

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) — BIOLUMINESCENCE: NATURE'S LIVING LIGHT (SCIENCE / BIOLOGY)

Q1-5

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

In the cold, sunless depths of the ocean, where light from the surface never reaches, life has devised its own illumination. Bioluminescence, the production of light by living organisms, is one of nature's most widespread yet least appreciated phenomena. From the flickering of fireflies on a summer night to the ghostly glow of certain mushrooms, and the dazzling blue sparkle that trails a ship's wake, the ability to manufacture light has evolved independently dozens of times across the tree of life.

The chemistry behind the glow is deceptively simple. A light-emitting molecule, generically called luciferin, reacts with oxygen in the presence of an enzyme, luciferase. The reaction releases its energy almost entirely as light rather than heat, which is why biologists call it 'cold light'. Unlike an electric bulb, which wastes most of its energy warming the surrounding air, a glowing organism loses almost nothing.

Why living things glow is a more interesting question than how. For the deep-sea anglerfish, a luminous lure dangled before its jaws draws unwary prey into the dark. For some squid, a sudden burst of light startles a predator just long enough to allow an escape. For others, glowing patterns serve as a private language, a means of recognising a mate or of signalling across the murk to members of the same species. Certain shrimp even spew clouds of glowing fluid to confuse an attacker, the marine equivalent of a smokescreen.

What unites these uses is economy. Light is precious in the deep, and organisms spend it sparingly and strategically. To a human observer the spectacle may seem magical; to the creatures themselves it is a hard-won tool for survival, refined over millions of years. The next time the sea glimmers at night, it is worth remembering that each spark is not decoration but a message, a flash of meaning in an ocean of darkness.

1. As used in the passage, the phrase 'deceptively simple' most nearly means that the chemistry is:

- A. obviously and plainly straightforward to all
- B. simpler in appearance than it really is
- C. dishonest and fraudulent in its real nature
- D. needlessly and pointlessly complicated

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

- A. Bioluminescence is seen mainly in fireflies and in a few rare species of glowing mushrooms.
- B. Cold light is far more energy-efficient than the warm light of an ordinary electric bulb.
- C. The deep ocean is the only environment on the earth where bioluminescence has evolved.
- D. Bioluminescence is a widespread, efficient adaptation serving several survival functions.

3. It can be inferred from the passage that, compared with an electric bulb, a bioluminescent organism:

- A. converts a far greater share of its energy into visible light
- B. produces light that feels noticeably warmer to the human touch
- C. depends on sunlight from the surface in order to make its glow
- D. glows steadily and continuously rather than in brief, timed bursts

4. The author's attitude towards bioluminescence can best be described as:

- A. sceptical, guarded and quietly dismissive
- B. anxious and openly alarmed
- C. appreciative and genuinely curious
- D. indifferent and wholly detached

5. Which of the following, if true, would most STRENGTHEN the claim that glowing is 'a hard-won tool for survival'?

- A. Many bioluminescent species are in fact found only in shallow, sunlit coastal waters.
- B. Species that lost the ability to glow were quickly wiped out by their natural predators.
- C. Bioluminescent light is clearly visible to human divers who explore the deep ocean floor.
- D. The chemicals involved in glowing are also present in several non-glowing animal species.

PASSAGE 2 (RC) — IN PRAISE OF BOREDOM (PSYCHOLOGY / SOCIETY)

Q6-10

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

We live in an age that has declared war on boredom. The moment a queue forms or a lift's doors close, hands reach for glowing screens, and the smallest gap in the day is filled with scrolling, swiping and streaming. Boredom, we are told, is a problem to be solved, an emptiness to be banished as quickly as possible. Yet a growing chorus of psychologists suggests that, in fleeing boredom so completely, we may be losing something valuable.

Boredom, properly understood, is not mere idleness. It is a restless, faintly uncomfortable state that arises when the mind is unoccupied but craving engagement. Precisely because it is uncomfortable, it prods us to act, to seek out something meaningful. Researchers have found that people allowed to grow bored before a creative task generate more original ideas than those kept busy. The wandering, unfocused mind, it seems, is fertile ground for imagination; it makes unexpected connections that a mind locked onto a screen never will.

