

ANSWER KEY — 13 JULY 2026

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10
B	C	A	D	B	C	A	D	B	C
Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20
A	D	B	C	A	D	B	C	A	D
Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27	Q28	Q29	Q30
A	C	B	D	A	C	B	D	A	B

RC PASSAGES

Q1 B

The word 'colonised' is used metaphorically. The sentence says every idle moment 'is now colonised by frictionless distraction, and the itch is scratched before it can do its work.' The image is of empty time being seized and occupied by distraction, so 'taken over and filled by distraction' captures the sense exactly. Option A ('settled by migrants') and option C ('governed from afar by a ruling authority') apply the literal, political meanings of colonisation, which do not fit a sentence about phones filling idle minutes. Option D ('deliberately cultivated for future benefit') reverses the author's point: the passage laments this filling of time as a loss, not a benefit deliberately sought. Vocabulary-in-context questions demand the meaning the surrounding clause supports, and here the surrounding clause about the 'itch' being 'scratched before it can do its work' clearly signals unwanted occupation, not cultivation or governance. In short, treat the metaphor as the clause frames it: idle time being seized and packed with distraction, so B alone fits the author's regretful sense of occupied, lost minutes. Hence (B) is the correct answer.

Q2 C

The passage repeatedly qualifies its praise of boredom: it opens by noting boredom's 'bad reputation,' concedes that 'chronic tedium... can corrode motivation and wellbeing,' and states its thesis narrowly, that 'occasional, tolerated boredom is worth protecting' because sitting with restlessness gives 'attention room to gather and ideas room to form.' Option C reproduces exactly this measured claim. Option A is the opposite of the author's view, since the passage regrets that technology fills every idle moment. Option B overstates a single detail: the default mode network is mentioned as associated with daydreaming, not declared the sole source of all creativity. Option D is an unsupported sweeping comparison the author never makes; the passage worries about a lost habit, not about ranking whole generations. Main-idea questions reward the option that matches the scope and balance of the whole argument, which is precisely option C's careful, protective claim. The takeaway for main-idea items is to test each option against the passage's hedges, and only C survives the author's careful, protective scope. Hence (C) is the correct answer.

Q3 A

The third paragraph argues that 'modern life rarely lets boredom run its course,' that idle moments are filled by distraction 'before it can do its work,' and warns we may be 'trading the discomfort of an empty minute for the loss of a valuable mental habit.' Option A restates this inference directly. Option B contradicts the fourth paragraph, which explicitly denies romanticising chronic tedium and notes it can 'corrode motivation and wellbeing.' Option C misreads the science: the default mode network is described as active when 'nothing external demands our attention,' the opposite of demanding tasks. Option D is an extreme distortion; the author values occasional boredom but never claims creativity depends 'entirely' on avoiding 'every' dull experience. Inference questions reward the modest claim the text supports, not the strongest-sounding one, so the phone-reaching point in option A is correct. Read against the third paragraph as a whole, only A stays within the modest, phone-in-the-idle-moment claim the author is actually willing to defend. Hence (A) is the correct answer.

Q4 D

The author praises boredom's benefits yet carefully hedges: 'None of this romanticises chronic tedium,' and the thesis is limited to 'occasional, tolerated boredom.' This combination of genuine appreciation with deliberate restraint is captured by option D, 'appreciative yet measured, valuing it without romanticising it.' Option A ('dismissive and contemptuous') is wrong because the author defends boredom rather than scorning it. Option B ('alarmed and pessimistic') misreads the tone; the author is hopeful about a recoverable habit, not despairing. Option C ('nostalgic and sentimental, longing for a vanished golden past') is tempting because of the image of children who 'once stared out of windows,' but the passage uses that image to make a practical point, not to indulge sentimental longing, and it explicitly refuses to romanticise. Tone questions require matching the whole texture of the writing, which here is balanced advocacy, exactly what option D describes. The safest tone answer is the one honouring both the praise and the disclaimer, and D uniquely balances appreciation with the refusal to romanticise. Hence (D) is the correct answer.

Q5 B

The author's causal claim is that boredom fuels creativity, supported by studies where people given a dull task 'later produce more inventive ideas.' To weaken a causal claim you attack the evidence for the link itself. Option B does this directly: if 'controlled studies show bored participants generate no more original ideas than entertained ones,' the central causal mechanism collapses. Option A notes boredom feels unpleasant, which the author already concedes and which says nothing about creativity. Option C, that creative artists were bored as children, if anything supports the author. Option D, that smartphones are used more now, is consistent with the passage's worry but does not test whether boredom actually produces creativity. Only option B undercuts the specific premise that boredom leads to more inventive output, so it is the strongest weakener. Because weakening a causal claim means severing the cause from the effect, only B, which denies the extra inventiveness itself, does the required damage. Hence (B) is the correct answer.

