

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 — ENVIRONMENT & NATURE · THE SHIFTING RIVER (Q1-Q6)

For the villages strung along the upper reaches of a great Himalayan river, the water has never been a fixed neighbour. Each monsoon it swells, browns with silt, and gnaws at its banks; each winter it shrinks back into a braided tangle of channels that wander across a bed far wider than the river itself. What the villagers call the river is really a moving argument between water and land, and in recent years the argument has turned violent.

Scientists describe the river as braided and sediment-heavy: born in the mountains, it carries an immense load of pulverised rock, and when it spills onto the flat valley it slows, drops that load, and raises its own bed. A river that lifts its bed must eventually find a new path, and so it swings, abandoning old channels and carving new ones, sometimes overnight. Embankments built to pin it in place only postpone the reckoning; when the water finally tops or breaches them, the flood is deeper and more sudden than it would have been on open terrain. The very defences meant to tame the river can amplify its fury.

This year the swing has been unusually savage. Whole hamlets that stood a safe distance from the water in spring found the current at their doors by July; fields, shrines and burial grounds slid into the brown rush. Officials speak of relief camps and compensation, but the villagers speak of memory: of a temple their grandparents built now somewhere under the silt, of the exact bend where the river used to be. They are not asking the river to stop moving, for they know it cannot. They are asking, more modestly, that those who plan embankments and roads treat the river as a living, wandering thing rather than a line on a map — that engineering begin from humility rather than the conviction that concrete can outlast water. The river, patient and immense, will in any case have the last word.

Engineers who study the valley add a sober footnote: every embankment raised in one stretch quietly shifts the danger to the next, for water denied one path simply takes another. The lesson the villagers have learned by loss, the hydrologists are now learning by data. Downstream, the same water that tore away one bank is quietly building another, laying down fresh silt that will be farmed by somebody's grandchildren. That is the bargain the valley has always lived by.

1. The primary purpose of the passage is to:

- ☐ A. To explain why the river shifts its course and to urge humbler, reality-based planning
- ☐ B. To blame the villagers for having built their homes too close to an unstable river, regardless of how the parties later describe it
- ☐ C. To prove that the river can be permanently tamed if better concrete defences are used, and the same conclusion would follow in any comparable case
- ☐ D. To argue that every embankment along the river should be demolished without delay, and the same would hold in any comparable case

2. According to the passage, embankments can make flooding worse because:

- ☐ A. They lower the level of the riverbed and slow the current that runs over it, regardless of how the parties later describe it
- ☐ B. When the water finally tops or breaches them, the flood is deeper and more sudden
- ☐ C. They strip the water of the sediment that it would otherwise deposit downstream, which would hold regardless of how the parties later described it
- ☐ D. They divert the river towards the sea before it can ever reach the villages, as would be true of any similarly placed reader

3. The phrase 'a moving argument between water and land' is best understood to mean:

- ☐ A. The water and the land have settled their competing claims on a permanent basis, on the footing that the rule applies uniformly
- ☐ B. The river is the site of an actual legal dispute over the ownership of riverbank land
- ☐ C. The river's course is an ever-shifting boundary contested between water and land
- ☐ D. The villagers quarrel among themselves about how the river should be managed, as would be true of any similarly placed reader

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

- ☐ A. Mocking and dismissive of the villagers and the losses that they describe
- ☐ B. Detached and purely technical, confining itself to hydrology and measurement
- ☐ C. Triumphant and celebratory about the engineering works along the river, on the footing that the rule applies uniformly
- ☐ D. Reflective and quietly admonitory towards those who plan the embankments

5. Which statement would the villagers, as portrayed, most likely endorse?

- ☐ A. Planners should treat the river as a living, wandering thing and plan with humility
- ☐ B. Compensation for those who lose land matters more than any change in planning, taking the argument entirely on its own terms
- ☐ C. Concrete embankments, if built high enough, are a complete answer to the flooding, on the footing that the rule applies uniformly to such cases
- ☐ D. The river must be prevented from moving at all, whatever the eventual cost, and no different result follows on these facts

