Daily RC & CR Sheet — 23 October 2026

20 Qs · 35 Min
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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 — PSYCHOLOGY & MIND · THE OVERLOADED MIND: COGNITION, ERROR, AND THE CASE FOR STRUCTURED DECISION-MAKING (Q1–Q5)

Human beings are not the impartial, rational agents classical economics assumed. Decision quality depends heavily on cognitive resources available at the moment. George Miller's 1956 paper established that working memory holds approximately seven items simultaneously — a ceiling that holds even for experienced professionals. Daniel Kahneman's dual-process framework distinguishes System 1 — fast, automatic, and largely unconscious — from System 2, which is slower and demands sustained attentional effort. High cognitive load depletes System 2 resources, pushing decision-makers toward heuristic shortcuts. Those shortcuts are not always wrong: in familiar domains, System 1 draws on well-practised patterns and often produces accurate results. But in novel or high-stakes situations for which heuristics were not calibrated, they generate predictable errors.

The consequences in professional settings are tangible. Surgeons managing complex emergencies, air-traffic controllers coordinating multiple simultaneous landings, and lawyers reviewing large document sets under tight deadlines all operate near the ceiling of working memory. Research by K. Anders Ericsson on expert performance confirmed that even highly trained specialists show degraded accuracy when task complexity saturates working memory, demonstrating that expertise does not eliminate cognitive limits but raises the threshold at which those limits bite. Kahneman and Tversky's anchoring experiments further showed that deliberate System 2 reasoners can be reliably skewed by an arbitrary prior number presented before their estimate, confirming that the bias penetrates even careful, deliberative cognition when load is high.

Prospect theory showed that individuals overweight losses relative to equivalent gains — a System 1 bias that intensifies under cognitive load. The planning fallacy — the consistent tendency to underestimate how long a task will take to complete — worsens under load because individuals fail to retrieve memories of past delays and instead project optimistically from a best-case scenario. The practical response to both these tendencies is external scaffolding. Aviation safety research pioneered checklists precisely because expert pilots made systematic errors under load. Atul Gawande's surgical checklist studies documented a 36% reduction in major complications across eight hospitals worldwide, confirming that structured external tools can compensate for the limits that cognitive overload imposes even on the most skilled and experienced practitioners.

1. The central claim of the passage is BEST captured by which of the following?
- ◯ **A.** Only trained professionals with at least 10,000 hours of practice can make reliable decisions under high cognitive load, due
- ◯ **B.** Cognitive overload predictably shifts decision-making toward fast heuristic processing, increasing systematic errors — but
- ◯ **C.** System 1 and System 2 are fundamentally incompatible neural pathways; individuals must choose one mode exclusively in any
- ◯ **D.** The planning fallacy affects only time-based estimates and has no bearing on high-stakes professional decisions in medicine

2. As used in the passage, the 'planning fallacy' MOST closely refers to which phenomenon?
- ◯ **A.** The tendency of planners to overestimate time required because they focus excessively on worst-case risk scenarios during
- ◯ **B.** The inability of novice planners to allocate cognitive resources efficiently due to insufficient domain-specific training in
- ◯ **C.** A systematic bias in which individuals consistently underestimate resource requirements such as money and personnel while
- ◯ **D.** A consistent cognitive bias in which individuals underestimate how long a task will take to complete, driven by optimistic

3. The author's recommendation that high-stakes decision-makers use cognitive offloading tools is MOST consistent with which of the following assumptions
- ◯ **A.** Even expert practitioners operating under System 2 are susceptible to working-memory saturation under sufficiently complex
- ◯ **B.** Cognitive offloading is primarily a compensatory strategy for novices and trainees who have not yet developed neural pathways
- ◯ **C.** The value of checklists and decision trees lies in their role as motivational aids that help users maintain focus and
- ◯ **D.** Expert cognition is categorically different from novice cognition in that experts face no practical working-memory ceiling

