

Top 20 Reading Comprehension Passages with Q&A

Passage - 1

Philosophy of Education is a label applied to the study of the purpose, process, nature and ideals of education. It can be considered a branch of both philosophy and education. Education can be defined as the teaching and learning of specific skills, and the imparting of knowledge, judgment and wisdom, and is something broader than the societal institution of education we often speak of.

Many educationalists consider it a weak and woolly field, too far removed from the practical applications of the real world to be useful. But philosophers dating back to Plato and the Ancient Greeks have given the area much thought and emphasis, and there is little doubt that their work has helped shape the practice of education over the millennia.

Plato is the earliest important educational thinker, and education is an essential element in "The Republic" (his most important work on philosophy and political theory, written around 360 B.C.). In it, he advocates some rather extreme methods: removing children from their mothers' care and raising them as wards of the state, and differentiating children suitable to the various castes, the highest receiving the most education, so that they could act as guardians of the city and care for the less able. He believed that education should be holistic, including facts, skills, physical discipline, music and art. Plato believed that talent and intelligence is not distributed genetically and thus is to be found in children born to all classes, although his proposed system of selective public education for an educated minority of the population does not really follow a democratic model.

Aristotle considered human nature, habit and reason to be equally important forces to be cultivated in education, the ultimate aim of which should be to produce good and virtuous citizens. He proposed that teachers lead their students systematically, and that repetition be used as a key tool to develop good habits, unlike Socrates' emphasis on questioning his listeners to bring out their own ideas. He emphasized the balancing of the theoretical and practical aspects of subjects taught, among which he explicitly mentions reading, writing, mathematics, music, physical education, literature, history, and a wide range of sciences, as well as play, which he also considered important.

During the Medieval period, the idea of Perennialism was first formulated by St. Thomas Aquinas in his work "De Magistro". Perennialism holds that one should teach those things deemed to be of everlasting importance to all people everywhere, namely principles and reasoning, not just facts (which are apt to change over time), and that one should teach first about people, not machines or techniques. It was originally religious in nature, and it was only much later that a theory of secular perennialism developed.

During the Renaissance, the French skeptic Michel de Montaigne (1533 - 1592) was one of the first to critically look at education. Unusually for his time, Montaigne was willing to question the conventional wisdom of the period, calling into question the whole edifice of the educational system, and the implicit assumption that university-educated philosophers were necessarily wiser than uneducated farm workers, for example.

Q1. What is the difference between the approaches of Socrates and Aristotle?

- 1) Aristotle felt the need for repetition to develop good habits in students; Socrates felt that students need to be constantly questioned
- 2) Aristotle felt the need for rote-learning; Socrates emphasized on dialogic learning

3) There was no difference

4) Aristotle emphasized on the importance of paying attention to human nature; Socrates emphasized upon science

Ans1. The first option is correct – their approaches were different and this difference is quite explicitly explained in the fourth paragraph

Q2. Why do educationists consider philosophy a ‘weak and woolly’ field?

1) It is not practically applicable

2) Its theoretical concepts are easily understood

3) It is irrelevant for education

4) None of the above

Ans2. The first option is correct because educationists believe that philosophical abstractions are not suitable for practical application.

Q3. What do you understand by the term ‘Perennialism’, in the context of the given comprehension passage?

1) It refers to something which is of ceaseless importance

2) It refers to something which is quite unnecessary

3) It refers to something which is abstract and theoretical

4) It refers to something which existed in the past and no longer exists now

Ans3. The first option is correct because the term comes from the root word ‘perennial’ – which means ceaseless.

Q4. Were Plato’s beliefs about education democratic?

1) He believed that only the rich have the right to acquire education

2) Yes

3) He believed that only a select few are meant to attend schools

4) He believed that all pupils are not talented

Ans4. The second option is correct – Plato's beliefs were democratic but not his suggested practices

Q5. Why did Aquinas propose a model of education which did not lay much emphasis on facts?

1) Facts are not important

2) Facts do not lead to holistic education

3) Facts change with the changing times

4) Facts are frozen in time

Ans5. The third option is correct – facts do change with the changing times, hence, they are not of the utmost importance when aiming for holistic education.

Passage - 2

"I Have a Dream" is a public speech delivered by American civil rights activist Martin Luther King Jr. during the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom on August 28, 1963, in which he calls for an end to racism in the United States and called for civil and economic rights. Delivered to over 250,000 civil rights supporters from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., the speech was a defining moment of the civil rights movement.

Beginning with a reference to the Emancipation Proclamation, which freed millions of slaves in 1863, King observes that: "one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free". Toward the end of the speech, King departed from his prepared text for a partly improvised peroration on the theme "I have a dream", prompted by Mahalia Jackson's cry: "Tell them about the dream, Martin!" In this part of the speech, which most excited the listeners and has

now become its most famous, King described his dreams of freedom and equality arising from a land of slavery and hatred. Jon Meacham writes that, "With a single phrase, Martin Luther King Jr. joined Jefferson and Lincoln in the ranks of men who've shaped modern America". The speech was ranked the top American speech of the 20th century in a 1999 poll of scholars of public address.

Q1. What issues does Martin Luther King's speech address?

1. Continuation of racism
2. End to racism and civil and economic rights
3. Civil rights
4. Civil War

Ans – The second option is correct, as stated in the passage.

Q2. What pushes King to speak: "I have a dream"?

1. He reads out the Emancipation Proclamation
2. He is prompted by Mahalia Jackson
3. He is overwhelmed by the crowd
4. Lincoln had asked him to give the speech

Ans- As mentioned in the passage, Mahalia Jackson had prompted him to speak about his dream

Q3. From the last paragraph, give one word for "to leave"

1. Departed
2. Proclamation
3. Improvised
4. Address

Ans – The correct answer is 'departed'

Q4. What is the name of Martin Luther King's famed speech?

