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 — ARTS & CULTURE · THE COPY IN THE ATELIER (Q1–Q5)

Visitors to a gallery of Mughal painting often bring with them a question the paintings were never designed to answer: who made this? The modern viewer expects a single author behind each work, and treats a copy as a lesser thing, valuable only as evidence of a lost original. Both expectations belong to a later and narrower idea of art. Applied to the imperial workshops of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, they distort more than they reveal.

Consider authorship first. A large illustrated manuscript made for Akbar was the work of a workshop, not of a lone genius. Inscriptions written in the margins of many pages record that one painter designed the composition, another laid in the colour, and sometimes a specialist added the faces. To ask which of them was the "real" artist is to impose a hierarchy the workshop did not recognise. The inscriptions recorded the division of labour because each contribution was valued, not because anyone wished to rank the contributors.

The copy deserves similar rethinking. Young painters were trained by reproducing the works of masters, line by line, until the hand had absorbed what the eye had studied. When engravings brought by European missionaries reached the court, painters copied them too, borrowing a figure here and a receding landscape there and setting them inside compositions of their own. Copying, in this setting, was not a failure of imagination. It was how a tradition stored its knowledge, and how it took in what was foreign without being overwhelmed by it.

None of this means that every copy was as good as its model, or that the workshops lacked a notion of excellence. Writers at court praised particular painters by name and judged some hands finer than others. The point is narrower. Excellence was measured by the mastery a painter showed within a shared practice, not by his distance from it. A painter could be celebrated for a copy that surpassed its source.

The modern preference for the single signed original is therefore a translation, and like every translation it loses something. Honouring these paintings need not mean abandoning names; the inscriptions themselves supply them. It means recognising that each page records a collaboration, and that the copy hanging beside a celebrated work may be the more instructive object, because it shows a tradition teaching itself.

1. Which of the following best states the central claim of the passage?

- ◯ **A.** Mughal painters valued copying above composing and so rarely produced any original work of their own
- ◯ **B.** The margin inscriptions prove that the faces were the most highly prized part of every Mughal page
- ◯ **C.** European engravings changed Mughal painting so far that it ceased to be a recognisably Indian art
- ◯ **D.** Ideas of sole authorship and the inferior copy misdescribe how Mughal workshops made and valued art

2. It can be inferred that the inscriptions recording the division of labour on a page indicate that the workshop

- ◯ **A.** kept such records chiefly in order to rank its painters for payment and for promotion
- ◯ **B.** regarded each painter's share in a finished page as a contribution worth recording
- ◯ **C.** treated the specialist who added the faces as the true author of the whole painting
- ◯ **D.** assigned most pages to a single master whose assistants were seldom named at all

3. The fourth paragraph functions mainly to

- ◯ **A.** withdraw the earlier claim that copying was a legitimate way for a tradition to store knowledge
- ◯ **B.** show that writers at court held their painters in lower esteem than modern viewers now do
- ◯ **C.** head off an overreading of the argument by granting that standards of excellence did exist
- ◯ **D.** offer new evidence that European engravings were judged finer than the court's own pages

4. As used in the third paragraph, 'absorbed' most nearly means

- ◯ **A.** soaked up, as thin paper takes in wet pigment
- ◯ **B.** taken in so fully it became second nature
- ◯ **C.** used up entirely until nothing remained
- ◯ **D.** engrossed, to the exclusion of all else

5. Which discovery, if made, would most weaken the author's account of how copying was regarded in the Mughal workshops?

- ◯ **A.** Trainees' copies of masters' pages survive bound beside the originals in the same manuscripts
- ◯ **B.** Court writers dismissed copies as worthless and praised painters only for wholly unprecedented work
- ◯ **C.** European engravings reached the court in far larger numbers than historians had earlier supposed
- ◯ **D.** Several manuscript inscriptions name only one painter rather than listing several contributors

READING COMPREHENSION — ENVIRONMENT & NATURE · THE UNDERTAKERS (Q6–Q10)

Conservation has always had favourites. The tiger, the elephant and the great Indian bustard draw the funds, the documentaries and the public affection, and there is nothing wrong with loving them. What goes wrong is the habit of judging a creature's importance by how readily it can be admired. By that measure the most indispensable workers in any ecosystem rank near the bottom, because their work is to deal with what we would rather not look at: dung, carcasses and the dead.

