

ANSWER KEY — 13 OCTOBER 2026

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10
C	A	D	B	A	D	B	D	A	C
Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20
B	C	D	B	C	A	D	A	A	C
Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24						
B	D	C	B						

READING COMPREHENSION

Q1 C Main idea **MED**

The passage moves from a measured fact (the Moon recedes about 3.8 cm a year) to its cause (tidal bulges dragged ahead by the Earth's spin), to the paired consequence ('What the Earth loses in spin, the Moon gains in orbit'), to evidence from coral bands, and finally to the general lesson and the far-off end point. The option saying that ordinary tidal friction trades the Earth's spin for the Moon's orbit over vast time captures every stage. The laser option seizes on the method of measurement, which the passage mentions only to show that the figure is 'measured directly', not to rank methods. The 'soon' option contradicts the last paragraph, which says the matching of day and month lies so far ahead that the Sun will transform the planet first. The coral option misstates the cause: the shorter days reflect a faster-spinning Earth, not a faster-orbiting Moon.

Examiner's note — the trap: The coral option attracts because shorter ancient days are stated in the passage, but it attributes them to the Moon's orbit rather than the Earth's spin.

Q2 A Purpose of a detail **HARD**

The comparison appears in the first sentence, right beside the figure of 3.8 centimetres. The next sentences stress that the figure 'is not a guess' but is 'measured directly' with lasers, and that the change is 'invisible within any single lifetime'. The fingernail image therefore translates a tiny but precise distance into something the reader can picture, which is the correct option. The 'biological process' option over-reads an analogy: comparing rates does not make the cause biological, and paragraph two traces it to ocean friction. The 'estimated roughly' option directly contradicts the claim that the figure is measured directly. The 'speeding up' option imports an idea the passage never states; a fingernail's growth is cited for its rate, not for any acceleration, and nothing in the passage says the retreat is quickening.

Examiner's note — the trap: The 'estimated roughly' option tempts readers who treat an everyday comparison as a sign of imprecision, but the very next sentence insists the figure is measured directly.

Q3 D Inference **HARD**

Paragraph two states the counterfactual directly: 'If the Earth did not spin, these bulges would sit directly beneath the Moon.' The forward pull exists only because 'the planet turns far faster than the Moon orbits' and friction drags the bulges 'slightly ahead of the line joining the two bodies'; it is 'the bulge that runs ahead' that 'tugs the Moon forward'. Without the spin there is no lead, and so no forward tug lifting the Moon into a wider orbit, which is the correct option. The 'vanish entirely' option is wrong because the passage says the bulges would still exist, merely sitting beneath the Moon. The 'faster retreat' option inverts the mechanism: removing the spin removes the cause of the retreat. The 'day lengthens' option is incoherent, since a non-spinning Earth has no rotation left to slow, and the drag ahead depends on the spin.

Examiner's note — the trap: The 'vanish entirely' option attracts readers who link the bulges to rotation, but the passage says the bulges would remain, only directly beneath the Moon.

Q4 B Function of a paragraph **HARD**

Paragraph four opens by naming a temptation, to 'file all this away as a curiosity of astronomy', and then rejects it: 'the lesson is more general'. It then generalises from the Moon to any system that 'looks fixed' but is changing slowly, and whose history may be explained by 'an ordinary process' rather than 'any dramatic event'. That is a broader lesson drawn from a specific case, the correct option. The 'concede' option reverses the paragraph, which raises the curiosity view only to set it aside. The 'fresh evidence' option misplaces the corals, which appear in paragraph three. The 'warn' option inverts the claim: the author says the key may lie in ordinary processes rather than dramatic events, not the other way round.

Examiner's note — the trap: The 'concede' option attracts because the paragraph does mention 'a curiosity of astronomy', but only as the view the author goes on to reject with 'but'.

