

**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.

Free daily practice — [clatgurukul.com/daily](https://clatgurukul.com/daily) · Pass this sheet to a friend.

**PASSAGE 1 (RC) — THE QUIET POWER OF BOREDOM (PSYCHOLOGY / SOCIETY)**

**Q1-5**

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

Boredom has a bad reputation. We treat it as a void to be filled, reaching for a phone the instant a queue stalls or a conversation lulls. Yet a growing body of psychological research suggests that this restless, itchy state is not merely an absence of stimulation but a quiet engine of the mind. When nothing external demands our attention, the brain does not switch off; it drifts inward, activating what neuroscientists call the default mode network, the circuitry associated with daydreaming, memory and imaginative rehearsal.

It is precisely in these unoccupied stretches that the mind wanders toward unexpected connections. Studies have found that people asked to perform a dull task first, such as copying numbers from a telephone directory, later produce more inventive ideas than those kept busy or entertained. Boredom, in this reading, is a signal rather than a symptom: it tells us that our current situation is unstimulating and nudges us to seek meaning, novelty or a fresh goal. That prod can be creative fuel.

The trouble is that modern life rarely lets boredom run its course. Every idle moment is now colonised by frictionless distraction, and the itch is scratched before it can do its work. Children, who once stared out of windows on long journeys, are handed screens; adults refresh feeds in lifts. We may be trading the discomfort of an empty minute for the loss of a valuable mental habit.

None of this romanticises chronic tedium, which can corrode motivation and wellbeing. The argument is narrower and more practical: that occasional, tolerated boredom is worth protecting. To sit with restlessness, rather than instantly dissolving it, may be to give attention room to gather and ideas room to form. The quiet power of boredom lies not in the state itself but in what we do when we finally, reluctantly, let ourselves feel it.

**1. In the third paragraph, the word 'colonised' ("Every idle moment is now colonised by frictionless distraction") most nearly means:**

- ☐ A. settled by migrants arriving from another distant region
- ☐ B. taken over and filled by distraction
- ☐ C. governed from afar by a single ruling authority
- ☐ D. deliberately cultivated for some future collective benefit

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

- ☐ A. Boredom is a harmful state that modern technology has thankfully helped us to eliminate for good
- ☐ B. The default mode network is the single sole source of all human creativity and problem-solving
- ☐ C. Occasional, tolerated boredom is worth protecting because it can prompt attention and ideas to form
- ☐ D. Children and adults today are far less creative than earlier generations were in nearly every measurable way

**3. It can be inferred from the passage that the author would most likely agree that:**

- ☐ A. instantly reaching for a phone in an idle moment may cost us a valuable mental habit
- ☐ B. boredom should be encouraged at all times because chronic tedium plainly boosts wellbeing
- ☐ C. the default mode network is active only while people are performing demanding external tasks
- ☐ D. creativity depends entirely on carefully avoiding every dull or unstimulating experience in life

**4. The author's attitude towards boredom in the passage is best described as:**

- ☐ A. dismissive and openly contemptuous of any interest shown in it
- ☐ B. alarmed and pessimistic about its supposedly inevitable harmful effects
- ☐ C. nostalgic and sentimental, longing for a vanished and irretrievable golden past
- ☐ D. appreciative yet measured, valuing it without romanticising it

**5. Which of the following, if true, would most WEAKEN the author's claim that boredom fuels creativity?**

- ☐ A. A survey finds that many people describe the feeling of boredom as unpleasant and uncomfortable
- ☐ B. Controlled studies show bored participants generate no more original ideas than entertained ones
- ☐ C. Some highly creative artists report that they often felt intensely bored during their childhood years
- ☐ D. Modern smartphones are now used by adults far more frequently than they were only a decade ago

**PASSAGE 2 (RC) — THE HIDDEN LIFE OF SOIL (SCIENCE / ENVIRONMENT)**

**Q6-10**

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

A handful of healthy soil contains more living organisms than there are people on Earth. Beneath our feet lies one of the planet's densest and least understood ecosystems, a dark, crowded world of bacteria, fungi, protozoa, nematodes and microscopic arthropods. Far from being inert dirt, soil is a living matrix in which these organisms trade nutrients, wage chemical warfare and quietly sustain almost all terrestrial life.

