

## 2021 Text 1

How can the train operators possibly justify yet another increase to rail passenger fares? It has become a grimly reliable annual ritual: every January the cost of travelling by train rises, imposing a significant extra burden on those who have no option but to use the rail network to get to work or otherwise. This year's rise, an average of 2.7 per cent, maybe a fraction lower than last year's, but it is still well above the official Consumer Price Index (CPI) measure of inflation.

Successive governments have permitted such increases on the grounds that the cost of investing in and running the rail network should be borne by those who use it, rather than the general taxpayer. Why, the argument goes, should a car-driving pensioner from Lincolnshire have to subsidise the daily commute of a stockbroker from Surrey? Equally, there is a sense that the travails of commuters in the south East, many of whom will face among the biggest rises, have received too much attention compared to those who must endure the relatively poor infrastructure of the Midlands and the North.

However, over the past 12 months, those commuters have also experienced some of the worst rail strikes in years. It is all very well train operators trumpeting the improvements they are making to the network, but passengers should be able to expect a basic level of service for the substantial sums they are now paying to travel. The responsibility for the latest wave of strikes rests on the unions. However, there is a strong case that those who have been worst affected by industrial action should receive compensation for the disruption they have suffered.

The Government has pledged to change the law to introduce a minimum service requirement so that, even when strikes occur, services can continue to operate. This should form part of a wider package of measures to address the long-running problems on Britain's railways. Yes, more investment is needed, but passengers will not be willing to pay more indefinitely if they must also endure cramped unreliable services, punctuated by regular chaos when timetables are changed, or planned maintenance is managed incompetently. The threat of nationalisation may have been seen off for now, but it will return with a vengeance if the justified anger of passengers is not addressed in short order.

21. The author holds that this year's increase in rail passenger fares \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. will ease train operators' burden
- B. has kept pace with inflation
- C. is a big surprise to commuters
- D. remains an unreasonable measure

22. The stockbroker in Paragraph 2 is used to stand for \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. car drivers
- B. rail travelers
- C. local investors
- D. ordinary taxpayers

23. It is indicated in Paragraph 3 that train operators \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. are offering compensations to commuters
- B. are trying to repair relations with the unions
- C. have failed to provide an adequate service
- D. have suffered huge losses owing to the strikes

24. If unable to calm down passengers, the railways may have to face \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. the loss of investment
- B. the collapse of operations
- C. a reduction of revenue
- D. a change of ownership

25. Which of the following would be the best title for the text?

- A. Who Are to Blame for the Strikes?
- B. Constant Complaining Doesn't Work
- C. Can Nationalisation Bring Hope?
- D. Ever-rising Fares Aren't Sustainable

## 2021 Text 2

Last year marked the third year in a row that Indonesia's bleak rate deforestation has slowed in pace. One reason for the turnaround may be the country's antipoverty program.

In 2007, Indonesia started phasing in a program that gives money to its poorest residents under certain conditions, such as requiring people to keep kids in school or get regular medical care. Called conditional cash transfers or CCTs, these social assistance programs are designed to reduce inequality and break the cycle of poverty. They're already used in dozens of countries worldwide. In Indonesia, the program has provided enough food and medicine to substantially reduce severe growth problems among children.

But CCT programs don't generally consider effects on the environment. In fact, poverty alleviation and environmental protection are often viewed as conflicting goals, says Paul Ferraro, an economist at Johns Hopkins University.

That's because economic growth can be correlated with environmental degradation, while protecting the environment is sometimes correlated with greater poverty. However, those correlations don't prove cause and effect. The only previous study analyzing causality, based on an area in Mexico that had instituted CCTs, supported the traditional view. There, as people got more money, some of them may have more cleared land for cattle to raise for meat, Ferraro says.

Such programs do not have to negatively affect the environment, though. Ferraro wanted to see if Indonesia's poverty-alleviation program was affecting deforestation. Indonesia has the third-largest area of tropical forest in the world and one of the highest deforestation rates.

Ferraro analyzed satellite data showing annual forest loss from 2008 to 2012—including during Indonesia's phase-in of the antipoverty program—in 7,468 forested villages across 15 provinces and multiple islands. The duo separated the effects of the CCT program on forest loss from other factors, like weather and macroeconomic changes, which were also affecting forest loss. With that, "we see that the program is associated with a 30 percent reduction in deforestation," Ferraro says.

That's likely because the rural poor are using the money as makeshift insurance policies against inclement weather, Ferraro says. Typically, if rains are delayed, people may clear land to plant more rice to supplement their harvests. With the CCTs, individuals instead can use the money to supplement their harvests.

Whether this research translates elsewhere is anybody's guess. Ferraro suggests the results may transfer to other parts of Asia, due to commonalities such as the importance of growing rice and market access. And regardless of transferability, the study shows that what's good for people may also be good for the environment. Even if this program didn't reduce poverty, Ferraro says, "the value of the avoided deforestation just for carbon dioxide emissions alone is more than the program costs."

26. According to the first two paragraphs, CCT programs aim to \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. facilitate health-care reform
- B. help poor families get better off
- C. improve local education systems
- D. lower deforestation rates

27. The study based on an area in Mexico is cited to show that \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. cattle rearing has been a major means of livelihood for the poor
- B. CCT programs have helped preserve traditional lifestyles
- C. antipoverty efforts require the participation of local farmers
- D. economic growth tends to cause environmental degradation

28. In his study about Indonesia, Ferraro intends to find out \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. its acceptance level of CCTs
- B. its annual rate of poverty alleviation
- C. the relation of CCTs to its forest loss
- D. the role of its forests in climate change

29. According to Ferraro, the CCT program in Indonesia is valuable in that \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. it will benefit other Asian countries
- B. it will reduce regional inequality
- C. it can protect the environment
- D. it can boost grain production

30. What is the text centered on?

- A. The effects of a program.
- B. The debates over a program.
- C. The process of a study.
- D. The transferability of a study.

<https://www.sciencenews.org/article/deforestation-trees-indonesia-cash-poor-families-programs>

## 2021 Text 3

As a historian who's always searching for the text or the image that makes us re-evaluate the past, I've become preoccupied with looking for photographs that show our Victorian ancestors smiling (what better way to shatter the image of 19th-century prudery?). I've found quite a few, and — since I started posting them on Twitter — they have been causing quite a stir. People have been surprised to see evidence that Victorians had fun and could, and did, laugh. They are noting that the Victorians suddenly seem to become more human as the hundred-or-so years that separate us fade away through our common experience of laughter.

Of course, I need to concede that my collection of 'Smiling Victorians' makes up only a tiny percentage of the vast catalogue of photographic portraiture created between 1840 and 1900, the majority of which show sitters posing miserably and stiffly in front of painted backdrops, or staring absently into the middle distance. How do we explain this trend?

During the 1840s and 1850s, in the early days of photography, exposure times were notoriously long: the daguerreotype photographic method (producing an image on a silvered copper plate) could take several minutes to complete, resulting in blurred images as sitters shifted position or adjusted their limbs. The thought of holding a fixed grin as the camera performed its magical duties was too much to contemplate, and so a non-committal blank stare became the norm.

But exposure times were much quicker by the 1880s, and the introduction of the Box Brownie and other portable cameras meant that, though slow by today's digital standards, the exposure was almost instantaneous. Spontaneous smiles were relatively easy to capture by the 1890s, so we must look elsewhere for an explanation of why Victorians still hesitated to smile.

One explanation might be the loss of dignity displayed through a cheesy grin. "Nature gave us lips to conceal our teeth," ran one popular Victorian saying, alluding to the fact that before the birth of proper dentistry, mouths were often in a shocking state of hygiene. A flashing set of healthy and clean, regular 'pearly whites' was a rare sight in Victorian society, the preserve of the super-rich (and even then, dental hygiene was not guaranteed).

A toothy grin (especially when there were gaps or blackened teeth) lacked class: drunks, tramps and music hall performers might gurn and grin with a smile as wide as Lewis Carroll's gum-exposing Cheshire Cat, but it was not a becoming look for properly bred persons. Even Mark Twain, a man who enjoyed a hearty laugh, said that when it came to photographic portraits there could be "nothing more damning than a silly, foolish smile fixed forever".

31. According to paragraph 1, the author's posts on Twitter \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. changed people's impression of the Victorians
- B. highlighted social media's role in Victorian studies
- C. re-evaluated the Victorian's notion of public image
- D. illustrated the development of Victorian photography

32. What does the author say about the Victorian portraits he has collected?

- A. They are in popular use among historians.
- B. They are rare among photographs of that age.
- C. They mirror 19th-century social conventions.
- D. They show effects of different exposure times.

33. What might have kept the Victorians from smiling for pictures in the 1890s?

- A. Their inherent social sensitiveness.
- B. Their tension before the camera.
- C. Their distrust of new inventions.
- D. Their unhealthy dental condition.

34. Mark Twain is quoted to show that the disapproval of smiles in pictures was \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. a deep-rooted belief
- B. a misguided attitude
- C. a controversial view
- D. a thought-provoking idea

35. Which of the following questions does the text answer?

- A. Why did most Victorians look stern in photographs?
- B. When did the Victorians start to view photography differently?
- C. What made photography develop slowly in the Victorian period?
- D. How did smiling in photographs become a post-Victorian norm?

## 2021 Text 4

From the early days of broadband, advocates for consumers and web-based companies worried that the cable and phone companies selling broadband connections had the power and incentive to favor affiliated websites over their rivals'. That's why there has been such a strong demand for rules that would prevent broadband providers from picking winners and losers online, preserving the freedom and innovation that have been the lifeblood of the Internet.

Yet that demand has been almost impossible to fill—in part because of push-back from broadband providers, anti-regulatory conservatives and the courts. A federal appeals court weighed in again Tuesday, but instead of providing a badly needed resolution, it only prolonged the fight. At issue before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit was the latest take of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) on net neutrality, adopted on a party-line vote in 2017. The Republican penned order not only eliminated the strict net neutrality rules the FCC had adopted when it had a Democratic majority in 2015, but rejected the commission's authority to require broadband providers to do much of anything. The order also declared that state and local governments couldn't regulate broadband providers either.

The Commission argued that other agencies would protect against anti-competitive behavior, such as a broadband-providing conglomerate like AT&T favoring its own video-streaming service at the expense of Netflix and Apple TV. Yet the FCC also ended the investigations of broadband providers that imposed data caps on their rivals' streaming services but not their own.

On Tuesday, the appeals court unanimously upheld the 2017 order deregulating broadband providers, citing a Supreme Court ruling from 2005 that upheld a similarly deregulatory move. But Judge Patricia Millett rightly argued in a concurring opinion that "the result is unhinged from the realities of modern broadband service," and said Congress on the Supreme Court could intervene to "avoid trapping internet regulation in technological anachronism."

In the meantime, the court threw out the FCC's attempt to block all state rules on net neutrality, while preserving the commission's power to preempt individual state laws that undermine its order. That means more battles like the one now going on between the Justice Department and California when enacted a tough net neutrality law in the wake of the FCC's abdication.

The endless legal battles and back-and-forth at the FCC cry out for Congress to act. It needs to give the commission explicit authority once and for all to bar broadband providers from meddling in the traffic on their network and to create clear rules protecting openness and innovation online.

36. There has long been concern that broadband providers would \_\_\_\_\_.

- |                                        |                                            |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| A. bring web-based firms under control | B. slow down the traffic on their network  |
| C. show partiality in treating clients | D. intensify competition with their rivals |

37. Faced with the demand for net neutrality rules, the FCC \_\_\_\_\_.

- |                                    |                                        |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| A. sticks to an out-of-date order  | B. takes an anti-regulatory stance     |
| C. has issued a special resolution | D. has allowed the states to intervene |

38. What can be learned about AT&T from Paragraph 3?

- |                                            |                                              |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| A. It protects against unfair competition. | B. It engages in anti-competitive practices. |
| C. It is under the FCC's investigation     | D. It is in pursuit of quality service.      |

39. Judge Patricia Millett argues that the appeals court's decision \_\_\_\_\_.

- |                                         |                                 |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| A. focuses on trivialities              | B. conveys an ambiguous message |
| C. is at odds with its earlier rulings. | D. is out of touch with reality |

40. What does the author argue in the last paragraph?

- |                                                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------|
| A. Congress needs to take action to ensure net neutrality. |
| B. The FCC should be put under strict supervision.         |
| C. Rules need to be set to diversify online services.      |
| D. Broadband providers' rights should be protected.        |

## 2020 Text 1

A group of Labour MPs, among them Yvette Cooper, are bringing in the new year with a call to institute a UK “town of culture” award. The proposal is that it should sit alongside the existing city of culture title, which was held by Hull in 2017 and has been awarded to Coventry for 2021. Cooper and her colleagues argue that the success of the crown for Hull, where it brought in £ 220m of investment and an avalanche of arts, out not to be confined to cities. Britain’s towns, it is true, are not prevented from applying, but they generally lack the resources to put together a bid to beat their bigger competitions. A town of culture award could, it is argued, become an annual event, attracting funding and creating jobs.

Some might see the proposal as a booby prize for the fact that Britain is no longer able to apply for the much more prestigious title of European capital of culture, a sought-after award bagged by Glasgow in 1990 and Liverpool in 2008. A cynic might speculate that the UK is on the verge of disappearing into an endless fever of self-celebration in its desperation to reinvent itself for the post-Brexit world: after town of culture, who knows that will follow—village of culture? Suburb of culture? Hamlet of culture?

It is also wise to recall that such titles are not a cure-all. A badly run “year of culture” washes in and out of a place like the tide, bringing prominence for a spell but leaving no lasting benefits to the community. The really successful holders of such titles are those that do a great deal more than fill hotel bedrooms and bring in high-profile arts events and good press for a year. They transform the aspirations of the people who live there; they nudge the self-image of the city into a bolder and more optimistic light.

It is hard to get right, and requires a remarkable degree of vision, as well as cooperation between city authorities, the private sector, community groups and cultural organisations. But it can be done: Glasgow’s year as European capital of culture can certainly be seen as one of complex series of factors that have turned the city into the powerhouse of art, music and theatre that it remains today.

A “town of culture” could be not just about the arts but about honouring a town’s peculiarities—helping sustain its high street, supporting local facilities and above all celebrating its people.

21. Cooper and her colleagues argue that a “town of culture” award could \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. consolidate the town-city ties in Britain
- B. promote cooperation among Britain’s towns
- C. increase the economic strength of Britain’s towns
- D. focus Britain’s limited resources on cultural events

22. According to paragraph 2, the proposal might be regarded by some as \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. a sensible compromise
- B. a self-deceiving attempt
- C. an eye-catching bonus
- D. an inaccessible target

23. The author suggests that a title holder is successful only if it \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. endeavours to maintain its image
- B. meets the aspirations of its people
- C. brings its local arts to prominence
- D. commits to its long-term growth

24. Glasgow is mentioned in Paragraph 4 to present \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. a contrasting case
- B. a supporting example
- C. a background story
- D. a related topic

25. What is the author’s attitude towards the proposal?

- A. Skeptical
- B. Objective
- C. Favourable
- D. Critical

## 2020 Text 2

Scientific publishing has long been a licence to print money. Scientists need journals in which to publish their research, so they will supply the articles without monetary reward. Other scientists perform the specialised work of peer review also for free, because it is a central element in the acquisition of status and the production of scientific knowledge.

