

## CLAT 2026 — English Language

### Reading Comprehension — Class 1 (17 April)

Total Questions: 30 | Max Marks: 30 (+1/-0.25/0) | Time: 35 Minutes

*"Read Like a Lawyer. Not Like a Student."*

1. Read each passage carefully. Answers must be drawn only from the passage unless stated otherwise.
2. Each correct answer: +1; each wrong answer: -0.25; unattempted: 0.
3. Section A (Q1-18) is to be solved in class. Section B (Q19-30) is homework.
4. Mark only one option per question. Multiple marks will be treated as wrong.

## SECTION A — SOLVE IN CLASS (Q1-Q18)

### Passage 1 — Constitutional Morality

*Constitutional morality, a phrase which B.R. Ambedkar borrowed from the historian George Grote and inserted into our founding debates, has lately re-entered public vocabulary with an intensity that borders on overuse. Ambedkar warned that constitutional morality was not a natural sentiment; it had to be cultivated, and its absence in a society could hollow out even the most carefully drafted text. By this he meant a disposition among citizens and institutions to subordinate majoritarian passion to the discipline of constitutional form. The idea, then, is not a vague appeal to virtue but a specific civic habit — a willingness to lose today's political battle so that the rules which make contest possible are preserved for tomorrow.*

*Critics, however, have charged that constitutional morality has become a judicial incantation, invoked to strike down laws whose only defect is their unpopularity with the court. The worry is not entirely misplaced. When a concept as protean as morality is grafted onto judicial review, it risks collapsing the distinction between what the Constitution commands and what the judge prefers. The charge acquires weight when the same bench that speaks of constitutional morality in one case speaks of "social morality" in another, without explaining how the two are to be reconciled when they diverge.*

*Yet abandoning the concept would be worse than policing it. A Constitution that could be reduced to its textualist minimum would offer no defence against a legislature willing to weaponise form against substance. Constitutional morality, rightly understood, is not an invitation to judicial adventurism but a reminder that the text presupposes a culture capable of sustaining it. The real task, therefore, is disciplinary: to tether the phrase to identifiable constitutional values — equality, dignity, fraternity, due process — rather than to the personal intuitions of whoever happens to be on the bench. Ambedkar's insight remains ours: a republic survives not merely by what it writes down, but by the temper with which it reads what it has written.*

**Q1.** Which of the following best expresses the central argument of the passage?

- (A) Constitutional morality is an obsolete concept that modern courts should discard. (B) Constitutional morality is identical to social morality and both must guide the judiciary.  
(C) Constitutional morality originates with George Grote and is therefore inapplicable to India. (D) Constitutional morality, properly anchored to identifiable values, is essential but must be disciplined against judicial overreach.

**Q2.** The author's tone in the passage is best described as:

- (A) Polemical and dismissive of the critics. (B) Measured and qualifiedly defensive of the concept.  
(C) Ironic and ultimately cynical about constitutional law. (D) Eulogistic and uncritical of Ambedkar's legacy.

**Q3.** In the context of the passage, the word 'protean' most nearly means:

- (A) Variable and capable of assuming many forms. (B) Ancient and steeped in tradition.  
(C) Precise and technically defined. (D) Morally compromised or suspect.

**Q4.** Which of the following, if true, would most WEAKEN the author's defence of constitutional morality?

- (A) Ambedkar in fact misquoted Grote in the Constituent Assembly debates. (B) Most mature democracies make no explicit reference to constitutional morality.  
(C) Empirical studies show that invocations of 'constitutional morality' correlate strongly with the personal ideology of individual judges, irrespective of constitutional text. (D) Social morality and constitutional morality sometimes coincide in outcome.

**Q5.** It can be inferred from the passage that the author believes judicial review should:

- (A) Be abolished in favour of pure legislative supremacy. (B) Be tethered to identifiable constitutional values rather than individual judicial preference.  
(C) Rely on social morality whenever the Constitution is silent. (D) Defer automatically to majoritarian sentiment expressed through elections.

