

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 — ECONOMICS · WHY THE THINGS WE MOST WANT CHEAPER KEEP GETTING DEARER (Q1-Q5)

A ticket to hear a string quartet costs far more, measured against average earnings, than it did when the quartet's repertoire was new. The four players perform the same notes in the same time; nobody has found a way to render the piece with three musicians, or at twice the speed. Manufactured goods have moved in the opposite direction. A wristwatch, a shirt, a transistor: each now absorbs a fraction of the labour it once did, and each is correspondingly cheaper. The economist William Baumol gave this divergence a name and, more usefully, a mechanism. Where output per worker rises, wages can rise without prices rising at all. Where output per worker cannot rise, wages must still rise, because otherwise the workers leave for the factory, and prices must rise with them. The quartet grows dearer not because it has grown worse, or greedier, but because everything around it has grown better.

The mechanism is an accounting identity dressed as a paradox, and its reach extends well past the concert hall. Teaching, nursing, policing, judging, caring for the very old: these are the activities in which a measured productivity gain, where one can be had at all, tends to be a disguised reduction in the service itself. A lecturer who addresses four hundred students rather than forty has multiplied her recorded output tenfold and may have taught nothing more. This is why the share of national income absorbed by such services climbs decade after decade in every economy that grows, and why each climb is greeted as a scandal of waste rather than as the arithmetic of success.

Two conclusions follow, and only one of them is comfortable. The comfortable one is that the rising relative cost is affordable: an economy whose factories keep improving can buy the same quantity of teaching and nursing every year at a rising price and still consume more of everything else besides. The uncomfortable one concerns who pays. Because these services are largely purchased collectively, through taxation, insurance and endowment, their rising relative price arrives as a permanent fiscal pressure, and fiscal pressure is answered politically rather than arithmetically. A government unwilling to raise the revenue must instead ration the service, or dilute it, or shift its cost quietly onto households. Baumol's disease is therefore misnamed twice over. It is not a disease, and it is not chiefly economic.

1. Which of the following best expresses the central claim of the passage?

- ☐ A. Manufactured goods have grown cheaper mainly because the workers who make them accepted slower wage growth than service workers did.
- ☐ B. Concert tickets, university fees and hospital charges rise fast because the institutions that set them face far too little competition.
- ☐ C. Services that resist mechanisation grow costlier as productivity rises elsewhere, and the real question is who pays for that cost.
- ☐ D. Economies that grow rich by improving their factories end up unable to afford the teaching and nursing that their citizens demand.

2. The passage most strongly suggests that a reported gain in the productivity of classroom teaching ought to be treated as

- ☐ A. a reliable sign that the teacher has been trained in some method that her colleagues have not yet been offered by their own schools
- ☐ B. evidence that the cost disease has begun to recede from at least some of those sectors in which Baumol had first identified it
- ☐ C. a claim to be examined for whether the service that is now being counted is still the same service that was supplied before
- ☐ D. a statistical artefact of the practice of valuing public services at the cost of their own inputs rather than at their true outputs

3. The author's attitude towards the public reaction he describes, in which rising service costs are 'greeted as a scandal of waste', is best described as

- ☐ A. sympathetic, since he accepts that the sums now involved have grown beyond what taxpayers can reasonably be asked to bear at all
- ☐ B. indignant, since he treats the reaction as a deliberate misrepresentation by those who would prefer these services to be privatised
- ☐ C. detached, since he treats the reaction as one more datum that requires explanation rather than as a judgement to be assessed at all
- ☐ D. corrective, since he takes the reaction to rest on an error of reasoning that the mechanism he has set out plainly exposes

4. The phrase 'the arithmetic of success' conveys that the rising cost of these services is

- ☐ A. an expected consequence of productivity growth elsewhere in the economy rather than a sign that anything has gone wrong
- ☐ B. a quantity that can be computed precisely enough for a government to plan around it for several decades in advance of the need
- ☐ C. a burden that societies have historically shouldered because the services being purchased are ones that they still genuinely value
- ☐ D. a measurement problem that would vanish if the national accounts valued public services at what citizens would actually pay for them

5. Which of the following best describes what the final paragraph does?

- ☐ A. It concedes that the mechanism set out earlier is incomplete, and repairs it by adding the fiscal considerations it had omitted.
- ☐ B. It separates whether the rising cost can be borne from who bears it, and locates the real problem in the second of these.
- ☐ C. It applies the mechanism to a second and different set of services, and shows that the conclusions reached earlier hold there as well.
- ☐ D. It withdraws the diagnosis offered earlier in favour of a political explanation, the economic one having proved to be unfalsifiable.