The most important players are often invisible. Networks of fungal threads, called mycorrhizae, weave themselves around plant roots and extend far into the surrounding earth, ferrying water and phosphorus to the plant in exchange for the sugars it makes through photosynthesis. Bacteria, meanwhile, perform the essential trick of fixing nitrogen from the air into forms that plants can absorb, a service that underpins the fertility of fields and forests alike. Without these microbial partnerships, the crops that feed humanity would falter.

Soil life also governs the fate of carbon. As microbes decompose dead leaves and roots, they release some carbon back to the atmosphere and lock the rest away in stable compounds that can persist for centuries. Healthy, biologically active soil is the of the largest carbon stores on land, rivalling the world's forests. Disturb it through aggressive ploughing, overuse of chemical fertilisers, erosion, and that stored carbon can escape, while the intricate web of organisms is torn apart.



The consequences are not abstract. A third of the world's soils are already degraded, their biological richness thinning as fertility declines. Restoring them means thinking of soil not as a passive medium but as a living community that can be nurtured or destroyed. Practices such as reduced tillage, cover cropping and composting feed the underground workforce rather than starving it. To protect the hidden life of soil is, in the end, to protect the foundations of our own food and climate.

6. In the first paragraph, the word 'inert' ("Far from being inert dirt") most nearly means:

- ☐ A. richly fertile and visibly teeming with abundant life
- ☐ B. loose and easily eroded away by both wind and running water
- ☐ C. lifeless and chemically or biologically inactive
- ☐ D. poisonous to the tender roots of most ordinary growing plants

7. The passage is primarily concerned with:

- ☐ A. explaining that soil is a living ecosystem whose organisms sustain plants, carbon storage and food
- ☐ B. arguing that fungi are the only organisms that truly matter to the health of the world's agricultural soils
- ☐ C. describing how ploughing techniques have improved steadily over the last several hundred years worldwide
- ☐ D. proving that soil contains precisely more organisms than the total human population living on Earth

8. Which statement about mycorrhizal fungi can be inferred from the passage?

- ☐ A. They compete aggressively with plant roots for the same scarce soil nutrients
- ☐ B. They release stored soil carbon rapidly into the atmosphere when they are left undisturbed
- ☐ C. They fix nitrogen directly from the air into forms that plants can then readily absorb
- ☐ D. They benefit plants and are in turn rewarded with sugars made by photosynthesis

9. The tone of the passage can best be characterised as:

- ☐ A. detached and purely neutral, taking no real interest at all in the outcome
- ☐ B. informative and quietly concerned about the degradation of soils
- ☐ C. cheerfully optimistic that soil degradation has already now been fully reversed
- ☐ D. indignant and openly accusatory towards farmers who choose to plough their fields

10. Which of the following, if true, would most STRENGTHEN the passage's claim that healthy soil is a major carbon store?

- ☐ A. Forests are known to absorb very large quantities of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere each and every year
- ☐ B. Farmers in some regions have begun using considerably more chemical fertilisers than in previous decades
- ☐ C. Measurements show undisturbed soils hold more carbon than the vegetation growing above them
- ☐ D. Certain desert soils, which are extremely dry, support very little microbial life or any fungal growth

### PASSAGE 3 (CR) — SHOULD VOTING BE MADE COMPULSORY IN INDIA? (CRITICAL REASONING / POLITY)

Q11-15

#### READ THE ARGUMENT AND ANSWER Q11-15.

India's voter turnout, though respectable by global standards, still leaves large sections of the electorate silent on polling day. Some reformers argue that the remedy is compulsion: make voting a legal duty, as Australia and a handful of other democracies do, and turnout will rise sharply. The proposal is superficially attractive, but India should not adopt compulsory voting.

The first difficulty is philosophical. A vote is an expression of political will, and the freedom to express that will must include the freedom to withhold it. Coercing a reluctant citizen into the polling booth does not produce genuine consent; it produces a mark on a ballot extracted under threat of penalty. A democracy that fines its citizens for staying home has confused the appearance of participation with its substance.

The second difficulty is practical. Compulsory voting drives large numbers of uninformed or indifferent voters to the booth, where many will vote randomly or spoil their ballots. Turnout figures improve, but the quality of the electoral verdict does not. Worse, enforcement in a country of nearly a billion voters would be an administrative nightmare, inviting selective penalisation of the poor, the migrant and the marginalised, who are least able to reach a booth or contest a fine.

