

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) — INDIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC MEETS THE STREAMING ALGORITHM

Q1-5

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

For most of the twentieth century, Indian classical music was disseminated through a patient apprenticeship model. A raga was learned over years inside a guru's home; recordings, when they existed, were treated as poor cousins of the live concert. Streaming platforms — first digital storefronts, then algorithmically-curated infinite playlists — have compressed that timeline radically. A listener in Bhopal can today summon a Kishori Amonkar recording of Bhoop in seconds, follow it with a Rashid Khan Yaman, and round off the evening with a Carnatic violin alapana, all without leaving the sofa.

The convenience is real, but the consequences for the form are unsettled. Streaming services optimise for retention, and their algorithms have learned that most listeners drop off when a recording exceeds a certain length. The result is quiet pressure on younger artists to truncate the alap, the slow meditation on a raga's mood that musicians have long regarded as the highest test of imagination. A forty-minute alap on a concert stage is praised as immersive; the same forty minutes at the start of a streaming recording is described in internal platform documents as a 'high-skip risk segment'.

There is, however, a counter-trend. Several specialist platforms founded by musicians and rasikas (connoisseurs) have begun curating long-form recordings deliberately. They market not the convenience of the format but its difficulty — the idea that surrendering an hour to a single raga is itself an act of cultural resistance. Whether this niche can sustain itself commercially is unclear; the audience, by definition, is smaller than the audience that wants three-minute pop songs.

What seems certain is that the algorithm is now a participant in the form's evolution. The musicians who shape the next generation of classical practice will do so partly in dialogue with — and partly in defiance of — the listening habits the streaming era has manufactured.

1. According to the passage, the principal pressure that streaming platforms exert on classical recordings is to:
 - A. Eliminate the alap from new recordings, replaced by pop-length tracks.
 - B. Truncate alaps; algorithms tag them as 'high-skip risk segments'.
 - C. Force musicians to perform live only, not record any new music.
 - D. Standardise raga performances so one algorithm recommends worldwide.
2. The phrase 'an act of cultural resistance', as used in the third paragraph, most nearly means:
 - A. Refusal of streaming's convenience logic, defending older listening.
 - B. Formal political protest by classical bodies against streaming rules.
 - C. Commercial strategy to charge premium fees branding it as luxury.
 - D. Older musicians stopping younger artists from recording digitally.
3. Which of the following best describes the author's overall stance?
 - A. Cautiously balanced — convenience noted, form-pressure flagged.
 - B. Wholly condemnatory — streaming has destroyed classical music form.
 - C. Wholly celebratory — streaming as unmitigated democratisation now.
 - D. Indifferent — reports trends without any evaluative judgment at all.
4. The author mentions specialist niche platforms in order to:
 - A. Argue the future lies in state subsidy, not market-based platforms.
 - B. Suggest mainstream streaming will be replaced by niche platforms now.
 - C. Illustrate counter-trend exists, sustainability unclear.
 - D. Show older musicians rejected platforms for concert halls only here.
5. Which of the following, if true, would most weaken the author's claim that the algorithm is now 'a participant in the form's evolution'?
 - A. Younger musicians say they ignore streaming retention data entirely.
 - B. Streaming has raised long-form classical's share in featured playlists.
 - C. A new generation of rasikas now also attends live concerts in numbers.
 - D. A senior musician publicly criticised platforms at a recent festival.

PASSAGE 2 (RC) — THE ECONOMICS OF WATER MARKETS IN ARID REGIONS

Q6-10

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

Where water is scarce, the question of how to allocate it is older than economics. For centuries the answer in most arid regions — including parts of western India — was customary: village panchayats, irrigation cooperatives and informal user associations rationed water by traditions of seniority, family-share and reciprocal exchange. In the second half of the twentieth century, a different idea began to circulate among development economists: that water should be treated as a tradeable commodity, with formal markets setting its price.

The argument for water markets is simple and powerful. When water is free, or priced below its scarcity value, it is wasted. Farmers grow water-hungry crops where they should not be grown. Industries flush aquifer water through processes that could be redesigned to consume far less. A properly functioning market sends a signal: the high price tells everyone simultaneously that the resource is scarce and that they should economise. Markets in water rights in parts of Australia and the western United States are often cited as models, with proponents claiming they have reduced over-extraction and reallocated water from low-value to high-value uses.