1. The Emancipation Proclamation
2. An Improvisation
3. A Peroration
4. I Have a Dream

Ans – As mentioned in the beginning of the comprehension, the first answer is correct

Q5. In front of whom does King speak?

- 1.The civil rights supporters
- 2.His friends
- 3.Lincoln
- 4.The Negroes

Ans – As mentioned in the opening paragraph, the first option is correct

Passage - 3

Today I Rabindranath Tagore complete eighty years of my life .As I look back on the vast stretch of years that lie behind me and see in clear perspective the history of my early development, I am struck by the change that has taken place both in my own attitude and in the psychology of my countrymen -- a change that carries within it a cause of profound tragedy.

Our direct contact with the larger world of men was linked up with the contemporary history of the English people whom we came to know in those earlier days. It was mainly through their mighty literature that we formed our ideas with regard to these newcomers to our Indian shores. In those days the type of learning that was served out to us was neither plentiful nor diverse, nor was the spirit of scientific enquiry very much in evidence. Thus their scope being strictly limited, the educated of those days had recourse to English language and literature. Their days and nights were eloquent with the stately declamations of Burke, with Macaulay's long-rolling sentences; discussions centered upon Shakespeare's drama and Byron's poetry and above all upon the large-hearted liberalism of the nineteenth-century English politics.

At the time though tentative attempts were being made to gain our national independence, at heart we had not lost faith in the generosity of the English race. This belief was so firmly rooted in the sentiments of our leaders as to lead them to hope that the victor would of his own grace pave the path of freedom for the vanquished. This belief was based upon the fact that England at the time provided a shelter to all those who had to flee from persecution in their own country. Political martyrs who had suffered for the honour of their people were accorded unreserved welcome at the hands of the English. I was impressed by this evidence of liberal humanity in the character of the English and thus I was led to set them on the pedestal of my highest respect. This generosity in their national character had not yet been vitiated by imperialist pride. About this time, as a boy in England, I had the opportunity of listening to the speeches of John Bright, both in and outside Parliament. The large-hearted, radical liberalism of those speeches, overflowing all narrow national bounds, had made so deep an impression on my mind that something of it lingers even today, even in these days of graceless disillusionment.

Q1. From the first paragraph, give a synonym for 'deep':

1. Perspective
2. Profound
3. tragedy
4. Psychology

Ans – the word 'profound' is similar in meaning to 'deep'

Q2. What helped the Indians to conceive of a notion of the Englishmen?

1. Their advanced weaponry
2. Their literature
3. Their orders
4. Their administration

Ans – As mentioned in the second paragraph, English literature helped Indians to shape their ideas about the Englishmen

Q3. Who could read and gain from English literature?

- 1.The educated Indians
- 2.All the Indians
- 3.Only writers such as Rabindranath Tagore
- 4.None of the above

Ans – As stated in the second paragraph, only the educated Indians could understand English literature

Q4. From the third paragraph, give an antonym for ‘victorious’

- 1.Victor
- 2.vanquished
- 3.Belief
- 4.Persecution

Ans – ‘Vanquished’ is the antonym, it means defeated

Q5. Whose speeches did Tagore listen to, as a boy?

- 1.Shakespeare
- 2.Byron
- 3.John Bright
- 4.Macaulay

Ans – Tagore listened to John Bright’s speeches, as stated in the last paragraph

Passage - 4

Sportsmanship can be conceptualized as an enduring and relatively stable characteristic or disposition such that individuals differ in the way they are generally expected to behave in sports situations. In general, sportsmanship refers to virtues such as fairness, self-control, courage, and persistence, and has been associated with interpersonal concepts of treating others and being treated fairly, maintaining self-control if dealing with others, and respect for

both authority and opponents. Sportsmanship is also looked at as being the way one reacts to a sport/game/player.

The four elements of sportsmanship are often shown being good form, the will to win, equity and fairness. All four elements are critical and a balance must be found among all four for true sportsmanship to be illustrated. These elements may also cause conflict, as a person may desire to win more than play in equity and fairness and thus resulting in a clash within the aspects of sportsmanship. This will cause problems as the person believes they are being a good sportsman, but they are defeating the purpose of this idea as they are ignoring two key components of being sportsman like. When athletes become too self-centred, the idea of sportsmanship is dismissed.

Today's sporting culture, in particular the base of elite sport, places great importance on the idea of competition and winning and thus sportsmanship takes a back seat as a result. In most, if not all sports, sportsmen at the elite level make the standards on sportsmanship and no matter whether they like it or not, they are seen as leaders and role models in society.

Since every sport is rule driven, the most common offence of bad sportsmanship is the act of cheating or breaking the rules to gain an unfair advantage. A competitor who exhibits poor sportsmanship after losing a game or contest is often called a "sore loser", while a competitor who exhibits poor sportsmanship after winning is typically called a "bad winner". Sore loser behavior includes blaming others for the loss, not accepting responsibility for personal actions that contributed to the defeat, reacting to the loss in an immature or improper fashion, making excuses for the defeat, and citing unfavourable conditions or other petty issues as reasons for the defeat. A bad winner acts in a shallow fashion after his or her victory, such as by gloating about his or her win, rubbing the win in the face(s) of the opponent(s), and lowering the opponent(s)'s self-esteem by constantly reminding the opponent(s) of "poor" performance in comparison (even if the opponent(s)

competed well). Not showing respect to the other team is considered to being a bad sportsman and could lead to demoralizing effects; as Leslie Howe describes: "If a pitcher in baseball decides to pitch not to his maximum ability suggest that the batter is not at an adequate level, [it] could lead to the batter to have low self-confidence or worth.

Q1. Is it necessary to strike a balance between all the four elements of sportsmanship?

1. No
2. Yes
3. Any 2 can be balanced
4. Only 1 is sufficient

Ans- Option 2 - Yes, all elements need to be balanced, as pointed out in paragraph 2

Q2. Why has sportsmanship taken a backseat today?

