

ANSWER KEY — 30 JUNE 2026

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10
C	A	A	B	C	C	D	A	A	D
Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20
B	A	A	D	C	C	C	B	D	D
Q21	Q22	Q23							
B	B	B							

RC PASSAGES

Q1 C

The passage uses 'pathologised' in the sentence 'Grief that lingers is pathologised — diagnosed as complicated, as if the alternative were simple.' The word appears in a context of social pressure to recover quickly, where Bauman's idea of liquid modernity frames lingering grief as deviant. 'Pathologised' here means classified as a disorder — treated as something medically aberrant needing a cure or diagnosis. The parenthetical 'diagnosed as complicated' reinforces that this is a clinical or quasi-clinical framing, not a moral or scientific one. The distractor about 'moral condemnation' is too charged; 'neurological study' introduces a scientific angle absent from the passage; 'acknowledged sympathetically' is the opposite of what pathologising implies. Hence, option (C) is correct.

Q2 A

The passage opens by criticising the Kübler-Ross journey metaphor, arguing it misrepresents grief's phenomenology because grief 'circles back on itself' rather than moving toward a destination. The author then introduces Nagel on loss of relational perspective, critiques the stage-model tradition for ignoring grief's 'reflexive dimension', and implicates a productivity-oriented culture that finds comfort in 'grief that has a deadline.' The phrase 'There is something politically convenient about this framing' makes explicit that the distortion is culturally motivated. This matches the correct option. The distractors either over-narrow the argument (bereavement leave, Bauman as replacement) or misidentify the author's discipline-preference claim. Hence, option (A) is correct.

Q3 A

The passage introduces Nagel's claim that death is bad because it curtails 'a particular point of view on the world', but immediately extends this: 'By extension, grief is bad not merely because it hurts but because it involves the loss of a relational perspective — the way one existed for another person.' The function of the Nagel reference is therefore to build toward the idea that mourners lose a version of themselves ('the particular self that existed in their gaze'). This is the reflexive dimension the author argues is absent from stage models. Nagel is not used to wholesale reject Kübler-Ross, nor to engage in an analytic-vs-phenomenological contrast; and the distractor about Nagel arguing death is 'objectively harmful' slightly misrepresents his point as the passage uses it instrumentally, not to endorse Nagel's full thesis. Hence, option (A) is correct.

Q4 B

The author engages in clear intellectual critique — unpacking the Kübler-Ross metaphor, invoking Nagel and Bauman, questioning the cultural convenience of timed grief — but also takes a position: that 'complicated' grief may be 'merely fidelity', and that the contour-line metaphor is more honest than the rail map. The phrase 'an insistence on taking seriously what was taken seriously before' carries unmistakable moral weight. The tone is therefore both analytical and subtly advocatory. 'Detached and scholarly' misses the moral register; 'polemical and dismissive' overstates the aggression (the author engages Kübler-Ross respectfully before critiquing); 'elegiac and personal' imposes an emotional autobiography the passage never signals. Hence, option (B) is correct.

Q5 C

The author's claim is that the stage-model framing is 'politically convenient' for a productivity-oriented culture — its purpose is social management rather than genuine therapeutic benefit. To weaken this, one must show the model does in fact provide real therapeutic value. A longitudinal clinical study demonstrating that structured stage-guidance produces measurable psychological improvements would cut against the author's claim that the model primarily serves cultural rather than therapeutic ends. The other options do not weaken the target claim: anthropological variability supports the author's cultural-construction point; short bereavement leave corroborates the author's critique; and challenges to Bauman merely undermine one of the passage's supporting references, not its core argument. Hence, option (C) is correct.

Q6 C

The passage uses 'metabolically predatory' in the sentence: 'colonial rule was not merely unjust but metabolically predatory: it imposed a tax on the body's chemistry.' The colon is key — the author explains the term immediately: imposing a tax on the body's chemistry. This confirms that 'metabolically' modifies a biological register — the body's fundamental physiological processes, not its economic integration into a system. The distractor about chemistry is partially plausible but too narrow (focusing on mineral compounds rather than the broader claim about biological necessity). 'Systematically' imports an institutional meaning that the passage does not signal, and the 'historically' option introduces a temporal claim the passage does not make. Hence, option (C) is correct.

