

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.
Free daily practice — clatgurukul.com/daily · Pass this sheet to a friend.

PASSAGE 1 (RC) – ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE: THE SLOW PANDEMIC (PUBLIC HEALTH / POLICY)

Q1-5

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

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR), often described by global health bodies as the slow pandemic, is the silent erosion of one of the most consequential gifts of twentieth-century medicine: the antibiotic. When Alexander Fleming first observed penicillin's antibacterial action in 1928, neither he nor his contemporaries could have foreseen that scarcely a century later, the World Health Organisation would warn of a return to a pre-antibiotic era, in which routine surgical procedures, common infections, and even childbirth could once again become matters of grave mortality.

The biology of resistance is, in truth, neither new nor surprising. Bacteria, fungi, viruses and parasites mutate in response to selection pressure, and the indiscriminate use of antimicrobials creates precisely such pressure. The pathogens that survive an antibiotic course are, almost by definition, those carrying genetic variations that confer some resistance. Over time, these resistant strains proliferate, spread, and exchange resistance genes through horizontal transfer. What is new is the velocity at which this evolutionary arms race has been compressed, accelerated by overprescription in human medicine, by the prophylactic use of antibiotics in industrial livestock farming, and by the dumping of pharmaceutical effluents into rivers in countries where regulation is weak.

The Indian subcontinent is at the epicentre of this crisis. Studies published in *The Lancet* have estimated that AMR contributed to nearly three lakh deaths in India in a single recent year. Pathogens such as *Klebsiella pneumoniae* carrying carbapenemase enzymes are now endemic in many tertiary hospitals. The very phrase carbapenem-resistant Enterobacteriaceae, once an exotic specialist's concern, is now part of routine intensive-care vocabulary.

Yet policy responses remain fragmentary. India's National Action Plan on AMR, first issued in 2017, set ambitious surveillance and stewardship targets, but implementation has been hobbled by the divided jurisdiction between human health, animal husbandry, and environmental regulation. Critics have noted that no country can win the AMR battle alone; the genes that confer resistance travel freely on a globalised planet, in patients, in food chains, and in microbiome cargo no border guard can detect.

1. In the passage, the phrase 'evolutionary arms race' most nearly refers to:

- A. A literal armaments competition between countries developing biological weapons.
- B. The continuous mutation of pathogens in response to the selection pressure exerted by antimicrobials.
- C. A government policy programme aimed at developing newer antibiotics within a stipulated time.
- D. The growing rivalry between pharmaceutical companies to patent the next generation of drugs.

2. Which of the following best captures the central idea of the passage?

- A. Antibiotics should be banned worldwide to slow the emergence of resistant pathogens.
- B. AMR is an accelerating global crisis driven by misuse across human, animal and environmental sectors, demanding coordinated, cross-jurisdictional action.
- C. The Indian National Action Plan on AMR has been an unqualified success and should serve as a template for other countries.
- D. Alexander Fleming's discovery of penicillin was a mistake that humanity now has to undo.

3. It can be inferred from the passage that the author considers India's policy response to AMR to be:

- A. Adequate but under-funded.
- B. Comprehensive and globally exemplary.
- C. Well-intentioned in design but undermined in implementation by jurisdictional fragmentation.
- D. Entirely absent, with no national plan in place.

4. The author's tone in the passage may be best described as:

- A. Sensationalist and alarmist
- B. Sober, analytical and quietly urgent
- C. Detached and indifferent
- D. Celebratory and triumphalist

5. Which of the following, if true, would most weaken the author's argument that AMR is a global crisis demanding coordinated international action?

- A. A study confirming that resistant strains can travel internationally through food and patient movement within weeks.
- B. Robust evidence that resistance genes cannot survive outside their host bacteria for more than a few minutes and never cross national borders.
- C. A new WHO report documenting rising AMR-related deaths across six continents.
- D. Evidence that pharmaceutical effluent regulation in India has weakened over the last decade.

PASSAGE 2 (RC) – THE QUIET REVIVAL OF VERNACULAR THEATRE IN POST-PANDEMIC INDIA (ARTS / CULTURE)

Q6-10

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

For a brief, eerie season after the COVID-19 lockdowns lifted, India's vernacular theatre seemed certain to die. Auditoria in Mumbai's Prithvi, in Kolkata's Academy of Fine Arts, in Thiruvananthapuram's Tagore Centenary Hall stood dark for months. Productions long in rehearsal were shelved. A generation of theatre practitioners drifted into freelance video work, dubbing, or unrelated employment. Yet, paradoxically, the very years in which the form was pronounced moribund have proved to be the years of its quiet, sinewy renewal.

