

READING COMPREHENSION

Directions: Read the given passage and answer the questions that follow.

Passage - 1 (Full Length)

Memory doesn't always walk in through the front door. Sometimes, it knocks in the middle of the night uninvited, stirring us awake from the scent of burnt milk on a winter morning. Though time marches forward, memory silently shapes our thoughts & choices. When modern life encourages focus on the now and next, much of the present is quietly shaped by the past. The way we react, form relationships, or even dream about the future is filtered through the lens of memory. Memory isn't a factual archive; it's fluid, subjective, reconstructed with time and emotion. They shift with emotion, time, and even

the stories we tell ourselves. It's why two people can recall the same moment differently, and why certain memories sharpen or soften with age. In recent years, psychologists and therapists have increasingly drawn links between memory and healing.

Therapy or writing often revisit the past — not to dwell, but to reframe. Unexamined childhood pain can shape lifelong patterns. Gently returning to those moments offer insight and healing. One Mumbai-based therapist explained, “People don’t always realise their current fears or relationship patterns often have roots in memory. Healing begins when we are willing to look back.” Yet not all memories are tinged with pain. Some cradle joy — moments of warmth, safety or wonder. They are triggered by music, scent or place, often arriving unannounced, wrapped in nostalgia. These memories can anchor us, reminding us who we are beneath the noise. At times, they offer solace. But nostalgia, too, has its risks. It can become an escape, casting the past in sepia tones while dulling the present.

There are inherited memories we never lived, but still carry. Passed down through stories, silences, or cultural grief, shape individuals in invisible ways. Children of migrants or survivors often carry absorbed emotional echoes they can’t name.

“Even when memories are not verbalised, they imprint,” says sociologist Marianne Hirsch, whose work on post memory explores how trauma travels across generations. These inherited memories can offer strength or weight, especially when personal experience doesn’t match collective memory. In places where histories have been silenced or distorted, memory becomes more than personal — it becomes resistance. The act of remembering, of naming what was erased, is an act of defiance. For women, for minorities, and for those whose stories have long been overlooked, reclaiming memory is a way of reclaiming dignity.

The most difficult task is learning how to live with memory not in denial and not imprisoned by it, but in conversation with it. This means making space for memory to surface,

being curious rather than critical, asking: What story have I told myself about this moment and what happens if I tell it differently? Among the many ways memory finds expression, writing is perhaps the most intimate and the oldest way to explore ourselves.

When we commit a memory to paper, we give it a body, a shape we can see, hold, and slowly come to understand. Writing doesn't require the memory to be whole or polished; it welcomes the fragmented, even the painful. In this space between ink and emotion, something softens. We write not to remember, but to make sense of what we've carried, sometimes unknowingly for years. The page offers privacy, a sacred container where feelings can stretch out without judgment. Through storytelling, journal entries, or poetry, we name what was once unspoken. In doing so, we bring to reclaim the narrative, by shifting how we relate to them. Healing doesn't come from erasing the past, but from finding a way to live alongside it with greater clarity and compassion.

Over time, memory evolves, as certain memories return with a new meaning. Trivial gains weight and the sting softens. This isn't regression, but growth. Because memory isn't fixed in the past. It walks besides us and in learning how we remember, we begin to understand not just what happened, but who we are becoming.

Q1. Based on the passage, which of the following can be conveyed about the relationship between memory and personal identity?

(I) Memory serves primarily as an accurate historical record that grounds our understanding of self.

(II) The dynamic nature of memory allows individuals to reinterpret past experiences in ways that facilitate personal growth.

(III) Our sense of identity is partly constructed through how we process and integrate memories over time.

A. Only (I)

B. Both (I) and (II)

C. Both (II) and (III)

D. All (I), (II), and (III)

E. Only (III)

Q2. Can the following inference be determined from the passage?

Inference: *The most constructive approach to processing memory involves maintaining a balance between acknowledging the past while preventing it from dictating present experiences.*

- A. Definitely true**
- B. Probably true**
- C. Cannot be determined**
- D. Probably false**
- E. Definitely false**

Q3. In each of the following questions, a statement of Assertion is given, followed by a statement of Reason. Read both statements carefully and choose the correct option.

