

ANSWER KEY — 8 OCTOBER 2026

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10
C	D	B	C	A	D	B	A	C	B
Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20
A	B	D	A	C	D	C	A	B	D

READING COMPREHENSION

Q1 C Inference - RC HARD

The third paragraph gives two explanations. Frictional heating requires 'a sliding object', so a person standing still produces none. But the second, Faraday's, rests on the fact that 'molecules at the boundary have fewer neighbours to hold them in place', so that 'even well below freezing they form a disordered, liquid-like skin'. That mechanism depends on neither motion nor pressure, so it would be present under a motionless person too. The option saying the surface may still carry such a skin follows from the passage. The entirely-solid option correctly notes the absence of friction and of sufficient pressure, but overlooks the surface layer, which needs neither. The stationary-weight-melts option revives the pressure explanation the passage rejects, and the passage says shoes exert 'far less pressure still'. The body-heat option invents a mechanism the passage never mentions. The word 'may' in the correct option also matches the passage's caution that the layer's thickness and character are disputed.

Examiner's note — the trap: The entirely-solid option is the trap: it reasons correctly about friction and pressure but forgets the third source of liquid that the passage describes, which exists without either.

Q2 D Structure/purpose - RC HARD

The second paragraph opens with 'The trouble is arithmetic' and proceeds to test the textbook claim against numbers and experience. It concedes that pressure lowers the melting point 'but only slightly', notes that people skate on ice 'far colder than pressure alone could ever melt', and observes that shoes exert 'far less pressure still' yet people 'slip in shoes all the same'. It ends with its verdict: 'it cannot be mainly the squeeze.' The option describing a test against quantities and ordinary experience, ending in the conclusion that pressure is too weak, describes this function. The frictional-heating option assigns the paragraph content that belongs to the third paragraph. The concession option misreads the paragraph: it does not concede that pressure melting is correct for skates; the skate example is itself used against the theory. The experiments option again belongs to the third paragraph, where lasers and X-rays are mentioned.

Examiner's note — the trap: The concession option attracts because the paragraph treats skates and shoes separately, but both examples are used against pressure melting; none is conceded to it.

Q3 B Vocabulary-in-context - RC HARD

The metaphor of credit 'not paid for' describes trust given without the price that should have earned it, which in science is evidence. The surrounding sentence makes this explicit: the pressure-melting story 'survived for a century not because anyone had checked it but because it answered the question in a sentence.' Its acceptance was bought by brevity and convenience, not by testing. The option saying the explanation wins acceptance on convenience and brevity rather than evidence gathered in its favour is therefore correct. The commercial-reward option takes 'credit' and 'paid' literally and invents publishers, which the passage never mentions. The checked-repeatedly option reverses the meaning: the whole point is that nobody checked. The loses-standing option contradicts the paragraph, which says the explanation survived and that researchers must later work to make students 'unlearn it'; familiarity entrenched the idea rather than weakening it. The 'cost of that credit' clause also confirms the reading: someone pays later.

Examiner's note — the trap: The commercial-reward option tempts students who read the financial metaphor literally, but nothing in the passage concerns publishers or money; 'credit' here means unearned trust.

Q4 C Tone/attitude - RC HARD

The author's attitude to the two sets of explanations differs, and the correct option must capture the difference. Towards pressure melting the author is plainly critical, calling it 'largely wrong' and stating that 'it cannot be mainly the squeeze'. Towards the replacements the author is approving but careful: they have 'replaced it', experiments 'have since detected such a layer', yet 'its thickness and exact character are still disputed.' The option describing firm criticism of the first and qualified support for the newer accounts fits this exactly. The dismissive-of-all option ignores the experimental support the author reports for the surface layer. The enthusiastic-teaching-device option reverses the author's view, since the final paragraph regrets that the old explanation was taught. The strictly-neutral option fails because the author clearly favours the evidence-backed accounts over the textbook one. Tone questions reward attention to qualifiers such as 'still disputed', which separate measured support from either dismissal or certainty.

Examiner's note — the trap: The strictly-neutral option tempts students who notice the author's caution about the surface layer, but caution about the details is not neutrality between a rejected theory and supported ones.

