

Topics Covered

- Effective Reading Strategies

VARC

CEX-V-0205/25

Number of Questions : **13**

Main Point

Directions for questions 1 to 4: Read the following passage and choose the option that best captures its main idea.

1. Historically, dentistry and medicine have evolved as distinct disciplines, with dentists primarily focused on oral health and physicians on the broader aspects of bodily health. This traditional division has led to a segmented approach to healthcare, where the mouth is often treated as separate from the rest of the body. However, recent trends in healthcare are challenging this separation, as numerous initiatives, particularly in the United States and other nations, are advocating for a more integrated approach to health that encompasses both oral and systemic care. This shift is driven by the growing recognition of the interconnections between oral health and general health, particularly in relation to chronic conditions such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and complications with joint replacements. Despite the burgeoning awareness, the precise nature of the relationship between oral health and other bodily ailments remains somewhat elusive and, at times, controversial. Nevertheless, the consensus among healthcare professionals is shifting towards the acknowledgement of the significant links between the health of the

mouth and teeth and overall physical health, emphasizing that these connections should no longer be ignored.

- (1) The evolution of dentistry and medicine as separate disciplines has historically led to a segmented healthcare approach, with each focusing on different aspects of health.
 - (2) The traditional separation of dentistry and medicine is being challenged by a growing understanding of the link between oral health and overall well-being.
 - (3) Research into the connection between oral health and systemic conditions like diabetes and cardiovascular disease is ongoing, with some findings still controversial.
 - (4) Initiatives in various countries are pushing for healthcare reforms that would treat the mouth and the body as a single entity, given the interrelated nature of oral and bodily health.
2. Primitive communism is appealing. It endorses an Edenic image of humanity, one in which modernity has corrupted our natural goodness. But this is precisely why we should question it. If a century and a half of research on humanity has taught us anything, it is to be sceptical of the seductive. From race science to the noble savage, the history of

anthropology is cluttered with the corpses of convenient stories, of narratives that misrepresent human diversity to advance ideological aims. Is primitive communism any different?

- (1) The concept of primitive communism holds a certain appeal.
- (2) The idea that modernity has corrupted natural human goodness.
- (3) History shows that idealized concepts have been used to advance ideological agendas.
- (4) The concept of primitive communism should be viewed with scepticism.

3. The Veil of Ignorance, a thought experiment developed by political philosopher John Rawls, is meant to help surface fair principles to govern society. The idea is that when people choose rules without knowing their own position in society, they are unable to favour themselves and will likely choose principles that benefit everyone fairly. We extended this concept to explore how it might identify rules for governing AI. We implemented this thought experiment in several ways, having people choose principles to govern AI. Our study suggests that when people are unaware of their own social position – advantaged or disadvantaged – they tend to pick AI governance principles that favour those who are worst off. This aligns with Rawls' speculation that people reasoning behind the veil would prioritize those less fortunate in society.

- (1) The results from a study on how to govern AI prove Rawls' theory that the Veil of Ignorance leads to prioritizing the less fortunate.
- (2) The Veil of Ignorance, when applied to AI governance, leads to the selection of principles that favour the disadvantaged.
- (3) The core concept of John Rawls' Veil of Ignorance involves making decisions

without knowledge of one's social position.

- (4) A study on AI applied the concept of the Veil of Ignorance to investigate its potential for developing AI governance rules.

4. Universal Grammar (UG) is a suspect concept. There is little agreement on what exactly is in it; the empirical evidence for it is very weak. A variety of arguments have been put forward as evidence for UG, out of which these are the three most powerful ones: universality (all human languages share a number of properties), convergence (all language learners converge on the same grammar in spite of the fact that they are exposed to different input), and poverty of the stimulus (children know things about language which they could not have learned from the input available to them). These arguments are based on premises which are either false or unsubstantiated. Languages differ from each other in profound ways, and there are very few true universals, so the fundamental cross-linguistic fact that needs explaining is diversity, not universality. A number of recent studies have demonstrated the existence of considerable differences in adult native speakers' knowledge of the grammar of their language, including aspects of inflectional morphology, passives, quantifiers, and a variety of more complex constructions, so learners do not, in fact, converge on the same grammar. Finally, the poverty of the stimulus argument presupposes that children acquire linguistic representations of the kind postulated by generative grammarians; constructionist grammar, such as those proposed by Tomasello, Goldberg and others, can be learned from the input. We are the only species that has language, so there must be something unique about humans that makes language learning possible. The extent of cross-linguistic diversity and the considerable individual differences in the rate,