1. Due to lack of balance between the elements
2. Due to the emphasis on winning
3. Due to drug abuse
4. None of the above

Ans- As per paragraph 3, the stress laid on winning has made sportsmanship take a backseat. Option 2 is correct

Q3. If one does not accept responsibility for one's defeat, one is called a:

1. Sore loser
2. Bad winner
3. Good sportsman
4. Prudent sportsman

Ans – Option 1 - Not accepting responsibility characterizes a sore loser

Q4. From the last paragraph, give the opposite of the word 'deep':

1. Competitor
2. Pitch
3. Immature
4. Shallow

Ans – Option 4 is the correct answer

Q5. When does the spirit of sportsmanship die?

1. When the sportsman becomes too self-centered
2. When the player loses the will to play
3. When the sportsman behaves badly
4. None of the above

Ans – Option 1 .According to the second paragraph, this is the correct option

Passage - 5

Artificial intelligence (AI), sometimes called machine intelligence, is intelligence demonstrated by machines, in contrast to the natural intelligence displayed by humans and other animals. In computer science AI research is defined as the study of "intelligent agents": any device that perceives its environment and takes actions that maximize its chance of successfully achieving its goals. Colloquially, the term "artificial intelligence" is applied when a machine mimics "cognitive" functions that humans associate with other human minds, such as "learning" and "problem solving".

The scope of AI is disputed: as machines become increasingly capable, tasks considered as requiring "intelligence" are often removed from the definition, a phenomenon known as the AI effect, leading to the quip, "AI is whatever hasn't been done yet." For instance, optical character recognition is frequently excluded from "artificial intelligence", having become a routine technology.

Capabilities generally classified as AI as of 2017 include successfully understanding human speech, competing at the highest level in strategic game systems (such as chess and Go), autonomous cars, intelligent routing in content delivery network and military simulations.

Artificial intelligence was founded as an academic discipline in 1956, and in the years since has experienced several waves of optimism, followed by disappointment and the loss of funding (known as an "AI winter"), followed by

new approaches, success and renewed funding. For most of its history, AI research has been divided into subfields that often fail to communicate with each other. These sub-fields are based on technical considerations, such as particular goals (e.g. "robotics" or "machine learning"), the use of particular tools ("logic" or artificial neural networks), or deep philosophical differences. Subfields have also been based on social factors (particular institutions or the work of particular researchers).

The traditional problems (or goals) of AI research include reasoning, knowledge representation, planning, learning, natural language processing, perception and the ability to move and manipulate objects. General intelligence is among the field's long-term goals. Approaches include statistical methods, computational intelligence, and traditional symbolic AI. Many tools are used in AI, including versions of search and mathematical optimization, artificial neural networks, and methods based on statistics, probability and economics. The AI field draws upon computer science, mathematics, psychology, linguistics, philosophy and many others.

Q1. What is the AI winter?

1. Loss of funding for AI projects
2. Non-functioning AI systems
3. Absence of research labs
4. None of the above

Ans – The first option is correct –as per paragraph 4

Q2. Are sub-fields based only on social factors?

1. No
2. Yes
3. They are based on machine learning
4. None of the above

Ans. Option 1 is correct – as per paragraph 3

Q3. Leaning and problem solving by machines is a colloquial way of understanding artificial intelligence?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Artificial intelligence means acquiring knowledge through books
4. It cannot be defined colloquially

Ans – Option 1 is correct, as stated in para 1

Q4. Are autonomous cars an example of AI?

1. Yes
2. No
3. As of 2017, they are
4. None of the above

Ans – The third option is correct, as given in para 2

Q5. Does AI only draw on technology and mathematics?

1. Yes
2. No
3. It also draws upon psychology
4. It only draws upon linguistics

Ans – The second option is correct – as given in the last para – there are other fields too, upon which AI draws.

Passage - 6

Like their ancient toga-wearing counterparts, modern philosophers continue to disagree on the nature of freewill. Do we really have any control over the choices we make and the things we desire, and if so, to what degree?

Theories of freewill vary, but the ancient words of Plato still line up with our modern perceptions of temptation and willpower. The revered Greek philosopher argued that the human experience is one of constant struggle between the intellect and the body, between rationality and desire. Along these lines, true freedom is only achievable when willpower unchains us from bodily, emotional, instinctual slavery.

You can find similar sentiments throughout world religions, most of which offer a particular and often difficult path to rise above our darker natures.

And science? Well, science mostly agrees with all of this. Willpower is all about overcoming your natural impulses to eat cupcakes, skip your morning workout, flirt with the waiter, hit the snooze alarm and check your e-mail during a funeral.

Your willpower, however, is limited. If life were a video game, you'd see a glowing "willpower" or "ego" meter at the top of the screen next to your "life" meter. Successfully resist one temptation, and the meter depletes a little. The next temptation depletes the "willpower" meter even more, until there's nothing left at all.

Our modern scientific understanding of willpower in large part stems from a 1996 research experiment involving chocolate and radishes. Psychologist Roy Baumeister led a study in which 67 test subjects were presented with tempting chocolate chip cookies and other chocolate-flavored treats before a persistence-testing puzzle. Here's the catch: The researchers asked some of the participants to abstain from sweets and snack on radishes instead.

Baumeister's results told a fascinating story. The test subjects who resisted the sweet stuff in favor of radishes performed poorly on the persistence test. They simply didn't have the willpower left to resist slacking off.

The resulting paper, "Ego Depletion: Is the Active Self a Limited Resource?" inspired more than a thousand additional studies discussing everything from the influence of positive messages to the ego-sapping power of daily decisions

Studies also show that cognitive capacity also affects our ability to hold out against temptation. Cognitive capacity is essentially your working memory, which you employ when resisting a temptation ... or holding a string of numbers in your head. A 1999 study from the University of Iowa professor Baba Shiv found that people tasked with remembering a two-digit number held out better than people remembering a seven-digit number when tempted with chocolate cake.