Q5 A Inference **HARD**

The corals laid down 'around 400 daily bands in a single year', which the passage says implies 'days of roughly 22 hours'. Four hundred days of 22 hours make about 8,800 hours, close to the roughly 8,766 hours of a modern year of 365 days of 24 hours. The inference is that the year was of similar length but divided into more, shorter days, because the Earth then spun faster. The passage attributes the change entirely to the Earth's slowing spin, never to the Earth's orbit around the Sun, so the 'orbited more slowly' option introduces an unsupported cause. The 'grew faster' option misreads the bands, which record days, not growth rate. The 'Moon farther away' option contradicts the passage: since the Moon recedes over time, it was nearer, not farther, 400 million years ago.

Examiner's note — the trap: The 'orbited more slowly' option attracts because it also yields more days per year, but the passage explains the extra days only through the Earth's faster spin.

Q6 D Weaken - RC (Stretch) **ELITE**

The passage's explanation is a linked mechanism: tidal friction both pushes the Moon outward and slows the Earth, so 'What the Earth loses in spin, the Moon gains in orbit'. The two effects are said to be 'bound together'. A finding that the lengthening of the day 'bears no relation' to the Moon's retreat would break that link and cast doubt on the claimed cause, which is the correct option. The 3.6 cm option merely adjusts a figure the passage gives as 'about' 3.8; the mechanism survives. The coral option is compatible with the passage's own hedged wording: the corals 'appear to have laid down around 400' bands, so slight variation does not touch the explanation. The Sun option repeats the passage's own prediction in the final paragraph and so supports rather than undermines it.

Examiner's note — the trap: The 3.6 cm option attracts because it contradicts a stated number, but the passage gives the figure as approximate and the explanation does not depend on its exact value.

Q7 B Primary purpose **MED**

The passage describes what the code does, notes that it is 'not a law', recounts its origin, sets out the proposal for statutory backing and the Commission's objection, and then states its thesis: 'The code's weakness and its strength are therefore the same feature.' Its lack of legal force means it cannot impose fines, yet it 'can be applied within days'. Explaining why non-legal status is both a limitation and an advantage is the primary purpose. The 'enacted by Parliament' option states the proposal the passage reports and then answers with the Commission's objection; the author does not endorse it. The 'history of election law' option inflates one sentence about Kerala in 1960 into the whole purpose. The 'criticise the Commission' option misreads the final paragraph, which warns of a risk if decisions look partisan but never accuses the Commission of actual bias.

Examiner's note — the trap: The 'criticise' option attracts because the last paragraph discusses partisan-looking decisions, but it states a condition for the code's survival, not a charge against the Commission.

Q8 D Meaning in context **HARD**

The sentence closes a paragraph arguing that, because the code is not law, it 'can be applied within days'. Saying that speed is 'the only currency that matters' and that the code 'spends it freely' treats speed as something of value that gets results in the setting of an election. That is the metaphorical sense of currency as a medium of exchange or value, the correct option. The 'widely accepted' sense is a real meaning of currency, as in an idea gaining currency, but it does not fit 'spends it freely'. The 'money spent by parties' option takes the metaphor literally and imports campaign finance, which the passage does not discuss. The 'up to date' option confuses currency with being current, which has nothing to do with spending or achieving results.

Examiner's note — the trap: The 'widely accepted' option attracts because it is a genuine dictionary sense of currency, but the verb 'spends' fixes the sense as a store of value.

Q9 A Inference **HARD**

The passage gives the Commission's reason in a short chain: 'An election lasts a few weeks.' A statutory code would bring '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 core concern is timing: rulings would arrive after the election they concerned, the correct option. The 'expertise' option introduces a comparison of competence that the passage never makes. The 'define every violation' option invents a drafting difficulty not mentioned anywhere. The 'parties would cease caring' option reverses the reputation argument, which is the case for statutory backing, not the Commission's objection to it.

Examiner's note — the trap: The 'expertise' option sounds like a natural institutional objection, but the passage grounds the Commission's resistance only in delay, not in any lack of judicial competence.