Q5 A Application - RC (Stretch) ELITE

The lesson of the final paragraph has two parts: an explanation survives because it is short and memorable ('it answered the question in a sentence'), and it survives despite lacking support ('not because anyone had checked it'), so that it must later be unlearned. A parallel situation must reproduce both parts. The one-line story of an empire's fall, which survives because it is memorable though historians found it unsupported, does exactly this. The medical-treatment option has survival without understanding, but the treatment is repeatedly confirmed by trials, so it has paid for its credit; this is the opposite of the lesson. The complex-climate-model option is the mirror image: a well-supported idea neglected because it is not brief. It is related to the lesson but does not parallel it. The rejected-experiment option concerns an established and well-tested theory resisting a challenger, which describes justified conservatism rather than unearned trust.

Examiner's note — the trap: The complex-climate-model option is the most attractive trap because it involves brevity and schoolteachers, but it reverses the structure: a supported idea is ignored rather than an unsupported one believed.

Q6 D Main idea - RC (Politics & governance) MED

The passage moves from what committees do (paragraph one), to why their closed doors matter (paragraph two), to the fall in referrals and the government's efficiency defence (paragraph three), to the author's rebuttal and conclusion (paragraph four): leaving referral 'to the discretion of those whose bills are to be scrutinised is to make the most useful check in the legislative process optional for the very people it is meant to check.' The option combining distinctive scrutiny with the problem of governmental discretion over referral states this. The binding-recommendations option misreads the final paragraph, which uses non-binding status as a reason referral is harmless, not as a defect to be fixed. The broadcast option reverses the second paragraph, which praises the closed door: 'That closed door is the point.' The fresh-mandate option states the government's defence, which the author explicitly rejects as one that 'mistakes what the delay is for'.

Examiner's note — the trap: The fresh-mandate option attracts careless readers because it appears in the passage, but it is the view the author sets out in order to refute.

Q7 B Inference - RC HARD

The second paragraph explains why the closed door matters: on the floor 'every word is spoken to a camera', so 'a member who concedes a point to the other side concedes it in public', whereas in committee 'the same member can admit that a clause is badly drafted without handing the opposition a headline.' If committee meetings were televised, that protection would disappear, and members would likely behave as they do on the floor, conceding less across party lines. The option predicting reduced willingness to concede faults, weakening what committees uniquely provide, follows directly. The binding-authority option invents a link between publicity and legal force that the passage never draws; binding status depends on rules, not on cameras. The more-referrals option speculates about ministerial credit with no support in the text. The faster-deliberation option has no basis: the passage says nothing to suggest cameras would speed committees up, and it gives no reason why referral rates would change.

Examiner's note — the trap: The more-referrals option tempts students who think publicity makes committees more attractive to governments, but the passage gives governments no such motive and ties the committee's value to privacy.

Q8 A Structure/purpose - RC HARD

The third paragraph sets out the government's defence: committees are slow, and 'a mandate won at the polls should not be held hostage to delay.' The final paragraph begins 'The defence mistakes what the delay is for' and then says a committee 'does not stand between a government and its majority; its recommendations bind no one, and a government that dislikes them can simply proceed.' The point is that referral cannot defeat the government's will, so it cannot hold the mandate hostage. The option saying the remark shows referral cannot defeat a majority, undercutting the hostage claim, captures this. The concession option misreads the remark as an admission of weakness, yet the author goes on to call the committee 'the most useful check in the legislative process'. The make-binding option proposes a reform the author never suggests. The explain-few-referrals option offers a cause for falling referrals that the author does not give; the passage attributes them to discretion, not to non-binding status.

Examiner's note — the trap: The concession option is attractive because 'bind no one' sounds like a weakness, but the author uses it as a strength in rebutting the government's defence.

Q9 C Weaken - RC application HARD

The government's defence, as the third paragraph presents it, is that 'committees are slow' and that a mandate 'should not be held hostage to delay'. To undermine it, one must show that referral does not in fact cause meaningful delay. The option stating that referred bills are reported back within a few months and usually pass in the same session as unreferred bills does exactly this: if referral does not push bills into later sessions, the efficiency argument loses its factual basis. The members-disagree option concerns committee independence, not delay, and if anything might be cited by governments as a reason to avoid committees. The amended-on-the-floor option suggests committees are sometimes ignored, which is consistent with the passage and says nothing about speed. The voters-cannot-name option concerns public awareness of committee work, which is irrelevant to whether committees are slow. Only the timing evidence engages the stated defence directly.

Examiner's note — the trap: The members-disagree option attracts students who look for anything favourable to committees, but it does not address the efficiency claim and could even support the government.

