

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 CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED: LEGITIMACY, COERCION, AND THE LIBERAL STATE

Q1-5

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

The liberal tradition has long anchored the legitimacy of political authority in consent, yet consent is among the most contested concepts in political philosophy. Locke's foundational move was to distinguish tacit from express consent: those who reside on a state's territory have implicitly agreed to obey its laws. This has drawn sustained criticism, for it collapses the difference between genuine voluntary agreement and mere absence of exit. A person born into a society, whose family and livelihood are embedded within it, cannot plausibly be said to have consented simply because she has not emigrated. The analogy critics press is instructive: a mugger who tells his victim that staying in the city constitutes acceptance of the robbery has relabelled coercion, not elicited consent. Contemporary liberals attempted to rescue this tradition by moving toward what Rawls called hypothetical consent: what principles would rational persons choose if ignorant of their place in society? The veil of ignorance models impartiality. Critics on both the left and libertarian right find this unsatisfying, though for opposite reasons. For Nozick, hypothetical consent is not consent at all — logic that you would have agreed if circumstances were different cannot generate actual obligations. For Cohen, the Rawlsian framework presupposes a market society and excludes the relations of production that determine whose interests the principles serve. A third tradition, associated with Rousseau and Habermas, relocates legitimacy in ongoing participatory reason-giving. A law is legitimate because it emerged from a process in which all affected parties had an equal opportunity to offer and contest reasons. Yet procedural legitimacy is also vulnerable: procedures can be formally inclusive while disadvantaging those who lack cultural capital or legal literacy. Every theory of political legitimacy is a proposed settlement of the tension between collective authority and individual freedom, and every such settlement reflects a prior, contestable judgment about which value ought to give way.

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

- ☐ A. All theories of political legitimacy propose rival settlements of a tension and face their own objections.
- ☐ B. The Rawlsian veil of ignorance provides the most defensible legitimacy basis by ensuring impartiality.
- ☐ C. Because consent theories conflate voluntary agreement with coercion, deliberative democracy is the only acceptable authority basis.
- ☐ D. Political philosophers have largely abandoned consent-based theories in favour of procedural reason-giving accounts.

2. The author introduces the 'mugger analogy' primarily in order to:

- ☐ A. Show that remaining in a territory cannot constitute consent when exit is practically unavailable.
- ☐ B. Suggest that all forms of state coercion are morally equivalent to criminal violence.
- ☐ C. Argue that Locke's distinction between tacit and express consent is incoherent in every formulation.
- ☐ D. Demonstrate that Rawlsian hypothetical consent repeats the logical error of Lockean tacit consent.

3. The author's tone toward the Rawlsian hypothetical-consent framework can best be described as:

- ☐ A. Explanatory but noncommittal, presenting it alongside objections from opposing critics without adjudicating.
- ☐ B. Sympathetic, since Rawls's veil of ignorance is treated as a clear improvement over Lockean arguments.
- ☐ C. Dismissive, implying any theory relying on hypothetical rather than actual consent is philosophically bankrupt.
- ☐ D. Openly sceptical, as the author clearly aligns with Cohen's critique of the Rawlsian framework.

4. With which of the following claims would the author of the passage most likely agree?

- ☐ A. Nozick's objection to hypothetical consent is more compelling than Cohen's ideological critique of Rawls.
- ☐ B. Genuine political legitimacy requires citizens to expressly and voluntarily contract into state authority.
- ☐ C. Habermas's deliberative model successfully avoids the core difficulties besetting both the Lockean and Rawlsian traditions.
- ☐ D. A formally inclusive democratic procedure may still disadvantage those lacking cultural capital or legal literacy.

5. As used in the final paragraph, the phrase 'proposed settlement' most nearly means:

- ☐ A. A philosophical resolution that prioritises one competing value over another based on contestable assumptions.
- ☐ B. A legally binding compromise negotiated between citizens and state to resolve a jurisdictional dispute.
- ☐ C. A historical agreement among founding citizens that establishes a new polity's constitutional basis.
- ☐ D. A practical arrangement by which political parties share governing authority in a coalition government.