Q10 C Author's attitude **HARD**

The author praises the code's speed, saying it 'can be applied within days' and that it 'spends' speed 'freely', and calls the Commission's reason one that 'deserves attention'. But the final paragraph begins 'None of this places the code beyond criticism' and warns that its authority 'rests entirely on the perceived even-handedness of the Commission'. That combination is appreciation with a qualification, the correct option. 'Dismissive' fails because the author repeatedly credits the code's practical strength and never says parties ignore it; the passage says parties found defying it costlier than obeying. 'Uncritically admiring' is contradicted by the explicit statement that the

code is not beyond criticism. 'Neutral and detached' ignores evaluative phrases such as 'deserves attention' and the thesis about weakness and strength.

Examiner's note — the trap: The 'uncritically admiring' option attracts because most of the passage praises the code, but the final paragraph expressly qualifies that praise.

Q11 B Structure - treatment of a view **HARD**

The author introduces the reputation argument with 'The argument is attractive', which grants it appeal, and attributes it to others with 'it is said'. The next sentences set against it the Commission's objection: a statute would bring hearings and appeals running for 'months or years', long after the election. That is granting some appeal and then weighing a practical cost of the proposed remedy, the correct option. The 'rejecting it as false' option goes too far: the author never claims that every party cares about reputation; indeed the last paragraph concedes the code's authority is fragile. The 'adopting it as the conclusion' option is wrong because the passage concludes that weakness and strength are the same feature, not that the code should be strengthened by statute. The 'Commission's reason' option confuses the argument for statutory backing with the Commission's argument against it.

Examiner's note — the trap: The 'Commission's reason' option attracts careless readers because both views sit in the same paragraph, but the reputation argument supports statutory backing, which the Commission resists.

Q12 C Application - RC (Stretch) **ELITE**

The final paragraph names the code's single point of failure: 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 'survives only as long as those it binds believe that it is being applied fairly to all of them'. A widespread belief that the Commission censures some parties and spares others attacks exactly that foundation, so it is the gravest threat. A slow court appeal concerns one ruling and does not touch the code's ordinary operation within days. A minister who delays a scheme until after results is complying with the code, not threatening it. A dropped proposal for statutory backing changes nothing, and the passage presents such proposals as recurring without suggesting they damage the code.

Examiner's note — the trap: The slow-appeal option attracts because delay is the passage's main theme, but the author identifies loss of trust in fairness, not delay in one case, as what would end the code.

CRITICAL REASONING

Q13 D Main conclusion - CR **MED**

The final paragraph opens with the author's verdict: 'That is where the money belongs', referring to the roads, electricity and training mentioned just before. It supports this with the claim that such advantages 'do not expire on a date', unlike a tax holiday. Everything earlier serves this recommendation: the closures after holidays lapse, the explanation that the design selects departing firms, and the hidden costs of the concession. So the main conclusion is that the money would be better spent on lasting advantages. The 'extend beyond ten years' option is never proposed; the argument holds that firms leave whenever payment stops, whatever the period. The 'assembly units' option is a premise describing the firms that left, and it overstates 'many' as 'most'. The 'local businesses' option generalises one supporting point about hidden costs into a universal claim.

Examiner's note — the trap: The 'assembly units' option attracts because it restates detail from the passage, but it is evidence offered for the conclusion, not the conclusion itself.

Q14 B Assumption - CR **ELITE**

The argument infers from the timing of departures, soon after exemptions lapsed, that such a firm 'stays only as long as it is paid to stay' and that the scheme selects 'the tenants least likely to remain'. That inference works only if those firms would not have found the district profitable without the concession; otherwise their departure could reflect something else and the selection claim would collapse. That is the necessary assumption. Negate it and suppose the departing firms would have been profitable without the holiday: then the subsidy was not why they came, and the design-based explanation fails. Relative efficiency is irrelevant, since the argument is about why firms locate, not how well they operate. The 'inherently less valuable' option compares types of industry, which the argument does not rely on. The poorest-districts option concerns where governments choose to offer holidays, not why firms leave.

Examiner's note — the trap: The efficiency option attracts because it offers another reason firms might leave, but the argument's claim concerns dependence on the subsidy, not productivity.

