because there may be a direct correlation between first time mother and first born.

The following appeared as a letter to the editor from a Central Plaza store owner.

"Over the past two years, the number of shoppers in Central Plaza has been steadily decreasing while the popularity of skateboarding has increased dramatically. Many Central Plaza store owners believe that the decrease in their business is due to the number of skateboard users in the plaza. There has also been a dramatic increase in the amount of litter and vandalism throughout the plaza. Thus, we recommend that the city prohibit skateboarding in Central Plaza. If skateboarding is prohibited here, we predict that business in Central Plaza will return to its previously high levels."

Write a response in which you discuss what questions would need to be answered in order to decide whether the recommendation is likely to have the predicted result. Be sure to explain how the answers to these questions would help to evaluate the recommendation.

In determining whether or not skateboarding should be prohibited in Central Plaza, one must question what evidence there is that skateboarding has increased dramatically? Are we physically taking count of those who are skateboarding each day? How many skateboarders are shopping as well? Were these people once shopping but are now skateboarding? If so, why? This is important to know because there could be an alternative to banning the sport and instead strategically placing a skatepark near the plaza or on the grounds, if there isn't one already, so that the activity is controlled and the skateboarders who are also customers are not turned away.

I would also like to know whether or not business was showing decrease in years prior to the increase in skateboarding. This is because there are many other factors that could come into play as to why business is now failing. Examples of questions that we would want to ask are whether or not there are other economical changes in areas surrounding the plaza and have people been increasing the amount of money they spend on online purchases for purposes of convenience? If there are other economical changes surrounding the plaza, for example so much construction is taking place that drivers are now purchasing items online as to avoid this, then of course the business will decrease.

Last, there was a point mentioned about litter and vandalism. That makes me wonder if there was in years past, when business was better, more security and personnel to care for the grounds. The word dramatic was subjectively used twice in this letter and needs to be explicitly supported with data and evidence in order to make the claim that it is indeed the skateboarders who are vandalizing the plaza.