

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 — LITERARY FICTION · THE TENANT OF THE BLUE ROOM (Q1-Q5)

For eleven summers the blue room at the top of the house had belonged to no one, and Meera had come to think of it as hers precisely because it was empty. It held a narrow bed, a washstand with a cracked jug, and a window that framed the estuary the way a frame flatters a saint, reverently and at a slight remove. She was nine when she first climbed the ladder to it, and she had climbed it every August since, on the first afternoon of the holidays, before the trunks were unpacked or the grown-ups had finished quarrelling in the hall below.

This year the ladder had been taken away.

Her aunt explained the matter briskly, as though explaining were itself a kindness. A guest was coming, a Mr. Sethi, something to do with the sale of the orchard, and the blue room, being the only spare, had been made ready for him. Meera nodded, because nodding was expected, and went out to stand in the wet grass and quietly hate the estuary for a while.

What troubled her was not the loss of the room but the ease of it. No one had asked. The room had been given away in a single sentence over breakfast, the way one gives away a habit one has outgrown, and the giving had cost the grown-ups nothing at all. She understood, dimly and for the first time, that a place could be entirely yours in every way that mattered to you and still, in the one way that counted to the world, belong to somebody else.

That night she heard Mr. Sethi's footsteps overhead, unfamiliar and slow, and the small complaint of the bed as he lay down on it. She lay awake beneath him, mapping from memory the ceiling he was looking at, the exact water-stain shaped like a hare. She felt no anger now, only a curious tenderness for the stranger who did not know, and would never know, that he was sleeping in the middle of somebody's childhood.

1. Which one of the following best captures the central concern of the passage?

- ☐ A. A quarrel among the adults of the household drives an unhappy young girl to seek a lasting refuge in an unused room at the very top of the house.
- ☐ B. A stranger's arrival at a country house gradually exposes the long-buried financial troubles that the family had hoped to keep hidden from the child.
- ☐ C. A child discovers that a place can be wholly hers in every way that matters to her and yet still belong, in the world's eyes, to someone else.
- ☐ D. A girl's cherished summer ritual is interrupted by a guest, and the experience teaches her at last to share what she had selfishly hoarded for years.

2. It can most reasonably be inferred that what most disturbs Meera about the loss of the blue room is

- ☐ A. the discomfort of having to sleep in some lesser room now that the only truly pleasant bedroom has been handed to a visiting stranger.
- ☐ B. the discovery that a thing she had thought unshakeably her own could be given away by others without her being consulted or even considered at all.
- ☐ C. her growing suspicion that Mr. Sethi has come not merely to buy the orchard but to take full and permanent possession of the house and everything within it.
- ☐ D. the fear that her aunt no longer regards her as a proper member of the family who is entitled to a room of her own each and every summer.

3. The tone of the passage as a whole is best described as

- ☐ A. wistful and reflective, tracing a small private loss that opens onto a larger understanding.
- ☐ B. bitter and accusatory, condemning the adults for their casual and thoughtless cruelty to a child.
- ☐ C. light and comic, treating the girl's disappointment as an amusing and trivial childish overreaction.
- ☐ D. tense and foreboding, hinting darkly that the stranger's arrival will bring the family to some ruin.

4. As used near the end of the passage ("the small complaint of the bed as he lay down on it"), the word "complaint" most nearly means

- ☐ A. a formal grievance lodged by the guest about the poor and neglected condition of the furniture in the room.
- ☐ B. an expression of the girl's own silent resentment, projected outward onto the ordinary objects around the man.
- ☐ C. a persistent ache or bodily ailment of the sort an elderly person might be expected to suffer on a hard mattress.
- ☐ D. the faint creaking sound made by the wooden bedframe as it took on the full weight of the person lying down.