The argument against is that water is not an ordinary commodity. It is necessary for life. A market price for water bears down hardest on those least able to pay – the smallholder farmer, the daily-wage labourer, the rural household that cannot afford a tanker. Even if aggregate efficiency rises, the distributional consequences may be intolerable. Critics also point out that water markets have often concentrated rights in a small number of large agribusinesses, who buy out smallholder allocations during dry years at distress prices.

The deeper difficulty is that water sits at the intersection of three categories ordinary economic theory keeps separate: a commodity (you can ship it), a public good (everyone needs it), and a sacred resource (in many cultures, rivers are revered, not bought). Designing a system that respects all three is harder than designing one that treats water as any of them alone.

6. The principal argument the passage attributes to proponents of water markets is that:

- A. Free water prevents waste; users feel a moral duty to economise it.
- B. Market price signals scarcity, reallocating to high-value uses elsewhere.
- C. Customary panchayat systems are corrupt; must be wholly replaced now.
- D. Water exported via centrally-planned national grid.

7. Which of the following best captures the author's view of water markets?

- A. Unqualified endorsement of water markets as the only allocator.
- B. Unqualified rejection of markets as a Western neoliberal idea.
- C. Balanced – efficiency noted, distributional consequences flagged.
- D. Water as sacred only, removed from any economic analysis whatever.

8. According to the passage, which of the following is the deepest difficulty in designing a water allocation system?

- A. Water sits at the intersection of commodity, public good and sacred.
- B. Water markets have failed everywhere; no working models exist.
- C. Customary systems collapsed; no institutional memory survives.
- D. International law forbids water markets, mandating state monopoly.

9. The author's mention of Australia and the western United States serves to:

- A. Argue India should adopt their models without modification soon.
- B. Illustrate the proponents' case while leaving working open.
- C. Demonstrate water-market experiments have universally failed there.
- D. Establish future designs must be drafted by their economists only.

10. Which of the following, if true, would most strengthen the critics' case against water markets?

- A. Smallholder allocations bought out at distress prices in dry years.
- B. Customary panchayat systems are seen as fair by village folk widely.
- C. Household water-demand elasticity is very low; use stays high.
- D. Drip-irrigation has reduced water needed for water-hungry crops here.

PASSAGE 3 (CR) — SHOULD INDIA INTRODUCE A WEALTH TAX ON THE TOP 1%?

Q11-15

READ THE ARGUMENT AND ANSWER Q11-15.

Editorial Argument: India should introduce an annual wealth tax of 2% on the net wealth of individuals with assets exceeding ₹50 crore.

First, wealth inequality in India has reached extreme levels. The top 1% now owns more than 40% of national wealth, while the bottom 50% owns less than 3%. This concentration is corrosive to democratic politics: it gives a small group disproportionate influence over public policy, media ownership and electoral outcomes. A wealth tax would compress the top of the distribution and fund expanded public investment in school education and primary healthcare for the bottom half.

Second, India already taxes consumption (GST), income and capital gains. But the very wealthy can – and often do – structure their affairs so they realise very little taxable income while their underlying wealth compounds untaxed. A wealth tax catches what other taxes miss.

Third, recent international experience offers useful lessons. Spain, Norway and Switzerland all operate forms of wealth tax without the catastrophic capital flight that opponents predict. The administrative challenges of valuation are real but manageable; tax administrations have valued real estate, listed shares and private business interests for decades.

The critics offer two main objections. They argue that wealth taxes have been repealed in many European countries (France in 2018, Germany in 1997) because of administrative complexity and capital flight. They also argue that India had a wealth tax until 2015, abolished because it collected very little relative to its compliance burden. Neither objection, the editorial concludes, is ultimately decisive on the merits of the question. The earlier Indian wealth tax exempted most productive assets and applied at a relatively low rate from a low threshold value; the proposed new tax, by contrast, would apply only above ₹50 crore at a meaningful rate, capturing precisely the segment where wealth concentration is most acute in the present distribution.

