

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 — HISTORY · NOON BY DECREE (Q1-Q6)

Before the railways, every Indian town kept its own time, and nobody found this strange. Noon was the moment the sun stood highest over the town, and because the sun reaches that point earlier in the east than in the west, the clocks of Calcutta ran well ahead of those of Bombay. For people who travelled at the pace of a bullock cart, the difference was invisible. A traveller taking a week over the distance adjusted to each town's noon as he arrived, much as he adjusted to its water and its dialect.

The railway made the difference visible and then intolerable. A timetable is a promise that a train will be at a given station at a given hour, and the promise means nothing unless the station and the passenger agree on what hour it is. Railway companies first solved the problem for themselves, running their trains on a single 'railway time' while the towns around the stations kept their own. For a generation, a passenger stepping off a platform might find that the station clock and the clock on the market tower disagreed by half an hour, and both were correct.

In 1906 the government proposed to end the confusion with a single standard time for the whole country, set five and a half hours ahead of Greenwich. Officials presented the change as plain convenience, and most places accepted it as such. Bombay refused. Its merchants, its newspapers and much of its municipal opinion insisted on keeping the city's own time, and for nearly half a century the city ran on two clocks at once.

It is tempting to read that resistance as mere attachment to habit, the reflex of people who disliked being told what time it was. The record suggests something more. For the city's critics, local time was a sign that the hours of their working day were set by the sun over their own harbour rather than by an order issued from elsewhere. The quarrel over a few minutes was a quarrel over who had the authority to define an ordinary day.

Standard time eventually won, as it was always likely to. But its victory was not the simple triumph of efficiency over sentiment that later accounts describe. It was the settlement of a dispute about whose clock a city should keep, and the losers understood very well what they were losing.

1. Which of the following best expresses the central claim that the author makes, across the passage as a whole, about the adoption of standard time in India?

- ☐ A. Standard time was adopted mainly because officials wished to weaken the power of Bombay's merchants
- ☐ B. The quarrel over standard time was a contest over authority, not merely habit against efficiency
- ☐ C. Local solar time was more accurate than railway time, which explains Bombay's long refusal to change
- ☐ D. Railway companies, not the government, were chiefly responsible for imposing one time on every town

2. In the first paragraph, the author mentions the traveller who moved 'at the pace of a bullock cart' chiefly in order to:

- ☐ A. show that travel in India before the railways was slow, costly and often dangerous for merchants
- ☐ B. suggest that such travellers were more tolerant of regional differences than modern railway passengers
- ☐ C. contrast the dependability of bullock carts with the frequent delays of the early railway trains
- ☐ D. explain why differences in local time caused no trouble until faster travel made them noticeable

3. In the second paragraph, when the author says that the station clock and the market clock disagreed 'and both were correct', the author most nearly means that:

- ☐ A. each clock faithfully kept a different standard, one set for the trains and one for the town
- ☐ B. both clocks were mechanically sound, though neither of them had lately been checked against the sun
- ☐ C. a difference of half an hour was too small to matter to passengers boarding the trains
- ☐ D. railway staff and townspeople each believed, wrongly, that only their own clock was accurate

4. Based on the final paragraph, the author's attitude towards the 'later accounts' of how standard time came to be adopted is best described as:

- ☐ A. admiring, since they rightly explain why standard time was always likely to win in the end
- ☐ B. indifferent, since the author treats the outcome of the dispute as far more important than its causes
- ☐ C. critical, since they reduce a dispute over authority to a plain contest of efficiency and sentiment
- ☐ D. hostile, since they deliberately hide the part Bombay's merchants played in delaying the change

5. As it is used in the final paragraph, in the phrase 'the settlement of a dispute', the word 'settlement' most nearly means:

- ☐ A. a place where a group of people have come to live together and build permanent homes
- ☐ B. a sum of money paid in order to close a legal claim between two private parties
- ☐ C. the gradual sinking of a large building as the ground beneath it slowly compacts
- ☐ D. the resolution of a long disagreement, here decided in favour of one of the sides

6. Which of the following, if true, would most strengthen the author's reading, in the fourth paragraph, of Bombay's long resistance to standard time?

