

ANSWER KEY — 1 JULY 2026

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10
A	C	D	A	D	B	B	D	C	C
Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20
D	A	C	C	A	D	B	B	A	B

RC PASSAGES

Q1 A

The author explicitly states that a conviction 'does not say that the defendant committed the act' but only that jurors could not find a reasonable path to acquittal, calling these 'profoundly different epistemic claims.' The author also argues that exclusionary rules 'actively distort the inferential landscape' rather than ensuring reliability, ruling out the option about reliable approximations. The passage attributes the 'identical in kind' view to Haack but then qualifies it by noting institutional constraints create different kinds of unreliability, not equivalence. Hence, option (A) is correct.

Q2 C

The author writes that exclusionary rules 'trade certain kinds of error for others in accordance with value judgments about what kinds of mistakes are more tolerable,' and labels this 'a frankly political observation dressed in procedural clothing.' This points squarely to the idea that the rules encode social priorities about error-tolerance rather than being epistemically neutral. The passage does not attribute the rules to legislative self-interest or judicial bias, nor does it advocate abolishing them. Hence, option (C) is correct.

Q3 D

The adversarial system passage extends the author's core argument about the gap between legal proof and epistemic truth. The author describes the adversarial record as 'a curated spectacle whose relationship to the underlying facts is mediated by rhetorical strategy,' directly supporting the correct option. The passage does not recommend replacing juries, does not call the defence lawyer's duty unethical, and explicitly says sincerity and competence are background assumptions that the adversarial setting disrupts — not the only variables. Hence, option (D) is correct.

Q4 A

The final sentence of the passage explicitly anticipates and rejects the despairing reading: 'To acknowledge this is not to despair of legal truth, but to understand that legal proof is a social technology.' The author presents the observation calmly as a corrective to misunderstanding, not as a call to reform or a satire. The passage contains no irony and no explicit reform agenda — it is a philosophical clarification. Hence, option (A) is correct.

Q5 D

The author's core claim is that exclusionary rules are active epistemic distortions that trade one kind of unreliability for another without improving overall accuracy. A direct challenge would argue that these constraints actually improve reliability by correcting for biases — this is the strongest counter to the author's position. The historical comparison between legal systems and the scientific-standard claim are tangential; the professional-codes point is compatible with the author's argument since it concerns sincerity, not the structural bias the author identifies. Hence, option (D) is correct.

Q6 B

The author is careful to state 'This is not a dismissal of thermodynamics as ideology; the laws are real and powerful,' positioning the claim as one about the sociology of scientific questions rather than the truth-value of the results. This corresponds precisely to the correct option. The social-construction reading is explicitly rejected. The passage says Carnot was responding to French-English engine efficiency differences, not British industrialist commissions. The 'pure mathematics' option is the opposite of what the passage argues. Hence, option (B) is correct.

Q7 B

The passage explicitly states Boltzmann's mechanics 'was initially resisted not primarily on empirical grounds but because it threatened to dissolve the certainty of thermodynamic doom.' This maps directly onto the correct option. The passage says nothing about mathematical errors in Boltzmann's work or unavailable apparatus. Boltzmann extended thermodynamics to statistical mechanics rather than contradicting Carnot's efficiency calculations — a confusion of different levels of theory. Hence, option (B) is correct.

Q8 D

A 'scientific warrant' is a justification or legitimacy conferred by science. The passage describes the Victorian imagination as 'saturated with images of decline' and then says entropy 'gave this sensibility a scientific warrant' — meaning it made a pre-existing cultural mood seem scientifically validated. The passage nowhere alleges intentional political distortion, and it explicitly preserves the empirical reality of thermodynamics. The 'metaphor first' reading reverses the chronological sequence the passage describes. Hence, option (D) is correct.

Q9 C

The passage explicitly states: 'The most defensible position is that the causal arrow ran in both directions simultaneously.' This is a clear commitment to mutual constitution, not agnosticism and not priority to either side. The final sentence reinforces this: 'acceptance of a theory depends not only on its empirical adequacy but on whether the world it describes is one that scientists and their societies are prepared to inhabit' — 'not only' acknowledges the empirical component while adding the cultural one. Hence, option (C) is correct.

Q10 C

The passage opens by contextualising Carnot's work within industrial competition and closes with the general claim that theory acceptance depends on empirical adequacy and societal preparedness to inhabit the world the theory describes. This is the methodology of contextual history of science, which is exactly what the correct option states. The 'purely logical' approach is what the passage critiques. The passage explicitly says it is illustrating 'a general feature of scientific development,' not a unique feature of thermodynamics. Hence, option (C) is correct.

