

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 EPISTEMOLOGY OF EXPERT TESTIMONY IN COURTS (PHILOSOPHY OF LAW / EVIDENCE)

Q1-5

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

Courts ask experts to do something epistemically unusual: to translate domain-specific technical knowledge — DNA analysis, forensic ballistics, structural engineering, psychiatric diagnosis — into evidence that a non-expert judge or jury can use as the basis of a legally consequential finding. The transaction is mediated by procedural rules — admissibility tests, cross-examination, qualifications of the witness — that aim to filter unreliable claims while preserving access to specialist insight. What the rules cannot fully resolve is the deeper epistemological problem: how should a non-expert RATIONALLY assess a claim whose grounds she does not herself understand?

The orthodox answer relies on AUTHORITY: the trier of fact accepts the expert's claim because the expert has the credentials, the methodology and the institutional standing that mark her as reliable. This answer is necessary but incomplete. Credentials are a proxy, not a guarantee; methodologies in some fields (bite-mark analysis, certain handwriting comparisons) have been credentialled for decades and have nonetheless been found, on subsequent meta-analytic scrutiny, to be unreliable. The Daubert framework in the United States, and the parallel emphases in Indian Evidence law (now BSA, 2023), attempt to address this by asking whether the expert's METHODOLOGY itself is testable, falsifiable, and reflects accepted standards — pushing the inquiry one step deeper than mere credentials.

This still leaves a residual problem. The trier of fact assessing whether a methodology is 'testable' or 'reflects accepted standards' is herself a non-expert in the relevant field; the assessment is recursive. The pragmatic response is that courts should rely on a TRIANGULATION of indicators — credentials, methodology, peer review, error rates, and (critically) the existence of an INDEPENDENT expert community whose published critiques the court can examine. No single indicator suffices.

The applied implication for litigation is that BOTH sides should be expected to produce expert evidence — adversarial expert testimony exposes methodological assumptions in a way that a single uncontested expert cannot. Where one side cannot afford a counter-expert, the asymmetry is itself a justice concern, distinct from any concern about the substantive reliability of the testimony actually offered.

1. Which BEST captures the central epistemic problem the author identifies?

- A. How a NON-EXPERT trier of fact can rationally assess an expert claim whose grounds she does not herself understand — the assessment is recursive and no single procedural rule fully resolves it
- B. Whether experts should be cross-examined
- C. Whether DNA analysis is reliable
- D. Whether courts should use juries or judges

2. The author cites bite-mark analysis and handwriting comparisons PRIMARILY to:

- A. Argue that all forensic science is unreliable
- B. Recommend that these techniques be replaced with DNA analysis
- C. Show that CREDENTIALLED methodologies have sometimes failed subsequent meta-analytic scrutiny — credentials are a PROXY, not a GUARANTEE, and the Daubert-style methodology inquiry is needed
- D. Suggest that the Indian BSA framework is superior to Daubert

3. Which is a HIDDEN ASSUMPTION the author relies on in the third paragraph's recommendation of triangulation?

- A. That there in fact EXISTS an independent expert community in the relevant field whose published critiques the court can examine — without such a community the triangulation breaks down and the court is back to relying on the contested expert's own self-assessment
- B. That all expert fields have multiple credentialled communities
- C. That judges are themselves trained scientists
- D. That cross-examination always reveals the truth

4. On the author's framework, the justice concern raised by an inability of one side to afford a counter-expert is:

- A. Identical to the concern about reliability of the substantive testimony
- B. A separate ASYMMETRY concern — adversarial expert testimony exposes methodological assumptions a single uncontested expert cannot; resource inequality between the parties degrades the epistemic process independently of any defect in the testimony actually given
- C. Resolvable solely by requiring all experts to be court-appointed
- D. Not really a justice concern at all