The revival has not arrived in grand metropolitan revivals of canonical playwrights. It has arrived, instead, in small towns: in Aurangabad's Marathi adaptations of Latin American magic realism; in Imphal's Manipuri productions wrestling with the wounds of insurgency; in Madurai's Tamil theatre collectives staging plays inside disused textile mills. The audiences, often numbering only sixty or seventy at a time, sit on stacked crates. Tickets are sold on WhatsApp groups. Sets are improvised from whatever the venue offers. And yet the work, by general critical assent, has been some of the most honest theatre India has produced in a generation.

What explains this counter-intuitive flourishing? Several factors converge. The pandemic exposed the fragility of large-scale productions financed by sponsorship; the new wave is deliberately lean, distrustful of grants, suspicious of star casting. The diaspora of artists into adjacent fields cross-pollinated theatre with cinema, with podcast craft, with poetry slams. State arts academies, reduced in budget but freed of bureaucratic baggage, have begun to support residencies rather than annual festivals.

Not all is well, of course. The economic precarity of theatre practitioners remains acute; venues outside metros are scarce; translation between Indian languages, vital for circulation, is poorly funded. But the texture of conversation around vernacular theatre has shifted. Where five years ago one spoke of decline, today one speaks of which young director's next production to attend.

6. The word 'sinewy' as used in the first paragraph most nearly means:

- A. Fragile and decorative
- B. Lean, tough and tenacious
- C. Lavish and grandiose
- D. Pretentious and self-important

7. Which of the following best states the main idea of the passage?

- A. Indian vernacular theatre died after the pandemic and has not recovered.
- B. Despite the pandemic's blow, Indian vernacular theatre is undergoing a lean, decentralised, small-town revival shaped by improvisation and cross-disciplinary cross-pollination.
- C. Government grants are essential to sustain vernacular theatre in India.
- D. Indian theatre will survive only if it abandons regional languages and adopts English.

8. Which of the following can be inferred about the audiences of the new vernacular theatre described in the passage?

- A. They are largely state-sponsored and consist of bureaucrats and academics.
- B. They are small, niche, often informally mobilised, and willing to attend non-traditional venues.
- C. They are made up exclusively of theatre practitioners themselves, with no general public.
- D. They are predominantly international tourists curious about Indian culture.

9. The author's attitude towards the new wave of vernacular theatre is best described as:

- A. Sceptical and dismissive of its long-term significance.
- B. Cautiously hopeful while acknowledging persistent structural challenges.
- C. Uncritically euphoric, ignoring all difficulties.
- D. Hostile to its small-scale and improvisational character.

10. Which of the following, if true, would most strengthen the author's claim that the new vernacular theatre is a genuine revival rather than a fleeting bubble?

- A. A finding that ticket revenues across small-town vernacular productions have grown steadily for three consecutive years.
- B. Evidence that most of the new directors return to dubbing and freelance video within twelve months.
- C. A report that audiences are declining year-on-year across small-town productions.
- D. A statement by a metropolitan critic that the old playwrights remain superior.

PASSAGE 3 (CR) – SHOULD INDIA ADOPT A UNIFORM CIVIL CODE? (CONSTITUTIONAL / SOCIAL POLICY)

Q11–15

READ THE ARGUMENT AND ANSWER Q11–15.

Article 44 of the Constitution directs the State to endeavour to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India. Seventy-five years after the Constitution's commencement, the debate over its enactment has lost none of its intensity. The argument in favour, advanced principally on grounds of equality and constitutional secularism, runs as follows.

First, the present system of personal laws — different rules for marriage, divorce, succession, adoption and maintenance for Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Parsis — is inconsistent with the constitutional guarantee of equality before the law in Article 14. Equality cannot be selective; a citizen's entitlement to fair treatment cannot turn on the religious community into which she was born. Second, the persistence of religion-based personal law has, in practice, operated to the disadvantage of women within several communities. A common civil code, drafted from a rights-first perspective, would secure uniform protection of women's economic and bodily autonomy. Third, in a plural society such as India's, a shared civil code would foster a thicker citizenship: a common legal grammar that binds Indians across faiths without coercing religious belief itself, since the right to worship, propagate and practise one's faith under Articles 25–28 would remain untouched.

