

ANSWER KEY — 26 SEPTEMBER 2026

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

READING COMPREHENSION

Q1 B Main idea - RC (environment) MED

The passage concedes the science and attacks the description. Paragraph two says plainly that 'Much of the underlying work is sound' and that labelling 'does show carbon atoms that entered one tree leaving it and appearing in another', before adding the decisive limitation: 'A tracer establishes a path. It does not establish a purpose, a budget, or a beneficiary.' Paragraph three then objects to reading intention into a channel, since 'The fungus is not a courier engaged by the forest', and paragraph four asks that the popular description 'earn each of its words'. Option B holds both halves together, the genuine evidence and the unearned freight of purpose and generosity. Option A denies the exchange the passage explicitly accepts. Option C turns a warning about policy language into an endorsement of network-based planting. Option D overshoots: the tax-collector line is offered as one behaviour 'in other conditions', not as a replacement label for the whole relationship.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option D attracts because the passage does call the fungus self-interested; but it says the fungus behaves so only 'in other conditions', which is far short of calling the relationship parasitic.

Q2 D Inference - RC HARD

The inference must stay inside the paragraph's own limits. The author accepts the tracer result and then names exactly what it omits: quantity ('small beside what a tree manufactures for itself'), direction ('not dependably from the large and old to the small and young') and destination ('may be spent by the fungus rather than delivered anywhere at all'). Compressed, that is the claim in option D: a demonstrated path settles neither the amount nor the beneficiary. Option A inverts the passage, which treats labelling as good evidence of movement and faults only what is read into it. Option B asserts a large transfer, the opposite of 'small beside what a tree manufactures for itself'. Option C invents a withdrawal of studies that the passage never reports; the complaint about harvest guidelines is about language travelling too confidently, not about retracted data.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option A tempts readers who register the passage as hostile; the hostility is directed at the metaphor, never at the isotope method itself.

Q3 A Tone and attitude - RC HARD

Tone questions are settled by the concessions an author makes. This author twice gives ground: 'Much of the underlying work is sound' and 'None of this restores competition as the whole story... the old picture of trees as sealed individuals was wrong too.' What is resisted is the wording and its travel outside the laboratory, into 'harvest guidelines, in planting schemes'. That is scepticism aimed at a description, not at a discipline, which is option A. Option B makes the author an opponent of the research, contradicted by the concession above and by the acceptance of the labelling results. Option C misreads the direction of concern; the author's worry is that the idea has spread too quickly, 'this popular this quickly', not too slowly. Option D claims neutrality, but a writer who says 'A pipe is not a gift' has plainly taken a side.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option D is the standard trap in tone items: a measured register is mistaken for an absence of position. Look for evaluative phrasing, which is present throughout.

Q4 C Vocabulary in context - RC MED

The sentence 'The deeper trouble is grammatical' is immediately explained by the one that follows: 'To say that a network moves resources is not yet to say that it exists in order to move them.' The complaint concerns the structure of the assertion, what is being predicated of what, and specifically the slide from a description of movement to a claim about purpose. That is option C. The word therefore has nothing to do with language teaching, style or pronunciation. Option A treats 'grammatical' as vocabulary trouble, which the paragraph never raises. Option B turns it into a complaint about prose style, whereas the author's quarrel is with an inference, not with ornament. Option D relocates the problem to the transmission of findings into guidelines, which is the fourth paragraph's separate point about consequences, not the third paragraph's point about form.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option D is attractive because the passage does worry about guidelines; but that worry arrives a paragraph later and is a consequence of the error, not the error itself.

Q5 A Structure and purpose - RC HARD

The paragraph opens by giving ground, 'None of this restores competition as the whole story', and conceding that the older picture of sealed individual trees 'was wrong too'. It then states what the criticism actually is: 'The objection is narrower and more exacting', and supplies the reason the wording still matters, namely that the words now operate 'in harvest guidelines, in planting schemes'. Conceding what is not being claimed and then stating why the complaint survives is exactly option A. Option B is wrong because no experimental evidence is summarised here and no prediction is offered. Option C reverses the paragraph, which restricts the criticism rather than withdrawing it; the closing line, 'It can only be budgeted', keeps the demand alive. Option D invents a rival hypothesis about fungal behaviour, whereas the paragraph advances no new biological claim at all.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option C exploits the concessive opening. A paragraph that begins by conceding is not thereby a paragraph that retracts; read to the last sentence.