- ☐ A. Bombay's critics wrote that a time fixed by a distant government should not rule their city's day
- ☐ B. Many residents of Bombay carried two watches, one set to local time and one set to standard time
- ☐ C. Other Indian cities adopted standard time quickly, though their traders complained of slight inconvenience
- ☐ D. Bombay's local time differed from standard time by more minutes than that of most other Indian cities

READING COMPREHENSION — ARTS & CULTURE · THE INVENTION OF SILENCE (Q7-Q12)



Anyone who has coughed during a quiet passage at a concert of Western classical music knows the look that follows. The audience in such a hall is expected to sit still, to stay silent, and to applaud only when the whole work has ended, never between its movements. Newcomers who clap too early are corrected, sometimes by a glare and sometimes by a helpful neighbour. The rules are enforced so confidently that most listeners assume they are as old as the music itself.

They are not. Through much of the eighteenth century, audiences talked, ate, came and went during performances, and clapped whenever something pleased them. A composer writing home from Paris in that period boasted that the audience had broken into applause in the middle of his symphony, at a passage he had written expressly to win it. Applause between movements remained ordinary well into the following century. The silent, motionless hall is largely a creation of the later nineteenth century, when critics and concert promoters began to treat instrumental music as something close to a sacred text, to be received in reverent attention.

The change brought real gains. Long, quiet works, which depend on the listener holding a thread of sound across many minutes, became possible to perform and to hear. A composer could write a passage of near silence and expect it to be heard as such, rather than drowned by conversation.

But the new manners did something else as well. Rules that must be learned before one can follow them sort an audience into those who know them and those who do not. The newcomer who claps between movements has not harmed the music; he has merely revealed that he did not grow up with it. Every glare he receives teaches him that the hall belongs to others.

The contrast with other traditions is instructive. In a concert of Hindustani classical music, a listener who murmurs approval at a well-turned phrase is not disturbing the performance but taking part in it, and many performers would feel the absence of such responses as a failure. Neither convention is natural. Each is a choice about what listening is for, and each choice admits some listeners more easily than others.

7. Which of the following best states the main point that the author makes about the manners of concert audiences in the passage as a whole?

- ☐ A. The silent concert hall is an old tradition that newcomers should learn to respect and follow
- ☐ B. Hindustani concerts are more welcoming than Western ones because their listeners may respond aloud
- ☐ C. Concert silence is a recent convention with real gains, but it also shuts out unfamiliar listeners
- ☐ D. Applause between movements harms long works and should be discouraged firmly but politely

8. In the second paragraph, the author refers to the composer who wrote home from Paris about his symphony primarily in order to:

- ☐ A. show that eighteenth-century composers cared more about applause than about the quality of their music
- ☐ B. offer evidence that applause during a performance was once welcomed, even by composers themselves
- ☐ C. suggest that audiences in Paris were less disciplined than audiences in other European cities
- ☐ D. illustrate how composers learned to write long, quiet passages that called for silent listening

9. Based on the fourth paragraph, it can most reasonably be inferred that the newcomer who claps between the movements of a work:

- ☐ A. damages the performance itself by breaking the thread of sound on which long works depend
- ☐ B. is usually corrected by the performers themselves rather than by others in the audience
- ☐ C. would be just as out of place at a concert of Hindustani classical music in India
- ☐ D. is judged less for any harm to the music than for what his conduct reveals about him

10. Which of the following best describes the role that the third paragraph plays in the development of the author's argument in the passage?