With the content of papers secured for free, the publisher needs only to find a market for its journal. Until this century, university libraries were not very price sensitive. Scientific publishers routinely report profit margins approaching 40% on their operations, at a time when the rest of the publishing industry is in an existential crisis.

The Dutch giant Elsevier, which claims to publish 25% of the scientific papers produced in the world, made profits of more than £ 900m last year, while UK universities alone spent more than £ 210m in 2016 to enable researchers to access their own publicly funded research; both figures seem to rise unstoppably despite increasingly desperate efforts to change them.

The most drastic, and thoroughly illegal, reaction has been the emergence of Sci-Hub, a kind of global photocopier for scientific papers, set up in 2012, which now claims to offer access to every paywalled article published since 2015. The success of Sci-Hub, which relies on researchers passing on copies they have themselves legally accessed, shows the legal ecosystem has lost legitimacy among its users and must be transformed so that it works for all participants.

In Britain the move towards open access publishing has been driven by funding bodies. In some ways it has been very successful. More than half of all British scientific research is now published under open access terms: either freely available from the moment of publication, or paywalled for a year or more so that the publishers can make a profit before being placed on general release.

Yet the new system has not worked out any cheaper for the universities. Publishers have responded to the demand that they make their product free to readers by charging their writers fees to cover the costs of preparing an article. These range from around £ 500 to \$ 5,000. A report last year pointed out that the costs both of subscriptions and of these “article preparation costs” had been steadily rising at a rate above inflation.

In some ways the scientific publishing model resembles the economy of the social internet: labour is provided free in exchange for the hope of status, while huge profits are made by a few big firms who run the market places. In both cases, we need a rebalancing of power.

26. Scientific publishing is seen as “a licence to print money” partly because \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. its funding has enjoyed a steady increase
- B. its marketing strategy has been successful
- C. its payment for peer review is reduced
- D. its content acquisition costs nothing

27. According to Paragraphs 2 and 3, scientific publishers Elsevier have \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. thrived mainly on university libraries
- B. gone through an existential crisis
- C. revived the publishing industry
- D. financed researchers generously

28. How does the author feel about the success of Sci-Hub?

- A. Relieved
- B. Puzzled
- C. Concerned
- D. Encouraged.

29. It can be learned from Paragraphs 5 and 6 that open access terms \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. allow publishers some room to make money
- B. render publishing much easier for scientists
- C. reduce the cost of publication substantially
- D. free universities from financial burdens

30. Which of the following characterises the scientific publishing model?

- A. Trial subscription is offered.
- B. Labour triumphs over status.
- C. Costs are well controlled.
- D. The few feed on the many.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/mar/04/the-guardian-view-on-academic-publishing-disastrous-capitalism>



## 2020 Text 3

Progressives often support diversity mandates as a path to equality and a way to level the playing field. But all too often such policies are an insincere form of virtue-signaling that benefits only the most privileged and does little to help average people.

A pair of bills sponsored by Massachusetts state Senator Jason Lewis and House Speaker Pro Tempore Patricia Haddad, to ensure “gender parity” on boards and commissions, provide a case in point.

Haddad and Lewis are concerned that more than half the state-government boards are less than 40 percent female. In order to ensure that elite women have more such opportunities, they have proposed imposing government quotas. If the bills become law, state boards and commissions will be required to set aside 50 percent of board seats for women by 2022.

The bills are similar to a measure recently adopted in California, which last year became the first state to require gender quotas for private companies. In signing the measure, California’s Governor Jerry Brown admitted that the law, which expressly classifies people on the basis of sex, is probably unconstitutional.

The US Supreme Court frowns on sex-based classifications unless they are designed to address an “important” policy interest. Because the California law applies to all boards, even where there is no history of prior discrimination, courts are likely to rule that the law violates the constitutional guarantee of “equal protection”.

But are such government mandates even necessary? Female participation on corporate boards may not currently mirror the percentage of women in the general population, but so what?

The number of women on corporate boards has been steadily increasing without government interference. According to a study by Catalyst, between 2010 and 2015, the share of women on the boards of global corporations increased by 54 percent.

Requiring companies to make gender the primary qualification for board membership will inevitably lead to less experienced private sector boards. That is exactly what happened when Norway adopted a nationwide corporate gender quota.

Writing in *The New Republic*, Alice Lee notes that increasing the number of opportunities for board membership without increasing the pool of qualified women to serve on such boards has led to a “golden skirt” phenomenon, where the same elite women scoop up multiple seats on a variety of boards.

Next time somebody pushes corporate quotas as a way to promote gender equity, remember that such policies are largely self-serving measures that make their sponsors feel good but do little to help average women.

31. The author believes that the bills sponsored by Lewis and Haddad will \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. help little to reduce gender bias
- B. pose a threat to the state government
- C. raise women’s position in politics
- D. greatly broaden career options

32. Which of the following is true of the California measure?

- A. It has irritated private business owners.
- B. It is welcomed by the Supreme Court.
- C. It may go against the Constitution.
- D. It will settle the prior controversies.

33. The author mentions the study by Catalyst to illustrate \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. the harm from arbitrary board decision
- B. the importance of constitutional guarantees
- C. the pressure on women in global corporations
- D. the needlessness of government interventions

34. Norway’s adoption of a nationwide corporate gender quota has led to \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. the underestimation of elite women’s role
- B. the objection to female participation on boards
- C. the entry of unqualified candidates into the board
- D. the growing tension between labor and management

35. Which of the following can be inferred from the text?

- A. Women’s need in employment should be considered.
- B. Feasibility should be a prime concern in policymaking.
- C. Everyone should try hard to promote social justice.
- D. Major social issues should be the focus of legislation.

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/2019/08/05/corporate-gender-quotas-reinforce-privilege/WA4QjKBkb2aUxUdF59h0EO/story.html>

## 2020 Text 4

Last Thursday, the French Senate passed a digital services tax, which would impose an entirely new tax on large multinationals that provide digital services to consumers or users in France. Digital services include everything from providing a platform for selling goods and services online to targeting advertising based on user data, and the tax applies to gross revenue from such services. Many French politicians and media outlets have referred to this as a “GAFA tax,” meaning that it is designed to apply primarily to companies such as Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon—in other words, multinational tech companies based in the United States.

The digital services tax now awaits the signature of President Emmanuel Macron, who has expressed support for the measure, and it could go into effect within the next few weeks. But it has already sparked significant controversy, with the United States trade representative opening an investigation into whether the tax discriminates against American companies, which in turn could lead to trade sanctions against France.

The French tax is not just a unilateral move by one country in need of revenue. Instead, the digital services tax is part of a much larger trend, with countries over the past few years proposing or putting in place an alphabet soup of new international tax provisions. These have included Britain’s DPT (diverted profits tax), Australia’s MAAL (multinational anti-avoidance law), and India’s SEP (significant economic presence) test, to name but a few. At the same time, the European Union, Spain, Britain and several other countries have all seriously contemplated digital services taxes.

These unilateral developments differ in their specifics, but they are all designed to tax multinationals on income and revenue that countries believe they should have a right to tax, even if international tax rules do not grant them that right. In other words, they all share a view that the international tax system has failed to keep up with the current economy.

In response to these many unilateral measures, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is currently working with 131 countries to reach a consensus on an international solution by the end of 2020. Both France and the United States are involved in the organization’s work, but France’s digital services tax and the American response raise questions about what the future holds for the international tax system.

France’s planned tax is a clear warning: Unless a broad consensus can be reached on reforming the international tax system, other nations are likely to follow suit, and American companies will face a cascade of different taxes from dozens of nations that will prove burdensome and costly.

36. The French Senate has passed a bill to \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. regulate digital services platforms
- B. protect French companies’ interests
- C. impose a levy on tech multinationals
- D. curb the influence of advertising

37. It can be learned from Paragraph 2 that the digital services tax \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. may trigger countermeasures against France
- B. is apt to arouse criticism at home and abroad
- C. aims to ease international trade tensions
- D. will prompt the tech giants to quit France

38. The countries adopting the unilateral measures share the opinion that \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. redistribution of tech giants’ revenue must be ensured
- B. the current international tax system needs upgrading
- C. tech multinationals’ monopoly should be prevented
- D. all countries ought to enjoy equal taxing rights

39. It can be learned from Paragraph 5 that the OECD’s current work \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. is being resisted by US companies
- B. needs to be readjusted immediately
- C. is faced with uncertain prospects.
- D. needs to involve more countries

40. Which of the following might be the best title for this text?

- A. France Is Confronted with Trade Sanctions
- B. France Leads the Charge on Digital Tax
- C. France Says “NO” to Tech Multinationals
- D. France Demands a Role in the Digital Economy

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/15/opinion/france-internet-tax.html>



## 2019 Text 1

Financial regulators in Britain have imposed a rather unusual rule on the bosses of big banks. Starting next year, any guaranteed bonus of top executives could be delayed 10 years if their banks are under investigation for wrongdoing. The main purpose of this “clawback” rule is to hold bankers accountable for harmful risk-taking and to restore public trust in financial institutions. Yet officials also hope for a much larger benefit: more long-term decision-making, not only by banks but by all corporations, to build a stronger economy for future generations.

“Short-termism,” or the desire for quick profits, has worsened in publicly traded companies, says the Bank of England’s top economist, Andrew Haldane. He quotes a giant of classical economics, Alfred Marshall, in describing this financial impatience as acting like “Children who pick the plums out of their pudding to eat them at once” rather than putting them aside to be eaten last.

The average time for holding a stock in both the United States and Britain, he notes, has dropped from seven years to seven months in recent decades. Transient investors, who demand high quarterly profits from companies, can hinder a firm’s efforts to invest in long-term research or to build up customer loyalty. This has been dubbed “quarterly capitalism.”

In addition, new digital technologies have allowed more rapid trading of equities, quicker use of information, and thus shorter attention spans in financial markets. “There seems to be a predominance of short-term thinking at the expense of long-term investing,” said Commissioner Daniel Gallagher of the US Securities and Exchange Commission in a speech this week.

In the US, *the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002* has pushed most public companies to defer performance bonuses for senior executives by about a year, slightly helping reduce “short-termism.” In its latest survey of CEO pay, *The Wall Street Journal* finds that “a substantial part” of executive pay is now tied to performance.

Much more could be done to encourage “long-termism,” such as changes in the tax code and quicker disclosure of stock acquisitions. In France, shareholders who hold onto a company investment for at least two years can sometimes earn more voting rights in a company.

Within companies, the right compensation design can provide incentives for executives to think beyond their own time at the company and on behalf of all stakeholders. Britain’s new rule is a reminder to bankers that society has an interest in their performance, not just for the short term but for the long term.

21. According to Paragraph 1, one motive in imposing the new rule is to \_\_\_\_\_.

- |                                               |                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| A. enhance bankers’ sense of responsibility   | B. help corporations achieve larger profits |
| C. build a new system of financial regulation | D. guarantee the bonuses of top executives  |

22. Alfred Marshall is quoted to indicate \_\_\_\_\_.

- |                                                     |                                               |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| A. the conditions for generating quick profits      | B. governments’ impatience in decision-making |
| C. the solid structure of publicly traded companies | D. “short-termism” in economic activities     |

23. It is argued that the influence of transient investment on public companies can be \_\_\_\_\_.

- |             |            |            |              |
|-------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| A. indirect | B. adverse | C. minimal | D. temporary |
|-------------|------------|------------|--------------|

24. The US and France examples are used to illustrate \_\_\_\_\_.

- |                                                |                                           |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| A. the obstacles to preventing “short-termism” | B. the significance of long-term thinking |
| C. the approaches to promoting “long-termism”  | D. the prevalence of short-term thinking  |

25. Which of the following would be the best title for the text?

- |                                            |                                       |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| A. Failure of Quarterly Capitalism         | B. Patience as a Corporate Virtue     |
| C. Decisiveness Required of Top Executives | D. Frustration of Risk-taking Bankers |

## 2019 Text 2

Grade inflation—the gradual increase in average GPAs (grade-point averages) over the past few decades—is often considered a product of a consumer era in higher education, in which students are treated like customers to be pleased. But another, related force—a policy often buried deep in course catalogs called “grade forgiveness”—is helping raise GPAs.

Grade forgiveness allows students to retake a course in which they received a low grade, and the most recent grade or the highest grade is the only one that counts in calculating a student’s overall GPA.

The use of this little-known practice has accelerated in recent years, as colleges continue to do their utmost to keep students in school (and paying tuition) and improve their graduation rates. When this practice first started decades ago, it was usually limited to freshmen, to give them a second chance to take a class in their first year if they struggled in their transition to college-level courses. But now most colleges, save for many selective campuses, allow all undergraduates, and even graduate students, to get their low grades forgiven.

College officials tend to emphasize that the goal of grade forgiveness is less about the grade itself and more about encouraging students to retake courses critical to their degree program and graduation without incurring a big penalty. “Ultimately,” said Jack Miner, Ohio State University’s registrar, “we see students achieve more success because they retake a course and do better in subsequent courses or master the content that allows them to graduate on time.”

That said, there is a way in which grade forgiveness satisfies colleges’ own needs as well. For public institutions, state funds are sometimes tied partly to their success on metrics such as graduation rates and student retention—so better grades can, by boosting figures like those, mean more money. And anything that raises GPAs will likely make students—who, at the end of the day, are paying the bill—feel they’ve gotten a better value for their tuition dollars, which is another big concern for colleges.

Indeed, grade forgiveness is just another way that universities are responding to consumers’ expectations for higher education. Since students and parents expect a college degree to lead to a job, it is in the best interest of a school to turn out graduates who are as qualified as possible—or at least appear to be. On this, students’ and colleges’ incentives seem to be aligned.

26. What is commonly regarded as the cause of grade inflation?

- A. The change of course catalogs.
- B. Students’ indifference to GPAs.
- C. Colleges’ neglect of GPAs.
- D. The influence of consumer culture.

27. What was the original purpose of grade forgiveness?

- A. To help freshmen adapt to college learning.
- B. To maintain colleges’ graduation rates.
- C. To prepare graduates for a challenging future.
- D. To increase universities’ income from tuition.

28. According to Paragraph 5, grade forgiveness enables colleges to \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. obtain more financial support
- B. boost their student enrollments
- C. improve their teaching quality
- D. meet local governments’ needs

29. What does the phrase “to be aligned” (Para. 6) most probably mean?

- A. To counterbalance each other.
- B. To complement each other.
- C. To be identical with each other.
- D. To be contradictory to each other.

30. The author examines the practice of grade forgiveness by \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. assessing its feasibility
- B. analyzing the causes behind it
- C. comparing different views on it
- D. listing its long-run effects

## 2019 Text 3

This year marks exactly two centuries since the publication of *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*, by Mary Shelley. Even before the invention of the electric light bulb, the author produced a remarkable work of speculative fiction that would foreshadow many ethical questions to be raised by technologies yet to come.

Today the rapid growth of artificial intelligence (AI) raises fundamental questions: “What is intelligence, identity, or consciousness? What makes humans humans?”

What is being called artificial general intelligence, machines that would imitate the way humans think, continues to evade scientists. Yet humans remain fascinated by the idea of robots that would look, move, and respond like humans, similar to those recently depicted on popular sci-fi TV series such as “Westworld” and “Humans.”