Q6 B Main idea - RC (psychology) MED

The passage reframes the question in its first line, 'intuition about what?', and then supplies two conditions: the environment 'must contain regularities stable enough to be learned', and 'there must have been long practice in which feedback arrived quickly and could not be argued with'. The closing paragraph converts these into the test to apply: 'does this domain hold still long enough to be learned, and did this person receive the kind of feedback that could have taught them?' Option B states exactly that pair. Option A denies expert intuition altogether, whereas the chess master's one-second judgement is treated as real skill. Option C makes the divergence of confidence and accuracy a matter of experts' reticence; the passage attributes it to fluency, not to reluctance. Option D reduces the contrast to practice hours, but the fund manager may have practised for decades in an environment that teaches nothing.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option D is the trap for readers who remember the popular claim about long practice. The passage makes practice necessary but insufficient, since it counts only where the world is regular.

Q7 C Inference - RC HARD

The third paragraph separates the felt state from its warrant: 'Confidence is not a signal of validity', and long service in an irregular environment 'produces practitioners who are confident without being accurate, and who are no less sincere for it'. The opening paragraph has already established that the chess master and the fund manager 'report it with conviction' alike. Together these yield option C: equal certainty, unequal entitlement to it, because only one environment can support the claim. Option A adds a speed of learning the passage never discusses; the fireground commander needed 'thousands of such lessons'. Option B converts the argument into a rule favouring the diffident, but expressed doubt is no more diagnostic than expressed confidence on this account. Option D makes feedback sufficient to create regularity, whereas the passage treats the regularity of the world as prior, a condition the person cannot manufacture.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option D inverts the dependency stated in the passage: feedback counts 'only because the world permits it'. Speed of feedback cannot make an irregular domain lawful.

Q8 D Tone and attitude - RC HARD

The last paragraph stops describing and starts instructing. It announces 'a change of address for the question', issues a direction, 'We should stop interrogating the expert and start interrogating the setting that made the expert', puts two diagnostic questions, and closes with a flat verdict: 'seniority is a credential for very little'. That is prescription delivered without hedging, which is option D. Option A imagines consolation, yet the closing comparison of thirty years with three is pointedly unconsoling. Option B reads the paragraph as irony, but the passage has already named chess, fires, infection and flying as domains that do meet the conditions, so the author plainly believes such domains exist. Option C calls the paragraph tentative; the modality is 'should', and the final sentence offers no alternative reading of the evidence.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option C attracts readers who treat any academic register as cautious. Check the verbs: 'should stop' and 'is worth about what' are assertions, not hedges.

Q9 B Vocabulary in context - RC MED

The word appears in a list, 'Chess positions, burning buildings, the progress of an infection and the handling of an aircraft are all lawful in this sense', which is immediately contrasted with the movement of asset prices over a week. The sense is fixed by the clause just before it: 'the environment must contain regularities stable enough to be learned'. So 'lawful' means law-governed in the scientific sense, patterned and therefore learnable, which is option B. Option C uses the everyday legal sense of permitted conduct, which makes nonsense of applying the word to a burning building. Option A is the same legal sense dressed as rules of conduct. Option D describes an order that is merely apparent and observer-imposed, the opposite of what the passage requires, since an illusory pattern is exactly what the third paragraph warns a coherent story can supply.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option D is the sophisticated trap; it borrows the passage's later scepticism about coherent stories and attaches it to a word that here means genuinely regular.

