

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) — IN PRAISE OF BOREDOM (PSYCHOLOGY / CULTURE)

Q1-5

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

Boredom has a bad reputation. We treat it as a void to be filled at once, and the modern world offers an endless supply of fillers: a phone in every pocket, a feed that never ends, a stream of small distractions always within reach. The moment a queue forms or a lull arrives, we reach for the screen. Yet a growing body of research suggests that in banishing boredom so efficiently we may be losing something we did not know we needed.

Boredom, psychologists argue, is not merely the absence of stimulation but a signal. It tells us that our present activity is failing to engage us, and it nudges us to seek something more meaningful. Left unaddressed by easy distraction, that restless feeling often pushes the mind inward, where it begins to wander. And a wandering mind, far from being idle, is busy: it makes unexpected connections, revisits old problems, and rehearses plans for the future. Many people report that their best ideas arrive not at the desk but in the shower, on a walk, or while staring out of a train window — precisely the unstructured moments we are now so quick to fill.

There is also a developmental case. Children who are never bored, who are handed a device the instant they grow restless, may be denied the chance to learn how to entertain themselves, to invent games, to tolerate the discomfort of an empty afternoon. The capacity to sit with one's own thoughts is not innate; it is a skill, and like any skill it withers without practice.

None of this is an argument for manufacturing misery. Chronic, inescapable boredom — the kind felt in a tedious job or a long illness — is genuinely corrosive. The point is narrower and more practical: the ordinary, passing boredom of everyday life is not an emergency to be solved but an opportunity to be used. To reach for it less often, and to let the mind drift now and then, may be one of the quieter disciplines of a creative life.

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

- A. Modern technology has made human beings far more productive than they were in any earlier age.
- B. Boredom of every kind, including chronic boredom, is uniformly good for the human mind and should be sought out, as a general matter.
- C. Children should be forbidden from using any electronic device until they reach a certain fixed age.
- D. Ordinary, passing boredom is not a problem to be eliminated but an opportunity that can fuel creativity and self-reliance.

2. As used in the passage, the description of a wandering mind as 'busy' most nearly means that such a mind is:

- A. overwhelmed and unable to rest because of constant external distraction, in the great majority of cases.
- B. fully occupied with the demanding tasks of formal work at a desk.
- C. actively making connections and working through problems rather than being idle.
- D. anxious and unsettled in a way that prevents any useful thought.

3. It can be inferred from the passage that the author regards the capacity to tolerate boredom as:

- A. an innate trait that every person possesses in equal measure from birth.
- B. a skill that must be practised and can weaken if it is never exercised.
- C. a purely negative habit that responsible adults should help children unlearn.
- D. a talent confined to a small number of unusually creative individuals.

4. The author mentions ideas arriving 'in the shower, on a walk, or while staring out of a train window' primarily in order to:

- A. prove that people are generally more intelligent when they are travelling than when at work, as a broad rule of thumb.
- B. recommend that readers take long train journeys whenever they wish to solve a problem.
- C. show that distractions such as screens are the true source of most creative ideas.
- D. illustrate that valuable thinking often occurs in unstructured moments we are now quick to fill.

5. Which of the following, if true, would most weaken the author's argument that ordinary boredom can be beneficial?

- A. Many people now carry smartphones and reach for them during even very brief moments of idleness.
- B. Careful studies show that people who quickly distract themselves from boredom are just as creative and self-reliant as those who do not.
- C. Chronic boredom experienced during a long illness is widely reported to be deeply unpleasant.
- D. Children today are, on average, handed their first electronic device at a noticeably younger age than children were just a single generation ago.

PASSAGE 2 (RC) — CRISPR AND THE ETHICS OF EDITING LIFE (SCIENCE / ETHICS)

Q6-10

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

For most of history, the genome — the full set of instructions written in an organism's DNA — was something we could read only with difficulty and could not rewrite at all. That has changed with startling speed. A tool known as CRISPR, adapted from a defence mechanism that bacteria use against viruses, now allows scientists to cut DNA at a chosen location and to edit the sequence with a precision and cheapness that would have seemed fantastical a generation ago. What was once the preserve of a few well-funded laboratories is becoming routine.

