

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.
Free daily practice — clatgurukul.com/daily · Pass this sheet to a friend.

SECTION — READING COMPREHENSION

READING COMPREHENSION — ENVIRONMENT & NATURE · THE DARK THAT POLLINATORS NEED (Q1-Q6)

For most of the history of life on land, night was reliably dark. The moon waxed and waned, the stars wheeled overhead, and every creature that evolved to work after sunset did so under light many thousands of times dimmer than noon. That arrangement has been undone in little more than a century. Street lamps, floodlit car parks and the glow of cities now spill so much light into the sky that, across large parts of the world, a truly dark night has become something a person must travel to find.

The damage done by this light is easy to underestimate, because it is quiet. A lamp does not fell a forest or poison a river. Yet a moth that would have spent the night moving between flowers instead circles a bulb until it is exhausted or eaten. Studies of meadows lit artificially at night have recorded sharp falls in the number of visits that nocturnal insects pay to flowers, and some plants in those meadows set noticeably less seed. The daytime bees, which receive most of the attention, cannot simply take up the slack, because many flowers are visited by different insects at different hours.

There is a tendency to treat all this as a problem for moths alone, and to weigh it against the obvious human benefits of a lit street. That framing misses how much of the work of the night is done unseen. Pollination after dark is not a curiosity at the margins of an ecosystem; in many places it is part of the ordinary machinery by which plants reproduce and by which other animals, from bats to birds, are fed.

The encouraging feature of light pollution, unlike most environmental harms, is that it stops the moment the switch is turned. No residue lingers in the soil and nothing must be dredged from a lake. Lamps can be shielded so that they light the road rather than the sky, dimmed in the small hours when streets are empty, or fitted with warmer bulbs that draw fewer insects. None of this requires a return to darkness.

What it does require is a change of habit among those who plan towns. For decades, more light has been treated as an unqualified good, a sign of safety and of progress. The night's other residents suggest that light, like water, is best used where it is needed and nowhere else.

1. Which of the following best captures the main point the author makes about artificial light at night across the passage as a whole?

- ☐ A. Artificial light now kills so many moths that it threatens most flowering plants near the world's large cities
- ☐ B. Street lighting brings real benefits to people, and these clearly outweigh the losses suffered by night insects
- ☐ C. Night lighting quietly disrupts important ecological work, but the harm is unusually easy to reduce
- ☐ D. Daytime bees are declining because night lighting forces them to pollinate flowers that moths once visited

2. In the second paragraph, the author remarks that 'a lamp does not fell a forest or poison a river' chiefly in order to:

- ☐ A. explain why the harm done by night lighting is easily overlooked even though it is real and serious
- ☐ B. argue that light pollution is a far less serious harm than either deforestation or the pollution of rivers
- ☐ C. suggest that forests and rivers are better protected by law than the night sky's darkness has been
- ☐ D. show that lamps harm only insects and leave the larger ecosystems around them almost entirely untouched

3. Which of the following can most reasonably be inferred from what the passage says about the daytime bees that 'receive most of the attention'?

- ☐ A. Bees pollinate more efficiently than moths and would replace them if night lighting were increased
- ☐ B. Bees are drawn to lit street lamps after dark and so suffer the same exhaustion as moths do
- ☐ C. Bees attract attention mainly because they produce honey that is valuable to human beings
- ☐ D. Some flowers rely on visitors at particular hours, so losses at night are not made good by day

4. Judging from the last two paragraphs, the author's attitude towards the prospects of reducing light pollution is best described as:

- ☐ A. resigned pessimism, since towns are unlikely ever to give up the sense of safety that light provides
- ☐ B. qualified optimism, since the remedies are simple but depend on planners changing settled habits
- ☐ C. unreserved enthusiasm, since shielded lamps have already restored darkness across much of the world
- ☐ D. detached neutrality, since the author lists the remedies without judging whether they can succeed

5. As used in the second paragraph, in the sentence about daytime bees, the phrase 'take up the slack' most nearly means:

- ☐ A. make up for the pollination that the night-flying insects are no longer able to provide
- ☐ B. relax their own efforts because the moths are already doing more than enough of the pollinating
- ☐ C. gather up and spread the seeds that plants in the lit meadows fail to scatter on their own
- ☐ D. take over the flowers' own work of attracting passing insects during the long hours of darkness

6. Which of the following, if true, would most seriously weaken the author's claim that light pollution 'stops the moment the switch is turned'?