There is also a quieter benefit. Boredom forces us to sit with ourselves, with our own thoughts and feelings, unmediated by distraction. For children especially, unstructured, 'boring' time is when they learn to invent games, tell themselves stories, and discover what they actually enjoy. A childhood with every minute scheduled or screened may produce capable adults, but perhaps not curious or self-reliant ones.

None of this is to romanticise tedium. Chronic, inescapable boredom, the boredom of a dull job or a lonely life, is genuinely corrosive. The point is subtler: that the brief, ordinary boredom of everyday life is not an enemy but an invitation. When we instantly smother every dull moment, we never hear what that boredom is trying to tell us. To be occasionally, productively bored is not a failure of modern life. It may be one of its rarest and most necessary luxuries.

6. The passage is primarily concerned with arguing that:

- A. ordinary, everyday boredom has overlooked benefits and should not always be banished
- B. modern technology has plainly made human beings far less intelligent than before
- C. every single form of boredom is valuable and ought therefore to be actively sought out
- D. children should under no circumstances be allowed to use screens for entertainment

7. It can be inferred that the author would most likely AGREE that:

- A. filling every spare moment with a screen is a harmless habit of modern living
- B. boredom and simple idleness mean exactly the same thing in psychological terms
- C. a tightly scheduled childhood is the surest route to a curious, inventive adult
- D. some discomfort can be useful when it prompts the mind to seek out meaning

8. As used in the final paragraph, the word 'corrosive' most nearly means:

- A. mildly and briefly irritating
- B. sharply and physically painful
- C. slowly and steadily damaging
- D. loudly and openly hostile

9. The author mentions children inventing games chiefly in order to:

- A. illustrate how unstructured, dull time can foster creativity and self-reliance
- B. argue that children today are markedly less imaginative than earlier generations
- C. prove that boredom is far more harmful to children than to adult office workers
- D. recommend that schools abolish all timetables and every form of structured lesson

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

- A. A handful of highly creative artists openly say that they frequently feel rather bored.
- B. People given dull, idle time produce no more original ideas than busy people do.
- C. Chronic boredom at a dull workplace is closely linked with low job satisfaction.
- D. Children left with unscheduled time sometimes complain loudly of being bored.

PASSAGE 3 (CR) — SHOULD INDIA MAKE VOTING COMPULSORY? (POLITY / DEMOCRACY)

Q11-15

READ THE ARGUMENT AND ANSWER Q11-15.

India prides itself on being the world's largest democracy, yet in most general elections roughly a third of eligible citizens do not vote. This widespread abstention, I argue, is a serious flaw that the law should correct by making voting compulsory, as it already is in Australia, Belgium and over twenty other countries.

The case begins with legitimacy. A government chosen by barely half of those entitled to vote cannot truly claim to speak for the whole nation. When turnout is low, the result reflects the preferences of the motivated few rather than the considered will of the many. Compulsory voting would ensure that every section of society, not merely the most organised or the most angry, has its voice counted, producing assemblies that mirror the electorate far more faithfully.

There is also a social benefit. Where voting is mandatory, citizens have a reason to inform themselves about candidates and issues; the very obligation nudges people towards engagement. Australia, which has enforced compulsory voting since 1924, routinely records turnouts above ninety per cent, and its citizens report high levels of trust in the electoral process. Far from resenting the duty, most Australians regard election day as a shared civic ritual.

Critics object that forcing people to vote violates individual freedom. But the law already compels us to do many things in the public interest: to pay taxes, to serve on juries, to send our children to school. Voting is no different; it is a duty we owe to the community, not merely a private right we may discard at will. Moreover, a compulsion merely to attend the booth need not force anyone to mark a particular choice, since a 'none of the above' option preserves the freedom to reject every candidate.

If we genuinely value democracy, we should be willing to ask every citizen to take part in it. India should make voting compulsory.