Just *how* people think is still far too complex to be understood, let alone reproduced, says David Eagleman, a Stanford University neuroscientist. “We are just in a situation where there are no good theories explaining what consciousness actually is and how you could ever build a machine to get there.”

But that doesn’t mean crucial ethical issues involving AI aren’t at hand. The coming use of autonomous vehicles, for example, poses thorny ethical questions. Human drivers sometimes must make split-second decisions. Their reactions may be a complex combination of instant reflexes, input from past driving experiences, and what their eyes and ears tell them in that moment. AI “vision” today is not nearly as sophisticated as that of humans. And to anticipate every imaginable driving situation is a difficult programming problem.

Whenever decisions are based on masses of data, “you quickly get into a lot of ethical questions,” notes Tan Kiat How, chief executive of a Singapore-based agency that is helping the government develop a voluntary code for the ethical use of AI. Along with Singapore, other governments and mega-corporations are beginning to establish their own guidelines. Britain is setting up a data ethics center. India released its AI ethics strategy this spring.

On June 7 Google pledged not to “design or deploy AI” that would cause “overall harm,” or to develop AI-directed weapons or use AI for surveillance that would violate international norms. It also pledged not to deploy AI whose use would violate international laws or human rights.

While the statement is vague, it represents one starting point. So does the idea that decisions made by AI systems should be explainable, transparent, and fair.

To put it another way: How can we make sure that the thinking of intelligent machines reflects humanity’s highest values? Only then will they be useful servants and not Frankenstein’s out-of-control monster.

31. Mary Shelley’s novel *Frankenstein* is mentioned because it \_\_\_\_\_.

- |                                                |                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| A. fascinates AI scientists all over the world | B. has remained popular for as long as 200 years |
| C. involves some concerns raised by AI today   | D. has sparked serious ethical controversies     |

32. In David Eagleman’s opinion, our current knowledge of consciousness \_\_\_\_\_.

- |                                          |                                          |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| A. helps explain artificial intelligence | B. can be misleading to robot making     |
| C. inspires popular sci-fi TV series     | D. is too limited for us to reproduce it |

33. The solution to the ethical issues brought by autonomous vehicles \_\_\_\_\_.

- |                                 |                                 |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| A. can hardly ever be found     | B. is still beyond our capacity |
| C. causes little public concern | D. has aroused much curiosity   |

34. The author’s attitude toward Google’s pledges is one of \_\_\_\_\_.

- |                |               |             |            |
|----------------|---------------|-------------|------------|
| A. affirmation | B. skepticism | C. contempt | D. respect |
|----------------|---------------|-------------|------------|

35. Which of the following would be the best title for the text?

- A. AI’s Future: In the Hands of Tech Giants  
B. *Frankenstein*, the Novel Predicting the Age of AI  
C. The Conscience of AI: Complex But Inevitable  
D. AI Shall Be Killers Once Out of Control

## 2019 Text 4

States will be able to force more people to pay sales tax when they make online purchases under a Supreme Court decision Thursday that will leave shoppers with lighter wallets but is a big financial win for states.

The Supreme Court's opinion Thursday overruled a pair of decades-old decisions that states said cost them billions of dollars in lost revenue annually. The decisions made it more difficult for states to collect sales tax on certain online purchases.

The cases the court overturned said that if a business was shipping a customer's purchase to a state where the business didn't have a physical presence such as a warehouse or office, the business didn't have to collect sales tax for the state. Customers were generally responsible for paying the sales tax to the state themselves if they weren't charged it, but most didn't realize they owed it and few paid.

Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote that the previous decisions were flawed. "Each year the physical presence rule becomes further removed from economic reality and results in significant revenue losses to the states," he wrote in an opinion joined by four other justices. Kennedy wrote that the rule "limited states' ability to seek long-term prosperity and has prevented market participants from competing on an even playing field."

The ruling is a victory for big chains with a presence in many states, since they usually collect sales tax on online purchases already. Now, rivals will be charging sales tax where they hadn't before. Big chains have been collecting sales tax nationwide because they typically have physical stores in whatever state a purchase is being shipped to. Amazon.com, with its network of warehouses, also collects sales tax in every state that charges it, though third-party sellers who use the site don't have to.

Until now, many sellers that have a physical presence in only a single state or a few states have been able to avoid charging sales taxes when they ship to addresses outside those states. Sellers that use eBay and Etsy, which provide platforms for smaller sellers, also haven't been collecting sales tax nationwide. Under the ruling Thursday, states can pass laws requiring out-of-state sellers to collect the state's sales tax from customers and send it to the state.

Retail trade groups praised the ruling, saying it levels the playing field for local and online businesses. The losers, said retail analyst Neil Saunders, are online-only retailers, especially smaller ones. Those retailers may face headaches complying with various state sales tax laws. The Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council advocacy group said in a statement, "Small businesses and internet entrepreneurs are not well served at all by this decision."

36. The Supreme Court decision Thursday will \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. better businesses' relations with states
- B. put most online business in a dilemma
- C. make more online shoppers pay sales tax
- D. force some states to cut sales tax

37. It can be learned from paragraphs 2 and 3 that the overruled decisions \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. have led to the dominance of e-commerce
- B. have cost consumers a lot over the years
- C. were widely criticized by online purchasers
- D. were considered unfavorable by states

38. According to Justice Anthony Kennedy, the physical presence rule has \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. hindered economic development
- B. brought prosperity to the country
- C. harmed fair market competition
- D. boosted growth in states' revenue

39. Who are most likely to welcome the Supreme Court ruling \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. Internet entrepreneurs
- B. Big-chain owners
- C. Third-party sellers
- D. Small retailers

40. In dealing with the Supreme Court decision Thursday, the author \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. gives a factual account of it and discusses its consequences
- B. describes the long and complicated process of its making
- C. presents its main points with conflicting views on them
- D. cites some cases related to it and analyzes their implications

## 2018 Text 1

Among the annoying challenges facing the middle class is one that will probably go unmentioned in the next presidential campaign: What happens when the robots come for their jobs?

Don't dismiss that possibility entirely. About half of U.S. jobs are at high risk of being automated, according to a University of Oxford study, with the middle class disproportionately squeezed. Lower-income jobs like gardening or day care don't appeal to robots. But many middle-class occupations—trucking, financial advice, software engineering—have aroused their interest, or soon will. The rich own the robots, so they will be fine.

This isn't to be alarmist. Optimists point out that technological upheaval has benefited workers in the past. The Industrial Revolution didn't go so well for Luddites whose jobs were displaced by mechanized looms, but it eventually raised living standards and created more jobs than it destroyed. Likewise, automation should eventually boost productivity, stimulate demand by driving down prices, and free workers from hard, boring work. But in the medium term, middle-class workers may need a lot of help adjusting.

The first step, as Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee argue in *The Second Machine Age*, should be rethinking education and job training. Curriculums—from grammar school to college—should evolve to focus less on memorizing facts and more on creativity and complex communication. Vocational schools should do a better job of fostering problem-solving skills and helping students work alongside robots. Online education can supplement the traditional kind. It could make extra training and instruction affordable. Professionals trying to acquire new skills will be able to do so without going into debt.

The challenge of coping with automation underlines the need for the U.S. to revive its fading business dynamism: Starting new companies must be made easier. In previous eras of drastic technological change, entrepreneurs smoothed the transition by dreaming up ways to combine labor and machines. The best uses of 3D printers and virtual reality haven't been invented yet. The U.S. needs the new companies that will invent them.

Finally, because automation threatens to widen the gap between capital income and labor income, taxes and the safety net will have to be rethought. Taxes on low-wage labor need to be cut, and wage subsidies such as the earned income tax credit should be expanded: This would boost incomes, encourage work, reward companies for job creation, and reduce inequality.

Technology will improve society in ways big and small over the next few years, yet this will be little comfort to those who find their lives and careers upended by automation. Destroying the machines that are coming for our jobs would be nuts. But policies to help workers adapt will be indispensable.

21. Who will be most threatened by automation?

- A. Leading politicians.
- B. Low-wage laborers.
- C. Robot owners.
- D. Middle-class workers.

22. Which of the following best represent the author's view?

- A. Worries about automation are in fact groundless.
- B. Optimists' opinions on new tech find little support.
- C. Issues arising from automation need to be tackled.
- D. Negative consequences of new tech can be avoided.

23. Education in the age of automation should put more emphasis on \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. creative potential
- B. job-hunting skills
- C. individual needs
- D. cooperative spirit

24. The author suggests that tax policies be aimed at \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. encouraging the development of automation
- B. increasing the return on capital investment
- C. easing the hostility between rich and poor
- D. preventing the income gap from widening

25. In this text, the author presents a problem with \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. opposing views on it
- B. possible solutions to it
- C. its alarming impacts
- D. its major variations

## 2018 Text 2

A new survey by Harvard University finds more than two-thirds of young Americans disapprove of President Trump's use of Twitter. The implication is that Millennials prefer news from the White House to be filtered through other sources, not a president's social media platform.

Most Americans rely on social media to check daily headlines. Yet as distrust has risen toward all media, people may be starting to beef up their media literacy skills. Such a trend is badly needed. During the 2016 presidential campaign, nearly a quarter of web content shared by Twitter users in the politically critical state of Michigan was fake news, according to the University of Oxford. And a survey conducted for BuzzFeed News found 44 percent of Facebook users rarely or never trust news from the media giant.

Young people who are digital natives are indeed becoming more skillful at separating fact from fiction in cyberspace. A Knight Foundation focus-group survey of young people between ages 14 and 24 found they use "distributed trust" to verify stories. They cross-check sources and prefer news from different perspectives—especially those that are open about any bias. "Many young people assume a great deal of personal responsibility for educating themselves and actively seeking out opposing viewpoints," the survey concluded.

Such active research can have another effect. A 2014 survey conducted in Australia, Britain, and the United States by the University of Wisconsin-Madison found that young people's reliance on social media led to greater political engagement.

Social media allows users to experience news events more intimately and immediately while also permitting them to re-share news as a projection of their values and interests. This forces users to be more conscious of their role in passing along information. A survey by Barna research group found the top reason given by Americans for the fake news phenomenon is "reader error," more so than made-up stories or factual mistakes in reporting. About a third say the problem of fake news lies in "misinterpretation or exaggeration of actual news" via social media. In other words, the choice to share news on social media may be the heart of the issue. "This indicates there is a real personal responsibility in counteracting this problem," says Roxanne Stone, editor in chief at Barna Group.

So when young people are critical of an over-tweeting president, they reveal a mental discipline in thinking skills—and in their choices on when to share on social media.

26. According to Paragraphs 1 and 2, many young Americans cast doubt on \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. the justification of the news-filtering practice
- B. people's preference for social media platforms
- C. the administration's ability to handle information
- D. social media was a reliable source of news

27. The phrase "beef up" (Para. 2) is closest in meaning to \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. sharpen
- B. define
- C. boast
- D. share

28. According to the knight Foundation survey, young people \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. tend to voice their opinions in cyberspace
- B. verify news by referring to diverse sources
- C. have a strong sense of social responsibility
- D. like to exchange views on "distributed trust"

29. The Barna survey found that a main cause for the fake news problem is \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. readers' outdated values
- B. journalists' biased reporting
- C. readers' misinterpretation
- D. journalists' made-up stories

30. Which of the following would be the best title for the text?

- A. A Rise in Critical Skills for Sharing News Online
- B. A Counteraction Against the Over-tweeting Trend
- C. The Accumulation of Mutual Trust on Social Media
- D. The Platforms for Projection of Personal Interests



## 2018 Text 3

Any fair-minded assessment of the dangers of the deal between Britain's National Health Service (NHS) and DeepMind must start by acknowledging that both sides mean well. DeepMind is one of the leading artificial intelligence (AI) companies in the world. The potential of this work applied to healthcare is very great, but it could also lead to further concentration of power in the tech giants. It is against that background that the information commissioner, Elizabeth Denham, has issued her damning verdict against the Royal Free hospital trust under the NHS, which handed over to DeepMind the records of 1.6 million patients in 2015 on the basis of a vague agreement which took far too little account of the patients' rights and their expectations of privacy.

DeepMind has almost apologised. The NHS trust has mended its ways. Further arrangements—and there may be many—between the NHS and DeepMind will be carefully scrutinised to ensure that all necessary permissions have been asked of patients and all unnecessary data has been cleaned. There are lessons about informed patient consent to learn. But privacy is not the only angle in this case and not even the most important. Ms Denham chose to concentrate the blame on the NHS trust, since under existing law it “controlled” the data and DeepMind merely “processed” it. But this distinction misses the point that it is processing and aggregation, not the mere possession of bits, that gives the data value.

The great question is who should benefit from the analysis of all the data that our lives now generate. Privacy law builds on the concept of damage to an individual from identifiable knowledge about them. That misses the way the surveillance economy works. The data of an individual there gains its value only when it is compared with the data of countless millions more.

The use of privacy law to curb the tech giants in this instance feels slightly maladapted. This practice does not address the real worry. It is not enough to say that the algorithms DeepMind develops will benefit patients and save lives. What matters is that they will belong to a private monopoly which developed them using public resources. If software promises to save lives on the scale that drugs now can, big data may be expected to behave as a big pharm has done. We are still at the beginning of this revolution and small choices now may turn out to have gigantic consequences later. A long struggle will be needed to avoid a future of digital feudalism. Ms Denham's report is a welcome start.

31. What is true of the agreement between the NHS and DeepMind?

- A. It caused conflicts among tech giants.
- B. It failed to pay due attention to patients' rights.
- C. It fell short of the latter's expectations.
- D. It put both sides into a dangerous situation.

32. The NHS trust responded to Denham's verdict with \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. empty promises
- B. tough resistance
- C. necessary adjustments
- D. sincere apologies

33. The author argues in Paragraph 2 that \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. privacy protection must be secured at all costs
- B. leaking patients' data is worse than selling it
- C. making profits from patients' data is illegal
- D. the value of data comes from the processing of it

34. According to the last paragraph, the real worry arising from this deal is \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. the vicious rivalry among big pharmas
- B. the ineffective enforcement of privacy law
- C. the uncontrolled use of new software
- D. the monopoly of big data by tech giants

35. The author's attitude toward the application of AI to healthcare is \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. ambiguous
- B. cautious
- C. appreciative
- D. contemptuous

## 2018 Text 4

The U.S. Postal Service (USPS) continues to bleed red ink. It reported a net loss of \$ 5.6 billion for fiscal 2016, the 10th straight year its expenses have exceeded revenue. Meanwhile, it has more than \$ 120 billion in unfunded liabilities, mostly for employee health and retirement costs. There are many reasons this formerly stable federal institution finds itself on the verge of bankruptcy. Fundamentally, the USPS is in a historic squeeze between technological change that has permanently decreased demand for its bread-and-butter product, first-class mail, and a regulatory structure that denies management the flexibility to adjust its operations to the new reality.

And interest groups ranging from postal unions to greeting-card makers exert self-interested pressure on the USPS's ultimate overseer—Congress—insisting that whatever else happens to the Postal Service, aspects of the status quo they depend on get protected. This is why repeated attempts at reform legislation have failed in recent years, leaving the Postal Service unable to pay its bills except by deferring vital modernization.