Q1. What do you understand by 'freewill'?

- 1)The choices we make and the things we desire
- 2)The choices that philosophers force us to make
- 3)Our perception of temptation
- 4)Our ego

Ans1. The first option is correct. The answer can be found in the second sentence of the first paragraph, where after stating a general observation on 'freewill', an attempt is made to define it.

Q2. According to Plato, when is true freedom available?

- 1)When there is a struggle between the intellect and the body

2)When our willpower helps us to overcome our base instincts

3)When we desire that which we cannot achieve

4)When we have no control over our ego

Ans2. The second option is correct, as is evident from the last line of the second paragraph – once our willpower becomes strong enough to overcome instant gratification, we are truly free.

Q3. In the second paragraph, what does the expression ‘line up’ signify?

1)Align with

2)disagree with

3)Differ from

4)In discussion with

Ans3. The first option is correct, as the second paragraph opens up by relating the fact that although the contemporary philosophers’ views vary, they still align with Plato’s thoughts.

Q4. What is meant by ‘cognitive capacity’?

1)Willpower

2)Our ego

3)Our ability to overcome temptation

4)The desire to give in to temptation

Ans 4.The third option is correct, the last paragraph offers a working definition of ‘cognitive capacity’

Q5. From the RC given above, find a synonym for 'respected'

- 1)Cognitive
- 2)Temptation
- 3)Desire
- 4)Revered

Ans 5. The fourth option is correct, 'revered' also means – to hold in high esteem, to respect.

Passage - 7

People do not always do the things we want them to do. No matter how reasonable or minimal our expectations may be, there are times when we are let down. Naturally, we feel upset and hurt when our expectations are not met. We dread confrontations because they are unpleasant and can damage relationships. Yet not confronting a person does not solve the problem because unresolved issues also affect relationships in an adverse way. Actually, the real problem lies in our style of confrontation, not in the issue. Typically, we use character-based confrontations. They help in venting our anger and hurt, but that is the only thing they do. They lead to angry show-downs and bring all discussions to a grinding halt.

It is important to remember that self-image is the most important possession of all human beings. It is the way we view and regard ourselves in our own eyes and in the eyes of others. As self-conscious beings, we are acutely aware of our image and constantly work towards protecting it from any damage. We also seek approval from others about our own self-image. We

feel distraught if we sense that there is even a slight threat to our self image, because our character is the essence of our lives.

To ensure a rational dialogue over dashed expectations, we need to deploy issue based confrontations. They involve an explanation of which actions have bothered us, in what manner and what changes we would like from the other person.

Questions - true or false

Q 1 Confrontations damage our self-image

Q 2 Not confronting an issue helps in solving the problem

Q 2 Approval from others for our own self-image is not necessary

Q 4 Issue - based confrontations are an easier way out

Answers -

A 1 True- confrontations tarnish our self image.

A 2 False - Confrontations are important, they help in resolving issues

A 3 False - We seek self-approval for our own self-image

A 4 True- such confrontations ensure rational discussion

Passage - 8

“A principal fruit of friendship,” Francis Bacon wrote in his timeless meditation on the subject, “is the ease and discharge of the fulness and swellings of the heart, which passions of all kinds do cause and induce.” For Thoreau, friendship was one of life’s great rewards. But in today’s cultural landscape of muddled relationships scattered across various platforms for connecting, amidst constant debates about whether our Facebook “friendships” are making us more or less happy, it pays to consider what friendship actually is. That’s precisely what CUNY philosophy professor Massimo Pigliucci explores in *Answers for Aristotle: How Science and Philosophy Can Lead Us to A More*

Meaningful Life (public library), which also gave us this provocative read on the science of what we call “intuition.”

Philosophers and cognitive scientists agree that friendship is an essential ingredient of human happiness. But beyond the dry academic definitions — like, say, “voluntary interdependence between two persons over time, which is intended to facilitate socio-emotional goals of the participants, and may involve varying types and degrees of companionship, intimacy, affection and mutual assistance” — lies a body of compelling research that sheds light on how, precisely, friendship augments happiness.

The way friendship enhances well-being, it turns out, has nothing to do with quantity and everything to do with quality — researchers confirm that it isn’t the number of friends (or, in the case of Facebook, “friends”)

Q1. Name one change effected in the present situation which hassled to a re-thinking of the concept of friendship

- 1) Bacon and Thoreau’s theories are no longer available to read
- 2) The arrival of social media on the scene
- 3) There is more interest in the sciences
- 4) Friendships are not possible in the real world anymore, due to over-competition

Ans1) The second part is the correct answer, since the passage mentions ‘Facebook’ a social networking website

Q2. Friendship leads to happiness. Is it true?

- 1) Yes, researches have proven that friendship does lead to happiness
- 2) No, there is no relationship between friendship and happiness

3) Friends cannot make each other happy

4) One needs to find one's happiness alone, with peace of mind

Ans2) According to the given paragraph, the first answer is correct (as is mentioned in the second passage of the RC)

Q3. Did Pigliucci's book discuss intuition too?

1) No, it only discussed friendship

2) It explained science and philosophy

3) It discusses Aristotle's theories

4) Yes

Ans3) The book does discuss intuition, as stated in the first paragraph. Hence the correct answer is the fourth option

Q4. Is the quality of friends important?

1) No, it is important to have more number of friends, quality does not matter

2) No, number of comments on social networking sites is important, not the quality of friends

3) Yes, it matters

4) No, quality comes automatically with quantity

Ans4) The third option is correct, as stated in the last paragraph – quality matters over quantity

Q5. As per the first, paragraph what are the debates about?

1)They are centred around whether our Facebook friends are helping us become more or less happy

2)There are no debates around friendship

3)The quality of comments of social media is debatable

4)Thoreau and Aristotle's thinking is at loggerheads

Ans5) The first option is correct, as per the first paragraph in the given RC

Passage - 9

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO, /'ɪsrou/) is the space agency of the Government of India headquartered in the city of Bangalore. Its vision is to "harness space technology for national development while pursuing space science research and planetary exploration."

