



CLAT Gurukul

By Ready For Exa

CAT GURUKUL

VARC (VA-heavy)

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1.

RC Passage I (read carefully, then answer Qs 1-4):

The canonical story of the Scientific Revolution holds that seventeenth-century natural philosophers broke decisively with the qualitative cosmology of the Aristotelians by replacing essences with measurable quantities. In this telling, the mathematisation of nature was a self-evident gain: where the schoolmen had spoken of fire's tendency to rise, Galileo wrote inclined-plane equations; where the Galenists had invoked humours, Harvey traced volumes of blood per minute. The arc of progress, on this account, is the steady displacement of metaphysical vocabulary by numerical description.

Yet this narrative, however durable in textbooks, conceals an unease that the actors themselves felt acutely. Newton, in queries appended to the *Opticks*, worried that gravitational attraction across empty space was as occult as anything in the schoolmen's lexicon; he insisted that he 'feigned no hypothesis' precisely because he could not explain the cause of what his equations so accurately described. Leibniz raised the objection more pointedly: a force whose ontology nobody understood, but whose mathematics worked, was a scandal dressed up as a triumph.

The modern reader may dismiss these qualms as growing pains. But the deeper question they pose has never been retired. When a scientific theory predicts experiment to ten decimal places yet resists any intuitive picture of what is going on — quantum field theory being the standard example — are we describing nature, or merely cataloguing its behaviour? The Aristotelians, after all, also had a grammar that fit the phenomena. What they lacked was not predictive accuracy in every domain but the modern willingness to treat fit-with-data as the whole of explanation.

The Scientific Revolution, then, did not simply substitute better answers for worse ones. It quietly redefined what counted as an answer. The mathematisation of nature was less a discovery than a decision — a decision whose costs, in interpretive depth, are still being paid.

Q1: The primary purpose of the passage is to: [rc-main-idea]

- A. Defend Aristotelian cosmology against its Newtonian critics
- B. Argue that the Scientific Revolution involved an unacknowledged narrowing of what counts as explanation
- C. Demonstrate that quantum field theory vindicates seventeenth-century natural philosophy
- D. Trace the historical influence of Leibniz on contemporary physics

NAME: _____

ROLL NO: _____

BATCH: _____

2.

Refer to RC Passage I. The author cites Newton's 'feigned no hypothesis' remark primarily to: [rc-inference]

- A. Demonstrate Newton's intellectual humility as a moral virtue
- B. Show that the founders of mathematized physics themselves recognised a gap between description and explanation
- C. Establish that Newton secretly accepted Aristotelian essences
- D. Explain why Leibniz's calculus was superior to Newton's

3.

Refer to RC Passage I. The author's attitude towards the standard textbook account of the Scientific Revolution is best described as: [rc-tone]

- A. Reverent and confirmatory
- B. Dismissive and polemical
- C. Sceptical, viewing it as a simplification that elides a real philosophical cost
- D. Indifferent — the author is concerned only with quantum theory

4.

Refer to RC Passage I. Which of the following, if true, would most WEAKEN the author's argument? [rc-weaken]

- A. Quantum field theory has recently been given a fully intuitive mechanical interpretation accepted by all working physicists
- B. Newton's later correspondence shows he doubted his own equations
- C. Aristotelian physics could not predict planetary retrograde motion accurately
- D. Leibniz and Newton corresponded extensively about theology

5.

RC Passage II (read carefully, then answer Qs 5-8):

In the standard economic account, a market price is a summary statistic: it aggregates the dispersed information held by buyers and sellers into a single number that, in equilibrium, equates supply with demand. Friedrich Hayek's celebrated 1945 essay extended this picture into an epistemic claim. No central planner, he argued, could ever collect and process the information that prices automatically compress; the market is therefore not merely efficient but uniquely capable of using knowledge that nobody possesses in full.

Half a century on, the Hayekian argument has been quietly weakened from two directions. The first is empirical. Behavioural economists have shown that prices in many markets — housing, art, even equities during bubbles — encode systematic errors rather than scarce information; the 'wisdom of crowds' shades easily into the madness of crowds when feedback loops between belief and price are tight enough. The signal Hayek prized is, in such cases, swamped by noise that the mechanism itself generates.

