

CAT 2024 VARC Slot 1 Question Paper with Solutions

Comprehension:

The passage below is accompanied by four questions. Based on the passage, choose the best answer for each question.

In the summer of 2022, subscribers to the US streaming service HBO MAX were alarmed to discover that dozens of the platform's offerings – from the Covid-themed heist thriller *Locked Down* to the recent remake of *The Witches* – had been quietly removed from the service. The news seemed like vindication to those who had long warned that streaming was more about controlling access to the cultural commons than expanding it, as did reports (since denied by the show's creators) that Netflix had begun editing old episodes of *Stranger Things* to retroactively improve their visual effects.

What's less clear is whether the commonly prescribed cure for these cultural ills – a return to the material pleasures of physical media – is the right one. While the makers of Blu-ray discs claim they have a shelf life of 100 years, such statistics remain largely theoretical until they come to pass, and are dependent on storage conditions, not to mention the continued availability of playback equipment. The humble DVD has already proved far less resilient, with many early releases already beginning to deteriorate in quality. Digital movie purchases provide even less security. Any film "bought" on iTunes could disappear if you move to another territory with a different rights agreement and try to redownload it. It's a bold new frontier in the commodification of art: the birth of the product recall. After a man took to Twitter to bemoan losing access to *Cars 2* after moving from Canada to Australia, Apple clarified that users who downloaded films to their devices would retain permanent access to those downloads, even if they relocated to a hemisphere where the [content was] subject to a different set of rights agreements. Thanks to the company's ironclad digital rights management technology, however, such files cannot be moved or backed up, locking you into watching with your Apple account. Anyone who does manage to acquire Digital Rights Management free (DRM-free) copies of their favourite films must nonetheless grapple with ever-changing file format standards, not to mention data decay – the gradual process by which electronic information slowly but surely corrupts. Only the regular migration of files from hard drive to hard drive can delay the inevitable, in a Sisyphean battle against the ravages of digital time.

In a sense, none of this is new. Charlie Chaplin burned the negative of his 1926 film *A Woman of the Sea* as a tax write-off. Many more films have been lost through accident, negligence or plain indifference. During a heatwave in July 1937, a Fox film vault in New Jersey burned down, destroying a majority of the silent films produced by the studio.

Back then, at least, cinema was defined by its ephemerality: the sense that a film was as good as gone once it left your local cinema. Today, with film studios keen to stress the breadth of their back catalogues (or to put in Hollywood terms, the value of their IPs), audiences may start to wonder why those same studios seem happy to set the vault alight themselves if it'll help next quarter's numbers.

Q.1: Which one of the following statements about art best captures the arguments made in the passage?

1. In the age of online subscription services, it is time to change our understanding of classic works of art being primarily immutable and easily available to the public.
2. Accepting retroactive changes to works of art is dangerous because it will encourage creators to not put enough effort into the original attempt, given that they can always edit or update their work later.
3. Works of art belong to the cultural commons and hence must remain available in perpetuity, irrespective of who pays for access to them.
4. As art is increasingly created, stored and distributed digitally, access to it is counterintuitively likely to be made more difficult by the rapid churn in technology and the whims of host platforms.

Answer: (4)

Solution:

Step 1: The passage discusses how works of art (especially films) are increasingly being controlled and removed from online platforms, making access to them more difficult. This is contrasted with the traditional idea that works of art should be available to the public in perpetuity.

Step 2: The author also critiques the promises made by physical media (e.g., Blu-ray) and digital movie purchases, emphasizing that technological and legal issues can make these works inaccessible over time.

Step 3: The argument is made that in the digital age, access to art is likely to become more difficult due to the rapid changes in technology, rights agreements, and DRM (Digital Rights Management). This suggests that the correct answer should focus on the growing challenges to access as technology evolves.

Thus, the most accurate option is (4), which highlights the counterintuitive difficulty of accessing art in the digital age.

Quick Tip

When studying comprehension passages, always focus on the overall message and arguments made by the author. Look for keywords that summarize the main point of each paragraph and match these with the options provided.

Q.2: “Netflix had begun editing old episodes of *Stranger Things* to retroactively improve their visual effects.” What is the purpose of this example used in the passage?

1. To show a practice that justifies the fears of people who feel streaming services cannot be trusted to be custodians of cultural artefacts like film.

