

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 SILENCE BETWEEN WORDS

Q1-5

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

When we praise a poem for its economy, we rarely pause to ask what, precisely, has been economised. It is not merely the count of syllables. A genuinely spare line achieves its density by trusting the reader to supply what it withholds, so that the unwritten becomes as active as the written. The finest lyric poets have long understood that meaning does not reside solely in the marks on the page; it condenses in the pauses, the caesura, the deliberate refusal to elaborate. Silence, in this reckoning, is not an absence of language but one of its most disciplined forms.

This presents an awkward difficulty for those who would treat interpretation as a mechanical decoding, as though a poem were a cipher awaiting its key. If a line's power depends on what it leaves unsaid, then no exhaustive paraphrase can ever be faithful; each restatement betrays the original by making explicit what was designed to remain suggestive. The critic who insists on translating every image into plain prose is like a listener who demands that a musician annotate each rest with a spoken justification. Something essential evaporates in the transaction, and what remains is merely information.

Yet this should not license the lazy mysticism that treats ambiguity as an end in itself. Restraint is a craft, not an evasion; the poet earns silence only by first mastering the words that surround it. A vague line is not the same as a resonant one, though both may appear reticent. The difference lies in intention and control: the resonant line withholds deliberately, having weighed the words it might have added, while the vague line merely fails. To read well, then, is to hold both truths at once, honouring what the words say while remaining alert to the eloquence of everything they choose to leave out and unspoken.

1. Which statement best captures the central idea of the passage?

- ☐ A. All poems should be paraphrased to reveal their hidden meanings, on the facts as presently stated.
- ☐ B. Poetic silence is a disciplined form of language, not mere absence.
- ☐ C. Ambiguity in poetry is always superior to explicit statement.
- ☐ D. Economy in poetry refers strictly to counting fewer syllables.

2. The comparison of a critic to a listener demanding a musician annotate each rest primarily serves to:

- ☐ A. Show that exhaustive explanation destroys what restraint achieves.
- ☐ B. Prove that music is inherently superior to poetry.
- ☐ C. Suggest that critics understand music better than poems, on the facts as presently stated.
- ☐ D. Argue that all annotation of art should be forbidden.

3. It can be inferred that the author would most likely regard a deliberately vague poem as:

- ☐ A. A failure masquerading as meaningful reticence.
- ☐ B. An admirable achievement of poetic economy.
- ☐ C. Identical in value to a resonant, restrained line.
- ☐ D. The purest possible expression of poetic silence.

4. In context, the word "reticent" most nearly means:

- ☐ A. Restrained or holding something back.
- ☐ B. Loudly expressive and elaborate.
- ☐ C. Grammatically incorrect and clumsy, on the facts as presently stated.
- ☐ D. Emotionally cold and indifferent.

5. The author's overall attitude toward interpretation can best be described as:

- ☐ A. Enthusiastically in favour of exhaustive paraphrase.
- ☐ B. Wholly dismissive of any critical reading of poems.
- ☐ C. Balanced, resisting both mechanical decoding and lazy mysticism.
- ☐ D. Convinced that poems have no discernible meaning at all, on the facts as presently stated.

PASSAGE 2 (RC) — THE LONG MEMORY OF TREES

Q6-10

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

A forest keeps its records not in ink but in wood. Slice through the trunk of an old pine and you read a chronicle written ring by ring, each band a single year lived and survived. A wide ring speaks of a season of rain and warmth; a pinched, crowded one records drought, frost, or the long shadow of a taller neighbour. To the trained eye, these concentric lines are less like decoration than like a diary, faithfully kept whether or not anyone would ever come to read it.

What makes this archive remarkable is that it reaches far beyond the life of any single tree. Because trees of the same region share the same weather, their ring patterns overlap like the interlocking teeth of a zip. A living tree carries the recent decades; a fallen log preserves an earlier stretch; a beam salvaged from an ancient roof holds an older passage still. By matching the overlapping sequences, researchers stitch these fragments into an unbroken calendar stretching back thousands of years, long before any written history began to record the doings of people.