Q15 C Weaken - CR **ELITE**

The argument's evidence is that units in holiday districts shut down or moved within two or three years after their exemptions lapsed, and it explains this by the design of the concession. If firms outside the scheme, in districts with no holidays, closed at the same rate in those same years, the closures would track something common to all firms, such as a general downturn, rather than the expiry of the holiday. That removes the link between the concession and the exits, which most weakens the argument. The local-recruitment option concerns firms that stayed and is consistent with the claim that firms with real ties remain. The cheaper-land option adds another subsidy, which, if anything, fits the picture of firms drawn by payments. The shortened-period option changes the length of the holiday without touching the reasoning that firms leave when payment stops.

Examiner's note — the trap: The cheaper-land option attracts because it suggests a second cause, but land concessions are another payment to locate and so leave the argument's logic intact.

Q16 A Strengthen - CR HARD

The conclusion is that money spent on tax holidays would be better spent on roads, electricity and training, because such advantages 'do not expire' and a district that is 'genuinely cheaper and easier to produce in will keep the firms it attracts'. Evidence that districts spending comparable sums on roads and power kept new firms much longer than holiday districts directly supports the comparative recommendation, which is the correct option. The assembly-units option merely repeats information already in the passage, so it adds nothing new. The employment-rose option supports the appeal of tax holidays that the author is arguing against, if it does anything. The subsidised-loans option adds another concession to the picture but says nothing about whether permanent infrastructure keeps firms better than temporary payments.

Examiner's note — the trap: The assembly-units option attracts because it agrees with the passage, but restating an existing premise does not add support to the conclusion.

Q17 D Role of a statement - CR HARD

The statement sits in the first paragraph inside the author's account of why the tax holiday is popular: 'The appeal is obvious. The concession appears to cost nothing...' The verb 'appears' signals that this is how it looks, not what the author believes. Paragraph four then disputes it directly: 'Nor is the concession as costless as it seems', pointing to taxes forgiven to firms that would have come anyway and the disadvantage borne by local rivals. So the statement is part of a view the argument reports and later disputes, the correct option. It is not the main conclusion, which concerns spending on lasting advantages. It is not evidence from the districts; it is reasoning about the concession's cost. Nor is it a premise the argument accepts and relies on, because the author rejects it.

Examiner's note — the trap: The 'premise the argument accepts' option attracts because the statement is stated plainly early on, but the word 'appears' and paragraph four show the author rejects it.

Q18 A Parallel reasoning - CR (Stretch) ELITE

The passage reasons as follows: a time-limited inducement attracts those whose decision depends on the inducement, so they leave when it ends; a lasting advantage would keep them, so resources should go to the lasting advantage. The gym whose free first month draws people who leave when fees start, and which concludes that better equipment would keep members longer, has the same structure: a temporary payment selects leavers, and a permanent improvement retains. The 'buy more equipment' option reasons that what worked once should be repeated, which is a different pattern. The 'lower fees permanently' option responds to departures with a permanent payment, which the passage would regard as paying firms to stay. The summer-closing option concerns seasonal patterns and a cost-cutting response, with no temporary inducement selecting the wrong members.

Examiner's note — the trap: The 'lower fees permanently' option attracts because it also links fees to departures, but it recommends permanent payment, the very remedy the passage rejects.

Q19 A Main conclusion - CR HARD

The argument builds to two linked claims. Prizes are 'better understood as a purchase than as an investment', buying 'the last stretch of work that grants paid for'; and a government shifting money from grants to prizes is 'drawing down the very stock of early, uncertain research' on which winners depend. The closing lines compress this: prizes 'can finish what grants begin. They cannot begin it.' The option combining reward for work done elsewhere with the inability to replace grants is the conclusion. The 'worthless' option contradicts the author, who says 'That is not worthless' and credits prizes with concentrating effort. The 'stop announcing prizes' option goes beyond the argument, which objects to replacing grants, not to prizes as such. The 'most winners' option is the evidence from the review, not the conclusion it supports.