style and outcome of acquisition suggest that it is more promising to think in terms of a language-making capacity, i.e., a set of domain-general abilities, rather than an innate body of knowledge about the structural properties of the target system.

- (1) Three primary arguments are often used to support the concept of Universal Grammar: universality, convergence, and the poverty of the stimulus.
- (2) Universal Grammar is theorized to be the reason why only humans have language, suggesting something uniquely human enables language learning.
- (3) A focus on language diversity and individual acquisition offers a more compelling explanation for language ability than Universal Grammar.
- (4) There is little consensus on what Universal Grammar, as proposed by Noam Chomsky, actually comprises, making it a somewhat nebulous concept.

Author's Attitude

5. For each of the following passages, determine whether it is expository, analytical, or argumentative.

Passage – 1

Humanism is a philosophical and ethical stance that emphasizes the value and agency of human beings, individually and collectively. It considers humans capable of reasoning and moral decision-making, often focusing on the need for self-actualization and the fulfillment of human potential. Originating in the Renaissance period, humanism sought to revive classical learning and cultivate a more secular outlook on life. It champions the importance of a broad education, the study of arts and sciences, and the development of critical thinking skills. Humanists advocate for human rights, secular governance, and

ethical practices derived from rational, rather than religious, considerations.

Passage – 2

The concept of humanism, traditionally celebrated for its emphasis on human values and intellectual progress, warrants a nuanced analytical examination in the context of its relevance and application in contemporary society. Humanism, which prioritizes human agency and rationality, has significantly shaped Western education and moral philosophy. However, its principles, when analyzed critically, reveal both strengths and limitations. On one hand, humanism's advocacy for critical thinking and individual dignity aligns with democratic ideals and promotes personal empowerment. On the other hand, its predominantly anthropocentric viewpoint raises questions about its adequacy in addressing the urgent global challenges of environmental degradation and social inequality.

Passage – 3

Humanism, contrary to certain critiques, is not a narrow or exclusionary ideology but rather a pivotal foundation for democratic and ethical societies. Critics argue that humanism overly glorifies human reason and neglects spiritual dimensions, but this perspective overlooks humanism's broad advocacy for holistic human flourishing, including emotional and spiritual well-being. By fostering critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and respect for human dignity, humanism significantly contributes to the development of inclusive, progressive communities. Therefore, the promotion of humanism is essential in education and policy-making to ensure a balanced integration of rationality and human values, countering the rise of dogmatism and authoritarianism in various societal aspects.

Structure of the passage

Directions for questions 6 to 9: The passage below is accompanied by four questions. Based on the passage, choose the best answer for each question.

Grove snails as a whole are distributed all over Europe, but a specific variety of the snail, with a distinctive white-lipped shell, is found exclusively in Ireland and in the Pyrenees mountains that lie on the border between France and Spain. The researchers sampled a total of 423 snail specimens from 36 sites distributed across Europe, with an emphasis on gathering large numbers of the white-lipped variety. When they sequenced genes from the mitochondrial DNA of each of these snails and used algorithms to analyze the genetic diversity between them, they found that a distinct lineage (the snails with the white-lipped shells) was indeed endemic to the two very specific and distant places in question.

Explaining this is tricky. Previously, some had speculated that the strange distributions of creatures such as the white-lipped grove snails could be explained by convergent evolution—in which two populations evolve the same trait by coincidence—but the underlying genetic similarities between the two groups rules that out. Alternately, some scientists had suggested that the white-lipped variety had simply spread over the whole continent, then been wiped out everywhere besides Ireland and the Pyrenees, but the researchers say their sampling and subsequent DNA analysis eliminate that possibility too.