The proponents anticipate the principal objection — that a uniform civil code is incompatible with religious freedom and threatens the cultural autonomy of minority communities. To this they answer that a civil code regulates only the public, secular incidents of family life: who may marry, how property devolves, how custody is decided. It does not, and need not, prescribe how a community prays, what scriptures it studies, or which rituals it celebrates. Hindu law itself, the proponents note, was substantially reformed by Parliament in 1955 without dismantling Hindu religious practice; there is no reason a thoughtful uniform code could not do the same across communities, especially if drafted through wide consultation rather than imposition.

11. Which of the following best states the principal conclusion the author of the passage is arguing for?

- A. India should immediately abolish all religious practice in the public sphere.
- B. India should enact a uniform civil code that regulates the secular incidents of family life across communities.
- C. India should retain the present system of separate personal laws indefinitely.
- D. Article 44 should be deleted from the Constitution.

12. Which of the following is an UNSTATED ASSUMPTION on which the author's argument depends?

- A. A uniform civil code can be designed in a manner that does not, in fact, regulate religious belief or worship.
- B. All citizens of India already agree on the contents of an ideal personal law.
- C. Article 44 has already been judicially held to be enforceable as a fundamental right.
- D. The judiciary has no role in interpreting personal laws.

13. Which of the following, if true, would most WEAKEN the author's argument?

- A. Empirical studies showing that, in practice, a uniform civil code cannot be drafted without prescribing rules that materially alter core religious rituals across at least one community.
- B. Evidence that Hindu personal law was reformed in 1955 without significant disruption to religious practice.
- C. A statement by a constitutional scholar that Article 14 protects formal equality.
- D. A survey showing that most citizens have not read the Constitution.

14. Which of the following, if true, would most STRENGTHEN the author's argument?

- A. Evidence that comparable plural democracies have successfully introduced uniform civil codes through wide consultation without religious disenfranchisement.
- B. A judgment holding that all directive principles are non-justiciable.
- C. Evidence that personal laws have always been entirely consistent with Article 14.
- D. A poll showing that very few citizens have any opinion on the matter.

15. Which of the following is a flaw in the author's reasoning, if any?

- A. The author conflates legal regulation of secular incidents with regulation of religious belief, but explicitly distinguishes them, so no such conflation occurs.
- B. The author argues from the analogy of Hindu law reform without examining whether the political and historical conditions of that reform are reproducible across all other communities today.
- C. The author denies that women are disadvantaged by personal laws, which is unsupported.
- D. The author argues that Article 44 is a fundamental right, which is incorrect.

PASSAGE 4 (CR) – SHOULD SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS BE TREATED AS PUBLISHERS? (TECHNOLOGY / LAW)

Q16–20

READ THE ARGUMENT AND ANSWER Q16–20.

For two decades, intermediaries such as Facebook, YouTube and X have enjoyed, across most jurisdictions, a safe-harbour exemption from liability for content posted by their users. The rationale, codified in India by Section 79 of the Information Technology Act 2000 and famously articulated abroad in Section 230 of the United States Communications Decency Act, was that platforms were mere conduits — they neither generated nor curated the content that flowed through them, and to hold them liable as publishers would chill online speech and impose impossible policing burdens. That rationale, however, was forged in an internet of bulletin boards and static web pages. It no longer fits the present.

The argument for now treating large platforms as publishers proceeds in three steps. First, modern platforms do not merely host content; their algorithms actively rank, recommend and amplify it. When a piece of content reaches a million users, it does so because the platform's recommendation engine decided that it should. That editorial choice is functionally indistinguishable from the choice a newspaper editor makes in selecting which story leads the front page; both shape what the public sees. Second, the economic model of platforms — micro-targeted advertising priced against engagement — creates a structural incentive to amplify precisely the most inflammatory, false or polarising content, because such content drives the engagement that drives revenue. Third, the harms thus inflicted are no longer theoretical. Empirical studies, including those documented by the Reuters Institute and India's own Observer Research Foundation, link algorithmic amplification of communal misinformation to incidents of mob violence in several Indian states between 2018 and 2024.

If editorial choice and economic incentive together produce real-world harm, the legal architecture must reflect that reality. The traditional conduit defence — applicable to the platform that merely stores a user's video without any algorithmic decision — should remain. But where a platform algorithmically amplifies content to mass audiences, it should be held to the same liability standard as a publisher: a duty of reasonable care, with safe-harbour limited to content the platform demonstrably did not amplify.

