

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 — POPULAR SCIENCE · WHY ICE LETS US FALL (Q1-Q5)

Few everyday facts look simpler than the slipperiness of ice, and few have embarrassed physicists for longer. Most solids grip a shoe or a blade; ice, close to its melting point, lets both slide with almost no resistance. The explanation found in many school textbooks is that the weight of a skater presses on the ice, the pressure lowers its melting point, and the blade glides on a thin film of water it has melted for itself. The account is tidy, memorable and, by the reckoning of most researchers today, largely wrong.

The trouble is arithmetic. Pressure does lower the melting point of ice, but only slightly: even the narrow edge of a skate blade, carrying the full weight of an adult, depresses it by a few degrees at most. Yet ice stays slippery well below that, and people skate happily on ice far colder than pressure alone could ever melt. A shoe, which spreads the same weight over a much larger area, exerts far less pressure still, and people slip in shoes all the same. Whatever makes ice slippery, it cannot be mainly the squeeze.

Two other explanations have replaced it, and they are partners rather than rivals. The first is frictional heating: a sliding object rubs the surface, and the heat this generates can melt a thin layer at the point of contact, so that motion supplies its own lubricant. The second, first proposed by Michael Faraday in the nineteenth century, is that the surface of ice is never quite solid. Molecules at the boundary have fewer neighbours to hold them in place than those deep within the crystal, and even well below freezing they form a disordered, liquid-like skin a few molecules thick. Experiments using lasers and X-rays have since detected such a layer, though its thickness and exact character are still disputed.

What this history teaches is less about ice than about explanations. The pressure-melting story survived for a century not because anyone had checked it but because it answered the question in a sentence. An explanation that fits neatly into a textbook margin earns a kind of credit it has not paid for, and the cost of that credit is usually borne by the students who learn it and by the researchers who must later persuade them to unlearn it.

1. Which can most reasonably be inferred about ice on which a person stands perfectly still, at a temperature well below its normal melting point?

- ☐ A. Its surface will be entirely solid, as stillness yields neither frictional heat nor enough pressure for liquid
- ☐ B. It will melt beneath the shoes, since even a stationary weight lowers the melting point enough to lubricate
- ☐ C. Its surface may carry a thin, liquid-like skin, which arises from boundary molecules, not from pressure or sliding
- ☐ D. It grows more slippery the longer the person stands, as body heat thickens a film beneath the soles

2. Considered in relation to the passage as a whole, the second paragraph contributes to the author's argument chiefly by doing which of the following?

- ☐ A. Introducing frictional heating and showing why it explains slipping in shoes and on skates at every temperature
- ☐ B. Conceding that pressure melting is correct for skate blades, while arguing that it cannot explain slipping in shoes
- ☐ C. Describing the laboratory experiments that first detected a liquid-like layer on ice, and why their results are disputed
- ☐ D. Checking the textbook account against quantities and experience, and finding pressure too weak to be the main cause

3. The author says a neat textbook explanation 'earns a kind of credit it has not paid for'. This suggests that such an explanation:

- ☐ A. is rewarded commercially by publishers who prefer short, memorable accounts to longer and more accurate ones
- ☐ B. wins acceptance through its convenience and brevity, rather than through evidence actually gathered in its favour
- ☐ C. is accepted only after repeated checking, so that the trust placed in it reflects careful experimental testing
- ☐ D. loses standing among researchers once students learn it, since familiarity makes scientists suspicious of popular ideas

4. Which best describes the author's attitude towards the pressure-melting explanation and towards the explanations that have since replaced it?

- ☐ A. Dismissive of all alike, treating every account of slippery ice as a tidy story no experiment has tested
- ☐ B. Enthusiastic about pressure melting as a teaching device, but finding the newer accounts too complicated to teach
- ☐ C. Firmly critical of the first, while treating the newer accounts as better supported though not yet fully settled
- ☐ D. Strictly neutral among all three, presenting each as equally plausible and declining to say which evidence favours

5. Which situation most closely parallels the author's lesson in the final paragraph about why the pressure-melting explanation survived so long?