“If the snails naturally colonized Ireland, you would expect to find some of the same genetic type in other areas of Europe, especially Britain. We just don’t find them,” Davidson, the lead author, said in a press statement.

Moreover, if they’d gradually spread across the continent, there would be some genetic variation within the white-lipped type, because evolution would introduce variety over the thousands of years it would have taken them to spread from the Pyrenees to Ireland. That variation doesn’t exist, at least in the

genes sampled. This means that rather than the organism gradually expanding its range, large populations instead were somehow moved en masse to the other location within the space of a few dozen generations, ensuring a lack of genetic variety.

“There is a very clear pattern, which is difficult to explain except by involving humans,” Davidson said. Humans, after all, colonized Ireland roughly 9,000 years ago, and the oldest fossil evidence of grove snails in Ireland dates to roughly the same era. Additionally, there is archaeological evidence of early sea trade between the ancient peoples of Spain and Ireland via the Atlantic and even evidence that humans routinely ate these types of snails before the advent of agriculture, as their burnt shells have been found in Stone Age trash heaps.

The simplest explanation, then? Boats. These snails may have inadvertently traveled on the floor of the small, coast-hugging skiffs these early humans used for travel, or they may have been intentionally carried to Ireland by the seafarers as a food source. “The highways of the past were rivers and the ocean—as the river that flanks the Pyrenees was an ancient trade route to the Atlantic, what we’re actually seeing might be the long lasting legacy of snails that hitched a ride as humans travelled from the South of France to Ireland 8,000 years ago,” Davidson said.

6. All of the following evidence supports the passage’s explanation of sea travel/trade EXCEPT:
- (1) the coincidental existence of similar traits in the white-lipped grove snails of Ireland and the Pyrenees because of convergent evolution.
 - (2) the oldest fossil evidence of white-lipped grove snails in Ireland dates back to roughly 9,000 years ago, the time when humans colonised Ireland.
 - (3) absence of genetic variation within the white-lipped grove snails of Ireland and the Pyrenees, whose genes were sampled.
 - (4) archaeological evidence of early sea trade between the ancient peoples of Spain and Ireland via the Atlantic Ocean.



7. The passage outlines several hypotheses and evidence related to white-lipped grove snails to arrive at the most convincing explanation for:

- (1) why the white-lipped variety of grove snails were wiped out everywhere except in Ireland and the Pyrenees.
- (2) how the white-lipped variety of grove snails independently evolved in Ireland and the Pyrenees.
- (3) why the white-lipped variety of grove snails are found only in Ireland and the Pyrenees.
- (4) how the white-lipped variety of grove snails independently evolved in Ireland and the Pyrenees.

8. Which one of the following makes the author eliminate convergent evolution as a probable explanation for why white-lipped grove snails are found in Ireland and the Pyrenees?

- (1) The absence of genetic variation between white-lipped grove snails of Ireland and the Pyrenees.
- (2) The absence of genetic similarities between white-lipped grove snails of Ireland and snails from other parts of Europe, especially Britain.
- (3) The coincidental evolution of similar traits (white-lipped shell) in the grove snails of Ireland and the Pyrenees.
- (4) The distinct lineage of white-lipped grove snails found specifically in Ireland and the Pyrenees.

9. In paragraph 4, the evidence that “humans routinely ate these types of snails before the advent of agriculture” can be used to conclude that:

- (1) white-lipped grove snails may have inadvertently traveled from the Pyrenees to Ireland on the floor of the small, coast-hugging skiffs that early seafarers used for travel.

(2) the seafarers who traveled from the Pyrenees to Ireland might have carried white-lipped grove snails with them as edibles.

(3) rivers and oceans in the Stone Age facilitated trade in white-lipped grove snails.

(4) 9,000 years ago, during the Stone Age, humans traveled from the South of France to Ireland via the Atlantic Ocean.