Now comes word that everyone involved—Democrats, Republicans, the Postal Service, the unions and the system's heaviest users—has finally agreed on a plan to fix the system. Legislation is moving through the House that would save USPS an estimated \$ 28.6 billion over five years, which could help pay for new vehicles, among other survival measures. Most of the money would come from a penny-per-letter permanent rate increase and from shifting postal retirees into Medicare. The latter step would largely offset the financial burden of annually pre-funding retiree health care, thus addressing a long-standing complaint by the USPS and its unions.

If it clears the House, this measure would still have to get through the Senate—where someone is bound to point out that it amounts to the bare, bare minimum necessary to keep the Postal Service afloat, not comprehensive reform. There's no change to collective bargaining at the USPS, a major omission considering that personnel accounts for 80 percent of the agency's costs. Also missing is any discussion of eliminating Saturday letter delivery. That common-sense change enjoys wide public support and would save the USPS \$ 2 billion per year. But postal special-interest groups seem to have killed it, at least in the House. The emerging consensus around the bill is a sign that legislators are getting frightened about a politically embarrassing short-term collapse at the USPS. It is not, however, a sign that they're getting serious about transforming the postal system for the 21st century.

36. The financial problem with the USPS is caused partly by \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. its unbalanced budget
- B. its rigid management
- C. the cost for technical upgrading
- D. the withdrawal of bank support

37. According to Paragraph 2, the USPS fails to modernize itself due to \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. the interference from interest groups
- B. the inadequate funding from Congress
- C. the shrinking demand for postal service
- D. the incompetence of postal unions

38. The long-standing complaint by the USPS and its unions can be addressed by \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. removing its burden of retiree health care
- B. making more investment in new vehicles
- C. adopting a new rate-increase mechanism
- D. attracting more first-class mail users

39. In the last paragraph, the author seems to view legislators with \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. respect
- B. tolerance
- C. discontent
- D. gratitude

40. Which of the following would be the best title for the text?

- A. The USPS Starts to Miss Its Good Old Days
- B. The Postal Service: Keep Away from My Cheese
- C. The USPS: Chronic Illness Requires a Quick Cure
- D. The Postal Service Needs More than a Band-Aid

## 2017 Text 1

First two hours, now three hours—this is how far in advance authorities are recommending people show up to catch a domestic flight, at least at some major U.S. airports with increasingly massive security lines.

Americans are willing to tolerate time-consuming security procedures in return for increased safety. The crash of EgyptAir Flight 804, which terrorists may have downed over the Mediterranean Sea, provides another tragic reminder of why. But demanding too much of air travelers or providing too little security in return undermines public support for the process. And it should: Wasted time is a drag on Americans' economic and private lives, not to mention infuriating.

Last year, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) found in a secret check that undercover investigators were able to sneak weapons—both fake and real - past airport security nearly every time they tried. Enhanced security measures since then, combined with a rise in airline travel due to the improving economy and low oil prices, have resulted in long waits at major airports such as Chicago's O'Hare International. It is not yet clear how much more effective airline security has become—but the lines are obvious.

Part of the issue is that the government did not anticipate the steep increase in airline travel, so the TSA is now rushing to get new screeners on the line. Part of the issue is that airports have only so much room for screening lanes. Another factor may be that more people are trying to overpack their carry-on bags to avoid checked-baggage fees, though the airlines strongly dispute this.

There is one step the TSA could take that would not require remodeling airports or rushing to hire: Enroll more people in the PreCheck program. PreCheck is supposed to be a win-win for travelers and the TSA. Passengers who pass a background check are eligible to use expedited screening lanes. This allows the TSA to focus on travelers who are higher risk, saving time for everyone involved. The TSA wants to enroll 25 million people in PreCheck.

It has not gotten anywhere close to that, and one big reason is sticker shock: Passengers must pay \$85 every five years to process their background checks. Since the beginning, this price tag has been PreCheck's fatal flaw. Upcoming reforms might bring the price to a more reasonable level. But Congress should look into doing so directly, by helping to finance PreCheck enrollment or to cut costs in other ways.

The TSA cannot continue diverting resources into underused PreCheck lanes while most of the traveling public suffers in unnecessary lines. It is long past time to make the program work.

21. The crash of EgyptAir Flight 804 is mentioned to \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. stress the urgency to strengthen security worldwide
- B. highlight the necessity of upgrading major U.S. airports
- C. explain Americans' tolerance of current security checks
- D. emphasize the importance of privacy protection

22. Which of the following contributes to long waits at major airports?

- A. New restrictions on carry-on bags.
- B. The declining efficiency of the TSA.
- C. An increase in the number of travelers.
- D. Frequent unexpected secret checks.

23. The word "expedited" (Para. 5) is closest in meaning to \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. faster
- B. quieter
- C. wider
- D. cheaper

24. One problem with the PreCheck program is \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. a dramatic reduction of its scale
- B. its wrongly-directed implementation
- C. the government's reluctance to back it
- D. an unreasonable price for enrollment

25. Which of the following would be the best title for the text?

- A. Less Screening for More Safety
- B. PreCheck—a Belated Solution
- C. Getting Stuck in Security Lines
- D. Underused PreCheck Lanes

## 2017 Text 2

“The ancient Hawaiians were astronomers,” wrote Queen Liliuokalani, Hawaii’s last reigning monarch, in 1897. Star watchers were among the most esteemed members of Hawaiian society. Sadly, all is not well with astronomy in Hawaii today. Protests have erupted over construction of the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) , a giant observatory that promises to revolutionize humanity’s view of the cosmos.

At issue is the TMT’s planned location on Mauna Kea, a dormant volcano worshiped by some Hawaiians as the *piko*, that connects the Hawaiian Islands to the heavens. But Mauna Kea is also home to some of the world’s most powerful telescopes. Rested in the Pacific Ocean, Mauna Kea’s peak rises above the bulk of our planet’s dense atmosphere, where conditions allow telescopes to obtain images of unsurpassed clarity.

Opposition to telescopes on Mauna Kea is nothing new. A small but vocal group of Hawaiians and environmentalists have long viewed their presence as disrespect for sacred land and a painful reminder of the occupation of what was once a sovereign nation.

Some blame for the current controversy belongs to astronomers. In their eagerness to build bigger telescopes, they forgot that science is not the only way of understanding the world. They did not always prioritize the protection of Mauna Kea’s fragile ecosystems or its holiness to the islands’ inhabitants. Hawaiian culture is not a relic of the past; it is a living culture undergoing a renaissance today.

Yet science has a cultural history, too, with roots going back to the dawn of civilization. The same curiosity to find what lies beyond the horizon that first brought early Polynesians to Hawaii’s shores inspires astronomers today to explore the heavens. Calls to disassemble all telescopes on Mauna Kea or to ban future development there ignore the reality that astronomy and Hawaiian culture both seek to answer big questions about who we are, where we come from and where we are going. Perhaps that is why we explore the starry skies, as if answering a primal calling to know ourselves and our true ancestral homes.

The astronomy community is making compromises to change its use of Mauna Kea. The TMT site was chosen to minimize the telescope’s visibility around the island and to avoid archaeological and environmental impact. To limit the number of telescopes on Mauna Kea, old ones will be removed at the end of their lifetimes and their sites returned to a natural state. There is no reason why everyone cannot be welcomed on Mauna Kea to embrace their cultural heritage and to study the stars.

26. Queen Liliuokalani’s remark in Paragraph 1 indicates \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. her conservative view on the historical role of astronomy
- B. the importance of astronomy in ancient Hawaiian society
- C. the regrettable decline of astronomy in ancient times
- D. her appreciation of star watchers’ feats in her time

27. Mauna Kea is deemed as an ideal astronomical site due to \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. its geographical features
- B. its protective surroundings
- C. its religious implications
- D. its existing infrastructure

28. The construction of the TMT is opposed by some locals partly because \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. it may risk ruining their intellectual life
- B. it reminds them of a humiliating history
- C. their culture will lose a chance of revival
- D. they fear losing control of Mauna Kea

29. It can be inferred from Paragraph 5 that progress in today’s astronomy \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. is fulfilling the dreams of ancient Hawaiians
- B. helps spread Hawaiian culture across the world
- C. may uncover the origin of Hawaiian culture
- D. will eventually soften Hawaiians’ hostility

30. The author’s attitude toward choosing Mauna Kea as the TMT site is one of \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. severe criticism
- B. passive acceptance
- C. slight hesitancy
- D. full approval

## 2017 Text 3

Robert F. Kennedy once said that a country's GDP measures "everything except that which makes life worthwhile." With Britain voting to leave the European Union, and GDP already predicted to slow as a result, it is now a timely moment to assess what he was referring to.

The question of GDP and its usefulness has annoyed policymakers for over half a century. Many argue that it is a flawed concept. It measures things that do not matter and misses things that do. By most recent measures, the UK's GDP has been the envy of the Western world, with record low unemployment and high growth figures. If everything was going so well, then why did over 17 million people vote for Brexit, despite the warnings about what it could do to their country's economic prospects?

A recent annual study of countries and their ability to convert growth into well-being sheds some light on that question. Across the 163 countries measured, the UK is one of the poorest performers in ensuring that economic growth is translated into meaningful improvements for its citizens. Rather than just focusing on GDP, over 40 different sets of criteria from health, education and civil society engagement have been measured to get a more rounded assessment of how countries are performing.

While all of these countries face their own challenges, there are a number of consistent themes. Yes, there has been a budding economic recovery since the 2008 global crash, but in key indicators in areas such as health and education, major economies have continued to decline. Yet this isn't the case with all countries. Some relatively poor European countries have seen huge improvements across measures including civil society, income equality and the environment.

This is a lesson that rich countries can learn: When GDP is no longer regarded as the sole measure of a country's success, the world looks very different.

So, what Kennedy was referring to was that while GDP has been the most common method for measuring the economic activity of nations, as a measure, it is no longer enough. It does not include important factors such as environmental quality or education outcomes—all things that contribute to a person's sense of well-being.

The sharp hit to growth predicted around the world and in the UK could lead to a decline in the everyday services we depend on for our well-being and for growth. But policymakers who refocus efforts on improving well-being rather than simply worrying about GDP figures could avoid the forecasted doom and may even see progress.

31. Robert F. Kennedy is cited because he \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. praised the UK for its GDP
- B. identified GDP with happiness
- C. misinterpreted the role of GDP
- D. had a low opinion of GDP

32. It can be inferred from Paragraph 2 that \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. the UK is reluctant to remold its economic pattern
- B. GDP as the measure of success is widely defied in the UK
- C. the UK will contribute less to the world economy
- D. policymakers in the UK are paying less attention to GDP

33. Which of the following is true about the recent annual study?

- A. It is sponsored by 163 countries.
- B. It excludes GDP as an indicator.
- C. Its criteria are questionable.
- D. Its results are enlightening.

34. In the last two paragraphs, the author suggests that \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. the UK is preparing for an economic boom
- B. high GDP foreshadows an economic decline
- C. it is essential to consider factors beyond GDP
- D. it requires caution to handle economic issues

35. Which of the following is the best title for the text?

- A. High GDP But Inadequate Well-being, a UK Lesson
- B. GDP Figures, a Window on Global Economic Health
- C. Robert F. Kennedy, a Terminator of GDP
- D. Brexit, the UK's Gateway to Well-being

## 2017 Text 4

In a rare unanimous ruling, the US Supreme Court has overturned the corruption conviction of a former Virginia governor, Robert McDonnell. But it did so while holding its nose at the ethics of his conduct, which included accepting gifts such as a Rolex watch and a Ferrari Automobile from a company seeking access to government.

The high court's decision said the judge in Mr. McDonnell's trial failed to tell a jury that it must look only at his "official acts," or the former governor's decisions on "specific" and "unsettled" issues related to his duties.

Merely helping a gift-giver gain access to other officials, unless done with clear intent to pressure those officials, is not corruption, the justices found.

The court did suggest that accepting favors in return for opening doors is "distasteful" and "nasty." But under anti-bribery laws, proof must be made of concrete benefits, such as approval of a contract or regulation. Simply arranging a meeting, making a phone call, or hosting an event is not an "official act."

The court's ruling is legally sound in defining a kind of favoritism that is not criminal. Elected leaders must be allowed to help supporters deal with bureaucratic problems without fear of prosecution of bribery. "The basic compact underlying representative government," wrote Chief Justice John Roberts for the court, "assumes that public officials will hear from their constituents and act on their concerns."

But the ruling reinforces the need for citizens and their elected representatives, not the courts, to ensure equality of access to government. Officials must not be allowed to play favorites in providing information or in arranging meetings simply because an individual or group provides a campaign donation or a personal gift. This type of integrity requires well-enforced laws in government transparency, such as records of official meetings, rules on lobbying, and information about each elected leader's source of wealth.

Favoritism in official access can fan public perceptions of corruption. But it is not always corruption. Rather officials must avoid double standards, or different types of access for average people and the wealthy. If connections can be bought, a basic premise of democratic society—that all are equal in treatment by government—is undermined. Good governance rests on an understanding of the inherent worth of each individual.

The court's ruling is a step forward in the struggle against both corruption and official favoritism.

36. The underlined sentence (Para.1) most probably shows that the court \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. avoided defining the extent of McDonnell's duties
- B. made no compromise in convicting McDonnell
- C. was contemptuous of McDonnell's conduct
- D. refused to comment on McDonnell's ethics

37. According to Paragraph 4, an official act is deemed corruptive only if it involves \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. leaking secrets intentionally
- B. sizable gains in the form of gifts
- C. concrete returns for gift-givers
- D. breaking contracts officially

38. The court's ruling is based on the assumption that public officials are \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. justified in addressing the needs of their constituents
- B. qualified to deal independently with bureaucratic issues
- C. allowed to focus on the concerns of their supporters
- D. exempt from conviction on the charge of favoritism

39. Well-enforced laws in government transparency are needed to \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. awaken the conscience of officials
- B. guarantee fair play in official access
- C. allow for certain kinds of lobbying
- D. inspire hopes in average people

40. The author's attitude toward the court's ruling is \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. sarcastic
- B. tolerant
- C. skeptical
- D. supportive



## 2016 Text 1

France, which prides itself as the global innovator of fashion, has decided its fashion industry has lost an absolute right to define physical beauty for women. Its lawmakers gave preliminary approval last week to a law that would make it a crime to employ ultra-thin models on runways. The parliament also agreed to ban websites that “incite excessive thinness” by promoting extreme dieting.

Such measures have a couple of uplifting motives. They suggest beauty should not be defined by looks that end up impinging on health. That’s a start. And the ban on ultra-thin models seems to go beyond protecting models from starving themselves to death—as some have done. It tells the fashion industry that it must take responsibility for the signal it sends women, especially teenage girls, about the social tape-measure they must use to determine their individual worth.

The bans, if fully enforced, would suggest to women (and many men) that they should not let others be arbiters of their beauty. And perhaps faintly, they hint that people should look to intangible qualities like character and intellect rather than dieting their way to size zero or wasp-waist physiques.

The French measures, however, rely too much on severe punishment to change a culture that still regards beauty as skin-deep—and bone-showing. Under the law, using a fashion model that does not meet a government-defined index of body mass could result in a \$ 85,000 fine and six months in prison.

The fashion industry knows it has an inherent problem in focusing on material adornment and idealized body types. In Denmark, the United States, and a few other countries, it is trying to set voluntary standards for models and fashion images that rely more on peer pressure for enforcement.