5. The one-sentence paragraph "This year the ladder had been taken away." functions in the passage chiefly to

- ☐ A. supply a purely practical explanation for why the girl happens to be physically unable to reach the room she loves this one particular summer.
- ☐ B. mark, by its abrupt and isolated brevity, the pivot on which the passage turns from settled ritual to the loss that prompts her reflection.
- ☐ C. foreshadow a later scene in which the missing ladder will turn out to have caused a serious accident to one of the adults of the house.
- ☐ D. cast a quiet suspicion on Mr. Sethi by implying that he himself ordered the ladder removed so that no one could ever disturb his privacy.

READING COMPREHENSION — PHILOSOPHY & IDEAS · THE USES OF BEING ALONE (Q6-Q10)

Solitude and loneliness are so often confused that we have half-forgotten they are opposites. Loneliness is a hunger; solitude one has learned to cook alone. The lonely person is haunted by an absence, aware at every moment of the company he



solitary person, by contrast, is not waiting for anyone. He has arranged his hours around his own presence and found the arrangement sufficient. That the two states can wear the same outward face, a single figure alone in a room, has misled moralists into treating all withdrawal from company as a symptom to be cured.

The confusion carries a real cost. A civilisation that cannot tell solitude from loneliness will medicate the first while feeding the second. It fills every silence with distraction, mistaking the noise for a cure, and so denies people the very stillness in which a self is assembled. For solitude is not the mere absence of others; it is a positive achievement, the slow work of becoming someone whose company you can bear. The child left alone is merely unattended. The adult who can be alone has built something.

None of this is a counsel of retreat. The solitary are not misanthropes; often they make the best of companions, precisely because they arrive at friendship without the desperation of the lonely, who demand that others fill a void those others did not dig. To need company less is to spoil it less. What one brings to a table one does not need to be rescued from is a lighter, freer thing than what the starving bring to it.

The ancients understood this. They prescribed retreat not as an escape from the world but as a preparation for returning to it more fully. We have inverted the lesson. We treat every unshared hour as time to be killed, and are then surprised that, having killed so much of it, we no longer quite know who we are when no one is watching. The capacity to be alone, it turns out, is the quiet ground on which every other capacity is built.

6. Which one of the following best states the main idea of the passage?

- ☐ A. Loneliness and solitude are, in the end, the very same condition, since each of them describes a person who happens to be set apart from all others.
- ☐ B. Modern civilisation has at last succeeded in wholly curing loneliness by ensuring that no citizen anywhere need ever pass so much as a single waking hour of the day without the ready company of others.
- ☐ C. Solitude is not mere aloneness but a positive achievement, and confusing it with loneliness leads a society to suppress the very stillness the self requires.
- ☐ D. People who quietly prefer their own company to that of others are, as a general rule, misanthropes who make for poor and unreliable friends.

7. It can most reasonably be inferred that the author regards a society that "fills every silence with distraction" as

- ☐ A. successfully shielding its members from the genuine dangers that long stretches of unstructured and unsupervised free time are known to pose.
- ☐ B. feeding loneliness while starving solitude, and so leaving its people less and less able to know themselves when they are unobserved.
- ☐ C. correctly recognising that the human mind is simply not built to tolerate any prolonged absence of stimulation arriving from the outside.
- ☐ D. merely reflecting, rather than in any way worsening, a loss of self-knowledge whose real causes are to be found entirely elsewhere.

8. The author's attitude toward the modern treatment of unshared time is best described as

- ☐ A. critical but constructive, faulting a mistake while pointing the reader toward a better understanding.
- ☐ B. nostalgic and despairing, convinced that the human capacity for solitude has been quite irretrievably lost.
- ☐ C. neutral and clinical, merely cataloguing various behaviours without evaluating a single one of them.
- ☐ D. celebratory and approving, warmly praising the many distractions that modern life has made available.

9. As used in the passage ("None of this is a counsel of retreat"), the word "counsel" most nearly means

- ☐ A. a professional lawyer who has been engaged to represent a person's interests in some formal dispute.
- ☐ B. a private matter or secret of the kind that a careful person keeps deliberately hidden from others.
- ☐ C. a formal assembly of elders convened together to deliberate upon a difficult question of policy.
- ☐ D. a piece of advice or recommendation urging a particular course of action upon the person addressed.