CR PASSAGES

Q11 D

In a multi-premise argument, the conclusion is the claim that the argument is designed to establish; the premises are the evidence and reasons offered in its support. The critics advance a chain of reasoning: algorithms reshape rather than merely reflect preferences; these preferences determine what hundreds of millions see; therefore platforms are exercising editorial power; therefore they should be regulated like broadcasters. The normative policy recommendation — that broadcasters' public-interest standards should apply — is what all the preceding claims are in service of establishing. The second option, about emotional content being rewarded, is an empirical premise describing how algorithms behave. The third option, about preference-shaping versus preference-reflection, is the key factual premise that distinguishes platforms from passive conduits. The fourth option, about concentration of control among few firms, is a structural premise that amplifies the stakes of the argument. None of these is the conclusion; they are all reasons offered to support the correct option, which captures what the critics ultimately want the reader to accept. Hence, option (D) is correct.

Q12 A

The mirror analogy depends on the claim that the signals algorithms are trained on — clicks, shares, dwell-time — accurately represent what users genuinely want to know. But if users' engagement patterns are themselves the product of prolonged algorithmic conditioning, the claim that algorithms merely reflect pre-existing preferences becomes circular: the mirror has already shaped the face it claims to be reflecting. This assumption is never stated in the advocates' position but is logically required for the mirror analogy to work: if the signals are conditioned rather than authentic, the algorithm is not reflecting independent preferences but amplifying patterns it has helped to create. The second option concerns editorial journalism's historical track record, which the advocates invoke as a comparator, but it is not the load-bearing premise for the mirror claim. The third option overstates the advocates' position by making it absolutist, whereas the text supports only a more moderate pluralism-and-freedom argument. The fourth option concerns a broader compatibility thesis between commercial and civic interests that is not explicitly invoked as the basis of the mirror analogy. Hence, option (A) is correct.

Q13 C

The critics' central empirical claim is that engagement-optimising algorithms produce an informational diet that narrows rather than broadens the epistemic range of citizens, thereby eroding the shared informational commons necessary for democratic deliberation. Evidence directly contradicting this empirical claim would deal a serious blow to the conclusion that follows from it. If measured exposure data show that algorithmic curation in fact increases diversity of viewpoints encountered — relative to the pre-algorithmic baseline of self-selected subscriptions — the critics cannot establish that a shared epistemic commons is being depleted; the curation may be epistemically beneficial on net. This does not merely rebut a peripheral point but attacks the empirical foundation of the critics' democratic concern. The second option about user preferences supports the advocates but does not speak to the epistemic quality of the content, which is the critics' concern. The third option about regulatory failure is a practical governance observation and does not rebut the theoretical case that platforms should bear obligations. The fourth option, about platforms experimenting with credibility signals, is a partial and voluntary remediation step that does not demonstrate that the underlying problem the critics identify does not exist. Hence, option (C) is correct.

Q14 C

A false analogy fails when the two cases being compared differ in a respect that is morally or logically relevant to the conclusion being drawn. The advocates' analogy requires the passivity of the shop window to transfer to the algorithm: both, on this view, merely present what is already desired. But this shared feature is precisely what is disputed. A shop window does not iteratively adjust its display based on which items drew the longest gaze in order to amplify cravings; an algorithm does exactly this. The critics provide empirical reasons to think that engagement-optimised systems actively condition the preferences they are supposed to be serving, which breaks the analogy at its core. The second option, about consumer protection law, is a real asymmetry but is a governance observation rather than a logical critique of the analogy as drawn. The third option concerns voluntary participation and informed consent, which are separate issues from the passivity/activity distinction the analogy rests on. The fourth option raises a valid autonomy concern — users may not know how curation works — but this critique targets transparency, not the mechanism of the analogy. Hence, option (C) is correct.

Q15 A

Parallel-reasoning questions require identifying the option that replicates the logical structure of the original argument, not merely its surface topic. The critics' argument has three structural elements: a private actor makes decisions that appear to be mere technical or commercial choices; those decisions determine the content of something on which a large population depends for a civic good; therefore the actor should be held to public-interest standards normally applied to recognised utilities or public bodies, because the scale and nature of the dependence creates a public responsibility. The correct option mirrors all three elements: a private company's technical decisions about water chemistry determine something a whole population depends on for health, so public utility standards should apply. The second option about bookshops concerns shelf placement for diversity, which has no analogue to the epistemic-commons concern or the characterisation of a private entity as effectively performing a public function. The third option about newspaper editorial ethics concerns a recognised editorial actor who is already acknowledged to have journalistic obligations, rather than a private entity currently claiming neutrality. The fourth option about rail pricing concerns monopoly pricing power and essential-service access, not the epistemic quality of what a population receives from a private actor's discretionary choices. Hence, option (A) is correct.

