

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 · THE MOON'S SLOW RETREAT (Q1–Q6)

Every year the Moon moves about 3.8 centimetres further from the Earth, roughly the rate at which a fingernail grows. The figure is not a guess drawn from theory. It is measured directly, by firing laser pulses at reflectors that Apollo astronauts left on the lunar surface and timing how long the light takes to return. A change so small would be invisible within any single lifetime, yet over the age of the solar system it has rearranged the sky.

The cause lies in the oceans. The Moon's gravity pulls the Earth's water into two bulges, one facing the Moon and one on the far side. If the Earth did not spin, these bulges would sit directly beneath the Moon. But the planet turns far faster than the Moon orbits, and friction between the moving seas and the sea floor drags the bulges slightly ahead of the line joining the two bodies. The bulge that runs ahead tugs the Moon forward along its path, lifting it into a wider orbit, while the Moon tugs back on the bulge and slows the Earth's rotation.

The two effects are bound together. What the Earth loses in spin, the Moon gains in orbit; nothing is created and nothing simply vanishes. The day therefore lengthens, though only by about two thousandths of a second each century. Fossil corals tell the same story in their growth bands, which record both days and seasons. Corals that lived some 400 million years ago appear to have laid down around 400 daily bands in a single year, implying days of roughly 22 hours.

It is tempting to file all this away as a curiosity of astronomy, but the lesson is more general. A system that looks fixed may only be changing too slowly for its observers to notice, and the key to its history may lie in an ordinary process, such as the rubbing of tides against rock, rather than in any dramatic event.

Nor will the retreat continue forever in its present form. In principle it ends when the Earth's day has slowed to match the Moon's month, at which point the bulges would no longer run ahead. That moment lies so far in the future that the ageing Sun is expected to transform the planet long before it arrives. The Moon is leaving us, but not in any hurry that should trouble us.

1. Which of the following best captures the main point that the author develops about the Moon and the Earth across the passage as a whole?

- ☐ A. The Moon's retreat proves that laser measurement is now more reliable than any other method in astronomy
- ☐ B. The Earth's rotation will soon slow enough to match the Moon's month, ending the retreat altogether
- ☐ C. Ordinary tidal friction slowly trades the Earth's spin for the Moon's orbit, reshaping both over vast time
- ☐ D. Fossil corals show that the Earth once had shorter days because the Moon then orbited much faster

2. In the opening sentence, the author compares the Moon's yearly retreat to the growth of a fingernail chiefly in order to:

- ☐ A. make a tiny, precisely measured distance easy for the reader to picture in everyday terms
- ☐ B. suggest that the retreat is a biological process rather than a purely mechanical astronomical one
- ☐ C. show that the figure was estimated roughly rather than measured with any real scientific precision
- ☐ D. imply that the retreat is speeding up as steadily and unstopably as a fingernail keeps growing

3. According to the passage, if the Earth did not spin at all, which of the following would most likely follow?

- ☐ A. The tidal bulges would vanish entirely, since the Moon's gravity acts only on a rotating planet
- ☐ B. The Moon would move away from the Earth faster, because nothing would hold the bulges back
- ☐ C. The day would lengthen more quickly, since the bulges would drag against the sea floor harder
- ☐ D. The bulges would sit beneath the Moon and would no longer pull it forward into a wider orbit

4. Within the structure of the passage as a whole, the fourth paragraph, which begins 'It is tempting to file all this away', functions mainly to:

- ☐ A. concede that the Moon's retreat is a minor curiosity of interest only to professional astronomers
- ☐ B. draw a broader lesson about slow change and ordinary causes from the specific case described
- ☐ C. introduce fresh evidence from fossil corals that confirms the laser measurements of the retreat
- ☐ D. warn readers that dramatic events, not ordinary processes, explain most change in natural systems

5. Which of the following can most reasonably be inferred from the passage's account of the fossil corals that lived some 400 million years ago?