4. The tone of the passage is BEST described as:
- ◯ **A.** Polemical and advocacy-driven, urging policymakers to mandate cognitive offloading tools across all professional sectors as a
- ◯ **B.** Sceptical and revisionary, questioning the scientific validity of dual-process theory and its application to real-world
- ◯ **C.** Expository and measured, presenting empirical findings on cognition and deriving practical implications without advocating an
- ◯ **D.** Elegiac and cautionary, lamenting the extent to which institutional decision-making has ignored decades of cognitive science

5. The passage implies which of the following about System 1 processing?
- ◯ **A.** System 1 processing is fundamentally unreliable and should be suppressed entirely in all professional decision-making contexts
- ◯ **B.** System 1 processing marks amateur thinking and insufficient training; expert practitioners rely exclusively on System 2 within
- ◯ **C.** System 1 exclusively produces errors while System 2 exclusively produces accurate outcomes, confirming the universal
- ◯ **D.** System 1 is not inherently unreliable — it produces efficient, often accurate results in familiar low-stakes contexts — but

READING COMPREHENSION — POPULAR SCIENCE · EDITING THE CODE OF LIFE: CRISPR-CAS9, PROMISE, AND THE GERMLINE BOUNDARY (Q6–Q10)

In 2012, Jennifer Doudna and Emmanuelle Charpentier harnessed a bacterial immune mechanism into a programmable gene-editing tool. CRISPR-Cas9 uses a synthetic guide RNA to direct a Cas9 protein to a precise genome location, where it cuts both DNA strands. Non-Homologous End Joining (NHEJ) reassembles the strands without a template — imprecise, typically introducing small insertions or deletions that disrupt the targeted gene. Homology-Directed Repair (HDR) can incorporate a researcher-supplied DNA template, enabling precise corrections at the cut site. This distinction matters clinically: HDR is the preferred pathway for therapeutic applications where a specific genetic sequence change is required, though it operates less efficiently in non-dividing cel
actively replicating ones.

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In 2023, the FDA approved Casgevy, the first CRISPR-based therapy, for sickle-cell disease and beta-thalassaemia. The therapy works by editing patients' own blood-stem cells ex vivo before reinfusion, correcting the underlying genetic mutation without altering heritable germline material. This approval demonstrated that CRISPR can advance within existing clinical trial frameworks — subject to the same safety, efficacy, and informed-consent standards governing any experimental therapy — and represented a landmark for precision medicine.

The same technology also exposed the costs of regulatory failure. In 2018, the Chinese scientist He Jiankui announced twin girls whose CCR5 gene he had edited at the embryo stage. The scientific community condemned him: he had acted without proper informed consent, exposed the children to unknown off-target risks, and made heritable changes that would be transmitted to all their descendants without those future persons' consent — an irreversible alteration at the population level with no analogue in conventional medicine. He was convicted of illegal medical practice. The regulatory consensus that emerged distinguishes somatic editing, which affects only the consenting patient and is bounded in risk and reversibility, from germline editing, which forecloses all future generations' consent. The ethical objection to germline editing rests specifically on this intergenerational consent problem: the people most profoundly affected by a heritable change cannot be consulted before the change is made. Most national frameworks and the WHO now prohibit heritable germline editing while permitting somatic research within established ethical oversight structures.

6. The primary purpose of the passage is to:

- ◯ **A.** Explain how CRISPR-Cas9 works, survey its applications, and delineate the ethical and regulatory distinction between
- ◯ **B.** Argue that all forms of human gene editing should be placed under a binding international moratorium until comprehensive
- ◯ **C.** Assess whether CRISPR-Cas9 technology is sufficiently mature for commercial agricultural applications and evaluate its
- ◯ **D.** Document the He Jiankui case as the defining regulatory failure of modern biotechnology and propose legal remedies to prevent

7. As used in the context of the passage, 'heritable germline editing' is ethically contentious PRIMARILY because:

- ◯ **A.** It requires harvesting reproductive cells, which carries substantially higher physical risk to the patient than somatic cell
- ◯ **B.** Current CRISPR technology has an unacceptably high error rate in germline applications that makes its use dangerous for future
- ◯ **C.** Any genetic change introduced in a germline cell is transmitted to all subsequent generations, affecting people who cannot
- ◯ **D.** Germline editing is economically accessible only to wealthy nations and therefore entrenches global biological inequality

8. The author's description of somatic gene editing as falling 'within existing clinical trial frameworks' implies which of the following?