Q6 C

'Inert' is defined by contrast: 'Far from being inert dirt, soil is a living matrix in which these organisms trade nutrients... and quietly sustain almost all terrestrial life.' The author sets 'inert' against 'living,' so 'inert' must mean lifeless or inactive, matching option C, 'lifeless and chemically or biologically inactive.' Option A ('richly fertile and teeming with life') is the opposite of inert and is what the author says soil actually is. Option B ('loose and easily eroded') describes a physical property unrelated to the living-versus-lifeless contrast the sentence draws. Option D ('poisonous to roots') introduces toxicity, a notion the passage never links to the word. Vocabulary-in-context questions hinge on the signposted contrast, and here 'Far from being inert... soil is a living matrix' makes the lifeless meaning in option C unmistakable. Anchor the answer to the explicit 'Far from being inert... living matrix' contrast, and the lifeless reading in C is the only defensible one. Hence (C) is the correct answer.

Q7 A

The passage surveys soil as a whole living system: it opens on the sheer abundance of soil organisms, explains fungal and bacterial partnerships that feed plants, describes soil's role in storing carbon, and closes by urging that soil be treated 'as a living community.' Option A captures this full sweep, naming organisms, carbon storage and food. Option B overstates one detail; fungi are important but bacteria and other organisms are given equal weight, so 'the only organisms that matter' is false. Option C picks a minor mention, ploughing, and wrongly makes improving plough technique the subject; the passage treats ploughing as a threat, not a triumph. Option D fixates on the opening comparison and distorts it into the passage's purpose. Main-idea questions reward the option matching the passage's overall scope, which option A alone does. For scope-based main-idea questions, reject options that seize on one detail; only A mirrors the passage's full arc from organisms to carbon to food. Hence (A) is the correct answer.

Q8 D

The passage says mycorrhizal fungi 'weave themselves around plant roots... ferrying water and phosphorus to the plant in exchange for the sugars it makes through photosynthesis.' This mutual exchange is exactly option D: fungi benefit plants and are rewarded with photosynthetic sugars. Option A ('compete aggressively for nutrients') contradicts the cooperative, trading relationship described. Option B ('release stored carbon when undisturbed') misattributes to fungi a process the passage links to disturbance and decomposition, and even then it is undisturbed soil that stores carbon. Option C is the classic trap: fixing nitrogen from the air is attributed by the passage to bacteria, not fungi, so it swaps the two organisms. Inference questions on paired details reward careful attribution, and only option D reflects what the text actually says about mycorrhizae. Since the passage assigns nitrogen-fixing to bacteria and sugar-trading to fungi, D keeps the attribution straight while C deliberately swaps the two. Hence (D) is the correct answer.

Q9 B

The passage presents facts about soil while signalling worry: it calls soil 'least understood,' warns that disturbance tears apart 'the intricate web of organisms,' and notes 'a third of the world's soils are already degraded.' This mix of explanation and unease matches option B, 'informative and quietly concerned about the degradation of soils.' Option A ('detached and purely neutral, taking no interest') ignores the clear concern in the final paragraph. Option C ('cheerfully optimistic that degradation has been reversed') contradicts the statement that a third of soils are already degraded and fertility is declining. Option D ('indignant and accusatory towards farmers') is too hostile; the passage suggests better practices such as reduced tillage rather than blaming farmers. Tone questions require matching the passage's overall register, and here it is calm, factual concern, exactly option B. The final paragraph's data on degraded soils rules out neutrality and optimism alike, leaving B's quietly concerned register as the correct tone. Hence (B) is the correct answer.

Q10 C

The claim to be strengthened is that 'healthy... soil is therefore one of the largest carbon stores on land, rivalling the world's forests.' To strengthen it you add evidence that soil holds a great deal of carbon. Option C does this directly: if 'undisturbed soils hold more carbon than the vegetation growing above them,' it confirms soil is a major store, even rivalling plants. Option A concerns forests absorbing carbon and, if anything, shifts the credit to forests rather than soil. Option B, more fertiliser use, relates to disturbance, not to the size of the carbon store. Option D, that dry desert soils support little life, describes an exception that could weaken rather than support the general claim. Only option C supplies confirming evidence about soil's carbon-holding capacity, making it the strongest strengthener. Strengthening requires fresh confirming evidence of soil's carbon capacity, and only C supplies a direct comparison showing soil out-storing the plants above it. Hence (C) is the correct answer.

