

Daily Reading Comprehension & Critical Reasoning

Rotated-genre RC passages and real-argument Critical Reasoning — CLAT-2026 grade. Read each passage and answer from the passage only.
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SECTION — READING COMPREHENSION

READING COMPREHENSION — LITERARY FICTION · THE TWO LEDGERS (Q1–Q5)

The lighthouse keeper's daughter kept two ledgers. In the first, bound in oilcloth and chained to the desk, she entered the particulars her father's post demanded: the hour each lamp was lit, the weight of oil consumed, the bearing of every vessel that crossed the sound. This ledger was the property of the Board, and an inspector read it twice a year, running a dry thumb down the columns as though the sea could be audited. In the second ledger, which no one had sanctioned and no one knew of, she wrote the things the first could not hold: that the fog on the ninth of March had the colour of unwashed wool; that a gull had died on the gallery rail and lain there three days before the wind took it; that her father, since her mother's going, spoke to the lamp as though it owed him an answer.

She did not think of the second ledger as a diary, for a diary confesses, and she confessed nothing. She thought of it as the true record, and of the first as the record that would be believed. The distinction mattered to her more than she could have said. The Board wanted a light that did not fail and figures that did not lie, and she gave them both; but a light that does not fail is not the same as a life, and the figures, however honest, told nothing of what it cost to keep them honest. When the inspector praised her father's diligence she understood that he was praising the wrong ledger, and that the praise, being misdirected, was a kind of insult neither man would ever recognise.

In time she came to suspect that every official account in the world had its unwritten twin — that behind each audited column stood a second column, kept in secret or kept in no one's hand at all, recording the colour of the fog and the death of the gull. The thought did not comfort her. It made the world seem a place of enormous, patient omission, where the things that were counted were precisely the things that did not finally matter, and the things that mattered were left, like her mother, to be remembered only by those who had no standing to be asked.

1. Which of the following best captures the central preoccupation the passage develops through the daughter's two ledgers?

- ☐ A. The practical difficulty of keeping an accurate lighthouse log in adverse weather
- ☐ B. The tension between an official record that is believed and a truer record that carries no standing
- ☐ C. The daughter's unresolved grief at the loss of her mother and her estrangement from her father
- ☐ D. The incompetence of a Board that audits its figures diligently yet never once grasps the human labour those tidy columns silently conceal

2. The narrator says the inspector's praise 'being misdirected, was a kind of insult neither man would ever recognise.' This is best explained by which inference?

- ☐ A. The inspector secretly knew of the second ledger yet chose to disregard it so that his twice-yearly audit of the first would remain untroubled
- ☐ B. The father resented being praised for work his daughter in fact performed
- ☐ C. Praise aimed at the sanctioned record implicitly dismisses the costly, unrecorded effort the daughter values most
- ☐ D. The inspector's compliment was insincere and both men privately knew it

3. The tone of the passage's final paragraph is best described as:

- ☐ A. quietly desolate, finding no consolation in a newly generalised insight
- ☐ B. bitterly accusatory toward the institutions that audit official records while ignoring the quiet human lives behind them
- ☐ C. wryly amused at the pretensions of bureaucratic auditing
- ☐ D. tenderly hopeful that the true record will one day be read

4. In the sentence 'the sea could be audited,' the word 'audited' is used to suggest that the inspector:

- ☐ A. performs a careful and legally required financial examination of the lighthouse accounts on the distant Board's behalf
- ☐ B. doubts the honesty of the keeper and seeks evidence of fraud
- ☐ C. measures the sea's tides and currents with scientific instruments
- ☐ D. mistakes a vast, unruly reality for something that columns of figures can fully account for

5. Which structural description best fits the passage as a whole?

- ☐ A. A chronological narrative of a single day at the lighthouse building to a dramatic climax
- ☐ B. A formal argument that states a single thesis at the outset and then defends it, point by point, against three separately named objections
- ☐ C. A concrete contrast between two objects widens, by the close, into a general claim about how the world records itself
- ☐ D. A character sketch of the father framed by the daughter's recollections of her mother