Q10 B Principle (justify) - RC (Stretch) ELITE

The author's conclusion is that referral should not be left 'to the discretion of those whose bills are to be scrutinised', because that makes the check 'optional for the very people it is meant to check'. The underlying principle is general: whether a check is applied should not depend on the party being checked. The option stating that a check should not rest chiefly with the authority whose conduct it examines expresses this and would justify the conclusion. The majority-vote option would still leave referral to the government, which commands the majority, so it supports the practice the author criticises. The presiding-officer option looks attractive, since the presiding officer is formally neutral, but the passage says that officer decides 'in consultation with the government of the day'; endorsing the current arrangement cannot support a criticism of it. The fresh-mandate option echoes the government's defence and so cuts against the author.

Examiner's note — the trap: The presiding-officer option is the strongest trap because it sounds like a neutral solution, but it endorses the existing arrangement, which the passage says operates in consultation with the government.

CRITICAL REASONING

Q11 A Assumption - CR ELITE

The pivotal sentence is conditional: 'If blame is a judgement on a person's conduct, it must follow what the person controlled.' The author then concludes that the second driver is 'therefore no more culpable', which requires treating the condition as satisfied: blame is only about conduct and control. If blame were partly a response to the harm actually caused, outcome could legitimately raise culpability, and the conclusion would fail. The option stating that blame is properly a judgement only on what was controlled, not also on harm caused, supplies this unstated premise. The warned-by-friends option restates something the passage already stipulates ('the same knowledge of the risk'), and adding a warning is not needed. The sentence-length option concerns legal practice, which is irrelevant to culpability. The most-reach-home option concerns frequency, which has no bearing on whether the two drivers are equally blameworthy. Negation test: if blame does track harm, the argument collapses.

Examiner's note — the trap: The warned-by-friends option attracts because it equalises the drivers' knowledge, but the passage already stipulates equal knowledge, so it is not a gap the argument needs filled.

Q12 B Weaken - CR HARD

The claim under attack is that the drivers 'controlled exactly the same things', resting on the stipulation that they drove 'at the same speed, with the same blurred attention' and that their care was identical. Evidence that the second driver made an additional choice the first did not, ignoring a school warning sign and declining to slow down, introduces a difference within his control. The difference in outcome could then partly reflect a difference in conduct, weakening the claim. The family's-request option reports a reaction to the outcome, which the author has already said is real but 'not a measure of the driver's fault'. The existing-sentencing option describes the legal practice the author accepts may exist for policy reasons; it does not touch the control claim. The repeat-offending option suggests the safe driver may be dangerous later, which, if anything, supports treating the first driver seriously; it does not show that the drivers controlled different things.

Examiner's note — the trap: The repeat-offending option attracts because it distinguishes the drivers, but it concerns future behaviour, not what each controlled on the journey in question.

Q13 D Parallel reasoning - CR ELITE

The author's structure is: two agents act identically in what they control; an external chance event makes the outcome differ; therefore their wrongdoing is equal, while any different treatment by rules is a separate matter. The archers option reproduces every element: equal carelessness, a gust (an uncontrolled event) producing different outcomes, a conclusion of equal wrongdoing, and a reservation about whatever the rules require, mirroring the policy point. The students option draws a different conclusion: it reallocates credit to a third party rather than equalising desert between the two agents. The firms option moves to a policy recommendation about inspection frequency, which the author's argument does not make. The doctors option reproduces the commentators' reasoning the author criticises, inferring a difference in conduct from a difference in outcome. That makes it the precise opposite of the author's argument, though it shares the two-agents setup.

Examiner's note — the trap: The doctors option is the trap: its two-agents, one-outcome frame looks parallel, but it infers different conduct from different outcomes, which is exactly what the author denies.

Q14 A Role of statement - CR HARD

In the second paragraph, the author eliminates candidate differences between the drivers: 'Not their choices... Not their skill or their care.' The remark that the only difference 'is a fact about the child's movements' completes that elimination by locating the remaining difference outside the drivers' control. The third paragraph then uses this: since blame 'must follow what the person controlled, and the two drivers controlled exactly the same things', the second is 'no more culpable'. The statement is thus a premise supporting the conclusion. The main-conclusion option misidentifies it; the conclusion is the equal culpability claim and the desert point in the final paragraph. The concession option misreads it as blaming the child, which the author never does; the remark concerns control, not responsibility. The objection option mislabels it as a counterargument, but it is the author's own reasoning, not an opposing view raised for rebuttal.

Examiner's note — the trap: The concession option tempts students who read 'the child's movements' as assigning fault to the child, but the remark only places the difference beyond the drivers' control.

