

Daily Reading Comprehension & Critical Reasoning

Two RC passages (English-as-Language) and two CR passages (Argumentation). Read each carefully and answer based on what is stated or implied.
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PASSAGE 1 (RC) – THE COGNITIVE SCIENCE OF READING VERSUS LISTENING (EDUCATION / PSYCHOLOGY) Q1-5

READ CAREFULLY AND ANSWER Q1-5 BASED ONLY ON THE PASSAGE.

For most of human history, knowledge travelled through the air. Stories, laws, lineages and philosophies were spoken aloud, memorised by listeners, and passed onward by mouth — a transmission system so refined that the Vedic corpus survived intact across millennia of oral recitation. Reading, by contrast, is an evolutionary newcomer. Writing systems are barely five thousand years old, and widespread literacy is a child of the printing press. When neuroscientists examined how the brain processes the printed page, they discovered that no part of our cortex evolved specifically for reading; instead, reading is a hack — a repurposing of regions originally devoted to recognising faces, animals and the borders of objects. Listening draws on language circuitry that is genetically ancient and almost universally fluent.

This history has consequences for comprehension. Studies in cognitive psychology consistently find that for narrative material — fiction, biography, history told as story — reading and listening produce roughly equivalent comprehension scores. The brain converts both inputs into the same internal representation: a mental model of characters, settings and events. But for dense expository prose — a legal judgment, a technical paper, a closely reasoned philosophical argument — the gap widens sharply in favour of reading. Print allows the reader to slow down, reread a sentence, glance back at an earlier definition, and visually track the architecture of an argument across paragraphs.

A second difference is attentional. Auditory information is fleeting; the listener cannot pause to think without missing what comes next. Reading naturally invites the small acts of cognitive pause that researchers now believe are essential to deep understanding. Many adults who consume long audiobooks during commutes report excellent retention of plot but vague memory of analytical content, mirroring the laboratory findings.

The lesson is not that one medium is superior. Each suits different material — and choosing between them deliberately, rather than by habit, is a skill in itself.

1. The central argument of the passage is best captured by which of the following statements?

- A. Listening is universally superior to reading because it draws on ancient language circuitry.
- B. Reading is a recent cognitive hack that produces deeper comprehension only for dense analytical material.
- C. Print and audio are equally effective regardless of the type of content being consumed.
- D. Audiobook listeners always retain less narrative content than print readers do.

2. The word 'hack' in the first paragraph is used to mean:

- A. A clumsy or temporary workaround that lacks elegance.
- B. An ingenious repurposing of existing neural machinery for a new task.
- C. A violation of evolutionary design principles by modern culture.
- D. A piece of computer programming code metaphorically embedded in the cortex.

3. Which of the following can be most reasonably inferred from the passage?

- A. The human brain has evolved a dedicated cortical region for processing print.
- B. Audiobook listeners typically underperform print readers on plot-based questions.
- C. Skilled readers can substantially improve their comprehension of legal judgments by re-reading sentences.
- D. Oral transmission preserved the Vedic corpus mainly because writing did not yet exist.

4. The author's stance toward the choice between reading and listening can best be described as:

- A. Polemical — strongly favouring print over audio in every context.
- B. Nostalgic — mourning the decline of oral and recitative traditions.
- C. Pragmatic — urging readers to match the medium to the material.
- D. Skeptical — questioning whether either medium produces genuine understanding.

5. Which of the following findings, if true, would most weaken the author's claim about dense expository prose?

- A. Listeners of complex legal judgments retain more procedural detail than readers of the same judgments at the same speed.
- B. Listeners of narrative fiction enjoy stories more than readers do, on average.
- C. Adults with reading disabilities prefer audiobooks for all kinds of content.
- D. Audiobooks now constitute the fastest-growing segment of book publishing globally.

PASSAGE 2 (RC) – INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS AND MODERN CONSERVATION (ANTHROPOLOGY / ENVIRONMENT) Q6-10

READ CAREFULLY AND ANSWER Q6-10 BASED ONLY ON THE PASSAGE.

For two centuries the global conservation movement was framed as a project of expert science rescuing nature from the ignorance of those who lived alongside it. National parks were carved out of forests, and the people who had lived in those forests for generations were often relocated as obstacles to ecological purity. A quieter revolution is now reversing this premise. Conservation biologists increasingly recognise that the planet's surviving biodiversity is disproportionately found on lands managed by indigenous peoples — and that the ecological knowledge those communities have refined over generations is not folklore to be displaced but a serious technical resource.