The promise is immense. Many devastating diseases — sickle-cell anaemia, certain inherited forms of blindness, some cancers — arise from identifiable faults in the genetic code, and the ability to correct those faults offers hope of cures rather than mere treatments. Early trials have already restored sight to some patients and freed others from a lifetime of painful transfusions. In agriculture, edited crops promise resistance to disease and drought.

But the same precision that makes CRISPR so powerful also makes it troubling. A crucial distinction lies between editing the body cells of a consenting patient, whose changes affect only that person, and editing the germ line — the eggs, sperm or embryos — whose changes would be passed on to every future generation. The former is, in principle, medicine; the latter is something closer to rewriting the species. An edit made to an embryo cannot be consented to by the person it will become, and a mistake could ripple down the generations.

There is also the spectre of inequality. If genetic enhancement — greater height, sharper memory, particular features — were ever to become possible and were available only to those who could pay, the result might be a world divided not merely by wealth but by biology. The technology itself is neither good nor evil; it is a tool of extraordinary reach. The harder task, which no laboratory can perform for us, is to decide collectively where the line between healing and engineering should be drawn.

6. According to the passage, the crucial distinction in the ethics of gene editing lies between:

- A. editing a patient's own body cells and editing the germ line, whose changes pass to future generations.
- B. editing the genes of plants for agriculture and editing the genes of animals for food.
- C. reading the genome, which is easy, and rewriting it, which remains technically impossible, certainly over the longer run.
- D. editing the genes of wealthy patients and editing the genes of poorer patients.

7. The author's main purpose in the passage is to:

- A. argue that CRISPR should be banned outright because its dangers clearly outweigh its possible benefits, in nearly every such instance.
- B. celebrate gene editing as an unmixed good that will shortly cure every serious human disease.
- C. explain the detailed biochemical mechanism by which the CRISPR tool cuts strands of DNA.
- D. present both the promise and the ethical risks of gene editing and stress that society must decide where to draw the line.

8. It can be inferred from the passage that the author regards the technology of gene editing itself as:

- A. inherently dangerous, so that its development should be halted as quickly as possible, certainly over the longer run.
- B. inherently benevolent, so that any restriction on its use would be plainly misguided.
- C. too primitive at present to raise any serious ethical questions for society.
- D. morally neutral, with its value depending on the choices people make about how to use it.

9. The passage suggests that editing an embryo's genes is especially troubling because:

- A. embryos are far more difficult and expensive to edit than ordinary adult body cells are, as a broad rule of thumb.
- B. such editing has so far proved completely ineffective in every clinical trial attempted.
- C. the person the embryo will become cannot consent, and any error could affect future generations.
- D. agricultural applications of the same technology have already caused widespread harm.

10. As used in the final paragraph, the phrase 'a world divided not merely by wealth but by biology' most nearly refers to a future in which:

- A. affordable genetic enhancement creates lasting biological advantages for those able to pay for it.
- B. people are separated geographically according to the natural ecosystems in which they live.
- C. scientists are sharply divided in their professional opinions about the safety of gene editing, certainly over the longer run.
- D. different species of organism are kept strictly apart to preserve the natural order.

PASSAGE 3 (CR) — SHOULD VOTING BE MADE COMPULSORY IN INDIA? (POLITY / GOVERNANCE)

Q11-15

READ THE ARGUMENT AND ANSWER Q11-15.

India should make voting compulsory. The health of a democracy is measured not only by the freedom to vote but by how many citizens actually exercise it, and turnout in our elections, though respectable, leaves a large share of the electorate silent. When millions stay home, governments are chosen by a fraction of the people and can claim a mandate they do not truly possess. Requiring every eligible citizen to cast a vote — even one marked 'none of the above' — would ensure that the result reflects the whole nation rather than only its most motivated factions.

Compulsory voting would also change the character of campaigns. Where turnout is voluntary, parties pour their energy into firing up their committed supporters and suppressing the other side's, since the contest is won at the margins of enthusiasm. Where everyone must vote, that strategy collapses: parties must instead appeal to the broad, moderate middle, including the disengaged citizens who would otherwise have stayed away. The likely result is a politics of persuasion rather than of anger.