11. Which of the following is the main conclusion of the editorial?

- A. India should levy a 2% wealth tax on net wealth above ₹50 crore.
- B. Inequality is corrosive and must be addressed by schools/health.
- C. The 2015-repealed wealth tax should be reinstated in its old form.
- D. European countries should reintroduce their abolished wealth taxes.

12. The editorial's argument that the very wealthy can structure their affairs so that they realise little taxable income relies on which unstated assumption?

- A. Income-tax admin is too corrupt; wealth tax avoids that issue.
- B. Income-wealth gap at the top is large enough to raise real revenue.
- C. Capital gains tax is zero on shares, real estate and business.
- D. The wealthy will voluntarily declare assets; no enforcement needed.

13. The editorial's response to the European-repeal objection works by:

- A. Concede repeals but cite Spain, Norway, Switzerland counter-cases.
- B. Dispute the claim that France abolished its wealth tax in 2018.
- C. Argue European tax administrations are weaker than India's anyway.
- D. Assert capital flight is impossible under modern FX controls.

14. Which of the following, if true, would most weaken the editorial's argument?

- A. Inequality has fallen modestly over the past five years, not risen.
- B. Tax bodies have valued realty, shares, businesses for decades.
- C. Simulation predicts 30% drop in ultra-wealthy equity in 2 years.
- D. School and primary-health investment is already adequately financed.

15. The editorial distinguishes the proposed wealth tax from the earlier Indian wealth tax (repealed 2015) primarily by:

- A. Higher ₹50 cr threshold + meaningful rate target acute concentration.
- B. A different tax authority would run it, separate from income-tax.
- C. Exempt all financial assets and apply only to immovable property.
- D. Voluntary, a self-declared nation-building contribution by donors.

PASSAGE 4 (CR) — SHOULD AI-GENERATED CONTENT REQUIRE MANDATORY WATERMARKING?

Q16–20

READ THE ARGUMENT AND ANSWER Q16–20.

Policy Argument: All AI-generated text, images, audio and video distributed in India should carry a mandatory machine-readable watermark identifying the underlying model and the date of generation. Failure should attract civil penalties, with criminal liability reserved for cases where absence of a watermark is used to mislead in elections, financial markets or judicial proceedings.

The volume of AI-generated content has grown by orders of magnitude since 2023. Without a reliable provenance signal, ordinary readers, viewers and listeners increasingly cannot tell what they are looking at. This collapse of the distinction between human and machine output has consequences far beyond aesthetic confusion. Deepfake audio has been used in attempted financial fraud; deepfake video has been used to interfere in elections; AI-generated text has been submitted to courts as if human-authored. A watermarking regime would not eliminate these abuses, but would substantially raise their cost and shift the burden of proof.

Critics offer three objections. First, technical: any watermark robust to compression and re-encoding is also detectable enough to be removed by a determined adversary. Second, jurisdictional: a domestic Indian rule does not bind models hosted abroad, which produce the bulk of online content. Third, free-speech: requiring disclosure of AI use is compelled speech that may chill legitimate uses in journalism, art and academic writing.

The argument concedes the first two in part. No regime can be perfect, and offshore content will leak in. But the relevant baseline is not perfection — it is the current zero-provenance situation. Even a leaky regime substantially improves the average reader's ability to assess what they see. As for compelled speech, what is disclosed is a fact about how the content was made, not an opinion the speaker must endorse; that distinction is well established in Indian free-speech jurisprudence on mandatory labelling and product-information disclosures.

16. Which of the following is the main conclusion of the policy argument?

- A. AI content in India must carry a watermark of model and date used.
- B. Criminal liability on every person failing to disclose AI use ever.
- C. Offshore AI models banned till they meet Indian watermark rules.
- D. All deepfake content unlawful regardless of watermarking status.

17. The argument's response to the 'jurisdictional' objection rests on which key move?

- A. Denying offshore AI models produce most of the content here.
- B. Conceding leakage; baseline is zero-provenance, so leaky still helps.
- C. Pursuing an international treaty so the gap disappears in time.
- D. Asserting the regulator already holds extraterritorial powers now.

18. The argument's response to the free-speech objection rests on which distinction?

- A. Commercial vs political: only commercial uses fall under the rule.
- B. Social-media (regulable) vs private messaging (not regulable) split.
- C. Disclosure of a fact vs forced endorsement of an opinion.
- D. Artistic uses (exempt) vs journalistic uses (regulated) split.