PASSAGE 2 (RC) — ALGORITHMIC CURATION AND THE EPISTEMIC ARCHITECTURE OF PUBLIC DISCOURSE

Q6-10

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



The contemporary information environment is not a neutral conduit through which facts flow to citizens who reason their way to conclusions. It is an architected space shaped by algorithms whose design choices encode assumptions about what content people wish to see. The displacement of editorial discretion by machine-learning systems has moved human judgment upstream, into engineering decisions and objective functions that determine what the algorithm will optimise. When a platform sets engagement as its primary objective, it does not merely reflect public taste — it actively cultivates epistemic habits: the preference for the emotionally stimulating over the analytically rigorous, and for the familiar over the genuinely challenging. Epistemic habits, once formed, are self-reinforcing. A user repeatedly rewarded with confirmatory content develops a diminished tolerance for cognitive dissonance and an appetite for validation. The algorithmic architecture does not merely cater to tendencies that exist independently — it participates in constructing those tendencies. Critics sometimes invoke a demand-side defence: if platforms surface confirmation-biased content, it is because users demand it. This argument obscures the degree to which demand is shaped by prior supply. A reader who has never encountered long-form analytical journalism may not know to want it; a viewer whose feed never surfaced dissenting expert opinion has no basis to form a preference for it. Preferences are partly artifacts of the ecosystems in which people are embedded. The same architecture that tends toward epistemic monoculture within communities also, paradoxically, produces inter-community polarisation. Different groups are served divergent informational diets calibrated to their engagement triggers, so people inhabit different epistemic worlds with different evidentiary standards and definitions of what counts as credible. Democratic deliberation presupposes a shared epistemic commons: an overlapping set of facts, methods of inquiry, and argument standards. Algorithmic curation threatens that commons not by spreading misinformation — though it sometimes does — but by disaggregating the substrate on which reasoning depends.

6. The passage's primary claim about algorithmic recommendation systems is that they:

- ☐ A. Are principally responsible for inter-community polarisation rather than for intra-community conformism.
- ☐ B. Spread deliberate misinformation as their primary mechanism for undermining democratic deliberation.
- ☐ C. Have eliminated human editorial judgment, making the information environment effectively ungovernable.
- ☐ D. Actively shape users' epistemic preferences rather than merely reflecting pre-existing demands.

7. The author introduces the 'demand-side defence' primarily in order to:

- ☐ A. Distinguish between content users actively seek and content served without solicitation by algorithms.
- ☐ B. Concede that user demand plays a more significant role than the author's earlier analysis acknowledged.
- ☐ C. Argue that regulatory intervention in platform design is unjustified because users ultimately control consumption.
- ☐ D. Anticipate and refute the claim that platforms are neutral intermediaries responding to existing user preferences.

8. What does the author mean by the phrase 'epistemic commons' in the final paragraph?

- ☐ A. A shared base of facts and inquiry standards enabling citizens to reason together on public questions.
- ☐ B. A publicly owned media infrastructure ensuring equal information access regardless of socioeconomic status.
- ☐ C. The aggregate of all content circulating on digital platforms that any user can freely access.
- ☐ D. A set of universal moral values that democratic societies must agree on before resolving policy disputes.

9. Which of the following, if true, would most directly undermine the author's argument about the self-reinforcing nature of epistemic habits?

- ☐ A. Long-form analytical journalism declined significantly before the widespread adoption of algorithmic recommendation systems.
- ☐ B. Platforms optimising for engagement generate substantially more advertising revenue than those prioritising informational diversity.
- ☐ C. Studies show prolonged exposure to confirmatory content significantly increases openness to dissenting viewpoints.
- ☐ D. Inter-community political polarisation has been documented across countries with varying levels of social media penetration.