**Q6.** Which of the following would be the MOST SUITABLE title for the passage?

- (A) Ambedkar, Grote, and the Origins of a Phrase (B) The Triumph of Social Morality  
(C) Why Courts Should Abandon Moral Language (D) Constitutional Morality: Discipline, Not Discard

### Passage 2 — The Gig Economy and Worker Rights

*The gig economy arrived in India dressed as liberation. Platform companies promised their workers flexibility, autonomy, and, to those freshly displaced by the pandemic, a floor of income that the formal sector could no longer offer. A decade on, the rhetoric has soured. Delivery riders file affidavits describing twelve-hour days for variable piece rates; cab drivers point out that the "partnership" celebrated in advertisements dissolves the moment a dispute arises. Platforms insist that these workers are independent contractors — entrepreneurs, even — and that classification, not wages, has become the central battleground of twenty-first-century labour.*

The classification question is not merely semantic. Once a worker is named an "independent contractor," a legal cascade follows: no minimum wage protection, no social security contribution, no right to collectively bargain, no liability for workplace injury. Platforms, in effect, enjoy the throughput of an industrial workforce while carrying none of the liabilities that a century of labour law attached to it. Defenders of the arrangement argue that the trade is consensual — no one forces a rider to log in, and many prefer the schedule. But consent in a labour market marked by acute informality and limited alternatives is a thin foundation for a legal fiction of independence.

India's Code on Social Security, 2020 attempted a cautious middle path by introducing the category of "platform worker," distinct from employee yet entitled to certain enumerated benefits. Whether the Code does enough is contested. Critics point out that the funding mechanism remains vague and the benefits thin. Defenders counter that any attempt to force platforms into the employer–employee binary would either collapse the business model or push the work underground, leaving workers worse off than before.

The honest answer is probably that no perfect category exists. Platforms exercise algorithmic control that looks like supervision; workers bear risks that look like entrepreneurship. What is not honest is to pretend the question can be evaded. If the law cannot be made to fit the work, the work will, quietly and inexorably, be made to fit the law's gaps — and it is always workers, not algorithms, who pay the rent in that bargain.

**Q7.** The central claim of the passage is that:

- (A) The classification of platform workers, rather than wages alone, has become the decisive legal battle, and evading the question harms workers. (B) The gig economy has been an unqualified success in India and deserves expansion.  
(C) The Code on Social Security, 2020 has permanently settled the platform worker question. (D) Platform companies should be treated identically to traditional factory employers in every respect.

**Q8.** The phrase "a thin foundation for a legal fiction of independence" most directly criticises:

- (A) The drafting style of the 2020 Code. (B) Workers who willingly log in to platforms.  
(C) The reliance on worker 'consent' to justify denying labour protections. (D) The very idea that contracts can exist in informal markets.

**Q9.** The author's attitude towards the Code on Social Security, 2020 is best described as:

- (A) Wholly celebratory. (B) Cautiously acknowledging its attempt while noting unresolved weaknesses.  
(C) Indifferent and uninterested in the statute. (D) Outrightly hostile and calling for its repeal.

**Q10.** Which of the following, if true, would most STRENGTHEN the author's argument that classification matters?

- (A) A survey shows most delivery riders have smartphones. (B) Platforms have recently raised their per-delivery incentives.  
(C) Most urban workers prefer flexible work schedules. (D) A comparative study across jurisdictions shows that when platform workers are reclassified as employees, their median earnings, injury compensation, and bargaining outcomes improve substantially, with minimal collapse of the platforms themselves.

**Q11.** In the context of the passage, the word 'inexorably' most nearly means:

- (A) In a manner that cannot be stopped or resisted. (B) Unexpectedly and suddenly.  
(C) Reluctantly and with hesitation. (D) Generously and with concession.