A 2023 review of global protected-area outcomes found that forests under indigenous stewardship in the Amazon, Congo Basin and Southeast Asia retained, on average, higher canopy cover and higher species richness than nearby state-managed reserves. The traditional ecological knowledge — TEK — guiding these outcomes includes seasonal rules about which species may be harvested, where certain trees should not be felled, and fire regimes calibrated to landscape memory. These rules are encoded in stories, songs, taboos and customary law. Modern remote sensing now confirms what indigenous foresters have long maintained: the cool-burn patterns of Aboriginal Australian fire management produce more diverse savannas than uniform suppression.

Critics counter that romanticising indigenous knowledge risks freezing communities into static custodianship roles and ignoring that many traditional practices were themselves contested, evolving and sometimes exploitative. The serious advocates of TEK do not deny this. They argue instead that the relevant question is not whether traditional practices are perfect, but whether the scientific establishment can collaborate with knowledge-holders as equal partners — sharing data, jointly designing studies, and respecting prior informed consent.

The deeper point is that science is not the only systematic way of knowing the natural world. It is one method among others, strengthened, not weakened, when tested against the long-running natural experiments that indigenous communities have quietly run for centuries.

6. The author's principal thesis is that:

- A. Indigenous communities should be relocated from protected areas to advance conservation.
- B. Traditional ecological knowledge is a serious technical resource that should be treated as a partner to scientific conservation, not a substitute for it.
- C. Modern remote sensing has proved indigenous methods superior to every scientific conservation technique.
- D. Conservation science has failed and should be replaced entirely by indigenous custodianship.

7. The word 'taboos' is used in the passage to refer to:

- A. Politically charged ideas now considered socially offensive.
- B. Customary prohibitions encoding ecological rules within a community.
- C. Sacred texts that all members of the community must memorise.
- D. Religious laws enforced by external state or church authorities.

8. Which of the following can be inferred from the passage?

- A. State-managed reserves outperform indigenous-managed forests in canopy retention on average.
- B. Aboriginal Australian fire-management techniques are vindicated by modern remote-sensing studies.
- C. The Amazon, Congo Basin and Southeast Asia have biodiversity profiles identical to one another.
- D. Pharmaceutical companies have an unqualified right to commercialise traditional knowledge.

9. The author's attitude toward critics of TEK is best described as:

- A. Dismissive — the critics' concerns are baseless and not worth engaging.
- B. Acknowledging — the romanticisation worry is taken seriously and answered.
- C. Hostile — the critics are characterised as agents of colonial conservation.
- D. Indifferent — the critics' views are simply not engaged with by the author.

10. Which finding, if true, would most strengthen the passage's central argument?

- A. A study showing that joint management of fisheries by scientists and traditional fishers produced higher fish stocks than either approach alone.
- B. A study showing that indigenous communities prefer urban relocation to forest residence.
- C. A study showing that remote-sensing data is unreliable in tropical forest contexts.
- D. A study showing that pharmaceutical extraction from rainforests has decreased.

PASSAGE 3 (CR) — THE CASE FOR A NATIONAL WEALTH TAX (ECONOMICS / PUBLIC POLICY)

Q11-15

READ THE ARGUMENT AND ANSWER Q11-15.

A national wealth tax — an annual levy of, say, one to two per cent on the net assets of households above a high threshold — is a policy long debated in advanced economies and now beginning to surface in Indian fiscal conversations. The argument for it rests on three premises and a single conclusion.

The first premise is that wealth inequality in India has reached historically high levels. The top one per cent of Indian adults now own a share of total household wealth higher than at any point since national accounts began. The second premise is that income taxation, even when nominally progressive, captures only the flow of new earnings each year — not the existing stock of wealth that compounds invisibly through asset appreciation. The third premise is that public services on which the middle and lower-middle classes most rely — schools, hospitals, transit, social insurance — are chronically underfunded relative to peer democracies of similar per-capita income. The conclusion drawn from these premises is that a modest annual wealth tax above a high threshold, falling only on the very wealthiest, would simultaneously slow capital concentration, generate substantial revenue for public goods, and avoid significantly distorting work or saving incentives.

The proposal is not without serious objections. Critics argue that wealth taxes are notoriously difficult to administer; that they tend to be evaded through asset relocation; and that capital flight, even if small, may discourage entrepreneurship. The proponents reply that these are problems of design, not of principle: digital asset registries, third-party reporting and exit-tax provisions can substantially mitigate enforcement gaps. The modest rates contemplated — typically below the long-run real return on capital — would slow but not reverse wealth accumulation.