- ◯ **A.** Somatic editing has already been approved by all major national drug regulators for unrestricted commercial therapeutic use
- ◯ **B.** Somatic editing is treated by regulators as a medical intervention affecting only the consenting patient, making it subject to
- ◯ **C.** The regulatory pathway for somatic editing was created by genome-specific legislation enacted after the He Jiankui incident
- ◯ **D.** Regulators have exempted somatic editing from Phase III trial requirements because the life-threatening nature of hereditary

9. Based on the passage, what distinguishes HDR (Homology-Directed Repair) from NHEJ (Non-Homologous End Joining) as a DNA repair mechanism following a CRISPR cut?

- ◯ **A.** HDR is triggered only when the cell's immune surveillance detects foreign Cas9 protein; NHEJ is the baseline repair pathway in
- ◯ **B.** NHEJ always produces a biologically beneficial outcome by removing harmful mutations, while HDR introduces random insertions
- ◯ **C.** HDR requires two Cas9 proteins working cooperatively, while NHEJ proceeds with a single cut — making HDR more
- ◯ **D.** HDR uses a supplied DNA template to make a precise correction at the cut site; NHEJ reconnects broken DNA ends without a

10. The passage's structure suggests that the author regards the He Jiankui case PRIMARILY as:

- ◯ **A.** A cautionary tale about the inadequacy of scientific peer review in preventing premature publication of dangerous research
- ◯ **B.** The defining real-world incident that crystallised the ethical and regulatory distinction between somatic and germline
- ◯ **C.** Evidence that the CRISPR community has irreparably lost public trust and must now advocate for a permanent global moratorium
- ◯ **D.** An illustration of inadequate national-level regulation and a definitive argument for a single binding international treaty on

SECTION — CRITICAL REASONING

CRITICAL REASONING — LAW & RIGHTS · FROM REASONABLENESS TO PROPORTIONALITY: DISCIPLINING THE STATE'S JUSTIFICATORY BURDEN (Q11–Q15)

For much of the post-independence period, Indian courts reviewed restrictions on fundamental rights against an unstructured reasonableness standard — requiring only that a measure was not arbitrary. The inadequacy is its vagueness: unreasonable is an epithet, not an analytical framework, and it produces inconsistent outcomes across benches and jurisdictions without disciplining the state to explain its choices or weigh competing interests in any organised way.

The nine-judge bench in K.S. Puttaswamy v Union of India (2017) articulated a four-stage proportionality test drawn from comparative constitutional law. First, the state must pursue a legitimate aim — a constitutionally permissible purpose that a democratic government may validly seek. Second, the measure must have a rational connection to that aim: the means chosen must logically advance the stated goal and not merely appear superficially related to it. Third, the measure must impair the right only to the minimum required — the necessity or minimal-impairment stage — which demands that the state demonstrate no less-restrictive alternative capable of achieving the aim was realistically available. Fourth, the severity of the rights-limitation must be proportionate to the importance of the aim being served: this balancing stage weighs the cost to individual liberty against the benefit to the public interest. In the Aadhaar judgment that followed Puttaswamy, courts applied this framework to assess whether mandatory biometric linkage to welfare services satisfied each stage in turn, illustrating how structured proportionality disciplines the state's justificatory burden and makes the reasoning behind judicial outcomes transparent and genuinely reviewable on appeal.

This four-stage framework mirrors the German Constitutional Court's Verhältnismäßigkeit doctrine and Canada's R v Oakes (1986) test, indicating convergence across mature constitutional systems on the requirements of rigorous rights adjudication. The balancing stage imports significant judicial discretion — critics argue it masks value-laden choices behind structured analysis. But the alternative tolerates an entirely unstructured inquiry with no discipline at all. Proportionality at minimum requires the state to place its justifications explicitly on the record and courts to explain why each stage is or is not satisfied. On balance, the shift to structured proportionality represents a significant and justified improvement in the quality of constitutional adjudication.