Directions for questions 10 to 13: The passage below is accompanied by four questions. Based on the passage, choose the best answer for each question.

Starting in 1957, [Noam Chomsky] proclaimed a new doctrine: Language, that most human of all attributes, was innate. The grammatical faculty was built into the infant brain, and your average 3-year-old was not a mere apprentice in the great enterprise of absorbing English from his or her parents, but a “linguistic genius.” Since this message was couched in terms of Chomskyan theoretical linguistics, in discourse so opaque that it was nearly incomprehensible even to some scholars, many people did not hear it. Now, in a brilliant, witty and altogether satisfying book, Mr. Chomsky’s colleague Steven Pinker . . . has brought Mr. Chomsky’s findings to everyman. In “The Language Instinct” he has gathered persuasive data from such diverse fields as cognitive neuroscience, developmental psychology and speech therapy to make his points, and when he disagrees with Mr. Chomsky he tells you so. . . .

For Mr. Chomsky and Mr. Pinker, somewhere in the human brain there is a complex set of neural circuits that have been programmed with “super-rules” (making up what Mr. Chomsky calls “universal grammar”), and that these rules are unconscious and instinctive. A half-century ago, this would have been pooh-poohed as a “black box” theory, since one could not actually pinpoint this grammatical faculty in a specific part of the brain, or describe its functioning. But now things are different.

Neurosurgeons [have now found that this] “black box” is situated in and around Broca’s area, on the left side of the forebrain. . . .

Unlike Mr. Chomsky, Mr. Pinker firmly places the wiring of the brain for language within the framework of Darwinian natural selection and evolution. He effectively disposes of all claims that intelligent nonhuman primates like chimps have any abilities to learn and use language. It is not that chimps lack the vocal apparatus to speak; it is just that their brains are unable to produce or use grammar. On the other hand, the “language instinct,” when it first appeared among our most distant hominid ancestors, must have given them a selective reproductive advantage over their competitors (including the ancestral chimps). . . .

So according to Mr. Pinker, the roots of language must be in the genes, but there cannot be a “grammar gene” any more than there can be a gene for the heart or any other complex body structure. This proposition will undoubtedly raise the hackles of some behavioral psychologists and anthropologists, for it apparently contradicts the liberal idea that human behavior may be changed for the better by improvements in culture and environment, and it might seem to invite the twin bugaboos of biological determinism and racism. Yet Mr. Pinker stresses one point that should allay such fears. Even though there are 4,000 to 6,000 languages today, they are all sufficiently alike to be considered one language by an extraterrestrial observer. In other words, most of the diversity of the world’s cultures, so beloved to anthropologists, is superficial and minor compared to the similarities. Racial differences are literally only “skin deep.” The fundamental unity of humanity is the theme of Mr. Chomsky’s universal grammar, and of this exciting book.

10. Which one of the following statements best summarises the author’s position about Pinker’s book?

- (1) Anatomical developments like the voice box play a key role in determining language acquisition skills.
- (2) The universality of the “language instinct” counters claims that Pinker’s book is racist.
- (3) The evolutionary and deterministic framework of Pinker’s book makes it racist.
- (4) Culture and environment play a key role in shaping our acquisition of language.

11. According to the passage, all of the following are true about the language instinct EXCEPT that:

- (1) all intelligent primates are gifted with it.
- (2) not all intelligent primates are gifted with it.
- (3) developments in neuroscience have increased its acceptance.
- (4) it confers an evolutionary reproductive advantage.

12. From the passage, it can be inferred that all of the following are true about Pinker’s book, “The Language Instinct”, EXCEPT that Pinker:

- (1) writes in a different style from Chomsky.
- (2) disagrees with Chomsky on certain grounds.
- (3) draws extensively from Chomsky’s propositions.
- (4) draws from behavioural psychology theories.

13. On the basis of the information in the passage, Pinker and Chomsky may disagree with each other on which one of the following points?

- (1) The possibility of a universal grammar.
- (2) The Darwinian explanatory paradigm for language.
- (3) The language instinct.
- (4) The inborn language acquisition skills of humans.