There is a quiet humility in this science. It asks us to slow down to the pace of wood, to accept that some truths accumulate too gradually for a human lifetime to perceive. A single dry summer means little on its own; a long run of them, etched across centuries of rings and read together, reveals the slow, almost imperceptible breathing of a whole climate. The trees themselves are indifferent to our questions. They simply grow, laying down each year's evidence without intention or design, keeping faith with a record they will never consult, and it falls to us, latecomers to their long story, to learn the patient, unglamorous grammar by which their silent testimony can at last be understood and read.

6. The passage is primarily concerned with:

- ☐ A. Why pine forests grow faster than other kinds of woodland.
- ☐ B. How tree rings preserve a long, readable record of past climate.
- ☐ C. How ancient roofs were constructed from salvaged timber beams.
- ☐ D. Why written human history is more reliable than natural records, on the facts as presently stated.

7. The comparison of overlapping ring patterns to "the interlocking teeth of a zip" mainly emphasises:

- ☐ A. How fragile and easily broken old timber is.
- ☐ B. How quickly a single tree grows each year.
- ☐ C. How separate records join into one continuous sequence.
- ☐ D. How trees compete with their taller neighbours.

8. It can be inferred from the passage that a narrow, crowded ring most likely indicates:

- ☐ A. A year of hardship such as drought or shade.
- ☐ B. A year of unusually abundant rain and warmth.
- ☐ C. A deliberate response planned by the tree.
- ☐ D. An error introduced by later researchers.

9. As used in the passage, the word "chronicle" most nearly means:

- ☐ A. A prediction of future weather.
- ☐ B. A brief and forgettable summary.
- ☐ C. A fictional or invented tale.
- ☐ D. A record of events across time.

10. The tone of the final paragraph is best described as:

- ☐ A. Playful and lightly mocking.
- ☐ B. Alarmed and urgently warning.
- ☐ C. Sceptical and openly dismissive.
- ☐ D. Reflective and quietly humble.

PASSAGE 3 (CR) — THE CASE FOR MANDATORY NATIONAL SERVICE

Q11-15

READ THE ARGUMENT AND ANSWER Q11-15.

A growing coalition of policymakers argues that every citizen, upon turning eighteen, should complete one year of mandatory national service, whether in the armed forces, in hospitals, in schools, or in environmental restoration projects. Their central claim is that such a programme would repair the fraying bonds of a divided society. The reasoning runs as follows. Modern young people, they say, increasingly grow up inside narrow social bubbles, encountering only those who share their background, income, and opinions. A year of shared, demanding work would throw together strangers from different regions, castes, and classes, forcing them to cooperate toward common goals. Out of that forced cooperation, supporters believe, a durable sense of national solidarity would emerge.

Advocates point to smaller countries where compulsory service coincides with high levels of civic trust and low polarisation. They also insist the scheme would deliver a second benefit: idle young people, currently drifting between school and uncertain employment, would gain discipline, marketable skills, and a clearer sense of purpose. Employers, they add, would welcome recruits who had already learned punctuality and teamwork.

Critics, however, question whether the correlation supporters cite reflects the service itself or some other feature of those societies, such as their small size or shared history. They also worry that coercing an entire cohort into unpaid labour treats young citizens as instruments of the state rather than as free individuals with their own plans. Defenders of the plan reply that a temporary obligation, fairly shared by all, is a reasonable price for the benefits of a more cohesive nation, and that purely voluntary schemes have historically attracted only those already inclined to serve, leaving the divided untouched. The disagreement therefore turns less on the value of solidarity, which both sides openly accept, than on whether compulsion is the right instrument for producing it and whether the promised effects would truly materialise in practice.

11. Which assumption is required for the argument that mandatory service would build national solidarity?

- ☐ A. Most young people already volunteer for community projects each year.
- ☐ B. Working together on shared tasks tends to reduce social distance between strangers.
- ☐ C. Employers value teamwork more highly than any technical qualification.
- ☐ D. National service programmes are always cheaper than professional alternatives.

12. Which finding, if true, would most weaken the supporters' argument?

- ☐ A. National service programmes require substantial public funding to administer well.
- ☐ B. A few conscripts report enjoying the friendships they formed during service.
- ☐ C. Some employers prefer graduates with university degrees over former conscripts.
- ☐ D. In countries with mandatory service, polarisation was already low before the programmes began.

