Daily RC & CR Sheet — 2 November 2026

20 Qs · 35 Min
+1 / −0.25

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 — PHILOSOPHY & IDEAS · THE FOG OF CAUSES (Q1–Q5)

Two drivers leave the same bar at the same hour, each slightly over the legal limit, each equally careless in the decision to drive. One reaches home unnoticed. The other, on a dark stretch, meets a child who has stepped off the kerb, and kills her. Nearly everyone judges the second driver more harshly, and the second driver will judge himself more harshly still, for the rest of his life. Yet what separates the two is the child's presence on that stretch at that second, a fact about which neither driver chose anything. The philosopher's discomfort begins here.

The principle that seems to govern blame is that we are responsible only for what lies within our control. It is among the most intuitive moral ideas we hold; no one thinks a person should be condemned for being born clumsy or for a sudden gust of wind. But applied consistently, the principle erodes more than the driver's guilt. Our character is shaped by an upbringing we did not select, our opportunities by circumstances we did not arrange, and even the decision to make an effort may owe something to a temperament that was handed to us. If control is the test, then control recedes the further back we look, and responsibility threatens to dissolve into a fog of causes in which nobody has done anything at all.

Some thinkers accept the dissolution and urge us to abandon blame as a vindictive habit. Others reply that this misreads what blame is for. Moral assessment, on their view, is not a calculation of desert from the agent's isolated will but a response to the person as he actually appears in the world, a being whose intentions are inseparable from what they bring about. A surgeon who botches an operation cannot say that his intention was admirable and the patient's death merely unlucky; to act is to stake oneself on the world's cooperation, and to answer for what happens when it is withheld. The regret felt by the second driver is not an error awaiting correction but a recognition of this.

The difficulty, the argument concedes, is not thereby resolved. A theory which accepts that luck helps determine guilt must live with the unfairness it has admitted. What it may claim is that a morality purged of that unfairness would be a morality for beings who do not act, and therefore not for us.

1. The central purpose of the passage is to
- ◯ **A.** argue that blame should be abandoned altogether because human control over outcomes is largely illusory
- ◯ **B.** show how a control principle undermines ordinary blame, and defend a view that accepts the role of outcomes
- ◯ **C.** demonstrate that drivers who cause harm deserve heavier legal punishment than drivers who merely take the same risk
- ◯ **D.** contrast the standards of responsibility applied to surgeons with those applied to ordinary drivers and citizens

2. It can be inferred that the author regards the second driver's lifelong self-reproach as
- ◯ **A.** strong evidence that the principle of control is false in every moral setting where it is applied
- ◯ **B.** an irrational emotion that a clear-sighted moral agent would eventually learn to correct and discard
- ◯ **C.** proof that outcomes alone, and not intentions, determine the extent of a person's moral guilt
- ◯ **D.** a fitting recognition that a person who acts must answer for what his act brings about in the world

3. The author's stance in the final paragraph toward the view that luck helps determine guilt is best described as
- ◯ **A.** a candid acknowledgement of its cost combined with a reasoned defence of living with that cost
- ◯ **B.** a reluctant surrender to scepticism about whether any moral judgement can ever be justified at all
- ◯ **C.** a confident dismissal of the objection that the view is unfair to those who suffer from it
- ◯ **D.** a neutral report of competing positions without any attempt to evaluate either of them

4. In the sentence 'to act is to stake oneself on the world's cooperation', the word 'stake' most nearly means
- ◯ **A.** to mark out a boundary or claim to a piece of land by driving posts into the ground
- ◯ **B.** to support a young plant by tying it to a pole so that it can grow upright
- ◯ **C.** to put at risk something of one's own on an outcome that one does not control
- ◯ **D.** to invest a sum of money in an enterprise expecting a share of its future profit

5. The example of the surgeon who botches an operation is introduced primarily in order to
- ◯ **A.** suggest that professionals should be held to higher standards of accountability than ordinary citizens are
- ◯ **B.** illustrate that acting involves committing oneself to results that one cannot fully control or guarantee
- ◯ **C.** establish that good intentions are irrelevant to every form of moral assessment in public life
- ◯ **D.** support the earlier claim that blame is merely a vindictive habit that societies should abandon

READING COMPREHENSION — ECONOMICS · THE CHEAPER ENGINE (Q6–Q10)

When the steam engines of Cornwall were improved in the late eighteenth century, coal consumption per unit of work fell sharply. Contemporaries expected the nation's appetite for coal to fall with it. It rose instead, and kept rising for a hundred years. William Stanley Jevons, observing this in 1865, drew the conclusion that has carried his name since: economy in the use of a resource, far from reducing demand for it, tends to increase it. The proposition sounds like a paradox, but it is an elementary consequence of how prices work. An efficiency gain lowers the effective cost of the service the resource provides, whether that is motive power, warmth or travel, and cheaper services are demanded in greater quantity.