- ☐ A. A year lasted about as long then as now, but it was divided into more and shorter days
- ☐ B. The Earth then orbited the Sun more slowly, so each year contained a larger number of days
- ☐ C. Ancient corals grew faster than modern corals, which is why they laid down extra daily bands
- ☐ D. The Moon was then farther from the Earth, so its tides were weaker and the days were shorter

6. Which of the following findings would most seriously undermine the passage's explanation of why the Moon is receding?

- ☐ A. Laser timings show the yearly retreat to be 3.6 centimetres rather than the figure of 3.8 given
- ☐ B. Some fossil corals from the same era appear to record slightly fewer than 400 bands each year
- ☐ C. Astronomers predict that the ageing Sun will change the Earth long before day and month ever match
- ☐ D. Over long periods, the measured lengthening of the day bears no relation to the Moon's retreat

READING COMPREHENSION — POLITICS & GOVERNANCE · A CODE WITHOUT A STATUTE (Q7–Q12)

India's Model Code of Conduct is one of the more unusual instruments in its public life. It tells parties and governments how from the moment an election is announced until the results are declared: ministers may not announce new schemes, combi



tours with campaigning, or use government vehicles and advertisements for party ends. Yet the code is not a law. No statute enacts it, and most of its provisions carry no penalty that a court would recognise.

The code began modestly, as a short set of guidelines agreed among political parties in Kerala before the 1960 assembly election. The Election Commission adopted and extended it, and over the following decades it grew into a detailed document applied across the country. Its force came less from any legal sanction than from the Commission's willingness to invoke it publicly, and from the fact that parties found the cost of being seen to defy it greater than the cost of obeying.

There have been periodic proposals to give the code statutory backing, so that violations could be punished in the ordinary way. The argument is attractive: a rule that binds only by reputation, it is said, binds only those who care about their reputation. The Election Commission has itself resisted the idea, and its reason deserves attention. An election lasts a few weeks. A statutory code would bring with it the machinery of statute: complaints, notices, hearings and appeals that could run for months or years. By the time a court ruled, the government whose conduct was in question might already have been re-elected or voted out.

The code's weakness and its strength are therefore the same feature. Because it is not law, it cannot be enforced by fines or imprisonment. Because it is not law, it can be applied within days, through public censure, the temporary barring of a campaigner, or the withdrawal of an advertisement. Speed is the only currency that matters during an election, and the code spends it freely.

None of this places the code beyond criticism. Its authority rests entirely on the perceived even-handedness of the Commission, and every decision that looks partisan draws down a stock of trust that no statute can replenish. A convention, unlike a law, survives only as long as those it binds believe that it is being applied fairly to all of them.

7. Which of the following best describes the primary purpose of the passage about India's Model Code of Conduct?

- ☐ A. argue that the Model Code of Conduct should be enacted by Parliament so that violators can be punished
- ☐ B. explain why the Model Code's lack of legal force is both its limitation and its practical advantage
- ☐ C. trace the history of election law in India from the Kerala guidelines of 1960 to the present day
- ☐ D. criticise the Election Commission for applying the Model Code unevenly to different political parties

8. In the sentence 'Speed is the only currency that matters during an election', the word 'currency' most nearly means:

- ☐ A. the state of being widely accepted or in general circulation among the competing parties
- ☐ B. money spent by parties and candidates on campaigning in the weeks before polling
- ☐ C. the quality of being current or up to date with the latest political developments and news
- ☐ D. something of value that can be used to achieve results in a particular setting or contest

9. The Election Commission's objection to statutory backing, as the passage presents it, rests chiefly on the concern that:

- ☐ A. legal procedures would deliver rulings only after the election they concerned had already ended
- ☐ B. courts lack the expertise in electoral matters that the Commission itself has built over decades
- ☐ C. a statute would require Parliament to define every possible violation of the code in advance
- ☐ D. parties would cease caring about their reputations once fines and imprisonment became available

10. Taking the passage as a whole, the author's attitude towards the Model Code of Conduct is best described as:

- ☐ A. dismissive, treating it as a toothless convention that the major parties have long learnt to ignore
- ☐ B. uncritically admiring, presenting it as a flawless instrument that needs no reform of any kind
- ☐ C. appreciative but qualified, valuing its speed while noting its heavy dependence on public trust
- ☐ D. neutral and detached, recording its history without expressing any view on its merits or flaws

11. The author's treatment of the argument that 'a rule that binds only by reputation... binds only those who care about their reputation' is best described as:

- ☐ A. rejecting it as false, since every party in fact cares deeply about its public reputation
- ☐ B. granting it some appeal, then setting against it a practical cost of the proposed remedy
- ☐ C. adopting it as the passage's own conclusion about how the code ought to be strengthened
- ☐ D. presenting it as the Election Commission's reason for resisting any statutory backing at all

12. Based on the passage, which development would the author most likely regard as the gravest threat to the Model Code's effectiveness?