Defenders point to Australia, where compulsory voting is popular and turnout exceeds ninety per cent. But Australia is small, wealthy and administratively compact; its experience says little about a vast, unequal federation still building its electoral machinery. Even the NOTA option, recently introduced in India, already lets voters register dissent without abstaining, undermining the claim that only compulsion can capture the disengaged.

The better path is to make voting easier and more meaningful, not mandatory: cleaner rolls, accessible booths, and candidates worth choosing. Turnout earned through trust is worth more than turnout extracted through fear. Compulsion treats the symptom while ignoring the disease.

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

- ☐ A. India should not adopt a system of compulsory voting
- ☐ B. Australia's compulsory voting model works well enough within its own particular national context
- ☐ C. Indian voter turnout is currently respectable when it is judged by prevailing global standards
- ☐ D. The NOTA option lets voters register their dissent without having to abstain from voting entirely

12. The argument that compulsion produces 'a mark on a ballot extracted under threat' rather than genuine consent rests on the assumption that:

- ☐ A. Australia's turnout has never even once exceeded ninety per cent in any single national election
- ☐ B. every ordinary Indian citizen already possesses complete and accurate information about all the candidates
- ☐ C. voter turnout in India is presently the very lowest recorded among all of the major world democracies
- ☐ D. genuine democratic consent requires that participation be freely chosen rather than coerced



13. Which of the following, if true, would most WEAKEN the author's argument against compulsory voting?

- ☐ A. A few small democracies have recently abolished their existing compulsory voting laws altogether and entirely
- ☐ B. Studies show voters compelled to attend become better informed and vote thoughtfully over time
- ☐ C. Australia is geographically far smaller and considerably wealthier than India happens to be at present
- ☐ D. Some Indian citizens openly say they would deeply resent being fined for failing to cast a vote

14. Which of the following, if true, would most STRENGTHEN the author's case against compulsory voting?

- ☐ A. In some countries turnout rose sharply after compulsory voting but then soon fell back to earlier baseline levels again
- ☐ B. Australia's citizens broadly support their compulsory voting law and only very rarely ever seek to repeal it
- ☐ C. In Indian states that simplified voter registration, turnout rose sharply without any compulsion
- ☐ D. A clear majority of Indians tell pollsters that they feel proud to vote in general elections voluntarily

15. The author's dismissal of the Australian example is most vulnerable to the criticism that it:

- ☐ A. rejects a relevant comparison by pointing to differences without showing they are decisive
- ☐ B. relies entirely on statistical data drawn from a single unrepresentative national election held very long ago
- ☐ C. assumes that whatever happens to be popular among citizens must therefore also be philosophically correct too
- ☐ D. confuses the underlying cause of low turnout with one of its many possible downstream later consequences

**PASSAGE 4 (CR) — THE CASE FOR A FOUR-DAY WORK WEEK (CRITICAL REASONING / ECONOMY)**

**Q16-20**

**READ THE ARGUMENT AND ANSWER Q16-20.**

The five-day working week is not a law of nature but an accident of industrial history, standardised in the early twentieth century when factories set the rhythm of labour. A century later, when much work is done with a laptop rather than a lathe, that rhythm deserves rethinking. India's employers should seriously consider moving to a four-day week.

The strongest evidence comes from recent trials. In the largest such experiment, conducted across dozens of British companies, most firms that cut hours to four days reported steady or improved productivity, while employees recorded lower stress, better sleep and higher job satisfaction. When the trial ended, the overwhelming majority of participating companies chose to keep the shorter week. If output holds while wellbeing rises, the arithmetic favours change.

The reasoning is not mysterious. A great deal of the conventional working week is consumed by low-value activity: needless meetings, distracted browsing and the slow drift of tasks to fill available time. Compressing work into four focused days forces organisations to strip out this waste, and rested workers concentrate better when they are actually at their desks. Fewer hours can therefore yield the same result.

A shorter week would also address problems India is only beginning to confront: burnout in high-pressure sectors, the difficulty of balancing careers with caregiving, and the strain that long commutes place on crowded cities. An extra day away from the office means fewer trips, easing both traffic and emissions.