Modern economists prefer the more graduated term "rebound effect" and distinguish its forms. The direct rebound occurs when a household with an efficient car drives further. The indirect rebound occurs when the money saved on fuel is spent on something else, an air journey perhaps, that carries its own energy cost. Beyond both lies a rebound across the whole economy: when a technology makes an input cheaper for every producer, industries that were previously uneconomic become viable, and aggregate demand rises accordingly. Estimates of the size of these effects are contested, and the empirical literature is more sober than the le household appliances in rich countries, studies typically find that between ten and thirty per cent of the expected saving i

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industrial processes the losses are often larger, and for poorer households, who were previously going without adequate heating or lighting, the rebound is partly a welfare gain rather than a waste.

The policy lesson is therefore narrower than the paradox suggests. Efficiency standards remain worthwhile so long as the rebound stays below one hundred per cent, which is to say, so long as some of the saving survives. What they cannot do alone is cap total consumption. That requires a price or a quantity limit on the resource itself, a carbon levy or a permit scheme, which prevents the saved money from purchasing the same pollution elsewhere. Jevons himself reached a similar view, though for coal he saw no remedy but exhaustion. Efficiency, in short, changes the cost of living with a resource; only a ceiling decides how much of it we use.

6. The passage is primarily concerned with arguing that

◯ **A.** gains in efficiency usually reduce resource use by less than expected, so they need to be paired with a limit on the resource itself
◯ **B.** improvements in efficiency invariably raise total consumption, which makes every efficiency standard counterproductive in practice and in theory
◯ **C.** Jevons's observation about coal has been decisively refuted by modern empirical studies of household and industrial energy use
◯ **D.** poorer households are chiefly responsible for the rebound effects that reduce the savings promised by efficient technologies

7. Which of the following can most reasonably be inferred about a policy consisting only of efficiency standards?

◯ **A.** It will raise total consumption of the resource in every country in which it is introduced
◯ **B.** It will be ineffective for poorer households because their rebound exceeds the original saving
◯ **C.** It may lower use per unit of service while leaving aggregate use of the resource uncapped
◯ **D.** It cannot be justified on economic grounds unless the rebound effect is exactly equal to zero

8. The author's treatment of the Jevons proposition is best characterised as

◯ **A.** dismissive of its relevance to modern economies because it rests on an outdated nineteenth-century example
◯ **B.** uncritical admiration for a historical insight that the author believes applies without exception today
◯ **C.** hostile to the economists who have measured rebound effects and published disputed estimates of them
◯ **D.** appreciative of its core insight while tempering its reach with caution drawn from empirical evidence

9. In the sentence 'the empirical literature is more sober than the legend', the word 'sober' most nearly means

◯ **A.** abstaining from the consumption of intoxicating drink and therefore capable of clear judgement
◯ **B.** restrained and modest in what it claims, as against the sweeping reputation of the legend
◯ **C.** sombre and gloomy in mood, offering little hope that resources can be conserved at all
◯ **D.** solemn and formal in style, written in a manner suited to official government reports

10. The reference to poorer households in the second paragraph serves chiefly to

◯ **A.** qualify the assumption that every instance of rebound represents wasted or harmful consumption
◯ **B.** suggest that poorer households ought to be exempted from the efficiency standards under discussion
◯ **C.** demonstrate that rebound effects are always smaller in poor countries than they are in rich ones
◯ **D.** provide an example of the indirect rebound in which saved money is spent on a different good

SECTION — CRITICAL REASONING

CRITICAL REASONING — POLITICAL ECONOMY · THE CLOSED BORDER (Q11–Q15)

Governments facing a spike in food prices reach almost reflexively for the export ban. The logic appears unanswerable: grain that leaves the country cannot feed those who live in it, so stopping the grain stops the price rise. The ban is cheap to announce, requires no budget allocation, and its beneficiaries, urban consumers, are the voters most likely to notice a rise in the price of the staple. Its critics, who are mostly economists, are accustomed to being dismissed as people who have never gone hungry.

Yet the record of such bans is poor, and the reason lies in the farmer rather than the consumer. A farmer decides in the sowing season how much to plant, on the basis of the price he expects at harvest. When a government has shown that it will close the border whenever prices climb, it has in effect announced a ceiling on what he can hope to earn in the good years, while leaving him fully exposed to the bad ones. A rational grower responds by planting less of the controlled crop or shifting to one that no minister is likely to restrict. Over two or three seasons the domestic supply that the ban was meant to protect shrinks, and the next price spike is sharper than the last. Among the major grain exporters that imposed bans during the 2008 crisis, the area sown to the restricted crop fell in the following season, and domestic prices were higher two years later than in comparable countries that left their borders open.