CR PASSAGES

Q11 A

The conclusion is the main point the argument is built to support. Here the opening paragraph states it plainly: after summarising the reformers' case, the author writes, 'The proposal is superficially attractive, but India should not adopt compulsory voting,' a claim the rest of the passage defends with philosophical and practical premises. Option A restates this conclusion. Option B (Australia's model works in its context) is a concession the author makes only to then set aside, not the conclusion. Option C (Indian turnout is respectable) is a background premise from the first sentence. Option D (NOTA lets voters dissent) is a supporting premise used to rebut defenders, not the overall claim. Identify-the-conclusion questions require separating the thesis from the evidence for it; the thesis here is the recommendation against compulsion, option A. Separating recommendation from evidence is the whole task here, and the imperative 'India should not adopt compulsory voting' is unmistakably the recommendation, A. Hence (A) is the correct answer.

Q12 D

The author argues coerced voting yields only 'a mark on a ballot extracted under threat,' not 'genuine consent,' because 'the freedom to express that will must include the freedom to withhold it.' The hidden assumption bridging coercion and the absence of genuine consent is that real democratic consent must be freely chosen, not forced, exactly option D. Negate it, and the argument fails: if consent need not be voluntary, then a compelled vote could still count as genuine. Option A (Australia never exceeded ninety per cent) is both false to the passage and irrelevant to the consent argument. Option B (every citizen is already fully informed) is not assumed; the author actually argues many voters are uninformed. Option C (India has the lowest turnout) is neither stated nor required. Assumption questions reward the unstated premise the argument needs, which is the freedom-to-choose principle in option D. Apply the negation test: deny that consent must be freely chosen and the argument dissolves, confirming D as the load-bearing unstated assumption. Hence (D) is the correct answer.

Q13 B

The author's practical objection is that compulsion 'drives large numbers of uninformed or indifferent voters to the booth, where many will vote randomly or spoil their ballots,' so turnout rises but verdict quality does not. To weaken this you show compelled voters do not vote badly. Option B does exactly that: if 'voters compelled to attend become better informed and vote thoughtfully over time,' the central practical premise collapses. Option A (small democracies abolished such laws) is vague and does not address vote quality. Option C (Australia is smaller and richer) actually supports the author's own point that Australia is a poor comparison. Option D (some Indians resent fines) reinforces rather than undermines the argument. Only option B attacks the premise that compulsion produces low-quality, uninformed voting, so it is the strongest weakener. A genuine weakener must strike the quality-of-verdict premise, and only B claims compelled voters end up informed and thoughtful rather than random. Hence (B) is the correct answer.

Q14 C

The author's positive case is that 'the better path is to make voting easier and more meaningful, not mandatory,' citing cleaner rolls and accessible booths. To strengthen this you supply evidence that easier voting raises turnout without compulsion. Option C does so directly: 'In Indian states that simplified voter registration, turnout rose sharply without any compulsion' confirms the author's proposed alternative works. Option A (turnout rose then fell under compulsion) weakly attacks compulsion but says nothing about the author's own remedy. Option B (Australians support their law) supports the opposing side. Option D (Indians feel proud to vote) speaks to sentiment, not to whether easier access actually raises turnout. Strengthen questions reward evidence for the author's stated position; option C alone provides real-world support for the 'make it easier, not mandatory' conclusion. Strengtheners must back the author's own remedy, and C is the sole option showing easier registration lifting turnout without any element of compulsion. Hence (C) is the correct answer.

Q15 A

The author brushes aside Australia by noting it is 'small, wealthy and administratively compact,' concluding its 'experience says little' about India. The flaw is dismissing a relevant counter-example merely by listing differences without proving those differences actually matter to the question of whether compulsion works, exactly option A: rejecting a comparison 'without showing they are decisive.' Option B (relying on a single unrepresentative election) misdescribes the passage, which cites Australia's general system, not one election. Option C (assuming popularity equals correctness) is a flaw the author avoids; indeed the author downplays Australian popularity. Option D (confusing cause with consequence) does not fit this step of the reasoning. Flaw questions reward the description that matches the actual reasoning move, and here the questionable move is waving away a comparison by citing undifferentiated differences, option A. The vulnerable move is dismissing a live counter-example by listing differences without proving their relevance, which is exactly the criticism option A names. Hence (A) is the correct answer.

