

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 LEDGER OF UNCLAIMED NAMES (Q1-Q6)

On the morning the order came, Sumitra Devi opened the post office at nine, as she had for thirty-one years, and swept the step before she read it. The letter was brief and courteous. The branch at Tenmile would close at the end of the month; its accounts would pass to the town office forty kilometres down the valley; the department thanked her for her long and valued service. She read it twice, folded it along its creases, and put it in the drawer where she kept the rubber stamps.

Nobody came until eleven. Then it was the Rai boy, who wanted nothing but to stand by the stove, and after him old Mr Gurung, who had come for his pension and stayed to complain about the bus. She counted his notes out twice, slowly, and he watched her hands as he always did, as though the money might become more if he watched closely enough. She did not tell him about the letter. There would be time for that, and he would say what everyone would say, that it was a shame and that nobody wrote letters any more, and she would agree, because it was true, and because agreeing was quicker.

In the afternoon she took down the green ledger from the top shelf. It was not an official book. In it, in her own small hand, she had written the name on every letter that had come to Tenmile and found no one to receive it: the addressee dead, or gone to the plains, or never there at all. There were two hundred and eleven entries. Beside some she had written what she guessed the letter held: a son, a debt, a proposal. The letters themselves had gone back long ago, as the rules required. Only the names remained.

She turned the pages for a long time. Outside, the clouds came up the valley and filled it, and the shop across the road switched on its single bulb. At five she wrote a last line at the bottom of the final page, not a name this time but the word Tenmile and the date, and closed the book, and put it not back on the shelf but into her own bag.

Then she locked the door, and tried it, and tried it again.

1. Why, according to the passage, does Sumitra Devi decide not to tell Mr Gurung about the closure order that morning?

- ☐ A. She fears that he will hurry down to the town office and complain about her to the department
- ☐ B. She foresees his predictable lament and finds it easier to agree than to discuss the closure
- ☐ C. She has been instructed by the department to keep the closure confidential until the month ends
- ☐ D. She doubts the order is final and expects the department to change its mind before the month ends

2. What is the most plausible significance of Sumitra writing the word 'Tenmile' and the date as the last line of her ledger?

- ☐ A. She is recording the date on which the post office's official accounts passed to the town office
- ☐ B. She is marking the page so that her successor at the town office can continue keeping the ledger
- ☐ C. She is noting that a final letter addressed to the village arrived that day and found no receiver
- ☐ D. She is listing the village itself among those things that now have no one left to receive them

3. The narrator's remark that Mr Gurung watched her hands 'as though the money might become more if he watched closely enough' chiefly suggests that:

- ☐ A. small sums matter greatly to him, so he attends to each note with anxious, hopeful care
- ☐ B. he suspects Sumitra of short-changing him, and watches her hands in order to catch her mistakes
- ☐ C. he is fascinated by the post office's routine and comes in chiefly to watch the clerk work
- ☐ D. his eyesight is failing, so that he must watch closely to tell one denomination from another

4. Which of the following best describes the tone in which the passage presents the closure of the Tenmile post office and Sumitra's last day there?

- ☐ A. Openly indignant, condemning the department for discarding a loyal clerk after thirty-one years of service
- ☐ B. Lightly comic, finding gentle humour in the habits of the villagers who visit the post office
- ☐ C. Restrained and melancholy, conveying loss through routine detail rather than through stated feeling
- ☐ D. Detached and documentary, recording the events of the day without any suggestion of emotion

5. At the very end of the excerpt, Sumitra locks the door, 'and tried it, and tried it again'. This closing image most plausibly conveys:

- ☐ A. a reluctance to let go, expressed through repeating an act of care that has lost its purpose
- ☐ B. a fear of burglary, since the office still holds cash and stamps that must be kept secure
- ☐ C. a growing doubt about the old lock, which she means to report to the town office next day
- ☐ D. a quiet anger at the department, which she expresses by rattling the door it has ordered shut

6. Each of the following statements is supported by the passage EXCEPT:

- ☐ A. Sumitra had run the Tenmile post office for more than three decades when the order came
- ☐ B. The letters named in the green ledger had been sent back long ago, as the rules required
- ☐ C. Mr Gurung came in that morning for his pension and stayed on to complain about the bus
- ☐ D. Sumitra kept the green ledger as an official record that the department required her to keep

