

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) — THE HIDDEN COST OF LIGHT POLLUTION (ENVIRONMENT / SOCIETY)

Q1-5

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

For most of human history, the night sky was a shared inheritance: a canopy of stars that anchored navigation, ritual, and the slow tutelage of the seasons. Today, more than four-fifths of humanity lives beneath skies bleached by artificial light, and a third can no longer glimpse the Milky Way at all. We have, with remarkable speed and almost no deliberation, abolished darkness as a feature of the inhabited world. The convenience of the perpetually illuminated city is rarely interrogated, for light reads to us as an unambiguous good—a synonym for safety, progress, and the conquest of fear. Yet the very innocence of that assumption is what makes light pollution so insidious; it is a degradation we have been trained not to perceive.

The ecological ledger is sobering. Migratory birds, calibrating their flight by the constellations, are lured fatally toward floodlit towers. Hatching sea turtles, programmed to crawl toward the brightest horizon—once reliably the moonlit sea—now stagger inland toward parking lots and perish. Nocturnal pollinators, on which a startling fraction of plant reproduction depends, are drawn into a futile orbit around lamps until they drop from exhaustion. These are not exotic casualties at the margins of the biosphere; they are load-bearing threads in ecosystems we depend upon, and their fraying is quiet precisely because it occurs at night, beyond the hours we keep watch.

The human cost is subtler but not negligible. The hormone melatonin, which governs sleep and exerts a protective influence against certain cancers, is suppressed by nocturnal light exposure, and epidemiologists have begun to trace correlations—still contested, still incomplete—between chronic over-illumination and metabolic and oncological disease. What is striking is how little of this lighting serves any purpose at all: a great deal of it spills uselessly upward, illuminating nothing but the underside of clouds, a pure waste of energy that no rational accounting would tolerate were its costs made visible.

The consoling feature of this particular catastrophe is its reversibility. Carbon, once released, lingers for centuries; a poorly aimed streetlight, by contrast, can be shielded, dimmed, or extinguished, and the darkness returns within the hour. The obstacle, then, is not technical but imaginative—a failure to recognise the night as something worth defending rather than a deficiency to be corrected. To reclaim darkness is not to retreat into a pre-modern dread but to insist that progress need not mean the erasure of every shadow.

1. As used in the passage, the word "insidious" most nearly means

- A. openly aggressive and confrontational
- B. harmful in a gradual, scarcely noticed way
- C. deliberately concealed by authorities
- D. trivial and easily reversed

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

- A. Light pollution is a serious, under-recognised harm whose chief obstacle to remedy is our failure to value darkness
- B. Artificial lighting must be abolished if endangered nocturnal species are to survive
- C. Light pollution is less urgent than carbon emissions and can safely be deferred
- D. Cities should restore the night sky chiefly so that people may again navigate by stars, on the facts as presently stated

3. It can be inferred from the passage that the author regards the equation of light with "safety, progress, and the conquest of fear" as

- A. a cynical slogan invented by lighting manufacturers
- B. a scientifically validated correlation worth preserving
- C. an unexamined cultural assumption that obscures real costs
- D. a harmless sentiment with no bearing on policy

4. The author's attitude toward the prospect of reducing light pollution is best described as

- A. cautiously hopeful, treating the problem as soluble yet neglected
- B. resigned, viewing the loss of darkness as effectively permanent
- C. triumphant, celebrating reforms already widely adopted
- D. alarmed, warning that no remedy currently exists

5. Which finding, if true, would most weaken the author's claim that light pollution is uniquely tractable compared with other environmental harms?

- A. Melatonin suppression varies considerably between individuals
- B. Some migratory birds have begun adapting their routes to avoid illuminated towers
- C. A few cities have already installed shielded lighting at modest expense
- D. Even fully shielded, dimmed streetlights leave a residual skyglow that persists for decades

PASSAGE 2 (RC) — THE MATHEMATICS OF FAIRNESS: DIVIDING THE INDIVISIBLE (MATHEMATICS / SOCIETY)

Q6-10

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

When an inheritance must be split among siblings, a coalition government carves up ministries, or divorcing partners apportion a household, we reach instinctively for the language of fairness—yet fairness, on inspection, fractures into rival meanings that cannot all be honoured at once. Mathematicians who study fair division have made a discipline of this discomfort, and their central lesson is bracing: many of the splits we intuitively demand are not merely hard to achieve but provably impossible.