In contrast to France’s actions, Denmark’s fashion industry agreed last month on rules and sanctions regarding the age, health, and other characteristics of models. The newly revised Danish Fashion Ethical Charter clearly states: “We are aware of and take responsibility for the impact the fashion industry has on body ideals, especially on young people.” The charter’s main tool of enforcement is to deny access for designers and modeling agencies to Copenhagen Fashion Week (CFW), which is run by the Danish Fashion Institute. But in general it relies on a name-and-shame method of compliance.

Relying on ethical persuasion rather than law to address the misuse of body ideals may be the best step. Even better would be to help elevate notions of beauty beyond the material standards of a particular industry.

21. According to the first paragraph, what would happen in France?

- A. Physical beauty would be redefined.
- B. New runways would be constructed.
- C. Websites about dieting would thrive.
- D. The fashion industry would decline.

22. The phrase “impinging on” (Para.2) is closest in meaning to \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. heightening the value of
- B. indicating the state of
- C. losing faith in
- D. doing harm to

23. Which of the following is TRUE of the fashion industry?

- A. The French measures have already failed.
- B. New standards are being set in Denmark.
- C. Models are no longer under peer pressure.
- D. Its inherent problems are getting worse.

24. A designer is most likely to be rejected by CFW for \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. setting a high age threshold for models
- B. caring too much about models’ character
- C. showing little concern for health factors
- D. pursuing perfect physical conditions

25. Which of the following may be the best title of the text?

- A. The Great Threats to the Fashion Industry
- B. Just Another Round of Struggle for Beauty
- C. A Dilemma for the Starving Models in France
- D. A Challenge to the Fashion Industry’s Body Ideals

## 2016 Text 2

For the first time in history more people live in towns than in the country. In Britain this has had a curious result. While polls show Britons rate “the countryside” alongside the royal family, Shakespeare and the National Health Service (NHS) as what makes them proudest of their country, this has limited political support.

A century ago Octavia Hill launched the National Trust not to rescue stylish houses but to save “the beauty of natural places for everyone forever.” It was specifically to provide city dwellers with spaces for leisure where they could experience “a refreshing air.” Hill’s pressure later led to the creation of national parks and green belts. They don’t make countryside any more, and every year concrete consumes more of it. It needs constant guardianship.

At the next election none of the big parties seem likely to endorse this sentiment. The Conservatives’ planning reform explicitly gives rural development priority over conservation, even authorising “off-plan” building where local people might object. The concept of sustainable development has been defined as profitable. Labour likewise wants to discontinue local planning where councils oppose development. The Liberal Democrats are silent. Only Ukip, sensing its chance, has sided with those pleading for a more considered approach to using green land. Its Campaign to Protect Rural England struck terror into many local Conservative parties.

The sensible place to build new houses, factories and offices is where people are, in cities and towns where infrastructure is in place. The London agents Stirling Ackroyd recently identified enough sites for half a million houses in the London area alone, with no intrusion on green belt. What is true of London is even truer of the provinces.

The idea that “housing crisis” equals “concreted meadows” is pure lobby talk. The issue is not the need for more houses but, as always, where to put them. Under lobby pressure, George Osborne favours rural new-build against urban renovation and renewal. He favours out-of-town shopping sites against high streets. This is not a free market but a biased one. Rural towns and villages have grown and will always grow. They do so best where building sticks to their edges and respects their character. We do not ruin urban conservation areas. Why ruin rural ones?

Development should be planned, not let rip. After the Netherlands, Britain is Europe’s most crowded country. Half a century of town and country planning has enabled it to retain an enviable rural coherence, while still permitting low-density urban living. There is no doubt of the alternative—the corrupted landscapes of southern Portugal, Spain or Ireland. Avoiding this rather than promoting it should unite the left and right of the political spectrum.

26. Britain’s public sentiment about the countryside \_\_\_\_\_.

- |                                        |                                            |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| A. has brought much benefit to the NHS | B. didn’t start till the Shakespearean age |
| C. is fully backed by the royal family | D. is not well reflected in politics       |

27. According to Paragraph 2, the achievements of the National Trust are now being \_\_\_\_\_.

- |                        |                           |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| A. gradually destroyed | B. effectively reinforced |
| C. properly protected  | D. largely overshadowed   |

28. Which of the following can be inferred from Paragraph 3?

- A. Ukip may gain from its support for rural conservation.
- B. The Conservatives may abandon “off-plan” building.
- C. The Liberal Democrats are losing political influence.
- D. Labour is under attack for opposing development.

29. The author holds that George Osborne’s preference \_\_\_\_\_.

- |                                                        |                                                         |
|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| A. reveals a strong prejudice against urban areas      | B. shows his disregard for the character of rural areas |
| C. stresses the necessity of easing the housing crisis | D. highlights his firm stand against lobby pressure     |

30. In the last paragraph, the author shows his appreciation of \_\_\_\_\_.

- |                                             |                                            |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| A. the size of population in Britain        | B. the enviable urban lifestyle in Britain |
| C. the town-and-country planning in Britain | D. the political life in today’s Britain   |

## 2016 Text 3

“There is one and only one social responsibility of business,” wrote Milton Friedman, a Nobel prize-winning economist, “That is, to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits.” But even if you accept Friedman’s premise and regard corporate social responsibility (CSR) policies as a waste of shareholders’ money, things may not be absolutely clear-cut. New research suggests that CSR may create monetary value for companies—at least when they are prosecuted for corruption.

The largest firms in America and Britain together spend more than \$ 15 billion a year on CSR, according to an estimate by EPG, a consulting firm. This could add value to their businesses in three ways. First, consumers may take CSR spending as a “signal” that a company’s products are of high quality. Second, customers may be willing to buy a company’s products as an indirect way to donate to the good causes it helps. And third, through a more diffuse “halo effect,” whereby its good deeds earn it greater consideration from consumers and others.

Previous studies on CSR have had trouble differentiating these effects because consumers can be affected by all three. A recent study attempts to separate them by looking at bribery prosecutions under America’s Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA). It argues that since prosecutors do not consume a company’s products as part of their investigations, they could be influenced only by the halo effect.

The study found that, among prosecuted firms, those with the most comprehensive CSR programmes tended to get more lenient penalties. Their analysis ruled out the possibility that it was firms’ political influence, rather than their CSR stand, that accounted for the leniency: Companies that contributed more to political campaigns did not receive lower fines.

In all, the study concludes that whereas prosecutors should only evaluate a case based on its merits, they do seem to be influenced by a company’s record in CSR. “We estimate that either eliminating a substantial labour-rights concern, such as child labour, or increasing corporate giving by about 20% results in fines that generally are 40% lower than the typical punishment for bribing foreign officials,” says one researcher.

Researchers admit that their study does not answer the question of how much businesses ought to spend on CSR. Nor does it reveal how much companies are banking on the halo effect, rather than the other possible benefits, when they decide their do-gooding policies. But at least have demonstrated that when companies get into trouble with the law, evidence of good character can win them a less costly punishment.

31. The author views Milton Friedman’s statement about CSR with \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. tolerance                      B. skepticism                      C. uncertainty                      D. approval

32. According to Paragraph 2, CSR helps a company by \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. winning trust from consumers                      B. guarding it against malpractices  
C. protecting it from being defamed                      D. raising the quality of its products

33. The expression “more lenient” (Para. 4) is closest in meaning to \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. more effective                      B. less controversial  
C. less severe                      D. more lasting

34. When prosecutors evaluate a case, a company’s CSR record \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. has an impact on their decision                      B. comes across as reliable evidence  
C. increases the chance of being penalized                      D. constitutes part of the investigation

35. Which of the following is TRUE of CSR, according to the last paragraph?

- A. Its negative effects on businesses are often overlooked.  
B. The necessary amount of companies’ spending on it is unknown.  
C. Companies’ financial capacity for it has been overestimated.  
D. It has brought much benefit to the banking industry.

## 2016 Text 4

There will eventually come a day when *The New York Times* ceases to publish stories on newsprint. Exactly when that day will be is a matter of debate. “Sometime in the future “the paper’s publisher said back in 2010.

Nostalgia for ink on paper and the rustle of pages aside, there’s plenty of incentive to ditch print. The infrastructure required to make a physical newspaper—printing presses, delivery truck—isn’t just expensive; it’s excessive at a time when online-only competitors don’t have the same set of financial constraints. Readers are migrating away from print anyway. And although print ad sales still dwarf their online and mobile counterparts, revenue from print is still declining.

Overhead may be high and circulation lower, but rushing to eliminate its print edition would be a mistake ,says BuzzFeed CEO Jonah Peretti.

Peretti says the *Times* shouldn’t waste time getting of the print business, only if they go about doing it the right away. “Figuring out a way to accelerate that transition would make sense for them,” he said, “but if you discontinue it, you’re going to have your most loyal customers really upset with you.”

Sometimes that’s worth making a change anyway. Peretti gives example of Netflix discontinuing its DVD-mailing service to focus on streaming. “It was seen as a blunder.” he said. The move turned out to be foresighted. And if Peretti were in charge at the *Times*? “I wouldn’t pick year to end print,” he said. “I would raise prices and make it into more of a legacy product.”

The most loyal costumers would still get the product they favor, the idea goes, and they’d feel like they were helping sustain the quality of something they believe in. “So if you’re overpaying for print, you could feel like you were helping,” Peretti said. “Then increase it at a higher rate each year and essentially try to generate additional revenue.” In other words, if you’re going to print product, make it for the people who are already obsessed with it. Which may be what the *Times* is doing already. Getting the print edition seven days a week costs nearly \$ 500 a year—more than twice as much as a digital-only subscription.

“It’s a really hard thing to do and it’s a tremendous luxury that BuzzFeed doesn’t have a legacy business,” Peretti remarked. “But we’re going to have questions like that where we have things we’re doing that don’t make sense when the market changes and the world changes. In those situations, it’s better to be more aggressive than less aggressive.”

36. *The New York Times* is considering ending its print edition partly due to \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. the pressure from its investors
- B. the complaints from its readers
- C. the high cost of operation
- D. the increasing online ad sales

37. Peretti suggests that, in face of the present situation, the *Times* should \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. seek new sources of readership
- B. end the print edition for good
- C. aim for efficient management
- D. make strategic adjustments

38. It can be inferred from Paragraphs 5 and 6 that a “legacy product” \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. helps restore the glory of former times
- B. is meant for the most loyal customers
- C. will have the cost of printing reduced
- D. expands the popularity of the paper

39. Peretti believes that, in a changing world, \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. traditional luxuries can stay unaffected
- B. aggressiveness better meets challenges
- C. cautiousness facilitates problem-solving
- D. legacy businesses are becoming outdated

40. Which of the following would be the best title of the text?

- A. Make Your Print Newspaper a Luxury Good
- B. Keep Your Newspapers Forever in Fashion
- C. Cherish the Newspaper Still in Your Hand
- D. Shift to Online Newspapers All at Once

## 2015 Text 1

King Juan Carlos of Spain once insisted “kings don’t abdicate, they die in their sleep.” But embarrassing scandals and the popularity of the republican left in the recent Euro-elections have forced him to eat his words and stand down. So, does the Spanish crisis suggest that monarchy is seeing its last days? Does that mean the writing is on the wall for all European royals, with their magnificent uniforms and majestic lifestyles?

The Spanish case provides arguments both for and against monarchy. When public opinion is particularly polarised, as it was following the end of the Franco regime, monarchs can rise above “mere” politics and “embody” a spirit of national unity.

It is this apparent transcendence of politics that explains monarchs’ continuing popularity as heads of state. And so, the Middle East expected, Europe is the most monarch-infested region in the world, with 10 kingdoms (not counting Vatican City and Andorra). But unlike their absolutist counterparts in the Gulf and Asia, most royal families have survived because they allow voters to avoid the difficult search for a non-controversial but respect public figure.

Even so, kings and queens undoubtedly have a downside. Symbolic of national unity as they claim to be, their very history—and sometimes the way they behave today—embodies outdated and indefensible privileges and inequalities. At a time when Thomas Piketty and other economists are warning of rising inequality and the increasing power of inherited wealth, it is bizarre that wealthy aristocratic families should still be the symbolic heart of modern democratic states.

The most successful monarchies strive to abandon or hide their old aristocratic ways. Princes and princesses have day-jobs and ride bicycles, not horses (or helicopters). Even so, these are wealthy families who party with the international 1%, and media intrusiveness makes it increasingly difficult to maintain the right image.

While Europe’s monarchies will no doubt be smart enough to survive for some time to come, it is the British royals who have most to fear from the Spanish example.

It is only the Queen who has preserved the monarchy’s reputation with her rather ordinary (if well-heeled) granny style. The danger will come with Charles, who has both an expensive taste of lifestyle and a pretty hierarchical view of the world. He has failed to understand that monarchies have largely survived because they provide a service—as non-controversial and non-political heads of state. Charles ought to know that as English history shows, it is kings, not republicans, who are the monarchy’s worst enemies.

21. According to the first two paragraphs, King Juan Carlos of Spain \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. used to enjoy high public support
- B. was unpopular among European royals
- C. eased his relationship with his rivals
- D. ended his reign in embarrassment

22. Monarchs are kept as heads of state in Europe mostly \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. owing to their undoubted and respectable status
- B. to achieve a balance between tradition and reality
- C. to give voters more public figures to look up to
- D. due to their everlasting political embodiment

23. Which of the following is shown to be odd, according to Paragraph 4?

- A. Aristocrats’ excessive reliance on inherited wealth.
- B. The role of the nobility in modern democracies.
- C. The simple lifestyle of the aristocratic families.
- D. The nobility’s adherence to their privileges.

24. The British royals “have most to fear” because Charles \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. takes a tough line on political issues
- B. fails to change his lifestyle as advised
- C. takes republicans as his potential allies
- D. fails to adapt himself to his future role

25. Which of the following is the best title of the text?

- A. Carlos, Glory and Disgrace Combined
- B. Charles, Anxious to Succeed to the Throne
- C. Carlos, a Lesson for All European Monarchs
- D. Charles, Slow to React to the Coming Threats

## 2015 Text 2

Just how much does the Constitution protect your digital data? The Supreme Court will now consider whether police can search the contents of a mobile phone without a warrant if the phone is on or around a person during an arrest.

California has asked the justices to refrain from a sweeping ruling, particularly one that upsets the old assumption that authorities may search through the possessions of suspects at the time of their arrest. It is hard, the state argues, for judges to assess the implications of new and rapidly changing technologies.

The court would be recklessly modest if it followed California's advice. Enough of the implications are discernable, even obvious, so that the justices can and should provide updated guidelines to police, lawyers and defendants.

They should start by discarding California's lame argument that exploring the contents of a smartphone—a vast storehouse of digital information—is similar to, say, going through a suspect's purse. The court has ruled that police don't violate the Fourth Amendment when they go through the wallet or pocketbook of an arrestee without a warrant. But exploring one's smartphone is more like entering his or her home. A smartphone may contain an arrestee's reading history, financial history, medical history and comprehensive records of recent correspondence. The development of "cloud computing," meanwhile, has made that exploration so much the easier.

Americans should take steps to protect their digital privacy. But keeping sensitive information on these devices is increasingly a requirement of normal life. Citizens still have a right to expect private documents to remain private and protected by the Constitution's prohibition on unreasonable searches.