Defenders of the ban reply that this proves only that farmers should be compensated, not that the border should remain closed. That reply concedes the main point. If compensation is needed to keep production up, then the ban is not free, as its supporters have claimed, but is a tax on farmers that must be repaid from some other pocket. The relevant comparison is therefore not between a ban and doing nothing, but between a ban plus compensation and a direct transfer to poor consumers financed from general revenue. On that comparison, the transfer wins, because it relieves the hardship without distorting the signal on which next year's harvest depends. A government that wishes to keep the poor fed should pay for it openly rather than collect the payment covertly from those who grow the food.

11. Which of the following best expresses the main conclusion of the argument?

◯ **A.** Export bans are cheap for governments to announce and are popular with the urban consumers who notice price rises during a crisis
◯ **B.** Farmers act rationally when they cut the area sown to a crop whose future price may be capped by official action
◯ **C.** Governments should always pay compensation to farmers whenever they impose any export ban on staple crops
◯ **D.** To protect poor consumers from food inflation, a direct transfer paid from general revenue is preferable to an export ban

12. The argument depends on assuming which of the following?

◯ **A.** Farmers in every grain-producing country form their expectations about prices in exactly the same way
◯ **B.** Urban consumers are the only group that is harmed when governments impose export bans on staple crops
◯ **C.** A direct transfer can be delivered to poor consumers without costs that outweigh the damage the ban does to planting
◯ **D.** Compensating farmers for the effects of an export ban would be impossible for any government to administer under any circumstances

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13. Which of the following, if true, most seriously weakens the author's explanation of the fall in sown area?

◯ **A.** Some of the countries that left their borders open also saw domestic prices rise sharply during the 2008 crisis
◯ **B.** The area sown fell equally in exporting countries without bans, as input costs and rainfall worsened in the region
◯ **C.** Farmers also base planting decisions on the cost of seed and fertiliser, in addition to the price expected at harvest
◯ **D.** Several governments that imposed export bans in 2008 later replaced them with programmes of direct cash transfers

14. Which of the following, if true, most strengthens the claim that export bans reduce later planting?

◯ **A.** With identical weather in two neighbouring countries, sown area fell only where the ban was open-ended, not where it was credibly time-limited
◯ **B.** Urban consumers in most countries respond to a rise in food prices by pressing their governments to take swift action to bring prices down again
◯ **C.** Several governments have since lifted their export bans after sustained criticism from economists and from international trade organisations
◯ **D.** In the weeks after a ban is announced, the domestic price of the restricted crop usually falls by a noticeable margin in the capital city

15. Which of the following arguments is most similar in its pattern of reasoning to the argument above?

◯ **A.** Banning overtime saves a firm wage costs in the short term but will drive its staff away; therefore the firm should abolish all of its bonuses as well
◯ **B.** Closing a library on Sundays saves money but loses readers; therefore the town should keep it open on Sundays by raising its membership fees
◯ **C.** Restricting hospital visiting hours lowers infection but upsets families; therefore the hospital should publish its infection data every year
◯ **D.** Capping rents shields tenants but deters landlords; compensating them is a hidden tax, so the city should give needy tenants vouchers

CRITICAL REASONING — SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY POLICY · THE DRAW AND THE LINE (Q16–Q20)

Every national research agency claims to fund the best science, and nearly every agency allocates its money by the same means: panels of senior scientists score proposals, and the highest scores are funded. Because the method is so familiar it is rarely examined, but the evidence about it is unflattering. Studies of grant review across several countries find that agreement between reviewers on the same proposal is barely better than chance once one looks beyond the best and worst few. A proposal that one panel ranks in the top tenth is as likely as not to fall below the funding line when a second panel scores it. The process is, in other words, partly a lottery already, except that nobody has admitted as much.

That would be a minor embarrassment if the noise were harmless, but it is not. Panels reward proposals whose merits can be recognised in the time available, which means proposals resembling work the reviewers already respect. Unorthodox projects, whose value is by definition disputed, attract one enthusiastic reviewer and one hostile one, and the average of the two falls below the line. The history of the field confirms the worry: several discoveries later honoured with prizes were first rejected by funding bodies on the ground that their premises were implausible.