READING COMPREHENSION — PHILOSOPHY & IDEAS · A PROMISE TO THE DEAD (Q7-Q12)

A dying woman asks her son to scatter her ashes on the hill where she grew up, and he promises. Years later, busy and far away, he scatters them in the river near his flat instead. Has he wronged her? The question is harder than it looks, because on account of morality the answer must be no. Wrongs, on that account, are harms, and harms need someone to suffer them. T



no longer exists; she cannot be disappointed, cannot learn what her son did, cannot be made worse off in any way. A promise to her, it seems, dies with her.

Many people find this conclusion hard to accept, and not merely out of sentiment. Consider what follows if it is true. A person who knows she is dying would have no reason to trust any promise made to her, since every such promise would lapse at the moment it mattered most. Wills, which ask the living to honour the wishes of the dead, would rest on nothing firmer than a convenient social habit. And the son, if he believed his promise void, could have made it insincerely from the start, knowing it would never bind him.

One reply is that the wrong is done not to the dead but to the living: breaking such promises weakens a practice on which everyone, eventually, will depend. This is true, but it proves too little. It implies that a broken promise kept perfectly secret wrongs nobody, and that the son who scatters the ashes unseen has done nothing amiss provided no one ever finds out.

A better reply begins by separating what a person wants from what a person experiences. The mother did not merely want to feel, at her death, that her wishes would be honoured; she wanted them honoured. Her interest was in the hill, not in her own state of mind about the hill. Interests of that kind can be satisfied or defeated after their holder is gone, just as a parent's interest in the welfare of her children can be defeated by events she never lives to see. If that is right, the son has wronged his mother, though she will never know it, and a wrong that no one feels is still a wrong.

7. Which of the following best states the central claim that the author defends in the passage about the son who broke his promise to his mother?

- ☐ A. Breaking a promise to the dead is wrong chiefly because it weakens a practice the living depend on
- ☐ B. Promises made to the dying cannot bind, since no one remains who could be harmed by their breach
- ☐ C. A promise to the dead can be wronged, since some interests concern the world, not one's experience
- ☐ D. Wills and deathbed promises survive only as social habits, and should be openly treated as such

8. Applying the view the author defends in the final paragraph, which of the following cases would most clearly count as a wrong done to the dead person?

- ☐ A. Spending, as the will allowed, an inheritance on a holiday the dead aunt would have thought a waste
- ☐ B. Secretly reading a dead friend's diaries after promising her, at her request, to burn them unread
- ☐ C. Forgetting a dead grandfather's birthday that he had never asked anyone to remember or to mark
- ☐ D. Selling a dead father's house, as his will directed, to a buyer the family privately disliked

9. 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. offering the author's own positive theory of why promises made to the dying continue to bind
- ☐ B. conceding that the familiar account is correct, while showing that it rests on sentiment alone
- ☐ C. describing how wills came to be enforced as a social habit rather than as a moral obligation
- ☐ D. drawing out unwelcome consequences of the familiar account to show that it is hard to accept

10. In saying that the reply locating the wrong in harm to the living 'proves too little', the author most nearly means that this reply:

- ☐ A. fails to cover cases it must cover, since it cannot condemn a breach that stays wholly secret
- ☐ B. claims more than its evidence shows, since practices are seldom weakened by any single breach
- ☐ C. rests on a false premise, since few people will ever depend on promises made to the dying
- ☐ D. is too modest in tone, since it treats a grave moral wrong as a minor social inconvenience

11. In the final paragraph, the comparison with a parent's interest in the welfare of her children serves mainly to do which of the following?