Assertion: *According to the passage, writing serves as a particularly effective medium for processing and integrating difficult memories.*

Reason: *Writing provides a private space where emotions can be expressed without judgment, allowing individuals to externalize and reshape their understanding of past experiences.*

- A. Both Assertion and Reason are true, but Reason is not the correct explanation of Assertion.**
- B. Both Assertion and Reason are true, and Reason is the correct explanation of Assertion.**
- C. Assertion is true, but Reason is false.**
- D. Assertion is false, but Reason is true.**
- E. Both Assertion and Reason are false.**

Q4. Which of the following statements would the author of the passage most likely agree with regarding the role of nostalgia?

(I) Nostalgic memories can provide emotional stability by connecting individuals to their core identity.

(II) Excessive indulgence in nostalgia may interfere with fully experiencing present moments.

(III) Nostalgia should be avoided as it inevitably distorts rational perception of the past.

A. Only (I)

B. Only (III)

C. Both (II) and (III)

D. Both (I) and (II)

E. All (I), (II), and (III)

Q5. Based on the passage, which of the following is most invalid regarding the concept of memories?

(I) Inherited memories are exclusively transmitted through explicit storytelling and documented historical accounts.

(II) Children of migrants and survivors may carry emotional echoes of experiences they haven't personally lived.

(III) Shared cultural memories can serve as a form of resistance against historical erasure.

- A. Only (I)**
- B. Only (II)**
- C. Only (III)**
- D. Both (I) and (III)**
- E. Both (II) and (III)**

Q6. Based on the passage, which of the following statements about intergenerational memory is/are correct?

(I) According to Marianne Hirsch, trauma can be transmitted across generations even without explicit verbalization.

(II) Inherited memories always provide psychological benefits to subsequent generations.

(III) The concept of "post memory" explores how descendants might carry emotional imprints of experiences they never personally lived.

A. Only (II)

B. Both (I) and (III)

C. Both (II) and (III)

D. All (I), (II), and (III)

E. Only (III)

Q7. In the line, "nostalgia... casting the past in sepia tones," the phrase "sepia tones" most closely refers to:

- A. A historically precise, unaltered replication of past events preserved through objective documentation.**
- B. A method to enhance the emotional intensity of memories through artificial vividness and heightened sensory details.**
- C. A warm, faded aesthetic that idealizes the past by softening harsh realities and amplifying emotional warmth.**
- D. A critical reinterpretation of the past that highlights moral failures and societal injustices with stark clarity.**

E. A neutral, chronological timeline of events stripped of subjective emotion or personal bias.

Passage - 2 (Full Length)

A caste-based headcount could bring long-overdue clarity to the composition of Indian society. However, with clarity comes complexity and the need to confront uncomfortable truths. While opposition parties have welcomed the idea of a caste census, the last official caste enumeration was likely in 1931. Since then, caste data has been excluded, possibly to avoid social tension. Over the decades, public interest in the census declined, with focus shifting mainly to population growth. The inclusion of caste could revive public engagement with the census process.

To ensure equality, caste identification may be extended to all religious groups, including Muslims, Christians, and Sikhs. Among Indian Muslims, the broad divisions are

Ashrafs, Ajlafs, and Arzals. Ashrafs are seen as the elite, often tracing their ancestry to foreign origins or to upper-caste Hindus who converted to Islam. Ajlafs include occupational castes like Dhobis and Darzis, while Arzals, akin to the Pasmandas, are the most marginalized.

Further distinctions exist among Muslims — Syeds, Shaikhs, Bohras, Khojas, Ismailis, Mughals, Pathans, and others, reflecting diverse ethnic and historical backgrounds. The electoral and political utility of a caste census could be significant. Candidates would gain precise data on caste composition in constituencies, enabling more targeted campaigning. Politically, such data could inform decisions on reservations. Currently, Dalits and some Other Backward Classes (OBCs) benefit from reservations, but many Muslim communities are excluded unless they convert to Hinduism or Sikhism. A detailed caste census could also support sociological insights. As sociologist Ram Manohar Lohia argued, caste in India often mirrors class. Historical examples show how caste identity remains prominent across religions —

“Brahmin Catholics” and “Rajput Muslims” being notable examples. Although Islam theoretically promotes equality, caste distinctions have emerged over time among Indian Muslims, often based on ancestral occupations or geographic origins.

Bohras trace their roots to Brahmin converts, Khojas to Halai Lohanas, and Memons to Kutchi Lohanas. Mughals and Pathans also maintain distinct identities, linked to Central Asian and Afghan origins, respectively.