READING COMPREHENSION — LAW & SOCIETY · WHEN DISPUTES SETTLE, THE LAW STOPS BEING WRITTEN (Q6-Q10)

Two things happen when a court decides a case. The parties are told who has won, and everybody else is told what the law is. ¹ a private good, paid for by the litigants and consumed by them. The second is a public good: a reasoned judgment enters the



cited, applied, distinguished, and in time either hardens into doctrine or is quietly abandoned. Only the first of these survives a settlement. A claim compromised on the courthouse steps resolves the quarrel perfectly and teaches the world nothing whatever. Across the common-law jurisdictions the proportion of filed civil claims that reaches a trial has fallen for six decades, in several of them into low single figures. The dispute-resolution system continues to work. The law-declaration system has been quietly starved.

The starvation is not evenly distributed, which is what makes it worth studying. Settlement is commonest precisely where one side litigates once in a lifetime and the other litigates constantly: consumer claims, employment, insurance, injury caused by treatment or by a defective product. The repeat player understands the value of a precedent as well as the value of a case. It can therefore settle generously the claims it expects to lose and fight to judgment the claims it expects to win, and across a decade the reported corpus drifts in its favour without a single judge having been persuaded of anything at all. Confidentiality clauses finish the work. The settled claim leaves no public trace at all, so the next claimant cannot discover what her own claim is worth, and the regulator cannot discover how often the very same defect has recurred.

The obvious response, which is to restore the trial, mistakes nostalgia for analysis. Trials are slow, ruinous and frightening, and the litigant who avoided one was usually well advised to do so. The interesting question is whether the public good can be manufactured without the private ordeal: reasoned rulings on preliminary points of law, judicial scrutiny of settlements in aggregate claims, a presumption against confidentiality wherever a safety defect is alleged, the routine publication of settlement terms with the names removed. Each of these separates precedent from combat. None of them is free, and every one of them requires somebody to notice that a court is not merely a machine for ending quarrels. Its by-product was never a by-product.

6. Which of the following best states the main point of the passage?

- ☐ A. Settlement is now so common that the courts spend most of their working time supervising compromises they never helped to negotiate.
- ☐ B. Adjudication yields a private resolution and a public rule; settlement supplies only the first, and the repeat player gains by it.
- ☐ C. Confidentiality clauses are the chief obstacle to the development of the law, and banning them would soon restore the precedent.
- ☐ D. The decline of the civil trial should be reversed, because a system that resolves disputes without declaring rules is not law at all.

7. It can be inferred from the second paragraph that the published judgments in a field dominated by repeat-player defendants will tend to

- ☐ A. be fewer in number but more carefully reasoned, since only the strongest claims survive long enough to be argued out at a full trial
- ☐ B. understate how often such defendants are held liable, while recording accurately the sums that a finding of liability then attracts
- ☐ C. record the disputes that were the most expensive to defend rather than the disputes that arose most often among ordinary claimants
- ☐ D. misdescribe the run of disputes, because the cases reaching judgment were chosen by the side best able to predict the result

8. The author's stance towards the proposal to 'restore the trial' is best described as

- ☐ A. unpersuaded: it answers a loss that he accepts with a remedy whose costs he thinks that its own supporters have forgotten
- ☐ B. hostile: those who advance it are, he suggests, chiefly interested in the fees that a return to trials would generate for them
- ☐ C. undecided: the evidence that he assembles does not settle whether trials produce better outcomes than settlements do in the end
- ☐ D. approving: the public good he has described cannot, he thinks, be produced by any of the alternatives that he goes on to list

9. The reported corpus drifts in its favour' means most nearly that

- ☐ A. litigation brought against such defendants falls steadily as claimants learn how rarely claims of the kind ever succeed at a trial
- ☐ B. judges gradually accept the arguments that such defendants advance, because those are the arguments that they hear most often
- ☐ C. the published decisions come to be the cases that such a defendant expected to win, with no judge having changed position
- ☐ D. the law reports begin to omit decisions given against such defendants, because the settlements that follow them are all confidential

