Daily RC & CR Sheet — 8 May 2026

20 Qs · 30 Min
+1 / –0.25

Daily Reading Comprehension & Critical Reasoning
Two RC passages (English-as-Language) and two CR passages (Argumentation). Read each carefully and answer based on what is stated or implied.
Free daily practice — clatgurukul.com/daily · Pass this sheet to a friend.

PASSAGE 1 (RC) — THE RESTORATION OF SLEEP AND THE PRODUCTIVITY TRAP (HEALTH / SOCIETY) Q1–5

READ CAREFULLY AND ANSWER Q1–5 BASED ONLY ON THE PASSAGE.

For the better part of the twentieth century, sleep was regarded by the productive classes as an inconvenient pause in the day's real business. Industrialists boasted of needing only four hours; politicians wore their insomnia as a badge of stamina; and management texts treated rest as a deduction from output. The trouble with this attitude is that the body keeps its own ledger, and the entries it makes during sleep are not optional.

A generation of careful experimental work, conducted in laboratories from Boston to Bangalore, has now established that the brain during sleep is not idle but intensely engaged in a kind of hidden labour. During the slower stages of non-REM sleep, the cerebrospinal fluid surges through the tissue at velocities not observed in waking, flushing out metabolic by-products that accumulate during the day. During REM, neural circuits replay the day's experiences in compressed form, consolidating learning and trimming away the trivial. Without this nightly maintenance, the apparatus we use to think simply degrades.

The productivity literature is now slowly absorbing this evidence. Knowledge workers who are sleep-deprived perform worse on every cognitive task that has been measured, from arithmetic to creative writing, and the deficit is generally invisible to the worker themselves. The night-shift surgeon and the all-night programmer rate themselves no less competent than their well-rested colleagues, even as the objective record shows otherwise. The brain that is short on sleep is, in effect, drunk on its own fatigue.

What then of the entrepreneur who insists that resting is a luxury? The answer, perhaps unsatisfactory to the romantic, is that no amount of grit substitutes for the biological housekeeping the body insists on doing. The most productive minds of any era have, almost without exception, slept well. The exceptions are merely loud.

1. Which of the following best captures the main argument of the passage?
- ◯ **A.** Knowledge workers should set early bedtimes regardless of personal preference
- ◯ **B.** Sleep performs essential biological work and the cult of sleeplessness has no basis in evidence
- ◯ **C.** Twentieth-century industrialists were the first to take sleep seriously
- ◯ **D.** REM and non-REM sleep are equally important for memory formation

2. The phrase 'the body keeps its own ledger' is best understood as:
- ◯ **A.** A reference to the literal accounting system of cells
- ◯ **B.** A metaphor suggesting that biological costs of sleeplessness are recorded and eventually paid
- ◯ **C.** A claim that hours of sleep can be banked for later
- ◯ **D.** A criticism of accounting practices in healthcare

3. According to the passage, which of the following is most directly supported by experimental work?
- ◯ **A.** Cerebrospinal fluid moves more rapidly during slow-wave sleep than during waking
- ◯ **B.** Surgeons working night shifts produce the highest-quality work of any medical profession
- ◯ **C.** Four hours of sleep is sufficient for most healthy adults
- ◯ **D.** REM sleep occupies fifty per cent of total sleep time in human beings

4. Which of the following, if true, would most WEAKEN the author's argument?
- ◯ **A.** A new study finds that long sleepers have slightly higher mortality than seven-hour sleepers
- ◯ **B.** A controlled trial shows that sustained four-hour sleepers perform on cognitive tests indistinguishably from seven-hour sleepers across years
- ◯ **C.** A psychiatrist reports that some patients with insomnia continue to function socially
- ◯ **D.** A historian documents that several famous artists worked into the early hours of the morning

5. The author's tone in the closing sentence — 'The exceptions are merely loud' — is best described as:
- ◯ **A.** Apologetic
- ◯ **B.** Wistful
- ◯ **C.** Mildly dismissive
- ◯ **D.** Strictly neutral and clinical

PASSAGE 2 (RC) — THE QUIET DECLINE OF THE INDEPENDENT BOOKSHOP (CULTURE / ECONOMICS) Q6–10

READ CAREFULLY AND ANSWER Q6–10 BASED ONLY ON THE PASSAGE.

The independent bookshop is, almost everywhere, in retreat. The chains came first, with their loyalty cards and their bestseller pyramids; then the online giants, with their algorithmic recommendations and same-day delivery; and finally the slow drift of the reading public into screens of every size. To walk into a small, family-owned bookshop today is to enter a building that has, statistically speaking, no business still being open.