11. The MAIN conclusion the author is driving toward is BEST captured by which of the following?

- ◯ **A.** The reasonableness standard must be retained for social and economic rights, while proportionality should govern only
- ◯ **B.** Proportionality analysis is inherently incompatible with parliamentary democracy because it empowers unelected judge

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◯ **C.** The four-part proportionality test adopted in Puttaswamy is a significant and justified improvement over vague reasonableness
◯ **D.** Indian courts should adopt proportionality analysis exactly as formulated in German Basic Law jurisprudence, rather than

12. Which of the following is an underlying assumption of the author's argument in favour of structured proportionality?

◯ **A.** A more structured test requiring the state to demonstrate necessity and minimal impairment provides stronger rights protection
◯ **B.** The Indian Supreme Court lacks institutional capacity to conduct the fourth (balancing) stage of proportionality review
◯ **C.** The only legitimate source for India's proportionality framework is the European Court of Human Rights' jurisprudence, not
◯ **D.** Fundamental rights protection is inherently superior when courts exercise restraint and defer to legislative judgments about

13. The author concedes that proportionality 'gives courts broad interpretive latitude.' Which of the following would, if established, MOST severely undermine

◯ **A.** Comparative constitutional scholars have documented significant divergence between Indian and German applications of the
◯ **B.** The Puttaswamy decision was decided by a nine-judge bench, while most subsequent privacy cases have been decided by smaller
◯ **C.** Proportionality analysis adds procedural complexity and lengthens adjudication timelines, increasing costs for litigants who
◯ **D.** Empirical studies show that courts applying structured proportionality uphold state restrictions at the same or higher rate

14. Which of the following, if true, would MOST strengthen the author's argument that proportionality is a positive development in rights adjudication?

◯ **A.** Germany and Canada, despite using proportionality analysis for decades, have experienced significant political controversy
◯ **B.** Empirical data from Indian High Courts shows that since Puttaswamy, state justifications for rights-limiting measures have
◯ **C.** The four-part proportionality test was endorsed by a simple majority of the nine Puttaswamy judges, with two judges preferring
◯ **D.** Proportionality analysis has been used to strike down legislation in Germany, Canada, and South Africa, confirming the test is

15. Based on the passage, what is the role of the 'necessity' or 'minimal impairment' stage in the proportionality test?

◯ **A.** It requires the state to demonstrate that the means chosen is the least restrictive among reasonably available options
◯ **B.** It mandates a judicial cost-benefit analysis in which the quantified social benefit of the measure must demonstrably exceed
◯ **C.** It restricts proportionality analysis to cases where the state has acknowledged infringing a fundamental right, thereby
◯ **D.** It creates a default presumption in favour of state action whenever the legislature has expressly debated the necessity of the

CRITICAL REASONING — ENVIRONMENT · PRICING CARBON: EFFICIENCY, EQUITY, AND THE POLITICS OF CLIMATE INSTRUMENTS (Q16–Q20)

Climate policy debates focus more on emission targets than on the choice of instrument to meet them. Sectoral regulation — mandating technologies or setting sector-level caps — has dominated because it produces visible, auditable commitments that governments can readily defend to constituents. Carbon pricing, which imposes a cost per unit of CO_2 equivalent emitted, takes a fundamentally different approach: it creates a price signal that lets each emitter identify and pursue its own least-cost reduction pathway, rather than being directed toward a specific technology or process mandated by the regulator.

The efficiency case rests on the reality that abatement costs vary widely across firms and sectors. Because the marginal cost of cutting emissions differs — a steel plant may face very high abatement costs while a power utility faces relatively low ones — a uniform carbon price allows low-cost abaters to reduce deeply while high-cost ones reduce less, achieving the same aggregate reduction at a lower total cost than a uniform technology mandate could. Economists describe this as least-cost abatement: reductions flow to wherever they can be made most cheaply, which is precisely the Coase theorem logic applied to pollution externalities.

