VIJETA CHECKLIST MAINS

CHECKLIST 135

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Reading Comprehension

Direction (1-10): Read the given passage carefully and answer the questions that follow.

Many of us who lived through the 1960s are *tempted* to seek similarities between then and now. We see the acute **polarization** of the nation, the warring ideologies, the National Guard deployed against demonstrators, the presidents who abuse power, the sense of America *losing* its bearing. Whereas President Richard Nixon's silent majority battled flower power and "commies," President Donald Trump's MAGA assails wokeness and the radical left. Whereas students closed down campuses over Vietnam, students now -- or at least a year ago -- rose up over the Gaza Strip. The list could go on. But it soon becomes evident that there are numerous differences. Some are obvious: the revolutionary advances over the past six decades in technology and communication, especially the prevalence of social media and smartphones, and the absence of a Cold War to clearly define global relationships and a draft to threaten young people with death in a distant jungle. The demonstrations in Los Angeles against the federal hunt for immigrants are nowhere near the scale of the protests against the Vietnam War. The National Guard units that opened fire on students at Kent State University in May 1970 were called in by the Ohio governor after a few days of violent protest; those in Los Angeles were deployed by Trump over the protests of the governor of California.

The student protests in the spring of 2024 against the carnage in Gaza, by contrast, never ignited a broader movement and _____(A)_____ mired in accusations of antisemitism and the humiliation of university leaders. The momentum was with Trump and his MAGA campaign, and its goal was, in effect, to reverse the gains of the '60s -- to undo the civil rights, sexual tolerance, environmental protection, campus activism and all the other themes and values clustered under the banner of diversity, equity and inclusion. Trump's appeal to a broad *swath* of America is more complex than that, of course. DEI sometimes deserved the criticism; people who voted for Trump had some valid grievances, and many of them do not necessarily support his angry, personal and often potentially illegal assaults on varying targets, including immigrants and Harvard University. But the unmistakable message in "Make America Great Again" is that the forces of change unleashed in the '60s are anti-American and needed to be expunged in order to restore the "real" America -- one of Christian values, respectful students, public order and blinders on racial discrimination, inequality and other blemishes. The search for parallels between then and now often includes the juxtaposition of Trump and Nixon, the president often *relegated* in popular memory -- unfairly, I believe -- to a symbol of what the '60s rose up against. There are tempting similarities. Scandal followed Nixon throughout his career, as it has Trump. Both scrambled back to the forefront of politics -- Nixon until he was felled by Watergate. Both positioned themselves as victims of

liberal elites and champions of a silent majority; both maintained an enemies list of people and institutions they wanted to punish. Curiously, the two men even had more than a decade-long correspondence in the 1980s and early '90s, when both were in New York, Nixon in retirement and Trump a real estate developer on the rise. But the differences are far greater than the similarities. Nixon entered the fray only at the tail end of the '60s -- he was inaugurated in January 1969. His predecessors John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B Johnson were far more responsible for the upheavals of that time. The idealism of "ask not what your country can do for you" and the Great Society was on their watch, as was

the tragedy of the Vietnam War. Trump, by contrast, defines what is happening today. The troubles of the country and world --whether the Gaza protests, the war in Ukraine or unchecked immigration -- may predate his second term, but the way he has incorporated them into his broad assault on American institutions and values stamps this era with his brand. Nixon never came close to anything of the sort. He was a lifelong politician, a skillful lawyer and a masterly player on the geopolitical chess board. I was fortunate to meet him in Moscow, when I was the Times bureau chief and he an elder statesman invited to address Russian students, and I remember how impressed I was by the depth and sophistication of his understanding of Russian history and politics. Tom Wickér, a Times columnist in the Nixon era, wrote in a study of the Nixon presidency that Watergate obscured "the achievements of a president who often responded to the pressures of his time with knowledge and skill and sometimes even with courage -- qualities the American people apparently don't find in most of their leaders today."