**Q12.** Which of the following is the MOST SUITABLE title for the passage?

- (A) The Algorithmic Revolution (B) Who Counts as a Worker? The Gig Classification Question  
(C) The End of the Factory Model (D) Why Platforms Must Be Banned

### Passage 3 — Climate Justice and the Global South

The language of climate change has, until recently, preferred abstraction. We speak of parts per million, of tipping points, of two-degree thresholds — all of them accurate, none of them morally legible to the farmer whose borewell ran dry last summer. Climate justice, as a discourse, insists on a different grammar. It asks not only what the atmosphere contains, but who put it there, who benefits from having put it there, and who is asked to pay for its consequences. The answers, uncomfortably, do not line up.

Historical emissions are concentrated in a handful of industrialised economies; contemporary vulnerability is concentrated elsewhere. A coastal fisherman in Odisha contributes a fraction of a fraction of global carbon, yet stands first in the queue when cyclones intensify. The framework of "common but differentiated responsibilities," enshrined in the 1992 Rio Declaration, was an attempt to encode this asymmetry into international law. Three decades on, the principle survives more as rhetorical ornament than operative rule, invoked at every summit, watered down in every final text.

The counter-argument is familiar. Developing economies, it is said, cannot be exempted indefinitely; their current emissions now rival or exceed those of earlier polluters, and the atmosphere does not distinguish between molecules by nationality. The point is not wrong — it is merely incomplete. A regime that asks developing countries to freeze their emissions at current per-capita levels while industrialised countries retain historically accumulated wealth produced by unrestricted emissions is a regime that confuses symmetry with fairness. Justice, as philosophers since Aristotle have insisted, sometimes requires treating relevantly different cases differently.

What, then, should a just climate regime look like? At minimum, three things: recognition of historical responsibility in the form of meaningful and non-loaned finance; transfer of green technology on terms that do not reproduce the economic dependencies the original pollution funded; and a genuine loss-and-damage mechanism, not a euphemistic fund perpetually short of pledges. None of this is charity. It is the price of a liveable atmosphere, now treated as a shared asset; and like any shared asset, the rules of its use must reflect the history of its misuse.

**Q13.** The primary purpose of the passage is to:

- (A) Deny that developing countries contribute to contemporary emissions. (B) Argue for the abolition of all international climate agreements.  
(C) Argue that a just climate regime must account for historical responsibility, not just present-day emissions. (D) Provide a technical explanation of atmospheric physics.

**Q14.** The author's use of the phrase "rhetorical ornament" in reference to common but differentiated responsibilities suggests that the principle is:

- (A) Frequently invoked and rigorously enforced. (B) Recently adopted and untested.  
(C) Strictly legal and non-negotiable. (D) Verbally honoured but operationally ignored.

**Q15.** Which of the following, if true, would most WEAKEN the author's argument?

- (A) Evidence that the wealth generated by historical emissions has been comprehensively redistributed to developing countries through private investment, such that no material advantage persists and vulnerability no longer correlates with historical responsibility. (B) A report that coastal fishermen in Odisha now use solar panels.  
(C) A finding that the 1992 Rio Declaration has been translated into many languages. (D) A survey showing most citizens support climate action.

**Q16.** The author invokes Aristotle in order to:

- (A) Establish that climate change is a problem of ancient origin. (B) Support the view that treating different cases differently can itself be a requirement of justice.  
(C) Suggest that Greek philosophy anticipated atmospheric science. (D) Argue that all forms of inequality are unjust.

**Q17.** In the passage, the phrase 'non-loanised finance' most nearly refers to:

- (A) Finance disbursed only in local currencies. (B) Private philanthropic donations rather than public funds.  
(C) Grants given exclusively to renewable energy corporations. (D) Financial support provided as grants or compensation rather than as interest-bearing debt.