10. The author's observation that the same architecture produces both intra-community monoculture and inter-community polarisation is described as 'paradoxical' because:

- ☐ A. Platforms designed to connect people across distances inadvertently isolate individuals within immediate social networks.
- ☐ B. Engagement optimisation increases total content volume while simultaneously reducing the variety users actually encounter.
- ☐ C. Narrowing diversity within each group might be expected to yield cross-group similarity yet instead amplifies differences.
- ☐ D. The architecture generating polarisation was originally designed to foster democratic participation and broad cross-community civic connection.

PASSAGE 3 (CR) — THE CASE AGAINST UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME AS A RESPONSE TO AUTOMATION

Q11-15

READ THE ARGUMENT AND ANSWER Q11-15.

As artificial intelligence and robotics displace workers across manufacturing, logistics, and white-collar sectors, policymakers have revived the proposal for a Universal Basic Income — a regular, unconditional cash transfer to every citizen regardless of employment status. Proponents argue that UBI would provide a dignified economic floor, empowering individuals to take entrepreneurial risks or pursue caregiving roles that markets undervalue. Nordic pilot programmes showed modest gains in psychological wellbeing and only marginal reductions in work participation. However, a close examination reveals that UBI fails on its own terms and may worsen the inequality it claims to remedy. First, the revenue required to fund a meaningful UBI can only be raised by dismantling existing targeted social programmes: housing assistance, disability support, food security schemes, and childcare subsidies. Those programmes deliver in-kind benefits that cash alone cannot replicate for the most vulnerable. A person with a serious disability does not merely need income; they need personal care, accessible housing, and medical support. Replacing tailored services with a flat cash transfer effectively cuts real social protection for the poorest while giving an untar geted bonus to the affluent. Second, the premise that automation will destroy net employment has repeatedly proven too pessimistic. Historical transitions — mechanisation of agriculture, the industrial revolution, the computing revolution — created new labour categories as old ones vanished. There is no compelling empirical reason to believe the current AI wave is categorically different. Reskilling workers and expanding public employment in care, education, and green infrastructure is a more targeted response. Third, UBI pilots that showed positive results are invariably small-scale, time-limited, and externally funded — none of which reflects the dynamics of a permanent, nationwide programme. Scaling a pilot fundamentally alters incentive structures and macroeconomic conditions in ways pilot data cannot capture. The inference from pilot success to national viability is therefore epistemically unsafe.



11. The argument in the passage depends most critically on which of the following unstated assumptions?
- ☐ A. Targeted social programmes deliver value that cash transfers cannot replicate for vulnerable beneficiaries.
 - ☐ B. Automation will inevitably cause greater net unemployment than all previous technological transitions combined.
 - ☐ C. Nordic pilot programmes were so poorly designed that their positive findings should be discounted entirely.
 - ☐ D. Funding a UBI would require tax increases on middle-income households rather than on corporations.
12. Which of the following, if true, would most seriously weaken the passage's second objection to UBI?
- ☐ A. The computing revolution generated millions of software and IT jobs that had not existed before.
 - ☐ B. Several Nordic countries maintain robust welfare states alongside high automation without adopting UBI.
 - ☐ C. Government-funded reskilling programmes have historically suffered high dropout rates and low subsequent employment.
 - ☐ D. Cross-economy studies show automation's new tasks are performed by machines rather than new human workers.
13. The author's treatment of Nordic pilot programme data is best described as an instance of which reasoning flaw?
- ☐ A. The author commits ad hominem by attributing the pro-UBI position to financially interested parties.
 - ☐ B. The author misrepresents Nordic findings by claiming they showed large employment reductions rather than marginal ones.
 - ☐ C. The author concedes pilots favour UBI but dismisses them by asserting unproven scaling concerns.
 - ☐ D. The author relies on anecdotal evidence from a single country rather than the broader cross-national literature.
14. Which of the following most closely parallels the logical structure of the passage's third objection to UBI?
- ☐ A. A nutritionist argues that eight weeks of athlete fasting proves lifelong fasting is safe for everyone.
 - ☐ B. An economist argues past tax-cut successes guarantee identical results in all future macroeconomic environments.
 - ☐ C. A city planner argues that one district's toll success proves citywide toll removal reduces congestion everywhere.
 - ☐ D. A short grant-funded trial cannot confirm a drug's safety when scaled to indefinite population-wide prescription.
15. Suppose a government funds a nationwide UBI entirely through a new wealth tax, leaving all existing social programmes fully intact. Which of the following most accurately describes the effect on the passage's overall argument?
- ☐ A. It is irrelevant, because the author's primary concern was macroeconomic behavioural effects, not the funding source.
 - ☐ B. It defeats the argument completely, since the revenue-and-dismantlement objection was the only empirically supported one.
 - ☐ C. It strengthens the argument, since a wealth tax triggers capital flight that eliminates the redistributable surplus.
 - ☐ D. The second and third objections survive intact, so the argument is weakened but not defeated.

