

Daily Reading Comprehension & Critical Reasoning

Rotated-genre RC passages and real-argument Critical Reasoning — CLAT-2026 grade. Read each passage and answer from the passage only.
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SECTION — READING COMPREHENSION

READING COMPREHENSION — HISTORY · HOW THE EMERGENCY IS REMEMBERED (Q1-Q5)

Few episodes in independent India's past are invoked with such moral certainty, and understood with such little precision, as the twenty-one months of Emergency imposed in 1975. In popular memory the period has hardened into a morality play: a single ambitious ruler suspending liberty, a servile bureaucracy, and a citizenry rescued by the ballot in 1977. This account is not false, but its very tidiness should invite suspicion. The archival record, now accessible in party correspondence and the reports of the Shah Commission, discloses a more uncomfortable story in which the machinery of repression was assembled not overnight but over years, and staffed willingly by people who later claimed reluctance.

Historians who mistake the Emergency for an aberration miss what the documents actually show: that many of its instruments—preventive detention, press licensing, the pliancy of courts—predated 1975 and outlived 1977. The tendency to personalise the crisis, to locate its cause in one leader's temperament, is comforting precisely because it absolves the institutions that bent. It also flatters the electorate, which is remembered as heroic yet had, in fact, tolerated much before it finally turned. Nostalgia, in this sense, does quiet political work, converting a shared failure into a flattering national fable.

A more searching historiography asks why resistance, when it came, took the shape it did, and why the coalition that defeated the ruling party dissolved so quickly once in office. The answer lies less in ideology than in the thin, improvised character of the opposition itself, held together by grievance rather than programme. To say this is not to diminish the courage of those who were jailed or silenced; it is to insist that courage and structural weakness coexisted.

The lesson the anniversary speeches rarely draw is the least flattering one. Democracies are not defended by memory alone, and the ritual condemnation of a past emergency can become a substitute for vigilance against the ordinary, legal erosions that never announce themselves with a proclamation. What the records finally teach is modesty: the institutions that failed were the same ones later praised for recovering, and the difference between the two was narrower than the anniversary wishes to admit. Vigilance, unlike remembrance, cannot be performed once a year.

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

- ☐ A. The Emergency was essentially an aberration caused by one leader's temperament and ended by a uniformly heroic electorate.
- ☐ B. The archival record demonstrates that the Shah Commission substantially exaggerated the true scale of the repression.
- ☐ C. Popular memory, by personalising the crisis, obscures the institutional and electoral failures that the records actually reveal.
- ☐ D. The opposition coalition that ended the Emergency dissolved because it lacked any coherent ideological programme of its own.

2. It can be most reasonably inferred that the author regards the 1977 electorate as:

- ☐ A. less heroic than commemoration suggests, having tolerated much before it finally acted.
- ☐ B. the single most decisive force responsible for finally dismantling the entire machinery of repression.
- ☐ C. largely indifferent to the suspension of civil liberties throughout almost the entire period.
- ☐ D. covertly manipulated by an opposition concealing its own authoritarian intentions.

3. The author's attitude toward the anniversary speeches on the Emergency is best described as:

- ☐ A. nostalgic and broadly approving of their annual commemorative function.
- ☐ B. openly contemptuous of those who were imprisoned or silenced during the period.
- ☐ C. detached and neutral, offering careful description without any real evaluation.
- ☐ D. sceptical, treating their ritual condemnation as a substitute for genuine vigilance.

4. In the passage, the word 'pliancy' (in 'the pliancy of courts') most nearly means:

- ☐ A. excessive procedural complexity and consequent institutional delay
- ☐ B. a readiness to yield or bend under external pressure
- ☐ C. steadfast judicial independence from the executive branch
- ☐ D. structural or physical fragility of the institution itself

5. The final paragraph functions primarily to:

- ☐ A. draw from the preceding analysis a general and deliberately uncomfortable lesson about institutional fragility.
- ☐ B. introduce fresh archival evidence that decisively overturns the argument developed earlier.
- ☐ C. concede that the popular, personalised account of the Emergency was substantially correct after all.
- ☐ D. propose a set of specific institutional reforms designed to prevent any future emergency.