The same cannot be said of Trump, a wheeler-dealer with seemingly little understanding of government and the Constitution who values instinct above expertise, doesn't know shame or embarrassment, views foreign affairs as a zero-sum game in which America is the dunce, and values sycophancy over *competent*. The Trump era is still upon us, of course, so any comparison with eras past must be conditional. Any search for lost time, whether the '60s, '50s or any other era, is of **dubious** value. Every age has its own array of peculiarities, conditions and fashions, and memory is too apt to idealize the good or **expunge** the bad to be a reliable judge. Maybe what I've written above is a good example of that. But if there is any value to identifying the disruptive actions of the Trump administration as the antithesis of the movement for change six decades ago, it is in asking which of the two really tried to make America great.

Question 1:

Which of the following statements is/are FALSE according to the passage?

I. The Vietnam War protests of the 1960s had far less intensity than the 2024 Gaza protests.
II. Trump's political rhetoric and actions are portrayed as a counter to the ideals established in the 1960s.
III. The author believes that Nixon was unfairly reduced to a symbol of what the 1960s opposed.
IV. The Cold War context is missing in present-day political unrest, unlike in the 1960s.

(a) I and III
(b) I and IV
(c) Only I
(d) II and IV
(e) None of these

Question 2:

Which of the following would be the MOST effective approach to critically assess the parallels drawn between the 1960s and the present era, as described in the passage?

(a) Highlighting the similarities in political polarization and protest culture between both periods.
(b) Ignoring the historical parallels altogether to prevent distortion of current political analysis.
(c) Recognizing the emotional appeal of historical memory while focusing on the unique sociopolitical dynamics of each era.
(d) Treating both the Nixon and Trump administrations as equal reflections of anti-progressive politics.
(e) Emphasizing technological differences alone as the main distinguishing factor.

Question 3:

The author compares Trump and Nixon in various ways. Which of the following BEST captures the **core difference** highlighted between the two?

(a) Nixon upheld traditional American values while Trump rejected them.
(b) Nixon was a geopolitically skilled politician, whereas Trump lacks institutional understanding and expertise.
(c) Nixon was more sympathetic to youth-led protests, whereas Trump opposed them.
(d) Nixon and Trump were both lifelong politicians, but differed in tone and temperament.
(e) Trump was more focused on the Cold War, while Nixon downplayed global issues.

Question 4:

What is the tone of the author in discussing the legacy of the 1960s in contrast to Trump's America?

(a) Objective and dispassionate
(b) Nostalgic and admiring
(c) Dismissive and satirical
(d) Concerned and evaluative
(e) Sarcastic and bitter

Question 5:

Which of the following BEST explains the author's use of historical analogy in comparing MAGA to the reactionary forces of the 1960s?

(a) To show that history repeats itself in the same form regardless of context
(b) To draw emotional support from readers who idealize the past
(c) To highlight how present political currents aim to dismantle the legacy of past social progress
(d) To dismiss the 1960s as an overrated and over-referenced period
(e) To prove that all political movements ultimately become regressive over time

Question 6:

Which of the following can serve as a suitable **synonym(s)** of the word *"expunge"*, as used in the sentence:

"the forces of change unleashed in the '60s are anti-American and needed to be expunged..."

I. erase
II. eradicate
III. preserve

(a) Only I
(b) Both I and II
(c) Only III
(d) I and III

(e) All I, II and III

Question 7:

Which of the following can serve as a suitable antonym(s) of the word **"dubious"**, as used in the sentence:

"Any search for lost time, whether the '60s, '50s or any other era, is of dubious value."

I. uncertain
II. unquestionable
III. reliable

(a) Only I
(b) Both I and II
(c) Only III
(d) Both II and III
(e) All I, II and III

8. The student protests in the spring of 2024 against the carnage in Gaza, by contrast, never ignited a broader movement and _____(A)_____ mired in accusations of antisemitism and the humiliation of university leaders.

Which of the following words will appropriately fit in the blank above?

I. petered out
II. fizzled out
III. died down

(a) Only II
(b) Both I and II
(c) Only III

(d) Both II and III
(e) All I, II and III

9. A few words have been highlighted and italicized in the passage. One word is grammatically/ contextually incorrect. Identify the word.

(a) tempted
(b) losing
(c) swath
(d) relegated
(e) competent

10. Which of the following words can serve as the most appropriate **antonym(s)** of the word **"polarization"**, as used in the passage?