- ☐ A. A one-line story of why an empire fell survives because it is memorable, though historians found it unsupported
- ☐ B. A treatment stays in use for decades because repeated trials confirm it works, though its mechanism is unknown
- ☐ C. A complex climate model is ignored by schoolteachers because it cannot be summarised briefly, though experiments support it
- ☐ D. A careful experiment is rejected for years because it contradicts a theory already tested and confirmed many times

READING COMPREHENSION — POLITICS & GOVERNANCE · THE ROOM WITHOUT CAMERAS (Q6-Q10)

Most of the work that turns a government bill into a sound law is meant to happen out of sight. Since 1993, India's Parliament has had a system of departmentally related standing committees: small groups of members drawn from both Houses and from across parties, each shadowing a set of ministries. A bill referred to one of them is examined clause by clause. The committee can summon officials, hear experts and invite the public to send in views, and it reports back with recommendations that the House is free to accept or ignore. Its meetings are closed, its members are not bound by the party whip, and its proceedings are not broadcast.

That closed door is the point. On the floor of the House, every word is spoken to a camera and, through it, to the voters, and who concedes a point to the other side concedes it in public. In committee, the same member can admit that a clause is bad



without handing the opposition a headline. Members who would never be seen agreeing in the chamber often agree around the committee table, and their reports have repeatedly produced amendments that governments, quietly, went on to adopt.

Yet referral is not automatic. Whether a bill goes to a committee is decided, in practice, by the presiding officer in consultation with the government of the day, and the share of bills referred has fallen sharply over the last three Lok Sabhas. Several major laws have passed within days of their introduction, debated for a few hours and examined by no committee at all. Governments defend this as efficiency: committees are slow, they say, and a mandate won at the polls should not be held hostage to delay.

The defence mistakes what the delay is for. A committee does not stand between a government and its majority; its recommendations bind no one, and a government that dislikes them can simply proceed. What a committee supplies is scrutiny that the floor, by its design, cannot provide, and that the government, by its position, has no incentive to request. To leave referral to the discretion of those whose bills are to be scrutinised is to make the most useful check in the legislative process optional for the very people it is meant to check.

6. Which best states the main point the author seeks to establish about departmentally related standing committees and the referral of bills to them?

- ☐ A. Committees should be able to bind the House, so that governments can no longer ignore their careful scrutiny
- ☐ B. Committee meetings should be broadcast, since closed proceedings let members strike quiet bargains voters never observe
- ☐ C. Governments may rightly bypass committees when their mandate is fresh, since scrutiny is slow and voters approved them
- ☐ D. Committees offer distinctive scrutiny, and leaving referral to the governments scrutinised makes that check easy to skip

7. It can most reasonably be inferred that if these committees' meetings were televised like debates on the floor of the House, then:

- ☐ A. committees would at once gain power to bind the House, as public proceedings carry more authority than private
- ☐ B. members would probably concede fewer faults in a bill across party lines, weakening what committees uniquely provide
- ☐ C. governments would refer far more bills, since public scrutiny would let ministers claim credit for every amendment adopted
- ☐ D. fewer bills would pass within days of introduction, because televised committees would deliberate faster than closed ones

8. In the final paragraph, the author notes that a committee's 'recommendations bind no one'. The author makes this point primarily in order to:

- ☐ A. show that referral cannot defeat a government's majority, undercutting the claim that it holds the mandate hostage
- ☐ B. concede that committees are ineffective, since a body whose advice may be ignored cannot improve any law
- ☐ C. argue that committee recommendations should become binding, so governments cannot proceed with bills a committee criticised
- ☐ D. explain why governments refer so few bills, since they see little value in advice they may freely disregard

9. Which of the following, if true, would most seriously undermine the government's defence, as presented in the passage, for passing major bills without committee referral?