- ☐ A. show that parents, like the dying, are owed promises that the living must keep in their memory
- ☐ B. show that an interest can be defeated by events its holder never lives to experience
- ☐ C. suggest that the son's broken promise also harms his own children, who learn from his example
- ☐ D. concede that interests in the world end at death, just as a parent's influence over children does

12. With which of the following statements would the author of the passage most likely agree?

- ☐ A. A person can be wronged even though she never learns of the wrong or feels its effects
- ☐ B. Harm to the living is the main reason why breaking a promise to the dead is wrong
- ☐ C. A promise made insincerely to a dying person places no real obligation on the one who made it
- ☐ D. A person's interests are limited to the states of mind she herself experiences while alive

SECTION — CRITICAL REASONING

CRITICAL REASONING — POLITICAL ECONOMY · THE BAN THAT SOWS FEWER ONIONS (Q13-Q18)

When the retail price of onions climbs sharply, the government's reflex is to ban their export. The logic seems unanswerable: onions that cannot leave the country must be sold at home, domestic supply rises, and prices fall for the households that spend the largest share of their income on food. Bans of this kind have been imposed repeatedly, and each time they have been defended as protection for the poor consumer.

The defence counts only half the transaction. A ban does lower the domestic price, but it does so by cutting the price farmers receive at the very moment when, after a poor harvest, high prices were compensating them for a smaller crop. The consumer's gain is, to a large extent, the grower's loss, transferred by order rather than by any change in how many onions exist. A ban does not create a single extra bulb.

Worse, the transfer is not a one-off. A farmer deciding in autumn how much land to give to onions must guess what price she will get in spring. If she has learned that high prices will be cut short by a ban whenever they arrive, while low prices are left to run their course, she faces a market in which the losses are hers to keep and the gains are capped by decree. A rational grower in that position plants less, or moves to crops the state leaves alone. Fewer onions are sown, the next shortage comes sooner, and the next ban follows it.

Foreign buyers learn a parallel lesson. An importer abroad who has had contracts cancelled by sudden bans will look for elsewhere, and once lost, such buyers are slow to return. The export market that might have absorbed a glut in a good year, at prices from collapsing, is smaller the next time it is needed.



Export bans therefore do not stabilise onion prices; over any period longer than a single season, they make prices more volatile, by shrinking the supply on which stability depends. If the aim is to protect poor households from a spike, the remedy is to support those households directly, through targeted transfers or a public buffer stock, rather than to make farmers pay for every shortage.

13. The author's claim that, after repeated bans, a rational grower 'plants less' or moves to other crops depends on which of the following assumptions?

- ☐ A. Onion farmers are mostly poor households who themselves spend a large share of income on food
- ☐ B. Foreign importers pay higher prices for onions than domestic wholesale buyers do in a normal year
- ☐ C. Crops other than onions are never subject to export bans or to any other form of price control
- ☐ D. Growers form expectations of future prices partly from how the state has acted on past spikes

14. Which of the following best expresses the main conclusion that the author draws in the argument about export bans on onions?

- ☐ A. Over more than one season, export bans make onion prices less stable, by shrinking supply
- ☐ B. Export bans transfer income from onion farmers to urban consumers without adding any onions
- ☐ C. Foreign buyers who lose contracts to sudden export bans are slow to return to the market
- ☐ D. Poor households should be shielded from price spikes through transfers or a buffer stock

15. Which of the following, if true, would most seriously weaken the author's argument that export bans make onion prices more volatile over time?

- ☐ A. Urban households spend a large share of income on food than the passage implies they do
- ☐ B. Some importers who had contracts cancelled returned to the same suppliers within a few years
- ☐ C. Onion acreage rose as fast in seasons after bans as in seasons that followed no ban at all
- ☐ D. Public buffer stocks of onions are costly to maintain because the crop spoils within months

16. Which of the following, if true, would most strengthen the author's claim about how growers decide how much land to sow with onions?

- ☐ A. Retail onion prices fell within weeks of each ban, as the government had predicted they would
- ☐ B. Surveys show growers cut onion acreage after bans, citing the risk that high prices would be capped
- ☐ C. Farmers who grow onions also grow pulses, whose prices the state seldom regulates or controls
- ☐ D. Importers abroad now buy most of their onions from suppliers in two other exporting countries

17. Which of the following arguments most closely parallels the reasoning by which the author concludes that export bans undermine price stability?

- ☐ A. Fuel subsidies help the poor less than the rich, who use more fuel, so subsidies should be targeted
- ☐ B. Banning a pesticide raises costs for farmers in the short run but improves soil health over time
- ☐ C. A tax on sugary drinks lowers consumption, so revenue falls and the tax ultimately defeats itself
- ☐ D. Capping rents whenever they rise teaches landlords to build less, so housing shortages recur

18. Knowing which of the following would be most useful in evaluating the author's prediction that export bans make the next shortage come sooner?