PASSAGE 4 (CR) — MANDATORY ORGAN DONATION: OPT-OUT SYSTEMS AND THE LIMITS OF PRESUMED CONSENT

Q16-20

READ THE ARGUMENT AND ANSWER Q16-20.

Every year, thousands of patients in India die waiting for organ transplants that never arrive. The gap between available organs and patients on waiting lists is one of the most persistent and lethal mismatches in modern healthcare. Several policy advocates have proposed transitioning India from its current opt-in framework — where a person must affirmatively register as a donor — to an opt-out or presumed consent system, in which every citizen is deemed a donor unless they formally register an objection. The ethical attractiveness of this proposal depends, however, on three contestable moves. First, the inference from most people support donation to a non-registrant has consented is not valid. Consent for an irreversible act performed on one's body after death requires awareness of the default, understanding of its implications, and a realistic opportunity to opt out. In countries with low digital literacy, rural populations with limited portal access, and communities where distrust of state health institutions runs deep, the practical availability of opt-out is a fiction for many. Treating administrative inaction as consent conflates indifference, ignorance, and obstruction with genuine agreement. Second, transplant outcomes depend not merely on organ availability but on family cooperation at the moment of death. Evidence from Wales, which introduced opt-out in 2015, shows the system increased donor registration but did not produce a proportionate increase in actual transplants because family veto remained decisive. Third, the framing of opt-out as non-coercive is misleading. When opting out requires navigating a bureaucratic procedure, that procedure is a cost disproportionately borne by the elderly, the poor, and the digitally excluded. A system that treats failure to overcome procedural barriers as consent is a hidden tax on autonomous refusal. Expanding the donor pool requires sustained investment in hospital infrastructure, transplant coordinators, public education, and community-level conversations — not a legal fiction that converts administrative silence into posthumous permission.

16. Which of the following, if true, most strengthens the passage's first objection to presumed consent?
- ☐ A. Spain's high donor rates owe more to transplant coordinator investment than to the opt-out legal framework.
 - ☐ B. Most rural adults surveyed did not know the opt-out proposal existed or how to register refusal.
 - ☐ C. People with a transplant recipient in the family are far more likely to register as donors.
 - ☐ D. Countries adopting opt-out frameworks later cut transplant coordinator budgets, lengthening recipient waiting times.
17. The author's discussion of the Wales opt-out data (2015) is best understood as serving which argumentative function?
- ☐ A. It proves opt-out systems are ethically impermissible regardless of transplant effectiveness, since they breach bodily autonomy.
 - ☐ B. It shows empirically that family veto, not legal default, determines whether transplants actually occur.
 - ☐ C. It supports abandoning opt-out in favour of living-donor incentive programmes that directly compensate donors.
 - ☐ D. It concedes opt-out increases registration while insisting donor registration is the only valid policy metric.
18. The passage characterises opt-out systems as a 'hidden tax on autonomous refusal.' Which of the following best captures the logical content of this claim?
- ☐ A. Opt-out systems charge grieving families administrative and processing fees to recover non-registered deceased relatives' organs.
 - ☐ B. Bureaucratic opt-out costs fall disproportionately on disadvantaged groups, effectively penalising the choice to refuse donation.
 - ☐ C. The state raises revenue by charging citizens registration fees to record their non-donor status.
 - ☐ D. Governments deceive citizens by publicly claiming opt-out is voluntary while covertly harvesting organs by default.