Whether the argument should prevail is ultimately a question of values as much as economics. But the case can no longer be dismissed as fringe.

11. Which statement is the principal conclusion of the central argument in the passage?

- A. Wealth inequality in India has reached historically high levels.
- B. A modest annual wealth tax above a high threshold would simultaneously slow capital concentration, generate revenue for public goods and avoid significant distortion of work and saving.
- C. Public services on which the middle class relies are chronically underfunded relative to peer democracies.
- D. Wealth taxes are notoriously difficult to administer in practice.

12. Which of the following is an unstated assumption on which the proponents' central argument relies?

- A. The very wealthiest households can be reliably identified and their assets accurately valued.
- B. Indian voters favour higher taxation of the rich in opinion polls.
- C. Wealth inequality is rising at the same rate in every advanced economy.
- D. Entrepreneurs always relocate to other jurisdictions when capital is taxed.

13. Which finding, if true, would most weaken the proponents' case?

- A. A peer-reviewed study showing that countries that adopted wealth taxes experienced both substantial revenue gains and an increase in entrepreneurship.
- B. A peer-reviewed study showing that even with state-of-the-art enforcement, more than half of taxable wealth migrated offshore within five years of adoption.
- C. A poll showing that the public approves of wealth taxes targeted at the very rich.
- D. A study showing that public services in India are in fact well-funded today.

14. Which finding, if true, would most strengthen the proponents' case?

- A. A long-running study showing that comparable wealth taxes in two peer economies generated 1.5% of GDP in annual revenue with negligible capital flight after enforcement reforms.
- B. Evidence that wealth taxes have been administratively difficult to enforce historically.
- C. Evidence that the top one per cent in India pay above the global average in income tax already.
- D. Evidence that public schools have improved without any additional funding.

15. The proponents' reply to the administrability objection is best characterised as:

- A. Conceding the objection but arguing that design improvements substantially mitigate it.
- B. Denying outright that the objection has any factual basis in reality.
- C. Ignoring the objection and changing the subject of the debate.
- D. Shifting the burden of proof onto the critics to disprove the proposal.

PASSAGE 4 (CR) – SHOULD AI-GENERATED CONTENT REQUIRE MANDATORY DISCLOSURE? (TECHNOLOGY / Q16–20 LAW)

READ THE ARGUMENT AND ANSWER Q16–20.

The rapid mainstreaming of generative artificial intelligence has produced a new regulatory question: should creators of AI-generated text, images and video be legally required to label that content as such? The argument for mandatory disclosure runs as follows.

First, generative models can now produce content that is, in many domains, visually or textually indistinguishable from human-authored work. Second, viewers have a long-established interest — protected by consumer-protection law in advertising, by securities law in financial disclosures, and by election law in political campaigning — in knowing the provenance of information they rely on. Third, the absence of labelling creates a market failure: honest disclosers are competitively disadvantaged because their disclosed content reads as less authoritative than undisclosed competitor content. Fourth, voluntary industry codes have so far failed to produce widespread adoption. From these premises, proponents conclude that legislation imposing a clear, machine-readable disclosure requirement on AI-generated content is justified.

The objection most commonly raised is that disclosure rules are likely to be both over- and under-inclusive. Over-inclusive because much content is produced through a continuum of human-machine collaboration in which it is unclear what counts as 'AI-generated'; under-inclusive because the most malicious uses — deepfaked election content, scam images, fake court documents — will simply violate the rule, while honest creators bear the compliance cost. The proponents reply that the same objection applies to almost every regulation of harmful conduct: traffic laws are violated by reckless drivers but still reduce reckless driving on the margin, and the existence of a clear rule shifts the legal and reputational landscape for honest actors. Machine-readable provenance is already being piloted by major model developers and camera manufacturers.

The choice ultimately turns on whether one believes a partial, imperfect rule is better than the present unregulated default.

16. Which statement is the principal conclusion of the proponents' argument?

- A. Voluntary industry codes have so far failed to produce widespread adoption of provenance metadata.
- B. Legislation imposing a clear, machine-readable disclosure requirement on AI-generated content is justified.
- C. Generative models can now produce content that is, in many domains, indistinguishable from human-authored work.
- D. Provenance metadata using embedded cryptographic signatures is technically feasible.