Examiner's note — the trap: The 'worthless' option attracts because the author is sceptical of prizes, but the passage explicitly says a deadline and a purse are not worthless.

Q20 C Assumption - CR HARD

The argument claims that shifting money from grants to prizes depletes early, uncertain research. This holds only if prize purses will not themselves fund that early research. If prize money flowed back into early-stage work, for instance because entrants could borrow against expected winnings or winners reinvested in new problems, the stock would not necessarily shrink. The passage supports this assumption through its claim that only teams already close to the target can 'rationally accept that bet', but the conclusion still requires it. The 'prize money larger' option is irrelevant, since the argument is about which stage of research is funded, not about relative sums. The 'losing teams abandon research' option is not needed; the argument says nothing about what losers do. The 'unreachable targets' option contradicts the passage, which describes winners reaching the targets.

Examiner's note — the trap: The 'losing teams abandon research' option attracts because it would add to the harm, but the argument's conclusion does not depend on what losing teams do.

Q21 B Weaken - CR HARD

The argument's explanation is that a prize makes competitors 'bear the whole risk of failure', so 'only those already close to the target can rationally accept that bet', and therefore prizes cannot begin research. If many entrants who began from scratch went on to win later prizes using only private money, then prizes would demonstrably be drawing in and sustaining early-stage work without grants, which most weakens the claim that 'They cannot begin it'. The private-investors option is consistent with the author's concession that a purse can 'draw public attention'. The coverage-of-fields option describes the scope of the review without challenging its findings. The never-awarded option shows only that some targets went unmet, which says nothing about who wins when prizes are awarded.

Examiner's note — the trap: The private-investors option attracts because it credits prizes with a benefit, but the author already concedes that prizes can attract attention and effort.

Q22 D Role of a statement - CR HARD

The claim appears in paragraph three, which begins 'This is not an accident' and explains why winners are usually teams near the end of their work. The comparison is between a team starting from nothing, facing 'years of cost and a small chance', and a team nearly there, facing 'months of cost and a large chance'. It concludes that 'The rules quietly sort entrants by how much of the work they have already done.' The statement is therefore part of an explanation of why prizes attract entrants already close to success, the correct option. It is not the main conclusion, which concerns prizes being purchases that cannot replace grants. It is not an objection the author answers; the author offers it in the passage's own voice. It is not evidence from the review, which appears in paragraph two and concerns winners' histories.

Examiner's note — the trap: The 'evidence from the review' option attracts because the claim sounds empirical, but it is the author's reasoning about incentives, not a finding of the review.

Q23 C Strengthen - CR HARD

The argument says prize winners depend on 'the very stock of early, uncertain research' that grants pay for, so cutting grants in favour of prizes will eventually starve prizes of credible entrants. Evidence that, in fields where grant funding was cut, the number of credible prize entrants fell in later years confirms exactly that dependency, which most strengthens the argument. The press-coverage option might explain why prizes are fashionable, but it says nothing about whether prizes depend on grant-funded research. The donation option describes generosity by winners, which neither shows dependence nor addresses the effect of shifting funds. The partnership option concerns how entrants share costs within a prize, which does not bear on where the early research comes from.

Examiner's note — the trap: The press-coverage option attracts because it fits the author's suggestion that prizes are 'fashionable', but popularity does not support the claim about dependence on grants.

Q24 B Inference - CR (Stretch) ELITE

The passage traces the bias in who enters to one feature of prizes: competitors must 'bear the whole risk of failure themselves' until the end, so only those near the target can accept the bet. A team starting from nothing faces 'years of cost and a small chance'. If a prize paid entrants for intermediate milestones, it would reduce the risk carried until the end, so it would follow from the passage's reasoning that teams further from the target could rationally enter. That is the most strongly supported option. The larger-purse option does not follow: a bigger purse leaves the years of unfunded cost in place, and the passage gives no reason to think size alone changes who can bear them. The no-research option contradicts the passage, which says prizes rely on prior research. The prizes-only option contradicts the claim that prizes cannot begin research.