Q15 C Principle (application) - CR (Stretch) ELITE

The final paragraph separates two questions. On desert, the drivers 'deserve the same'. On legal response, 'Nor does it follow that the law must punish both drivers alike': there may be 'good reasons, of deterrence, of public confidence, of the victims' need to see a wrong acknowledged', provided they are 'defended openly as such'. The option allowing heavier punishment for the second driver, if defended on grounds such as deterrence rather than desert, matches this exactly. The same-sentence option contradicts 'Nor does it follow that the law must punish both drivers alike'. The ignore-outcomes option contradicts the author's acceptance that the law may 'respond to outcomes as well as to choices'. The punish-the-first-as-severely option is the subtle trap: it follows from equal desert, but the author does not say the law should match punishments, only that differences must not be justified by desert. It converts a claim about desert into a legal prescription the passage withholds.

Examiner's note — the trap: The punish-the-first-as-severely option is attractive because it seems to follow from equal desert, but the author keeps desert and legal punishment apart and prescribes no equalisation.

Q16 D Assumption - CR HARD

The author argues that repeating Class 5 'gives that child the same syllabus, taught at the same pace and in the same way, that has already failed to reach her.' For this to show that repetition will not help, the author must assume that the child's difficulty is not one that a second exposure to the same teaching would cure, for instance by simply giving her more time. If some children did learn to read on a second pass through identical teaching, repetition would help them. The option stating that the causes of failure are not ones a second pass is likely to remedy supplies this premise. The poorer-families option introduces a socioeconomic claim the argument does not need. The badly-designed-examination option is contrary to the author's view, who accepts that an examination 'can discover that a child has fallen behind'. The teacher-preference option concerns teachers' attitudes, which are irrelevant to whether repetition helps.

Examiner's note — the trap: The badly-designed-examination option tempts students who see the author criticising examinations, but the author's complaint is that the test does not teach, not that it misidentifies children.

Q17 C Weaken - CR HARD

The author's core objection is that detention supplies measurement 'without the second', that is, without teaching, and that the repeated year offers 'the same syllabus, taught at the same pace and in the same way'. Evidence that pupils facing the re-test in fact get two months of targeted remedial classes, and that most who pass go on to read at grade level, directly contradicts the claim that the rule comes without teaching and shows it producing real learning. The less-inclined-to-prepare option supports the motive for reform but does not show that detention helps children catch up. The low-before-the-policy option would weaken the claim that no-detention caused low learning, which is the supporters' view rather than the author's, so it does not hurt the author. The parents-prefer option reports a preference, which says nothing about whether repetition improves learning. Only the remedial-classes evidence attacks the author's central premise.

Examiner's note — the trap: The less-inclined-to-prepare option is attractive because it supports accountability, but showing that the old policy had costs does not show that the new rule helps children learn.

Q18 A Role of statement - CR HARD

Up to the final paragraph, the author has attacked the detention rule. A reader might infer that the author favours the earlier no-detention regime. The statement 'None of this is a defence of the old system' blocks that inference, and the following sentences explain why: under the old system 'a child could pass through eight years of school without anyone checking whether she had learned to read', and its promised assessment and remedial teaching 'never arrived'. The option describing the statement as forestalling the objection that criticising detention means endorsing automatic promotion, by acknowledging the old policy's failure, is correct. The concession option misreads it as admitting that detention works, which the author never grants. The no-examinations option invents a proposal; the author accepts that examinations can diagnose. The Centre-only option is unsupported: the author notes the Centre adopted the rule but restricts the criticism to no particular set of schools.

Examiner's note — the trap: The concession option attracts because 'None of this is a defence' sounds like a qualification, but what the author concedes is a fault in the old system, not a merit in detention.

Q19 B Inference - CR (Stretch) ELITE

The final paragraph explains both failures. The no-detention policy 'was meant to be paired with continuous assessment and remedial teaching, and in most schools neither ever arrived.' The detention rule 'repeats that mistake from the other side', supplying measurement without teaching. In both cases, a rule about whether a child moves up a class was left to do work that only assessment and teaching could do; the 'other side' is that one policy always promotes and the other holds back. The option capturing this shared error is the supported inference. The Parliament-versus-states option invents a federal explanation the passage never offers. The detention-is-worse option is the trap: the passage does say retention raises dropout, but the author never ranks the two policies, and calls them the same mistake from opposite sides. The examinations-in-every-class option misreads the old policy's failure, which the author attributes to missing assessment and teaching, not to the number of examinations.

Examiner's note — the trap: The detention-is-worse option is tempting because the passage cites higher dropout among retained children, but the author treats the two policies as the same mistake and never ranks them.