The experience of countries such as Australia is encouraging. There, compulsory voting has produced turnout above ninety per cent for decades, the penalty for not voting is modest, and the practice enjoys broad public acceptance rather than resentment. The predicted tyranny of forcing people to the booth has simply not materialised.

Critics protest that compelling a citizen to vote infringes individual liberty. But the law already compels much in the name of citizenship — we require people to pay taxes, to serve on juries in some countries, to send their children to school — and a duty to spend a few minutes shaping the government that rules us is a light burden by comparison. Besides, no one is forced to support any candidate; the citizen who wishes to reject them all may say so on the ballot. Compulsory voting does not silence dissent. It guarantees that dissent, like assent, is actually counted.

11. Which of the following best states the main conclusion of the argument?

- A. Voter turnout in India, though respectable, leaves many citizens silent.
- B. In Australia, compulsory voting has produced very high turnout for decades.
- C. India should make voting compulsory.
- D. The law already compels citizens to pay taxes and to send their children to school.

12. The argument that compulsory voting would change the character of campaigns chiefly assumes that:

- A. political parties in India currently have no means whatever of reaching moderate or undecided voters, in nearly every such instance.
- B. when every citizen must vote, parties can no longer win simply by energising their own committed supporters.
- C. disengaged citizens are, as a group, better informed about policy than highly motivated partisans.
- D. campaigns conducted under voluntary voting never make any appeal to persuasion or to moderation.

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

- A. A small number of Indian commentators have written newspaper columns opposing compulsory voting.
- B. In countries that introduced compulsory voting, the additional voters cast their ballots almost at random, so results reflected the electorate no better than before.
- C. Some citizens who currently choose to vote say they find the process of going to a polling booth inconvenient.
- D. Voter turnout in India has risen by a modest but clearly measurable margin in several recent general elections when set against the turnout recorded across earlier decades.

14. The author responds to the objection that compulsory voting infringes liberty mainly by arguing that:

- A. the law already imposes comparable or heavier civic duties, and no one is compelled to support any particular candidate.
- B. individual liberty is an outdated idea that modern democracies are right to set aside entirely, in the great majority of cases.
- C. the citizens who object to compulsory voting are too few in number for their views to matter.
- D. voting is so enjoyable that, once required to do it, almost everyone comes to welcome the duty.

15. The reasoning in the argument is most vulnerable to the criticism that it:

- A. openly contradicts itself by both supporting and opposing compulsory voting at the same time.
- B. relies entirely on statistical evidence drawn from a single election held within India.
- C. treats the duty to vote as comparable to duties such as paying taxes without showing that the cases are genuinely alike.
- D. assumes that compulsory voting has already been introduced throughout India in the recent past, in nearly every such instance.

PASSAGE 4 (CR) — SHOULD SOCIAL-MEDIA PLATFORMS BE LIABLE FOR WHAT THEIR USERS POST? (LAW / TECHNOLOGY)

Q16–20

READ THE ARGUMENT AND ANSWER Q16–20.

When a user posts something defamatory, threatening or false on a social-media platform, who should answer for it in law — the user who wrote it, or the company that runs the platform? The temptation to blame the company is strong, but it should be resisted. Social-media platforms should not, as a general rule, be held legally liable for the content their users create.

The first reason is one of function. A platform is, in the main, a conduit. It does not commission or write the millions of messages that pass through it; it carries them, much as a telephone network carries a conversation or a noticeboard holds whatever is pinned to it. We do not sue the telephone company for a threat made down the line, because the wrongdoer is the speaker, not the wire. The author of an unlawful post is identifiable and answerable; it is there that responsibility properly rests.

The second reason is one of scale and consequence. The largest platforms carry billions of posts a day. To make them liable for each one would force them, in self-defence, to monitor and pre-screen everything — an impossible task that they would perform by deleting anything remotely controversial. The predictable result is not careful justice but wholesale removal: lawful speech, unpopular opinion and legitimate criticism swept away alongside the genuinely harmful, because it is cheaper to delete than to judge. A rule meant to curb a few bad posts would end by chilling the speech of millions.