READING COMPREHENSION — PHILOSOPHY & IDEAS · TWO KINDS OF TOLERANCE (Q6–Q10)

We tend to speak of tolerance as if it were a single virtue, but the word conceals two very different attitudes that history has repeatedly confused. The first, which we may call tolerance as forbearance, is the posture of a party that holds power and declines, for prudential or humane reasons, to use it against those it disapproves of. The ruler tolerates the dissenting sect; the majority tolerates the minority. On this model, toleration is a gift, granted from a height, and what is given can be withdrawn. Its logic is the logic of permission, and permission always presupposes a permitter.

The second attitude, tolerance as recognition, denies that anyone occupies the height from which gifts are dispensed. It holds that the dissenter's standing does not depend on the majority's forbearance because it was never the majority's to grant. On this model, to 'tolerate' another is not to indulge them but to acknowledge a claim they possessed independently of one's own approval. The difference is not merely verbal. Under forbearance, the tolerated party remains a supplicant, perpetually grateful and perpetually at risk; under recognition, they are an equal whose rights happen, at present, to be unpopular.



Much of the confusion in public argument arises because the language of the first model is used to describe situations that only the second can justify. A constitution that protects a minority faith does not 'tolerate' it in the forbearance sense, for a constitutional right is precisely what cannot be withdrawn at the pleasure of the majority; yet the majority often experiences its own restraint as a generous concession, and resents the beneficiary for failing to be grateful. The resentment is instructive. It reveals that the majority has understood its forbearance as a favour, and a favour unthanked feels like a theft.

The deeper trouble is that forbearance, however benign, leaves the structure of domination intact. It changes the ruler's conduct without changing the ruler's position. A tolerant despot is still a despot, and the security he offers lasts exactly as long as his mood. Recognition, by contrast, dissolves the position itself: there is no longer a height from which to be gracious, because the claim that was to be granted is seen to have been there all along. This is why appeals to 'tolerance' can be, depending on which sense is meant, either the beginning of justice or a sophisticated way of postponing it.

6. The author's principal claim is that:

- ☐ A. the single word 'tolerance' masks two attitudes, only one of which secures the equal standing of the tolerated
- ☐ B. tolerance is always preferable to intolerance regardless of the particular sense in which the ambiguous word happens to be meant
- ☐ C. constitutional rights are a modern invention that older societies managed without
- ☐ D. majorities are naturally resentful and cannot be relied upon to protect minorities

7. According to the passage, why does a majority often resent the minority it protects under a constitutional right?

- ☐ A. Because the minority openly refuses to obey the laws the majority has enacted
- ☐ B. Because protecting the minority imposes measurable and deeply resented economic costs that the majority is unwillingly forced to bear
- ☐ C. Because the constitution forces the majority to adopt the minority's beliefs
- ☐ D. Because the majority misreads its restraint as a favour, and an unthanked favour feels like a theft

8. Which statement, if true, would most directly illustrate the author's point that 'a tolerant despot is still a despot'?

- ☐ A. A ruler codifies free worship as a deeply entrenched right that neither he himself nor any of his successors may ever repeal
- ☐ B. A ruler who permits free worship today revokes the permission the moment it becomes inconvenient
- ☐ C. A ruler consults minority leaders before passing laws that affect them
- ☐ D. A ruler publicly praises the minority's contributions to national life

9. In the final paragraph, 'dissolves the position itself' most nearly means that recognition:

- ☐ A. eliminates the minority's need to assert its rights in public
- ☐ B. weakens the constitution's capacity to protect unpopular groups
- ☐ C. merges the majority and the minority together into one single, undifferentiated and perfectly harmonious public body
- ☐ D. abolishes the very standpoint of superior authority from which toleration was thought to be granted

10. The passage's closing sentence treats 'tolerance' as something that can be 'either the beginning of justice or a sophisticated way of postponing it.' This is best understood as:

