

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) — SLEEP AND THE CONSOLIDATION OF MEMORY (NEUROSCIENCE / HEALTH) Q1-5

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

For much of the twentieth century, sleep was regarded as a passive state, a nightly shutting-down of the brain in which little of consequence occurred. That view has been overturned. Sleep is now understood to be one of the most biologically active periods of our lives, and nowhere is its activity more striking than in the consolidation of memory. When we learn something during the day, the memory is at first fragile, held in the hippocampus, a structure that acts as a temporary buffer. It is during sleep, and particularly during the deep, slow-wave stages, that these fragile traces are gradually transferred to the neocortex for long-term storage, a process researchers compare to moving files from a computer's volatile working memory to its permanent hard drive.

The architecture of sleep matters as much as its quantity. A night of sleep is not uniform; it cycles repeatedly through stages, including the slow-wave sleep associated with the consolidation of facts and the rapid-eye-movement (REM) sleep linked to emotional processing and the integration of new information with old. Experiments have shown that learners who sleep after studying retain markedly more than those kept awake for the same interval, and that selectively depriving people of particular sleep stages impairs particular kinds of memory. The sleeping brain even appears to replay the patterns of neural firing recorded during waking learning, as if rehearsing the day's lessons in miniature.

These findings carry an uncomfortable warning for modern habits. The widespread compression of sleep, whether by shift work, screens at midnight, or the cultural glorification of busyness, is not a harmless economy. By shortening sleep, we shorten precisely the window in which the day's learning is made durable. For students who sacrifice sleep to cram, the irony is sharp: the very hours they steal from rest are the hours their brains most need to keep what they have studied. Far from being lost time, sleep may be the quiet labour on which memory, and much of learning itself, depends.

1. As used in the first paragraph, the word 'volatile' most nearly means:

- A. dangerously explosive and chemically unstable
- B. permanent and fixed
- C. temporary and easily lost
- D. rapidly overheating

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

- A. Sleep is an active process essential to consolidating memory and learning.
- B. Computers store and retrieve memory far more reliably than the human brain ever can.
- C. REM sleep is the only stage that has any effect on human memory.
- D. Students should study new material exclusively during the night hours.

3. It can be inferred from the passage that depriving a person of slow-wave sleep would most likely:

- A. improve the person's ability to memorise facts the next day.
- B. have no measurable effect on any kind of memory at all.
- C. enhance only the emotional processing handled during REM sleep.
- D. impair the consolidation of newly learned facts.

4. The author's tone in the final paragraph is best described as:

- A. celebratory
- B. cautionary
- C. indifferent
- D. nostalgic

5. Which statement, if true, would most WEAKEN the passage's argument about sleep and memory?

- A. Slow-wave sleep occupies a considerably larger share of the night in very young children than in older adults.
- B. The hippocampus is also involved in spatial navigation as well as in memory.
- C. Students kept fully awake after studying retained exactly as much a week later as those who slept.
- D. Some people are able to function on six hours of sleep without feeling drowsy.

PASSAGE 2 (RC) — THE FORGOTTEN CALCULUS OF THE KERALA SCHOOL (HISTORY OF SCIENCE / CULTURE) Q6-10

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

Long before calculus is conventionally said to have been born in seventeenth-century Europe, a remarkable school of mathematicians and astronomers flourished on the south-western coast of India. Centred in what is now Kerala and active from roughly the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries, the Kerala School produced results that anticipated, by two or three hundred years, ideas usually credited to Newton and Leibniz. Its founder, Madhava of Sangamagrama, derived infinite series for the trigonometric functions and for pi, achieving approximations of astonishing accuracy without any of the symbolic machinery later available in Europe.

The achievements of the school were not the work of a single genius but of a continuous tradition, passed from teacher to pupil across generations and recorded in works such as the Yuktibhasha, which some historians describe as among the first texts to present systematic proofs of its results. The motivation was largely astronomical: accurate calendars and predictions of eclipses demanded ever more precise trigonometric tables, and the pursuit of that precision drove the mathematicians towards the infinite series that lie at the heart of analysis.

Why, then, is the Kerala School so little known? Part of the answer is linguistic and geographical: its texts were written in Sanskrit and Malayalam and circulated within a regional scholarly community, far from the networks that carried European mathematics. Part is historiographical: the conventional narrative of scientific progress has long been written as a story of Western achievement, with non-Western contributions treated as marginal or derivative. Whether the school's ideas travelled, perhaps through Jesuit missionaries, to influence Europe remains debated and unproven.

What is no longer in serious doubt is the originality and sophistication of the work itself. Recovering this history is not merely an exercise in national pride. It corrects a distorted picture of how mathematical knowledge actually develops, reminding us that discovery is rarely the monopoly of any one civilisation, and that the lines of intellectual descent we take for granted may be far more tangled than the textbooks suggest.

6. According to the passage, the principal motivation for the Kerala School's mathematical work was:

- A. the need for precise astronomical calculations such as calendars and eclipse predictions.
- B. a desire to challenge and to overturn the established authority of contemporary European mathematicians.
- C. the demands of commerce and trade along the south-western coast of India.
- D. the wish to win recognition and prestige for the region's scholarly community.