19. Which of the following, if true, would most weaken the policy argument?

- A. Partial watermarks raise identification accuracy by over 50 percent.
- B. Compression-robust watermarks now exist invisibly to viewers today.
- C. Robust watermarks are trivially removable by ordinary consumer tools.
- D. Indian courts uphold disclosure as factual, not as opinion-speech.

20. Which of the following best describes the argumentative structure of the policy piece?

- A. Problem → remedy → three objections → each addressed, two conceded.
- B. Problem and remedy stated, no engagement with standard objections.
- C. Survey of intl. watermarking, then Indian variant, no problem cited.
- D. Refutation of outright AI ban with no positive recommendation.

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. Who was sworn in as the Chief Justice of India in May 2025?

- A. Justice D.Y. Chandrachud – continued through the period.
- B. Justice B.R. Gavai – sworn in as 52nd CJI in 2025.
- C. Justice Sanjiv Khanna – continued past the period.
- D. Justice U.U. Lalit – was previously CJI, reappointed.

22. Choose the word closest in meaning to 'ubiquitous' as used in the sentence: 'Mobile phones have become ubiquitous in Indian classrooms.'

- A. Rare – found only in a few classrooms.
- B. Outdated – replaced by newer tech in classrooms.
- C. Expensive – affordable only to a few students.
- D. Omnipresent – found everywhere, widespread use.

23. The Constitution (One Hundred and Sixth Amendment) Act, 2023, popularly known as the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, provides for:

- A. 1/3 women's reservation in Lok Sabha + State Assemblies.
- B. Equal men-women representation on PSU corporate boards.
- C. Mandatory women-headed gram panchayats across India.
- D. Reservation of half of all civil-service posts for EWS women.

24. Pick the idiom that best fits: 'When the auditor uncovered the hidden ledger, the whole fraud was ____.'

- A. Brought to book – held to account; fits the auditor case.
- B. Up in the air – uncertain; opposite of what's needed.
- C. On the cards – likely soon; future, not present, sense.
- D. In the same boat – sharing trouble; doesn't fit fraud.

25. Which Article of the Constitution of India provides for the abolition of untouchability?

- A. Article 14 – equality before law, equal protection.
- B. Article 15 – bars State discrimination on caste etc.
- C. Article 17 – abolishes untouchability; penal.
- D. Article 19 – six freedoms of citizens within India.

26. The Hague Conference on Private International Law adopted, in 2024, a new convention on the recognition of foreign judgments concerning:

- A. Maritime arbitration, replacing 1950s shipping treaties.
- B. Cross-border civil/commercial matters; India considering accession.
- C. Criminal jurisdiction over multinational corporate officers.
- D. Cyber-crime extradition, replacing 2001 Budapest Convention.

27. Choose the word closest in meaning to 'ephemeral' in the sentence: 'The trends of the season are notoriously ephemeral.'

- A. Long-lasting – enduring; opposite of intended sense.
- B. Profitable – generating returns; unrelated to time.
- C. Sophisticated – refined taste; not a temporal sense.
- D. Short-lived – lasting briefly; passes away quickly.

28. Under Article 32 of the Constitution of India, the Supreme Court has the power to issue writs for the enforcement of:

- A. Fundamental Rights – Part III; A.32 itself a right.
- B. Directive Principles – Part IV; non-justiciable here.
- C. Fundamental Duties – Part IV-A; not writ-enforceable.
- D. Any statutory right – open to any aggrieved person.

29. The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023, replaces which earlier Indian statute?

- A. CrPC, 1973 – criminal procedure until July 2024.
- B. Indian Evidence Act, 1872 – replaced by BSA, 2023.
- C. Indian Penal Code, 1860 – substantive criminal law.
- D. Indian Contract Act, 1872 – alongside criminal codes.

30. Pick the word that is closest in meaning to 'sagacious'.

- A. Foolish – lacking judgment; direct opposite sense.
- B. Verbose – using too many words; not judgment.
- C. Wise – keen mental discernment and good judgment.
- D. Tall – of greater than average height; unrelated.