10. The two short sentences "The child left alone is merely unattended. The adult who can be alone has built something." serve primarily to

- ☐ A. concede that children are, after all, far better suited to solitude than the anxious and overworked adults of the present day.
- ☐ B. introduce a fresh objection to the essay's main argument, one which the paragraph immediately following will then be devoted entirely to answering at some considerable length.
- ☐ C. sharpen the central distinction of the essay by contrasting mere aloneness with solitude understood as an achievement earned over time.
- ☐ D. soften the earlier criticism of modern society by admitting that much of what looks like solitude is only loneliness renamed.

SECTION — CRITICAL REASONING

CRITICAL REASONING — LAW & RIGHTS · INNOCENT UNTIL PUBLISHED (Q11-Q15)

The presumption of innocence is usually described as a rule of the courtroom: a direction to the judge about who must prove what, and to what standard. But it is also, and more importantly, a promise the state makes to every citizen, that until guilt is established by due process one will be treated as innocent not merely in law but in life. It is this second, broader promise that the modern practice of publicising arrests systematically breaks.

Consider the sequence. A person is arrested; his name, his face and the alleged offence are released to the press within hours; the report circulates widely before a single charge is framed, let alone tested. By the time an acquittal arrives, if it arrives at all, the damage is complete and largely irreversible. Employers have already acted; neighbours have already decided; the archive of search results has hardened into a verdict that no court ever delivered. The law's eventual finding of innocence cannot un-publish what the arrest once published.

Defenders of the practice invoke transparency. The public, they say, has a right to know whom the state has detained, lest arrests become secret and power unaccountable. The concern is a serious one, but the chosen remedy is disproportionate to it. Acco requires that arrests be recorded, reviewable and open to challenge; it does not require that the arrested person's identity be to millions who will never scrutinise the conduct of the state and will only pre-judge the conduct of the individual. One can police to account without pillorying the suspect.



The principled line is therefore this. The identity of an accused person should be withheld from publication until a court has found, at the very least, that there is a case to answer, and ideally until conviction, save where the person consents or where naming is genuinely necessary to protect others, as with an absconding danger to the public. This is not secrecy. The fact of the arrest, the charge and the proceedings would all remain matters of record. It is merely a refusal to let the machinery of publicity impose a punishment that the law has not authorised and may never authorise.

11. Which one of the following most accurately expresses the main conclusion of the argument?

- ☐ A. The presumption of innocence is best understood as a narrow and technical rule addressed to judges about the correct allocation of the burden of proof.
- ☐ B. The public has an essentially unqualified right to learn the identity of every single person whom the state has arrested, however early in the process.
- ☐ C. An acquittal, once it has finally been delivered by a court, is normally quite sufficient to repair whatever reputational harm an earlier arrest may have caused.
- ☐ D. The identity of an accused person should not be published until a court finds at least a case to answer, save in a few narrow protective exceptions.

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

- ☐ A. The great majority of people who are arrested by the police are in fact eventually convicted of the very offence for which they were first detained.
- ☐ B. Newspapers would readily agree to withhold the names of arrested persons if they were simply and politely asked to do so by the relevant authorities.
- ☐ C. The reputational harm caused by the publicising of an arrest is not, as a rule, reliably undone by a later acquittal or by a withdrawal of the charge.
- ☐ D. Transparency about arrests serves no legitimate public purpose whatsoever, and is invoked in practice only as a convenient pretext by an intrusive press.

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

- ☐ A. Courts in most jurisdictions already possess the long-settled and well-recognised power to impose reporting restrictions in those individual cases where they happen to judge it appropriate and fit to do so.
- ☐ B. Empirical studies find that publicising an arrest most often prompts further witnesses and additional victims to come forward, preventing greater harm to the public.
- ☐ C. The majority of readers who happen to see an arrest reported in the press tend to forget the accused person's name again within a few short days.
- ☐ D. Employers are in many places legally forbidden from dismissing an employee merely on the basis of an arrest that has not yet resulted in any conviction.