Q16 D

The deterrence argument holds that a fixed, severe penalty increases the expected cost of crime and therefore reduces its incidence. For this to work, the mechanism must be operative: potential offenders must be aware of the fixed penalty in advance and must incorporate that awareness into a decision about whether to offend. An assumption is a premise on which the argument depends but does not explicitly state; denying this assumption breaks the argument. If most potential offenders either do not know the penalty before acting or, as the critics suggest, do not engage in the kind of rational cost-benefit analysis that could be influenced by prior knowledge of a mandatory minimum, the deterrence rationale collapses entirely. The second option about judicial bias is relevant to the equality rationale, not the deterrence argument. The third option about prosecutors is relevant to whether the equality argument is sound, since prosecutorial discretion may relocate disparity, but it does not concern the deterrence mechanism. The fourth option about geographic consistency is a premise that would strengthen the equality argument but does not relate to deterrence either. Hence, option (D) is correct.

Q17 B

The proponents' equality argument is that fixing the sentence by statute eliminates the judicial discretion that produces unequal outcomes for similarly situated defendants. The critics counter that this formal equality conceals substantive inequality by relocating disparity to prosecutorial charging decisions, which are not fixed by the mandatory minimum. Empirical evidence of large racial disparities in how prosecutors choose to bring mandatory minimum charges — disparities that precisely track the critics' theoretical prediction — directly validates the critics' rebuttal and thereby defeats the equality argument. If racial disparity persists even under mandatory minimums but is now attributable to charging rather than sentencing, the formal equality of the sentence does not translate into substantive equality of treatment. The second option about sentencing variation without mandatory minimums confirms judicial discretion produces variety, but it does not demonstrate that mandatory minimums actually deliver equality. The third option invokes legislative accountability, which addresses the democratic legitimacy of the scheme rather than whether equality is achieved. The fourth option about public confidence is a political and perceptual observation entirely distinct from the empirical question of whether outcomes are in fact equal. Hence, option (B) is correct.

Q18 B

The critics' plea bargaining argument has two steps: mandatory minimums create overwhelming pressure on defendants to plead guilty to lesser charges to avoid the catastrophic risk of the mandatory floor, and this pressure is particularly acute for innocent or marginally culpable defendants who would otherwise contest the charge. The argument warns that the result is mass plea-bargaining that bypasses the trial system, including in cases where the factual basis for a plea is weak or absent. Direct evidence of wrongful convictions in mandatory minimum jurisdictions where the defendant pleaded guilty specifically to avoid the mandatory penalty confirms both the mechanism (pressure to plead) and the worst-case consequence (innocent people admitting guilt). This is the most precise confirmation of the critics' concern. The second option about attorney time allocation confirms behavioural changes consistent with plea pressure but does not show that innocent or borderline defendants are being harmed. The third option concerns recidivism and speaks to the deterrence rationale rather than the plea-bargaining critique. The fourth option describes internal prosecutorial workflow, which has no direct bearing on whether defendants are being coerced into guilty pleas. Hence, option (B) is correct.

Q19 A

The critics do not merely assert that disparity shifts to prosecutors; they argue that this shift matters normatively because it worsens the situation. The implicit assumption required for this to follow is that the relocation of disparity to prosecutorial charging is more problematic than disparity at the sentencing stage — which is true only if prosecutorial decisions are less visible, less constrained, and less subject to appellate correction than judicial decisions. If prosecutorial charging were equally well-supervised and reviewable, merely relocating the source of disparity would not necessarily constitute a defeat for the equality rationale. The assumption that prosecutorial discretion is structurally less accountable is the hidden premise that makes the critics' equality critique bite rather than simply describe a lateral shift. The second option concerning judges being more equitable than prosecutors is a comparative claim about outcomes, not a structural claim about oversight, and it overstates what the critics need to assume. The third option about a necessary increase in informal discretion elsewhere is too broad — the critics focus on a specific relocation to prosecutors, not a general diffusion of discretion throughout the system. The fourth option about prosecutorial motivation conflates the structural argument about oversight with an ad hominem argument about individual bias, which the critics do not make. Hence, option (A) is correct.

Q20 B

The proponents' argument has a specific logical structure: by fixing one variable in the process at a uniform statutory value, variation in outcomes attributable to that variable is eliminated, thereby ensuring formally equal treatment for similarly situated parties. The correct option mirrors this structure: fixing grade boundaries at uniform thresholds removes department-level variation in how equivalent raw scores translate into grades, ensuring equal treatment for the same performance. Crucially — and this is the feature the critics would seize on — the parallel also preserves the possibility of hidden upstream variation (in marking standards, assessment design, or question difficulty) that is not addressed by fixing the boundary, just as mandatory minimums leave prosecutorial charging unaddressed. The second option, about a maximum fine, addresses an upper cap on severity rather than a fixed uniform outcome, and does not eliminate all variation within the sentencing range. The third option, about a salary cap, is about removing a competitive resource advantage, a different kind of equality concern. The fourth option, about a flat tax rate, actually parallels a different equality argument — proportional contribution rather than uniform treatment of similarly situated individuals — and introduces the issue of circumstantial variation in a way the proponents' mandatory minimum argument explicitly does not. Hence, option (B) is correct.