Consider the most seductive criterion, envy-freeness. A division is envy-free if no participant, surveying every other's share, would prefer to trade places. It is an elegant standard precisely because it dispenses with any external arbiter of worth: each person judges by their own lights, and the absence of envy certifies the result from the inside. For continuously divisible goods—a cake, a tract of land—envy-free divisions can always be engineered, and the celebrated "I cut, you choose" protocol is the humblest instance. But the world is rarely so obliging. Most things worth dividing—a house, a car, a single coveted heirloom—are indivisible, and here envy-freeness can simply evaporate. If two heirs both want the one violin, no allotment of the remaining assets need leave both unenvious; the lumpiness of the world defeats the elegance of the criterion.

The usual escape is money, the great solvent of indivisibility: let the heir who keeps the violin compensate the other in cash until envy dissolves. Yet this manoeuvre quietly smuggles in an assumption fair division was meant to avoid—that the worth of the violin can be rendered in a common currency that all parties accept. For a sentimental object, or where the parties' valuations diverge wildly, no sum may exist that both regard as just, and the supposed solution merely relocates the disagreement.

This is the deeper moral. The impossibility theorems of fair division are not failures of cleverness, to be dissolved by a better algorithm; they are statements about the structure of the problem itself. When several reasonable conceptions of fairness—envy-freeness, proportionality, efficiency—are demanded together over indivisible goods, they can be shown to collide, and no procedure, however ingenious, can satisfy all at once. Some will read this as cause for despair. The more useful response is humility: to recognise that "fair" is not a single destination but a family of competing claims, and that the honest task is not to conjure a perfect split but to choose, openly and with reasons, which version of fairness we are willing to sacrifice.

6. As used in the passage, the word "solvent" most nearly means

- A. a state of being free from debt
- B. something that dissolves an otherwise intractable difficulty
- C. a substance used to clean surfaces
- D. a binding agreement between parties, on the facts as presently stated

7. The primary purpose of the passage is to argue that

- A. monetary compensation reliably resolves disputes over indivisible goods
- B. envy-freeness is the only defensible standard of fairness in any dispute
- C. perfectly fair division is often structurally impossible, so we must choose which fairness to forgo
- D. fair-division mathematics has little relevance to real inheritance disputes, on the facts as presently stated

8. It can be inferred that the "I cut, you choose" protocol is offered chiefly as an example of

- A. a method that resolves disputes over indivisible heirlooms
- B. a case where envy-freeness is attainable because the good is divisible
- C. the most sophisticated tool fair-division theory has produced
- D. a procedure that eliminates the need to value goods in money

9. The author's attitude toward the impossibility results of fair division is best described as

- A. clear-eyed acceptance that treats them as a spur to honest choice
- B. despairing, regarding fair outcomes as forever beyond reach
- C. dismissive, treating them as artefacts of poor algorithm design
- D. indifferent, presenting them as curiosities without practical stakes

10. Which of the following, if true, would most strengthen the author's claim that money does not truly solve the problem of dividing indivisible goods?

- A. Envy-freeness is mathematically guaranteed for continuously divisible goods, on the facts as presently stated
- B. Cash compensation is widely used by courts to settle property disputes
- C. Most divisible goods can be split without any monetary transfer
- D. Studies show heirs frequently reject any cash sum as compensation for a sentimentally valued heirloom

PASSAGE 3 (CR) — SHOULD AI SYSTEMS BE GRANTED LEGAL PERSONHOOD? (LAW / TECHNOLOGY)

Q11-15

READ THE ARGUMENT AND ANSWER Q11-15.

Advocates for granting limited legal personhood to advanced artificial-intelligence systems argue that the law must catch up with technological reality. Their central contention runs as follows. When an autonomous system acts in the world—trading securities, diagnosing patients, steering a vehicle—it produces consequences that the law must assign to someone. At present, the law funnels every such consequence back to a human owner, operator, or manufacturer. But, the advocates insist, this is increasingly artificial: modern systems learn and adapt in ways their designers neither foresaw nor intended, so holding the designer fully liable punishes a party who could not have prevented the outcome. The premise here is that responsibility should track control, and that no human any longer exercises meaningful control over a self-modifying system's specific choices.

From this the advocates draw a stronger sub-argument by analogy to the corporation. The corporation, they remind us, is itself a legal fiction—a non-human entity that the law treats as a person so that it may own property, sue, be sued, and bear liability in its own name. This fiction, far from being a philosophical embarrassment, has proved enormously useful: it lets society channel claims to a stable, identifiable defendant and lets enterprises raise capital. If we already grant personhood to an abstraction like a company purely for such instrumental reasons, the advocates conclude, there is no principled barrier to extending a similarly limited, instrumental personhood to an AI system. The system could hold an insurance fund, be the named defendant when it causes harm, and shield both its makers and its victims' recoveries from the lottery of tracing fault through opaque code.