- ☐ A. Shielded street lamps cost more to install than the unshielded lamps that most towns now use
- ☐ B. Many residents of large cities say that they feel safer walking at night on brightly lit streets
- ☐ C. Insect numbers near long-lit areas stay low for several seasons after the lamps are taken away
- ☐ D. Warmer bulbs draw fewer insects but are dimmer, so they must be fitted much closer together

READING COMPREHENSION — PSYCHOLOGY & MIND · THE ENDING WRITES THE MEMORY (Q7-Q12)



Ask someone how a holiday went and the answer arrives quickly, often with conviction. It rarely reflects an average of the days. Psychologists who study how people judge past experiences find that memory is a poor accountant. It does not add up moments of pleasure and pain and divide by the time they lasted. Instead it gives special weight to two points: the most intense moment, and the way the experience ended.

The finding emerged most strikingly from studies of uncomfortable medical procedures. Patients who underwent a longer procedure, in which the final minutes were milder than the rest, later rated the whole ordeal as less unpleasant than patients whose shorter procedure ended at its most painful point. By any sum of suffering, the first group had endured more. Yet they remembered less, and were more willing to return for a repeat. Laboratory experiments with hands held in cold water produced the same pattern: given a choice, many volunteers preferred to repeat the longer trial with the gentler ending.

It would be easy to call this a simple error, a defect to be trained away. The more interesting view is that two different selves are at work. One lives through each moment as it comes; the other looks back and tells the story. The experiencing self has no voice once its moment has passed. It is the remembering self that decides which doctor to visit, which holiday to repeat and which job to keep, and it decides on the basis of a summary that largely ignores how long anything lasted.

This has awkward implications for anyone who designs experiences for others. A hospital, a school or a government office could make people remember an encounter more kindly by improving its last few minutes, even while leaving the bulk of it unchanged. Whether that counts as a genuine improvement depends on which self one thinks matters more.

There is no neutral answer to that question. A policy that minimised total suffering would serve the experiencing self; one that maximised good memories would serve the remembering self. Most of us, when we choose, quietly side with the second, and are then puzzled that our choices do not always make our days any better.

7. Which of the following best states the central idea that the author develops over the course of the passage?

- ☐ A. Medical procedures should be lengthened so that patients will remember them as less painful afterwards
- ☐ B. Memory is unreliable, so people should distrust their own judgements about almost any of their past experiences
- ☐ C. The experiencing self matters more than the remembering self, though most people tend to forget this
- ☐ D. Memory judges experiences by their peaks and endings, raising hard questions about whose interests count

8. The author mentions the laboratory experiments with cold water in the second paragraph primarily in order to:

- ☐ A. show that laboratory findings contradict what was earlier observed among patients in hospitals undergoing real procedures
- ☐ B. show that the pattern found in medical procedures also appears under controlled laboratory conditions
- ☐ C. suggest that volunteers in experiments tolerate pain better than patients who undergo medical treatment
- ☐ D. prove that people always prefer a longer unpleasant experience to a shorter but equally unpleasant one

9. Based on the studies described in the second paragraph, a patient whose short procedure ended at its most painful moment would most likely:

- ☐ A. remember the procedure accurately, since a short experience leaves less for memory to distort
- ☐ B. rate it as milder than a longer procedure, because the total suffering involved was smaller
- ☐ C. be less willing to repeat it than a patient whose longer procedure ended more gently
- ☐ D. prefer to undergo the same short procedure again rather than any longer alternative

10. By calling memory 'a poor accountant' in the first paragraph, the author most nearly means that memory:

- ☐ A. does not total an experience across its whole length but weights a few moments very heavily
- ☐ B. keeps an accurate record of pain but tends to forget moments of pleasure as more time passes
- ☐ C. exaggerates the cost of unpleasant experiences so that people will avoid ever repeating them
- ☐ D. is unreliable about numbers and so cannot recall how many minutes an experience really lasted

11. In the third paragraph, the author's attitude towards treating the findings on memory as 'a simple error' is best described as:

- ☐ A. approving, since the author believes memory's bias ought to be corrected through careful and patient training
- ☐ B. hostile, since the author holds that memory never really misrepresents what people have actually experienced
- ☐ C. indifferent, since the author regards the question of error as having no practical importance whatsoever
- ☐ D. sceptical, since the author finds a more illuminating account in the idea of two distinct selves

12. Which of the following practices most clearly relies on the tendency of memory that the passage describes in its first two paragraphs?