Q10 A Structure and purpose - RC ELITE

The two examples are built to be identical in everything except the environment. Both practitioners glance, both judge in a second, and the paragraph closes by insisting on the shared phenomenology: 'Both report the same inner event, a judgement arriving whole and unaccompanied by reasons, and both report it with conviction.' By holding the inner experience constant, the author forecloses the explanation a reader would reach for first, that the good intuition simply feels different from the bad one, and forces the difference

outwards onto the domain, which is option A. Option B draws a moral about games and money that the passage never states. Option C says the contrast will be dissolved, but it is sharpened, not dissolved; only the experience is shared. Option D casts the pair as a concession to an objection, whereas the examples carry the argument rather than answering a critic.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option C is the near miss: the passage does say the two cases share a mechanism of experience, but it preserves the contrast in validity rather than dissolving it.

CRITICAL REASONING

Q11 **D** Main conclusion - CR **MED**

Everything in the editorial converges on its last sentence: 'The sealed cover injures the process even where the secret is real and the judge is beyond reproach.' The two concessions at the start, that the exception is narrow and that the bench is independent, are set up precisely so that the conclusion can survive both, which is why option D carries the qualifier 'even where'. Option A is far stronger than anything argued; the piece expressly says that 'None of this requires that dangerous material be published' and proposes a gist or a cleared advocate. Option B recommends a procedural outcome the editorial never urges; its complaint is that appellate review is emptied, not that appeals should be refused. Option C generalises independence into a weak safeguard everywhere, whereas the argument's point is narrower: independence cannot substitute for contradiction by the affected party.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option C is the most attractive distractor because the third paragraph does criticise the independence defence; but it does so only for this setting, not for adjudication at large.

Q12 **C** Necessary assumption - CR **HARD**

The argument concedes that an impartial bench may well reach the right result and still says the process is injured. That move is only available if correctness of outcome is not the whole point of adjudication, which is what option C states. The text supplies the thought directly: 'A judgment is not only an outcome that happens to be correct; it is an account of reasons that the losing party can carry away and test.' Negate option C and the editorial collapses, since a fully informed impartial judge would then deliver everything adjudication is for. Option A attributes bad faith to governments, which the argument deliberately avoids by assuming the secrecy is genuine. Option B overstates the author's own remedy; the passage calls the devices 'imperfect and slow', so it cannot be assuming they are equivalent to open proceedings. Option D adds an empirical claim about dismissal rates that the argument nowhere needs.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option B tempts because the author does recommend a gist and a cleared advocate; an assumption must be something the argument needs, and this one is contradicted by 'imperfect and slow'.

Q13 **A** Weaken - CR **HARD**

The engine of the argument is that the testing work is 'performed by the party with the strongest motive to find the flaw', and that removing the party leaves 'the state's characterisation of its own file' unopposed. Option A supplies a substitute adversary inside the sealed procedure itself: independent counsel who reads the file and argues the absent party's case. If that is routine, the very defect the editorial identifies is already cured, and the claim that the process is injured loses its ground. Option B says petitioners often lack technical expertise, which softens the loss only marginally and does not restore contradiction. Option C reports judicial discomfort, which is consistent with, indeed supportive of, the author's view. Option D notes that the practice is rare; frequency does not touch a claim about what happens when it is used.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option D is the classic scope trap. An argument about the quality of a procedure is untouched by evidence about how often the procedure is resorted to.

Q14 **D** Strengthen - CR **MED**

The editorial's specific claim is that the absent party, and not the bench, is the one equipped to find the flaw: it could have said 'that the material was stale, or that it described a different person, or that its author had an interest in the outcome'. Option D confirms this empirically, reporting that errors later discovered were of a kind only the affected party could have caught. That makes the loss of the party a real and not merely theoretical injury, which is exactly the proposition under challenge. Option A strengthens a different conclusion, that the secrecy is unjustified, but the editorial has conceded genuine secrecy and argues the injury persists anyway. Option B concerns delay, which the argument never relies on. Option C describes petitioners who would have given up; that speaks to their incentives, not to the court's capacity to test the material.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option A is the most seductive: it looks like support but attacks a premise the author has deliberately granted, so it strengthens a claim the editorial is not making.