5. The author's overall stance toward expert testimony is BEST described as:

- A. Procedurally engaged and pragmatic — expert testimony is indispensable; the rational use of it requires triangulation across credentials, methodology, peer review, error rates, and an independent expert community, plus adversarial testing where feasible
- B. Enthusiastic — credentialled experts are entirely reliable
- C. Skeptical — expert testimony should be excluded from courts
- D. Indifferent — the question is purely technical

PASSAGE 2 (RC) — THE ECONOMICS OF PATENT THICKETS IN PHARMACEUTICALS (ECONOMICS / IP POLICY) Q6-10

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

A patent thicket is a dense web of overlapping intellectual-property rights surrounding a single product or technological domain, such that any new entrant must navigate (and often license) multiple patents — frequently held by different rights-holders — before bringing a competing product to market. In pharmaceuticals, thickets typically arise around block-buster drugs nearing the expiry of their primary 'composition of matter' patent. The originator firm files what critics call 'EVERGREENING' patents on secondary features — new salt forms, new dosage regimens, new manufacturing processes, new combinations — that, individually or together, extend the period during which generic entry is legally or commercially impeded.

The economic case AGAINST thickets is straightforward. Generic competition is the principal mechanism by which drug prices fall toward marginal cost after the originator's initial recoupment period. A thicket that prolongs the originator's effective monopoly delays generic entry and SUSTAINS supra-competitive pricing, with welfare losses concentrated on patients and public health budgets. India's Section 3(d) of the Patents Act 1970 — refusing patents for 'mere discovery of a new form of a known substance' that does not enhance efficacy — is the leading statutory response, validated by *Novartis AG v. Union of India* (2013).

The ECONOMIC CASE FOR (some) secondary patents is also serious and less often heard. Genuine secondary innovations — improved formulations that meaningfully reduce side-effects, new dosage regimens that materially improve compliance — produce REAL therapeutic gain and warrant the patent system's reward. A statutory regime that refuses ALL secondary patents would chill that innovation. The policy challenge is therefore one of FILTRATION: identifying which secondary patents reflect genuine innovation and which are strategic extensions of monopoly.

Section 3(d)'s 'enhancement of efficacy' filter, on the *Novartis* interpretation, is a reasonable structural attempt at this filtration. Its limitation — pointed out by the patent-holder community — is that 'enhancement of efficacy' is itself contested terminology; how much enhancement, on what measure (therapeutic, pharmacokinetic, side-effect profile), and judged by whom? The best modern statements treat the filter as a workable rough cut rather than a precise instrument, and direct the harder work to a robust patent-opposition system in which independent experts and generic firms can challenge marginal secondary patents.

6. What is the author's PRIMARY argument about pharmaceutical patent thickets?

- A. Thickets impose welfare costs by delaying generic entry, but a flat ban on secondary patents would chill genuine secondary innovation — the policy challenge is FILTRATION (separating genuine from strategic secondary patents), and Section 3(d) plus a robust opposition system is a workable rough cut
- B. Patent thickets are unambiguously good for innovation
- C. All secondary patents should be abolished
- D. Section 3(d) should be repealed because it discourages investment

7. The author cites *Novartis AG v. Union of India* (2013) PRIMARILY to:

- A. Criticise the Supreme Court's reasoning
- B. Establish that Section 3(d)'s 'enhancement of efficacy' filter has been judicially validated as a structural attempt to separate strategic evergreening from genuine secondary innovation
- C. Argue that the *Novartis* judgement is binding on EU pharmaceutical regulators
- D. Recommend abolishing the patent system in pharmaceuticals

8. Which is the BEST description of the trade-off the author identifies?

- A. Access versus innovation — refusing all secondary patents would lower prices in the short run but chill genuine secondary innovation; granting all would sustain monopolies; filtration tries to do BOTH at acceptable cost
- B. Innovation versus profit — they are flatly opposed
- C. Domestic versus foreign firms — Indian firms should be favoured
- D. Process patents versus product patents