- ☐ A. Committee members often disagree with their parties' positions, and some later vote against those bills on the floor
- ☐ B. Several bills examined by committees were later amended on the floor in ways the committees never recommended
- ☐ C. Referred bills usually return within a few months, and most pass in the same session as unreferred bills
- ☐ D. Voters surveyed after elections usually cannot name one bill their own representative examined in a committee

10. Which principle, if accepted, would most strongly support the author's conclusion about who should decide whether a government bill is referred to a committee?

- ☐ A. Any procedure slowing legislation should be adopted only if a clear majority of the House votes for it
- ☐ B. Whether a check on an authority is applied should not rest chiefly with the authority that check examines
- ☐ C. Procedural decisions of the House should always rest with the presiding officer, who stands above the parties
- ☐ D. Bills from a freshly elected government deserve less scrutiny than bills passed late in a government's term

SECTION — CRITICAL REASONING

CRITICAL REASONING — ETHICS · TWO DRIVERS, ONE CHOICE (Q11-Q15)

Two friends leave the same party, each having drunk far too much, and each drives home along the same road. Neither is more careless than the other: they drive at the same speed, with the same blurred attention and the same knowledge of the risk they are running. The first arrives home without incident. The second, rounding a bend, meets a child who has run into the road and kills her. The law will treat them very differently. The first, if he is stopped at all, faces a fine and a suspended licence; the second faces years in prison. Most people find this distinction natural, even obviously right.

It is worth asking what, exactly, distinguishes the two. Not their choices: both chose to drive drunk, and both chose it knowing what they were doing. Not their skill or their care, which, by hypothesis, were identical. The only difference is that a child happened to be on the second driver's road and not on the first's, and that is a fact about the child's movements, not about anything either driver did or decided. Philosophers have a name for this: moral luck, the way in which our moral standing seems to depend on circumstances we never controlled.

If blame is a judgement on a person's conduct, it must follow what the person controlled, and the two drivers controlled exactly the same things. The second driver is therefore no more culpable than the first, and the first is exactly as culpable as the second. This does not mean that the death of the child is unimportant, or that her family's grief deserves no answer. It means only that the grief, however real and however terrible, is not a measure of the driver's fault.

Nor does it follow that the law must punish both drivers alike. There may be good reasons, of deterrence, of public confidence, of the victims' need to see a wrong acknowledged, for the law to respond to outcomes as well as to choices. But those are reasons of policy, and they should be defended openly as such. What should not be said is that the second driver deserves more punishment than the first. In the only sense of desert that concerns what a person has actually done, they deserve the same.

11. The author's move from the drivers' identical choices to the claim that the second is no more culpable depends on which assumption?

- ☐ A. Blame properly judges only what a person controlled, not also, in part, the harm their conduct actually caused
- ☐ B. Friends at the party had warned both drivers not to drive, so each knew the risks equally well
- ☐ C. Prison sentences for drunk driving that causes death are, in practice, rarely as long as the legal maximum



- ☐ D. Most drunk drivers reach home safely, so the first driver's experience is far more common than the second's

12. Which, if true, would most seriously weaken the author's claim that the two drivers controlled exactly the same things on their journeys home?

- ☐ A. The child's family has publicly asked the court to impose the longest prison sentence the law permits
☐ B. Unlike the first, the second driver saw a school warning sign there and chose not to slow
☐ C. Courts in many countries already sentence drunk drivers who harm no one more lightly than those who kill
☐ D. Drivers who get home safely after driving drunk once are likelier than others to drive drunk again

13. Which of the following arguments is most similar in its pattern of reasoning to the author's argument about the two drivers?

- ☐ A. Two students revise equally, but a lenient examiner lifts one's score; so the examiner deserves that credit
☐ B. Two firms break one safety rule, but only one is inspected; so inspections should be more frequent
☐ C. Two doctors give the same diagnosis, but one patient recovers; so that doctor must have taken greater care
☐ D. Two archers shoot equally carelessly; a gust makes one hit a spectator; both erred equally, whatever rules require

14. The author's remark that the only difference between the drivers 'is a fact about the child's movements' plays which role in the argument?