- ☐ A. An appeal against one of the Commission's rulings that a court takes several months to hear
- ☐ B. A minister who quietly delays announcing a new scheme until the election results are declared
- ☐ C. A widespread belief among parties that the Commission censures some of them but spares others
- ☐ D. A proposal in Parliament, later dropped, to give the code statutory backing with fixed penalties

SECTION — CRITICAL REASONING

CRITICAL REASONING — POLITICAL ECONOMY · THE FACTORY THAT LEAVES ON SCHEDULE (Q13-Q18)

For three decades, governments hoping to industrialise lagging districts have reached for the same instrument: the tax holiday. A firm that builds a factory in a designated area is excused from specified taxes for a fixed period, commonly ten years, after which ordinary rates apply. The appeal is obvious. The concession appears to cost nothing at the moment it is granted, since the revenue given up is revenue that, without the factory, would never have existed. Ribbon-cuttings follow, and employment figures rise.

The trouble appears when the holiday ends. In several districts that offered such packages in the early 2000s, a large share of the units registered under the scheme had shut down or moved away within two or three years of their exemptions lapsing. Many had been assembly and packaging operations, bringing in components from elsewhere and sending finished goods straight back out. Their machinery was light, their workforce was largely recruited from outside, and their ties to the district were thin.

This pattern is not a misfortune but a consequence of the design. A concession that expires on a known date attracts precisely firms whose decision to locate depends on the concession, and which therefore have every reason to leave once it is gone. A firm that would have found the district profitable anyway receives a windfall; a firm that would not have found it profitable stays only if it is paid to stay. The scheme thus selects for the tenants least likely to remain.



Nor is the concession as costless as it seems. Firms that would have come regardless were relieved of taxes they would otherwise have paid, and established local businesses competing against subsidised newcomers bore the disadvantage. The revenue given up could instead have built roads, secured reliable electricity or trained a local workforce.

That is where the money belongs. Advantages of that kind do not expire on a date written into a government notification; a road built in the fifth year is still there in the fifteenth. A district that is genuinely cheaper and easier to produce in will keep the firms it attracts. A district that is merely paying firms to stay will keep them only for as long as it goes on paying.

13. Which of the following most accurately expresses the main conclusion of the argument about tax holidays offered to firms in lagging districts?

- ☐ A. Tax holidays should be extended beyond ten years so that firms have no reason to leave
- ☐ B. Most factories set up in lagging districts are assembly units with thin local ties and light machinery
- ☐ C. Established local businesses are harmed whenever governments offer concessions to new firms
- ☐ D. Funds spent on tax holidays would be better spent on lasting advantages such as roads and power

14. The argument's claim that the scheme 'selects for the tenants least likely to remain' depends on which assumption?

- ☐ A. Firms that left after their exemptions lapsed were generally less efficient than the firms that stayed
- ☐ B. Firms that left soon after their exemptions lapsed would not have found the district profitable without them
- ☐ C. Assembly and packaging operations are inherently less valuable to a district than heavy manufacturing
- ☐ D. Governments that offer tax holidays usually choose districts with the poorest roads and least electricity

15. Which of the following, if true, would most seriously weaken the argument that tax holidays select for firms likely to leave?

- ☐ A. Some firms that stayed after their holidays ended had recruited most of their workers from the district
- ☐ B. Tax holidays in several of these districts were also accompanied by cheaper land for new factories
- ☐ C. Firms outside the scheme, in districts with no holidays, closed at the same rate in those same years
- ☐ D. The ten-year holiday period was shortened to seven years in some districts in later notifications

16. Which of the following, if true, would most strengthen the argument that the money belongs in roads, power and training?