Q20 **D** Strengthen - CR **MED**

The author's claim is that the detention rule 'has measured the problem and called it a solution': it identifies children who have fallen behind but does not help them catch up. Evidence that, in schools that detained pupils, those repeating Class 5 received no extra teaching and read no better a year later confirms both halves of this claim: no remedy was provided, and the outcome did not improve. The more-examinations option adds measurement, which, if anything, illustrates the author's complaint but says nothing about whether learning improved; it neither confirms nor refutes the lack of teaching. The enjoyed-school option concerns the old policy's popularity, which is irrelevant to whether detention solves anything. The other-countries option points to countries that retain pupils and score higher, which would tend to weaken the author's argument rather than strengthen it, even though such a correlation would not prove that retention caused those higher scores.

Examiner's note — the trap: The more-examinations option attracts because the author contrasts measuring with teaching, but more tests alone show nothing about whether detained children failed to improve.

RAPID FIRE — ANSWERS

1. Per the textbook account, what lowers the melting point under a skate? — **The pressure of the skater's weight**
2. By how much can a skate blade's pressure lower ice's melting point? — **A few degrees at most**
3. Who first proposed that the surface of ice is never quite solid? — **Michael Faraday**
4. In which century was the liquid-like-layer idea first proposed? — **The nineteenth century**
5. Which two tools have detected the liquid-like layer on ice? — **Lasers and X-rays**
6. How thick is the liquid-like skin on ice, per the passage? — **A few molecules thick**
7. For how long did the pressure-melting story survive? — **About a century**
8. In which year did India set up departmentally related standing committees? — **1993**
9. From which Houses are standing committee members drawn? — **Both Houses of Parliament**
10. Who decides, in practice, whether a bill goes to a committee? — **The presiding officer, consulting the government**
11. Over how many Lok Sabhas has the referral share fallen sharply? — **The last three**
12. Are a committee's recommendations binding on the House? — **No - they bind no one**
13. What name do philosophers give to blame depending on uncontrolled circumstances? — **Moral luck**
14. What penalty does the drunk driver who arrives home safely face? — **A fine and a suspended licence**
15. Name the three policy reasons the author lists for responding to outcomes. — **Deterrence, public confidence, victims' acknowledgement**
16. Which classes may states detain pupils in after the 2019 amendment? — **Classes 5 and 8**
17. Within how long must the re-test be held before a pupil is detained? — **Within two months**
18. Which Act barred detention in the elementary years? — **The Right to Education Act**
19. What two supports was no-detention meant to be paired with? — **Continuous assessment and remedial teaching**
20. Per the studies cited, retained children are more likely to do what? — **Leave school early**
21. Per the textbook account, what lowers the melting point under a skate? — **The pressure of the skater's weight**
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41. What does 'tidy' describe in the opening paragraph on ice? — **The textbook pressure-melting account**
42. Why does a shoe exert less pressure than a skate blade? — **It spreads the weight over a larger area**
43. What does a sliding object generate that can melt a thin layer? — **Frictional heat**
44. Per the passage, motion supplies its own what? — **Lubricant**
45. Why do boundary molecules form a disordered skin? — **They have fewer neighbours to hold them**
46. What two features of the surface layer are still disputed? — **Its thickness and exact character**
47. The passage calls the two newer ice explanations partners or rivals? — **Partners rather than rivals**
48. Who bears the cost of an unearned textbook explanation? — **Students who learn it and researchers who correct it**

49. What does 'the trouble is arithmetic' introduce? — **A quantitative test of pressure melting**

50. Can people skate on ice colder than pressure could melt? — **Yes, happily**

51. Meaning of 'depresses' as used of the melting point: — **Lowers**

52. What does 'reckoning' mean in 'by the reckoning of most researchers'? — **Judgement or estimate**

53. Why did the pressure-melting story survive, per the author? — **It answered the question in a sentence**

54. What, per the author, is the history of ice really a lesson about? — **Explanations**

55. What do standing committees shadow? — **A set of ministries**

56. How is a referred bill examined in committee? — **Clause by clause**

57. Name two kinds of witness a committee may hear. — **Officials and experts**

58. Are committee members bound by the party whip? — **No**

59. Are committee proceedings broadcast? — **No**

60. What does a member risk by conceding a point on the floor? — **Handing the opposition a headline**

61. What did committee reports repeatedly produce, per the passage? — **Amendments governments quietly adopted**

62. How do governments describe skipping committees? — **As efficiency**