Formed in 1969, ISRO superseded the erstwhile Indian National Committee for Space Research (INCOSPAR) established in 1962 by the efforts of independent India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, and his close aide and scientist Vikram Sarabhai. The establishment of ISRO thus institutionalized space activities in India. It is managed by the Department of Space, which reports to the Prime Minister of India.

ISRO built India's first satellite, Aryabhata, which was launched by the Soviet Union on 19 April 1975. It was named after the Mathematician Aryabhata. In 1980, Rohini became the first satellite to be placed in orbit by an Indian-made launch vehicle, SLV-3. ISRO subsequently developed two other rockets: the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) for launching satellites into polar orbits and the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) for placing satellites into geostationary orbits. These rockets have launched numerous

communications satellites and earth observation satellites. Satellite navigation systems like GAGAN and IRNSS have been deployed. In January 2014, ISRO successfully used an indigenous cryogenic engine in a GSLV-D5 launch of the GSAT-14.

ISRO sent a lunar orbiter, Chandrayaan-1, on 22 October 2008 and a Mars orbiter, Mars Orbiter Mission, on 5 November 2013, which successfully entered Mars orbit on 24 September 2014, making India the first nation to succeed on its first attempt to Mars, and ISRO the fourth space agency in the world as well as the first space agency in Asia to successfully reach Mars orbit. On 18 June 2016 ISRO successfully set a record with a launch of 20 satellites in a single payload, one being a satellite from Google. On 15 February 2017, ISRO launched 104 satellites in a single rocket (PSLV-C37) and created a world record. ISRO launched its heaviest rocket, Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle-Mark III (GSLV-Mk III), on 5 June 2017 and placed a communications satellite GSAT-19 in orbit. With this launch, ISRO became capable of launching 4 ton heavy satellites.

Q1. Is the ISRO a private organization?

- 1) No, it is a government organization
- 2) Yes, it is a private organization
- 3) It used to be a government organization but not anymore
- 4) It is a non-functional entity

Ans1) the first option is correct – the ISRO is a government organization

Q2. The ISRO only launches other nations' satellites?

- 1) Yes, it generates revenue through launching foreign satellites only

2)No, it is involved in space and planetary exploration

3)It deals with geographical spaces on earth

4)It searches for aliens

Ans2)The second option is correct, as per the first passage of the RC

Q3. India still uses foreign-made satellite launch vehicles?

1)No, it has its own satellite launch vehicles

2)Yes

3)Only India's first satellite – Aryabhata – was launched by the Soviet union

4)None of the above

Ans3) The third option is correct

Q4. From the third paragraph, choose a word which is closes in meaning to 'assistant':

1)scientist

2)aide

3)independent

4)institutionalized

Ans4)The second option is correct. If one considers the etymology of the word 'aide', it comes from 'aid' – which means, to help

Q5) Who was Aryabhata, according to the third paragraph?

1)A scientist

2)a mathematician

3)India's prime minister

4)The head of ISRO

Ans5) Aryabhata was a mathematician

Passage - 10

The Indian Army is the land-based branch and the largest component of the Indian Armed Forces. The President of India is the Supreme Commander of the Indian Army, and it is commanded by the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), who is a four-star general. Two officers have been conferred with the rank of field marshal, a five-star rank, which is a ceremonial position of great honour. The Indian Army originated from the armies of the East India Company, which eventually became the British Indian Army, and the armies of the princely states, which finally became the national army after independence. The units and regiments of the Indian Army have diverse histories and have participated in a number of battles and campaigns across the world, earning a large number of battle and theatre honours before and after Independence.

The primary mission of the Indian Army is to ensure national security and national unity, defending the nation from external aggression and internal threats, and maintaining peace and security within its borders. It conducts humanitarian rescue operations during natural calamities and other disturbances, like Operation Surya Hope, and can also be requisitioned by the government to cope with internal threats. It is a major component of national power alongside the Indian Navy and the Indian Air Force. The army has been involved in four wars with neighbouring Pakistan and one with China. Other major operations undertaken by the army include: Operation Vijay, Operation

Meghdoot and Operation Cactus. Apart from conflicts, the army has conducted large peace time exercises like Operation Brasstacks and Exercise Shoorveer, and it has also been an active participant in numerous United Nations peacekeeping missions including those in: Cyprus, Lebanon, Congo, Angola, Cambodia, Vietnam, Namibia, El Salvador, Liberia, Mozambique and Somalia.

The Indian Army has a regimental system, but is operationally and geographically divided into seven commands, with the basic field formation being a division. It is an all-volunteer force and comprises more than 80% of the country's active defence personnel. It is the 2nd largest standing army in the world, with 1,237,117 active troops and 960,000 reserve troops. The army has embarked on an infantry modernisation program known as Futuristic Infantry Soldier As a System (F-INSAS), and is also upgrading and acquiring new assets for its armoured, artillery and aviation branches

Q1. Is the chief of army a five-star general?

- 1) Yes
- 2) No, he is a four-star general
- 3) No, the field marshal is the five-star general
- 4) No, the chief of army is the president

Ans1) The chief of army is a four-star general, as per the first paragraph

Q2. What is the basic field formation in the Indian army?

- 1) The regiment
- 2) The division
- 3) The infantry
- 4) Aviation

Ans2) The second option is the correct answer, according to the last paragraph of the RC

Q3. Is the Indian army involved in any peace-making efforts?

- 1)no, it only involves itself in conflict situations
- 2)It helps in rebuilding cities ravaged by wars
- 3)Yes, it does involve itself in peace-making efforts
- 4)It does not enter into conflict zones

Ans3) The third option is the correct answer, according to the second paragraph of the RC

Q4. Is the Indian army the only component of national power?