And yet they persist, in pockets. The economics seem grim only until one notices what is actually being sold. A chain bookshop, optimised for stock turn, sells what it has shipped to it; the algorithmic retailer sells what its model predicts will convert. The independent bookshop sells curation — a hand-picked selection that bears the personality of its owner, the tilt of the local readership, and the weather of the season. Customers, increasingly, will pay a small premium for that kind of judgement, especially when the alternative is wading through ten thousand undifferentiated titles online.

The regulatory environment matters too. In countries with fixed book pricing — France, Germany, parts of Latin America — publishers set the retail price and discounting is sharply limited. The independent bookshop is, in such places, less an endangered species than a settled feature of the high street. In jurisdictions without such rules, including most of the English-speaking world, indies survive only by carving out a defensible niche: literature in translation, children's books, regional poetry, second-hand stacks, themed events.

NAME: _____ ROLL NO: _____ BATCH: _____

The deeper question is what kind of reading culture a society wishes to have. A bookshop is not merely a shop; it is one of the last public spaces in which a stranger can browse for an hour without buying anything, and leave the better for it. The market value of that experience is hard to compute. Its absence, however, is not.

6. Which of the following best captures the central argument of the passage?

- ◯ **A.** Independent bookshops should diversify into selling stationery to survive
- ◯ **B.** Independent bookshops survive by offering curation and a public space whose value the market measures only imperfectly
- ◯ **C.** All bookshops will close within a generation regardless of policy choices
- ◯ **D.** Online retailers offer better value than any high-street alternative

7. The author's reference to fixed book pricing in France and Germany is offered as:

- ◯ **A.** A model India should immediately adopt
- ◯ **B.** An example of how regulation can shape the survival of independent retailers
- ◯ **C.** Evidence that European book markets are inherently superior to others
- ◯ **D.** A digression unrelated to the main thesis

8. The phrase 'the weather of the season' in the second paragraph most likely refers to:

- ◯ **A.** Literal climatic conditions affecting reading habits
- ◯ **B.** The shifting moods, interests, and conversations of the local reading public
- ◯ **C.** Seasonal sales and discount cycles run by publishers
- ◯ **D.** The supply of paperback editions in colder months

9. The author's overall attitude toward the independent bookshop can best be described as:

- ◯ **A.** Aggressively defensive and hostile to all modern retail
- ◯ **B.** Sentimentally nostalgic, with no interest in commercial realities
- ◯ **C.** Sympathetic but realistic, balancing affection with awareness of structural pressures
- ◯ **D.** Strictly economic and indifferent to cultural questions

10. Which of the following, if true, would most STRENGTHEN the author's argument that independent bookshops add cultural value?

- ◯ **A.** A study finds that towns with at least one independent bookshop report higher self-reported community well-being
- ◯ **B.** A retailer announces it will open thirty new chain bookshops nationally
- ◯ **C.** A national survey finds online book sales rose 20 per cent year on year
- ◯ **D.** A publisher reports falling translation rights revenue

PASSAGE 3 (CR) — A NATIONWIDE BAN ON SINGLE-USE PLASTICS (ENVIRONMENT / PUBLIC POLICY) Q11–15

READ THE ARGUMENT AND ANSWER Q11–15.

The Ministry of Environment has proposed a complete nationwide ban on the manufacture, import, sale, and use of single-use plastic items — cutlery, cups, straws, plates, carry-bags, and packaging films of less than 75 microns. The Ministry argues as follows. India generates close to 26 lakh tonnes of plastic waste each year. Roughly forty per cent of that waste is single-use plastic, of which only a small fraction is recycled. The remainder enters drains, choking urban wastewater systems and producing the urban floods that have become a fixture of every monsoon. Marine ecologists have documented microplastic contamination in fish caught off both coasts; the same particles have been recovered from human placenta in clinical samples. The downstream healthcare cost, which the Ministry estimates at ₹12,000 crore per year, is borne by the public exchequer.

The Ministry concludes that voluntary measures and partial bans have failed for over a decade. Recyclability targets, levies on producers, and consumer awareness campaigns have all been tried. None has materially altered the volume of waste reaching the rivers. A complete ban, the Ministry says, is the only intervention with a meaningful chance of breaking the consumption pattern at scale.

Industry associations have raised three counter-arguments. First, that the ban will eliminate roughly 1.6 lakh small-business jobs in the affected segments and that no realistic transition plan has been costed. Second, that compliant alternatives — paper bags, plant-based polymers, areca cutlery — cannot be produced at the scale or price required to meet national demand within the proposed eighteen-month window. Third, that enforcement is likely to be uneven, with the burden falling disproportionately on small kirana stores and street vendors, while large-format retailers absorb the compliance cost as overhead.