10. The final paragraph proceeds by

- ☐ A. conceding an objection, restating the argument in weaker terms, and then leaving the reader to supply the remedy for himself
- ☐ B. rejecting the obvious remedy, redescribing the problem so that it is no longer the only one, and listing measures that fit
- ☐ C. ranking the four reforms by their cost and recommending the cheapest, since the others need legislation that he expects to fail
- ☐ D. drawing a historical parallel, and using it to argue that the decline described earlier will reverse without any intervention at all

SECTION — CRITICAL REASONING

CRITICAL REASONING — ETHICS · THE REMEDY THAT RATIFIES THE WRONG (Q11-Q15)

Ask what a regulator does on discovering that an adviser is paid by the very product he recommends, and the answer is almost always the same. It requires him to say so. Disclosure has become the reflexive remedy across finance, medicine, research and journalism, and its appeal is not hard to see. It is cheap, it respects the autonomy of the person advised, and it leaves the relationship otherwise intact. On the evidence now available, it is also the wrong remedy in exactly the cases that matter most.

Two findings drive that conclusion. The first concerns the adviser. In repeated experiments, advisers required to disclose a financial interest gave more slanted advice than advisers who were not, and described themselves afterwards as licensed to do so: having warned the client, they treated the client as having accepted the risk. The second concerns the client. Recipients of a disclosure did discount the advice, but they discounted it by far less than the bias warranted, and a substantial minority complied more readily after disclosure than before, because refusing now carried the implication that the adviser was being accused of dishonesty to his face. The two effects push the same way, and neither of them is a failure of comprehension that a plainer form of words could repair. The adviser's candour buys him licence; the client's courtesy costs him money.

The institutional effect is worse than either of the individual ones. Once disclosure sits on the statute book it is treated as having discharged the duty. Supervisors stop asking whether the arrangement should exist at all and begin auditing whether the form was signed; firms design remuneration in the confidence that a footnote will legalise it. A rule intended to expose an arrangement ends by ratifying it, and the more scrupulously the rule is obeyed the more securely the arrangement is protected from ever being examined again. Where the conflict is material, which is to say where the adviser's own payment turns on which of several products he persuaded to buy, the law should require that the conflict be got rid of rather than announced. Disclosure remains defensible in trivial case, the small shareholding and the conference fee, precisely because nothing turns on it. For the rest, a remedy that biased adviser more comfortable and the trusting client poorer is no remedy at all.



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

- ☐ A. Advisers who are required to disclose a financial interest give more slanted advice than do advisers who are not required to.
- ☐ B. Regulators who accept disclosure stop asking whether the conflicted arrangement ought ever to have been permitted to exist at all.
- ☐ C. Where a conflict is material, the law should require that it be got rid of rather than that it be merely announced.
- ☐ D. Disclosure is an inappropriate response to a conflict of interest wherever an adviser happens to be paid by some interested party.

12. The argument depends on assuming which of the following?

- ☐ A. Regulators in finance, medicine, research and journalism apply the disclosure requirement with equal strictness in each field.
- ☐ B. Advisers who are required to disclose know, as they advise, that the advice they are giving has in fact become more slanted.
- ☐ C. The experiments used practising advisers rather than volunteers who were recruited specially for the purpose of those studies.
- ☐ D. Eliminating a material conflict would not itself cost the advised person any more than disclosure already costs her now.

13. Which of the following, if true, most weakens the argument?

- ☐ A. In several jurisdictions disclosure was adopted only after proposals to prohibit the arrangements outright had been defeated.
- ☐ B. Clients who receive a disclosure and then take a second opinion end up with advice that is no better than the advice first given.
- ☐ C. Where conflicts are material, prohibition drives out so many advisers that most clients then receive no advice at all.
- ☐ D. The licensing effect was strongest among those advisers who had disclosed a comparable conflict on more than one earlier occasion.

14. Which of the following, if true, most strengthens the argument?

- ☐ A. Where a regulator swapped disclosure for prohibition in one product class, advice there improved and did not worsen elsewhere.
- ☐ B. Surveys consistently find that most clients would rather be told of an adviser's financial interest than left in ignorance of it.
- ☐ C. Advisers report that drafting and delivering the required disclosure consumes time they would have spent on the client's affairs.
- ☐ D. Firms that disclose conflicts prominently attract fewer new clients than firms disclosing the same conflicts after the sale closes.