- ☐ A. It concedes that the new concert manners had genuine benefits before the author turns to their costs
- ☐ B. It offers the main evidence that the silence of concert halls dates only from the later nineteenth century
- ☐ C. It rebuts the claim, made in the second paragraph, that audiences once applauded quite freely
- ☐ D. It explains why Hindustani performers value audible responses from the listeners before them

11. Taking the passage as a whole, and especially its final paragraph, the tone of the author is best described as:

- ☐ A. nostalgic, longing openly for the lively and noisy concert halls of the eighteenth century
- ☐ B. scornful, mocking the listeners who glare at newcomers for clapping at the wrong time
- ☐ C. analytical, weighing what a convention achieves against the listeners it quietly shuts out
- ☐ D. celebratory, praising the reverent silence of the modern concert hall as a cultural triumph

12. Which of the following situations is most closely analogous to the effect of concert manners that the author describes in the fourth paragraph of the passage?

- ☐ A. A museum bans flash photography to protect old paintings from damage caused by repeated exposure
- ☐ B. A club's unwritten dress code lets members spot, and quietly cold-shoulder, guests from outside
- ☐ C. A public library asks its visitors to keep silent so that readers can concentrate on their books
- ☐ D. A theatre dims its lights before a play begins so that the audience's attention turns to the stage

SECTION — CRITICAL REASONING

CRITICAL REASONING — SOCIETY & CULTURE · THE TRANSLATION THAT SOLD THE ORIGINAL (Q13–Q18)

Writers in many Indian languages have long voiced a fear that translation into English is a kind of slow theft. Every reader who meets a novel in English, the argument goes, is a reader lost to the language in which it was written, and every prize given to a translation teaches the young that the road to recognition runs through English. On this view, the growth of translation is a symptom of decline, and the literatures that are translated most are the ones being emptied fastest.

The evidence from bookshops points the other way. When a translated novel wins a major international prize, sales of the original-language edition typically rise in the months that follow, often sharply. Publishers in the original language reprint the book, bring out the author's earlier titles, and find booksellers suddenly willing to stock them. Readers who had never thought to look for a new novel in their own language discover that one of its writers is being discussed abroad, and they go looking for the writer at home.

This should not surprise anyone. The readers who buy a celebrated novel in English are, for the most part, not readers who otherwise have bought it in the original; many of them cannot read the original at all. The translation therefore takes little



original's market. What it adds is attention, and attention is the scarcest thing a regional literature has. A language with a small publishing industry cannot afford the advertising that makes a book visible; a prize abroad does that work for free.

Nor does the prize push young writers towards English. A writer who sees a colleague celebrated abroad for a book written in their shared language learns the opposite lesson: that one need not change languages in order to be read.

It follows that the fear of translation has things backwards. Translation into English does not drain readers away from the literatures it draws on. It is one of the few means by which those literatures can recover the readers they have already lost, and writers who resent it are resenting their most effective advocate.

13. Which of the following best expresses the main conclusion that the author draws about the effect of English translation on Indian-language literatures?

- ☐ A. Translation into English helps the literatures it draws on rather than draining readers from them
- ☐ B. Prizes for translated fiction teach young writers that recognition can come only through English
- ☐ C. Regional literatures cannot afford advertising and so depend on prizes awarded in other countries
- ☐ D. Sales of an original-language edition usually rise after its English translation wins a major prize

14. The author's claim that a translation 'takes little from the original's market' depends on which of the following assumptions?

- ☐ A. Most buyers of English translations are themselves writers working in one of the Indian languages
- ☐ B. Publishers in Indian languages cannot afford to advertise even their most successful titles
- ☐ C. Readers who are able to read the original seldom buy the English translation in its place
- ☐ D. Prize-winning translations usually appear in print before the original-language editions do

15. Which of the following, if true, would most seriously weaken the author's conclusion that translation into English does not drain readers from the original literatures?

- ☐ A. Some translated novels that win prizes abroad were already bestsellers in their original language
- ☐ B. Post-prize gains go to the winning title alone, while overall sales in that language keep falling
- ☐ C. Translators are often paid less than the authors whose works they render into English
- ☐ D. Many readers of English translations also read novels that were originally written in English

16. Which of the following, if true, would most strengthen the author's claim that prizes for translations send readers back to the original-language editions?