- ☐ A. A clinic shortens every appointment so that patients spend less total time in any discomfort
- ☐ B. A dentist ends each painful session with a few minutes of gentle, entirely pain-free polishing
- ☐ C. A school spreads its examinations across the year so that no single week is especially stressful
- ☐ D. A hotel offers a discount to guests who complain about its service on their first day

SECTION — CRITICAL REASONING

CRITICAL REASONING — ETHICS · THE APOLOGY THAT COSTS NOTHING (Q13-Q18)

When a company harms the public, the apology now follows a familiar script. A senior figure expresses deep regret, promises that lessons will be learnt and assures customers that their trust matters above all else. The words are often carefully chosen, and sometimes they are moving. But the quality of the wording tells us almost nothing, and we should stop treating it as though it did.

Consider what an apology is meant to do. Between people, it does more than describe a feeling. It tells the person wronged that the wrongdoer accepts the act was wrong, not merely unfortunate, and that it will not be repeated. Its value lies in that commitment. A commitment, however, is worth only as much as our reason to believe it, and here the corporate apology runs into difficulty.

Words of regret cost a company almost nothing to produce. A firm that is truly sorry can issue them, but so can a firm that intends to carry on exactly as before and simply wishes the headlines to fade. Since both kinds of firm can say the same things, the statement cannot tell us which kind we are dealing with. Indeed, a large company can hire specialists whose whole trade is to make regret sound sincere.

What separates the two is willingness to bear a cost. A firm that compensates those it has harmed without waiting for a court to withdraw a profitable product, or that ties its executives' pay to the promised reform is doing something an insincere firm



choose to do, because the insincere firm wants the reputational benefit of contrition without the expense. Only such costly acts can show the public that the commitment is real.

It follows that a corporate apology unaccompanied by any such cost is not really an apology at all. It is better understood as a form of advertising, and the public would do well to give it the attention it gives to any other advertisement: polite, brief and unpersuaded. Regret that costs the company nothing should earn it nothing in return, least of all the forgiveness that a real apology asks for and sometimes deserves.

13. Which of the following most accurately expresses the main conclusion of the argument about corporate apologies?

- ☐ A. A corporate apology that costs the company nothing should not be treated as a real apology
- ☐ B. Companies should be required by law to compensate those they harm whenever they cause damage to the public
- ☐ C. Apologies between individuals are generally more sincere than apologies issued by large companies
- ☐ D. The wording of corporate apologies has grown more polished since firms began hiring specialists

14. The argument's conclusion that a costless apology 'is not really an apology at all' depends on which of the following assumptions?

- ☐ A. Most companies that apologise for a harm have no real intention of changing how they actually behave
- ☐ B. Specialists hired by companies write more persuasive apologies than senior executives usually manage to write themselves
- ☐ C. Whether a statement counts as an apology depends on whether outsiders can verify its commitment
- ☐ D. Paying compensation without a court order is the most costly act that any large company can undertake

15. Which of the following, if true, most seriously weakens the argument that only costly acts reveal a sincere apology?

- ☐ A. Some customers say they are deeply moved by apologies from executives whom they personally admire and trust
- ☐ B. Firms planning no reform often pay voluntary compensation, finding the goodwill outweighs the cost
- ☐ C. Courts in several countries now routinely order companies to compensate people harmed by their products
- ☐ D. Executives' pay is already tied to overall company performance at most large firms listed on stock exchanges

16. Which of the following, if true, most strengthens the author's argument about what makes a corporate apology credible?