6. The reference to 'a temple their grandparents built now somewhere under the silt' serves primarily to:

- ☐ A. Convey the inherited, personal scale of what the shifting river has taken from the villagers
- ☐ B. Establish that the temple had been structurally unsound for years and would have fallen in any case
- ☐ C. Suggest that all places of worship ought to be relocated well away from any major riverbank, taking the argument entirely on its own terms
- ☐ D. Demonstrate that the embankments were sited by engineers who ignored the villagers' warnings

READING COMPREHENSION — PSYCHOLOGY & MIND · THE LIMITS OF WILLPOWER (Q7-Q12)

For much of the last century, self-control was imagined as a kind of inner muscle. The disciplined person, on this view, simply of it: more grit to resist the second slice of cake, more resolve to study when friends were out. Failure was a moral verdict — y



the reward too much, or tried too little. Recent psychology has quietly dismantled this picture, and the revision has consequences well beyond the laboratory.

Studies of people who score high on measures of self-control reveal a surprise: they do not, for the most part, spend their days in heroic struggle against temptation. Instead, they arrange their lives so that temptation rarely arises. They keep sweets out of the house, study in libraries where distraction is scarce, and choose friends whose habits pull in the direction they want to go. What looks from outside like iron willpower is often, on closer inspection, clever design. The person who never checks her phone during dinner may not be resisting the phone at all; she may have left it in another room.

This reframing matters because it shifts responsibility from a mysterious inner force to something learnable. If self-control were a fixed quantity of grit, advice would be limited to 'try harder' — advice that has failed generations. But if it is largely a matter of shaping one's environment, then it can be taught, practised and improved. The implication is not that effort is irrelevant; summoning the initial resolve to remove the sweets still takes some. It is that effort spent on arranging circumstances pays far larger dividends than effort spent, again and again, in the exhausting moment of temptation itself. The most self-disciplined among us, it turns out, are often simply the best at avoiding the need for discipline. Researchers add a caution of their own: designing one's surroundings is itself a skill that must be practised, and those who master it were rarely born calm. They learned, by trial and repeated small failures, which situations to avoid and which cues to remove, until the good choice became the easy one. What looks like serene discipline is, more often, the quiet residue of many earlier corrections. There is a further, quieter implication. If self-control is mostly design, then judging people for lacking it is not only unkind but inaccurate, since it mistakes an environment for a character.

7. The central claim of the passage is that self-control is:

- ☐ A. A fixed inner muscle of grit that some people simply happen to be born with, and the same would hold in any comparable case
- ☐ B. Largely a matter of shaping one's own environment rather than exercising raw willpower
- ☐ C. A moral virtue that a person either possesses already or cannot be taught at all, and no different result would follow on these particular facts
- ☐ D. Something entirely unrelated to effort of any kind, whether early or sustained, regardless of how the parties later describe it

8. The example of leaving the phone 'in another room' is used to illustrate that:

- ☐ A. People who remove sweets from the house report noticeably fewer cravings than those who keep them within easy reach
- ☐ B. Highly self-controlled people succeed through constant, conscious struggle against temptation, as would be true of any similarly placed reader
- ☐ C. Highly self-controlled people often report that learning to arrange their surroundings took them years of deliberate practice
- ☐ D. Mobile phones are the single main obstacle to self-control in everyday life, regardless of how the parties later describe it

9. According to the passage, the old 'inner muscle' view treated failure as:

- ☐ A. A purely biological event, determined by inherited traits beyond a person's control
- ☐ B. A sign that the person had cleverly designed their environment to avoid temptation
- ☐ C. A neutral and entirely expected outcome that called for no particular judgement, as would be true of any similarly placed reader
- ☐ D. A moral verdict — that one wanted the reward too much or simply tried too little

10. The passage suggests that the advice 'try harder' has failed because:

- ☐ A. It treats self-control as a fixed quantity of grit rather than a learnable skill of design
- ☐ B. Effort of every kind is completely irrelevant to whether self-control actually succeeds, as would be true of any similarly placed party in that position
- ☐ C. Temptation is not something that genuinely exists outside of a person's imagination, and no different result follows on these facts
- ☐ D. Most people who receive the advice do not actually wish to improve themselves, on the footing that the rule applies uniformly