- ☐ A. Districts that spent comparable sums on roads and power kept new firms much longer than holiday districts
- ☐ B. Many firms that registered under the scheme were assembly units that brought in components from elsewhere
- ☐ C. Employment in the holiday districts rose sharply in the first few years after the scheme was announced
- ☐ D. Some states offering tax holidays also offered firms subsidised loans for buying new machinery

17. In the first paragraph, the statement that the concession 'appears to cost nothing at the moment it is granted' plays which role in the argument?

- ☐ A. It is the main conclusion, which the rest of the argument about tax holidays is offered to support
- ☐ B. It is evidence gathered from the districts that the argument uses to establish its central claim
- ☐ C. It is a premise the argument accepts and later relies on when it recommends spending on roads
- ☐ D. It is part of a popular view the argument reports and later disputes as overlooking real costs

18. Which of the following arguments is most similar in its pattern of reasoning to the argument made in the passage about tax holidays?

- ☐ A. A gym's free first month draws people who leave when fees start; better equipment would keep members longer
- ☐ B. A gym's new equipment drew many members, so buying more equipment will draw still more members
- ☐ C. A gym lost members after raising fees, so it should lower fees permanently to keep members from leaving
- ☐ D. A gym's members leave in summer and return in winter, so it should close during the summer months

CRITICAL REASONING — SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY POLICY · PRIZES THAT PAY FOR FINISHED WORK (Q19–Q24)

Challenge prizes have become a fashionable way for governments to buy innovation. Instead of funding laboratories in advance, an agency announces a target, such as a battery that holds a given charge or a cheap test for a disease, and promises a large sum to whoever reaches it first. The attractions are easy to list. The public pays only for success, many teams compete for a single purse, and the failures of the losing teams cost the treasury nothing at all.

The appeal rests on a picture of a prize drawing fresh minds to a problem they would otherwise have ignored. The record suggests a different picture. In a review of public challenge prizes awarded over the past decade, most winners turned out to be teams that had been working on the problem for years before the prize was announced, usually with the help of conventional research grants. The prize did not set them on the road; it met them near its end.

This is not an accident. A prize asks competitors to bear the whole risk of failure themselves, and only those already close to the target can rationally accept that bet. A team starting from nothing faces years of cost and a small chance of winning; a team that is nearly there faces months of cost and a large chance. The rules quietly sort entrants by how much of the work they have already done.

It follows that a prize is better understood as a purchase than as an investment. It buys the last stretch of work that grants paid for, and announces the result as its own achievement. That is not worthless. A deadline and a purse can concentrate effort, and they can draw public attention to a need that markets and laboratories have neglected. But a government that shifts money from grants to prizes because prizes 'pay only for success' is drawing down the very stock of early, uncertain research on which nearly every prize winner depended.

The mistake lies in treating the visible moment of success as if it were the whole of the work. Breakthroughs that are announced in a single afternoon have usually been assembled over many unglamorous years. Prizes, in short, can finish what grants begin. They cannot begin it.

19. Which of the following most accurately expresses the main conclusion of the argument about public challenge prizes and research grants?

- ☐ A. Challenge prizes reward work largely done elsewhere and cannot replace grants that fund early research
- ☐ B. Challenge prizes are worthless because they reward teams for work that grants have already paid for
- ☐ C. Governments should stop announcing challenge prizes and return all such funds to conventional grants