The Ministry's proposal is now before the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Environment.

11. Which of the following best states the conclusion of the Ministry's argument?

- ◯ **A.** India should phase out plastic recycling subsidies
- ◯ **B.** A complete ban on single-use plastics is the only intervention with a meaningful chance of breaking consumption at scale
- ◯ **C.** Voluntary measures should continue for three more years
- ◯ **D.** Industry associations should be exempted from the ban

12. The Ministry's argument relies most heavily on which unstated assumption?

- ◯ **A.** Single-use plastic is the largest contributor to greenhouse-gas emissions in India
- ◯ **B.** A complete ban will, in practice, be enforced sufficiently to alter consumption patterns
- ◯ **C.** Industry associations have not previously been consulted on environmental policy
- ◯ **D.** Healthcare costs from plastic exposure will eventually exceed defence spending

13. Which of the following, if true, would most WEAKEN the Ministry's argument?

- ◯ **A.** A neighbouring jurisdiction enacted an identical complete ban and saw plastic-waste volumes in waterways unchanged after three years owing to enforcement gaps
- ◯ **B.** A new study finds that recycled-plastic cutlery is dishwasher-safe
- ◯ **C.** A polling firm reports that 55 per cent of urban consumers approve of the proposed ban
- ◯ **D.** A factory in Pune has begun manufacturing biodegradable straws

14. Which of the following, if true, would most STRENGTHEN the Ministry's argument?

◯ **A.** An independent peer-reviewed study finds that complete bans, with even modest enforcement, reduce single-use waste by 70 per cent within twelve months
◯ **B.** Industry associations release a statement opposing the ban
◯ **C.** A small kirana association files a writ challenging the ban
◯ **D.** Plastic prices have fallen marginally over the previous quarter

15. The flaw in the industry counter-argument that 'enforcement will be uneven' is most accurately described as:

◯ **A.** It is a non sequitur because enforcement difficulty does not by itself show that the policy is wrong, only that implementation must be designed carefully
◯ **B.** It is an ad hominem against the Ministry's officials
◯ **C.** It is a strawman because the Ministry never claimed perfect enforcement
◯ **D.** It is internally consistent and contains no logical flaw at all

PASSAGE 4 (CR) — THE CASE FOR AND AGAINST MANDATORY VOTING (POLITICAL THEORY / PUBLIC POLICY) Q16–20

READ THE ARGUMENT AND ANSWER Q16–20.

Australia, Belgium, and roughly twenty other democracies require their citizens to turn up at the polling booth on election day or pay a small fine. Indian commentators have, for decades, debated whether the country should follow suit. The argument for mandatory voting runs broadly as follows. Democratic legitimacy, properly understood, is a function of how broad the participating electorate is. When turnout falls to fifty or sixty per cent, those who do vote are a self-selected slice of the citizenry — typically older, wealthier, and more partisan than the population at large. Their preferences then determine policy for everyone, including the disengaged majority. Mandatory voting fixes this distortion at its root. It does not force anyone to support a particular party; it merely insists that the citizen show up. The voter retains every right to spoil the ballot or vote None of the Above.

There is also a compounding argument. Where voting is voluntary, parties spend much of their campaign budget on the costly, low-yield exercise of getting their own base to the booth. Where voting is mandatory, that money is redirected toward the contestable middle, the persuasion of which is the actual democratic conversation. Politics becomes less about turnout and more about ideas.

The argument against mandatory voting is principally one of liberty. To compel a citizen to vote, even on pain of a token fine, is to override the citizen's freedom not to participate. A person who has lost confidence in every party on the ballot has, on this view, the right to express that loss of confidence by staying home. Coercing such a citizen to attend a polling booth produces, at best, a meaningless ballot and, at worst, a felt grievance that corrodes the legitimacy mandatory voting was supposed to produce. Liberty critics also note that low turnout is a signal worth listening to, not a defect to be administratively corrected.

India's debate has remained inconclusive precisely because both sides press genuine values that cannot be fully reconciled.