As so often is the case, stating that principle doesn't ease the challenge of line-drawing. In many cases, it would not be overly burdensome for authorities to obtain a warrant to search through phone contents. They could still invalidate Fourth Amendment protections when facing severe, urgent circumstances, and they could take reasonable measures to ensure that phone data are not erased or altered while waiting for a warrant. The court, though, may want to allow room for police to cite situations where they are entitled to more freedom.

But the justices should not swallow California's argument whole. New, disruptive technology sometimes demands novel applications of the Constitution's protections. Orin Kerr, a law professor, compares the explosion and accessibility of digital information in the 21st century with the establishment of automobile use as a virtual necessity of life in the 20th: The justices had to specify novel rules for the new personal domain of the passenger car then; they must sort out how the Fourth Amendment applies to digital information now.

26. The Supreme Court will work out whether, during an arrest, it is legitimate to \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. prevent suspects from deleting their phone contents
- B. check suspects' phone contents without being authorized
- C. search for suspects' mobile phones without a warrant
- D. prohibit suspects from using their mobile phones

27. The author's attitude toward California's argument is one of \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. tolerance
- B. indifference
- C. disapproval
- D. cautiousness

28. The author believes that exploring one's phone contents is comparable to \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. getting into one's residence
- B. handling one's historical records
- C. scanning one's correspondences
- D. going through one's wallet

29. In Paragraphs 5 and 6, the author shows his concern that \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. principles are hard to be clearly expressed
- B. the court is giving police less room for action
- C. phones are used to store sensitive information
- D. citizens' privacy is not effectively protected

30. Orin Kerr's comparison is quoted to indicate that \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. the Constitution should be implemented flexibly
- B. new technology requires reinterpretation of the Constitution
- C. California's argument violates principles of the Constitution
- D. principles of the Constitution should never be altered



## 2015 Text 3

The journal *Science* is adding an extra round of statistical checks to its peer-review process, editor-in-chief Marcia McNutt announced today. The policy follows similar efforts from other journals, after widespread concern that basic mistakes in data analysis are contributing to the irreproducibility of many published research findings.

“Readers must have confidence in the conclusions published in our journal,” writes McNutt in an editorial. Working with the American Statistical Association, the journal has appointed seven experts to a statistics board of reviewing editors (SBoRE). Manuscript will be flagged up for additional scrutiny by the journal’s internal editors, or by its existing Board of Reviewing Editors or by outside peer reviewers. The SBoRE panel will then find external statisticians to review these manuscripts.

Asked whether any particular papers had impelled the change, McNutt said: “The creation of the ‘statistics board’ was motivated by concerns broadly with the application of statistics and data analysis in scientific research and is part of *Science*’s overall drive to increase reproducibility in the research we publish.”

Giovanni Parmigiani, a biostatistician at the Harvard School of Public Health, a member of the SBoRE group, says he expects the board to “play primarily an advisory role.” He agreed to join because he “found the foresight behind the establishment of the SBoRE to be novel, unique and likely to have a lasting impact. This impact will not only be through the publications in *Science* itself, but hopefully through a larger group of publishing places that may want to model their approach after *Science*.”

John Ioannidis, a physician who studies research methodology, says that the policy is “a most welcome step forward” and “long overdue.” “Most journals are weak in statistical review, and this damages the quality of what they publish. I think that, for the majority of scientific papers nowadays, statistical review is more essential than expert review,” he says. But he noted that biomedical journals such as *Annals of Internal Medicine*, *the Journal of the American Medical Association* and *The Lancet* pay strong attention to statistical review.

Professional scientists are expected to know how to analyze data, but statistical errors are alarmingly common in published research, according to David Vaux, a cell biologist. Researchers should improve their standards, he wrote in 2012, but journals should also take a tougher line, “engaging reviewers who are statistically literate and editors who can verify the process.” Vaux says that *Science*’s idea to pass some papers to statisticians “has some merit, but a weakness is that it relies on the board of reviewing editors to identify ‘the papers that need scrutiny’ in the first place.”

31. It can be learned from Paragraph 1 that \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. *Science* intends to simplify its peer-review process
- B. journals are strengthening their statistical checks
- C. few journals are blamed for mistakes in data analysis
- D. lack of data analysis is common in research projects

32. The phrase “flagged up” (Para. 2) is the closest in meaning to \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. found
- B. marked
- C. revised
- D. stored

33. Giovanni Parmigiani believes that the establishment of the SBoRE may \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. pose a threat to all its peers
- B. meet with strong opposition
- C. increase *Science*’s circulation
- D. set an example for other journals

34. David Vaux holds that what *Science* is doing now \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. adds to researchers’ workload
- B. diminishes the role of reviewers
- C. has room for further improvement
- D. is to fail in the foreseeable future

35. Which of the following is the best title of the text?

- A. *Science* Joins Push to Screen Statistics in Papers
- B. Professional Statisticians Deserve More Respect
- C. Data Analysis Finds Its Way onto Editors’ Desks
- D. Statisticians Are Coming Back with *Science*

## 2015 Text 4

Two years ago, Rupert Murdoch's daughter, Elisabeth, spoke of the "unsettling dearth of integrity across so many of our institutions." Integrity had collapsed, she argued, because of a collective acceptance that the only "sorting mechanism" in society should be profit and the market. But "it's us, human beings, we the people who create the society we want, not profit."

Driving her point home, she continued: "It's increasingly apparent that the absence of purpose, of a moral language within government, media or business could become one of the most dangerous goals for capitalism and freedom." This same absence of moral purpose was wounding companies such as News International, she thought, making it more likely that it would lose its way as it had with widespread illegal telephone hacking.

As the hacking trial concludes—finding guilty one ex-editor of the *News of the World*, Andy Coulson, for conspiring to hack phones, and finding his predecessor, Rebekah Brooks, innocent of the same charge—the wider issue of dearth of integrity still stands. Journalists are known to have hacked the phones of up to 5,500 people. This is hacking on an industrial scale, as was acknowledged by Glenn Mulcaire, the man hired by the *News of the World* in 2001 to be the point person for phone hacking. Others await trial. This long story still unfolds.

In many respects, the dearth of moral purpose frames not only the fact of such widespread phone hacking but the terms on which the trial took place. One of the astonishing revelations was how little Rebekah Brooks knew of what went on in her newsroom, how little she thought to ask and the fact that she never inquired how the stories arrived. The core of her successful defence was that she knew nothing.

In today's world, it has become normal that well-paid executives should not be accountable for what happens in the organizations that they run. Perhaps we should not be so surprised. For a generation, the collective doctrine has been that the sorting mechanism of society should be profit. The words that have mattered are efficiency, flexibility, shareholder value, business-friendly, wealth generation, sales, impact and, in newspapers, circulation. Words degraded to the margin have been justice, fairness, tolerance, proportionality and accountability.

The purpose of editing the *News of the World* was not to promote reader understanding, to be fair in what was written or to betray any common humanity. It was to ruin lives in the quest for circulation and impact. Ms Brooks may or may not have had suspicions about how her journalists got their stories, but she asked no questions, gave no instructions—nor received traceable, recorded answers.

36. According to the first two paragraphs, Elisabeth was upset by \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. the consequences of the current sorting mechanism
- B. companies' financial loss due to immoral practices
- C. governmental ineffectiveness on moral issues
- D. the wide misuse of integrity among institutions

37. It can be inferred from Paragraph 3 that \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. Glenn Mulcaire may deny phone hacking as a crime
- B. more journalists may be found guilty of phone hacking
- C. Andy Coulson should be held innocent of the charge
- D. phone hacking will be accepted on certain occasions

38. The author believes that Rebekah Brooks's defence \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. revealed a cunning personality
- B. centered on trivial issues
- C. was hardly convincing
- D. was part of a conspiracy

39. The author holds that the current collective doctrine shows \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. generally distorted values
- B. unfair wealth distribution
- C. a marginalized lifestyle
- D. a rigid moral code

40. Which of the following is suggested in the last paragraph?

- A. The quality of writings is of primary importance.
- B. Common humanity is central to news reporting.
- C. Moral awareness matters in editing a newspaper.
- D. Journalists need stricter industrial regulations.

## 2014 Text 1

In order to “change lives for the better” and reduce “dependency,” George Osborne, Chancellor of the Exchequer, introduced the “upfront work search” scheme. Only if the jobless arrive at the jobcentre with a CV, register for online job search, and start looking for work will they be eligible for benefit—and then they should report weekly rather than fortnightly. What could be more reasonable?

More apparent reasonableness followed. There will now be a seven-day wait for the jobseeker’s allowance. “Those first few days should be spent looking for work, not looking to sign on,” he claimed. “We’re doing these things because we know they help people stay off benefits and help those on benefits get into work faster.” Help? Really? On first hearing, this was the socially concerned chancellor, trying to change lives for the better, complete with “reforms” to an obviously indulgent system that demands too little effort from the newly unemployed to find work, and subsidises laziness. What motivated him, we were to understand, was his zeal for “fundamental fairness”—protecting the taxpayer, controlling spending and ensuring that only the most deserving claimants received their benefits.

Losing a job is hurting: you don’t skip down to the jobcentre with a song in your heart, delighted at the prospect of doubling your income from the generous state. It is financially terrifying, psychologically embarrassing and you know that support is minimal and extraordinarily hard to get. You are now not wanted; you are now excluded from the work environment that offers purpose and structure in your life. Worse, the crucial income to feed yourself and your family and pay the bills has disappeared. Ask anyone newly unemployed what they want and the answer is always: a job.

But in Osborneland, your first instinct is to fall into dependency—permanent dependency if you can get it—supported by a state only too ready to indulge your falsehood. It is as though 20 years of ever-tougher reforms of the job search and benefit administration system never happened. The principle of British welfare is no longer that you can insure yourself against the risk of unemployment and receive unconditional payments if the disaster happens. Even the very phrase “jobseeker’s allowance” is about redefining the unemployed as a “jobseeker” who had no fundamental right to a benefit he or she has earned through making national insurance contributions. Instead, the claimant receives a time-limited “allowance,” conditional on actively seeking a job; no entitlement and no insurance, at £ 71.70 a week, one of the least generous in the EU.

21. George Osborne’s scheme was intended to \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. provide the unemployed with easier access to benefits
- B. encourage jobseekers’ active engagement in job seeking
- C. motivate the unemployed to report voluntarily
- D. guarantee jobseekers’ legitimate right to benefits

22. The phrase “to sign on” (Para. 2) most probably means \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. to check on the availability of jobs at the jobcentre
- B. to accept the government’s restrictions on the allowance
- C. to register for an allowance from the government
- D. to attend a governmental job-training program

23. What prompted the chancellor to develop his scheme?

- A. A desire to secure a better life for all.
- B. An eagerness to protect the unemployed.
- C. An urge to be generous to the claimants.
- D. A passion to ensure fairness for taxpayers.

24. According to Paragraph 3, being unemployed makes one feel \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. uneasy
- B. enraged
- C. insulted
- D. guilty

25. To which of the following would the author most probably agree?

- A. The British welfare system indulges jobseekers’ laziness.
- B. Osborne’s reforms will reduce the risk of unemployment.
- C. The jobseekers’ allowance has met their actual needs.
- D. Unemployment benefits should not be made conditional.

## 2014 Text 2

All around the world, lawyers generate more hostility than the members of any other profession—with the possible exception of journalism. But there are few places where clients have more grounds for complaint than America.

During the decade before the economic crisis, spending on legal services in America grew twice as fast as inflation. The best lawyers made skyscrapers-full of money, tempting ever more students to pile into law schools. But most law graduates never get a big-firm job. Many of them instead become the kind of nuisance-lawsuit filer that makes the tort system a costly nightmare.

There are many reasons for this. One is the excessive costs of a legal education. There is just one path for a lawyer in most American states: a four-year undergraduate degree in some unrelated subject, then a three-year law degree at one of 200 law schools authorized by the American Bar Association and an expensive preparation for the bar exam. This leaves today's average law-school graduate with \$ 100,000 of debt on top of undergraduate debts. Law-school debt means that they have to work fearsomely hard.

Reforming the system would help both lawyers and their customers. Sensible ideas have been around for a long time, but the state-level bodies that govern the profession have been too conservative to implement them. One idea is to allow people to study law as an undergraduate degree. Another is to let students sit for the bar after only two years of law school. If the bar exam is truly a stern enough test for a would-be lawyer, those who can sit it earlier should be allowed to do so. Students who do not need the extra training could cut their debt mountain by a third.

The other reason why costs are so high is the restrictive guild-like ownership structure of the business. Except in the District of Columbia, non-lawyers may not own any share of a law firm. This keeps fees high and innovation slow. There is pressure for change from within the profession, but opponents of change among the regulators insist that keeping outsiders out of a law firm isolates lawyers from the pressure to make money rather than serve clients ethically.

In fact, allowing non-lawyers to own shares in law firms would reduce costs and improve services to customers, by encouraging law firms to use technology and to employ professional managers to focus on improving firms' efficiency. After all, other countries, such as Australia and Britain, have started liberalizing their legal professions. America should follow.

26. A lot of students take up law as their profession due to \_\_\_\_\_.

- |                                         |                                         |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| A. the growing demand from clients      | B. the increasing pressure of inflation |
| C. the prospect of working in big firms | D. the attraction of financial rewards  |

27. Which of the following adds to the costs of legal education in most American states?

- |                                                   |                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| A. Higher tuition fees for undergraduate studies. | B. Admissions approval from the bar association.    |
| C. Pursuing a bachelor's degree in another major. | D. Receiving training by professional associations. |

28. Hindrance to the reform of the legal system originates from \_\_\_\_\_.

- |                                            |                                              |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| A. lawyers' and clients' strong resistance | B. the rigid bodies governing the profession |
| C. the stern exam for would-be lawyers     | D. non-professionals' sharp criticism        |

29. The guild-like ownership structure is considered "restrictive" partly because it \_\_\_\_\_.

- |                                                  |                                               |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| A. bans outsiders' involvement in the profession | B. keeps lawyers from holding law-firm shares |
| C. aggravates the ethical situation in the trade | D. prevents lawyers from gaining due profits  |

30. In this text, the author mainly discusses \_\_\_\_\_.

- |                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A. flawed ownership of America's law firms and its causes         |
| B. the factors that help make a successful lawyer in America      |
| C. a problem in America's legal profession and solutions to it    |
| D. the role of undergraduate studies in America's legal education |

## 2014 Text 3

The US \$ 3-million Fundamental physics prize is indeed an interesting experiment, as Alexander Polyakov said when he accepted this year's award in March. And it is far from the only one of its type. As a News Feature article in *Nature* discusses, a string of lucrative awards for researchers have joined the Nobel Prizes in recent years. Many, like the Fundamental Physics Prize, are funded from the telephone-number-sized bank accounts of Internet entrepreneurs. These benefactors have succeeded in their chosen fields, they say, and they want to use their wealth to draw attention to those who have succeeded in science.

What's not to like? Quite a lot, according to a handful of scientists quoted in the News Feature. You cannot buy class, as the old saying goes, and these upstart entrepreneurs cannot buy their prizes the prestige of the Nobels. The new awards are an exercise in self-promotion for those behind them, say scientists. They could distort the achievement-based system of peer-review-led research. They could cement the status quo of peer-reviewed research. They do not fund peer-reviewed research. They perpetuate the myth of the lone genius.