Critics warn that some industries, from hospitals to factories, cannot simply close for a third day. That is true, but it is an argument for flexibility, not rejection; staggered rosters can preserve coverage while still shortening individual weeks. The four-day week will not suit every workplace, yet the evidence increasingly suggests that, for much of the modern economy, working less can mean achieving more.

16. Which of the following best expresses the main conclusion of the passage?

- ☐ A. The five-day week was standardised in the early twentieth century by large industrial factories
- ☐ B. Most of the firms in the British trial reported steady or even improved productivity throughout
- ☐ C. Long daily commutes place a considerable strain on India's already crowded and heavily congested cities
- ☐ D. India's employers should seriously consider adopting a four-day working week

17. The argument depends on which of the following assumptions about the 'low-value activity' in a conventional week?

- ☐ A. It is genuinely enjoyed by most workers, who would strongly resist any real attempt to remove it
- ☐ B. It can be reduced without a matching loss of the useful output that work produces
- ☐ C. It is entirely absent from every hospital, factory and other round-the-clock continuous workplace
- ☐ D. It has grown steadily and markedly worse in every single industry since the early twentieth century

18. Which of the following, if true, would most WEAKEN the argument for a four-day week?

- ☐ A. Some employees say that they would very happily accept an extra day of rest away from the busy office
- ☐ B. Australia and several European countries already offer their workers fairly generous paid annual leave
- ☐ C. Firms in the trials quietly required staff to make up the lost output through unpaid overtime
- ☐ D. Commuting into the largest Indian cities is often slow, crowded and stressful during the daily peak hours

19. Which of the following, if true, would most STRENGTHEN the argument for a four-day week?

- ☐ A. A large controlled study found four-day teams matched five-day output while reporting far less stress
- ☐ B. Workers as a rule prefer having rather more leisure time than they currently enjoy under present schedules
- ☐ C. Some hospitals and factories simply cannot realistically close their essential operations for a third day each week
- ☐ D. The five-day working week was first standardised during the early decades of the twentieth century worldwide

20. Which of the following most closely parallels the author's reasoning that shorter, more focused days can yield the same output?

- ☐ A. A student who studies far longer hours will almost always outperform one who studies for only a brief time
- ☐ B. A factory that keeps its machines running continuously without any pause at all will always outproduce a slower rival firm
- ☐ C. A runner who trains every single day without ever taking any rest will inevitably improve faster than a rival
- ☐ D. A writer who drafts in short, distraction-free bursts finishes as much as one toiling all day distracted

**SECTION C — RAPID-FIRE GK & CURRENT AFFAIRS**

**Q21-30**

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



**21. The capital city of Australia is:**

- ☐ A. Canberra
- ☐ C. Melbourne

- ☐ B. Sydney
- ☐ D. Perth

**22. The official currency of South Korea is the:**

- ☐ A. Yen
- ☐ C. Won

- ☐ B. Yuan
- ☐ D. Ringgit

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

- ☐ A. Eternal
- ☐ C. Frequent

- ☐ B. Fleeting
- ☐ D. Ancient

**24. The idiom 'to bite the bullet' means to:**

- ☐ A. Act in anger
- ☐ C. Speak rudely

- ☐ B. Waste your money
- ☐ D. Endure hardship

**25. Which Article of the Indian Constitution abolishes untouchability?**

- ☐ A. Article 17
- ☐ C. Article 14

- ☐ B. Article 21
- ☐ D. Article 19

**26. The basic structure doctrine of the Constitution was propounded by the Supreme Court in:**

- ☐ A. ADM Jabalpur case
- ☐ B. Maneka Gandhi case
- ☐ C. Kesavananda Bharati case
- ☐ D. Golaknath case

**27. The book 'The Argumentative Indian' was written by:**

- ☐ A. Vikram Seth
- ☐ C. Arundhati Roy

- ☐ B. Amartya Sen
- ☐ D. Amitav Ghosh

**28. The Ranji Trophy is associated with which sport?**

- ☐ A. Hockey
- ☐ C. Badminton

- ☐ B. Football
- ☐ D. Cricket

**29. Which law states that the pressure and volume of a gas are inversely related at constant temperature?**

- ☐ A. Boyle's law
- ☐ C. Newton's law

- ☐ B. Ohm's law
- ☐ D. Hooke's law

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

- ☐ A. Generous
- ☐ C. Cheerful

- ☐ B. Malicious
- ☐ D. Truthful