- ☐ A. a quiet concession that the author's own carefully drawn distinction between the two senses ultimately collapses under closer scrutiny
- ☐ B. a claim that the moral worth of invoking tolerance depends entirely on which of the two senses is operative
- ☐ C. an admission that justice and tolerance are finally the same thing
- ☐ D. a warning that minorities should refuse all appeals to tolerance

SECTION — CRITICAL REASONING

CRITICAL REASONING — ETHICS · THE DONOR PLEDGE CONDITION (Q11–Q15)

A hospital ethics committee has adopted a rule that no patient may receive a transplanted organ unless they first agree, in writing, to register as a posthumous donor themselves. The committee defends the rule on grounds of fairness: it is unjust, they argue, to accept a benefit from a system of organ sharing while refusing in principle to contribute to it. A person who would take a kidney but would not give one is, on this view, a free-rider, and the rule simply closes the gap between what such a person is willing to receive and what they are willing to provide.

The argument has an evident appeal, but it rests on an assumption that will not bear the weight placed on it. The committee treats willingness to donate after death and need for an organ while alive as if they were the same currency, so that a refusal to supply the one cancels the claim to the other. Yet the two are not symmetrical. The patient's need is a present, involuntary fact: no one chooses to suffer organ failure. The pledge to donate, by contrast, concerns a future over which the patient has, at the moment of decision, every reason to be uncertain — religious scruple, family objection, or simple dread of contemplating one's own death. To make the treatment of a present, blameless emergency conditional on the resolution of a future, contestable choice is to punish the patient not for any wrong they have done but for a position they conscientiously hold.

Moreover, the free-rider charge misdescribes the case. A free-rider enjoys a good while deliberately shirking a cost that others bear, and could bear it without special hardship. But the dying patient is not enjoying anything; they are seeking rescue. And the 'cost' the committee demands is not a share of taxes or a turn at jury service but a commitment touching conscience and the body's fate after death — a demand of a wholly different order. Fairness between contributors and beneficiaries is a real value, but it is purchased too dearly if the price is that the sick must buy their lives by surrendering a belief. A policy that increases donation by coercing the desperate has not solved the ethical problem of scarcity; it has merely hidden it inside the consent form.

11. Which of the following best states the main conclusion of the author's argument?

- ☐ A. Charging a substantially higher insurance premium to those drivers who have accumulated a long record of prior accidents, on the stated ground that they now pose a measurably greater risk to the shared pool
- ☐ B. Everyone has a moral duty to register as a posthumous organ donor
- ☐ C. The committee's donor-pledge condition is unjustified because it wrongly equates a present need with a future contestable and misapplies the free-rider charge
- ☐ D. Ethics committees should never impose any conditions on who receives a transplant



12. The author's reply to the 'free-rider' charge depends on which assumption?

- ☐ A. That a genuine free-rider could bear the shirked cost without special hardship, whereas the donor pledge demands something touching conscience
- ☐ B. That the total number of transplantable organs available to the sharing system is permanently fixed and cannot be increased by any policy the committee might choose to adopt
- ☐ C. That most patients would in fact agree to the pledge if simply asked
- ☐ D. That hospitals have no legitimate interest in increasing the supply of organs

13. Which of the following, if true, would most WEAKEN the author's argument?

- ☐ A. Registered posthumous donors can withdraw their registration at any time before death, at no cost and with no questions asked
- ☐ B. Many patients report feeling considerable anxiety and genuine distress whenever they are asked to sit quietly and contemplate the plain fact of their own eventual death
- ☐ C. The committee adopted the rule after a long period of public consultation
- ☐ D. Some religions explicitly forbid the donation of organs after death

14. The author concedes that 'fairness between contributors and beneficiaries is a real value.' The role of this concession in the argument is to:

- ☐ A. abandon the author's own carefully argued position entirely in favour of the committee's competing conception of what fairness requires
- ☐ B. prove that the committee's rule is fair after all
- ☐ C. introduce a new argument unrelated to the transplant question
- ☐ D. acknowledge the principle the committee invokes while denying that it justifies this particular policy