7. The word 'anticipated', as used in the first paragraph, most nearly means:

- A. looked forward to eagerly
- B. feared the arrival of
- C. expected as a result of
- D. developed in advance of

8. Which of the following is offered in the passage as a reason the Kerala School is little known?

- A. Its results were later found to contain serious mathematical errors and were discredited.
- B. Its texts were written in regional languages and circulated far from European networks.
- C. Its members deliberately kept their methods secret from all outsiders and rivals.
- D. Its works were entirely destroyed and no record of them survives to the present day.

9. Regarding whether the Kerala School's ideas influenced European mathematics, the author's position is that it:

- A. has been conclusively established by recent historical research.
- B. is impossible and has been firmly ruled out by all scholars.
- C. remains debated and has not been proven.
- D. is of no interest or importance to historians of mathematics.

10. The author suggests that recovering the history of the Kerala School is valuable chiefly because it:

- A. corrects a distorted picture of how mathematical knowledge actually develops.
- B. proves that Indian mathematics was always superior to that of every other civilisation.
- C. provides a justification for feelings of national pride above all other considerations.
- D. demonstrates that European mathematicians deliberately plagiarised the school's results.

**PASSAGE 3 (CR) — SHOULD FINANCIAL LITERACY BE COMPULSORY IN SCHOOLS?
(EDUCATION / POLICY)**

**Q11-
15**

READ THE ARGUMENT AND ANSWER Q11-15.

Every year, surveys reveal that a large fraction of young adults cannot answer basic questions about interest rates, inflation, or the risks of borrowing. Many leave school able to analyse a poem or balance a chemical equation, yet unable to read a loan agreement or plan a monthly budget. The consequences are visible in spiralling consumer debt, in the ease with which predatory lenders and fraudulent schemes find victims, and in the anxiety that financial confusion breeds. The remedy, advocates argue, is straightforward: financial literacy should be made a compulsory subject in every secondary school.

The case rests on a simple premise. If poor financial decisions stem from a lack of knowledge, then supplying that knowledge in school, before young people face real financial choices, should reduce the harm. A compulsory course would reach every student, not merely those whose families already discuss money wisely, and so would be especially valuable to children from disadvantaged backgrounds who have no other source of such guidance. Just as we do not leave literacy or numeracy to chance, the argument runs, we should not leave financial competence to the accidents of upbringing.

Critics counter that knowledge taught in a classroom, divorced from real stakes, is quickly forgotten, and that financial behaviour is driven less by what people know than by impulse, habit, and circumstance. A teenager who can define compound interest may still, years later, sign a ruinous loan under pressure. The school timetable, moreover, is already crowded; every new compulsory subject displaces something else. The debate, then, turns not on whether financial ignorance is a problem, which few dispute, but on whether a mandatory school course is an effective cure for it. Proponents and sceptics alike accept that the stakes are high and that the consequences of poor financial decisions can shadow a person for decades; where they part company is on the narrower question of method, and on whether a lesson learned at fifteen can survive to guide a decision made at thirty.

11. Which of the following best states the main conclusion that the advocates in the passage are arguing for?

- A. Young adults today are markedly worse with money than previous generations were.
- B. Predatory lenders and fraudulent schemes ought to be banned by stricter legislation.
- C. Schools currently place far too much emphasis on subjects like poetry and chemistry.
- D. Financial literacy should be made a compulsory subject in every secondary school.

12. The advocates' argument depends on which of the following assumptions?

- A. Financial literacy is a far more important subject than every other subject presently in the school curriculum.
- B. Knowledge taught in school can meaningfully change the financial decisions people later make.
- C. No student ever receives any financial guidance from his or her family at home.
- D. All consumer debt is the direct result of fraud by predatory lenders only.

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

- A. Financial fraud has steadily become more sophisticated and considerably harder for ordinary people to detect and avoid.
- B. Many parents say they would welcome financial literacy being taught in their children's schools.
- C. Studies show that students who complete financial-literacy courses make no better borrowing decisions years later.
- D. Some private schools already offer optional classes in personal finance to interested students.

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

- A. Regions that introduced compulsory school finance courses later saw sharp falls in youth debt defaults.
- B. Adults very often say that they wish they had been taught about money and budgeting when they were much younger.
- C. Financial-literacy textbooks are expensive and would add to the cost of running schools.
- D. Teenagers generally find lessons about budgeting and interest rates rather dull.

15. The critics' reply chiefly attacks the advocates' argument by:

- A. arguing that secondary education as an institution itself does considerably more harm than good to its students.
- B. denying that financial ignorance among young people is a genuine problem at all.
- C. claiming that predatory lending is in fact beneficial to the wider economy.
- D. questioning whether knowledge gained in class actually translates into better real-world behaviour.

PASSAGE 4 (CR) — DOES REMOTE WORK HURT EARLY-CAREER PROFESSIONALS? (WORK / SOCIETY)

Q16–20

READ THE ARGUMENT AND ANSWER Q16–20.