Australia learned this at some cost. When cattle were introduced there, the native dung beetles, which had evolved alongside marsupials, could not process the large, wet pats that cattle produced. Dung lay on the pastures for months, smothering grass and breeding flies, until scientists in the second half of the twentieth century imported beetle species from Africa and Europe to do the job. A labour no one had noticed became visible only when it stopped.

India's lesson was harsher. Within roughly a decade from the 1990s, populations of several vulture species collapsed, poiso
painkiller given to cattle that lingered in the carcasses the birds ate. Carcasses that vultures would once have stripped in hours n

NAME: _____ ROLL NO: _____ BATCH: _____

for days. Feral dogs multiplied on the surplus, and with them the risk of rabies. A bird that many people found repellent had been performing a public-health service that nobody paid for and nobody counted.

The pattern in both cases is the same. Decomposers and scavengers are valued, if at all, as curiosities, while the service they render is treated as a free background condition, like air. Because the service is invisible, its loss is noticed late, and replacing it, by importing beetles or by building plants to dispose of carcasses, costs far more than protecting the creatures would have cost.

The argument is not that charisma should be ignored. Admiration raises money, and some of that money protects habitats on which unloved species also depend. It is that the case for conservation is incomplete when it rests on beauty alone. A ledger that counted the work done by beetles, vultures, fungi and worms would not replace our love of the tiger. It would correct a judgement that has confused what is pleasant to watch with what is necessary to live beside.

6. Which of the following best states the main point of the passage?

- ◯ **A.** Valuing species by their appeal hides the vital, costly-to-replace work of decomposers and scavengers
- ◯ **B.** Charismatic animals such as the tiger receive far more conservation money than they need or deserve
- ◯ **C.** Imported species are usually a more dependable answer to ecological problems than native species
- ◯ **D.** Vultures declined in India chiefly because the public found them repellent and refused to protect them

7. The reference to feral dogs and rabies in the third paragraph serves mainly to

- ◯ **A.** show that feral dogs are a graver threat to public health than any decline in wild birds
- ◯ **B.** argue that the painkiller given to cattle ought to have been banned well before the 1990s
- ◯ **C.** suggest that vultures and feral dogs competed for carcasses throughout the twentieth century
- ◯ **D.** show that the loss of an unloved scavenger caused concrete and measurable harm to people

8. The author would most likely say that the Australian dung beetle episode illustrates that

- ◯ **A.** a natural service can pass unnoticed until the creatures performing it are absent or unable
- ◯ **B.** native species are always less efficient than imported species at processing livestock waste
- ◯ **C.** cattle should never have been introduced, since Australian pastures cannot tolerate any dung
- ◯ **D.** flies are the main reason that governments choose to fund research on decomposing organisms

9. As used in the final paragraph, 'ledger' most nearly refers to

- ◯ **A.** a flat stone slab laid over a grave
- ◯ **B.** a shop's book of its daily cash sales
- ◯ **C.** an account of value otherwise uncounted
- ◯ **D.** a horizontal timber fixed in a scaffold frame

10. Which proposal would the author's reasoning most directly support?

- ◯ **A.** Moving all funds now spent on tigers and elephants into research on fungi and worms
- ◯ **B.** Ending wildlife documentaries because they steer public affection towards charismatic animals
- ◯ **C.** Building carcass-disposal plants across India in place of further efforts to protect vultures
- ◯ **D.** Ranking conservation priorities partly by the cost of replacing each species' ecological work

SECTION — CRITICAL REASONING

CRITICAL REASONING — LAW & RIGHTS · THE SENTENCE FIXED IN ADVANCE (Q11–Q15)

When a crime provokes public anger, legislatures reach for the same remedy: a mandatory minimum sentence, below which no judge may go. The appeal is obvious. A fixed floor promises that offenders will not escape with leniency, and it signals that the state takes the offence seriously. Yet the floor rarely delivers the certainty it promises, and in important respects it undermines the justice it is meant to secure.