- ☐ A. Corporate apologies have grown longer and far more emotional in tone over the past two decades or so
- ☐ B. Many people who receive a company's apology say they never troubled to read the whole of it
- ☐ C. Public relations specialists earn considerably more on average than most other employees of large firms
- ☐ D. Firms whose apologies came with voluntary compensation were far less likely to repeat the harm

17. The statement that a company 'can hire specialists whose whole trade is to make insincere regret sound sincere' plays which role in the argument?

- ☐ A. It is the main conclusion that the argument as a whole has been designed to establish
- ☐ B. It is a counter-argument that the author raises in order to reject it later in the passage
- ☐ C. It supports the claim that a firm's words alone cannot reveal whether its regret is sincere
- ☐ D. It is evidence offered to show that most corporate apologies are deliberately and knowingly dishonest

18. Which of the following situations most closely conforms to the principle about credible commitments that underlies the argument?

- ☐ A. A lender trusts a borrower's promise more when it is backed by property forfeited on default
- ☐ B. A teacher believes a student's excuse because the student has never lied to her before
- ☐ C. A shopper trusts a product's quality because its advertisement uses moving, sincere language
- ☐ D. A voter distrusts every politician's promise because promises are often broken after elections

CRITICAL REASONING — EDUCATION · THE MARK THAT MEANS NOTHING (Q19–Q24)

Every year, results day brings a familiar headline: more students than ever have scored above ninety per cent in their board examinations. Part of the rise reflects moderation, the practice by which boards adjust raw marks upwards, and generous adjustments have become routine. Its defenders say it protects students from a single harsh paper and gives weaker candidates a fairer chance. Nobody wants a child's future to turn on one bad morning. The intention is kind. The effect, I will argue, is to harm most the very students moderation is meant to help.

A mark is useful to a university only if it separates one applicant from another. When a few thousand students score above ninety-five, a board result can still be used to choose among them. When hundreds of thousands do, it cannot. Faced with a crowd of near-identical marksheets, universities have done the obvious thing: they have stopped relying on board marks and turned to entrance tests, which now decide most admissions to sought-after courses.

Entrance tests are not neutral ground. They reward a particular kind of preparation, the timed drilling of question types, which coaching institutes sell at prices many families cannot pay. A student from such a family once had a route into a good college through the board examination, a test prepared for in the ordinary classroom over two years, where the coached and the uncoached sat on more equal terms. That route has been narrowed, not by any decision to close it, but because the marks it produced stopped meaning anything.

So the gains of generous moderation are visible and immediate, while its costs are diffuse and delayed. A student who receives an extra eight marks is grateful on results day, and so are the parents. The same student may discover a year later that those marks bought nothing, because the seat was decided elsewhere, by a test that rewards money as much as merit.

Boards that wish to help weaker candidates should therefore keep moderation modest and make its rules public. A mark that means something is worth more to a poor student than a generous mark that means nothing at all.

19. Which of the following best expresses the main conclusion of the author's argument about the moderation of board marks?

- ☐ A. Universities should abolish entrance tests and go back to admitting students purely on board marks
- ☐ B. Generous moderation ends up harming most the weaker students it was intended to help
- ☐ C. Coaching institutes have grown because board examinations have become harder with every passing year



- ☐ D. Board examinations are a fairer test of ability than any entrance test can ever hope to be

20. The author's argument that moderation harms the students it is meant to help assumes which of the following?

- ☐ A. Every university in the country has now replaced board marks entirely with an entrance test of its own
☐ B. Coaching institutes deliberately raise their fees whenever board marks become more inflated than in earlier years
☐ C. Students who gain marks through moderation are usually aware of exactly how many extra marks they received
☐ D. The weaker candidates whom moderation aims to help are largely students who cannot afford coaching

21. Which of the following, if true, would most weaken the author's argument about the effects of generous moderation?

- ☐ A. Low-income students now win a larger share of sought-after seats than when board marks decided admission
☐ B. Several state boards have recently published the detailed rules that they use to moderate their students' marks
☐ C. Many students scoring above ninety per cent also attend private coaching classes in the evenings and on weekends
☐ D. Some universities still admit students to their less popular courses purely on the basis of board marks

22. Which of the following, if true, would most strengthen the author's argument that inflated marks pushed universities towards entrance tests?