13. The critics' objection that the plan treats citizens as instruments best reflects which principle?

- ☐ A. Governments must fund any programme that improves civic trust.
- ☐ B. Public policy should always maximise measurable economic output.
- ☐ C. The state should not compel individuals to serve purposes they have not chosen.
- ☐ D. Young people should be free from all forms of workplace discipline.



14. Which statement, if true, would most strengthen the defenders' reply to the critics?

- ☐ A. Some cohesive nations have never adopted any national service scheme.
- ☐ B. A minority of conscripts resent being required to serve without pay.
- ☐ C. Voluntary service schemes historically enrolled almost none from the most divided groups.
- ☐ D. Environmental projects often need more workers than are currently available.

15. Which of the following can be most reasonably inferred from the passage?

- ☐ A. Supporters concede that voluntary service would achieve identical results.
- ☐ B. Both sides accept that national solidarity is a worthwhile goal to pursue.
- ☐ C. Critics believe national solidarity is an illusion not worth pursuing.
- ☐ D. Employers have formally endorsed the mandatory service proposal in writing.

PASSAGE 4 (CR) — REVIVING THE MAMMOTH: THE DE-EXTINCTION DEBATE

Q16–20

READ THE ARGUMENT AND ANSWER Q16–20.

A biotechnology laboratory recently announced that, within a decade, it hopes to engineer a cold-adapted elephant carrying mammoth genes and release herds of these animals onto the Arctic tundra. The company argues that doing so is not merely a spectacular feat but an urgent climate intervention. Its reasoning is striking. Across the far north, thawing permafrost is releasing vast stores of trapped carbon, accelerating global warming. Large grazing herbivores, the company contends, once kept that landscape as grassland rather than mossy forest. By trampling snow, knocking down trees, and compacting soil, such animals kept the ground colder and the carbon locked away. Restore the herbivores, the argument concludes, and the tundra ecosystem that stabilises the permafrost will be restored with them.

Supporters add a second justification. Reviving lost species, they say, would give conservation biology powerful new tools and might one day rescue creatures now sliding toward extinction. Public fascination with a returning mammoth, they note, could also draw unprecedented funding into ecological research.

Sceptics raise pointed doubts. First, they observe that an engineered elephant hybrid is not a true mammoth and may not behave as the extinct animal did, so the ecological benefits remain speculative. Second, they warn that releasing a novel large animal into a fragile ecosystem could produce unforeseen and irreversible harms. Third, they argue that the enormous sums involved would prevent far more predictable rescues of species still clinging to survival, whose habitats could be protected today for a fraction of the cost. The company answers that its techniques will eventually become cheap and that early investment is how any transformative technology matures. What both sides share is a commitment to fighting biodiversity loss; where they part ways is over whether resurrecting the vanished is a wiser bet than defending the living that remain among us now.

16. Which assumption underlies the company's claim that revived herbivores would stabilise the permafrost?

- ☐ A. Permafrost carbon poses a greater danger than any other emission source.
- ☐ B. Public fascination with mammoths guarantees long-term research funding.
- ☐ C. The engineered animals would alter the landscape much as ancient herbivores once did.
- ☐ D. Elephants cannot survive in any environment colder than the tropics.

17. Which point, if true, would most weaken the company's climate argument?

- ☐ A. The laboratory has attracted several celebrity investors this year.
- ☐ B. Modern tundra warms mainly for reasons unrelated to the loss of grazing herbivores.
- ☐ C. Some elephants in zoos have tolerated unusually cold winter temperatures.
- ☐ D. Mammoth skeletons are frequently discovered preserved in Arctic permafrost.

18. Which principle best captures the sceptics' third objection about cost?

- ☐ A. Governments must ban all private biotechnology laboratories immediately.
- ☐ B. No extinct species should ever be revived under any circumstances.
- ☐ C. Scientific spectacle always outweighs cautious, incremental research.
- ☐ D. Scarce conservation funds should go where they save the most species reliably.

19. Which statement, if true, would most strengthen the company's reply to the cost objection?

- ☐ A. Similar biotechnologies have historically fallen sharply in cost after early investment.
- ☐ B. The revived mammoth would attract many curious tourists to the Arctic, on the facts as presently stated.
- ☐ C. Some endangered species live in habitats that are hard to protect.
- ☐ D. Elephants and mammoths share a large portion of their genome.