11. Which statement best expresses the passage's view of effort?

- ☐ A. Effort is irrelevant to the outcome; only the surrounding environment really matters, provided the surrounding facts remained materially unchanged
- ☐ B. Effort is best spent arranging circumstances rather than resisting temptation in the moment
- ☐ C. Effort must be spent repeatedly, in the exhausting moment of temptation itself, and no different result follows on these facts
- ☐ D. Effort and environment are ultimately the same thing described in two different ways, taking the argument entirely on its own terms

12. Which one of the following, if true, would most weaken the passage's central claim?

- ☐ A. People who remove sweets from the house consistently report noticeably fewer cravings than those who keep them within easy reach, and the same would hold in any comparable case
- ☐ B. Careful studies find that people who redesign their surroundings succeed no more often than those who simply resist in the moment
- ☐ C. Highly self-controlled people often report that learning to arrange their surroundings took them several years of deliberate practice
- ☐ D. Some people manage to study effectively even in noisy environments that are filled with obvious and constant distractions, taking the argument entirely on its own terms

SECTION — CRITICAL REASONING

CRITICAL REASONING — ETHICS · THE ETHICS OF THE RESCUE DRONE (Q13-Q18)

A city's disaster agency has begun using autonomous drones to locate survivors after floods. The drones fly over inundated areas, use cameras and heat sensors to spot people, and radio their coordinates to rescue boats. Supporters argue the programme is not merely permissible but ethically required. Their reasoning runs as follows. When a technology can save human lives at modest cost and with little risk to others, a public authority that declines to use it fails in its duty of care. The rescue drones save lives at modest cost and pose little risk to bystanders, since they fly low over water away from crowds. Therefore, the agency would be failing in its duty of care if it did not deploy them.

Critics respond on several fronts. Some accept the general principle but deny that the drones truly pose 'little risk,' pointing out same cameras that find survivors also record everyone they pass, creating a surveillance archive that could later be misused. Others question the 'modest cost' premise, noting that the money spent on drones was diverted from repairing the embankments which



caused the flood in the first place. A third group accepts every premise but argues that duty of care, properly understood, also requires the agency to obtain the informed consent of those it films — a step the current programme skips. The debate is less about whether saving lives is good, which all concede, than about whether the supporters' tidy argument has quietly smuggled in assumptions that do not survive scrutiny. Beneath the disagreement lies a shared method: each side tests whether a general moral principle, applied honestly to the facts, actually yields the conclusion claimed for it. The supporters say it plainly does; the critics reply that the principle survives only if its comfortable premises about cost, risk and consent are examined rather than assumed. In that sense the dispute is a model of careful practical reasoning, where the hard work lies not in stating a value everyone shares but in checking each step that is meant to follow from it. The agency, for its part, has published none of the data that would settle the question: how many survivors the drones actually located, how long the footage is kept, and who may request access to it. Until those figures exist, both sides are arguing from assumption rather than evidence.

13. The main conclusion of the supporters' argument is that:

- ☐ A. That rescue boats are no longer necessary now that the drones have been deployed, regardless of how the parties later describe it
- ☐ B. That the autonomous rescue drones are a technologically impressive piece of engineering
- ☐ C. That the agency would fail in its duty of care if it did not deploy the rescue drones
- ☐ D. That surveillance of the public is always justified during a declared emergency, and the same would hold in any comparable case

14. Which is an assumption on which the supporters' argument depends?

- ☐ A. That deploying drones is cheaper than operating rescue helicopters over the same area
- ☐ B. That survivors would themselves prefer to be located by a machine rather than a person
- ☐ C. That this particular flood was unusually severe by the standards of the region, regardless of how the parties later describe it
- ☐ D. That the drones do save lives at modest cost and pose little risk to other people

15. The critics who cite the surveillance archive weaken the argument mainly by:

- ☐ A. Challenging the premise that the drones pose 'little risk' to people other than survivors
- ☐ B. Proving that the drones are in fact incapable of locating survivors in flood water, and the same conclusion would follow in any comparable case
- ☐ C. Showing that any rescue attempt is impossible while flood waters remain high, on the footing that the rule applies uniformly
- ☐ D. Denying the shared premise that saving human lives is a good worth pursuing, as would be true of any similarly placed reader