The British Columbia carbon tax, introduced in 2008, saw per-capita fuel consumption fall 15–20% over a decade with no statistically significant GDP decline. The EU Emissions Trading System reduced power-sector emissions by approximately 35% between 2005 and 2019. Two objections dominate. Carbon pricing is regressive, burdening low-income households who spend a larger share of income on energy than wealthier households do. And it is politically vulnerable — Australia's repeal of its carbon tax in 2014 illustrated this risk clearly.

Revenue recycling addresses the first objection directly: distributing carbon tax revenue as equal per-capita dividend payments, or using it for targeted labour income tax cuts, more than offsets the carbon cost for lower-income households because those households typically have smaller carbon footprints than wealthier ones. Political vulnerability, the second objection, afflicts all long-term climate policies equally; the answer lies in institutional design — independent carbon pricing authorities insulated from annual budget cycles — rather than in abandoning the instrument entirely.

16. The MAIN conclusion of the passage is BEST stated as:

◯ **A.** Carbon pricing is economically optimal in theory but has been empirically shown to be ineffective in every major jurisdiction
◯ **B.** Carbon pricing is only legitimate if the revenue raised is constitutionally ring-fenced for climate adaptation rather than for
◯ **C.** Cap-and-trade systems are clearly superior to carbon taxes because they provide absolute certainty on the emissions ceiling
◯ **D.** Carbon pricing is a more efficient and flexible climate instrument than sectoral regulation, and the two most commonly cited

17. According to the passage, which real-world example is cited as evidence that carbon pricing can reduce fuel consumption without harming economic output?

◯ **A.** The EU Emissions Trading System, which covered power and industrial sectors from 2005 and extended to aviation by 2012.
◯ **B.** The British Columbia carbon tax, introduced in 2008, which saw per-capita fuel consumption fall 15–20% over a decade without a
◯ **C.** Norway's offshore petroleum carbon levy, which generated sufficient revenue to fully fund the country's sovereign wealth fund
◯ **D.** California's cap-and-trade programme, which linked with Quebec's market in 2014 and extended coverage to the transportation

18. The author's response to the 'regressivity' objection is that revenue recycling can address it. Which of the following, if true, would MOST effectively

◯ **A.** Revenue recycling increases administrative costs, reducing the net fiscal efficiency gain that is carbon pricing's primary
◯ **B.** In theory recycling fully neutralises regressivity, but it requires legislative appropriation, creating political risk that
◯ **C.** Empirical evidence from multiple carbon-pricing jurisdictions shows that recycling programmes systematically delivered smaller
◯ **D.** Low-income households have smaller carbon footprints than high-income households and therefore receive a proportic larger

19. Which of the following is an assumption on which the claim that carbon pricing achieves emission re

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at lower cost than sectoral regulation DEPENDS?

- ◯ **A.** The entities best placed to reduce emissions cheaply respond to price signals by actually making those reductions, rather than
- ◯ **B.** Carbon pricing instruments have a longer legislative history than sectoral regulations and are therefore better understood by
- ◯ **C.** Sectoral regulations are inherently incapable of achieving the same aggregate emission reductions as a well-designed carbon
- ◯ **D.** The emission cost differential between carbon pricing and sectoral regulation exceeds 30% in every major economic sector — the

20. The author argues that political vulnerability is 'an argument for better institutional design, not abandonment.' Which of the following, if true, would

- ◯ **A.** Public opinion surveys show a majority of voters in most OECD countries prefer carbon pricing over direct regulation
- ◯ **B.** Both the British Columbia carbon tax and the EU ETS have survived multiple electoral cycles without repeal, showing that
- ◯ **C.** Countries with independent carbon pricing authorities insulated from annual budget cycles have maintained higher and more
- ◯ **D.** Political vulnerability is a feature common to all long-term climate policies including sectoral regulations, and therefore

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