Begin with where discretion goes. A minimum sentence does not remove discretion from the system; it moves it. The judge, who hears the evidence in open court and must give reasons, loses the power to fit the sentence to the case. The prosecutor, who decides what charge to bring and does so without stating public reasons, gains it. Whether an accused faces the minimum now depends largely on a charging decision made out of view. Discretion once exercised openly and subject to appeal is now exercised privately.

Consider next how complainants and courts respond. Where the prescribed floor is severe, a complainant who knows the accused, whether a neighbour, a relative or an employer, may hesitate to report the offence at all. Judges who regard the minimum as excessive for the facts before them may be tempted to find the evidence insufficient rather than impose a sentence they think unjust. A law designed to guarantee punishment can thus produce fewer reports and fewer convictions.

Finally, the floor treats unlike cases alike. Two people convicted under the same section may differ greatly in culpability: one a principal, the other a frightened accomplice; one a repeat offender, the other a first offender acting under pressure. A sentence that cannot register these differences is not more just for being uniform. Equality before the law requires that like cases be treated alike, and it requires equally that different cases be treated differently.

None of this argues for leniency. Serious offences deserve serious sentences, and guidelines that set a normal range while requiring judges to give reasons for departing from it can curb inconsistency without abolishing judgement. The legislature's proper task is to declare how grave an offence is, not to decide in advance every case that will ever come before a court.

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

- ◯ **A.** Mandatory minimums fail to give the certainty they promise and undermine the justice they aim at
- ◯ **B.** Serious offences should no longer carry severe sentences, since uniform punishment is always unjust
- ◯ **C.** Prosecutors should be required to give public reasons for every charging decision that they make
- ◯ **D.** Judges who think a minimum excessive routinely acquit guilty accused and ought to be disciplined

12. The reasoning in the second paragraph depends on which of the following assumptions?

- ◯ **A.** Prosecutors are usually less honest than judges and often frame charges out of personal malice
- ◯ **B.** Discretion used without reasons or review is more open to error or abuse than discretion used openly
- ◯ **C.** Judges who are free to fit a sentence to the case never make mistakes when they pass sentence
- ◯ **D.** Most accused persons would plead guilty at once if mandatory minimum sentences were abolished

13. Which of the following, if true, most weakens the claim made in the third paragraph?

- ◯ **A.** Where severe minimums were introduced, reports and convictions for those offences rose, not fell

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◯ **B.** Some complainants who know the accused report offences whatever sentence the law prescribes
◯ **C.** Judges in many systems give written reasons whenever they find the evidence in a case insufficient
◯ **D.** Mandatory minimums have been enacted for several offences in direct response to public anger

14. Which of the following, if true, most strengthens the argument as a whole?

◯ **A.** Offences carrying mandatory minimums are, on average, graver than offences that carry none
◯ **B.** The public generally approves of mandatory minimum sentences when they are first announced
◯ **C.** Judges with full discretion sometimes pass very different sentences in closely similar cases
◯ **D.** Where minimums apply, sentences vary mainly with charging choices, not with offenders' culpability

15. The statement 'None of this argues for leniency' in the final paragraph functions mainly to

◯ **A.** concede that the objections raised against mandatory minimums are, on reflection, unconvincing
◯ **B.** forestall the objection that rejecting fixed floors is the same as favouring lighter punishment
◯ **C.** introduce fresh evidence that mandatory minimums have in fact raised the general severity of sentences
◯ **D.** shift the focus of the argument away from the courts towards the conduct of the legislature

CRITICAL REASONING — ENVIRONMENT · THE PRICE OF A BAG (Q16–Q20)

Governments that wish to cut the use of plastic carry bags usually choose between two instruments: a ban, which forbids shops to hand them out, and a charge, which requires shops to sell each bag at a fixed price. The ban looks bolder and is more popular with campaigners. The charge, though modest in appearance, is usually the better policy, and the reason lies in how each instrument interacts with ordinary behaviour.