- 1)Yes
- 2)No, national power is a combination of the army, the navy and the air force
- 3)No, the navy is the only component
- 4)no, all national power lies in the hands of the government

Ans4) The second option is correct, since the three arms of the national power are – the army, the navy and the air force

Q5. Is the Indian army an ‘all-volunteer’ force?

- 1)No, it is compulsory for every Indian above the age of 18 to join the army
- 2)yes, it is
- 3)no, only the air force is all voluntary
- 4)No, the navy is all-voluntary

Ans5) The second option is correct as given in the last paragraph.

Passage - 11

The issue of road rage requires serious attention. Day by day, it is becoming a great concern. Call it the negligence of the government or the rashness of the drivers, the underlying fact is that at the end of the day, the common man is the one who suffers the most. The commoner driving a two-wheeler who is hit by a speeding SUV, even though the former was following the traffic rules, has nowhere to go in order to seek redressal for his grievances or his injury. A recent case in point is the accident caused by the speeding luxury car owned by Hema Malini. A family of four driving a modest Alto was hit by the overspeeding car driven by the actress's driver. It resulted in the death of the youngest child of the family and several injuries to the other family members. To add insult to injury, Malini posted negative comments on a famous social networking website.

Part of the problem lies with the attitude and mentality of the driver behind the steering wheel. The car is a personal vehicle and one possesses the freedom to drive it independently and at one's own will. But one must understand that the road on which one drives is open to the public. This blurring of the dichotomy between the public and the private leads to reckless behaviour on the roads. Respect for the elderly and pedestrians, so common in countries abroad, is a thing of rarity to be found in our land. A little consideration to road rules and adoption of simple safety measures such as fastening of the seat belt, can go a long way in reducing this menace.

Questions:

Q 1 Suggest a suitable title to the passage.

Q 2 Why does the common man suffer grievously in instances of road rage?

Q 3 What should the driver understand?

Q 4 What is the solution to this problem of road rage?

Answer key:

A 1. "Road Rage", "Menace on Indian Roads"

A 2. Due to the absence of immediate grievance redressal mechanisms

A 3. The driver should not overstep the line which separates the public and the private, by respecting others on the road and not blindly giving in to speeding etc.

A 4. Inculcating a sense of respect for the elderly and the pedestrians, adopting simple safety measures such as utilising the seat belt.

Passage - 12

The art of academic writing is not easy to master. It is a formal skill, which requires precision and accuracy, and is perfected by continuous and dedicated practice. Academic writing is the skilful exposition and explanation of an argument, which the writer has carefully researched and developed over a sustained period of time. It is a time-consuming activity and demands patience and perseverance. But the joy of reading and sharing with others, one's succinctly composed piece of argument, is incomparable.

Before beginning to write, the writer must ask himself a few questions – Why am I writing? What is it that I intend to share with others? What purpose will my writing serve? Have I read enough about the topic or theme about which I am going to write? If one is hesitant to answer even one of the aforementioned questions, one better not write at all! Because academic writing is a serious activity – it makes one part of a shared community of

readers and writers who wish to disseminate and learn from well-argued pieces of writing.

The structure of an argumentative essay should take the form of – Introduction (which should be around ten percent of the entire essay), Body (it should constitute eighty percent of the piece) and the Conclusion (again, ten per cent of the essay). The introduction should function as the hook which draws the reader in and holds his attention, the body should include cogent and coherently linked paragraphs and the conclusion should re-state the argument and offer a substantial ending to the piece.

Questions:

Q 1 What is academic writing?

Q 2 Why is reading an important part of writing?

Q 3 Why should one ask oneself the questions mentioned in the second passage?

Q 4 What are the components of the structure of an argumentative essay?

Answer key:

A 1. Academic writing is the skilful exposition and explanation of an argument, which the writer has carefully researched and developed over a sustained period of time

A 2. Reading about one's chosen topic or theme is important since it tells the reader about what has already been argued. It depicts the awareness of other arguments.

A 3. One must ask oneself certain questions before writing in order to get a sense of clarity about one's purpose behind writing.

A 4. The parts – Introduction, Body, Conclusion

Passage – 13

Today's world can truly be called a "society of the spectacle", a phrase that the French sociologist and thinker Guy de Bord used decades earlier. Every act of lived experience has today become a spectacle. It would be a little incorrect to say that this craze for spectacle-izing everything that occurs around us is a recent phenomenon. If one had watched The Pirates of The Caribbean movies, one would realise that even in the late eighteenth century, executions were public events - a large portion of the populace would gather around the site of the hanging in the city square in order to see justice being meted out in front of their very own eyes. It was also a form of popular entertainment. It was a sort of a collective public blood-letting.

The spectacle that the contemporary society has become is an overwhelming experience. One enters into a restaurant, orders an exotic dish – but the proof of having eaten it doesn't exist until tons of photographs are clicked from varied angles and shared on social networking sites, one goes for a holiday to a calm and serene location, but is all the while busy telling the world about it. It as if one has to document every moment of one's existence. When does one live that moment then? Perhaps it is in the documentation that one survives these days!

Questions:

Q 1 What is the "Society of the spectacle"?

Q 2 Is it a recent occurrence?

Q 3 Do we really 'live' moments now?

Q 4 Besides documentation, what is the other function of the spectacle?

Answer key:

A 1 Every act of lived experience has today become a spectacle

A 2 No, as the example states, it is not a recent phenomenon

A 3 No, we only document moments now

A 4 The spectacle is also a form of popular entertainment

Passage – 14

Surveillance has increased manifold since the 9/11 terror attacks on the World Trade Centre in the U.S. This increase in surveillance today shapes the relationship between the state and the individual. The state keeps an eye on its citizens, thereby positing each and every citizen as a potential wrong-doer. For instance, the proliferation of the CCTV cameras in streets, restaurants and in every imaginable public space. Infact, the camera need not even be functional in order to make the citizens behave themselves – its mere presence is enough to scare the citizens into submission. Such is the power of the mere potential of surveillance.