The second weakening is structural. Modern markets are not the small-scale haggling Hayek implicitly imagined; they are dominated by algorithmic traders whose orders are placed and withdrawn in milliseconds, and by a handful of platforms that intermedicate the bulk of consumer transactions. When the price-formation process is itself owned by a few firms, the claim that prices reflect distributed knowledge becomes harder to sustain. The information being aggregated is increasingly the information those firms choose to expose.

None of this refutes Hayek wholesale; the elementary point that prices convey something no central planner can replicate remains powerful in many ordinary markets. But the elevation of that point into a general theory of social knowledge looks, in 2026, more like ideology than economics. The price system is a useful instrument; it is not an oracle.

Q5: Which of the following best captures the central claim of Passage II? [rc-main-idea]

- A. Hayek's account of prices was wrong from the beginning and should be discarded
- B. Hayek's epistemic defence of markets, though valid in limited settings, has been narrowed by behavioural and structural changes in modern markets
- C. Algorithmic trading has made all market prices uninformative
- D. Central planning has been vindicated by behavioural economics

6.

Refer to RC Passage II. The author uses the phrase 'wisdom of crowds shades easily into the madness of crowds' to suggest that: [rc-inference]

- A. Crowds are fundamentally irrational in every market
- B. The same aggregation mechanism that produces useful prices can, under tight feedback, produce systematically distorted ones
- C. Behavioural economists have refuted neoclassical theory entirely
- D. Bubbles are impossible to identify in advance

7.

Refer to RC Passage II. By calling the price system 'a useful instrument' but 'not an oracle', the author conveys a stance that is best described as: [rc-tone]

- A. Unqualifiedly pro-market
- B. Unqualifiedly anti-market
- C. Qualified — accepting the limited epistemic claim while rejecting its ideological inflation
- D. Agnostic — refusing to take any position on prices

8.

Refer to RC Passage II. Which of the following would the author most likely AGREE with? [rc-inference]

- A. A central planner could outperform markets in pricing ordinary perishable goods
- B. The case for using prices is strongest in routine, deeply traded markets and weakest where feedback loops and platform power dominate
- C. Behavioural finance has nothing to teach Hayekians
- D. Algorithmic trading is intrinsically fraudulent

9.

Q9 (TITA — enter the correct 4-letter sequence, e.g. ABCD):

Para-jumble. Arrange A, B, C, D in the most logical order:

- A. Yet the very pervasiveness of the device disguises how recent it is: the convention is barely older than the late nineteenth century.
- B. Before its adoption, scholars cited works by short titles, page numbers, or whatever shorthand the discipline tolerated, and disputes about who said what often turned on the reliability of memory.
- C. The footnote is now so embedded in academic writing that authors rarely pause to consider what intellectual labour it performs.
- D. The footnote, in short, did not merely standardise citation; it changed what it meant to make a verifiable claim. [para-jumble]

10.

Q10 (TITA — enter the correct 4-letter sequence):

Para-jumble. Arrange A, B, C, D in the most logical order:

- A. The result is a paradox familiar to every working translator: the closer one stays to the source, the further one drifts from the reader.
- B. Literal translation, long held up as the ideal of fidelity, in fact betrays the original whenever the source language carries connotations the target language cannot reproduce.
- C. A faithful translator must therefore be unfaithful in the small in order to be faithful in the large — substituting equivalents that the author would, in the new tongue, plausibly have chosen.
- D. What looks like faithfulness on the page can read, in the target language, as awkwardness, archaism, or sheer nonsense. [para-jumble]

11.

Q11 (TITA — enter the correct 4-letter sequence):

Para-jumble. Arrange A, B, C, D in the most logical order:

- A. By the time the inscription was deciphered in the 1820s, the language it recorded had been dead for nearly two millennia.
- B. The Rosetta Stone, unearthed by French soldiers in 1799, contained the same decree in three scripts: hieroglyphic, demotic, and Greek.
- C. Champollion's breakthrough was to recognise that the hieroglyphs were not purely symbolic but encoded sounds — a hypothesis his rivals had dismissed.
- D. This recovery, more than any single artefact, opened ancient Egypt to historical, rather than merely antiquarian, study. [para-jumble]

12.