**Q18.** Which of the following would be the MOST SUITABLE title for the passage?

- (A) Two Degrees and Counting (B) Why Aristotle Matters  
(C) Climate Justice: History, Asymmetry, and a Liveable Atmosphere (D) The End of the Rio Declaration

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## SECTION B — HOMEWORK (Q19–Q30)

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### Passage 4 — Judicial Review and the Idea of Democracy

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*A familiar objection to judicial review runs like this: in a democracy, the people rule, and the people rule through their elected legislators; therefore, a court that strikes down a statute is a court that overrules the people. The argument has a blunt moral force; it also, on close inspection, relies on a series of simplifications that do not survive contact with how constitutional democracies actually work.*

*Begin with "the people." Legislatures do not transmit some unified popular will; they produce coalitions, compromises, horse-trading, and, occasionally, statutes that reflect the intensity of a well-organised minority rather than the preference of any majority. To equate "statute" with "people" is to confuse the output of a political process with the consent of those subjected to it. A court that sets aside a statute is not, on this view, overruling the people; it may be reminding the legislature that the very rules by which it claims to speak for the people must themselves be respected.*

*Consider, next, what the Constitution is understood to do. A written Constitution is a precommitment device — a deliberate tying of the community's hands against decisions it might make in moments of passion, panic, or durable factional advantage. Ulysses asked his sailors to bind him to the mast; the Constitution, similarly, invites the legislature to bind itself in advance. Judicial review is the untying of those bindings only in the specific cases the Constitution itself defines. It is not, properly conceived, an alien imposition on democracy but one of the means by which democracy persists over time.*

*None of this is to deny the risk of judicial overreach. Courts that exceed the constitutional text, or that substitute personal preference for constitutional reasoning, damage the very precommitment logic that justifies their power. The answer, however, is not to abolish review but to discipline it — with clearer doctrines, institutional humility, and a refusal to resolve by constitutional decree what politics ought to resolve by persuasion. The alternative — unreviewable legislative supremacy — has, historically, produced majorities that cannibalise the rules that produced them.*

**Q19.** The central argument of the passage is that:

- (A) Judicial review is fundamentally anti-democratic and should be abolished. (B) Judicial review, properly disciplined, is not anti-democratic but part of what allows a democracy to persist over time.  
(C) Legislatures are always corrupt and cannot be trusted. (D) The Ulysses analogy proves courts are superior to parliaments.

**Q20.** The author uses the Ulysses analogy primarily to:

- (A) Illustrate the idea that a Constitution is a precommitment device designed to protect a community from its own momentary passions. (B) Argue that all legislatures are mythical in nature.  
(C) Compare constitutional judges to ancient Greek sailors. (D) Suggest that Greek mythology is the foundation of modern law.

**Q21.** The author's tone in the passage is best described as:

- (A) Despairing and resigned. (B) Celebratory and uncritical of judges.  
(C) Playful and ironic. (D) Analytical and qualifiedly defensive of judicial review.

**Q22.** Which of the following, if true, would most STRENGTHEN the author's defence of judicial review?

- (A) A survey showing most citizens like judges. (B) Evidence that courts occasionally write long judgments.

(C) Empirical evidence that in democracies without effective judicial review, entrenched majorities have more often dismantled the very electoral and rights frameworks that originally produced them, relative to democracies with effective review. (D) A finding that constitutional texts are usually drafted by lawyers.

**Q23.** The author's claim that "statute" should not be equated with "people" relies most directly on which of the following observations?

(A) Statutes are written in legalese that most citizens cannot understand. (B) Legislative outputs emerge from coalitions, compromises, and the intensity of organised minorities, rather than from a unified popular will.

(C) Most statutes are rarely read by citizens. (D) Statutes are drafted by civil servants rather than elected representatives.

**Q24.** In the context of the passage, the word 'cannibalise' most nearly means:

(A) Consume or destroy in a self-defeating manner. (B) Reinforce and celebrate.

(C) Translate into a foreign language. (D) Codify in writing.