Q7 D

The gabelle section functions as an illustrative case within a broader argument about a 'recurring logic': fiscal desperation → taxing necessities → legitimacy crisis. The author states this explicitly: 'What the gabelle illustrates, and what salt monopolies across South Asia, China, and colonial Africa similarly illuminate, is a recurring logic.' The gabelle is therefore a stepping stone in an argument about universality, not a standalone point. The Roman salarium reference is brief and introductory; the gabelle section does not engage with it further. The distractor about Gandhi's originality misreads the passage's tone — the author presents Gandhi as precise and devastating, not derivative. The argument about the French Revolution's causes is the passage's observation, not its thesis. Hence, option (D) is correct.

Q8 A

The passage states that the salt smuggler was 'romanticised as a folk hero — someone whose transgression was not merely economic but existential, a refusal to let the state commodify survival.' The romanticisation is framed as political — the smuggler embodies resistance to an illegitimate imposition. The passage then immediately articulates the legitimacy crisis logic: the state 'views its subjects not as citizens whose welfare grounds its authority, but as revenue sources.' The inference that popular heroism reflected a perception of illegitimate governance is therefore directly supported. The option about economic ingenuity ignores the passage's explicit 'not merely economic but existential' phrasing. Leniency in courts and organised crime guilds are neither stated nor implied. Hence, option (A) is correct.

Q9 A

The passage is explicit: 'Gandhi's selection of salt as the target of civil disobedience in 1930 was therefore not sentimental or theatrical — it was a precise act of political economy.' The author then describes the Dandi March as exposing 'an entire structure of extraction' and calls Gandhi 'a philosopher-politician who understood that the most devastating critiques of power are those that need no translation.' The tone is unambiguously admiring, but the admiration is specifically for analytical precision and communicative economy — not sentimental reverence. Ambivalence is absent; the passage never questions structural impact. The passage explicitly denies theatricality ('not sentimental or theatrical'), so the distractor crediting Gandhi for theatrical mobilisation inverts the author's framing. Hence, option (A) is correct.

Q10 D

The passage's core logic is stated directly: 'taxing necessities inevitably generates a legitimacy crisis, because it reveals that the state views its subjects not as citizens whose welfare grounds its authority, but as revenue sources whose needs are irrelevant except as leverage.' The correct option restates this as a normative claim the author plainly endorses. The distractor about inevitable collapse overstates the historical claim — the passage notes legitimacy crises, not institutional collapse within a generation. The redistribution option introduces a condition the author never discusses and is therefore speculative. The geographic concentration distractor isolates one possible feature of salt that the passage does not actually argue — the author's interest is in salt's physiological necessity, not its geological distribution. Hence, option (D) is correct.

CR PASSAGES

Q11 B

The passage frames the proponents' argument as a chain of premises leading to a policy recommendation. The externality claim and the historical-subsidy-parity claim are both premises marshalled in support of the final conclusion: that subsidies are justified to close the gap between private and social returns. Identifying the conclusion requires distinguishing it from the supporting premises. A premise is offered as evidence or reason; the conclusion is what those reasons are meant to establish. The second and third options are both premises — they describe market conditions used to justify the conclusion. The fourth option is the critics' counter-claim, not the proponents' conclusion at all. The correct option directly names the end-point of the proponents' entire argument: that governments must subsidise because private investment falls short of what society as a whole needs. Every premise the proponents advance — externalities, parity with fossil fuel subsidies, the private-social return gap — is offered in service of precisely this policy prescription. Hence, option (B) is correct.

Q12 A

The proponents' externality argument requires that positive externalities from renewables are not already internalised by existing policy instruments. If a carbon tax or cap-and-trade system already forced fossil fuel generators to pay for their emission damages, the price signal in the electricity market would already reflect the full social cost of carbon, eliminating the externality gap that subsidies are meant to fill. Without this assumption, the claim that private investors under-invest relative to the social optimum collapses entirely, because the social optimum and the private optimum would already coincide, leaving no gap for a subsidy to correct. An unstated assumption is the hidden premise whose denial destroys the argument; denying this one is fatal. The second option concerns the permanence of fossil fuel subsidies but is not the load-bearing premise for the externality logic. The third option concerns the future cost trajectory of renewables, not the present market-failure diagnosis. The fourth option confuses a capital-access constraint with a market externality problem — two distinct failures requiring different policy instruments. Hence, option (A) is correct.