16. Which of the following best states the conclusion of the argument FOR mandatory voting?

◯ **A.** Voluntary voting is the only system consistent with civic dignity
◯ **B.** Mandatory voting corrects a self-selection distortion in democratic legitimacy without forcing any particular vote
◯ **C.** Australian elections are inherently superior to Indian elections
◯ **D.** Election commissions should set a turnout floor at 95 per cent

17. Which of the following is an unstated assumption of the pro-mandatory argument?

◯ **A.** Most voters secretly wish that voting were mandatory
◯ **B.** Higher turnout, when achieved by compulsion, generally produces a more representative electoral outcome
◯ **C.** Indian political parties are wealthier than Australian parties
◯ **D.** The cost of administering mandatory voting is zero

18. Which of the following, if true, would most WEAKEN the argument FOR mandatory voting?

◯ **A.** An empirical study of mandatory-voting jurisdictions finds that the policies enacted under compelled turnout do not differ measurably from those that would have emerged under voluntary turnout
◯ **B.** An opinion poll finds 45 per cent support for mandatory voting in India
◯ **C.** A small fine is easier to administer than a large fine
◯ **D.** A political philosopher publishes a book defending mandatory voting

19. Which of the following, if true, would most STRENGTHEN the liberty objection?

◯ **A.** A constitutional court holds that the freedom to abstain is a protected expression integral to electoral participation rights
◯ **B.** Australian turnout exceeds 90 per cent in most federal elections
◯ **C.** Belgium has enforced mandatory voting since 1893
◯ **D.** Compulsory voting reduces campaign spending on the base

20. The author's claim that 'low turnout is a signal worth listening to' functions in the argument as:

◯ **A.** An empirical fact that decides the matter conclusively
◯ **B.** A normative consideration offered to support the liberty critique of mandatory voting
◯ **C.** A concession to the pro-mandatory side
◯ **D.** An ad-hominem attack on advocates of mandatory voting

SECTION C — RAPID-FIRE GK & CURRENT AFFAIRS Q21–33 · 13 Marks

Standalone questions on current affairs, static GK, vocabulary in context and idiom usage. No passage required.

21. Which Indian state, in March 2026, became the first to operationalise a fully solar-powered High Court complex?

◯ **A.** Rajasthan
◯ **B.** Gujarat
◯ **C.** Karnataka
◯ **D.** Maharashtra

22. The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, replaced which of the following colonial-era statutes?

- ◯ **A.** Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973
- ◯ **B.** Indian Penal Code, 1860
- ◯ **C.** Indian Evidence Act, 1872
- ◯ **D.** Police Act, 1861

23. Choose the word most nearly OPPOSITE in meaning to 'NASCENT':

- ◯ **A.** Mature
- ◯ **B.** Recent
- ◯ **C.** Inchoate
- ◯ **D.** Initial

24. The idiom 'to throw in the towel' most nearly means:

- ◯ **A.** To start a new project with enthusiasm
- ◯ **B.** To accept defeat and give up
- ◯ **C.** To clean a kitchen quickly
- ◯ **D.** To celebrate a victory loudly

25. Which Article of the Constitution of India enshrines the Right to Constitutional Remedies?

- ◯ **A.** Article 14
- ◯ **B.** Article 21
- ◯ **C.** Article 32
- ◯ **D.** Article 19

26. The 2025 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded principally for work related to which area?

- ◯ **A.** Reduction of methane emissions
- ◯ **B.** Mediation in protracted civil conflicts
- ◯ **C.** Nuclear disarmament verification
- ◯ **D.** Press freedom in autocracies

27. The capital city of Norway is:

- ◯ **A.** Stockholm
- ◯ **B.** Helsinki
- ◯ **C.** Oslo
- ◯ **D.** Copenhagen

28. Choose the word most nearly SIMILAR in meaning to 'EXACERBATE':

- ◯ **A.** Worsen
- ◯ **B.** Mitigate
- ◯ **C.** Conceal
- ◯ **D.** Postpone

29. The Reserve Bank of India's monetary policy is currently formulated by which body?

- ◯ **A.** The RBI Board of Directors
- ◯ **B.** The Monetary Policy Committee constituted under the RBI Act
- ◯ **C.** The Ministry of Finance directly
- ◯ **D.** The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs

30. Which Indian author won the JCB Prize for Literature in 2025?

- ◯ **A.** Arundhati Roy
- ◯ **B.** Perumal Murugan
- ◯ **C.** Vivek Shanbhag
- ◯ **D.** Janice Pariat

31. The currency of South Korea is:

- ◯ **A.** Yen
- ◯ **B.** Yuan
- ◯ **C.** Won
- ◯ **D.** Ringgit

32. The phrase 'a Pyrrhic victory' is best understood to mean:

- ◯ **A.** A victory celebrated with fireworks
- ◯ **B.** A win that is achieved at such great cost that the cost outweighs the gain
- ◯ **C.** A victory in a constitutional dispute
- ◯ **D.** A win against an enemy of legendary fame

33. The case Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala (1973) is principally remembered for establishing which constitutional doctrine?

- ◯ **A.** Doctrine of Eclipse
- ◯ **B.** Basic Structure Doctrine
- ◯ **C.** Doctrine of Severability
- ◯ **D.** Doctrine of Pith and Substance