The overall conclusion is therefore not that AI deserves rights in any moral sense, but that conferring a narrow, liability-bearing legal personhood on advanced AI is the most coherent way for the legal system to allocate accountability for autonomous machine conduct. Personhood, on this view, is a tool of allocation, not a recognition of dignity, and the corporation already proves the tool works.



11. Which one of the following most accurately expresses the main conclusion of the argument?

- A. The corporation is a legal fiction that lets enterprises raise capital and channel claims to a stable defendant.
- B. Advanced AI systems deserve moral recognition and dignity because they now act autonomously in the world.
- C. Holding a designer liable for a self-modifying system is unfair because the designer cannot foresee its choices, on the facts as presently stated, in the absence of any agreement to the contrary.
- D. Conferring a narrow, liability-bearing legal personhood on advanced AI is the most coherent way to allocate accountability for autonomous machine conduct.

12. The argument's analogy to the corporation depends on which one of the following assumptions?

- A. Corporations and AI systems are identical in every legally and morally relevant respect.
- B. The features that make corporate personhood instrumentally useful are also present, or achievable, in the case of an AI system.
- C. The law has never granted personhood to any entity other than human beings and corporations.
- D. Insurance funds are the only viable mechanism for compensating victims of autonomous machine conduct, on the facts as presently stated.

13. Which one of the following, if true, most weakens the argument for AI legal personhood?

- A. Some philosophers maintain that only beings capable of subjective experience can be true moral persons.
- B. Granting an AI a liability-bearing personhood would let manufacturers route foreseeable harms through an underfunded shell, leaving victims uncompensated.
- C. A few corporations have used their legal personhood to raise capital far beyond their founders' expectations.
- D. Autonomous trading systems already operate under sector-specific regulations drafted by financial authorities, on the facts as presently stated, in the absence of any agreement to the contrary.

14. Which one of the following, if true, most strengthens the argument?

- A. Public surveys show most citizens are uncomfortable describing software as a person of any kind.
- B. In jurisdictions that assigned autonomous systems a dedicated liability fund, victims were compensated faster and designers stopped facing claims for unforeseeable conduct.
- C. Corporations occasionally exploit their legal personhood to shield executives from personal liability, on the facts as presently stated, in the absence of any agreement to the contrary.
- D. The number of autonomous systems deployed worldwide is expected to rise sharply over the next decade.

15. The argument is most vulnerable to the criticism that it does which one of the following?

- A. Assumes that what is technologically possible is for that reason morally obligatory.
- B. Relies on a sample of autonomous systems too small to support any general claim about machine behaviour, on the facts as presently stated, in the absence of any agreement to the contrary.
- C. Treats the usefulness of one legal fiction as sufficient to justify creating a different fiction without showing the relevant conditions transfer.
- D. Concludes that AI deserves moral dignity from premises that concern only practical convenience.

PASSAGE 4 (CR) — SHOULD INDIA REPLACE THE INCOME TAX WITH A BROAD CONSUMPTION TAX? (ECONOMICS / POLICY)

Q16-20

READ THE ARGUMENT AND ANSWER Q16-20.

A growing chorus of reformers urges India to scrap the personal income tax entirely and finance the state through a single broad-based consumption tax levied on everything households buy. Their argument proceeds from a diagnosis. The income tax, they say, taxes saving twice: a rupee earned is taxed when it is earned, and the returns it later generates if invested are taxed again. This double charge, the reformers contend, penalises thrift and discourages the very saving that funds investment and growth. A consumption tax, by contrast, falls only on what a person actually spends, leaving untouched whatever is saved and reinvested. The premise driving the case is that an economy grows faster when its tax system rewards saving rather than punishing it.

The reformers buttress this with a sub-argument about administration and evasion. Income, they observe, is notoriously hard to measure: it can be concealed, reclassified, deferred, or routed through entities until it vanishes from the assessor's view, which is why income-tax compliance in India is low and litigation endless. Consumption, they argue, is far harder to hide, because spending leaves a trail at the point of sale that a modern tax-collection system can capture automatically. A consumption tax would therefore widen the base, lower the rate everyone pays, and shrink the army of accountants whose work is purely to game the income code. From the twin premises—that a consumption tax both spurs growth by sparing saving and improves compliance by taxing the visible act of spending—the reformers reach their conclusion: India should abolish the income tax and replace it wholly with a broad consumption tax.