Surveillance studies have shown that these techniques might not be too effective at all times, citizens might feign decent behaviour in order to avoid themselves from getting into a tussle with the law of the land. But it does not assure the state of the reformation in the attitude of the citizens. It is a mere eye-wash. It works only when the citizen truly desires to transform his or her attitude and adopt decency in all walks of life.

The act of constant surveillance makes the state a voyeur – a person who derives pleasure from watching events unfold in a secretive manner. A recent case in point would be the raid on a hotel in the so-called cosmopolitan city of Mumbai where young couples were consensually residing. The state has today entered the bed-room. And this is an unhealthy proposition!

Questions:

Q 1 What is the effect of the state's surveillance on the individual?

Q 2 Does the CCTV need to be functional all the time?

Q 3 Why is surveillance not effective always?

Q 4 When is surveillance really effective?

Answer key:

A 1 It views each individual as a potential wrong-does

A 2 No, the mere presence is enough

A 3 Because citizens might adopt a fake decent attitude

A 4 When citizens really wish to conform to the rules

Passage - 15

India is a secular, democratic nation. This implies that every religion is treated equally and at par with every other religion. No religion is accorded any preferential treatment of any kind. All citizens are also free to practice, preach or profess any religion of their choosing. The state does not have a unified or homogeneous religious following

This unique characteristic of India ensures its unity in diversity. India has been the birthplace of several religions and is the land where all these religions - such as Hinduism, Christianity, Buddhism, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism, Jainism and so on exist simultaneously, peacefully and harmoniously.

But, some anti-social elements have interpreted the sanctity of religions in a twisted way. No religion preaches violence or rioting. All the religions are but various ways to reach the Supreme Being, they are paths which lead to the ultimate truth and salvation, though we refer to the destination by various names such as Jesus, Krishna, Buddha. Allah and so on. It is important to realize that in order to ensure a peaceful mosaic of cultural distinctness, the path of non-violence or ahimsa, as given by the Father of the nation, must be followed unwaveringly.

God created man in his own image. Hence, it follows naturally that there is some divinity within all human beings. Thus, to kill and murder in the name of religion is blasphemy. Only once the religious fanatics understand this, will there be perpetual peace in the land.

Questions:

Q 1 What is meant by the term "Secular"?

Q 2 What is special about India's association with religion?

Q 3 Why are human beings divine?

Q 4 How can all religions co-exist peacefully?

Answer key:

A 1 Secular - there is no state religion, all religions enjoy an equal importance

A 2 India has been the birthplace of several religions and here, all of them co-exist harmoniously

A 3 Because God created man in his own image

A 4 By adopting the path of non-violence or ahimsa

Passage - 16

The Mona Lisa was one of Leonardo da Vinci's favourite paintings, and he carried it around with him until he died. Today it is regarded as the most famous painting in the world, and is viewed by thousands of people annually. Who is this painted figure? Many suggestions have been made, and the most likely candidate is Lisa Gherardini, the wife of a Florentine silk merchant.

Another more likely, but popular theory, is that the painting was a self-portrait. There are certainly similarities between the facial features of the Mona Lisa and the artist's self-portrait painted many years later. Could this be the reason for Vinci giving the portrait such an enigmatic smile?

Today, the Mona Lisa looks rather sombre, in dull shades of brown and yellow. This is due to layer of varnish covering the paint, which has yellowed over the years. It is possible that the painting was once brighter and more colourful than it is now.

The Mona Lisa was stolen from the Louvre in 1911, by a former employee who believed that the painting belonged in Italy. The thief walked out of the

gallery with the picture underneath his painter's smock. He was apprehended by the police two years later and the painting was returned to the Louvre, where it is placed even today.

Questions:

State whether the following are true or false:

Q 1 The Mona Lisa is actually sombre-hued.

Q 2 Vinci's self-portrait has an enigmatic smile

Q 3 The varnish has yellowed the painting

Q 4 The painting is still placed in the Louvre, in Italy.

Answers -

A 1 False (A layer of varnish, which has now become dull, has given it that appearance)

A 2 False (The Mona Lisa has an enigmatic smile)

A 3 True (The varnish has become dull, yellow. Since it covers the painting, it has made its appearance yellow)

A 4 False. (it is in the Louvre in France)

Passage - 17

In the Middle Ages, the Roman Church burned books that dared present contradictory view-points. Authors who failed to heed this warning risked being burned at stake.

Though we no longer live in the Dark Ages, we are naturally disturbed by the burning of ArunShourie's book - Worshipping False Gods - by some members of parliament recently. They claimed that Shourie had twisted facts, misquoted

Dr.Ambedkar, to make him appear anti-national, instigated prejudice and violence against the Dalits. And so they demanded a ban.

The reasons given by the Roman Church for burning books and authors too, were disturbingly similar. The Church too professed to be a guardian of morality and order, and accused liberals from Galileo to Voltaire of twisting facts, hurting the sentiments of people, proclaiming untruths, sowing seeds of conflict and encouraging violence. Our book-burning members of parliament may feel outraged by Shourie's book, but should remember that the Roman Church felt no less outraged in its time.

The progress of civilisation lies in rising above such narrow outlook and honoring dissent. Voltaire once said - "I might disagree with what you say but I will defend to death your right to say it"

Questions- True or false:

Q 1 We live in the Middle Ages.

Q 2 Shourie had actually twisted facts

Q 3 Voltaire twisted facts

Q 4 Civilisation can progress by misquoting authors.

Answers -

A 1 False (The act of burning of Shourie's book is similar to such practices in the Middle Ages)

A 2 False (It was Claimed that he had done so)

A 3 False (The Roman Church accused him of doing so)

A 4 False (Progress can be made by allowing dissent)

Passages - 18

Indians as a community have always been known to be resourceful and hard-working, and it is clearly demonstrated by the students heading abroad for undergraduate or higher studies.