Q15 **B** Parallel reasoning - CR **ELITE**

Reduce the editorial to its shape. A practice withholds material from the affected party; the defence is that a competent and disinterested decision-maker examines it; the reply is that the withheld step exists to let the affected party test the material, and no amount of competence in the decision-maker performs that function. Option B reproduces every element: withheld data, expert referees offered as the safeguard, and the reply that refereeing cannot do what outside testing does. Option A attacks the qualifications themselves, which is not the editorial's move, since it never doubts the bench. Option C likewise questions the specialists' judgement rather than pointing to a missing kind of scrutiny. Option D turns on relevance against volume, a quite different complaint about how material was weighed, not about who was excluded from contesting it.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option C looks parallel because it has an expert and a critic, but it doubts the expert's competence; the editorial concedes competence and objects to the missing adversary.

Q16 C Main conclusion - CR MED

The piece states its target twice. First: 'An avoided-emissions number computed on the assumption that behaviour does not answer to price is not a measurement of emissions avoided; it is a measurement of what would have been avoided in a population that does not exist.' Then, closing: 'A programme may be worth every rupee it costs and still fail to do the one thing the ledger says it has done.' That is option C, an attack on the figure that leaves the merits of the standards open. Option A calls for withdrawal, contradicting 'None of this makes the standards a mistake'. Option B moralises about households, whereas the response to lower running costs is treated as ordinary and even welfare-improving. Option D denies the engineering gain, but the forty per cent improvement 'for each unit of service' is accepted; what is denied is the conversion of that gain into avoided emissions.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option D is the near miss. The author disputes the arithmetic that converts per-unit efficiency into emissions, not the per-unit efficiency improvement itself.

Q17 C Necessary assumption - CR HARD

The argument reasons from observed behaviour, more lit hours, larger coolers, flat meter readings, to the conclusion that the fixed-usage arithmetic overstates emissions avoided. That inference requires that the extra usage be attributable, at least in part, to the efficiency gain rather than wholly to something independent, and option C states precisely that in negative form. Deny it, suppose incomes or heat alone would have driven usage up identically, and the rise no longer shows that the estimate's fixed-usage step is what went wrong. Option A demands national representativeness, which is more than the argument needs, since its claim is about the method rather than a national total. Option B compares other inventory entries, which is irrelevant to whether this one is sound. Option D weighs welfare against emissions cost, a judgement the piece explicitly declines to make when it grants a 'real gain in welfare'.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option A is the standard sampling distractor. The argument attacks the arithmetic in principle, so it survives even if those districts are unusual.

Q18 A Weaken - CR ELITE

The strongest single piece of evidence offered is the meter reading: 'total residential consumption flat rather than falling across the same period'. Option A supplies an alternative cause for that flatness that has nothing to do with rebound, namely newly connected households arriving on the grid under a new tariff. If consumption stayed level because the customer base grew, the figures no longer show that existing households consumed away their savings, and the empirical leg of the argument is knocked out. Option B removes some households from the count, which affects coverage rather than the logic of the estimate. Option C revises an input to the engineering figure slightly, leaving the fixed-usage assumption untouched. Option D reports that other countries use the same method, which, if anything, widens the author's complaint rather than answering it.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option D feels like a defence by consensus, but shared practice is not evidence of validity; the author's objection would simply apply to those countries too.

Q19 D Strengthen - CR HARD

What the argument most needs is causal evidence that the efficiency gain itself raised usage, rather than a coincident trend. Option D supplies a controlled comparison: households that received the new lamps increased lit hours by a third, matched households that kept the old lamps did not. That isolates the retrofit as the cause of the extra service and directly vindicates the claim that 'usage is precisely what an efficiency gain disturbs'. Option A concerns households' beliefs about old running costs, which does not establish that behaviour changed after the change. Option B raises an audit-independence point about who prepares the figure; that invites suspicion without showing the method wrong. Option C compares the shares of lighting and cooling, which bears on magnitude at best and leaves the fixed-usage assumption entirely unexamined.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option B is attractive because it impugns the regulator, but the argument is about a method, and a self-reported figure computed correctly would still be correct.