16. The objection about money 'diverted from repairing the embankments' targets which premise?

- ☐ A. The general principle that declining a life-saving technology breaches a duty of care
- ☐ B. The premise that the drones save lives at 'modest cost' to the public authority
- ☐ C. The factual claim that the drones fly low over water and away from crowds, on the footing that the rule applies uniformly
- ☐ D. The shared moral premise that saving human lives is a good worth pursuing, and no different result follows on these facts

17. The third group's objection is best described as arguing that:

- ☐ A. That the drones ought simply to be flown at a greater height above the flooded area, taking the argument entirely on its own terms
- ☐ B. That one or more of the supporters' stated premises is, on examination, false, and no different result follows on these facts
- ☐ C. That even granting the premises, duty of care also requires informed consent, which is omitted
- ☐ D. That duty of care is not a genuine ethical concept capable of guiding public authorities, as would be true of any similarly placed party in that position

18. Which one of the following, if true, would most strengthen the supporters' argument?

- ☐ A. The drones were purchased from a supplier that also equips several neighbouring city agencies, and the same would hold in any comparable case
- ☐ B. Rescue boat crews report that coordinates radioed from the air reach them faster than radio relays
- ☐ C. Independent audits confirm the drones' footage is automatically deleted within hours and never retained
- ☐ D. The agency has used aerial photography during floods for many years without public objection, taking the argument entirely on its own terms

CRITICAL REASONING — SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY POLICY · REGULATING THE FIRST AI-NATIVE GENERATION (Q19–Q24)

A policy essay argues that governments should mandate strong default privacy settings on any digital product widely used by children. Its reasoning is this. History shows that when a new technology scales faster than its safeguards, harm follows until protections are built in by default rather than left to individual choice: electricity became safe only once insulation and circuit breakers were standard, and cars only once seat belts and airbags were required. Artificial intelligence, the essay says, is now scaling faster than its safeguards, and children are among its heaviest users. Therefore, the essay concludes, AI products used by children should carry strong protections by default, not as an option a busy parent must hunt for and switch on.

A sceptic raises three challenges. First, she notes that the electricity and car analogies involve physical dangers with clear, measurable injuries, whereas the harms of AI to children are contested and hard to quantify; if the analogy is weak, the conclusion loses support. Second, she argues that mandating a single national default assumes regulators can identify the right protection in advance, when the technology and its risks are still changing month to month. Third, she points out that even if defaults are wise, the essay offers no evidence that a legal mandate, rather than industry self-regulation, is the most effective route to them. The essayist's core value — that children deserve protection — is not in dispute; what the sceptic contests is whether each link in the argument's chain actually holds. What unites the sceptic's three objections is a refusal to let a persuasive analogy do the work of an argument. She does not deny that children deserve protection, nor that safety by default has often served society well; she insists only that each inference — from past technologies to this one, from wise defaults to a fixed national rule, and from a good end to one particular means — must earn its place. The essay's conclusion may yet be right, but on her view it has not been shown to be right, and in policy the difference matters. Notably, the sceptic does not conclude that nothing should be done. Her position is narrower and harder to dismiss: that a conclusion this consequential should rest on evidence about this technology, not on the borrowed authority of seat belts and circuit breakers.

19. The essay's main conclusion is that:

- ☐ A. That parents are principally to blame for the online harms their children suffer
- ☐ B. That electricity and motor cars were both badly regulated when first introduced
- ☐ C. That artificial intelligence should be prohibited outright for all children, and the same would hold in any comparable case



- ☐ D. That AI products used by children should carry strong protections by default

20. The analogies to electricity and cars are used to support the claim that:

- ☐ A. That safety is best achieved when protections are built in by default, not left to choice
☐ B. That artificial intelligence is identical in kind to electricity and motor cars, as would be true of any similarly placed reader
☐ C. That regulation of a new technology always slows the pace of useful innovation, regardless of how the parties later describe it
☐ D. That every genuinely new technology is dangerous until it has been fully regulated, on the footing that the rule applies uniformly to such cases