16. Which of the following best states the principal conclusion of the author's argument?

- A. All social media platforms should be banned in India.
- B. Large social media platforms should lose their safe-harbour protection in respect of content they algorithmically amplify and should bear a publisher's duty of reasonable care in such cases.
- C. Section 79 of the IT Act should remain wholly untouched.
- D. Newspaper editors should adopt the operational practices of social media platforms.

17. Which of the following is an essential UNSTATED ASSUMPTION on which the author's argument depends?

- A. An algorithmic choice to amplify content is, in morally and legally relevant respects, comparable to an editorial choice to publish it.
- B. All social media users are themselves publishers.
- C. Newspapers have no advertising revenue.
- D. All algorithmically amplified content is, by definition, false.

18. Which of the following, if true, would most WEAKEN the author's argument?

- A. Robust empirical evidence that algorithmic amplification, as deployed by major platforms, does not in fact differentially favour inflammatory or false content over neutral content, when controlled for user interest.
- B. Evidence that Reuters Institute studies have documented harm linked to algorithmic amplification.
- C. Evidence that platforms earn revenue from advertising.
- D. A statement that Section 230 was passed in the United States.

19. Which of the following, if true, would most **STRENGTHEN** the author's argument?

- A. Internal platform documents disclosed in litigation showing that engineers identified inflammatory amplification, predicted real-world harm, and deliberately chose not to modify the algorithm because the change would reduce ad revenue.
- B. Evidence that platforms have, on occasion, taken down individual posts when notified by users.
- C. A statement that the Internet has many users.
- D. A finding that some users post on small bulletin boards.

20. Which of the following best identifies the structure of the author's argument?

- A. Analogy alone: platforms are like newspapers, therefore they must be regulated identically in every respect.
- B. Functional comparison plus empirical claim: platforms make editorial-like choices and earn revenue from amplification, and these choices have produced documented harm; therefore the legal standard should change for the amplification function.
- C. Pure deduction from constitutional text without reference to empirical claims.
- D. Appeal to authority alone, citing only Section 79 of the IT Act.

SECTION C — RAPID-FIRE GK & CURRENT AFFAIRS

Q21–30 · 10 Marks

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

21. Which Indian state, in early 2026, became the first to operationalise a state-level Climate Adaptation Mission with statutory backing?

- A. Sikkim
- B. Tamil Nadu
- C. Kerala
- D. Mizoram

22. The Booker Prize 2025 was awarded to David Szalay for which of the following novels?

- A. 'Flesh'
- B. 'Orbital'
- C. 'The Bee Sting'
- D. 'Prophet Song'

23. Choose the word that is most nearly **OPPOSITE** in meaning to the word in capitals: **ECLECTIC**

- A. Diverse
- B. Catholic
- C. Narrow
- D. Inclusive

24. Choose the option that best completes the sentence: The minister's reply was so ___ that journalists left the press conference more confused than when they had arrived.

- A. lucid
- B. perspicuous
- C. opaque
- D. candid

25. Identify the meaning of the idiom: 'to throw down the gauntlet'.

- A. To beg for mercy
- B. To issue a challenge
- C. To surrender unconditionally
- D. To celebrate a victory loudly

26. Which Article of the Constitution of India provides for the abolition of untouchability and forbids its practice in any form?

- A. Article 14
- B. Article 15
- C. Article 17
- D. Article 23

27. The doctrine of 'basic structure' of the Constitution was first authoritatively laid down by the Supreme Court of India in which case?

- A. Golak Nath v. State of Punjab (1967)
- B. Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala (1973)
- C. Minerva Mills v. Union of India (1980)
- D. Indira Nehru Gandhi v. Raj Narain (1975)

28. India's first indigenously designed and built nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine, commissioned into active service, is named:

- A. INS Vikrant
- B. INS Arihant
- C. INS Chakra
- D. INS Vagir

29. Which one of the following Indian classical dance forms originated in the temple traditions of Odisha?

- A. Kuchipudi
- B. Mohiniyattam
- C. Odissi
- D. Sattriya

30. The Reserve Bank of India's principal policy rate, used to signal the stance of monetary policy, is known as the:

- A. Bank Rate
- B. Reverse Repo Rate
- C. Marginal Standing Facility Rate
- D. Repo Rate