A ban works only where it is enforced. Carry bags are handed out by millions of small sellers, from street vendors to neighbourhood grocers, and no inspectorate can watch them all. Where enforcement is thin, the banned bag simply returns, often in a thinner and less durable form made by unregistered producers outside any regulation. The law then stands on paper while the bags circulate as before, and the government has spent its credibility on a rule it cannot keep.

A charge works differently. It does not depend on catching anyone; it changes the decision made at the counter. A shopper who must pay for every bag begins to carry one from home, and the habit, once formed, tends to persist. Because the charge is collected through the shop's own till, the seller has little reason to evade it, particularly where shops may keep a portion to cover their costs. Ireland's levy on plastic bags, introduced in 2002, is widely cited because use fell sharply within months and stayed low.

Bans carry a further risk. When one material is forbidden, sellers switch to whatever substitute is permitted, and the substitute is not always better. A heavier bag of cloth or paper may need to be reused many times before the environmental cost of making it falls below that of the plastic bag it replaced. A charge applied to all single-use bags, whatever their material, avoids rewarding a substitution that may leave the environment no better off.

The ban has its place. For items that have no reasonable substitute and cause severe harm, a prohibition may be the only sensible option. For an article as ordinary as a carry bag, however, the more effective policy is the one that changes the habit rather than the one that merely outlaws the object.

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

◯ **A.** Plastic carry bags always do more environmental harm than cloth or paper bags, whatever the circumstances
◯ **B.** For carry bags, a charge on single-use bags is usually a more effective policy than an outright ban
◯ **C.** Governments should repeal every ban on plastic, since no ban can be enforced against small sellers
◯ **D.** Ireland's experience shows that every country can remove plastic bags from use within months

17. The argument in the third paragraph assumes that

◯ **A.** shoppers who carry bags from home will also cut their use of every other kind of single-use plastic
◯ **B.** shops keeping part of the charge will raise other prices to recover the cost
◯ **C.** Irish shoppers were more conscious of the environment than shoppers elsewhere before 2002
◯ **D.** the charge is large enough, relative to shoppers' means, to change what they do at the counter

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

◯ **A.** Some campaigners argue that a charge lets wealthier shoppers go on using plastic bags freely
◯ **B.** Cloth bags reused many times eventually cost the environment less than plastic bags do
◯ **C.** Where small sellers dominate, vendors commonly give bags away free and ignore the charge
◯ **D.** Ireland brought in its levy when many of its shops were already selling reusable bags

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

◯ **A.** Paper bags decompose much faster than plastic bags when they are discarded in the open
◯ **B.** Most shoppers prefer cloth bags to plastic ones when both are offered at the same price
◯ **C.** Several countries that banned plastic bags have since repealed the ban under public pressure
◯ **D.** Where plastic bags were banned, shops mostly handed out free paper bags that were used once

20. Which of the following arguments most closely parallels the reasoning of the passage?

◯ **A.** A city should ban central traffic, as a ban is bolder and more popular than a fee
◯ **B.** A school should forbid phones in class, because a fine on students would anger their parents
◯ **C.** A city should meter water, not ban lawn watering: prices change habits, while bans need inspectors
◯ **D.** A state should tax sugary drinks, not ban them, because the tax raises money for health schemes

RAPID FIRE — ONE-LINE RECALL **85 quick questions · not negatively marked**

1. Which emperor's illustrated manuscripts does the Mughal-painting passage discuss? .....
2. In which centuries did the imperial workshops in the passage flourish? .....
3. Per the passage, a large Mughal manuscript was the work of a lone genius or a workshop? .....
4. Where were the inscriptions recording the division of labour written? .....
5. Name the three tasks the inscriptions divide among painters. .....
6. Who sometimes added the faces to a Mughal page, per the p .....