- ☐ A. English-language publishers have increased the number of Indian-language novels they translate yearly
- ☐ B. Several prize-winning translators say that they first read the original novels as children
- ☐ C. Young writers in Indian languages increasingly study English literature at university
- ☐ D. Most buyers of reprinted originals say they first heard of the author through coverage of the prize

17. The statement that many buyers of the English translation 'cannot read the original at all' plays which role in the argument?

- ☐ A. It supports the claim that the translation takes few sales away from the original-language edition
- ☐ B. It is the main conclusion, which the rest of the argument is offered in order to establish
- ☐ C. It states the view of the critics of translation, which the author then goes on to reject
- ☐ D. It explains why sales of the original rise so sharply after a translation wins a prize

18. Which of the following most accurately identifies a flaw in the reasoning by which the author reaches the conclusion stated in the final paragraph?

- ☐ A. It assumes that critics of translation have no personal stake in the matter they discuss
- ☐ B. It relies on the word of publishers, who stand to gain from the sale of translated books
- ☐ C. It draws a conclusion about translation in general from rare prize-winning translations
- ☐ D. It treats a rise in the original's sales as if it were a fall in the translation's sales

CRITICAL REASONING — HEALTH POLICY · MOVING THE PRESCRIPTION PAD (Q19-Q24)

A rule requiring doctors to prescribe medicines only by their generic names has been welcomed as a blow against the drug companies. The reasoning seems straightforward. When a doctor writes a brand name, the patient must buy that brand, often at several times the price of an equivalent product; when the doctor writes only the name of the chemical, the patient is free to buy the cheapest version. Companies that now court doctors with gifts and sponsored conferences would lose the point of doing so, and the money they spend on persuasion would flow back to patients as lower prices.

The reasoning overlooks a question: once the doctor no longer chooses the brand, who does? Not, in most cases, the patient. A patient handed a slip bearing only the name of a molecule rarely knows which of the twenty products on the chemist's shelf contain it, still less which of them are reliable. He asks the chemist, and the chemist chooses.

The chemist's choice is not made in a vacuum. Many of the cheaper versions on the shelf are sold as 'branded generics', products whose maximum retail price is set well above what the chemist pays for them, and the difference is his margin. A product with a high printed price and a low wholesale cost earns the chemist far more than one priced honestly. The chemist who is asked to choose therefore has every reason to choose the product that costs the patient most.

The companies, for their part, will not stop spending on persuasion. They will simply redirect it, from the doctor's clinic to the chemist's counter, offering larger margins and bonus stock in place of conferences and gifts. The patient will face the same high price, now recommended by a different person.

None of this means that generic prescribing is a mistake. It means that the rule, standing alone, moves the choice without changing the incentive that corrupts it. Unless it is paired with limits on trade margins, or with a public list of approved low-cost products from which the chemist must offer the cheapest, it will change the name of the person who profits from the patient's ignorance and little else.

19. Which of the following best states the main conclusion of the author's argument about the rule requiring doctors to prescribe by generic name?

- ☐ A. Generic prescribing is a mistake, because it simply hands the choice of medicine over to chemists
- ☐ B. Drug companies should be prohibited from offering gifts or sponsored conferences to doctors



- ☐ C. Patients rarely know which of the products on a chemist's shelf contain the molecule prescribed
- ☐ D. Without margin limits or a low-cost list, the rule merely shifts who profits from patients' ignorance

20. The author's prediction that patients will 'face the same high price' under the rule depends on which of the following assumptions?

- ☐ A. Doctors who prescribe by brand name are always swayed by the gifts they receive from drug companies
- ☐ B. Few patients will insist on the cheapest version or take the trouble to compare prices across chemists
- ☐ C. Branded generics are generally of poorer quality than the original branded medicines they copy
- ☐ D. Chemists earn far more from prescription medicines than from any of the other goods they sell

21. Which of the following, if true, would most seriously weaken the author's prediction that the rule will leave the prices paid by patients unchanged?