Q20 B Parallel reasoning - CR ELITE

The structure to match is a benefit computed by applying an improved rate to the old quantity, where the improvement itself changes that quantity. In the passage the efficiency gain is multiplied by pre-change usage, and the gain then raises usage. Option B repeats this exactly: the time saving is got 'by applying the new speed to the old traffic volume that the widening has raised'. Option A is an attrition or completer-only problem, a different defect, since nothing there says the treatment altered who completed. Option C is a trend that predates the intervention, which challenges causation rather than a held-fixed multiplier. Option D is a self-reported measurement with an interested recorder, again a different fault. Only option B contains the self-defeating arithmetic in which the intervention undoes the assumption on which its benefit was calculated.

Examiner's note — the trap: Option C is the usual decoy in these items. A pre-existing trend attacks causation; here the causation is granted and the arithmetic is what fails.

RAPID FIRE — ANSWERS

1. 'Mycorrhiza' means? — **A partnership between a fungus and a plant root that trades nutrients for sugars.**

2. What does the fungus supply the tree? — **Mineral nutrients and water drawn from soil pores too fine for roots.**

3. What does the tree supply the fungus? — **Sugars made by photosynthesis in its leaves.**

4. 'Filament' means? — **A very fine thread.**

5. 'Hypha' (plural hyphae)? — **A single fungal thread.**

6. 'Mycelium' means? — **The whole mass of fungal threads running through soil or wood.**

7. 'Symbiosis' means? — **Two different species living in close, lasting association.**

8. 'Mutualism' vs 'parasitism'? — **Both species gain; versus one gaining at the other's expense.**

9. 'Commensalism'? — **One species gains and the other is neither helped nor harmed.**

10. What is isotope labelling used for? — **Tagging atoms so their movement between organisms can be traced.**

11. 'Tracer' in an experiment? — **A detectable substance followed through a system.**

12. 'Photosynthesis' in one line? — **Using light to build sugars from carbon dioxide and water.**

13. A 'temperate' forest is? — **Forest of the middle latitudes, with warm summers and cold winters.**

14. 'Arresting', of a description? — **Striking enough to stop you and hold your attention.**

15. 'Dependably' means? — **Reliably; in a way that can be counted on.**

16. 'Courier' means? — **A messenger who carries something on someone else's behalf.**

17. 'Withholding' means? — **Keeping back something that could be handed over.**

18. 'Terms of trade' means? — **The rate at which one thing is exchanged for another.**

19. What does the passage say a metaphor can be, if not refuted? — **Budgeted - made to account for exactly what it claims.**

20. 'Exacting' means? — **Demanding; requiring care and precision.**

21. 'Arena', used figuratively? — **A place of open contest.**

22. A 'stand' of trees? — **A group of trees of similar kind growing together.**

23. Which two mineral nutrients does the passage name? — **Phosphorus and nitrogen.**

24. Three things a tracer cannot establish, per the passage? — **A purpose, a budget and a beneficiary.**

25. 'Beneficiary' means? — **The one who gains from something.**

26. 'Anthropomorphism' means? — **Reading human motives or feelings into non-human things.**

27. 'Teleology' means? — **Explaining a thing by the purpose it is taken to serve.**

28. 'Seedling' means? — **A young plant newly grown from seed.**

29. 'Replicate' a study means? — **Repeat it to see whether the result holds.**

30. 'Expository' writing does what? — **Sets out information or positions without arguing for one.**

31. 'Intuition', in one line? — **A judgement that arrives without conscious reasoning.**

32. Two conditions for trustworthy expert intuition? — **A regular environment, and long practice with prompt feedback.**

33. Why must the environment come first? — **Practice cannot teach patterns that the world does not repeat.**

34. 'Regularity' of an environment? — **Stable patterns that recur and can therefore be learned.**

35. Why is confidence a poor guide to accuracy? — **It tracks how easily a coherent story comes to mind.**

36. 'Fluency', in cognition? — **The ease with which something is processed or recalled.**