9. Which is a HIDDEN ASSUMPTION the author relies on in endorsing Section 3(d) plus opposition as a workable rough cut?

- A. That every secondary patent will be opposed by generic firms
- B. That the existing patent-opposition machinery is sufficiently resourced and independent to scrutinise secondary patents at scale — if opposition is in practice rare or under-resourced, the filtration is paper-only and the rough cut is no cut at all
- C. That Indian generic firms have unlimited capital
- D. That Indian patents are recognised in the United States

10. On the author's framework, an argument that 'all secondary patents should be granted to encourage continuous innovation' would be:

- A. Strongly endorsed
- B. Endorsed conditionally on the firm being Indian
- C. Strongly REJECTED — granting all secondary patents would sustain supra-competitive pricing past genuine monopoly periods, deferring generic entry on patents that reflect strategic extension rather than genuine therapeutic gain; the absence of filtration is what the author's analysis warns against
- D. Dismissed as irrelevant to Indian law

PASSAGE 3 (CR) — SHOULD INDIA FULLY PRIVATISE THE RAILWAYS? (PUBLIC POLICY / INFRASTRUCTURE) Q11–15

READ THE ARGUMENT AND ANSWER Q11–15.

The argument for full privatisation of Indian Railways rests on three claims commonly heard in pro-market commentary: that private ownership would force operational efficiency that the public-sector incumbent has demonstrably failed to deliver; that competition between private operators would drive down fares and improve service quality; and that the fiscal burden of cross-subsidising passenger services from freight (and from the general budget) would be eliminated. The proposal advanced here is the negative case: India should NOT fully privatise the Railways, though it should pursue carefully delimited private participation in specific segments.

Three arguments support this conclusion. First, the Railways perform a UNIVERSAL-SERVICE function that markets, left to themselves, systematically underprovide. A private operator's commercial logic will concentrate services on high-density profitable routes and reduce or abandon services on thin-density routes that connect interior and peripheral districts to the national network. The social-inclusion and national-integration value of the present network — a value that does not appear in any private balance sheet — would be eroded.

Second, the British privatisation experiment (1993-2021) is a cautionary precedent. Fares rose in real terms across most of the period; punctuality declined; the track-operator separation (Railtrack) produced costly safety failures; and the eventual renationalisation of track infrastructure and parts of the operator base under successive governments indicates that the model proved unsustainable. India's network is materially larger, denser, more socially central, and lower-fare; the structural risks would be amplified.

Third, the FREIGHT-PASSENGER CROSS-SUBSIDY that critics call 'distortive' is in fact a deliberate redistributive instrument that has made affordable mass passenger travel possible at scale. Full privatisation would unwind this cross-subsidy, and the political-economy consequence — sharp fare increases on the thin-density routes that depend most on the subsidy — is precisely the social-inclusion problem identified in argument one.

Two objections deserve engagement. The EFFICIENCY objection — that the public operator is sluggish and overstaffed — has merit but does not require full privatisation as the remedy; corporatisation under public ownership, performance-linked management contracts and the dedicated freight-corridor model (DFCC) have achieved efficiency gains without losing the universal-service mandate. The INVESTMENT objection — that the network needs private capital — also has merit but is addressable through targeted public-private partnerships on rolling stock, station modernisation and dedicated freight corridors, not through wholesale ownership transfer.

11. What is the MAIN CONCLUSION of the argument?

- A. Indian Railways should be fully privatised immediately
- B. Indian Railways should be fully nationalised with no private participation
- C. India should NOT fully privatise the Railways; the universal-service mandate, the British cautionary precedent, and the freight-passenger cross-subsidy together justify continued public ownership, while DELIMITED private participation in rolling stock, station modernisation and dedicated freight corridors is appropriate
- D. Indian Railways should be sold to foreign operators only

12. Consider the following argument: 'Many city bus services have been deregulated and fares rose afterward. Therefore, deregulating any public utility will raise fares.' Which of the author's premises is PARALLEL in structure (single-case extrapolation to a general conclusion) to this bus argument?