More than ever before, the youth are switching over from a bank-loan to self-financing of their studies almost invariably from the second year if not within the first six months of joining a foreign university.

Part-time jobs at gas stations, restaurants, kitchens, baby-sitting, car-cleaning, fruit-picking during the harvest season - nothing seems difficult to the able-bodied youth.

In the recent years, along with fees, the quantum of loans has gone up. Some banks have seen nearly 50% of their clients (mostly students) becoming self-sufficient after the first tranche of the loan allocated to them. Even the number of undergraduate students who reduce their dependence on institutional support is estimated to have grown by 20-25%

Estimates have also revealed that while students do seek a loan for the entire spell of two to five years, depending on the programme that they have enrolled in, smarter children have invariably succeeded in bagging an assistantship or a part-time job which helps them to fund either completely or partially the remaining spell of their studies.

Questions True or false:

Q 1 This passage discusses about all students studying abroad

Q 2 As soon as students join the university, funding no longer remains a problem

Q 3 The youth prefer jobs which can be easily done

Q 4 All students become self-sufficient after getting the loans

Answers -

A 1 False (It discusses only Indians students)

A 2 False (Funding problems are solved within 6 months to two years)

A 3 False (The able-bodied youth can take up any jobs)

A 4 False (Only 50% students become self-sufficient)

Passage - 19

As we look forward to the bright future awaiting us, we must determine where our strengths lie. Much of the conventional analyses of India's position in the world relies on the all-too familiar indices of GDP, impressive economic growth rates and our military prowess. But if there is one attribute of independent India to which we have not yet paid much attention is its 'soft power'

The notion of soft-power is relatively new. It was coined by Harvard's Joseph Nye to describe the extraordinary strengths of the United States that went well beyond the American military and economic dominance. The fact is that the U.S. is home to Boeing, Microsoft, Apple, Intel, MTV, Hollywood, Disneyland, Kodak and so on - in short, most of the major products that dominate daily life around the globe. This has ensured the maximisation of the soft power of the US - that is, the ability to attract and persuade others to adopt America's agenda, rather than relying purely on the coercive hard power of military force. Thus, this soft power is undoubtedly more important than the hard power.

For India, it means paying attention to the aspects and products of our society that the world would find attractive - not in order to directly persuade others to support us but to enhance our country's standing in their eyes. Bollywood is doing a great deal in this direction by bringing entertainment home to people (the diaspora) in the U.S. and elsewhere. Indian classical music and dance have the same effect. So does the work of our fashion designers, chefs and cricketers.

Questions - mark true or false

Q 1 Soft power has been in use in international discourse since a long time

Q 2 Soft power will ensure direct support to India

Q 3 Soft power is less effective in making the world accept America's agenda

Q 4 Bollywood is enhancing India's soft power

Answers -

A 1 False (It is a relatively new concept)

A 2 False (It will ensure indirect support)

A 3 False (Hard power, not soft power, is coercive, hence less effective)

A 4 True (by reaching Indians in other parts of the world)

Passage - 20

Born on Jan 12, 1863 in an affluent Bengali family, Narendra Natha Datta was a precocious child who was what we call nowadays, an all-rounder, excelling in music, studies and athletics. His father Vishwanatha Datta was a well-known attorney. However, he took the spiritual route instead and introduced Hinduism to the world in 1893 when he spoke at the World's Parliament of Religion (probably one of the most epic things any Indian has done abroad!).

The historic speech was given on September 11, 1893 by Swami

Vivekananda. Here's the full text of his opening and closing address:

Sisters and Brothers of America,

It fills my heart with joy unspeakable to rise in response to the warm and cordial welcome which you have given us. I thank you in the name of the most ancient order of monks in the world; I thank you in the name of the mother of religions, and I thank you in the name of millions and millions of Hindu people of all classes and sects.

My thanks, also, to some of the speakers on this platform who, referring to the delegates from the Orient, have told you that these men from far-off nations

may well claim the honor of bearing to different lands the idea of toleration. I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance.

We believe not only in universal toleration, but we accept all religions as true. I am proud to belong to a nation which has sheltered the persecuted and the refugees of all religions and all nations of the earth. I am proud to tell you that we have gathered in our bosom the purest remnant of the Israelites, who came to Southern India and took refuge with us in the very year in which their holy temple was shattered to pieces by Roman tyranny. I am proud to belong to the religion which has sheltered and is still fostering the remnant of the grand Zoroastrian nation. I will quote to you, brethren, a few lines from a hymn which I remember to have repeated from my earliest boyhood, which is every day repeated by millions of human beings: "As the different streams having their sources in different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee."

The present convention, which is one of the most august assemblies ever held, is in itself a vindication, a declaration to the world of the wonderful doctrine preached in the Gita: "Whosoever comes to me, through whatsoever form, I reach him; all men are struggling through paths which in the end lead to me." Sectarianism, bigotry, and its horrible descendant, fanaticism, have long possessed this beautiful earth.

Q1. What was Vishwanatha Datta's profession?

1. Attorney
2. Spiritual leader
3. Teacher
4. None of the above

Ans – The first option is correct, as the passage mentions that he was an attorney.

Q2. Who spoke at the World's Parliament of Religion?

- 1.Narendra Nath Datta
- 2.Swami Vivekananda
- 3.Both
- 4.None

Ans – Swami Vivekananda spoke at the conference

Q3. Give the opposite of the word “Occident” from the second passage of the speech

- 1.Delegate
- 2.Universal
- 3.Orient
- 4.Toleration

Ans – “Orient” is the opposite of Occident

Q4. In the phrase: “all lead to Thee”, to whom does the word ‘Thee’ refer?

- 1.All religions
- 2.The delegates present
- 3.Universal brotherhood and peace
- 4.God

Ans – It refers to God.

Q5. In the phrase: “I am proud to belong to a nation” – what nation is the speaker referring to?

- 1.India
- 2.Southern India
- 3.Rome
- 4.America

Ans – the speaker is referring to India