2. To show that streaming services are controlling access to the cultural commons rather than expanding it.
3. To show how unsubstantiated reports are leading to an increase in the level of distrust towards streaming services.
4. To show that art in the digital age, specifically film, is no longer sacrosanct, and may be changed to suit changing tastes or technology.

Answer: (4)

Solution:

Step 1: The mention of Netflix editing old episodes of *Stranger Things* to improve visual effects is used as an example to demonstrate how streaming services are altering existing works, which is seen as a breach of the idea that art should remain as originally intended.

Step 2: This practice is also linked to the idea that streaming services, rather than preserving cultural artefacts, are instead modifying and controlling access to these works to suit commercial or technological purposes.

Step 3: The example of Netflix is meant to highlight how digital media, and specifically streaming platforms, can modify the content as they see fit, which goes against the traditional view that art, once created, should be left unchanged.

Based on this analysis, the correct answer is option (4), as it emphasizes the idea that digital art is no longer sacrosanct and may be altered to suit new tastes or technologies.

 Quick Tip

When reading comprehension passages, always focus on the purpose behind specific examples or anecdotes. Ask yourself why the author included the example and what it reveals about the larger argument being made.

Q.3: Which one of the following statements, if true, would best invalidate the main argument of the passage?

1. Improved cloud storage services have made it possible for movie collections to now be preserved in perpetuity, without the need to keep migrating the files.
2. When moving to a different geographical location, customers can easily use Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) to bypass geo-blocking and regain access to their content on any streaming service.
3. Recent research has irrefutably proven that Blu-Ray discs have a shelf life of at least 100 years.
4. Studios and streaming services have committed to giving customers perpetual and platform-independent access to the original digital content they have paid for.

Answer: (4)

Solution:

Step 1: The passage argues that digital media, such as streaming services and digital purchases, are becoming more fragile and vulnerable to access issues, including geo-blocking, digital rights management, and data decay.

Step 2: The author suggests that current solutions, like Blu-ray or iTunes purchases, do not guarantee permanent access or preservation of content. These issues are exacerbated by factors like the rapid change in technology and storage standards.

Step 3: To invalidate the main argument, we would need a statement that counteracts the idea that access to digital content is insecure and may not be available in perpetuity.

Step 4: The most effective way to invalidate the argument is a statement that assures perpetual, platform-independent access to digital content, as this would directly counter the concerns raised about the future availability of digital media.

Therefore, option (4) — that studios and streaming services have committed to giving customers perpetual and platform-independent access — best invalidates the main argument of the passage.

 Quick Tip

When analyzing comprehension passages, pay attention to the tone and purpose of the author's argument. Look for statements that either reinforce or counteract the main point being made, especially when choosing the best answer to a question.

Q.4: Which of the following statements is suggested by the sentence “Back then, at least, cinema was defined by its ephemerality: the sense that a film was as good as gone once it left your local cinema”?

1. Cinema is now no longer as ephemeral as it used to be earlier, because the technology used for creating and preserving films has improved manifold.
2. Presently, there is no reason why film studios should remove access to films once they have left the local cinema.
3. Today, films are expected to be available for a long time, since they are no longer tied solely to their stay at the local cinema.
4. Around a century ago, people were more accepting of not having access to films once they left the local cinema.

Answer: (3)

Solution:

Step 1: The passage contrasts the current expectation that films should be available long

after their theatrical release with the past practice where films were seen as ephemeral and typically no longer accessible once they left the cinema.

Step 2: The author emphasizes that today's films are expected to remain available, which contrasts with the older, more transient nature of cinema. The mention of "ephemerality" signals that films were once viewed as temporary, fleeting experiences.

Step 3: The correct answer must reflect this shift in perspective, where films are now expected to endure and remain accessible, which is option (3).

Therefore, the correct answer is (3), as it reflects the modern expectation that films will remain available for an extended period after their cinema run.

 Quick Tip

When analyzing comprehension questions, look for keywords like "contrast" or "shift" to identify changes in how things were perceived in the past versus the present. These clues help you pinpoint the main point the author is making.

Q.5 Five jumbled up sentences (labelled 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5), related to a topic, are given below. Four of them can be put together to form a coherent paragraph. Identify the odd sentence and key in the number of that sentence as your answer.