### Passage 5 — Artificial Intelligence and Human Dignity

*A peculiar feature of the current debate over artificial intelligence is how quickly the language of rights has been displaced by the language of risk. Safety, alignment, misuse, existential threat — these now dominate the vocabulary, while older categories such as dignity, autonomy, and the proper scope of decisions that a human being is owed to make have receded. This is not an accident. Risk is a register that technologists understand and regulators can metricise; dignity is a register that resists quantification. But a politics of AI that cannot speak about dignity will be ill-equipped to govern what AI is now, increasingly, being asked to do.*

*Consider the spread of algorithmic decision-making into domains long thought to require human judgment: bail, welfare eligibility, tenancy screening, hiring, medical triage. In each, an opaque model trained on past data produces a score; in each, a human life is arranged around that score. Defenders of these systems note, correctly, that human decision-makers are themselves biased, inconsistent, and often opaque. The honest reply is that the comparison is not between perfect humans and imperfect machines but between two imperfect decision-making systems with very different relationships to contestation, explanation, and appeal. A human loan officer can be asked why; an algorithm usually cannot, and when it can, the answer is often a post-hoc rationalisation that persuades neither the applicant nor the engineer.*

*Dignity enters here. To be denied a livelihood, liberty, or medical care on grounds one cannot interrogate is to be treated as an object of administration rather than as a participant in a decision about one's own life. This is not merely inefficient; it is demeaning, and a regulatory framework that cannot name that harm will miss what is most at stake. The emerging principle in European and Indian jurisprudence — a right to a human in the loop for high-impact decisions — is best read not as technophobia but as a dignity-preserving floor.*

*None of this is an argument against AI. The technology will, in many domains, enlarge rather than shrink the space of human agency. But enlargement is not automatic. It depends on institutional choices about which decisions remain human, which are assisted by machines, and which are handed over. Those choices cannot be well made by risk analysts alone; they require a vocabulary the current discourse has half-forgotten.*

**Q25.** The central argument of the passage is that:

(A) AI technology should be banned in all high-impact domains. (B) Risk vocabulary is sufficient for governing AI, and dignity talk is obsolete.

(C) Governing AI well requires a vocabulary of dignity and autonomy that current risk-focused discourse has partially displaced. (D) Human decision-makers are always superior to algorithms.

**Q26.** According to the author, the comparison between human and algorithmic decision-making is complicated primarily because:

(A) Algorithms are faster than humans. (B) Humans are always fairer than machines.

(C) Algorithms are cheaper to deploy. (D) The two systems differ substantially in their relationships to contestation, explanation, and appeal, not merely in accuracy.

**Q27.** The author's attitude towards the 'human in the loop' principle is best described as:

(A) Supportive, reading it as a dignity-preserving floor rather than technophobia. (B) Dismissive, treating it as a fear of technology.

(C) Indifferent; the author does not evaluate it. (D) Hostile, arguing it obstructs innovation.

**Q28.** In the passage, the word 'metricise' most nearly means:

(A) Translate into a foreign language. (B) Convert into measurable quantitative indicators.

(C) Regulate through criminal law. (D) Abolish entirely.

**Q29.** Which of the following, if true, would most WEAKEN the author's dignity-based argument?

(A) A finding that algorithms process information faster than humans. (B) A report that some engineers enjoy building AI systems.

(C) Robust, replicated empirical evidence that algorithmic decisions in bail, welfare, hiring, and medical triage are, in practice, more contestable, more transparent, and more responsive to appeal than their human-only counterparts across all affected populations. (D) A survey showing most citizens have heard of AI.

**Q30.** Which of the following would be the MOST SUITABLE title for the passage?

(A) Beyond Risk: AI, Dignity, and the Vocabulary of Governance (B) Why AI Will Destroy Human Jobs

(C) A Short History of Algorithms (D) The Triumph of the Risk Model