The goals of the prize-givers seem as scattered as the criticism. Some want to shock, others to draw people into science, or to better reward those who have made their careers in research.

As *Nature* has pointed out before, there are some legitimate concerns about how science prizes—both new and old—are distributed. The Breakthrough Prize in Life Sciences, launched this year, takes an unrepresentative view of what the life sciences include. But the Nobel Foundation's limit of three recipients per prize, each of whom must still be living, has long been outgrown by the collaborative nature of modern research—as will be demonstrated by the inevitable row over who is ignored when it comes to acknowledging the discovery of the Higgs boson. The Nobels were, of course, themselves set up by a very rich individual who had decided what he wanted to do with his own money. Time, rather than intention, has given them legitimacy.

As much as some scientists may complain about the new awards, two things seem clear. First, most researchers would accept such a prize if they were offered one. Second, it is surely a good thing that the money and attention come to science rather than go elsewhere, it is fair to criticize and question the mechanism—that is the culture of research, after all—but it is the prize-givers' money to do with as they please. It is wise to take such gifts with gratitude and grace.

31. The Fundamental Physics Prize is seen as \_\_\_\_\_.

- |                                          |                                               |
|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| A. a symbol of the entrepreneurs' wealth | B. a possible replacement of the Nobel Prizes |
| C. an example of bankers' investments    | D. a handsome reward for researchers          |

32. The critics think that the new awards will most benefit \_\_\_\_\_.

- |                                   |                                   |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| A. the profit-oriented scientists | B. the founders of the new awards |
| C. the achievement-based system   | D. peer-review-led research       |

33. The discovery of the Higgs boson is a typical case which involves \_\_\_\_\_.

- |                                              |                                           |
|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| A. controversies over the recipients' status | B. the joint effort of modern researchers |
| C. legitimate concerns over the new prizes   | D. the demonstration of research findings |

34. According to Paragraph 4, which of the following is true of the Nobels?

- |                                              |                                               |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| A. Their endurance has done justice to them. | B. Their legitimacy has long been in dispute. |
| C. They are the most representative honor.   | D. History has never cast doubt on them.      |

35. The author believes that the new awards are \_\_\_\_\_.

- |                                     |                                       |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| A. acceptable despite the criticism | B. harmful to the culture of research |
| C. subject to undesirable changes   | D. unworthy of public attention       |

## 2014 Text 4

“The Heart of the Matter,” the just-released report by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (AAAS), deserves praise for affirming the importance of the humanities and social sciences to the prosperity and security of liberal democracy in America. Regrettably, however, the report’s failure to address the true nature of the crisis facing liberal education may cause more harm than good.

In 2010, leading congressional Democrats and Republicans sent letters to the AAAS asking that it identify actions that could be taken by “federal, state and local governments, universities, foundations, educators, individual benefactors and others” to “maintain national excellence in humanities and social scientific scholarship and education.” In response, the American Academy formed the Commission on the Humanities and Social Sciences. Among the commission’s 51 members are top-tier-university presidents, scholars, lawyers, judges, and business executives, as well as prominent figures from diplomacy, filmmaking, music and journalism.

The goals identified in the report are generally admirable. Because representative government presupposes an informed citizenry, the report supports full literacy; stresses the study of history and government, particularly American history and American government; and encourages the use of new digital technologies. To encourage innovation and competition, the report calls for increased investment in research, the crafting of coherent curricula that improve students’ ability to solve problems and communicate effectively in the 21st century, increased funding for teachers and the encouragement of scholars to bring their learning to bear on the great challenges of the day. The report also advocates greater study of foreign languages, international affairs and the expansion of study abroad programs.

Unfortunately, despite two and a half years in the making, “The Heart of the Matter” never gets to the heart of the matter: the illiberal nature of liberal education at our leading colleges and universities. The commission ignores that for several decades America’s colleges and universities have produced graduates who don’t know the content and character of liberal education and are thus deprived of its benefits. Sadly, the spirit of inquiry once at home on campus has been replaced by the use of the humanities and social sciences as vehicles for publicizing “progressive,” or left-liberal propaganda.

Today, professors routinely treat the progressive interpretation of history and progressive public policy as the proper subject of study while portraying conservative or classical liberal ideas—such as free markets and self-reliance—as falling outside the boundaries of routine, and sometimes legitimate, intellectual investigation.

The AAAS displays great enthusiasm for liberal education. Yet its report may well set back reform by obscuring the depth and breadth of the challenge that Congress asked it to illuminate.

36. According to Paragraph 1, what is the author’s attitude toward the AAAS’s report?

- A. Critical                      B. Appreciative                      C. Contemptuous                      D. Tolerant

37. Influential figures in the Congress required that the AAAS report on how to \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. retain people’s interest in liberal education                      B. define the government’s role in education  
C. keep a leading position in liberal education                      D. safeguard individuals’ rights to education

38. According to Paragraph 3, the report suggests \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. an exclusive study of American history                      B. a greater emphasis on theoretical subjects  
C. the application of emerging technologies                      D. funding for the study of foreign languages

39. The author implies in Paragraph 5 that professors are \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. supportive of free markets                      B. cautious about intellectual investigation  
C. conservative about public policy                      D. biased against classical liberal ideas

40. Which of the following would be the best title for the text?

- A. Ways to Grasp “The Heart of the Matter”  
B. Illiberal Education and “The Heart of the Matter”  
C. The AAAS’s Contribution to Liberal Education  
D. Progressive Policy vs. Liberal Education



## 2013 Text 1

In the 2006 film version of *The Devil Wears Prada*, Miranda Priestly, played by Meryl Streep, scolds her unattractive assistant for imagining that high fashion doesn't affect her. Priestly explains how the deep blue color of the assistant's sweater descended over the years from fashion shows to department stores and to the bargain bin in which the poor girl doubtless found her garment.

This top-down conception of the fashion business couldn't be more out of date or at odds with the feverish world described in *Overdressed*, Elizabeth Cline's three-year indictment of "fast fashion". In the last decade or so, advances in technology have allowed mass-market labels such as Zara, H&M, and Uniqlo to react to trends more quickly and anticipate demand more precisely. Quicker turnarounds mean less wasted inventory, more frequent releases, and more profit. These labels encourage style-conscious consumers to see clothes as disposable—meant to last only a wash or two, although they don't advertise that—and to renew their wardrobe every few weeks. By offering on-trend items at dirt-cheap prices, Cline argues, these brands have hijacked fashion cycles, shaking an industry long accustomed to a seasonal pace.

The victims of this revolution, of course, are not limited to designers. For H&M to offer a \$ 5.95 knit miniskirt in all its 2,300-plus stores around the world, it must rely on low-wage, overseas labor, order in volumes that strain natural resources, and use massive amounts of harmful chemicals.

*Overdressed* is the fashion world's answer to consumer-activist bestsellers like Michael Pollan's *The Omnivore's Dilemma*. "Mass-produced clothing, like fast food, fills a hunger and need, yet is non-durable and wasteful," Cline argues. Americans, she finds, buy roughly 20 billion garments a year—about 64 items per person—and no matter how much they give away, this excess leads to waste.

Towards the end of *Overdressed*, Cline introduced her ideal, a Brooklyn woman named Sarah Kate Beaumont, who since 2008 has made all of her own clothes—and beautifully. But as Cline is the first to note, it took Beaumont decades to perfect her craft; her example can't be knocked off.

Though several fast-fashion companies have made efforts to curb their impact on labor and the environment—including H&M, with its green Conscious Collection line—Cline believes lasting change can only be effected by the customer. She exhibits the idealism common to many advocates of sustainability, be it in food or in energy. Vanity is a constant; people will only start shopping more sustainably when they can't afford not to.

21. Priestly criticizes her assistant for her \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. poor bargaining skill
- B. insensitivity to fashion
- C. obsession with high fashion
- D. lack of imagination

22. According to Cline, mass-market labels urge consumers to \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. combat unnecessary waste
- B. shut out the feverish fashion world
- C. resist the influence of advertisements
- D. shop for their garments more frequently

23. The word "indictment" (Para.2) is closest in meaning to \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. accusation
- B. enthusiasm
- C. indifference
- D. tolerance

24. Which of the following can be inferred from the last paragraph?

- A. Vanity has more often been found in idealists.
- B. The fast-fashion industry ignores sustainability.
- C. People are more interested in unaffordable garments.
- D. Pricing is vital to environment-friendly purchasing.

25. What is the subject of the text?

- A. Satire on an extravagant lifestyle.
- B. Challenge to a high-fashion myth.
- C. Criticism of the fast-fashion industry.
- D. Exposure of a mass-market secret.

## 2013 Text 2

An old saying has it that half of all advertising budgets are wasted—the trouble is, no one knows which half. In the internet age, at least in theory, this fraction can be much reduced. By watching what people search for, click on and say online, companies can aim “behavioural” ads at those most likely to buy.

In the past couple of weeks a quarrel has illustrated the value to advertisers of such fine-grained information: Should advertisers assume that people are happy to be tracked and sent behavioural ads? Or should they have explicit permission?

In December 2010 America’s Federal Trade Commission (FTC) proposed adding a “do not track” (DNT) option to internet browsers, so that users could tell advertisers that they did not want to be followed. Microsoft’s Internet Explorer and Apple’s Safari both offer DNT; Google’s Chrome is due to do so this year. In February the FTC and Digital Advertising Alliance (DAA) agreed that the industry would get cracking on responding to DNT requests.

On May 31st Microsoft set off the row. It said that Internet Explorer 10, the version due to appear windows 8, would have DNT as a default.

Advertisers are horrified. Human nature being what it is, most people stick with default settings. Few switch DNT on now, but if tracking is off it will stay off. Bob Liodice, the chief executive of the Association of National Advertisers, says consumers will be worse off if the industry cannot collect information about their preferences. People will not get fewer ads, he says. “They’ll get less meaningful, less targeted ads.”

It is not yet clear how advertisers will respond. Getting a DNT signal does not oblige anyone to stop tracking, although some companies have promised to do so. Unable to tell whether someone really objects to behavioural ads or whether they are sticking with Microsoft’s default, some may ignore a DNT signal and press on anyway.

Also unclear is why Microsoft has gone it alone. After all, it has an ad business too, which it says will comply with DNT requests, though it is still working out how. If it is trying to upset Google, which relies almost wholly on advertising, it has chosen an indirect method: There is no guarantee that DNT by default will become the norm. DNT does not seem an obviously huge selling point for windows 8—though the firm has compared some of its other products favourably with Google’s on that count before. Brendon Lynch, Microsoft’s chief privacy officer, blogged: “We believe consumers should have more control.” Could it really be that simple?

26. It is suggested in paragraph 1 that “behavioural” ads help advertisers to \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. ease competition among themselves
- B. lower their operational costs
- C. avoid complaints from consumers
- D. provide better online services

27. “The industry” (Para.3) refers to \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. online advertisers
- B. e-commerce conductors
- C. digital information analysts
- D. internet browser developers

28. Bob Liodice holds that setting DNT as a default \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. may cut the number of junk ads
- B. fails to affect the ad industry
- C. will not benefit consumers
- D. goes against human nature

29. Which of the following is TRUE according to Paragraph 6?

- A. DNT may not serve its intended purpose.
- B. Advertisers are willing to implement DNT.
- C. DNT is losing its popularity among consumers.
- D. Advertisers are obliged to offer behavioural ads.

30. The author’s attitude towards what Brendon Lynch said in his blog is one of \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. indulgence
- B. understanding
- C. appreciation
- D. skepticism

## 2013 Text 3

Up until a few decades ago, our visions of the future were largely—though by no means uniformly—glowingly positive. Science and technology would cure all the ills of humanity, leading to lives of fulfillment and opportunity for all.

Now utopia has grown unfashionable, as we have gained a deeper appreciation of the range of threats facing us, from asteroid strike to epidemic flu and to climate change. You might even be tempted to assume that humanity has little future to look forward to.

But such gloominess is misplaced. The fossil record shows that many species have endured for millions of years—so why shouldn't we? Take a broader look at our species' place in the universe, and it becomes clear that we have an excellent chance of surviving for tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of years. Look up *Homo sapiens* in the "Red List" of threatened species of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and you will read: "Listed as Least Concern as the species is very widely distributed, adaptable, currently increasing, and there are no major threats resulting in an overall population decline."

So what does our deep future hold? A growing number of researchers and organisations are now thinking seriously about that question. For example, the Long Now Foundation has as its flagship project a mechanical clock that is designed to still be marking time thousands of years hence.

Then there are scientists who are giving serious consideration to the idea that we should recognise a new geological era: the Anthropocene. They, too, are pulling the camera right back and asking what humanity's impact will be on the planet - in the context of stratigraphic time.

Perhaps willfully, it may be easier to think about such lengthy timescales than about the more immediate future. The potential evolution of today's technology, and its social consequences, is dazzlingly complicated, and it's perhaps best left to science fiction writers and futurologists to explore the many possibilities we can envisage. That's one reason why we have launched *Arc*, a new publication dedicated to the near future.

But take a longer view and there is a surprising amount that we can say with considerable assurance. As so often, the past holds the key to the future: we have now identified enough of the long-term patterns shaping the history of the planet, and our species, to make evidence-based forecasts about the situations in which our descendants will find themselves.

This long perspective makes the pessimistic view of our prospects seem more likely to be a passing fad. To be sure, the future is not all rosy. But we are now knowledgeable enough to reduce many of the risks that threatened the existence of earlier humans, and to improve the lot of those to come.

31. Our vision of the future used to be inspired by \_\_\_\_\_.

- |                                        |                                        |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| A. our desire for lives of fulfillment | B. our faith in science and technology |
| C. our awareness of potential risks    | D. our belief in equal opportunity     |

32. The IUCN's "Red List" suggests that human beings are \_\_\_\_\_.

- |                               |                                |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| A. a sustained species        | B. a threat to the environment |
| C. the world's dominant power | D. a misplaced race            |

33. Which of the following is TRUE according to Paragraph 5?

- |                                                               |                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| A. <i>Arc</i> helps limit the scope of futurological studies. | B. Technology offers solutions to social problem. |
| C. The interest in science fiction is on the rise.            | D. Our immediate future is hard to conceive.      |

34. To ensure the future of mankind, it is crucial to \_\_\_\_\_.

- |                                            |                                          |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| A. explore our planet's abundant resources | B. adopt an optimistic view of the world |
| C. draw on our experience from the past    | D. curb our ambition to reshape history  |

35. Which of the following would be the best title for the text?

- |                                         |                                     |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| A. Uncertainty about Our Future         | B. Evolution of the Human Species   |
| C. The Ever-bright Prospects of Mankind | D. Science, Technology and Humanity |

## 2013 Text 4

On a five to three vote, the Supreme Court knocked out much of Arizona's immigration law Monday—a modest policy victory for the Obama Administration. But on the more important matter of the Constitution, the decision was an 8-0 defeat for the Administration's effort to upset the balance of power between the federal government and the states.

In *Arizona v. United States*, the majority overturned three of the four contested provisions of Arizona's controversial plan to have state and local police enforce federal immigration law. The Constitutional principles that Washington alone has the power to “establish a uniform Rule of Naturalization” and that federal laws precede state laws are noncontroversial. Arizona had attempted to fashion state policies that ran parallel to the existing federal ones.