1. Urbanites also have more and better options for getting around: Uber is ubiquitous; easy-to-rent dockless bicycles are spreading; battery-powered scooters will be next.
2. When more people use buses or trains the service usually improves because public-transport agencies run more buses and trains.
3. Worsening services on public transport, terrorist attacks in some urban metros and a rise in fares have been blamed for this trend.
4. It seems more likely that public transport is being squeezed structurally as people's need to travel is diminishing as a result of smartphones, videoconferencing, online shopping and so on.
5. There has been a puzzling decline in the use of urban public transport in many countries in the west, despite the growth in urban populations and rising employment.

Answer: 2

Solution:

Step 1: The question presents five sentences related to urban transport, and we are asked to identify the odd one out. We need to look for the sentence that doesn't logically fit with the rest.

Step 2: Sentences 1, 3, 4, and 5 are all related to the decline in the use of urban public transport and the factors contributing to it, such as technological advancements and changing travel needs.

Step 3: Sentence 2, however, is about how public transport service improves with increased usage, which doesn't match the overall theme of decline or challenges in urban public transport discussed in the other sentences.

Step 4: Therefore, sentence 2 is the odd one out, as it contradicts the trend described in the other sentences.

The correct answer is (2).

 Quick Tip

When solving jumbled sentence questions, focus on the overall flow and coherence of the paragraph. Look for sentences that connect logically with the preceding and following sentences. Identify any sentence that breaks the flow or presents an idea that doesn't align with the rest.

Comprehension:

The passage below is accompanied by four questions. Based on the passage, choose the best answer for each question.

The idea of craftsmanship is not simply nostalgic. Crafts require distinct skills, an all-round approach to work that involves the whole product, rather than individual parts, and an attitude that necessitates devotion to the job and a focus on the communal interest. The concept of craft emphasises the human touch and individual judgment. Essentially, the crafts concept seems to run against the preponderant ethos of management studies which, as the academics note, have long prioritised efficiency and consistency. Craft skills were portrayed as being primitive and traditionalist. The contrast between artisanship and efficiency first came to the fore in the 19th century when British manufacturers suddenly faced competition from across the Atlantic as firms developed the “American system” using standardised parts. The worldwide success of the Singer sewing machine showed the potential of a mass-produced device. This process created its own reaction, first in the form of the Arts and Crafts movement of the late 19th century, and then again in the “small is beautiful” movement of the 1970s. A third crafts movement is emerging as people become aware of the environmental impact of conventional industry. There are two potential markets for those who practise crafts. The first stems from the existence of consumers who are willing to pay a premium price for goods that are deemed to be of extra quality. . . . The second market lies in those consumers who wish to use their purchases to support local workers, or to reduce their environmental impact by taking goods to craftspeople to be mended, or recycled. For workers, the appeal of craftsmanship is that it allows them the autonomy to make creative choices, and thus makes a job far more satisfying. In that sense, it could offer hope for the overall labour market. Let the machines automate dull and repetitive tasks and let workers focus purely on their skills, judgment and imagination. As a current example, the academics cite the “agile” manifesto in the software sector, an industry at the heart of technological change. The

pioneers behind the original agile manifesto promised to prioritise “individuals and interactions over processes and tools”. By bringing together experts from different teams, agile working is designed to improve creativity. But the broader question is whether crafts can create a lot more jobs than they do today. Demand for crafted products may rise but will it be easy to retrain workers in sectors that might get automated (such as truck drivers) to take advantage? In a world where products and services often have to pass through regulatory hoops, large companies will usually have the advantage. History also suggests that the link between crafts and creativity is not automatic. Medieval craft guilds were monopolies which resisted new entrants. They were also highly hierarchical with young men required to spend long periods as apprentices and journeymen before they could set up on their own; by that time the innovative spirit may have been knocked out of them. Craft workers can thrive in the modern era, but only if they don’t get too organised.

Q.6: The author questions the ability of crafts to create substantial employment opportunities presently because

1. the low scale of crafts production will not be able to absorb the mass of redundant labour.
2. regulatory requirements could make it difficult for small crafts outfits to compete.
3. workers made redundant by automation are unlikely to opt for crafts-related work.
4. crafts guilds tend to resist new entrants and are unlikely to accept large numbers of trainees.

Answer: (2)

Solution:

Step 1: The passage discusses the challenges faced by crafts in creating substantial employment opportunities, including issues of scalability and competition with larger companies.

Step 2: The author questions whether the growth of crafts can create jobs at a scale necessary to absorb redundant labour, pointing out that regulatory hurdles may impede the success of small crafts outfits.