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

- A. Australia has recorded very high voter turnout consistently ever since the year 1924.
- B. Low turnout means a government is chosen by only the most motivated section of voters.
- C. India should, by law, make voting in its general elections compulsory for citizens.
- D. The law already compels citizens to pay their taxes and to serve on ordinary juries.

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

- A. Higher turnout produces a government that more faithfully reflects the whole electorate.
- B. Every citizen who is compelled to attend the booth will cast a careful and thoughtful vote.
- C. Australia and India share almost identical political, social and economic conditions.
- D. Voting is the only civic duty that a democratic state may lawfully impose on its people.

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

- A. Some citizens who abstain from voting do so because they are content with any likely outcome whatsoever.
- B. A few countries with compulsory voting report slightly lower public trust in government.
- C. Organising and enforcing compulsory voting would modestly raise the cost of elections.
- D. Citizens forced to vote without interest often pick candidates at random, distorting results.

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

- A. Some voters dislike being told by the state how they ought to behave on polling day.
- B. Studies show that compelled voters become better informed about political issues over time.
- C. Voter turnout in India has remained roughly constant across several recent general elections.
- D. A few wealthy democracies sustain very high turnout without any legal compulsion at all.

15. The argument's reply to the objection about individual freedom relies chiefly on:

- A. denying that citizens possess any individual freedoms that are genuinely worth protecting
- B. claiming that Australia is, in essentially every relevant respect, identical to India today
- C. drawing an analogy between voting and other compulsory duties owed to the wider community
- D. asserting that low voter turnout has never once affected the result of any past election

PASSAGE 4 (CR) — SHOULD GENE EDITING OF HUMAN EMBRYOS BE PERMITTED? (SCIENCE / ETHICS) Q16-20

READ THE ARGUMENT AND ANSWER Q16-20.

The ability to edit the genes of a human embryo, rewriting instructions that will be passed to every future generation, is now within reach. Some scientists hail it as the dawn of a world free from inherited disease. I believe, however, that editing the genes of human embryos for heritable traits should not be permitted, at least for the foreseeable future.

My first reason is irreversibility. A change made to an embryo's genome is not confined to one person; it is copied into that person's children, and their children, indefinitely. An ordinary medical mistake harms a single patient. A mistake written into the human germline could propagate a harmful mutation through countless descendants who never consented to the experiment. When the stakes are permanent and collective, the burden of caution must be extraordinarily high.

Second, our knowledge remains dangerously incomplete. Genes rarely correspond neatly to single traits; one gene may influence many characteristics at once, in ways we do not yet understand. 'Correcting' a gene linked to one disease might unintentionally raise the risk of some other disorder. We are, in effect, proposing to rewrite a text we can barely read.

Third, there is the question of equality. If embryo editing becomes available, it will almost certainly be expensive, and therefore accessible chiefly to the wealthy. Over time this could entrench biological advantage along the lines of existing wealth, creating divisions far deeper than any we know today, a genetic aristocracy purchased rather than earned.

Defenders reply that the technology could eliminate terrible diseases. That hope is real, and I do not dismiss it. But the same goals can largely be pursued through safer means, such as screening embryos rather than editing them. Until our understanding is far greater and the risks far better contained, the wise course is restraint. We should not permit the heritable editing of human embryos.

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

- A. Heritable gene editing of human embryos should not be permitted, at least for the present.
- B. A single gene can in fact influence several different human characteristics all at once.
- C. Gene editing of embryos would be very expensive and hence available mainly to the wealthy few.
- D. Screening embryos is a completely risk-free and superior alternative to editing them all.

17. The argument's third reason, concerning equality, assumes that:

- A. all new medical technologies eventually become cheap and widely available to everyone alike
- B. wealth within the society is at present distributed in a more or less perfectly equal manner
- C. the wealthy have no legitimate claim whatsoever to receive any better medical treatment at all
- D. a technology accessible mainly to the rich can deepen the social divisions that already exist

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

- A. Some inherited diseases cause very great suffering to the children who are born with them.
- B. Edits made to an embryo's genome can in fact be reliably reversed in later generations.
- C. Embryo screening, the proposed alternative, cannot detect every possible inherited condition.
- D. Gene-editing laboratory equipment has become significantly cheaper over recent years.