- ☐ D. Most winners of public challenge prizes had been working on their problems for years beforehand
- 20. The argument that shifting money from grants to prizes draws down 'the very stock of early, uncertain research' assumes that:**
- ☐ A. prize money is usually larger than the total value of the grants that winning teams once received
- ☐ B. teams that lose a challenge prize generally abandon research on the problem once the prize is awarded
- ☐ C. prize purses will not themselves fund the early, uncertain research that grants currently pay for
- ☐ D. governments that offer prizes usually announce targets that no team could realistically ever reach
- 21. Which of the following, if true, would most seriously weaken the argument's claim that prizes cannot begin research?**
- ☐ A. Several prize-winning teams said publicly that the purse had helped them attract private investors
- ☐ B. Many prize entrants who began from scratch went on to win later prizes using only private money
- ☐ C. The review of challenge prizes covered awards made in health, energy and environmental technology
- ☐ D. Some challenge prizes in the review were never awarded because no team met the announced target
- 22. The claim that a team 'nearly there faces months of cost and a large chance' functions in the argument as:**
- ☐ A. the main conclusion, which the rest of the argument supports with evidence from the prize review
- ☐ B. an objection to the argument which the author raises and then goes on to answer in detail
- ☐ C. evidence from the review showing that most winners had previously received research grants
- ☐ D. part of an explanation of why prizes tend to attract entrants who are already close to success
- 23. Which of the following, if true, would most strengthen the argument that prize winners depend on earlier grant-funded research?**
- ☐ A. Prize announcements receive far more press coverage than announcements of new research grants
- ☐ B. Some prize winners donated part of their purse to universities that had trained their researchers
- ☐ C. In fields where grant funding was cut, the number of credible prize entrants fell in later years
- ☐ D. Teams that entered prizes often formed partnerships with other teams in order to share costs
- 24. Which of the following is most strongly supported by the passage's reasoning about why prizes attract teams already close to success?**
- ☐ A. A prize with a very large purse would attract entrants who are starting entirely from scratch
- ☐ B. A prize that paid entrants for intermediate milestones would draw in teams further from the target
- ☐ C. A prize is most useful when no team has yet done any research on the announced problem
- ☐ D. A government that funds only prizes would see more breakthroughs than one that funds only grants

RAPID FIRE — ONE-LINE RECALL

49 quick questions · not negatively marked

1. How far does the Moon move away from the Earth each year? _____
2. The Moon's yearly retreat matches the growth rate of what? _____
3. How is the Moon's retreat measured? _____
4. Who left the reflectors on the lunar surface? _____
5. Where, per the passage, does the cause of the Moon's retreat lie? _____
6. How many tidal bulges does the Moon's gravity raise? _____
7. Where would the bulges sit if the Earth did not spin? _____
8. What drags the bulges ahead of the Earth-Moon line? _____
9. What does the leading bulge do to the Moon? _____
10. What does the Moon's pull on the bulge do to the Earth? _____
11. What the Earth loses in spin, the Moon gains in what? _____
12. By how much does the day lengthen each century? _____
13. Which fossils record both days and seasons? _____
14. About how many daily bands per year did ancient corals lay down? _____
15. How long ago did those corals live? _____
16. How long were days 400 million years ago, per the corals? _____
17. What may a system that looks fixed actually be doing? _____
18. Name the ordinary process the author contrasts with dramatic events. _____
19. When does the Moon's retreat end in principle? _____
20. What is expected to transform the Earth before day and month match? _____
21. Does the passage call the 3.8 cm figure a guess? _____
22. Is the Moon's retreat visible within one lifetime? _____
23. What does the Model Code of Conduct govern? _____
24. From when does the Model Code apply? _____
25. Until when does the Model Code apply? _____
26. Name one thing ministers may not do under the code. _____
27. Is the Model Code enacted by any statute? _____
28. Where did the code begin? _____
29. Before which election did the code first appear? _____
30. Who adopted and extended the code? _____
31. Where did the code's force come from, rather than legal sanction? _____
32. What have periodic proposals sought for the code? _____
33. A rule binding only by reputation binds whom, critics say? _____
34. Who has resisted statutory backing for the code? _____
35. How long does an election last, per the passage? _____
36. How long could statutory hearings and appeals run? _____
37. Name one quick sanction the code allows. _____
38. What does the author call the only currency in an election? _____
39. The code's weakness and strength are the same what? _____
40. On what does the code's authority entirely rest? _____
41. What does a partisan-looking decision draw down? _____
42. Can a statute replenish the code's lost trust? _____
43. How long does a convention survive, per the author? _____
44. What instrument have governments used to industrialise lagging districts? _____
45. For how long does a tax holiday commonly run? _____
46. What applies after a tax holiday ends? _____
47. Why does a tax holiday appear costless when granted? _____
48. What follows a tax holiday's launch, per the author? _____
49. When did the passage's districts offer such packages? _____