Step 3: In particular, the passage highlights how large companies often have the advantage when it comes to navigating regulatory hoops, which can make it difficult for small-scale craft producers to compete.

Based on this, the correct answer is (2), as it directly addresses the concern about regulatory challenges for small crafts businesses.

Quick Tip

When answering questions about the author’s reasoning, look for clues about what the author considers to be the main obstacles or challenges. Identify key phrases that indicate the difficulties faced by the subject discussed, such as “regulatory hurdles,” “competition,” or “scalability.”

Q.7: We can infer from the passage that medieval crafts guilds resembled mass production in that both

1. did not necessarily promote creativity.
2. did not always employ egalitarian production processes.
3. focused excessively on product quality.
4. discouraged innovation by restricting entry through strict rules.

Answer: (4)

Solution:

Step 1: The passage compares medieval craft guilds to mass production, suggesting that both were characterized by hierarchical structures and restrictive practices that limited innovation.

Step 2: The passage specifically states that medieval craft guilds were monopolies that resisted new entrants, and the apprentices were required to spend long periods before they could become independent. This created a system where innovation could be stifled as young workers spent years in the system before being allowed to innovate.

Step 3: Based on this description, the most appropriate inference is that both guilds and mass production systems discouraged innovation by imposing strict rules on entry and participation.

Thus, the correct answer is (4), as both systems discouraged innovation by restricting entry through strict rules.

 Quick Tip

In inference-based questions, focus on key phrases that describe the systems or ideas being compared. Look for similarities in restrictions, hierarchies, or processes that could point to the correct answer.

Q.8: The most recent revival in interest in the crafts is a result of the emergence of all of the following EXCEPT:

1. a greater interest in buying locally produced goods.
2. concerns about the environmental impact of mass production.
3. support for individual creations as opposed to mass-produced objects.
4. a niche market for discerning buyers of quality products.

Answer: (4)

Solution:

Step 1: The passage discusses the revival of interest in crafts and identifies the key drivers behind this trend. Specifically, it mentions a growing awareness of environmental concerns, the desire for locally produced goods, and a focus on supporting individual creations.

Step 2: The passage suggests that there are two potential markets for crafted goods: one for those willing to pay a premium for quality and another for those interested in supporting local workers or reducing environmental impact.

Step 3: The reference to a “niche market for discerning buyers of quality products” implies that the growing interest in crafts stems from people willing to pay for craftsmanship. However, this is not one of the key factors discussed in the passage, as the primary focus is on environmental concerns, local production, and individual craftsmanship.

Therefore, the correct answer is (4), as it does not directly align with the reasons given in the passage for the revival of interest in crafts.

 Quick Tip

In questions that ask for exceptions, focus on the details that do not match the main points or trends discussed in the passage. Look for ideas that are mentioned less prominently or are not directly addressed by the author.

Q.9: Which one of the following statements is NOT inconsistent with the views stated in the passage?

1. The Arts and Crafts movement was initially inspired by the “American system” of production.
2. We need to support the crafts; only then can we retain the creativity intrinsic to their production.
3. The agile movement in software is a throwback to the tenets of the medieval crafts guilds.
4. Creativity in the crafts could be stifled if the market for artisan goods becomes too organised.

Answer: (4)

Solution:

Step 1: The passage discusses how movements like Arts and Crafts emerged as a response to the standardisation and mass production systems, which devalued individual creativity.

Step 2: Option (1) is inconsistent because the Arts and Crafts movement arose as a reaction to the “American system” of mass production, not as an inspiration from it.

Step 3: Option (2) is consistent with the passage, as it supports the idea that supporting crafts is necessary for retaining creativity, which aligns with the passage's view on the importance of creativity in craftsmanship.

Step 4: Option (3) is inconsistent, as the passage highlights the hierarchical, restrictive nature of medieval guilds, which are contrasted with the more modern, agile movements, not described as similar.

Step 5: Option (4) is consistent with the passage because the author suggests that creativity in crafts can be stifled if the market becomes too organised, which aligns with the point that crafts should remain flexible and not too commercialised.

Therefore, the correct answer is (4), as it aligns with the views stated in the passage.

 Quick Tip

In questions that ask for inconsistencies, focus on the tone and key arguments made in the passage. Identify the statements that contradict the author's views, and choose the one that best fits the author's perspective.

Q.10: The passage given below is followed by four alternate summaries. Choose the option that best captures the essence of the passage.