I. consensus
II. cohesion
III. partisanship

(a) Only II
(b) Both I and II
(c) Only III
(d) I and III
(e) All I, II and III

ANSWER

1.Ans: (c)
Explanation:

Statement I is **false**: The passage explicitly states that the Gaza protests never reached the scale of the Vietnam War protests.
Statement II is **true**: The author states Trump's MAGA campaign aimed to "reverse the gains of the '60s."
Statement III is **true**: The author says Nixon is "unfairly" relegated to a symbol of the 1960s opposition.
Statement IV is **true**: The author notes that present unrest lacks a Cold War to define global alignments.

2.Ans: (c)
Explanation:

Option (c) captures the author's own nuanced caution: that memory often idealizes or distorts, and each era has its own "peculiarities."
Option (a) only scratches the surface and ignores the deeper point the author makes about **differences** being more significant.
Option (b) is too extreme; the author does draw parallels but warns about over-reliance on them.

Option (d) is misleading; the author argues Trump goes **far beyond** Nixon.
Option (e) is reductive, while technology is mentioned, it's not the core argument.

3.Ans: (b)
Explanation:

(b) directly reflects the author's contrasting descriptions: Nixon as a statesman and lawyer with global understanding vs. Trump as instinct-driven, dismissive of expertise.
(a) is incorrect; the author does not frame Nixon as a defender of traditional values.
(c) is factually unsupported.
(d) is incorrect; Trump was *not* a lifelong politician.
(e) reverses facts: **Nixon operated during the Cold War**, not Trump.

4.Ans: (d)
Explanation:

The author **evaluates** the two eras thoughtfully and expresses **concern** over Trump's undermining of 1960s values.
(b) Nostalgia is explicitly questioned ("memory is too apt to idealize...")
(a) is incorrect; the author does express value judgments.

(c) and (e) don't match the tone, which is serious and analytical.

5.Ans: (c)
Explanation:

(c) aligns with the main argument: that MAGA is trying to "reverse the gains of the '60s."
(a) is incorrect; the author emphasizes that **differences** outweigh similarities.
(b) is misaligned; the author is cautious about nostalgia.
(d) is not the author's intent.
(e) is not supported; the author does not suggest an inevitable decline of all movements.

6.Ans: (b)
Explanation:

The word **"expunged"** means to **completely remove or erase something unwanted or offensive**.

I. erase – a valid synonym; both imply removal.
II. eradicate – also suitable; it suggests complete elimination.
III. preserve – not a synonym; it means to maintain or keep, which is the opposite of "expunge."

7.Ans: (d)

Explanation:
 In this sentence, **"dubious"** refers to something **doubtful, questionable, or of uncertain worth or reliability**.

III. reliable – an appropriate antonym, as it implies dependability and trustworthiness.
II. unquestionable – also an appropriate antonym, suggesting something that is clear and not in doubt.
I. uncertain – not an antonym; it is similar in meaning to "dubious" and therefore not correct.

8.Ans: (e)

Explanation:
The sentence describes how the student protests in spring 2024 **failed to turn into a larger movement** and became entangled in controversy. The phrase needed in the blank should indicate a **gradual loss of momentum or energy**.

I. petered out – means to gradually become weaker or less active and then come to an end.
 This fits perfectly in the context of protests that began but didn't sustain.
II. fizzled out – means to fail after a promising start, especially with a gradual loss of force or effect.
 This also suits the sentence well.

III. died down – means to become less intense or active.
While slightly broader, this still conveys the reduction of energy or impact in the protests.

9.Ans: (e)

Explanation:
In the given passage, a few words have been *italicized* for emphasis. One of these words is **either grammatically or contextually incorrect**. Identify the word that does **not** fit the context correctly.

(a) tempted
(b) losing
(c) swath
(d) relegated
(e) competent

10. Ans: (b)

Explanation:

Polarization refers to division into sharply contrasting groups or sets of opinions or beliefs.
I. consensus implies general agreement, which opposes division.
II. cohesion implies unity and sticking together, again the opposite of division.
III. partisanship refers to strong loyalty to a particular political party or group, which contributes to polarization rather than countering it.

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