The declaration of caste in census results is likely to prompt widespread demands for inclusion in reservation categories. The government response to such demands may follow standard criteria, potentially excluding Muslims from benefits on religious grounds. However, social realities may lead individuals or groups to seek advantages through religious or caste-based reclassification.

India's political landscape is also undergoing significant change. During the Nehruvian era, being part of a minority community was sometimes perceived as

advantageous. Today, there is a perception that belonging to the majority can offer greater socio-political leverage. Historically, religious conversions in India were often influenced by socio-economic pressures,

such as access to jobs or protection from persecution. In the current climate of reform, the idea of compulsory voting has been suggested to ensure greater electoral participation. If implemented, citizens would be required to vote or submit a valid reason for absence within a set period, failing which they might risk removal from the electoral rolls—subject to appeal. The aim would be to stress the importance of voting in a democracy.

Previously, low voter turnout among the majority community gave minorities disproportionate influence over electoral outcomes. As majority participation has increased, it has led to visible shifts in national policies and political priorities. Compulsory voting, already in place in over 20 democracies including Australia and Belgium, could help ensure that election outcomes reflect

the will of the entire electorate, not just the most mobilized segments.

Q1. What can be inferred from the passage about the potential outcomes of a caste-based headcount in India?

(I) A caste census would likely reveal uncomfortable social realities that have been deliberately obscured since independence.

(II) The inclusion of caste data could reinvigorate public participation in the census process, which has declined over decades.

(III) Detailed caste enumeration would likely erode the neutrality of the electoral process.

- A. Both (I) and (III)**
- B. Both (II) and (III)**
- C. Both (I) and (II)**
- D. All (I), (II), and (III)**
- E. Only (III)**

Q2. Which inference about the relationship between religion and caste identity in India is best supported by the passage?

(I) Caste identity persists across religious boundaries, with individuals maintaining caste affiliations even after conversion.

(II) Religious conversion historically served as an effective mechanism for Indians to completely escape caste-based discrimination.

(III) The intersection of caste and religion creates complex social identities that influence political and economic outcomes.

- A. Only (I)**
- B. Both (I) and (III)**
- C. Only (II)**
- D. Both (II) and (III)**
- E. All (I), (II), and (III)**

Q3. What is the passage suggesting about the potential impact of a caste census on India's reservation system?

(I) The government might face challenges in applying consistent criteria for reservation benefits across different religious communities.

(II) Data from a caste census could lead to more precise allocation of benefits to historically disadvantaged groups.

(III) A caste census would likely result in widespread demands for inclusion in reservation categories from various social groups.

- A. Only (I)**
- B. Only (III)**
- C. Both (II) and (III)**
- D. Both (I) and (III)**
- E. All (I), (II), and (III)**

Q4. Based on the passage, which of the following best characterizes the historical shift in India's political dynamics regarding majority-minority relations?

(I) During the Nehruvian era, minority status was perceived to confer certain socio-political advantages.

(II) Increased electoral participation by the majority community has significantly altered national policy priorities.

(III) Compulsory voting has historically ensured equitable representation of all communities in India's democratic process.

A. Only (I)

B. Both (I) and (II)

C. Both (II) and (III)

D. All (I), (II), and (III)

E. Only (III)

Q5. Which of the following can be inferred about the extension of caste identification to all religious groups in India?

(I) The categorization of Muslims into Ashrafs, Ajlafs, and Arzals mirrors hierarchical structures found in other religious communities.

(II) The extension of caste identification across religious boundaries is primarily motivated by equality considerations.

(III) Ensuring equality requires acknowledging caste distinctions within non-Hindu religious communities.

- A. Only (I)**
- B. Only (III)**
- C. Both (I) and (III)**
- D. Both (II) and (III)**
- E. All (I), (II), and (III)**

Q6. Which of the following is the TRUE statement based on the given passage?

I. Despite theoretical equality in Islam, caste distinctions have emerged among Indian Muslims based on factors like ancestral occupations.

II. The last official caste enumeration in India was conducted in the early 21st century.

III. According to Ram Manohar Lohia, caste in India often corresponds to class divisions.

A. Only III

B. Both I and II

C. Both I and III

D. Both II and III

E. All I, II and III

Q7. What is the predominant tone of the passage regarding the potential consequences of a caste census?

- A. Circumspect**
- B. Dispassionate**
- C. Prognosticatory**
- D. Dialectical**
- E. Phlegmatic**