- ☐ A. It places the only difference outside the drivers' control, a premise the author uses to deny different blame
☐ B. It is the argument's main conclusion, which later paragraphs support with evidence about what the law should do
☐ C. It is a concession to opponents, admitting that the child herself bears some moral responsibility for the harm
☐ D. It is an objection the author raises deliberately, to show how moral luck can answer it later

15. Which position is most consistent with the view the author expresses in the final paragraph about how the law may respond to the two drivers?

- ☐ A. The law must sentence both drivers alike, since any difference would wrong whoever received the heavier sentence
☐ B. The law should ignore outcomes entirely, since a system responding to results rather than choices is indefensible
☐ C. The law may punish the second driver harder, if that is defended on grounds like deterrence, not desert
☐ D. The law should punish the first driver as severely, since only luck kept him from killing anyone

CRITICAL REASONING — EDUCATION · HOLDING BACK IS NOT CATCHING UP (Q16–Q20)

For nearly a decade after the Right to Education Act came into force, Indian schools were barred from detaining children in the elementary years: a child who failed to learn was promoted with the rest of the class. The policy was blamed, loudly and often, for the dismal learning levels that surveys kept reporting, and in 2019 Parliament amended the Act to let states hold back pupils in Classes 5 and 8 who fail a year-end examination and a re-test held within two months. Several states have since done so, and the Centre has adopted the same rule for the schools it runs. Supporters describe the change as a return to accountability.

Accountability for whom? The detained child is the one who bears the consequence, but the child is not the one who failed. A pupil who cannot read a simple paragraph at the end of Class 5 did not reach that point in a single year; the gap opened in Class 1 or 2 and widened, unnoticed or unaddressed, through every year since. Repeating Class 5 gives that child the same syllabus, taught at the same pace and in the same way, that has already failed to reach her. Nothing in the examination tells a teacher why she cannot read or what she needs.

The evidence from elsewhere is not encouraging. Studies of grade retention in several countries have generally found that children who are held back do no better, a few years later, than similar children who were promoted, and that they are considerably more likely to leave school early. A child who is two years older than her classmates, and labelled a failure in front of them, has reasons to stop coming that have nothing to do with her ability.

None of this is a defence of the old system, under which a child could pass through eight years of school without anyone checking whether she had learned to read. The no-detention policy was meant to be paired with continuous assessment and remedial teaching, and in most schools neither ever arrived. The detention rule repeats that mistake from the other side. An examination can discover that a child has fallen behind; only teaching can help her catch up, and a rule that supplies the first without the second has measured the problem and called it a solution.

16. The author's claim that repeating Class 5 will not help a child who cannot read a simple paragraph relies on which assumption?

- ☐ A. Children detained in Class 5 come, on average, from poorer families than the children promoted with their class
☐ B. The Class 5 year-end examination is badly designed and fails to identify most children who cannot read
☐ C. Most teachers would rather promote every child than take on the extra work of teaching a repeated class
☐ D. Her failure to read has causes that sitting through the same year's teaching again is unlikely to remedy

17. Which of the following, if true, would most seriously weaken the author's argument against the detention rule as applied in the schools described?

- ☐ A. Many teachers report that the no-detention policy made some pupils less inclined to prepare seriously for examinations
☐ B. Learning surveys show Class 5 reading levels were already low in several states before no-detention came into force
☐ C. Re-test pupils get two months of targeted remedial classes, and most who pass then read at grade level
☐ D. Some parents prefer a child to repeat a class rather than struggle more after being promoted

18. The author's statement in the final paragraph that 'None of this is a defence of the old system' functions primarily to:

- ☐ A. forestall the objection that criticising detention endorses automatic promotion, by admitting the earlier policy also failed
☐ B. concede that detention has raised learning levels, while insisting it remains unfair to the children held back
☐ C. introduce a new conclusion that both policies should yield to a system with no examinations before Class 8
☐ D. show that the criticism applies only to Centre-run schools and not to those run by the states

19. What can most reasonably be inferred from the author's account of why no-detention failed and how detention 'repeats that mistake from the other side'?