Q16 D

The conclusion is the recommendation the whole passage supports. After noting the five-day week is 'an accident of industrial history,' the author states, 'India's employers should seriously consider moving to a four-day week,' then spends the rest of the passage defending it with trial evidence and reasoning about wasted time. Option D restates this recommendation. Option A (the five-day week was standardised by factories) is background history offered in the setup. Option B (firms reported steady productivity) is supporting evidence from the trials, not the main claim. Option C (commutes strain cities) is one subsidiary benefit among several. Identify-the-conclusion questions require distinguishing the central recommendation from the premises marshalled for it; here the recommendation to adopt a four-day week, option D, is what everything else is designed to support. Keep the recommendation distinct from its supporting trial data and benefits, and the explicit call to adopt a four-day week, D, is the conclusion. Hence (D) is the correct answer.

Q17 B

The argument holds that compressing work into four days lets firms 'strip out this waste' of 'needless meetings, distracted browsing' so 'fewer hours can therefore yield the same result.' This only works if the eliminated low-value activity can be cut without also cutting genuine output, exactly the assumption in option B. Negate it, and removing that activity would reduce useful output, defeating the claim that fewer hours yield the same result. Option A (workers enjoy the wasteful activity and would resist) is not needed and is not the author's premise. Option C (such activity is wholly absent from round-the-clock workplaces) is neither assumed nor relevant to the productivity argument. Option D (it has worsened in every industry) is an unnecessary sweeping claim. Assumption questions reward the unstated premise the reasoning depends on, which is that cutting waste spares real output, option B. Under negation, if cutting the low-value activity did shrink real output the argument collapses, so B is the premise the reasoning silently relies on. Hence (B) is the correct answer.

Q18 C

The argument's key empirical premise is that 'output holds while wellbeing rises' under a four-day week. To weaken it you show output does not really hold. Option C does this directly: if 'firms in the trials quietly required staff to make up the lost output through unpaid overtime,' then the apparent productivity gains are illusory, produced by hidden extra hours rather than genuine efficiency, and the trials no longer support a true four-day week. Option A (employees would welcome rest) supports the argument. Option B (other countries offer paid leave) is irrelevant to whether output holds. Option D (commuting is stressful) reinforces the author's case about the benefits of fewer trips. Only option C undermines the crucial premise that output is maintained, revealing the evidence as compromised, so it is the strongest weakener. A decisive weakener must expose the 'output holds' claim as false, and only C shows the gains were bought with hidden, unpaid extra hours. Hence (C) is the correct answer.

Q19 A

The argument rests on trial evidence that shorter weeks preserve output while improving wellbeing. To strengthen it you supply stronger, cleaner evidence of exactly that pattern. Option A does so: 'a large controlled study found four-day teams matched five-day output while reporting far less stress' directly confirms both halves of the author's claim, that productivity holds and wellbeing rises. Option B (workers prefer leisure) is mere preference, not evidence about output. Option C (some hospitals cannot close a third day) is actually the critics' objection and weakens the general case. Option D (the five-day week was standardised long ago) is neutral background already stated in the passage. Strengthen questions reward the option that most solidifies the core claim; a rigorous controlled study confirming matched output with less stress, option A, is the strongest support. The best strengthener is rigorous evidence confirming both halves of the claim, and A's controlled study on matched output with less stress does precisely that. Hence (A) is the correct answer.

Q20 D

The author's reasoning pattern is: reduce the quantity of work but increase focus, and you achieve the same output, because concentrated effort strips out waste. A parallel argument must mirror this 'less time but focused equals equal output' structure. Option D does so precisely: a writer working 'in short, distraction-free bursts finishes as much as one toiling all day distracted', fewer, focused hours matching a longer, unfocused stretch. Option A reverses the logic, claiming longer hours always win, the opposite of the author's point. Option B (continuous machines outproduce a rival) again argues that more running time wins, contradicting the pattern. Option C (training daily without rest improves faster) likewise favours more, not less, and ignores the focus element. Parallel-reasoning questions require matching the logical shape, and only option D reproduces the 'compressed but focused yields the same result' structure. Parallel-reasoning items demand identical logical shape, and only D reproduces the compressed-but-focused-equals-equal-output pattern rather than reversing it. Hence (D) is the correct answer.

SECTION C — RAPID-FIRE GK & CURRENT AFFAIRS

Q21 A

Canberra is the purpose-built capital of Australia, chosen as a compromise between the rival cities of Sydney and Melbourne and established in the early twentieth century. Sydney and Melbourne, though larger and better known, are state capitals, not the national capital. Perth is the capital of Western Australia. This is a frequently tested static-GK trap because the largest city is not the capital. Remember the rule that a country's largest or most famous city need not be its political capital, which is exactly the trap Canberra sets here. Hence (A) is the correct answer.