Justice Anthony Kennedy, joined by Chief Justice John Roberts and the Court's liberals, ruled that the state flew too close to the federal sun. On the overturned provisions the majority held that Congress had deliberately “occupied the field”, and Arizona had thus intruded on the federal's privileged powers.

However, the Justices said that Arizona police would be allowed to verify the legal status of people who come in contact with law enforcement. That's because Congress has always envisioned joint federal-state immigration enforcement and explicitly encourages state officers to share information and cooperate with federal colleagues.

Two of the three objecting Justice—Samuel Alito and Clarence Thomas—agreed with this Constitutional logic but disagreed about which Arizona rules conflicted with the federal statute. The only major objection came from Justice Antonin Scalia, who offered an even more robust defense of state privileges going back to the Alien and Sedition Acts.

The 8-0 objection to President Obama turns on what Justice Samuel Alito describes in his objection as “a shocking assertion of federal executive power.” The White House argued that Arizona's laws conflicted with its enforcement priorities, even if state laws complied with federal statutes to the letter. In effect, the White House claimed that it could invalidate any otherwise legitimate state law that it disagrees with.

Some powers do belong exclusively to the federal government, and control of citizenship and the borders is among them. But if Congress wanted to prevent states from using their own resources to check immigration status, it could. It never did so. The administration was in essence asserting that because it didn't want to carry out Congress's immigration wishes, no state should be allowed to do so either. Every Justice rightly rejected this remarkable claim. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702303640804577488640267175810>

36. Three provisions of Arizona's plan were overturned because they \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. deprived the federal police of Constitutional powers
- B. disturbed the power balance between different states
- C. overstepped the authority of federal immigration law
- D. contradicted both the federal and state policies

37. On which of the following did the Justices agree, according to Paragraph 4?

- A. Federal officers' duty to withhold immigrants' information.
- B. States' independence from federal immigration law.
- C. States' legitimate role in immigration enforcement.
- D. Congress's intervention in immigration enforcement.

38. It can be inferred from Paragraph 5 that the Alien and Sedition Acts \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. violated the Constitution
- B. undermined the states' interests
- C. supported the federal statute
- D. stood in favor of the states

39. The White House claims that its power of enforcement \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. outweighs that held by the states
- B. is dependent on the states' support
- C. is established by federal statutes
- D. rarely goes against state laws

40. What can be learned from the last paragraph?

- A. Immigration issues are usually decided by Congress.
- B. Justices intended to check the power of the Administration.
- C. Justices wanted to strengthen its coordination with Congress.
- D. The Administration is dominant over immigration issues.

## 2012 Text 1

Come on—Everybody's doing it. That whispered message, half invitation and half forcing, is what most of us think of when we hear the words *peer pressure*. It usually leads to no good—drinking, drugs and casual sex. But in her new book *Join the Club*, Tina Rosenberg contends that peer pressure can also be a positive force through what she calls the social cure, in which organizations and officials use the power of group dynamics to help individuals improve their lives and possibly the world.

Rosenberg, the recipient of a Pulitzer Prize, offers a host of examples of the social cure in action: In South Carolina, a state-sponsored antismoking program called Rage Against the Haze sets out to make cigarettes uncool. In South Africa, an HIV-prevention initiative known as loveLife recruits young people to promote safe sex among their peers.

The idea seems promising, and Rosenberg is a perceptive observer. Her critique of the lameness of many public-health campaigns is spot-on: they fail to mobilize peer pressure for healthy habits, and they demonstrate a seriously flawed understanding of psychology. "Dare to be different, please don't smoke!" pleads one billboard campaign aimed at reducing smoking among teenagers—*teenagers*, who desire nothing more than fitting in. Rosenberg argues convincingly that public-health advocates ought to take a page from advertisers, so skilled at applying peer pressure.

But on the general effectiveness of the social cure, Rosenberg is less persuasive. *Join the Club* is filled with too much irrelevant detail and not enough exploration of the social and biological factors that make peer pressure so powerful. The most glaring flaw of the social cure as it's presented here is that it doesn't work very well for very long. Rage Against the Haze failed once state funding was cut. Evidence that the loveLife program produces lasting changes is limited and mixed.

There's no doubt that our peer groups exert enormous influence on our behavior. An emerging body of research shows that positive health habits—as well as negative ones—spread through networks of friends via social communication. This is a subtle form of peer pressure: we unconsciously imitate the behavior we see every day.

Far less certain, however, is how successfully experts and bureaucrats can select our peer groups and steer their activities in virtuous directions. It's like the teacher who breaks up the troublemakers in the back row by pairing them with better-behaved classmates. The tactic never really works. And that's the problem with a social cure engineered from the outside: in the real world, as in school, we insist on choosing our own friends.

21. According to the first paragraph, peer pressure often emerges as \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. a supplement to the social cure
- B. a stimulus to group dynamics
- C. an obstacle to social progress
- D. a cause of undesirable behaviors

22. Rosenberg holds that public-health advocates should \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. recruit professional advertisers
- B. learn from advertisers' experience
- C. stay away from commercial advertisers
- D. recognize the limitations of advertisements

23. In the author's view, Rosenberg's book fails to \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. adequately probe social and biological factors
- B. effectively evade the flaws of the social cure
- C. illustrate the functions of state funding
- D. produce a long-lasting social effect

24. Paragraph 5 shows that our imitation of behaviors \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. is harmful to our networks of friends
- B. will mislead behavioral studies
- C. occurs without our realizing it
- D. can produce negative health habits

25. The author suggests in the last paragraph that the effect of peer pressure is \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. harmful
- B. desirable
- C. profound
- D. questionable

<http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,2061234,00.html>

## 2012 Text 2

A deal is a deal—except, apparently, when Entergy is involved. The company, a major energy supplier in New England, provoked justified outrage in Vermont last week when it announced it was reneging on a longstanding commitment to abide by the state’s strict nuclear regulations.

Instead, the company has done precisely what it had long promised it would not: challenge the constitutionality of Vermont’s rules in the federal court, as part of a desperate effort to keep its Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant running. It’s a stunning move.

The conflict has been surfacing since 2002, when the corporation bought Vermont’s only nuclear power plant, an aging reactor in Vernon. As a condition of receiving state approval for the sale, the company agreed to seek permission from state regulators to operate past 2012. In 2006, the state went a step further, requiring that any extension of the plant’s license be subject to Vermont legislature’s approval. Then, too, the company went along.

Either Entergy never really intended to live by those commitments, or it simply didn’t foresee what would happen next. A string of accidents, including the partial collapse of a cooling tower in 2007 and the discovery of an underground pipe system leakage, raised serious questions about both Vermont Yankee’s safety and Entergy’s management—especially after the company made misleading statements about the pipe. Enraged by Entergy’s behavior, the Vermont Senate voted 26 to 4 last year against allowing an extension.

Now the company is suddenly claiming that the 2002 agreement is invalid because of the 2006 legislation, and that only the federal government has regulatory power over nuclear issues. The legal issues in the case are obscure: whereas the Supreme Court has ruled that states do have some regulatory authority over nuclear power, legal scholars say that Vermont case will offer a precedent-setting test of how far those powers extend. Certainly, there are valid concerns about the patchwork regulations that could result if every state sets its own rules. But had Entergy kept its word, that debate would be beside the point.

The company seems to have concluded that its reputation in Vermont is already so damaged that it has nothing left to lose by going to war with the state. But there should be consequences. Permission to run a nuclear plant is a public trust. Entergy runs 11 other reactors in the United States, including Pilgrim Nuclear station in Plymouth. Pledging to run Pilgrim safely, the company has applied for federal permission to keep it open for another 20 years. But as the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) reviews the company’s application, it should keep in mind what promises from Entergy are worth.

26. The phrase “reneging on” (Para.1) is closest in meaning to \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. condemning
- B. reaffirming
- C. dishonoring
- D. securing

27. By entering into the 2002 agreement, Entergy intended to \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. obtain protection from Vermont regulators
- B. seek favor from the federal legislature
- C. acquire an extension of its business license
- D. get permission to purchase a power plant

28. According to Paragraph 4, Entergy seems to have problems with its \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. managerial practices
- B. technical innovativeness
- C. financial goals
- D. business vision

29. In the author’s view, the Vermont case will test \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. Entergy’s capacity to fulfill all its promises
- B. the nature of states’ patchwork regulations
- C. the federal authority over nuclear issues
- D. the limits of states’ power over nuclear issues

30. It can be inferred from the last paragraph that \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. Entergy’s business elsewhere might be affected
- B. the authority of the NRC will be defied
- C. Entergy will withdraw its Plymouth application
- D. Vermont’s reputation might be damaged

[http://archive.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial\\_opinion/editorials/articles/2011/04/24/vermont\\_yankee\\_plants\\_owner\\_must\\_honor\\_its\\_own\\_promises/](http://archive.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial_opinion/editorials/articles/2011/04/24/vermont_yankee_plants_owner_must_honor_its_own_promises/)



## 2012 Text 3

In the idealized version of how science is done, facts about the world are waiting to be observed and collected by objective researchers who use the scientific method to carry out their work. But in the everyday practice of science, discovery frequently follows an ambiguous and complicated route. We aim to be objective, but we cannot escape the context of our unique life experience. Prior knowledge and interests influence what we experience, what we think our experiences mean, and the subsequent actions we take. Opportunities for misinterpretation, error, and self-deception abound.

Consequently, discovery claims should be thought of as protoscience. Similar to newly staked mining claims, they are full of potential. But it takes collective scrutiny and acceptance to transform a discovery claim into a mature discovery. This is the credibility process, through which the individual researcher's *me, here, now* becomes the community's *anyone, anywhere, anytime*. Objective knowledge is the goal, not the starting point.

Once a discovery claim becomes public, the discoverer receives intellectual credit. But, unlike with mining claims, the community takes control of what happens next. Within the complex social structure of the scientific community, researchers make discoveries; editors and reviewers act as gatekeepers by controlling the publication process; other scientists use the new finding to suit their own purposes; and finally, the public (including other scientists) receives the new discovery and possibly accompanying technology. As a discovery claim works its way through the community, the interaction and confrontation between shared and competing beliefs about the science and the technology involved transforms an individual's discovery claim into the community's credible discovery.

Two paradoxes exist throughout this credibility process. First, scientific work tends to focus on some aspect of prevailing knowledge that is viewed as incomplete or incorrect. Little reward accompanies duplication and confirmation of what is already known and believed. The goal is *new-search*, not *re-search*. Not surprisingly, newly published discovery claims and credible discoveries that appear to be important and convincing will always be open to challenge and potential modification or refutation by future researchers. Second, novelty itself frequently provokes disbelief. Nobel Laureate and physiologist Albert Szent-Györgyi once described discovery as "seeing what everybody has seen and thinking what nobody has thought." But thinking what nobody else has thought and telling others what they have missed may not change their views. Sometimes years are required for truly novel discovery claims to be accepted and appreciated.

In the end, credibility "happens" to a discovery claim—a process that corresponds to what philosopher Annette Baier has described as the *commons of the mind*. "We reason together, challenge, revise, and complete each other's reasoning and each other's conceptions of reason."

31. According to the first paragraph, the process of discovery is characterized by its \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. uncertainty and complexity
- B. misconception and deceptiveness
- C. logicity and objectivity
- D. systematicness and regularity

32. It can be inferred from Paragraph 2 that credibility process requires \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. strict inspection
- B. shared efforts
- C. individual wisdom
- D. persistent innovation

33. Paragraph 3 shows that a discovery claim becomes credible after it \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. has attracted the attention of the general public
- B. has been examined by the scientific community
- C. has received recognition from editors and reviewers
- D. has been frequently quoted by peer scientists

34. Albert Szent-Györgyi would most likely agree that \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. scientific claims will survive challenges
- B. discoveries today inspire future research
- C. efforts to make discoveries are justified
- D. scientific work calls for a critical mind

35. Which of the following would be the best title of the text?

- A. Novelty as an Engine of Scientific Development
- B. Collective Scrutiny in Scientific Discovery
- C. Evolution of Credibility in Doing Science
- D. Challenge to Credibility at the Gate to Science

## 2012 Text 4

If the trade unionist Jimmy Hoffa were alive today, he would probably represent civil servants. When Hoffa's Teamsters were in their prime in 1960, only one in ten American government workers belonged to a union; now 36% do. In 2009 the number of unionists in America's public sector passed that of their fellow members in the private sector. In Britain, more than half of public-sector workers but only about 15% of private-sector ones are unionized.

There are three reasons for the public-sector unions' thriving. First, they can shut things down without suffering much in the way of consequences. Second, they are mostly bright and well-educated. A quarter of America's public-sector workers have a university degree. Third, they now dominate left-of-centre politics. Some of their ties go back a long way. Britain's Labor Party, as its name implies, has long been associated with trade unionism. Its current leader, Ed Miliband, owes his position to votes from public-sector unions.

At the state level their influence can be even more fearsome. Mark Baldassare of the Public Policy Institute of California points out that much of the state's budget is patrolled by unions. The teachers' unions keep an eye on schools, the CCPOA on prisons and a variety of labor groups on health care.

In many rich countries average wages in the state sector are higher than in the private one. But the real gains come in benefits and work practices. Politicians have repeatedly "backloaded" public-sector pay deals, keeping the pay increases modest but adding to holidays and especially pensions that are already generous.

Reform has been vigorously opposed, perhaps most notoriously in education, where charter schools, academies and merit pay all faced drawn-out battles. Even though there is plenty of evidence that the quality of the teachers is the most important variable, teachers' unions have fought against getting rid of bad ones and promoting good ones.

As the cost to everyone else has become clearer, politicians have begun to clamp down. In Wisconsin the unions have rallied thousands of supporters against Scott Walker, the hardline Republican governor. But many within the public sector suffer under the current system, too.

John Donahue at Harvard's Kennedy School points out that the norms of culture in Western civil services suit those who want to stay put but is bad for high achievers. The only American public-sector workers who earn well above \$ 250,000 a year are university sports coaches and the president of the United States. Bankers' fat pay packets have attracted much criticism, but a public-sector system that does not reward high achievers may be a much bigger problem for America.

36. It can be learned from the first paragraph that \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. Teamsters still have a large body of members
- B. Jimmy Hoffa used to work as a civil servant
- C. unions have enlarged their public-sector membership
- D. the government has improved its relationship with unionists

37. Which of the following is TRUE of Paragraph 2?

- A. Public-sector unions are prudent in taking actions.
- B. Education is required for public-sector union membership.
- C. Labor Party has long been fighting against public-sector unions.
- D. Public-sector unions seldom get in trouble for their actions.

38. It can be learned from Paragraph 4 that the income in the state sector is \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. illegally secured
- B. indirectly augmented
- C. excessively increased
- D. fairly adjusted

39. The example of the unions in Wisconsin shows that unions \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. often run against the current political system
- B. can change people's political attitudes
- C. may be a barrier to public-sector reforms
- D. are dominant in the government

40. John Donahue's attitude towards the public-sector system is one of \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. disapproval
- B. appreciation
- C. tolerance
- D. indifference

<https://www.economist.com/special-report/2011/03/19/enemies-of-progress>