15. Which of the following arguments is most closely parallel in its reasoning to the argument above?

- ☐ A. Warning labels on machinery are ignored by most operators, so the labels should be enlarged and placed under the operator's hand.
- ☐ B. Hygiene ratings make diners price a risk they cannot assess and let poor kitchens trade on the display; close them down instead.
- ☐ C. Speed cameras are unpopular and are often vandalised, so a measure that provokes such resistance cannot be an effective safeguard.
- ☐ D. Because seat belts reduce injury in collisions, requiring them will cut road deaths by the proportion that the laboratory recorded.

CRITICAL REASONING — EDUCATION · THE NUMBER AND THE INFERENCE (Q16–Q20)

The case for taking the tutoring programme national rests on a single number. The trial raised reading scores by the equivalent of four months of schooling, at a cost per child lower than that of any competing intervention on the ministry's list. The number is real. The inference now being drawn from it is not.

Consider what the trial actually was. Its tutors were recruited by the research team from a pool of applicants, four in five of whom were turned away. Each tutor was observed twice a week and replaced if the observations went badly. Sessions were held in a dedicated room, at a fixed hour protected from the rest of the timetable, and a child who missed one was followed up the same week. Every one of those conditions was a decision taken by people whose own careers depended on the trial succeeding, and not one of them appears as a line in the costing that the ministry has published. When the same programme was repeated at eight times the scale, with tutors recruited by the schools themselves, the measured effect fell to one month; and in the two districts that could not staff a supervisor at all, it could not be distinguished from zero. The pattern is familiar to anybody who has watched a promising programme meet a system. The active ingredient was not the tutoring. It was the supervision, and supervision is the input that cannot be multiplied quickly, because a supervisor must first have been a good tutor for some years. Tutors, by contrast, can be hired in thousands within a term, which is precisely why a ministry under pressure will hire them and call the programme launched.

None of this shows that the programme is worthless, and nothing here argues for abandoning it. What follows is narrower and more awkward than that. The national budget should not be built on the trial's effect size, and the roll-out should be paced to the rate at which supervisors can be trained rather than to the rate at which tutors can be hired. A ministry that engages forty thousand tutors next year and trains four hundred supervisors will have purchased the form of the intervention and discarded its content. It will then report, quite correctly, that tutoring does not work, and the finding will be believed for a decade.

16. Which of the following most accurately expresses the conclusion the argument is driving at?

- ☐ A. The programme should be budgeted and paced on the supply of supervisors, not on the effect size that the trial reported.
- ☐ B. Tutoring does not raise reading attainment once it comes to be delivered by tutors whom the schools have themselves recruited.
- ☐ C. Research teams should not evaluate programmes whose continued funding depends upon the results that those very evaluations report.
- ☐ D. The ministry should abandon the roll-out until a third trial has been run at a scale comparable to the one it now contemplates.

17. The argument assumes which of the following?

- ☐ A. The tutors recruited by schools in the larger study were less able than those the research team had itself selected earlier.
- ☐ B. Reading attainment is the outcome by which the ministry means the national programme to be judged once it is up and running.
- ☐ C. Supervisors cannot be trained in large numbers within a single year by any method that the ministry has considered and rejected.
- ☐ D. The fall in the larger study's effect was not caused mainly by features that a national roll-out would not repeat.

18. Which of the following, if true, most undermines the argument?

- ☐ A. The two districts without a supervisor also recorded the highest tutor turnover of any of the districts in the larger study.
- ☐ B. Tutors given a weekly checklist and one recorded example lesson matched the gains of tutors who were observed twice a week.
- ☐ C. The team's observers were postgraduate students, not experienced teachers, and were paid at a rate the ministry could match.
- ☐ D. Gains in the original trial lasted for two years after the tutoring ended, and were largest among the weakest readers of all.

19. Which of the following, if true, most strengthens the argument?

- ☐ A. The ministry has said that it will publish the national programme's results whether or not they match the ones the trial
- ☐ B. Other countries have attempted national tutoring programmes, and in each of them the cost per child exceeded the first
- ☐ C. The tutors in the original trial were paid the same hourly rate that the national programme proposes to pay its own recr



- ☐ D. Across twenty scaled-up programmes, the fall in effect was largest where trials had leaned most on evaluator supervision.
- 20. The argument is most vulnerable to the objection that it**
- ☐ A. treats a single replication at a larger scale as enough to establish which feature of the trial had produced its result
- ☐ B. assumes that a programme which fails to reproduce the result of its own trial is for that reason not worth funding at all
- ☐ C. relies throughout on the testimony of the very research team that ran the trial whose findings it then goes on to question
- ☐ D. draws a conclusion about reading attainment from evidence that concerns only the cost of delivering it in the districts