1. Animals are more intelligent than us in sensing danger and detecting diseases.
2. The similarity in brain structure explains why animals show emotions typically associated with humans.
3. Animals can show emotions which are typically associated with humans.
4. The advanced sensory and motor abilities of animals is the reason why they can display wide-ranging emotions.

Answer: (2)

Solution:

Step 1: The passage highlights how animals have exceptional sensory and motor abilities, as well as the ability to detect diseases, communicate over long distances, and display a range of emotions.

Step 2: The passage then explains that animals share many of these emotions with humans because both humans and animals share brain structures (the limbic system) that are responsible for emotions.

Step 3: The most accurate summary must reflect the link between brain structure and emotional similarity, as explained in the passage.

Therefore, the correct answer is (2), as it directly captures the explanation given in the passage about the similarity in brain structure between humans and animals.

 Quick Tip

When answering summary questions, focus on the main point or argument made in the passage. Look for options that encapsulate the primary idea, especially those that focus on key concepts like cause and effect or similarities between subjects.

Q.11: There is a sentence that is missing in the paragraph below. Look at the paragraph and decide where (option 1, 2, 3, or 4) the following sentence would best fit. **Sentence:** Understanding central Asia’s role helps developments make more sense not only across Asia but in Europe, the Americas and Africa.

Paragraph: The nations of the Silk Roads are sometimes called ‘developing countries’, but they are actually some of the world’s most highly developed countries, the very crossroads of civilization, in advanced states of disrepair. —(1)—. These countries lie at the centre of global affairs: they have since the beginning of history. Running across the spine of Asia, they form a web of connections fanning out in every direction, routes along which pilgrims and warriors, nomads and merchants have travelled, goods and produce have been bought and sold, and ideas exchanged, adapted and refined. —(2)—. They have carried not only prosperity, but also death and violence, disease and disaster. —(3)—. The Silk Roads are the world’s central nervous system, connecting otherwise far-flung peoples and places. . . . —(4)—. It allows us to see patterns and links, causes and effects that remain invisible if one looks only at Europe, or North America.

1. Option 1
2. Option 2
3. Option 4
4. Option 3

Answer: (1)

Solution:

Step 1: The missing sentence discusses how understanding central Asia’s role provides clarity on global developments, which fits with the sentence immediately after the introduction to the Silk Roads, connecting them to the broader global context.

Step 2: Sentence (1) establishes the importance of central Asia in global affairs, and thus it fits best between the introductory and the description of the Silk Roads.

The correct answer is (1).

 Quick Tip

In missing sentence questions, focus on the context of the paragraph before and after the blank. Look for the sentence that logically introduces, connects, or concludes the ideas in the surrounding sentences.

Q.12: The passage given below is followed by four alternate summaries. Choose the option that best captures the essence of the passage.

Cartographers design and create maps to communicate information about phenomena located somewhere on our planet. In the past, cartographers did not worry too much about who was going to read their maps. Although some simple “usability” research was done—like comparing whether circle or bar symbols worked best—cartographers knew how to make maps. This has changed now, however, due to all kinds of societal and technological developments. Today, map readers are more demanding—mostly because of the tools they use to read maps. Cartographers, who are also influenced by these trends, are now more interested in seeing if their products are efficient, effective, and appreciated.

1. Today, cartographers also need to look into the usability of maps because of the new technological developments.
2. New technological developments have prompted cartographers to experiment with their maps by applying these new innovations.
3. Maps are being used for a variety of reasons and therefore map readers have become more demanding.
4. Modern mapmakers evaluate a map’s effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction of the user through a series of experiments.

Answer: (1)

Solution:

Step 1: The passage explains how technological advancements have led to increased demands from map readers, and how cartographers are now focusing on usability and efficiency.

Step 2: Option (1) best reflects the shift in focus from traditional cartography to considering usability in response to technological developments, which is directly mentioned in the passage.

The correct answer is (1).

 Quick Tip

When choosing a summary, focus on the main change or development described in the passage. Look for the option that captures the most important shift or trend discussed.

Q.13: There is a sentence that is missing in the paragraph below. Look at the paragraph and decide where (option 1, 2, 3, or 4) the following sentence would best fit.

Sentence: The brain isn't organized the way you might set up your home office or bathroom medicine cabinet.