We therefore propose that agencies adopt a two-stage procedure. Panels would first screen proposals for competence and feasibility, discarding those that fail a clear threshold. The surviving proposals, however many, would then be funded by random draw until the budget is spent. This would not reduce the quality of funded work, since every proposal in the draw has already been judged sound, and it would remove the premium that the present system places on conforming to reviewers' tastes. It would also save the months that applicants and panels now spend refining distinctions among proposals that cannot reliably be distinguished. A small fund in one country that has used a partial lottery for several years reports that applicants found the process fairer and that no decline in the quality of results was observed. If the aim is to find the best science we cannot know in advance, the sensible response to our ignorance is to stop pretending to a precision we lack and to fund broadly within the range of work that is demonstrably good.

16. Which of the following best expresses the main conclusion of the argument?

◯ **A.** Agreement between reviewers on the same grant proposal is only slightly better than chance beyond the very best and worst entries
◯ **B.** Several discoveries later honoured with prizes were first turned down by the funding bodies that reviewed them at the time
◯ **C.** Research agencies should screen proposals for competence and then allocate their funds among the qualifying ones by random draw
◯ **D.** Unorthodox projects tend to attract sharply divided reviews and therefore score lower than conventional projects do on average

17. The proposal depends on the assumption that

◯ **A.** panels can reliably tell sound proposals from unsound ones even though they cannot reliably rank sound ones against each other
◯ **B.** applicants would submit fewer and better prepared proposals if they knew that a lottery would decide the final outcome of the round
◯ **C.** the agency's budget is large enough to fund a majority of the proposals that pass the competence threshold in a given year
◯ **D.** prize-winning discoveries are generally the product of projects that review panels would rate as unorthodox when first submitted

18. Which of the following, if true, most seriously weakens the argument?

◯ **A.** Applicants and panels together spend several months each year in refining distinctions among proposals of very similar merit
◯ **B.** Some of the discoveries later honoured with prizes had been funded at the first attempt by a conventional panel review
◯ **C.** Panels find it harder to apply a competence threshold to proposals lying close to the boundary than to those far from it
◯ **D.** Within the passing group, higher scorers produced markedly more influential results, even where score gaps were small

19. Which of the following, if true, most strengthens the argument?

◯ **A.** Most of the senior scientists who sit on grant panels report that they find the work of scoring proposals tedious and stressful
◯ **B.** The budget of the agency has doubled over the past decade, and the number of applications has risen faster than the budget
◯ **C.** Proposals ranked just below the funding line later produced results no less influential than those ranked just above it
◯ **D.** A number of journals now ask authors to state publicly whether their research was funded through competitive review b

20. The argument is most vulnerable to which of the following criticisms?

◯ **A.** It relies mainly on the testimony of reviewers who have a personal interest in how the funding system is organised

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◯ **B.** It treats an unreliable fine ranking as wholly uninformative, overlooking that weak signals can still carry some information
◯ **C.** It confuses the quality of a proposal with the originality of the idea on which that proposal is based in the first place
◯ **D.** It assumes that every discovery honoured with a prize must have been rejected at least once by some funding body

RAPID FIRE — ONE-LINE RECALL

32 quick questions · not negatively marked

1. Plural of 'phenomenon'? _____
2. Meaning of 'ubi jus ibi remedium'? _____
3. Fallacy: attacking the speaker, not the argument? _____
4. Fallacy: 'Everyone believes it, so it is true'? _____
5. Fallacy: assuming what is to be proved? _____
6. Fallacy: only two options offered when more exist? _____
7. Fallacy: 'After this, therefore because of this'? _____
8. Meaning of 'mitigate'? _____
9. Confusable: 'militate' means? _____
10. Meaning of 'ephemeral'? _____
11. Meaning of 'ubiquitous'? _____
12. Meaning of 'laconic'? _____
13. Synonym of 'obdurate'? _____
14. Antonym of 'candid'? _____
15. Meaning of 'sub judice'? _____
16. Meaning of 'mens rea'? _____
17. Meaning of 'actus reus'? _____
18. 'Neither of the boys ___ present': is or are? _____
19. Correct: 'fewer' or 'less' for countable nouns? _____
20. Meaning of 'prima facie'? _____
21. Meaning of 'ultra vires'? _____
22. A person who dabbles superficially in many subjects? _____
23. What is a 'premise' in an argument? _____
24. A 'necessary assumption' is one that? _____
25. What does a 'weaken' question ask for? _____
26. Meaning of 'the rebound effect' in economics? _____
27. Meaning of 'sophistry'? _____
28. Meaning of 'equivocate'? _____
29. Meaning of 'perfunctory'? _____
30. Meaning of 'sanguine'? _____
31. Meaning of 'corollary'? _____
32. Meaning of 'nugatory'? _____

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