- A. The second argument — about the British privatisation experiment — appears parallel in citing a single national experiment as the basis for caution about a different national network; whether the parallel constitutes a flaw depends on whether the structural similarities (network density, social centrality) make the cross-case inference rationally supported, which is the author's own claim
- B. The first argument — about universal service — does NOT exhibit this single-case extrapolation; it argues from a structural feature of markets, not from a single case
- C. The third argument — about cross-subsidy — exhibits no single-case extrapolation
- D. The response to the investment objection exhibits the parallel

13. Which of the following, if true, MUST be true given the author's first argument (universal service)?

- A. Private operators are inherently dishonest
- B. All public services should be permanently public
- C. If a private operator's commercial logic systematically prioritises high-density routes, THEN absent counter-regulation the thin-density routes will be reduced or abandoned — an inference following directly from the premise about market provision of universal-service goods
- D. Indian Railways currently makes a profit

14. Which would STRENGTHEN the author's argument EXCEPT?

- A. Comparative evidence that other large-network privatisations (Japan, Argentina) also produced fare increases or service contraction in thin-density regions
- B. Evidence that the dedicated freight-corridor model (DFCC) has produced efficiency gains under public ownership comparable to private-operator benchmarks
- C. Detailed analysis showing the cross-subsidy is essential to maintaining service in interior districts of states with low average incomes
- D. Evidence that, post-2021 renationalisation, Britain's renationalised rail has performed WORSE on every measure than the privatised period — punctuality lower, fares higher, safety incidents up

15. Which is a PARALLEL FLAW that one MIGHT (mistakenly) attribute to the author's second argument (British experiment)?

- A. Begging the question
- B. Appeal to authority
- C. Genetic fallacy
- D. HASTY GENERALISATION (inferring a general truth from one case); on inspection, the author argues that the structural similarities between Britain's privatised network and India's network — network density, social centrality, lower fares in India — make the cross-case inference rationally supported, and the author EXPLICITLY says India's network is 'materially larger, denser, more socially central' suggesting the inference is qualified rather than blindly extrapolated, so the parallel flaw does not in fact apply with full force

PASSAGE 4 (CR) — SHOULD PUBLIC BROADCASTERS BE FUNDED BY A HOUSEHOLD LEVY? (MEDIA POLICY / Q16–20 PUBLIC GOODS)

READ THE ARGUMENT AND ANSWER Q16–20.

The proposal advanced here is that India's public broadcasters — Prasar Bharati (Doordarshan and All India Radio) — be funded primarily through a MANDATORY HOUSEHOLD LEVY collected from television-owning households, on the model long operated by the BBC in the United Kingdom and by ARD/ZDF in Germany. The current funding mix — combining government grants, modest commercial revenue and indirect cross-subsidy — has produced chronic underfunding, advertiser-dependence on the commercial side, and the perennial political vulnerability that comes with grant-dependence on the government of the day.

Three arguments support this conclusion. First, a household levy DECOUPLES funding from the government of the day. Where the broadcaster depends on annual grant negotiations with the ministry, editorial pressure — overt or subtle — follows. A levy collected by a statutory authority on a fixed formula, with renewal subject to parliamentary review at long intervals rather than annual ministerial discretion, materially strengthens editorial independence. The BBC's structural independence is built on this funding model.

Second, a levy avoids the advertiser-distortion that pure commercial funding produces. Public broadcasters chasing advertising revenue replicate the programming priorities of commercial broadcasters — entertainment-heavy, ratings-driven — and underprovide the educational, regional-language, agricultural and public-information content that justifies their public mandate in the first place. A levy supports the distinctive mandate.