Examiner's note — the trap: The larger-purse option attracts because more money seems to reward more risk, but the passage locates the barrier in bearing the cost until the end, which a bigger purse does not remove.

RAPID FIRE — ANSWERS

1. How far does the Moon move away from the Earth each year? — **About 3.8 centimetres**
2. The Moon's yearly retreat matches the growth rate of what? — **A fingernail**
3. How is the Moon's retreat measured? — **By timing laser pulses bounced off lunar reflectors**
4. Who left the reflectors on the lunar surface? — **Apollo astronauts**
5. Where, per the passage, does the cause of the Moon's retreat lie? — **In the oceans**
6. How many tidal bulges does the Moon's gravity raise? — **Two**
7. Where would the bulges sit if the Earth did not spin? — **Directly beneath the Moon**
8. What drags the bulges ahead of the Earth-Moon line? — **Friction between the seas and the sea floor**
9. What does the leading bulge do to the Moon? — **Tugs it forward into a wider orbit**
10. What does the Moon's pull on the bulge do to the Earth? — **Slows its rotation**
11. What the Earth loses in spin, the Moon gains in what? — **Orbit**
12. By how much does the day lengthen each century? — **About two thousandths of a second**
13. Which fossils record both days and seasons? — **Corals**
14. About how many daily bands per year did ancient corals lay down? — **Around 400**
15. How long ago did those corals live? — **Some 400 million years ago**
16. How long were days 400 million years ago, per the corals? — **Roughly 22 hours**
17. What may a system that looks fixed actually be doing? — **Changing too slowly to notice**
18. Name the ordinary process the author contrasts with dramatic events. — **The rubbing of tides against rock**
19. When does the Moon's retreat end in principle? — **When the day matches the Moon's month**
20. What is expected to transform the Earth before day and month match? — **The ageing Sun**
21. Does the passage call the 3.8 cm figure a guess? — **No, it is measured directly**
22. Is the Moon's retreat visible within one lifetime? — **No**
23. What does the Model Code of Conduct govern? — **How parties and governments behave during elections**
24. From when does the Model Code apply? — **From the announcement of an election**
25. Until when does the Model Code apply? — **Until results are declared**
26. Name one thing ministers may not do under the code. — **Announce new schemes**
27. Is the Model Code enacted by any statute? — **No**
28. Where did the code begin? — **Kerala**
29. Before which election did the code first appear? — **The 1960 Kerala assembly election**
30. Who adopted and extended the code? — **The Election Commission**

31. Where did the code's force come from, rather than legal sanction? — **The Commission's public invocation and the cost of defiance**

32. What have periodic proposals sought for the code? — **Statutory backing**

33. A rule binding only by reputation binds whom, critics say? — **Those who care about their reputation**

34. Who has resisted statutory backing for the code? — **The Election Commission**

35. How long does an election last, per the passage? — **A few weeks**

36. How long could statutory hearings and appeals run? — **Months or years**

37. Name one quick sanction the code allows. — **Public censure, barring a campaigner, or withdrawing an ad**

38. What does the author call the only currency in an election? — **Speed**

39. The code's weakness and strength are the same what? — **Feature**

40. On what does the code's authority entirely rest? — **The Commission's perceived even-handedness**

41. What does a partisan-looking decision draw down? — **A stock of trust**

42. Can a statute replenish the code's lost trust? — **No**

43. How long does a convention survive, per the author? — **As long as those bound believe it is fairly applied**

44. What instrument have governments used to industrialise lagging districts? — **The tax holiday**

45. For how long does a tax holiday commonly run? — **Ten years**

46. What applies after a tax holiday ends? — **Ordinary tax rates**

47. Why does a tax holiday appear costless when granted? — **The revenue would not exist without the factory**

48. What follows a tax holiday's launch, per the author? — **Ribbon-cuttings and rising employment**

49. When did the passage's districts offer such packages? — **In the early 2000s**