Paragraph: —(1)—. You can't just put things anywhere you want to. The evolved architecture of the brain is haphazard and disjointed, and incorporates multiple systems, each of which has a mind of its own. —(2)—. Evolution doesn't design things and it doesn't build systems—it settles on systems that, historically, conveyed a survival benefit. There is no overarching, grand planner engineering the systems so that they work harmoniously together. —(3)—. The brain is more like a big, old house with piecemeal renovations done on every floor, and less like new construction. —(4)—.

1. Option 2
2. Option 4
3. Option 1
4. Option 3

Answer: (1)

Solution:

Step 1: The missing sentence needs to introduce the idea that the brain isn't organized in a simple or structured way, which aligns with the concept of haphazardness and disjointed systems described in the following sentences.

Step 2: Option (1) fits perfectly as it introduces the comparison of the brain's organization to the unstructured nature of a home office, setting up the idea of chaotic brain architecture.

The correct answer is (1).

 Quick Tip

For missing sentence questions, look for the sentence that logically introduces the main idea or prepares the reader for the explanation that follows.

Q.14: There is a sentence that is missing in the paragraph below. Look at the paragraph and decide where (option 1, 2, 3, or 4) the following sentence would best fit.

Sentence: Comprehending a wide range of emotions, Renaissance music nevertheless portrayed all emotions in a balanced and moderate fashion.

Paragraph: A volume of translated Italian madrigals were published in London during the year of 1588. This sudden public interest facilitated a surge of English Madrigal writing as well as a spurt of other secular music writing and publication. —(1). This music boom lasted for thirty years and was as much a golden age of music as British literature was with Shakespeare and Queen Elizabeth I. —(2). The rebirth in both literature and music originated in Italy and migrated to England; the English madrigal became more humorous and lighter in England as compared to Italy. Renaissance music was mostly polyphonic in texture. —(3). Extreme use of and contrasts in dynamics, rhythm, and tone colour do not occur. —(4).

1. Option 1
2. Option 2
3. Option 3
4. Option 4

Answer: (3)

Solution:

Step 1: The missing sentence should fit into a context where Renaissance music is discussed as having emotional balance and moderation, which fits between the description of madrigal writing and the mention of musical texture.

Step 2: Option (3) fits the context perfectly by introducing the balanced portrayal of emotions in Renaissance music, leading into the technical description of the music's structure.

The correct answer is (3).

 Quick Tip

Look for sentences that naturally expand upon the key ideas or concepts being introduced in the surrounding text, especially when describing characteristics or attributes.

Comprehension:

The passage below is accompanied by four questions. Based on the passage, choose the best answer for each question.

Oftentimes, when economists cross borders, they are less interested in learning from others than in invading their garden plots. Gary Becker, for instance, pioneered the

idea of human capital. To do so, he famously tackled topics like crime and domesticity, applying methods honed in the study of markets to domains of nonmarket life. He projected economics outward into new realms: for example, by revealing the extent to which humans calculate marginal utilities when choosing their spouses or stealing from neighbors. At the same time, he did not let other ways of thinking enter his own economic realm: for example, he did not borrow from anthropology or history or let observations of nonmarket economics inform his *homo economicus*. Becker was a picture of the imperial economist in the heyday of the discipline's bravura.

Times have changed for the once almighty discipline. Economics has been taken to task, within and beyond its ramparts. Some economists have reached out, imported, borrowed, and collaborated—been less imperial, more open. Consider Thomas Piketty and his outreach to historians. The booming field of behavioral economics—the fusion of economics and social psychology—is another case. Having spawned active subfields, like judgment, decisionmaking and a turn to experimentation, the field aims to go beyond the caricature of Rational Man to explain how humans make decisions. . . .

It is important to underscore how this flips the way we think about economics. For generations, economists have presumed that people have interests—“preferences,” in the neoclassical argot—that get revealed in the course of peoples' choices. Interests come before actions and determine them. If you are hungry, you buy lunch; if you are cold, you get a sweater. If you only have so much money and can't afford to deal with both your growling stomach and your shivering, which need you choose to meet using your scarce savings reveals your preference.

Psychologists take one look at this simple formulation and shake their heads. Increasingly, even some mainstream economists have to admit that *homo economicus* doesn't always behave like the textbook maximizer; irrational behavior can't simply be waved away as extraeconomic expressions of passions over interests, and thus the domain of other disciplines. . . . This is one place where the humanist can help the economist. If narrative economics is going to help us understand how rivals duke it out, who wins and who loses, we are going to need much more than lessons from epidemiological studies of viruses or intracranial stimuli.