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

- ☐ A. A long-term study finds that people acquitted after their arrests were publicised suffer lasting losses of employment and social standing that acquitted persons who were never named do not.
- ☐ B. Surveys consistently show that the public's confidence in the police tends to rise quite noticeably whenever the names of arrested suspects are promptly released to the assembled representatives of the national media.
- ☐ C. Most criminal proceedings that begin with a widely reported arrest end not in an acquittal at all but rather in a negotiated plea of guilty to some lesser charge.
- ☐ D. Newspapers report that the total number of arrests made in a typical year has been climbing fairly steadily across most of the recognised categories of offence.

15. The argument is most vulnerable to the criticism that it

- ☐ A. simply assumes that the press is uniformly and quite unreasonably hostile toward each and every last person whose arrest it just so happens to choose to report upon at all.
- ☐ B. treats the presumption of innocence as though it were only a narrow rule of evidence rather than the broader promise it later relies upon.
- ☐ C. overlooks the plain possibility that at least some arrested persons might positively prefer to have their own names published in the press.
- ☐ D. proposes to withhold names until a court finds "a case to answer" without explaining how that threshold escapes the very publicity harm it condemns.

CRITICAL REASONING — SOCIETY & CULTURE · THE TROUBLE WITH AUTHENTICITY (Q16–Q20)

No word does more work in the modern marketplace of culture than "authentic", and none is asked to carry a heavier load of confusion. The traveller wants an authentic meal, the listener an authentic voice, the shopper an authentic craft. In each case the word promises contact with something unspoiled by commerce and untouched by the seeker's own presence. This promise, on inspection, cannot be kept, and the pursuit of it tends to destroy the very thing it prizes.

Begin with the paradox at its heart. The moment a practice is valued for being authentic, it acquires a market; the market rewards those who perform authenticity most convincingly; and performance, by its nature, is the opposite of the unselfconscious life the traveller came to witness. The fishing village that learns tourists will pay to watch "real" fishermen soon has more men posing with nets than casting them. The seeker's very demand reshapes the supply, and the culture obligingly stages a version of itself for the camera. What is consumed as authentic is, precisely because it is being consumed, a production.

There is a deeper error still. "Authenticity" quietly assumes that a culture has a single true form, frozen at some earlier and purer moment, against which all later change counts as adulteration. But living cultures are not fossils; they borrow, adapt and hybridise, and always have. The "traditional" dish contains a New World chilli; the "ancient" festival was reinvented two generations ago. To demand that a culture stay authentic is to demand that it stop being alive, to conscript real people into a museum of themselves for the pleasure of visitors who remain free to change while they are not.

The honest response is not to sneer at the desire behind the word, which is a real and even admirable hunger for the genuine, but to redirect that desire. What deserves our respect is not a culture's supposed purity but its vitality, its capacity to make and ren



on its own terms. We should judge a tradition not by how faithfully it embalms the past, but by how confidently it goes on living. The genuine article was never a relic; it was always a work in progress.

16. Which one of the following best captures the main conclusion of the argument?

- ☐ A. Travellers, listeners and shoppers alike ought to abandon altogether their desire for genuine experiences, since that desire is naive and even faintly shameful.
- ☐ B. A culture's real value lies chiefly in how faithfully it manages to preserve the customs and forms that it inherited from earlier and demonstrably purer generations.
- ☐ C. Cultures should be valued not for a supposed purity but for their living vitality, their capacity to make and remake themselves on their own terms.
- ☐ D. The modern tourist industry is largely to blame for corrupting a range of practices that would otherwise have remained wholly untouched by any commerce.