- ☐ A. Whether households that buy onions also buy other vegetables whose prices rose that season
- ☐ B. Whether the governments that ban onion exports have also banned the export of rice or wheat
- ☐ C. Whether onion acreage actually fell in the sowing seasons that followed past export bans
- ☐ D. Whether onion farmers earn less on average than wage-earning households in the cities do

CRITICAL REASONING — SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY POLICY · APPROVAL ON PROBATION (Q19-Q24)

Medicines for serious illnesses can now reach patients years earlier than they once did, because regulators in several countries allow what is called accelerated approval. Instead of waiting for evidence that a drug helps patients live longer or feel better, the regulator accepts evidence that it changes a surrogate endpoint: a laboratory measure, such as the shrinking of a tumour on a scan, that is expected to predict real benefit. The manufacturer is then required to run a confirmatory trial showing that the predicted benefit actually appears.

The bargain is sound in principle. For a patient with months to live, a drug that probably works today is worth more than one that certainly works in five years. The difficulty lies in the second half of the bargain. Once a drug is on the market, the manufacturer has little reason to hurry the confirmatory trial: it already has its sales, and the trial can only take them away. Patients, for their part, are reluctant to enrol in a study in which they may receive a placebo when the drug itself can be had on prescription. Confirmatory trials have accordingly run years beyond their deadlines, and some drugs whose trials eventually showed no benefit stayed on sale for a long time while their withdrawal was argued over.

Regulators already have the power to withdraw such approvals, but the power is seldom used quickly, because withdrawal is a visible act that removes a drug some patients and doctors believe in, while delay is invisible. The burden of action, in other words, falls on the side that bears the greater political cost.

The remedy is to reverse that burden. An accelerated approval should carry a fixed expiry date, set at the time of approval with a reasonable allowance for the confirmatory trial, after which it lapses automatically unless the trial has reported and confirmed a benefit. A manufacturer whose drug works would lose nothing, since it would simply complete the trial it had already promised to run. Only a manufacturer content to sell an unconfirmed drug indefinitely would have reason to object, and that is not an interest public policy needs to protect.

19. Which of the following best states the main conclusion of the author's argument about accelerated approval of medicines?

- ☐ A. Accelerated approvals should lapse at a set date unless a confirmatory trial has shown benefit
- ☐ B. Accelerated approval is sound in principle, since a probable benefit today outweighs a later one
- ☐ C. Regulators should withdraw unconfirmed drugs more quickly, whatever patients and doctors believe
- ☐ D. Manufacturers should be barred from selling a drug until its confirmatory trial has been completed

20. Considered in relation to the argument as a whole, the third paragraph, about regulators' power to w



approvals, functions chiefly to:

- ☐ A. establish that regulators lack any legal power to withdraw an accelerated approval once granted
- ☐ B. show that patients and doctors are right to resist the withdrawal of drugs they believe in
- ☐ C. explain why the existing withdrawal power fails, motivating a rule that needs no active decision
- ☐ D. concede that delay in confirmatory trials is harmless, since it is invisible to most patients

21. Which, if true, would most seriously weaken the claim that a manufacturer whose drug works 'would lose nothing'?

- ☐ A. Most manufacturers already finish confirmatory trials before the deadlines that regulators currently set
- ☐ B. Placebo-recruitment problems often stop even effective drugs from finishing trials within any fixed period
- ☐ C. Surrogate endpoints such as tumour shrinkage predict real benefit accurately in most types of cancer
- ☐ D. Doctors prescribe drugs with accelerated approval less often than drugs approved in the usual way

22. The final sentence claims that only a manufacturer content to sell an unconfirmed drug would object. Which is the most serious flaw in this reasoning?

- ☐ A. It assumes surrogate endpoints never predict real benefit, so that every unconfirmed drug is useless
- ☐ B. It confuses the regulator's power to withdraw a drug with a duty to withdraw it promptly
- ☐ C. It relies on the opinions of doctors and patients rather than on the results of confirmatory trials
- ☐ D. It presumes only a self-interested motive could ground an objection, ignoring legitimate ones

23. Which of the following, if true, would most strengthen the author's proposal that accelerated approvals should carry a fixed expiry date?