READING COMPREHENSION — ARTS & CULTURE · THE GALLERY THAT REOPENS WITHOUT ITS JEWELS (Q6-Q10)

When a celebrated national gallery reopens after years of refurbishment, the temptation is to read the event as pure triumph—light-filled rooms, restored canvases, a public invited back to its own heritage. Yet the most revealing thing about such a reopening is often what remains absent. The most contested objects, those acquired in the long shadow of empire, are frequently kept in storage or displayed with an apologetic caption, present enough to draw crowds but framed carefully enough to forestall demands for their return. A homecoming, in other words, can also be a quiet act of retention.

Defenders of the encyclopaedic museum argue that these institutions preserve a shared human inheritance, that objects gathered from many cultures acquire, under one roof, a universal legibility they would lack in isolation. There is a real idea here, and it should not be dismissed as mere alibi. But the argument grows thinner each time it is deployed to justify keeping precisely those pieces whose acquisition was least consensual. Universality invoked selectively is not a principle; it is a convenience.



The more honest curators have begun to treat the gap itself as the exhibit. An empty plinth, a photograph where a bronze once stood, a label that names the community still asking—these are not evasions but confessions, and they change what a visitor is asked to feel. Instead of uncomplicated wonder, the room now offers something closer to unease, which is arguably the truer response to art whose provenance is unresolved.

What such displays understand is that a museum is not a neutral warehouse but an argument about who owns the past. To reopen grandly while withholding the disputed few is to make one argument; to leave the absence visible and legible is to make another. The first flatters the institution; the second respects the visitor's intelligence. Neither is cost-free, and pretending otherwise is its own kind of dishonesty.

The gallery that dares to exhibit its own incompleteness may draw smaller headlines, but it does something the restored rooms cannot: it admits that possession and belonging are not the same thing, and that the most valuable object in the building may be the one no longer there.

6. The passage is primarily concerned with:

- ☐ A. chronicling the technical process by which a national gallery restores its damaged canvases.
- ☐ B. defending the encyclopaedic museum's claim to preserve a universal human inheritance.
- ☐ C. arguing that every contested object should always be returned to its community of origin immediately.
- ☐ D. examining what a museum's handling of disputed objects reveals about ownership and honesty.

7. It can be inferred that the author considers the 'universality' argument to be:

- ☐ A. a wholly cynical pretext that possesses no legitimate intellectual content whatsoever.
- ☐ B. genuine in principle yet weakened when used selectively to retain disputed pieces.
- ☐ C. the single strongest available justification for returning every contested object.
- ☐ D. essentially irrelevant to the question of who rightfully owns the cultural past.

8. The author's attitude toward curators who leave 'an empty plinth' visible is best described as:

- ☐ A. dismissive, treating the gesture as a convenient evasion of institutional responsibility.
- ☐ B. wholly indifferent to any difference between such displays and conventional ones.
- ☐ C. approving, regarding the visible absence as more honest than uncomplicated wonder.
- ☐ D. alarmed that such austere displays will inevitably drive away the museum's public.

9. As used in the passage, 'provenance' most nearly refers to:

- ☐ A. the record of an object's origins and chain of ownership.
- ☐ B. the aesthetic value assigned to an object by professional critics.
- ☐ C. the physical condition in which a fragile object has survived.
- ☐ D. the eventual future destination proposed for a contested object.

10. Which of the following best describes how the passage is organised?

- ☐ A. It presents a strictly chronological catalogue of one gallery's acquisitions, moving steadily from the age of empire to the present day.
- ☐ B. It opens with an apparent triumph, surfaces what is absent, weighs a counter-argument, then reframes the museum as a moral claim.
- ☐ C. It states a single fixed thesis in its opening sentence and does little more than restate that same claim in each of the later paragraphs.
- ☐ D. It compares two named national galleries and ranks their respective restitution policies in close and exhaustive institutional detail throughout.