Above all, we need politics and institutions. Shiller [the Nobel prize winning economist] connects perceptions of narratives to changes in behavior and thence to social outcomes. He completes a circle that was key to behavioral economics and brings in storytelling to make sense of how perceptions get framed. This cycle (perception to behavior to society) was once mediated or dominated by institutions: the political parties, lobby groups, and media organizations that played a vital role in legitimating, representing, and excluding interests. Yet institutions have been stripped from Shiller's account, to reveal a bare dynamic of emotions and economics, without the intermediating place of politics.

Q.15: We can infer from the passage that the term 'homo economicus' refers to someone who

1. believes in borrowing and collaborating with other disciplines in their work.
2. maximises their opportunities based on nonmarket choices.

3. makes rational decisions based on their own preferences.
4. is not influenced by the preferences and choices of others.

Answer: (3)

Solution:

Step 1: The passage introduces the concept of "homo economicus" as the idealized model of rational decision-making in economics. This model suggests that individuals make choices based on their preferences and aim to maximize their utility.

Step 2: The term "homo economicus" is explained in the context of economists assuming that people's preferences come before actions and determine their behavior. The example about choosing between lunch and a sweater demonstrates how decisions are based on preferences.

Step 3: Given that "homo economicus" is associated with rational decision-making based on preferences, the correct answer is (3), as it aligns with the model's idea of individuals making decisions based on their own preferences.

The correct answer is (3).

 Quick Tip

In inference-based questions, focus on the key attributes and characteristics described in the passage. Look for definitions or descriptions that help clarify complex concepts or terms.

Q.16: "Times have changed for the once mighty discipline." We can infer from this statement and the associated paragraph that the author is being

1. sarcastic about how economists, who earlier shunned other disciplines, are now beginning to incorporate them in their analyses.
2. critical of economists' openly borrowing and collaborating across disciplines to explain how humans make decisions.
3. disparaging of economists' inability to precisely predict market behaviour, and are now borrowing from other disciplines to remedy this.
4. judgemental about the ability of economic tools to accurately manage crises leading to the downfall of this lofty science.

Answer: (1)

Solution:

Step 1: The phrase "times have changed for the once mighty discipline" suggests a shift in economics from a dominant, self-sufficient discipline to one that is now more open to incorporating ideas from other fields.

Step 2: The passage discusses how economists, once imperial in their approach, have become more open and collaborative with other disciplines, like behavioral economics, psychology, and history. This shift is not presented in a neutral light but rather with a tone of surprise or critique, as the author reflects on how economists once operated in isolation.

Step 3: Given this tone, the best inference is that the author is being sarcastic about how economists who once avoided borrowing from other fields are now forced to do so, and the phrase "once almighty" underscores this shift.

Therefore, the correct answer is (1).

 Quick Tip

In questions about tone or inference, focus on how the author expresses their attitude toward the subject. Look for words that imply criticism, surprise, or sarcasm to help determine the author's stance.

Q.17: In the first paragraph the author is making the point that economists like Becker

1. benefitted from the application of their principles and concepts to non-economic phenomena.
2. used economics to analyse non-market behaviour, without incorporating perspectives from other areas of inquiry.
3. tended to guard their discipline from poaching by academics from other subject areas.
4. had begun to borrow concepts from other disciplines but were averse to the latter applying economic principles.

Answer: (2)

Solution:

Step 1: In the first paragraph, the author highlights how Becker used economic methods to analyze areas outside of traditional economics, such as crime and domestic life.

Step 2: The passage explains that Becker expanded the scope of economics into non-market areas but did not incorporate ideas from other fields like anthropology or history. This suggests that he applied economics to non-market behaviors but without incorporating perspectives from other disciplines.

Step 3: This fits best with option (2), which states that Becker used economics to analyze non-market behavior, without borrowing from other areas of inquiry.

The correct answer is (2).

 Quick Tip

When answering questions about the author's argument, focus on the key activities or principles mentioned in the passage. Look for the author's description of actions, particularly whether the author emphasizes exclusion or incorporation of ideas from other disciplines.