37. 'Validity' of a judgement? — **How well it corresponds to what is actually the case.**

38. 'Deliberate practice'? — **Practice aimed at specific weaknesses with immediate correction.**

39. Why is a ten-year forecast hard to learn from? — **Its feedback arrives too late and too tangled to teach anything.**

40. 'Confounded' means? — **Mixed with other causes, so effects cannot be separated.**

41. What does a sincere but wrong expert show? — **That honesty is not evidence of accuracy.**

42. 'Heuristic' means? — **A rule of thumb giving a fast, usually adequate answer.**

43. 'Overconfidence effect'? — **Confidence that runs ahead of actual accuracy.**

44. 'Hindsight bias'? — **Believing after the event that the outcome was predictable.**

45. 'Illusion of validity'? — **Unjustified confidence produced by a coherent but unreliable story.**

46. What does expert pattern recognition rest on? — **Matching the present case against thousands of stored ones.**

47. 'Tacit knowledge'? — **Know-how a person can use but cannot fully put into words.**

48. 'Seniority' vs 'expertise'? — **Years served, versus skill the environment was able to teach.**

49. 'Practitioner' means? — **Someone who actually does the work of a field.**

50. 'To interrogate', figuratively? — **To question something closely and sceptically.**

51. 'Domain', in this sense? — **A defined field of activity or knowledge.**

52. A judgement 'arriving whole' means? — **It appears complete, with no intermediate steps available.**

53. 'Lawful', in the passage's sense? — **Governed by regularities that can be learned.**

54. 'Conviction' means? — **Firm certainty in a belief.**

55. A change of address for the question? — **Asking it of the environment rather than of the person.**

56. 'Sealed cover' procedure? — **Material handed to the court in a closed envelope, unseen by the other side.**

57. 'Open justice' means? — **Justice done in public, on reasons that can be seen and tested.**

58. 'Audi alteram partem'? — **Hear the other side - a rule of natural justice.**

59. The two rules of natural justice? — **Hear the other side; no one is a judge in their own cause.**

60. 'Nemo iudex in causa sua'? — **No one may judge a matter in which they have an interest.**

61. 'Ex parte' means? — **With only one party present or heard.**

62. 'In camera' proceedings? — **Held in private rather than in open court.**

63. 'Public interest immunity'? — **A claim that disclosing a document would harm the public interest.**

64. 'Redacted' means? — **With portions blacked out before release.**

65. A 'gist' given to a party? — **A summary of secret material, enough to let the party answer it.**

66. 'Special advocate' / security-cleared counsel? — **A lawyer who reads secret material and argues against it without disclosing it.**

67. 'Adjudication' means? — **The formal, reasoned deciding of a dispute.**

68. A 'speaking order'? — **An order that sets out the reasons for itself.**

69. Why are orders written and published? — **So the losing party and an appellate court can test the reasons.**

70. What does cross-examination do? — **Tests a witness's account by questioning from the opposing side.**

71. 'Adversarial' system? — **Rival parties present and test the evidence before a neutral judge.**

72. 'Inquisitorial' system? — **The court itself investigates and gathers the evidence.**

73. 'Impartial' vs 'informed'? — **Free of interest, versus possessing the facts.**

74. 'Appellate review' means? — **A higher court examining the decision of a lower one.**

75. 'To defer', of a court? — **To accept another's judgement instead of substituting its own.**

76. 'Stale' evidence means? — **Too old to support the conclusion now drawn from it.**

77. 'Beyond reproach' means? — **Not open to any criticism.**

78. The 'operative reason' in a decision? — **The reason actually doing the work of deciding it.**

79. 'Characterisation' of a file? — **The account one side gives of what its material shows.**

80. 'Petitioner' means? — **The party who brings the challenge before the court.**

81. 'Rebound effect', in one line? — **Efficiency lowers the cost of a service, so more of it is used.**

82. 'Jevons paradox'? — **Greater efficiency in using a resource can raise total consumption of it.**

83. Direct vs indirect rebound? — **More of the same service, versus savings spent on other energy uses.**