Third, a levy is more **EQUITABLE** than the alternatives commonly proposed. General taxation funds public broadcasting from the unwilling and the non-users (those who do not own televisions). A targeted levy on television-owning households is, by contrast, broadly aligned with use; exemptions can be designed for BPL households, single-pensioner households, and similar categories that protect equity at the margin.

Two objections deserve engagement. The **COLLECTION-COST** objection — that household-by-household levy collection is administratively expensive — has merit but is addressable through the discoms' existing electricity-billing infrastructure (a small surcharge on electricity bills for households declaring TV ownership) and through digital declaration platforms. The **CHOICE** objection — that households without interest in public broadcasting should not be compelled to pay — has more force, and the proposal therefore retains the BPL and single-pensioner exemptions and considers a means-tested rebate for low-use households, while accepting that some compulsion is intrinsic to the public-good logic of broadcasting that the proposal embraces.

16. What is the MAIN CONCLUSION of the argument?

- A. Prasar Bharati should be privatised
- B. Prasar Bharati should be funded entirely through commercial advertising
- C. Prasar Bharati should be funded primarily through a **MANDATORY HOUSEHOLD LEVY** collected from television-owning households, with exemptions for BPL and single-pensioner households and means-tested rebates, on the BBC / ARD-ZDF model
- D. Prasar Bharati should be folded into the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

17. Which of the following, if true, MUST be true given the author's FIRST argument (decoupling)?

- A. All ministers are corrupt
- B. Annual grant negotiations always produce editorial bias
- C. **IF** the broadcaster's funding depends on annual ministerial discretion, **THEN** editorial pressure — overt or subtle — is materially more likely than under a fixed-formula levy renewed at long intervals; the inference follows directly from the premise about funding-dependence and pressure
- D. The BBC has zero editorial bias

18. Consider the following argument: 'Many people object to property tax. Therefore, property tax should be abolished.' Which of the author's responses BEST illustrates the same flawed pattern (treating mere objection as decisive ground for abolition)?

- A. The author's response to the **CHOICE** objection — which expressly **REJECTS** the pattern by treating choice-based objection as having force but not decisive force, retaining the levy with calibrated exemptions and accepting that some compulsion is intrinsic to the public-good logic; thus the author's response does **NOT** exhibit the pattern, and the parallel flaw question is testing whether students can identify a response that pre-empts rather than commits the flaw
- B. The first argument (decoupling)
- C. The second argument (advertiser-distortion)
- D. The third argument (equity)

19. Which would STRENGTHEN the author's argument EXCEPT?

- A. Comparative evidence that BBC and ARD/ZDF score higher than commercially-funded broadcasters on editorial-independence indices
- B. Detailed analysis showing that programming priorities of public broadcasters chasing advertising revenue measurably converge with those of commercial broadcasters
- C. Evidence that household electricity-billing platforms have been used successfully for low-cost statutory collections in two large Indian states
- D. Evidence from BBC's recent funding crisis that household-levy models systematically produce **LOWER** editorial independence than government-grant models because levies become politically contested at renewal

20. Which inference about the author's view CAN be drawn from the exemptions the author concedes (BPL, single-pensioner, means-tested rebate)?

- A. The author opposes the levy
- B. The author treats the levy as the **DEFAULT** but recognises calibrated equity exceptions at the margins where the burden would be regressive — the exemptions are designed to **PROTECT** the levy by addressing the most compelling equity counter-cases, consistent with the proposal's targeting-by-use logic
- C. The author wants public broadcasting abolished
- D. The author is indifferent to equity

SECTION C — RAPID-FIRE GK & CURRENT AFFAIRS

Q21–22 · 2 Marks

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

21. Under the Constitution, the procedure for impeachment of the President is laid down in:

- A. Article 56
- B. Article 124
- C. Article 74
- D. Article 61

22. Choose the word CLOSEST in meaning to: 'perfunctory'.

- A. Careless or done as a routine duty without genuine attention
- B. Thorough
- C. Elaborate
- D. Anxious