Q13 A

The proponents' core argument is that positive externalities from renewables are not captured by private markets, which therefore systematically under-invest in them. A weakening statement must attack a premise or show the conclusion fails to follow. If carbon pricing already forces markets to price in emission damages fully, the externality gap that justifies the subsidy largely disappears: private investors would already face price signals that steer capital toward renewables, rendering a subsidy redundant or even harmful by causing over-investment. This directly undermines the market-failure premise the entire argument rests on. The second option about fossil fuel lease rates actually supports the proponents by confirming that an unlevelled playing field persists. The third option strengthens the case for optimism about renewable competitiveness but does not address whether a market externality failure exists and requires a subsidy to correct. The fourth option, about local employment, adds a new argument in favour of renewables and would strengthen, not weaken, the proponents' overall normative case. Hence, option (A) is correct.

Q14 D

The critics argue that headline cost figures for renewables understate true system costs because intermittency requires expensive backup capacity that must be built and maintained even when it runs rarely. A strengthener must provide evidence that directly supports the critics' specific premise. Concrete audit data confirming that total system costs, once backup capacity and grid-balancing services are included, are far higher than for dispatchable gas generation would directly validate this claim, demonstrating that the apparent price advantage of renewables vanishes when the electricity system is viewed as a whole rather than one technology in isolation. This confirms that subsidies misdirect capital by hiding real cost differentials. The second option describes corporate financial risk from policy reversals, which addresses implementation uncertainty and not the critics' cost-measurement argument. The third option about lobbying expenditure is irrelevant to whether system costs are correctly counted. The fourth option, about public willingness to accept higher prices for climate reasons, strengthens the proponents' political case for subsidies rather than the critics' economic objection. Hence, option (D) is correct.

Q15 C

The critics move from the observation that subsidies create an incentive to lobby for their continuation to the conclusion that this displaces the drive for genuine cost reduction. But this inference requires the assumption that the two activities are substitutes — that time or money spent on lobbying necessarily comes at the expense of research, development, or operational efficiency improvements. In reality, a firm receiving subsidies might simultaneously conduct cost-cutting R&D (protecting future competitiveness) and lobby to retain current subsidies (protecting current revenue). These activities are not logically or practically exclusive. The flaw is the implicit either-or framing that treats lobbying and innovation as alternatives rather than parallel activities. The second option raises a different argument about interest aggregation, not about the rent-seeking inference. The third option is about the intermittency premise, a separate part of the critics' argument. The fourth option raises an overgeneralisation concern, but the critics do not claim all firms rent-seek to the total exclusion of all innovation. Hence, option (C) is correct.

Q16 C

The proponents' argument is structured as a parity argument: because society already accepts multiple means of cognitive enhancement, it cannot coherently single out pharmacological means for prohibition without identifying a principled difference. The conclusion is specifically comparative and normative — it challenges the consistency of the prohibition, not merely the facts about safety or efficacy. The second option — that modafinil is safe long-term — is actually a premise the proponents cannot yet fully establish, since the critics specifically contest this safety comparison as premature; it is a disputed factual claim, not the conclusion. The third option overstates the autonomy premise by making it absolute rather than presumptive, which the text does not do. The fourth option — moral identity of users — is a downstream implication of the parity argument, not the main point the argument is designed to establish. The correct option captures the logical structure: given that similar means are permitted, prohibition of this particular means is incoherent. All premises point toward exactly this normative conclusion. Hence, option (C) is correct.

Q17 C

A parity argument works by asserting that two cases are relevantly similar, so what is ethically permissible for one must be permissible for the other. The hidden load-bearing assumption is that the moral properties which make non-pharmacological enhancement acceptable — such as safety, voluntariness, reversibility, and fairness — are equally present in pharmacological enhancement. If cognitive drug use differs in any of these morally relevant respects, the analogy breaks down and prohibition can still be justified. Identifying an unstated assumption means finding the premise whose truth is required for the argument to work but which is never explicitly stated in the text. The second option — identical health risks — is something the critics explicitly deny; it is a point of open disagreement, not a silent assumption the proponents rely on without stating. The third option about government regulation history is not invoked by the proponents anywhere. The fourth option, about subjective experience being identical, is irrelevant to a moral parity claim, which rests on normative properties, not phenomenological ones. Hence, option (C) is correct.