When offices emptied during the pandemic and millions discovered they could do their jobs from home, many predicted that remote work would simply become the new normal, a permanent and unambiguous improvement. Yet a growing chorus of managers and researchers now argues that fully remote arrangements carry a hidden cost, and that the cost falls hardest on those at the start of their careers.

The argument runs as follows. Much of what a young professional learns in the first years of a job is never written down. It is absorbed by watching how a senior colleague handles a difficult client, by overhearing how a negotiation is framed, by the casual question asked across a desk and answered in a sentence. This tacit knowledge, the unspoken craft of a profession, is transmitted through proximity. Remove the shared physical space, the argument goes, and you remove the very channels through which such learning flows. A new recruit working alone from a bedroom may complete assigned tasks competently while quietly missing the informal apprenticeship that turns a beginner into an expert.

There is, the argument continues, a further danger. Mentorship and sponsorship, the relationships that advance a career, tend to grow from repeated, unplanned contact. The senior who recommends a junior for a stretch assignment usually does so because she has seen the junior at work, day after day. A remote junior, however diligent, may simply never come to such a person's attention. Over years, the argument concludes, the convenience of working from home could harden into a structural disadvantage, leaving a generation of remote beginners competent but unseen, and slower to rise than their office-based peers. None of this, the proponents of the view are careful to add, is an argument against remote work for the experienced, whose networks and reputations are already built; it is a warning aimed specifically at the beginning of a career, the very stage at which the invisible scaffolding of proximity may matter most.

16. Which of the following best expresses the main conclusion of the argument presented in the passage?

- A. Remote work was an unambiguous improvement for every kind of worker during the pandemic.
- B. Fully remote work tends to disadvantage those at the start of their careers.
- C. Tacit knowledge is the only form of learning that matters in any profession.
- D. Senior colleagues should be legally required to mentor every junior employee.

17. The argument relies on which of the following assumptions?

- A. No senior employee has ever successfully mentored a junior whom they first met only through remote video calls.
- B. Young professionals are incapable of completing any work tasks while working remotely.
- C. Important early-career learning depends substantially on in-person proximity to colleagues.
- D. Remote work reduces the total quantity of output produced by every kind of employee.

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

- A. Studies find remote juniors who use structured virtual mentoring advance as fast as office-based peers.
- B. Remote workers consistently report saving several hours of personal time each and every week by avoiding a long daily commute.
- C. Some senior professionals say they personally prefer working from a quiet home office.
- D. A few companies have reduced their office space since adopting remote work.

19. The phrase 'informal apprenticeship' is used in the passage to refer to:

- A. a formal, structured training programme with written examinations and an official completion certificate.
- B. a legally binding contract between a junior employee and a senior mentor.
- C. the salary and benefits typically offered to workers in their very first job.
- D. the unwritten, tacit knowledge a beginner picks up by working near experienced colleagues.

20. Which of the following, if true, would most STRENGTHEN the argument?

- A. Some remote workers do occasionally travel to the central office to meet important clients and senior colleagues in person.
- B. Tracking studies show fully remote recruits are promoted much more slowly than comparable in-office recruits.
- C. Many employees report that they feel more productive when working from home.
- D. Office rents in major cities have risen sharply over the past several years.

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. The 'Right to Property' in the Indian Constitution is presently a:

- A. a fundamental right guaranteed to citizens under Article 19
- B. fundamental right under Article 31
- C. constitutional legal right under Article 300A
- D. directive principle of state policy

22. Choose the word most nearly OPPOSITE in meaning to 'EPHEMERAL':

- A. Lasting
- B. Fleeting
- C. Delicate
- D. Hollow

23. The idiom 'to bite the bullet' means:

- A. to make a serious and very costly mistake
- B. to speak without thinking
- C. to waste a valuable chance
- D. to endure a painful situation bravely

24. Which body in India is constitutionally empowered to conduct elections to Parliament and State Legislatures?

- A. The Supreme Court of India
- B. The Election Commission of India
- C. The Union Public Service Commission
- D. The NITI Aayog

25. The Tropic of Cancer does NOT pass through which of the following Indian states?

- A. Tamil Nadu
- B. Gujarat
- C. Madhya Pradesh
- D. Jharkhand

26. Choose the correctly spelt word:

- A. Concientious
- B. Conscientous
- C. Conscientious
- D. Consciencious

27. Who among the following was the first woman to serve as a judge of the Supreme Court of India?

- A. Justice Leila Seth
- B. Justice Anna Chandy
- C. Justice Ruma Pal
- D. Justice M. Fathima Beevi

28. Fill in the blank: The committee will ____ its findings to the minister next week.

- A. submits
- B. submit
- C. submitting
- D. submitted

29. The headquarters of the International Court of Justice is located in:

- A. Geneva, Switzerland
- B. New York, USA
- C. The Hague, Netherlands
- D. Vienna, Austria

30. Choose the word that is the SYNONYM of 'PRAGMATIC':

- A. Practical
- B. Idealistic
- C. Hesitant
- D. Wasteful