17. The claim that the demand for authenticity "reshapes the supply" depends on which one of the following assumptions?

- ☐ A. Those who practise a valued tradition will, at least in part, alter what they actually do in response to the rewards that outside interest holds out to them.
- ☐ B. No genuine fishing village anywhere has ever managed to survive the arrival of tourists without abandoning fishing as a livelihood entirely within one generation.
- ☐ C. Ordinary tourists are, as a rule, wholly incapable of telling the difference between a knowingly staged performance of a craft and its unselfconscious practice.
- ☐ D. A culture that has once begun to perform itself for visiting outsiders can never afterwards recover even a trace of its earlier and more genuine character.

18. Which one of the following, if true, would most weaken the argument?

- ☐ A. Studies of several tourist villages find that paid demand for "traditional" crafts has funded and revived skills that were otherwise dying out, without displacing genuine practice.
- ☐ B. Many travellers report that they feel a deep and surprisingly lasting satisfaction after visiting the sorts of places that are widely advertised as authentic and quite unspoiled by commerce.
- ☐ C. The chilli now thought quite essential to a certain "traditional" cuisine was in fact introduced there from the New World only a matter of a few centuries ago.
- ☐ D. Some of the festivals now promoted to tourists as being genuinely ancient were actually designed and first performed within the last two or three generations.

19. Which one of the following, if true, would most strengthen the argument?

- ☐ A. The word "authentic" now appears far more frequently in tourist advertising than it did in the comparable advertising of several decades ago.
- ☐ B. In villages that became widely known for "authentic" crafts, researchers found the share of residents staging displays for visitors rose sharply while everyday practice fell away.
- ☐ C. Many tourists now say that they would quite happily pay a really substantial premium for the sort of experience that the seller was genuinely willing to guarantee to them as being completely and utterly genuine.
- ☐ D. Cuisines almost everywhere have absorbed new ingredients and techniques from distant regions over the course of many long centuries of trade and exchange.

20. The author's reasoning that the seeking of authenticity destroys it is most closely paralleled by which one of the following?

- ☐ A. A gardener waters a plant so faithfully each day that its roots, never having to reach for moisture, grow shallow, and the plant is toppled by the very first strong wind.
- ☐ B. A critic praises a novel so extravagantly beforehand that readers approach it with expectations no book could ever satisfy, and so come away vaguely disappointed.
- ☐ C. A collector keeps a rare coin sealed away so carefully that, although it stays perfectly preserved, it is never again seen or enjoyed by any living person.
- ☐ D. A photographer asks villagers to pose exactly as they "really" live, and in the very posing the ordinary life he had wished to capture quietly vanishes from the frame.

RAPID FIRE — ONE-LINE RECALL

19 quick questions · not negatively marked

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| 1. Define the reading skill 'main idea' in one line. _____ | 13. Define 'counterfactual'. _____ |
| 2. What does an 'inference' question test? _____ | 14. One-word: reasoning from a general rule to a specific case is? _____ |
| 3. Literary device: giving a bed a 'complaint' is an example of? _____ | 15. A conclusion that must be true if the premises are true is called a valid ____? |
| 4. Vocab-in-context: 'wistful' describes a tone that is? _____ | 16. The attitude a writer takes toward the subject is called the ____? |
| 5. Homophone trap: 'counsel' versus 'council'? _____ | 17. Assuming an event caused another only because it came first is which fallacy? _____ |
| 6. What must a 'weaken' answer do? _____ | 18. One word: a preliminary assumption made without proof for the sake of argument. _____ |
| 7. What must a 'strengthen' answer do? _____ | 19. An argument that attacks the person rather than the claim commits which fallacy? _____ |
| 8. Vocab: 'misanthrope' means? _____ | |
| 9. Define 'assumption' in critical reasoning. _____ | |
| 10. Latin: 'prima facie' means? _____ | |
| 11. What is the 'presumption of innocence'? _____ | |
| 12. Vocab: to 'pillory' someone means? _____ | |