21. The sceptic's first challenge weakens the argument by:

- ☐ A. Denying that children are in fact among the heaviest users of AI products, as would be true of any similarly placed reader
☐ B. Arguing the analogy is weak because AI's harms, unlike physical injuries, are contested
☐ C. Proving that seat belts and airbags never actually reduced injuries in motor cars, on the footing that the rule applies uniformly
☐ D. Showing that artificial intelligence cannot in practice scale as quickly as claimed, and no different result would follow on these particular facts

22. The sceptic's second challenge questions which assumption?

- ☐ A. That parents are too busy to hunt for and switch on the right protective settings, and the same conclusion would follow in any comparable case
☐ B. That children deserve protection from the harms a new technology may cause them, on the footing that the rule applies uniformly
☐ C. That regulators can identify the right protection in advance despite fast-changing risks
☐ D. That electricity was genuinely dangerous before insulation and circuit breakers, and no different result follows on these facts

23. The sceptic's third point differs from the first two because it:

- ☐ A. It rejects the use of any analogy whatever when reasoning about new technologies, and no different result follows on these facts
☐ B. It argues that artificial intelligence is not yet widely used by children at all, taking the argument entirely on its own terms
☐ C. It disputes the shared value that children deserve protection from technological harm, which would hold regardless of how the parties later described it
☐ D. It grants defaults may be wise but questions whether a legal mandate is the best route

24. The essayist could best answer the sceptic's third challenge by showing that:

- ☐ A. The harms of AI to children can already be measured as precisely as physical injuries can, taking the argument entirely on its own terms
☐ B. Regulators in other countries have adopted broadly similar default settings for children's products
☐ C. Parents overwhelmingly say they would prefer strong protections to be switched on by default, and the same would hold in any comparable case
☐ D. Industry self-regulation has repeatedly failed to deliver protective defaults without a legal mandate

RAPID FIRE — ONE-LINE RECALL

36 quick questions · not negatively marked

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| 1. The sentence an argument is built to establish is its: _____ | 19. Attacking the person instead of the argument is which fallacy? _____ |
| 2. A premise the argument needs but never states is its: _____ | 20. Presenting only two options when more exist is which fallacy? _____ |
| 3. To weaken an argument you typically attack a premise or the _____ between premise and conclusion. | 21. Which UN convention governs rights and duties in the world's oceans? _____ |
| 4. A river with many interlacing, shifting channels is described as: _____ | 22. Under UNCLOS an Exclusive Economic Zone extends up to how many nautical miles? _____ |
| 5. Tone that is gently reproachful or warning is best called: _____ | 23. Which article carries the right to life and personal liberty? _____ |
| 6. Which body chairs disaster management at the national level in India? _____ | 24. Which Directive Principle directs the State to protect the environment? _____ |
| 7. The Disaster Management Act was enacted in which year? _____ | 25. Protecting the environment is a Fundamental Duty under which article? _____ |
| 8. 'Induced demand' means new road capacity is soon filled by ____. | 26. The specialised central force for disaster response is the: _____ |
| 9. A '123 Agreement' takes its name from a section of which US statute? _____ | 27. 'Elegiac' in tone means: _____ |
| 10. The treaty that anchors the global non-proliferation regime: _____ | 28. 'Disanalogy' means an argument's comparison is: _____ |
| 11. The agency that administers international nuclear safeguards: _____ | 29. A claim hedged with 'sometimes' is harder to refute because it is: _____ |
| 12. Reading a metaphor literally instead of figuratively is which kind of error? _____ | 30. An option answering a different objection than the one asked is a: _____ |
| 13. An option that answers a different objection from the one asked is called a: _____ | 31. Which body is the single-window regulator for private space activity in India? _____ |
| 14. In an argument, an example offered to make a point concrete functions as: _____ | 32. 'Restitution' of antiquities means returning them to their: _____ |
| 15. Granting the premises but disputing the mechanism attacks the argument's: _____ | 33. The Antiquities and Art Treasures Act was passed in which year? _____ |
| 16. The Brahmaputra is known in Tibet by which name? _____ | 34. Which body protects centrally protected monuments in India? _____ |
| 17. A conclusion that merely restates a premise commits which flaw? _____ | 35. Article 49 directs the State to protect monuments of: _____ |
| 18. An argument drawing a general rule from a few cases risks which error? _____ | 36. A 123 Agreement permits trade in nuclear technology only: _____ |