SECTION — CRITICAL REASONING

CRITICAL REASONING — EDUCATION · WOULD DECENTRALISING EXAMS END THE LEAKS? (Q11–Q15)

The recurrence of paper leaks in national entrance examinations has revived an old proposal: abolish the centralised test altogether and return the conduct of admissions to the individual States. The reasoning offered by the proposal's champions runs as follows. A single nationwide examination, they observe, creates a single point of failure; when one question paper is compromised, the integrity of the entire cohort collapses at once. Decentralised State-level examinations, by contrast, would fragment the target. A leak in one State would taint only that State's results, leaving the rest of the country untouched. Because the damage from any breach would be contained, the argument concludes, decentralisation would make the admissions system as a whole more secure.

The editorialists press the point with a further claim. Central agencies, they note, have grown so large that accountability within them has become diffuse; no official can be readily identified when something goes wrong. State bodies, being smaller and closer to the students they serve, would face sharper public scrutiny and would therefore guard their papers more zealously. Proximity, on this view, breeds diligence.

There is an intuitive appeal to this reasoning, and its diagnosis of the central agency's failures is largely accurate. Yet the conclusion does not follow as cleanly as its advocates suppose. The argument treats the number of examinations as the decisive variable, as though security were merely a matter of how many baskets the eggs are divided among. It quietly assumes that each State body would bring to the task at least the same standard of custody that the central agency, for all its faults, currently maintains—an assumption for which the record of State-run recruitment tests offers little comfort.

Nor does containment straightforwardly equal safety. Multiplying the number of examinations also multiplies the number of points at which a determined leak network can strike, and a syndicate defeated by one well-guarded national paper might find thirty unevenly guarded State papers a far softer target. The proposal, in short, mistakes the dispersal of risk for its reduction. Before the country dismantles a flawed but improvable system, it should ask whether the replacement would be secured by anything sturdier than the hope that smaller institutions are, by their nature, more honest.



11. Which of the following most accurately states the main conclusion of the editorialists' argument?

- ☐ A. Central examination agencies have grown far too large for genuine accountability to function.
- ☐ B. A single nationwide examination inevitably creates one decisive point of catastrophic failure.
- ☐ C. Proximity between examiners and students almost inevitably breeds much greater diligence.
- ☐ D. Decentralising examinations to the States would make the whole admissions system more secure.

12. The argument for decentralisation depends on which of the following assumptions?

- ☐ A. No State has ever once experienced a serious leak in any of its recruitment examinations.
- ☐ B. The central agency must have deliberately compromised its own confidential question papers.
- ☐ C. State bodies would guard papers at least as well as the central agency now does.
- ☐ D. Students across the country strongly prefer State-level examinations to a single national one.

13. Which of the following, if true, would most weaken the argument for decentralisation?

- ☐ A. State-run recruitment examinations have lately leaked at several times the rate of national ones.
- ☐ B. The central agency has very recently increased the number of officials handling each single paper.
- ☐ C. Students in some remote States must travel unusually long distances to reach examination centres.
- ☐ D. A handful of States have formally proposed conducting their examinations on computers rather than paper.

14. Which of the following, if true, would most strengthen the editorialists' argument?

- ☐ A. The central agency's operating budget has grown faster than the number of candidates it serves each year.
- ☐ B. Where States already run their own entrance tests, the smaller scale has made officials individually accountable.
- ☐ C. National examinations reliably attract far more media coverage than most State examinations do.
- ☐ D. Some organised leak syndicates are known to operate across several States simultaneously.

15. The author contends the editorialists' argument is flawed because it:

- ☐ A. relies on a biological account of selective pressure that is now considered scientifically outdated.
- ☐ B. assumes that the central agency's documented failures were entirely deliberate rather than merely accidental.
- ☐ C. treats the dispersal of risk as though it were a genuine reduction of it.
- ☐ D. ignores the real possibility that students might object to sitting far more examinations.