- ☐ A. Patients with months to live are usually willing to accept a drug whose benefit is still unconfirmed
- ☐ B. Regulators that withdrew unconfirmed drugs quickly faced public criticism from patient groups
- ☐ C. Where approvals lapsed automatically, trials finished on time far more often, and few effective drugs lapsed
- ☐ D. Confirmatory trials for drugs with accelerated approval are usually larger than ordinary approval trials

24. The author's proposal that accelerated approvals should lapse automatically depends on which of the following assumptions?

- ☐ A. Surrogate endpoints never predict real clinical benefit for patients with a serious illness
- ☐ B. An automatic lapse would escape the political cost that now deters an active withdrawal
- ☐ C. Patients with serious illnesses would rather wait five years for a drug that certainly works
- ☐ D. Regulators now lack any legal power to withdraw an accelerated approval once it is granted

RAPID FIRE — ONE-LINE RECALL

50 quick questions · not negatively marked

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|--|---|
| 1. How long had Sumitra Devi run the Tenmile post office? _____ | 27. Give one reason a letter reached no receiver at Tenmile. _____ |
| 2. At what time did Sumitra open the post office each morning? _____ | 28. Where had some addressees gone, per the ledger? _____ |
| 3. What did Sumitra do before reading the closure order? _____ | 29. What did the dying woman ask her son to do? _____ |
| 4. How does the narrator describe the department's letter? _____ | 30. Where did the son actually scatter the ashes? _____ |
| 5. When would the Tenmile branch close? _____ | 31. On the familiar account, wrongs are what? _____ |
| 6. Where would Tenmile's accounts pass after closure? _____ | 32. On the familiar account, what do harms need? _____ |
| 7. How far away was the town office? _____ | 33. On the familiar account, what happens to a promise to the dead? _____ |
| 8. Where did Sumitra put the folded order? _____ | 34. Why, on the familiar view, would the dying not trust promises? _____ |
| 9. At what time did the first visitor arrive? _____ | 35. What would wills rest on if the familiar view were true? _____ |
| 10. What did the Rai boy want at the post office? _____ | 36. Who does the first reply say is wronged by a broken promise? _____ |
| 11. Why had Mr Gurung come to the post office? _____ | 37. What does the first reply say breaking such promises weakens? _____ |
| 12. What did Mr Gurung complain about? _____ | 38. What does the author say the 'harm to the living' reply proves? _____ |
| 13. How did Sumitra count Mr Gurung's notes? _____ | 39. Which breach does the 'harm to the living' reply fail to condemn? _____ |
| 14. What would everyone say about the closure, Sumitra expected? _____ | 40. The better reply separates wanting from what? _____ |
| 15. Why did Sumitra expect she would agree with Mr Gurung? _____ | 41. Per the author, the mother's interest was in what? _____ |
| 16. What colour was Sumitra's private ledger? _____ | 42. Interests of that kind can be defeated when? _____ |
| 17. Was the green ledger an official record? _____ | 43. What parental interest does the author use as an analogy? _____ |
| 18. What did the green ledger record? _____ | 44. Per the author, is a wrong no one feels still a wrong? _____ |
| 19. How many entries did the green ledger hold? _____ | 45. What is the government's reflex when onion prices climb? _____ |
| 20. Name one guess Sumitra wrote beside an entry. _____ | 46. Who is the ban defended as protecting? _____ |
| 21. What had happened to the undelivered letters themselves? _____ | 47. Whose loss is the consumer's gain, per the author? _____ |
| 22. What filled the valley in the afternoon? _____ | 48. How many extra bulbs does an export ban create? _____ |
| 23. What came on in the shop across the road? _____ | 49. When must a farmer guess the spring onion price? _____ |
| 24. What did Sumitra write as the ledger's last line? _____ | 50. Under repeated bans, whose are the losses to keep? _____ |
| 25. Where did Sumitra put the ledger at five? _____ | |
| 26. How many times did Sumitra try the lock after locking it? _____ | |