- ☐ A. Some doctors already prescribe by generic name even though no rule at present requires them to
- ☐ B. Drug companies spend more each year on persuading doctors than they spend on research
- ☐ C. Where such a rule was tried, most patients asked for the cheapest version, and prices fell
- ☐ D. Chemists in large cities stock a far wider range of generic products than chemists in villages

22. Which of the following, if true, would most strengthen the author's claim that drug companies will redirect their persuasion to the chemist's counter?

- ☐ A. Where generic prescribing began, chemists' sales shifted towards high-margin branded generics
- ☐ B. Many patients trust their doctor's advice more than they trust their local chemist's advice
- ☐ C. Some branded generics are made in the same factories as the original branded medicines
- ☐ D. Medical associations have opposed the rule, citing doubts about the quality of cheap medicines

23. In the final paragraph, the sentence 'None of this means that generic prescribing is a mistake' serves mainly, within the structure of the argument, to:

- ☐ A. state the main conclusion that the rest of the argument has been carefully built to support
- ☐ B. present the view of the rule's supporters, which the author then sets out to refute
- ☐ C. introduce evidence that generic prescribing has already lowered medicine prices in some places
- ☐ D. narrow the conclusion, so that its target is the rule standing alone, not the idea itself

24. Which of the following arguments is most similar in its pattern of reasoning to the argument the author makes about generic prescribing?

- ☐ A. Banning sugary drinks in school canteens will fail, since children will simply buy them outside the gates
- ☐ B. Barring insurers from naming repair garages won't cut bills; owners will ask surveyors paid by costly garages
- ☐ C. Cutting the fee for a driving test will not reduce bribery, since examiners are paid too little anyway
- ☐ D. Publishing hospital prices will not help patients, since few patients can understand a medical bill

RAPID FIRE — ONE-LINE RECALL

45 quick questions · not negatively marked

1. Before the railways, whose time did each Indian town keep? _____
2. How was noon defined in a town before standard time? _____
3. Why did Calcutta's clocks run ahead of Bombay's? _____
4. To whom was the local-time difference invisible? _____
5. Name one thing besides noon a slow traveller adjusted to. _____
6. What made the time difference 'visible and then intolerable'? _____
7. What does the author call a timetable? _____
8. What did railway companies run their trains on? _____
9. By how much could a station clock and market clock differ? _____
10. Where stood the town clock that disagreed with the station's? _____
11. In which year was a single standard time proposed? _____
12. How far ahead of Greenwich was the proposed standard time? _____
13. How did officials present the change to standard time? _____
14. Which city refused standard time? _____
15. Name one group in Bombay that insisted on local time. _____
16. For how long did Bombay run on two clocks? _____
17. What reading of Bombay's resistance does the author call tempting? _____
18. For critics, local time meant the day was set by what? _____
19. The quarrel over minutes was really a quarrel over what? _____
20. What do 'later accounts' call standard time's victory? _____
21. What does the author call the victory instead? _____
22. Did Bombay's losers understand their loss, per the author? _____
23. What follows a cough in a quiet concert passage? _____
24. When may a Western concert audience applaud? _____
25. Name one way an early clapper is corrected. _____
26. What do most listeners assume about concert rules? _____
27. Name one thing 18th-century audiences did mid-performance. _____
28. From which city did the composer write home? _____
29. Where did the Paris audience applaud? _____
30. Why had the composer written that passage? _____
31. Until when did applause between movements stay ordinary? _____
32. When was the silent hall largely created? _____
33. Who began treating instrumental music as near-sacred? _____
34. How was music to be received in the new hall? _____
35. What did the change in manners bring, per the author? _____
36. Which works became possible to perform and hear? _____
37. What must a listener hold across many minutes? _____
38. What could a composer now expect of near silence? _____
39. What do rules that must be learned do to an audience? _____
40. Has the early clapper harmed the music? _____
41. What has the early clapper revealed? _____
42. What does each glare teach the newcomer? _____
43. In which tradition is murmured approval part of the concert? _____
44. How might Hindustani performers feel without responses? _____
45. Is either concert convention natural, per the author? _____