Q12: Para-summary. Choose the option that best captures the essence of the paragraph below:

"Conservation biology has long operated on a triage logic: identify species at greatest risk, channel limited resources to them, and accept that some losses are unavoidable. But this framing presupposes that we know which losses matter most — an epistemic confidence the discipline is increasingly unable to defend. Recent work on ecosystem networks has shown that 'unimportant' species frequently turn out to be load-bearing, in ways visible only after their removal. Triage, in such conditions, becomes a polite name for guesswork." [para-summary]

- A. Conservation biology should abandon triage entirely and protect every species equally.
- B. Conservation triage assumes we know which species matter most, but network research suggests this assumption is unfounded, making triage closer to guesswork than informed prioritisation.
- C. Ecosystem networks prove that all species are equally important.
- D. Conservation biologists have always known that triage was unreliable.

13.

Q13: Para-summary. Choose the option that best captures the essence of the paragraph below:

"The shift from print to screen has been described as a technological substitution, but reading research increasingly suggests it is a cognitive one. Eye-tracking studies show that screen reading favours a scanning F-pattern, while print sustains the linear sweep on which deep comprehension depends. The medium is not merely the vehicle; it shapes the kind of attention the reader brings, and therefore the kind of understanding the text yields." [para-summary]

- A. Screen reading is technologically inferior to print and should be replaced.
- B. Eye-tracking is the only reliable method for studying reading comprehension.
- C. The print-to-screen shift is not just a change of medium but a change in how readers attend and understand, with screens favouring scanning and print favouring deep reading.
- D. F-pattern reading produces better comprehension than linear reading.

14.

Q14: Para-summary. Choose the option that best captures the essence of the paragraph below:

"Public-health campaigns against smoking succeeded not because they delivered better information — by the 1970s the health risks were widely known — but because they slowly recoded smoking from a marker of sophistication to a marker of recklessness. The change was social and semiotic, not informational. Campaigns that ignore this distinction, and that treat behaviour change as a matter of telling people what they already know, tend to fail." [para-summary]

- A. Anti-smoking campaigns failed because they delivered too much information.
- B. Information is irrelevant to behaviour change.
- C. Smoking declined chiefly because of the semiotic reframing of its social meaning, not because new information was supplied; campaigns that rely on information alone tend to fail.
- D. Public-health authorities should never use information campaigns.

15.

Q15: Odd-one-out. Four sentences are given. Three together form a coherent paragraph; one does NOT belong. Identify the odd sentence.

- (1) The notion that meditation calms the mind is, in the early Buddhist sources, almost a side-effect of a more central goal: clear seeing.
- (2) The practice was designed to expose, not soothe, the workings of perception.
- (3) Many modern wellness programmes invert this priority, marketing meditation primarily as a stress-reduction technique.
- (4) Yoga mats, sold in over 80 countries, are now a billion-dollar global market. [odd-one-out]

- A. Sentence 1
- B. Sentence 2
- C. Sentence 3
- D. Sentence 4

16.

Q16: Odd-one-out. Four sentences are given. Three together form a coherent paragraph; one does NOT belong. Identify the odd sentence.

- (1) The Bauhaus school's central conviction was that craft and industrial production were not opposites.
- (2) Designers were trained simultaneously in handwork and in the constraints of mass manufacture.
- (3) This synthesis, the school argued, was the only path to objects that were both honest and accessible.
- (4) The school's Dessau building was demolished by the Nazi authorities in the late 1930s. [odd-one-out]

- A. Sentence 1
- B. Sentence 2
- C. Sentence 3
- D. Sentence 4

17.

Q17: Odd-one-out. Four sentences are given. Three together form a coherent paragraph; one does NOT belong. Identify the odd sentence.

- (1) The historiography of decolonisation long treated independence as a single event — a transfer of flags on a single midnight.
- (2) Recent scholarship has insisted, instead, on a longer chronology that includes economic, legal, and cultural disentanglements stretching decades on either side of formal independence.
- (3) On this view, decolonisation is a process whose endpoint is, in many former colonies, still being negotiated.
- (4) The longest river in Africa is the Nile. [odd-one-out]

- A. Sentence 1
- B. Sentence 2
- C. Sentence 3
- D. Sentence 4

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