- ☐ A. Moderation was first introduced to correct for examination papers that had been set unusually hard in some years
☐ B. Students who score highly in board examinations generally report much less stress than other students do
☐ C. Universities that dropped board marks cited the number of near-identical top scores as their reason
☐ D. The fees charged by coaching institutes have fallen slightly in recent years in several smaller towns

23. In the third paragraph, the claim that 'entrance tests are not neutral ground' functions in the argument as:

- ☐ A. the main conclusion, which the rest of the passage has been written in order to support and defend
☐ B. an intermediate step linking the rise of entrance tests to harm for uncoached students
☐ C. an objection that the author raises only to answer and dismiss it in the very next sentence
☐ D. a piece of background information that plays no real part in reaching the argument's final conclusion

24. Which of the following arguments is most similar in its pattern of reasoning to the argument presented in the passage?

- ☐ A. Raising the minimum wage helps low-paid workers, so governments ought to raise it again every single year
☐ B. Cheap loans help small farmers buy seed, though some farmers spend the borrowed money on other things instead
☐ C. Free school meals raise attendance, so a town that offers them will soon see better examination results
☐ D. Praising every applicant to help weak ones makes employers hire through contacts, which hurts the unconnected

RAPID FIRE — ONE-LINE RECALL

47 quick questions · not negatively marked

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. For most of history, what was night on land reliably? _____ | 24. Light, like what, is best used only where needed? _____ |
| 2. How much dimmer than noon is the light night creatures evolved under? _____ | 25. Does memory average the days of a holiday? _____ |
| 3. In roughly how long has the dark night been undone? _____ | 26. What does the author call memory? _____ |
| 4. Name one source of light the author says spills into the sky. _____ | 27. Which two points does memory give special weight to? _____ |
| 5. What must a person now often do to find a truly dark night? _____ | 28. From studies of what did the finding emerge most strikingly? _____ |
| 6. Why is the damage from night light easy to underestimate? _____ | 29. Whose longer procedure was remembered as less unpleasant? _____ |
| 7. Name one dramatic harm a lamp does NOT cause, per the author. _____ | 30. Which group endured more total suffering? _____ |
| 8. What does a moth do instead of moving between flowers? _____ | 31. Which group was more willing to return for a repeat? _____ |
| 9. What fell sharply in meadows lit artificially at night? _____ | 32. What did volunteers hold in cold water? _____ |
| 10. What did some plants in lit meadows set less of? _____ | 33. Which cold-water trial did many volunteers prefer to repeat? _____ |
| 11. Which insects 'receive most of the attention'? _____ | 34. What view of the finding does the author call 'easy'? _____ |
| 12. Why can't bees simply take up the slack? _____ | 35. How does the 'simple error' view propose to fix the defect? _____ |
| 13. Light pollution is wrongly treated as a problem for whom alone? _____ | 36. How many selves are at work, on the 'more interesting view'? _____ |
| 14. What is night pollination part of, per the author? _____ | 37. Which self lives through each moment as it comes? _____ |
| 15. Name one animal fed by the work done at night. _____ | 38. Which self looks back and tells the story? _____ |
| 16. What is the 'encouraging feature' of light pollution? _____ | 39. Which self has no voice once its moment has passed? _____ |
| 17. What does NOT linger in the soil after the lights go off? _____ | 40. Name one decision the remembering self makes. _____ |
| 18. Why shield a lamp, per the passage? _____ | 41. What does the remembering self's summary largely ignore? _____ |
| 19. When may street lamps be dimmed? _____ | 42. Name one institution that could improve last few minutes. _____ |
| 20. What kind of bulbs draw fewer insects? _____ | 43. Is there a neutral answer to which self matters more? _____ |
| 21. Do the remedies require a return to darkness? _____ | 44. A policy minimising total suffering serves which self? _____ |
| 22. Whose change of habit is required? _____ | 45. A policy maximising good memories serves which self? _____ |
| 23. How has more light long been treated? _____ | 46. Which self do most of us quietly side with? _____ |
| | 47. Name one line in the familiar corporate apology script. _____ |