- ☐ A. Both policies failed because Parliament, not the states, introduced them, and states know their own schools far better
☐ B. Both policies expect a promotion decision to do work that only continuous assessment and remedial teaching can do



- ☐ C. Detention is the worse policy, since it drives children from school while no-detention at least kept them enrolled
- ☐ D. No-detention would have worked had examinations been held in every class, not merely Classes 5 and 8

20. Which, if true, would most strengthen the author's argument that the detention rule mistakes measuring the problem of poor learning for solving it?

- ☐ A. Most states adopting the detention rule also increased the number of examinations held in each elementary school year
- ☐ B. Children promoted under no-detention often said they enjoyed school more than earlier pupils in their classes had
- ☐ C. Several countries that hold back failing pupils also report higher average reading scores than India in international tests
- ☐ D. Class 5 repeaters detained after the re-test got no extra teaching and read no better a year later

RAPID FIRE — ONE-LINE RECALL

62 quick questions · not negatively marked

1. Per the textbook account, what lowers the melting point under a skate? _____
2. By how much can a skate blade's pressure lower ice's melting point? _____
3. Who first proposed that the surface of ice is never quite solid? _____
4. In which century was the liquid-like-layer idea first proposed? _____
5. Which two tools have detected the liquid-like layer on ice? _____
6. How thick is the liquid-like skin on ice, per the passage? _____
7. For how long did the pressure-melting story survive? _____
8. In which year did India set up departmentally related standing committees? _____
9. From which Houses are standing committee members drawn? _____
10. Who decides, in practice, whether a bill goes to a committee? _____
11. Over how many Lok Sabhas has the referral share fallen sharply? _____
12. Are a committee's recommendations binding on the House? _____
13. What name do philosophers give to blame depending on uncontrolled circumstances? _____
14. What penalty does the drunk driver who arrives home safely face? _____
15. Name the three policy reasons the author lists for responding to outcomes. _____
16. Which classes may states detain pupils in after the 2019 amendment? _____
17. Within how long must the re-test be held before a pupil is detained? _____
18. Which Act barred detention in the elementary years? _____
19. What two supports was no-detention meant to be paired with? _____
20. Per the studies cited, retained children are more likely to do what? _____
21. Per the textbook account, what lowers the melting point under a skate? _____
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40. Per the studies cited, retained children are more likely to do what? _____
41. What does 'tidy' describe in the opening paragraph on ice? _____
42. Why does a shoe exert less pressure than a skate blade? _____
43. What does a sliding object generate that can melt a thin layer? _____
44. Per the passage, motion supplies its own what? _____
45. Why do boundary molecules form a disordered skin? _____
46. What two features of the surface layer are still disputed? _____
47. The passage calls the two newer ice explanations partners or rivals? _____
48. Who bears the cost of an unearned textbook explanation? _____
49. What does 'the trouble is arithmetic' introduce? _____
50. Can people skate on ice colder than pressure could melt? _____
51. Meaning of 'depresses' as used of the melting point: _____
52. What does 'reckoning' mean in 'by the reckoning of most researchers'? _____
53. Why did the pressure-melting story survive, per the author? _____
54. What, per the author, is the history of ice really a lesson about? _____
55. What do standing committees shadow? _____
56. How is a referred bill examined in committee? _____
57. Name two kinds of witness a committee may hear. _____
58. Are committee members bound by the party whip? _____
59. Are committee proceedings broadcast? _____
60. What does a member risk by conceding a point on the floor? _____
61. What did committee reports repeatedly produce, per the passage? _____
62. How do governments describe skipping committees? _____