20. Which of the following is most reasonably inferred from the final paragraph?

- ☐ A. Sceptics deny that biodiversity loss is a real problem at all.
- ☐ B. Both sides regard halting biodiversity loss as a goal genuinely worth pursuing.
- ☐ C. The company admits its climate claims are almost certainly false.
- ☐ D. Conservation biologists unanimously oppose all de-extinction research.

SECTION C — RAPID-FIRE GK & CURRENT AFFAIRS

Q21–38 · 18 Marks

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

21. Which Article of the Indian Constitution guarantees the Right to Equality before the law?

- ☐ A. Article 21
- ☐ B. Article 19
- ☐ C. Article 14
- ☐ D. Article 32

22. Which landmark case established the 'Basic Structure Doctrine' of the Indian Constitution?

- ☐ A. Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala
- ☐ B. A.K. Gopalan v. State of Madras
- ☐ C. Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India
- ☐ D. Golaknath v. State of Punjab



23. The capital of Australia is which city?

- ☐ A. Perth
☐ C. Melbourne

- ☐ B. Sydney
☐ D. Canberra

24. Choose the word most similar in meaning to 'EPHEMERAL'.

- ☐ A. Colourful
☐ C. Enormous

- ☐ B. Permanent
☐ D. Transient

25. The idiom 'to bury the hatchet' means what?

- ☐ A. To dig up old memories
☐ B. To hide a weapon carefully
☐ C. To start a new fight
☐ D. To make peace and end a quarrel

26. One word substitution: 'A person who does not believe in the existence of God' is called?

- ☐ A. Heretic
☐ C. Agnostic

- ☐ B. Theist
☐ D. Atheist

27. The Tropic of Cancer passes through how many Indian states?

- ☐ A. Six
☐ C. Ten

- ☐ B. Eight
☐ D. Five

28. Who was the first Governor-General of independent India?

- ☐ A. Lord Canning
☐ C. Lord Mountbatten

- ☐ B. C. Rajagopalachari
☐ D. Warren Hastings

29. Which organisation compiles and publishes the Human Development Index (HDI)?

- ☐ A. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
☐ B. World Bank
☐ C. International Monetary Fund, on the facts as presently stated
☐ D. World Economic Forum

30. Fill in the blank with the correct preposition: 'She has been living here ____ 2015.'

- ☐ A. for
☐ C. from

- ☐ B. since
☐ D. by

31. The 'Preamble' of the Indian Constitution declares India to be which of the following?

- ☐ A. Secular Capitalist State
☐ B. Sovereign Democratic Monarchy, on the facts as presently stated
☐ C. Federal Socialist Union
☐ D. Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic

32. Choose the antonym of 'BENEVOLENT'.

- ☐ A. Kind
☐ C. Malevolent

- ☐ B. Generous
☐ D. Charitable

33. Which river is known as the 'Sorrow of Bihar'?

- ☐ A. Ganga
☐ C. Son

- ☐ B. Kosi
☐ D. Gandak

34. The one-word substitution for 'a government run by officials' is what?

- ☐ A. Bureaucracy
☐ C. Aristocracy

- ☐ B. Democracy
☐ D. Autocracy

35. Who is the constitutional head of the Indian State (a State within the Union)?

- ☐ A. Chief Minister
☐ C. Chief Justice

- ☐ B. Governor
☐ D. Speaker

36. Fill in the blank with the correct word: 'The lawyer gave sound ____ to her client before the hearing.'

- ☐ A. advising
☐ C. advices

- ☐ B. advise
☐ D. advice

37. The famous 'Dandi March' led by Mahatma Gandhi was associated with which movement?

- ☐ A. Civil Disobedience Movement
☐ B. Quit India Movement
☐ C. Non-Cooperation Movement
☐ D. Swadeshi Movement

38. Which body in India is empowered to conduct elections to Parliament and State Legislatures?

- ☐ A. Union Public Service Commission
☐ B. Supreme Court of India
☐ C. Election Commission of India
☐ D. Finance Commission