Q22 C

The official currency of South Korea is the South Korean won. The yen is the currency of Japan, the yuan (renminbi) is used in China, and the ringgit is the currency of Malaysia. Grouping East and Southeast Asian currencies together is a common examiner tactic, so candidates should firmly associate the won with South Korea. Fixing each Asian currency to its correct nation, the won to South Korea, prevents the usual mix-up with the yen, yuan and ringgit. Hence (C) is the correct answer.

Q23 B

'Ephemeral' means lasting for a very short time, short-lived or transitory, so 'fleeting' is the closest synonym. 'Eternal' and 'ancient' point to great duration or age, the opposite idea, while 'frequent' concerns how often something happens rather than how long it lasts. The root sense of something quickly passing makes 'fleeting' the correct match. Fixing the root idea of something quickly passing away makes fleeting the natural synonym and rules out the duration-based distractors. Hence (B) is the correct answer.

Q24 D

'To bite the bullet' means to force oneself to endure a painful or unpleasant situation with courage, so 'endure hardship' is correct. The phrase comes from soldiers reputedly biting a bullet to bear pain during surgery without anaesthetic. The other options, acting in anger, wasting money or speaking rudely, are unrelated to the idiom's meaning of bracing oneself to face difficulty. Knowing the idiom's origin in soldiers biting a bullet to bear pain helps lock in the meaning of steeling oneself to endure hardship. Hence (D) is the correct answer.

Q25 A

Article 17 of the Indian Constitution abolishes 'untouchability' and forbids its practice in any form, making its enforcement a punishable offence. Article 14 guarantees equality before the law, Article 19 protects freedoms such as speech and assembly, and Article 21 protects life and personal liberty. Article 17 is a favourite in polity sections because of its direct social-justice significance. Grouping the equality and liberty articles together, Article 17 stands out as the specific provision that abolishes untouchability outright. Hence (A) is the correct answer.

Q26 C

The basic structure doctrine was propounded by the Supreme Court in *Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala* (1973), which held that Parliament cannot amend the Constitution so as to destroy its basic structure. *Golaknath* dealt with fundamental rights and amendment, *ADM Jabalpur* concerned habeas corpus during the Emergency, and *Maneka Gandhi* expanded Article 21. *Kesavananda Bharati* remains the landmark on the amending power. Fixing each landmark to its ratio, *Kesavananda Bharati* remains the definitive authority on the limits of Parliament's power to amend the Constitution. Hence (C) is the correct answer.

Q27 B

'The Argumentative Indian' (2005), a collection of essays on Indian history, culture and identity, was written by the Nobel laureate economist Amartya Sen. Vikram Seth is known for 'A Suitable Boy', Arundhati Roy for 'The God of Small Things', and Amitav Ghosh for novels such as 'The Shadow Lines'. Matching author to signature work is standard static-GK testing. Linking each author to a signature title keeps Amartya Sen tied to this essay collection rather than to the novels of the distractors. Hence (B) is the correct answer.

Q28 D

The Ranji Trophy is India's premier domestic first-class cricket championship, contested by teams representing states and regions, and is named after the cricketer Ranjitsinhji. Hockey, football and badminton have their own separate national competitions. Candidates should associate the Ranji Trophy specifically with domestic cricket, distinguishing it from limited-overs tournaments. Associating the trophy with domestic first-class cricket distinguishes it clearly from limited-overs events and from other sports entirely. Hence (D) is the correct answer.

Q29 A

Boyle's law states that, at constant temperature, the pressure of a fixed mass of gas is inversely proportional to its volume. Ohm's law relates voltage, current and resistance in a circuit; Newton's laws concern motion and force; Hooke's law describes the extension of a spring being proportional to the applied force. The pressure-volume relationship at constant temperature is uniquely Boyle's law. Fixing the pressure-volume relationship at constant temperature to Boyle keeps it apart from the circuit, motion and spring laws offered as distractors. Hence (A) is the correct answer.

Q30 B

'Benevolent' means kind, well-meaning and charitable, so its opposite is 'malicious', meaning intending to do harm or showing ill will. 'Generous' and 'cheerful' are broadly positive and closer in spirit to benevolent, while 'truthful' concerns honesty rather than kindness. The clear antonym relationship between wishing others well and wishing them harm makes 'malicious' correct. Framing the pair as wishing others well versus wishing them harm makes malicious the precise antonym of benevolent among the choices. Hence (B) is the correct answer.