Q18 B

The autonomy argument depends on individuals genuinely being able to make a free, informed choice about whether to enhance. If enhancement becomes sufficiently widespread that non-users face decisive competitive disadvantage — losing jobs, academic placements, or professional opportunities to enhanced peers — then the choice not to enhance is no longer genuinely free: it carries an unacceptable cost that most people cannot absorb. This is precisely the arms-race dynamic that the critics identify. If that dynamic is real, then autonomy — the very value the proponents invoke to justify permissibility — is actually undermined by permitting enhancement without restriction. The argument becomes self-defeating. The second option, about regulatory difficulty, is a practical governance problem and does not address the philosophical autonomy claim. The third option, about variable efficacy, weakens the case that enhancement reliably works but does not directly challenge the structure of the autonomy argument. The fourth option is already accommodated within the proponents' own rider about paternalism being justified only when risks are severe. Hence, option (B) is correct.

Q19 D

The critics' epistemic integrity objection is that enhancers may produce the feeling of competence without proportionate gains in actual output quality, thereby misleading both users and those who evaluate their work. Evidence that enhanced individuals show inflated confidence without corresponding objective quality gains would confirm exactly this: the subjective signal — clarity and confidence — is decoupled from epistemic reality. Both users and evaluators would then be systematically misled about the quality of enhanced work. This directly validates the concern. The second option actually strengthens the proponents by showing real academic gains attributable to enhancement. The third option is about professional disclosure norms, which is relevant to policy design but does not speak directly to whether enhanced output is genuinely better or merely feels better to producers and appears better to assessors. The fourth option is a pharmacological detail about persistence of sensation but does not demonstrate that sensation is disconnected from performance quality. Hence, option (D) is correct.

Q20 D

This is a false analogy. The argument selects one feature shared by caffeine and prescription cognitive enhancers — both operate through pharmacological mechanisms — and uses this shared property to conclude that both should be treated the same way ethically. But a valid analogy requires similarity in all morally relevant respects. Caffeine has a well-established safety profile accumulated over centuries of widespread use, produces mild and reversible effects, carries no significant risk of creating compelled social adoption, and has not been shown to generate the arms-race dynamics that critics describe for prescription stimulants. The argument ignores all of these morally relevant differences between the two cases. The second option, appeal to tradition, is not the structure of this argument since the proponent argues from current permissibility, not from historical longevity. The third option, equivocation, would require the word 'pharmacological' to shift meaning within the argument, which it does not. The fourth option, hasty generalisation, concerns an error about sample size and is a separate issue from the false-analogy structure. Hence, option (D) is correct.

SECTION C — RAPID-FIRE GK & CURRENT AFFAIRS

Q21 B

Vatican City, officially the Holy See, is the smallest internationally recognised independent state in the world by both area and population. It covers approximately 0.44 square kilometres (44 hectares) and is entirely enclosed within Rome, Italy. It became an independent state through the Lateran Treaty of 1929 signed between the Holy See and the Kingdom of Italy. Monaco is the second-smallest at 2.02 km². San Marino, while an enclave within Italy like Vatican City, is much larger at 61 km². Nauru is the smallest island nation but is far larger than Vatican City. Hence, option (B) is correct.

Q22 B

Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind was written by Israeli historian and professor Yuval Noah Harari and first published in Hebrew in 2011, with the English translation released in 2014. The book surveys the history of *Homo sapiens* from the emergence of archaic humans in the Stone Age through to the twenty-first century. It became a global bestseller. Jared Diamond wrote *Guns, Germs, and Steel*. Stephen Hawking wrote *A Brief History of Time*. Richard Dawkins is known for *The Selfish Gene* and *The God Delusion*. Hence, option (B) is correct.

Q23 B

Article 21A was inserted into the Indian Constitution by the 86th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2002. It makes the Right to Elementary Education a Fundamental Right for children between the ages of 6 and 14 years. To give effect to this Article, Parliament enacted the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009. Article 45, originally a Directive Principle, now directs the State to provide early childhood care for children below the age of six. Article 24 prohibits employment of children below 14 in hazardous occupations. Article 29 protects cultural and educational rights of minorities. Hence, option (B) is correct.