15. Which of the following most closely parallels the reasoning the author uses against the committee?

- ☐ A. Charging a noticeably higher insurance premium to those particular drivers who already carry a documented record of repeated prior accidents, since they pose a greater statistical risk
- ☐ B. Refusing to treat an injured driver until they admit fault in the accident, though the injury needs care now whatever the eventual verdict
- ☐ C. Requiring all citizens to carry identification when they travel abroad
- ☐ D. Offering a discount to customers who pay their bills early

CRITICAL REASONING — EDUCATION · THE CASE AGAINST LECTURES, RECONSIDERED (Q16-Q20)

An influential report urges universities to abolish lecture-based teaching in favour of 'active learning,' in which students work through problems in small groups while the instructor circulates. The report's central evidence is a meta-analysis showing that, across many studies, students in active-learning classrooms scored higher on end-of-course examinations than students in lecture classrooms. From this the report concludes that lectures are an inferior method and should be phased out wherever resources allow.

The inference moves faster than the evidence warrants. The studies pooled in the meta-analysis compared active learning chiefly in large introductory science courses, where the material is procedural and the chief task is mastering a defined set of problem types. It does not follow that the advantage carries over to a seminar in legal history or a tutorial in literary criticism, where the goal is not to solve problems of a known form but to acquire a tradition of argument and judgement that a skilled lecturer can model in ways a group of novices, however active, cannot model for one another. To generalise from the introductory science laboratory to the whole of higher education is to assume that all learning has the shape of the cases that were measured.

There is a further difficulty. The outcome the studies measure is the end-of-course examination, and examinations are themselves designed around what each method teaches well. A course built on active learning will tend to be assessed by problem sets resembling its classroom activity, just as a lecture course is often assessed by essays that reward the synthesis lectures provide. If the measure is drawn from the same mould as the method, a method may appear superior partly because it has been graded on its home ground. The report does not consider whether the examinations were neutral between the two approaches.

None of this shows that lectures are better, or that active learning lacks value; the evidence for active learning in the settings studied is genuine and should be taken seriously. It shows only that the report's leap from superiority in measured introductory courses to an inferior method to be phased out everywhere is unsupported. A reform that discards a method wholesale on evidence drawn from one corner of the curriculum risks trading a documented gain in some courses for an undocumented loss in others.

16. The author's main point is that:

- ☐ A. that lectures are in fact the superior teaching method and that active learning, whatever its measured appeal, ought to be abandoned across the whole of the modern university curriculum
- ☐ B. end-of-course examinations are an invalid way to measure any kind of learning
- ☐ C. the report's conclusion that lectures should be phased out everywhere is not supported by evidence drawn mainly from introductory science courses
- ☐ D. universities lack the resources to adopt active learning on a large scale

17. The author objects that the meta-analysis studied 'chiefly... large introductory science courses.' This objection is an instance of challenging:

- ☐ A. the mathematical accuracy of the many separate calculations performed within the meta-analysis itself
- ☐ B. the honesty of the researchers who conducted the original studies
- ☐ C. the representativeness of the sample from which a general conclusion is drawn
- ☐ D. the motives of the report's authors in recommending reform

18. Which of the following, if true, would most STRENGTHEN the author's critique?

- ☐ A. That active-learning classrooms, which require smaller groups and additional staff to circulate among them, are considerably more expensive to run and to timetable than the large lecture halls they would replace
- ☐ B. A seminar in legal history that switched to active learning showed no improvement, and students reported losing the modelled reasoning a lecturer had provided
- ☐ C. Most students say they personally prefer working in small groups
- ☐ D. The meta-analysis included data from several different countries



19. The concern the author raises in the third paragraph is best summarised as the worry that:

- ☐ A. the examinations may favour whichever method they were designed to assess, so the comparison is not neutral
- ☐ B. that students enrolled in active-learning courses are somehow tempted to cheat far more often on their end-of-course examinations than their lecture-taught peers
- ☐ C. examinations are graded too leniently in introductory science
- ☐ D. lectures cannot be assessed by examination at all