RAPID FIRE — ONE-LINE RECALL

94 quick questions · not negatively marked

1. Baumol's cost disease? _____
2. 'Relative price' means? _____
3. Labour productivity is measured as? _____
4. Why must wages rise even in a low-productivity service? _____
5. 'Real' vs 'nominal' wage? _____
6. 'Tradable' vs 'non-tradable' sector? _____
7. Two features of a public good? _____
8. 'Externality' means? _____
9. 'Cross-subsidy'? _____
10. 'Rationing' a public service means? _____
11. 'Endowment' of an institution? _____
12. 'Fiscal pressure'? _____
13. To 'dilute' a service? _____
14. 'Repertoire' means? _____
15. Why does the services share of national income rise as economies grow? _____
16. 'Stare decisis'? _____
17. 'Ratio decidendi'? _____
18. 'Obiter dicta'? _____
19. 'Distinguishing' a precedent? _____
20. A decision 'per incuriam'? _____
21. 'Res judicata'? _____
22. 'Summary judgment'? _____
23. A 'preliminary issue'? _____
24. 'Without prejudice' correspondence? _____
25. 'Quantum' in a claim? _____
26. 'Repeat player' vs 'one-shotter'? _____
27. Why would a repeat player settle a case it expects to lose? _____
28. A confidentiality clause in a settlement hides what, and from whom? _____
29. An 'anonymised' judgment? _____
30. To 'compromise' a claim? _____
31. 'Conflict of interest'? _____
32. A 'material' conflict? _____
33. 'Moral licensing'? _____
34. 'Insinuation anxiety'? _____
35. 'Recusal'? _____
36. 'Divestment' as a remedy? _____
37. The 'principal-agent' problem? _____
38. An 'information barrier' inside a firm? _____
39. To 'discharge' a duty? _____
40. 'Reflexive' (of a remedy)? _____
41. 'Efficacy' vs 'effectiveness'? _____
42. 'External validity'? _____
43. 'Implementation fidelity'? _____
44. An effect size stated in 'months of schooling'? _____
45. The 'active ingredient' of a programme? _____
46. 'Free rider' problem? _____
47. 'Absorb labour' means? _____
48. 'Total factor productivity'? _____
49. 'Unit labour cost'? _____
50. An 'interlocutory' order? _____
51. 'Costs follow the event' means? _____
52. 'Declaratory relief'? _____
53. 'Amicus curiae'? _____
54. 'Opportunity cost'? _____
55. 'Marginal' cost? _____
56. 'Inflation' vs a rise in one relative price? _____
57. 'Subsidy' means? _____
58. 'Means-tested' provision? _____
59. 'Universal' provision? _____
60. 'Automation' raises productivity mainly where? _____
61. Why is live music a classic cost-disease example? _____
62. 'Regressive' vs 'progressive' charge? _____
63. 'Precedent' in one line? _____
64. 'Binding' vs 'persuasive' authority? _____
65. 'Settlement' means? _____
66. 'Vanishing trial' thesis? _____
67. Why is a judgment called a public good? _____
68. 'Selection effect' in reported cases? _____
69. 'Asymmetry of resources' between litigants? _____
70. 'Non-disclosure agreement'? _____
71. 'Transparency' as a regulatory tool? _____
72. 'Prohibition' as a regulatory tool? _____
73. 'Disclosure' does what to responsibility? _____
74. 'Fiduciary' relationship, in one line? _____
75. 'Independence' of an adviser? _____
76. 'Randomised controlled trial'? _____
77. 'Effect size'? _____
78. 'Pilot' vs 'at scale'? _____
79. 'Selection bias' in a trial? _____
80. 'Attrition' in a study? _____
81. 'Statistically significant' means? _____
82. 'Generalisability'? _____
83. Why can a good pilot fail at scale? _____
84. 'Budgeting an effect size'? _____
85. 'Proxy measure'? _____
86. 'Cost-benefit analysis'? _____
87. 'Counterparty'? _____
88. 'Threshold' in a rule? _____
89. 'Rollout' means? _____
90. 'Baseline' in an evaluation? _____
91. 'Scalability'? _____
92. 'Unit cost' of a service? _____
93. 'Marginal benefit'? _____
94. 'Deadweight loss'? _____