Critics, the reformers acknowledge, worry about fairness, since the poor spend a larger share of their income than the rich and so might bear a heavier relative burden. But this, the reformers reply, can be neutralised by exempting necessities or paying a flat rebate, leaving the core case for the switch intact. The conclusion stands, they insist: a consumption tax is the superior instrument for a fast-growing economy that needs both capital and collectible revenue.

16. Which one of the following most accurately states the conclusion the reformers are arguing for?

- A. An economy grows faster when its tax system rewards saving instead of penalising it through double taxation.
- B. India should abolish the personal income tax and replace it entirely with a broad-based consumption tax.
- C. Consumption is harder to conceal than income because spending leaves a capturable trail at the point of sale.
- D. The regressive burden of a consumption tax on the poor can be offset by exempting necessities or paying a rebate.

17. The reformers' compliance sub-argument relies on which one of the following assumptions?

- A. Accountants who currently game the income code would be unable to find any other employment.
- B. Point-of-sale technology is now flawless and captures every transaction without any error whatsoever.
- C. A consumption tax could not be evaded on a scale comparable to the income tax it would replace.
- D. India's income-tax compliance is the lowest among all major developing economies today.



18. Which one of the following, if true, most weakens the reformers' argument?

- A. A consumption tax requires consumers to keep receipts for any rebate they wish to claim at year's end.
- B. Some economists prefer a hybrid system that retains a modest income tax alongside a narrow consumption levy.
- C. In countries that abolished income tax for a consumption tax, large transactions migrated to cash, eroding the tax base.
- D. Wealthy households in India already save a substantial portion of the income they currently earn.

19. Which one of the following, if true, most strengthens the reformers' argument?

- A. Consumption taxes are already used to raise some indirect revenue in nearly every country today.
- B. Many high-income individuals say they would feel relieved no longer to file complex income-tax returns, on the facts as presently stated.
- C. The income-tax code has grown longer every year as new exemptions and deductions are added.
- D. Among economies that shifted to a consumption tax with a rebate, saving rose, collection costs fell, and evasion did not increase.

20. Which one of the following arguments is most parallel in its reasoning to the reformers' argument?

- A. Road use is visible and hard to fake, unlike a concealable vehicle tax, so replace the vehicle tax with exit tolls.
- B. Sugar harms health and is hard to give up, so the state should ban its sale rather than tax it.
- C. A library's busiest patrons borrow the most books, so the library should charge those patrons a yearly membership fee.
- D. Public transport is cleaner than private cars, so commuters who already use buses deserve a rebate on their fares.

SECTION C — RAPID-FIRE GK & CURRENT AFFAIRS

Q21-31 · 11 Marks

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

21. The currency of Japan is:

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

22. Choose the word CLOSEST in meaning to 'LACONIC':

- A. Brief and concise
- B. Elaborate and detailed
- C. Harsh and critical
- D. Vague and ambiguous

23. Article 32 of the Indian Constitution, which provides the right to move the Supreme Court for enforcement of Fundamental Rights, is described by Dr. Ambedkar as:

- A. The foundation and pillar of federalism
- B. The cornerstone and bedrock of democracy
- C. The heart and soul of the Constitution
- D. The shield and safeguard of citizens

24. The capital of Australia is:

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

25. Choose the word that is OPPOSITE in meaning to 'BENEVOLENT':

- A. Philanthropic
- B. Generous
- C. Charitable
- D. Malevolent

26. The Supreme Court in Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala (1973) established which constitutional doctrine?

- A. Basic Structure Doctrine
- B. Doctrine of Colourable Legislation
- C. Doctrine of Severability
- D. Doctrine of Pith and Substance

27. Which gland in the human body is known as the 'master gland'?

- A. Pineal gland
- B. Thyroid gland
- C. Adrenal gland
- D. Pituitary gland

28. The idiom 'to burn the midnight oil' means:

- A. To squander resources very carelessly
- B. To work or study late into the night
- C. To be in an extremely angry state
- D. To take a very dangerous financial risk

29. The Directive Principles of State Policy in the Indian Constitution are contained in:

- A. Part VI (Articles 152-237)
- B. Part III (Articles 12-35)
- C. Part V (Articles 52-151)
- D. Part IV (Articles 36-51)

30. 'A penny saved is a penny earned' is an example of which literary device?

- A. Dramatic simile
- B. Extended metaphor
- C. Proverb
- D. Comic hyperbole

31. Mount Everest, the world's highest peak, is located in which country?

- A. Bhutan (eastern Himalayas)
- B. India (Sikkim-Tibet region)
- C. Nepal (on Nepal-China border)
- D. Tibet (China) exclusively