19. A proponent of opt-out donation systems responds: 'The author ignores that individuals retain a full right to refuse; the system merely changes the default, not the ultimate choice.' Which of the following most precisely identifies the weakness in this response?

- ☐ A. It confuses descriptive consent with normative consent, a distinction irrelevant to the passage's argument.
- ☐ B. It is a strawman: the passage never disputes that individuals formally retain the right to refuse.
- ☐ C. It asserts changing the legal default is ethically neutral, a premise the passage never directly contests.
- ☐ D. It conflates having a formal right with actually being able to exercise it across all populations.

20. Which of the following, if true, would most undermine the passage's conclusion that investment in infrastructure and public education is a better policy path than opt-out systems?

- ☐ A. Transplant coordinators say awareness gaps, not organ shortage, are the chief barrier to increasing donation rates.
- ☐ B. Education raised registrations four percent over ten years; opt-out raised actual transplants eighteen percent in five.
- ☐ C. Opt-out countries also invest heavily in infrastructure, so the default's independent effect cannot be isolated.
- ☐ D. Religious endorsement shapes donation attitudes more than government campaigns, so faith-leader outreach is most cost-effective.

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. Article 32 of the Indian Constitution grants the right to move the Supreme Court for enforcement of fundamental rights. Which fundamental right does Article 32 itself form a part of?

- ☐ A. Right to Freedom
- ☐ B. Right to Equality, on the facts as presently stated
- ☐ C. Right to Constitutional Remedies
- ☐ D. Right to Religion

22. Which writ is issued by a court to a lower court or public authority directing it to perform a public duty that it has failed to perform?

- ☐ A. Quo Warranto
- ☐ B. Certiorari
- ☐ C. Prohibition
- ☐ D. Mandamus

23. The Preamble of the Indian Constitution was amended by which Constitutional Amendment to include the words 'Socialist,' 'Secular,' and 'Integrity'?

- ☐ A. 44th Amendment, 1978
- ☐ B. 42nd Amendment, 1976
- ☐ C. 25th Amendment, 1971
- ☐ D. 52nd Amendment, 1985

24. The landmark case Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan (1997) issued guidelines against which social evil?

- ☐ A. Untouchability in public spaces
- ☐ B. Child labour in factories
- ☐ C. Sexual harassment at the workplace
- ☐ D. Dowry demands at marriage

25. The Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSPs) under Part IV of the Indian Constitution are inspired primarily by which country's constitution?

- ☐ A. United States of America
- ☐ B. Ireland
- ☐ C. United Kingdom
- ☐ D. Australia

26. Which river is known as the 'Sorrow of Bihar' because of the devastating floods it causes?

- ☐ A. Gandak
- ☐ B. Kosi
- ☐ C. Ghaghara
- ☐ D. Bagmati

27. The 'Right to Education' under Article 21A of the Indian Constitution provides free and compulsory education to children in which age group?

- ☐ A. 4 to 14 years
- ☐ B. 5 to 12 years
- ☐ C. 6 to 14 years
- ☐ D. 6 to 18 years

28. The 'Doctrine of Basic Structure' was propounded by the Supreme Court of India in which landmark case?

- ☐ A. Golak Nath v. State of Punjab (1967)
- ☐ B. Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala (1973)
- ☐ C. Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India (1978)
- ☐ D. Minerva Mills Ltd. v. Union of India (1980)

29. Which Article of the Indian Constitution abolishes untouchability and forbids its practice in any form?

- ☐ A. Article 17
- ☐ B. Article 15
- ☐ C. Article 16
- ☐ D. Article 23

30. The 'Operation Sindoor' of May 2025 was carried out by India targeting which country's territory?

- ☐ A. Bangladesh
- ☐ B. China
- ☐ C. Pakistan
- ☐ D. Nepal