20. In the final paragraph the author writes that the evidence for active learning 'is genuine and should be taken seriously.' Including this statement most helps the argument by:

- ☐ A. conceding the opponent's entire case outright and quietly withdrawing the whole of the critique the author has just spent four full paragraphs carefully building
- ☐ B. introducing statistical evidence that lectures outperform active learning
- ☐ C. proving that examinations are always biased
- ☐ D. pre-empting the charge that the author is merely defending lectures, thereby isolating the specific flaw of over-generalisation

RAPID FIRE — ONE-LINE RECALL

84 quick questions · not negatively marked

1. 'Forbearance' means? _____
2. 'Supplicant' means? _____
3. A 'free-rider' is? _____
4. 'Posthumous' means? _____
5. 'Prudential' means? _____
6. 'Elegiac' tone is? _____
7. 'Entrenched' (of a right) means? _____
8. 'Meta-analysis' is? _____
9. 'Procedural' knowledge is? _____
10. 'Representative sample' means? _____
11. 'Hasty generalisation' is? _____
12. 'Ad hominem' attack is? _____
13. 'Concede then rebut' is? _____
14. 'To impugn' means? _____
15. 'Estoppel' (law) means? _____
16. 'Coercion' means? _____
17. 'Irrevocable' means? _____
18. 'Symmetry' between two things means? _____
19. 'Scruple' means? _____
20. 'Benign' means? _____
21. 'Despot' means? _____
22. 'Concession' in argument is? _____
23. 'Omission' means? _____
24. 'Sanction' (verb) can mean? _____
25. 'Recognition' (author's sense) means? _____
26. 'Grievance' means? _____
27. 'Prima facie' means? _____
28. 'Nexus' means? _____
29. 'Contestable' means? _____
30. 'Pool' (data) means? _____
31. 'Transfer' of a learning advantage means? _____
32. 'Wholesale' (adverb) means? _____
33. 'Novice' means? _____
34. 'Synthesis' means? _____
35. 'Blameless' means? _____
36. 'Incongruous' means? _____
37. 'Unpopular right' paradox is? _____
38. 'Home ground' advantage (of a test) means? _____
39. 'Postpone' means? _____
40. 'Diligence' means? _____
41. 'Ostensible' means? _____
42. 'Tacit' agreement is? _____
43. 'Salient' means? _____
44. 'Mitigate' means? _____
45. 'Vindicate' means? _____
46. 'Equivocate' means? _____
47. 'Circular reasoning' is? _____
48. 'False dilemma' is? _____
49. 'Slippery slope' fallacy is? _____
50. 'Straw man' fallacy is? _____
51. 'Correlation vs causation' error is? _____
52. 'Necessary condition' is? _____
53. 'Sufficient condition' is? _____
54. 'Premise' of an argument is? _____
55. 'Assumption' (unstated) is? _____
56. 'Inference' means? _____
57. 'Analogy' in argument is? _____
58. 'Counterexample' is? _____
59. 'Rebuttal' means? _____
60. 'Corroborate' means? _____
61. 'Undermine' (an argument) means? _____
62. 'Paradox' means? _____
63. 'Anomaly' means? _____
64. 'Plausible' means? _____
65. 'Spurious' means? _____
66. 'Ambivalent' means? _____
67. 'Candid' means? _____
68. 'Pragmatic' means? _____
69. 'Nuance' means? _____
70. 'Caveat' means? _____
71. 'Precedent' (law) means? _____
72. 'Statute' means? _____
73. 'Liability' means? _____
74. 'Negligence' means? _____
75. 'Burden of proof' is? _____
76. 'Verbose' means? _____
77. 'Concise' means? _____
78. 'Didactic' means? _____
79. 'Polemic' means? _____
80. 'Rhetoric' means? _____
81. 'Cite one word: fear of confined spaces'? _____
82. One word: 'that cannot be corrected'? _____
83. One word: 'one who speaks many languages'? _____
84. Idiom: 'to beg the question' (strict sense) means? _____