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

- A. A few laboratories have already edited some embryos without any reported problems arising at all so far.
- B. Most citizens say that they would personally welcome an end to all inherited human disease.
- C. Past attempts to edit one gene have repeatedly triggered unforeseen new disorders in patients.
- D. Embryo editing has turned out to be technically far simpler than most researchers expected.

20. Which of the following best describes the author's response to those who defend the technology?

- A. conceding the defenders' aim but arguing that a safer means can achieve the very same end
- B. flatly denying that inherited diseases cause any real suffering to anyone worth considering
- C. claiming that the defenders of the technology are motivated purely by their own financial gain
- D. arguing that the elimination of inherited disease is not, in fact, a goal worth pursuing at all

SECTION C — RAPID-FIRE GK & CURRENT AFFAIRS

Q21-40 · 20 Marks

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

21. What is the capital of Australia?

- A. Sydney
- B. Melbourne
- C. Canberra
- D. Perth

22. The official currency of Japan is the:

- A. Won
- B. Yen
- C. Yuan
- D. Ringgit

23. The Bharat Ratna is the highest civilian honour of India. It is therefore primarily a:

- A. Military decoration
- B. Literary prize
- C. Sporting award
- D. Civilian honour

24. The book 'The Discovery of India' was written by:

- A. Mahatma Gandhi
- B. Jawaharlal Nehru
- C. B. R. Ambedkar
- D. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

25. In a standard cricket match, how many players take the field for each team?

- A. Nine
- B. Ten
- C. Eleven
- D. Thirteen

26. During photosynthesis, green plants chiefly absorb which gas from the surrounding air?

- A. Oxygen
- B. Nitrogen
- C. Carbon dioxide
- D. Carbon monoxide

27. Choose the word most nearly SIMILAR in meaning to 'EPHEMERAL':

- A. Permanent
- B. Short-lived
- C. Long-lasting
- D. Ancient

28. Choose the word most nearly OPPOSITE in meaning to 'BENEVOLENT':

- A. Generous
- B. Cheerful
- C. Malevolent
- D. Compassionate

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

- A. Face hardship bravely
- B. Act recklessly without any thought
- C. Waste one's money
- D. Speak very rudely

30. Article 21 of the Constitution of India guarantees to every person the:

- A. Right to equality
- B. Right to freedom of speech and expression
- C. Right against exploitation
- D. Right to life and personal liberty

31. What is the capital of Canada?

- A. Ottawa
- B. Toronto
- C. Vancouver
- D. Montreal

32. In which city are the headquarters of the United Nations located?

- A. New York
- B. Washington DC
- C. Geneva
- D. Paris

33. Who composed 'Jana Gana Mana', the national anthem of India?

- A. Rabindranath Tagore
- B. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee
- C. Sarojini Naidu
- D. Mahatma Gandhi

34. How many rings appear on the Olympic flag?

- A. Four
- B. Five
- C. Six
- D. Seven

35. Which gas makes up the largest proportion of the Earth's atmosphere?

- A. Oxygen
- B. Nitrogen
- C. Carbon dioxide
- D. Hydrogen

36. Choose the word most nearly SIMILAR in meaning to 'ABUNDANT':

- A. Scarce
- B. Plentiful
- C. Insufficient
- D. Costly

37. Choose the word most nearly OPPOSITE in meaning to 'CANDID':

- A. Frank
- B. Sincere
- C. Evasive
- D. Outspoken

38. The idiom 'a blessing in disguise' refers to:

- A. A hidden danger that threatens one
- B. A costly mistake made in haste
- C. A good thing at first seen as bad
- D. A promise that is broken

39. Who is widely regarded as the chief architect of the Constitution of India?

- A. Jawaharlal Nehru
- B. Rajendra Prasad
- C. Sardar Patel
- D. B. R. Ambedkar

40. How many Fundamental Rights are presently guaranteed by the Constitution of India?

- A. Five
- B. Seven
- C. Eight
- D. Six