None of this means platforms should do nothing. They can and should remove clearly illegal content once it is flagged, cooperate with the authorities, and design their systems to limit obvious harm. The argument is narrower: the primary legal liability for an unlawful post should fall on its author, not on the neutral platform that happened to carry it. To hold otherwise is to punish the messenger and, in doing so, to silence a great deal of lawful speech.

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

- A. Social-media platforms should not, as a general rule, be held legally liable for content created by their users.
- B. Users who post defamatory or threatening material should never face any legal consequences at all.
- C. Social-media platforms ought to be shut down because they carry so much harmful and unlawful content, certainly over the longer run.
- D. Telephone companies should be held legally responsible for any threats made over their networks.

17. The argument's comparison of a platform to a telephone network or a noticeboard is meant to support the claim that:

- A. social-media platforms are technologically identical to telephone networks and physical noticeboards, in the great majority of cases.
- B. a platform mainly carries others' messages rather than creating them, so the author of a post bears the responsibility.
- C. no communication medium of any kind has ever been held legally responsible for its users' messages.
- D. platforms should be regulated in exactly the same statute that governs telephone companies.

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

- A. In jurisdictions that made platforms liable for user posts, the platforms responded by deleting large amounts of lawful and harmless speech.
- B. Several of the very largest social-media platforms earn extremely substantial advertising revenue from the very user posts that they host each year.
- C. Some users say they would prefer platforms to display fewer advertisements alongside their posts.
- D. Most people now read at least some of their daily news through social-media platforms.

19. The author's claim that imposing liability would lead to 'wholesale removal' of lawful speech depends on the assumption that:

- A. platforms are, for purely technical reasons, wholly incapable of removing any single piece of content from their systems once a user has posted it.
- B. users would immediately abandon any platform that ever removed even a single one of their posts.
- C. governments would compel platforms to publish every post without any moderation whatsoever.
- D. faced with liability for each post, platforms would find it cheaper to delete doubtful content than to judge it case by case.

20. The author would be most likely to agree with which of the following statements?

- A. A platform should never remove any content at all, however clearly illegal that content may be.
- B. The user who actually writes an unlawful post should bear no legal responsibility for it at all, since the platform is the party that published it to the world.
- C. A platform should remove clearly illegal content once it has been flagged, even though it should not bear primary liability for it.
- D. A platform should be treated in law exactly as if it were the author of every post it carries.

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 headquarters of the World Health Organization (WHO) is located in:

- A. Geneva
- B. Paris
- C. Rome
- D. New York

22. The writ of Mandamus is issued by a court mainly to:

- A. command a public authority to perform a public duty it has failed to perform
- B. bring a detained person before the court to test the legality of the detention
- C. quash an order already passed by a lower court or tribunal
- D. question the authority by which a person holds a public office

23. Which Article of the Constitution of India guarantees the Right to Constitutional Remedies?

- A. Article 19(1)(a)
- B. Article 32
- C. Article 21
- D. Article 44

24. Choose the word most nearly similar in meaning to 'BENEVOLENT':

- A. Hostile
- B. Kind
- C. Wealthy
- D. Cautious

25. Choose the word most nearly OPPOSITE in meaning to 'TRANSPARENT':

- A. Clear
- B. Fragile
- C. Honest
- D. Opaque

26. The idiom 'once in a blue moon' means:

- A. very often
- B. only at night
- C. all of a sudden
- D. very rarely

27. The Dronacharya Award in India is conferred upon outstanding:

- A. sports coaches
- B. war heroes
- C. classical musicians
- D. film directors

28. In which case did the Supreme Court of India declare the right to privacy to be a fundamental right?

- A. Maneka Gandhi v Union of India
- B. Kesavananda Bharati v State of Kerala
- C. K.S. Puttaswamy v Union of India
- D. ADM Jabalpur v Shivkant Shukla

29. Which is the longest river flowing within India?

- A. The Godavari
- B. The Yamuna
- C. The Ganga
- D. The Brahmaputra

30. The currency of the United Kingdom is the:

- A. Euro
- B. Pound Sterling
- C. United States Dollar
- D. Franc