CRITICAL REASONING — HEALTH POLICY · THE DISPENSING CAP AND THE MISSING RESERVOIR (Q16-Q20)

A senior public-health official, reviewing three years of prescription data from the district's hospitals, has drawn a conclusion that is being circulated as settled fact. The data show that prescriptions of broad-spectrum 'Watch' category antibiotics rose sharply over the period, and that during the same years the proportion of bacterial infections resistant to first-line drugs also climbed. From this correlation the official infers that the rising use of Watch antibiotics is the principal driver of the district's growing resistance, and recommends that the surest way to reverse the trend is to cap the quantity of such antibiotics each hospital may dispense each month.

The chain of reasoning is straightforward. Overuse of powerful antibiotics, the official notes, exposes bacterial populations to selective pressure, allowing resistant strains to survive and multiply. More prescriptions therefore mean more resistance. Since the district's prescriptions rose and its resistance rose in step, curbing prescriptions should, by the same logic, bring resistance down. A monthly dispensing cap, being simple to administer and easy to audit, is offered as the natural instrument.

The inference is not absurd, and the underlying biology of selective pressure is sound. But the recommendation rests on steps the data do not by themselves establish. The official's own figures record only the volume of antibiotics dispensed, not whether they were prescribed appropriately; a rise in volume driven by a genuine rise in severe, correctly diagnosed infections would carry very different implications from a rise driven by careless prescribing. The two are indistinguishable in the numbers presented.

More troubling for the proposed cap is the question of what the numbers leave out. Resistant strains travel; they arrive with transferred patients, on imported produce, through water and travellers, and a district that tightened its own prescribing to zero could still watch resistance climb if the dominant reservoirs lay elsewhere. A cap assumes that local prescribing is not merely a contributor but the decisive one, and that assumption is precisely what a simple correlation cannot supply. Before the district rations a class of drugs that critically ill patients depend upon, it owes those patients evidence that the restriction would treat the cause rather than merely the most conveniently measurable symptom of it.

16. Which of the following best expresses the conclusion the official draws from the data?

- ☐ A. Bacterial infections have quietly become far more common across the district's hospitals.
- ☐ B. Broad-spectrum antibiotics steadily expose bacterial populations to strong selective pressure.
- ☐ C. Prescription volumes and drug-resistance rates both rose together over the three-year period.
- ☐ D. Rising Watch-antibiotic use is the principal driver of the district's growing resistance.

17. The official's recommendation of a dispensing cap depends on assuming that:

- ☐ A. no critically ill patient anywhere in the entire district genuinely requires a Watch antibiotic.
- ☐ B. the rise in prescriptions reflects careless overuse, not a real rise in severe infections.
- ☐ C. resistant bacteria essentially never travel between neighbouring districts by any known route.
- ☐ D. the central health authority will readily fund the additional auditing that the cap requires.

18. Which of the following, if true, would most undermine the official's recommendation?

- ☐ A. Most local resistant infections trace to strains arriving with patients transferred from other regions.
- ☐ B. The district's hospitals have very recently hired several additional pharmacists to track prescriptions.
- ☐ C. Watch antibiotics are considerably more expensive than the first-line drugs they are replacing.
- ☐ D. Some senior physicians in the district openly prefer newer antibiotics to much older ones.

19. Which of the following, if true, would most strengthen the inference that local prescribing drives the district's resistance?

- ☐ A. Several neighbouring districts with far lower antibiotic use reported broadly similar increases in resistance.
- ☐ B. The district imports a very large share of its fresh produce from other States.
- ☐ C. Hospitals that curbed Watch prescriptions saw resistance fall, while those that did not saw it rise.
- ☐ D. The market cost of Watch antibiotics rose sharply during the same three-year period.



20. The passage's central objection to the official's reasoning is that it:

- ☐ **A.** flatly denies that antibiotic overuse can ever create real selective pressure on bacteria.
 - ☐ **B.** relies entirely on data drawn from only a single hospital within the district.
 - ☐ **C.** wrongly assumes that resistant bacteria can be eliminated entirely within one district.
 - ☐ **D.** infers a decisive local cause from a correlation consistent with several other explanations.
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