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7. Why did the inscriptions record each painter's share, per the author?
8. Did the workshop wish to rank its contributors, per the passage?
9. How were young Mughal painters trained?
10. What foreign objects did European missionaries bring that painters copied?
11. Name one element painters borrowed from European engravings.
12. Per the author, copying was how a tradition did what with its knowledge?
13. Copying let the tradition take in the foreign without being what?
14. Who praised particular painters by name, per the fourth paragraph?
15. By what was excellence measured in the workshops?
16. Could a painter be celebrated for a copy, per the passage?
17. What does the author call the modern preference for the single signed original?
18. What does every translation do, per the closing paragraph?
19. What does each Mughal page record, per the closing paragraph?
20. Why may the copy be the more instructive object?
21. Meaning of 'absorbed' in 'the hand had absorbed what the eye had studied'?
22. Two modern expectations the author says distort Mughal painting?
23. Title of the Arts & culture passage on Mughal painting?
24. Does honouring Mughal paintings require abandoning painters' names?
25. What question do gallery visitors bring that the paintings never answer?
26. Name the three favourite animals listed in the passage's opening line.
27. What three things does conservation's favouritism draw, per the passage?
28. What wrong habit does the author identify in judging creatures?
29. Name the three things decomposers deal with, per the first paragraph.
30. Alongside which animals had Australia's native dung beetles evolved?
31. Why could native Australian beetles not handle cattle dung?
32. How long did cattle dung lie on Australian pastures?
33. Two harms caused by uncollected dung in Australia?
34. From which two regions did Australia import dung beetles?
35. When did Australia import dung beetles, per the passage?
36. Moral of the dung-beetle story in one line?
37. From roughly when did India's vulture populations collapse?
38. What poisoned India's vultures, per the passage?
39. How quickly would vultures once strip a carcass?
40. What multiplied on surplus carcasses after vultures declined?
41. Which disease risk rose with feral dogs, per the passage?
42. What service had vultures performed unpaid and uncounted?
43. How are decomposers' services treated, per the fourth paragraph?
44. Two costly replacements for lost scavenging, per the passage?
45. What does admiration for charismatic species do, per the author?
46. The case for conservation is incomplete when it rests on what alone?
47. Four creatures the proposed ledger would count?
48. Meaning of 'ledger' in the final paragraph?
49. What has the current judgement confused, per the last line?
50. Title of the Environment & nature passage?
51. Is replacing a lost natural service cheaper than protecting its providers?
52. Why is the loss of decomposers noticed late?
53. What would the ledger not replace, per the author?
54. How long did carcasses rot after the vulture collapse?
55. What is a mandatory minimum sentence?
56. What provokes legislatures to enact mandatory minimums, per the passage?
57. Two things a fixed floor promises or signals?
58. Does a minimum sentence remove discretion, per the author?
59. From whom does a mandatory minimum move discretion?
60. To whom does a mandatory minimum move discretion?
61. Where does the judge hear evidence, per the passage?
62. What must the judge give that the prosecutor need not?
63. On what does facing the minimum now largely depend?
64. Three people a complainant may know, per the third paragraph?
65. What might a complainant who knows the accused do under a severe floor?
66. What might judges find rather than impose an unjust minimum?
67. Two outcomes a severe floor can produce, per the third paragraph?
68. The floor treats what kind of cases alike?
69. Two contrasts in culpability given in the passage?
70. Equality before the law requires what two things?
71. What do serious offences deserve, per the author?
72. What alternative to fixed floors does the author propose?
73. What must judges give when departing from a guideline range?
74. Guidelines curb inconsistency without abolishing what?
75. The legislature's proper task, per the closing line?
76. Title of the Law & rights CR passage?
77. Function of 'None of this argues for leniency'?
78. Two instruments for cutting carry-bag use, per the passage?
79. What does a carry-bag ban do?
80. What does a carry-bag charge require shops to do?
81. Which instrument is more popular with campaigners?
82. Which instrument does the author call usually the better policy?
83. A ban works only where it is what?
84. Two kinds of small sellers named in the passage?
85. Under thin enforcement, in what form does the banned bag

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