17. Which unstated assumption is essential to the proponents' argument?

- A. All users of generative-AI technology are fundamentally dishonest in intent.
- B. Disclosure of AI provenance materially affects how the audience evaluates a content item's reliability.
- C. Existing AI models cannot match human creativity in any domain whatsoever.
- D. The state has effectively unlimited enforcement capacity to police disclosure violations.

18. Which finding, if true, would most weaken the argument for mandatory disclosure?

- A. Empirical research showing that audiences shown identical content with and without AI labels report no measurable difference in trust, persuasion or behaviour.
- B. Evidence that AI-generated content is steadily rising in technical quality each year.
- C. Evidence that voluntary disclosure is rising organically in a few sub-sectors.
- D. Evidence that some users prefer AI-generated images for entertainment purposes.

19. Which finding, if true, would most strengthen the argument for mandatory disclosure?

- A. A study showing that audiences shown AI-labelled content adjust their reliance appropriately and that overall information quality improves in labelled markets.
- B. A study showing that AI models are improving rapidly in capability over time.
- C. A study showing that some malicious actors successfully evade labelling rules.
- D. A study showing that camera manufacturers are profitable on average.

20. The proponents' reply to the over- and under-inclusiveness objection is most analogous to which of the following arguments about traffic regulation?

- A. Speed limits should be abolished because some drivers will ignore them and honest drivers bear the inconvenience.
- B. Speed limits are worth keeping because, though violated by some, they reduce reckless driving on average and set a clear baseline of legal expectations.
- C. Speed limits should be abolished because better safety technology in modern cars makes them obsolete.
- D. Speed limits should apply only to commercial trucks, not to private cars on highways.

SECTION C — RAPID-FIRE GK & CURRENT AFFAIRS

Q21–33 · 13 Marks

Standalone questions on current affairs, static GK, vocabulary in context and idiom usage. No passage required.

21. Which Article of the Indian Constitution provides for the establishment of the Election Commission of India?

- A. Article 308
- B. Article 324
- C. Article 343
- D. Article 356

22. The 'basic structure doctrine' of the Indian Constitution was first established by the Supreme Court in which of the following landmark cases?

- A. AK Gopalan v State of Madras
- B. Kesavananda Bharati v State of Kerala
- C. Minerva Mills v Union of India
- D. Maneka Gandhi v Union of India

23. Choose the word that best fills the blank in the following sentence: 'The senator's _____ remarks during the debate damaged his reputation among moderates.'

- A. Conciliatory
- B. Inflammatory
- C. Deferential
- D. Pellucid

24. Select the word most nearly OPPOSITE in meaning to the word ABROGATE:

- A. Cancel
- B. Repeal
- C. Establish
- D. Annul

25. What does the idiom 'to call a spade a spade' mean?

- A. To speak honestly and directly without using euphemism.
- B. To accuse someone wrongly of being dishonest or evasive.
- C. To make a trivial matter sound far more important than it is.
- D. To use technical jargon to deliberately confuse a listener.

26. The Jnanpith Award, instituted in 1965 and conferred annually, is given in which field?

- A. Science and technology
- B. Literature
- C. Cinema
- D. Sports

27. Which country won the ICC Men's T20 World Cup held in June 2024 in the West Indies and the United States?

- A. Australia
- B. India
- C. England
- D. South Africa

28. Which constitutional amendment lowered the voting age in India from 21 years to 18 years?

- A. 42nd Amendment
- B. 44th Amendment
- C. 61st Amendment
- D. 73rd Amendment

29. The Tropic of Cancer passes through how many Indian states?

- A. Six
- B. Seven
- C. Eight
- D. Nine

30. What does the idiom 'to bite the bullet' mean?

- A. To act recklessly and without thought of consequence.
- B. To accept a difficult situation with stoic resolve.
- C. To make a hasty retreat from an unpleasant problem.
- D. To deceive someone deliberately for personal gain.

31. Choose the antonym of the word EPHEMERAL:

- A. Fleeting
- B. Transient
- C. Enduring
- D. Temporary

32. The Supreme Court case Vishaka v State of Rajasthan (1997) is best known for laying down which of the following?

- A. The fundamental right to privacy as part of Article 21.
- B. Guidelines against sexual harassment at the workplace.
- C. Reservation in promotions in public services for SC/ST employees.
- D. Custodial deaths and accountability of police officers.

33. Which schedule of the Indian Constitution contains the languages officially recognised by the Constitution?

- A. Sixth Schedule
- B. Seventh Schedule
- C. Eighth Schedule
- D. Ninth Schedule