Q.18: The author critiques Schiller's approach to behavioural economics for

1. linking emotions and rational behaviour without considering the mediation of social institutions.
2. denigrating the role of institutions while creating a link between behavioural economics and perceptions.
3. relying excessively on storytelling as the main influence on the formation of perceptions.
4. ignoring the marginal role that media and politics play in influencing people's behaviour.

Answer: (1)

Solution:

Step 1: The passage explains how Schiller connects emotions to behavior and how perceptions can influence societal outcomes, but the author critiques Schiller for removing the role of institutions in this process.

Step 2: The critique is that Schiller's approach overlooks the mediation of social institutions such as political parties, lobby groups, and media organizations, which historically played an important role in shaping perceptions and behavior.

Step 3: The best summary of this critique is option (1), which highlights the author's argument that Schiller's approach links emotions and rational behavior while disregarding the important mediating role of institutions.

Therefore, the correct answer is (1).

 Quick Tip

When addressing critiques in comprehension passages, look for clues about what the author feels is missing or overlooked. In this case, the absence of key concepts (like institutions) is a focal point of the critique.

Q.19: Five jumbled up sentences (labelled 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5), related to a topic, are given below. Four of them can be put together to form a coherent paragraph. Identify the odd sentence and key in the number of that sentence as your answer.

1. Animals have an interest in fulfilling their basic needs, but also in avoiding suffering, and thus we ought to extend moral consideration.
2. Singer viewed himself as a utilitarian, and presents a direct moral theory concerning animal rights, in contrast to indirect positions, such as welfarist views.
3. He argued for extending moral consideration to animals because, similar to humans, animals have certain significant interests.
4. The event that publicly announced animal rights as a legitimate issue within contemporary philosophy was Peter Singer's Animal Liberation text in 1975.
5. As such, we ought to view their interests alongside and equal to human interests, which results in humans having direct moral duties towards animals.

1. Option 1
2. Option 2
3. Option 3
4. Option 4

Answer: (4)

Solution:

Step 1: The paragraph discusses Peter Singer's views on animal rights and the moral duties humans have towards animals. Sentences (1), (2), (3), and (5) all discuss the concept of extending moral consideration to animals and the arguments for it.

Step 2: Sentence (4) is unrelated to the flow of the argument. While it references Peter Singer's Animal Liberation, it doesn't connect with the moral theory discussion in the other sentences. It simply provides context but doesn't fit with the development of the argument in the paragraph.

Therefore, the correct answer is (4).

 Quick Tip

In jumbled sentence questions, look for sentences that introduce or provide context to the topic at hand. Odd sentences often provide irrelevant information or break the logical flow of the paragraph.

Q.20: The passage given below is followed by four alternate summaries. Choose the option that best captures the essence of the passage.

Certain codes may, of course, be so widely distributed in a specific language community or culture, and be learned at so early an age, that they appear not to be constructed – the effect of an articulation between sign and referent – but to be ‘naturally’ given. Simple visual signs appear to have achieved a ‘near-universality’ in this sense: though evidence remains that even apparently ‘natural’ visual codes are culture specific. However, this

does not mean that no codes have intervened; rather, that the codes have been profoundly naturalized. The operation of naturalized codes reveals not the transparency and ‘naturalness’ of language but the depth, the habituation and the near-universality of the codes in use. They produce apparently ‘natural’ recognitions. This has the (ideological) effect of concealing the practices of coding which are present.

1. All codes, linguistic and visual, have a natural origin but some are so widespread that they become universal. This is what hides the mechanism of coding behind signs.
2. Not all codes are natural but certain codes are naturalized and made to appear universal. Ideology aims to hide the mechanism of coding behind signs.
3. Learning linguistic and visual signs at an early age makes all such codes appear natural. This naturalization of codes is the effect of ideology.
4. Language and visual signs are codes. However, some of the codes are so widespread that they not only seem naturally given but also hide the mechanism of coding behind the signs.

Answer: (2)

Solution:

Step 1: The passage discusses how codes, whether linguistic or visual, are not inherently natural but have been naturalized over time. The process of naturalization makes these codes seem universal, even though they are culture-specific.

Step 2: Option (2) correctly captures the essence of the passage. It explains that not all codes are natural but that some have been naturalized, made to appear universal, and that ideology plays a role in hiding the mechanisms of coding behind these signs. The correct answer is (2).

💡 Quick Tip

In summary-based questions, focus on identifying the key argument of the passage. Look for options that encapsulate the primary idea and avoid details that only address minor points.

Comprehension:

The passage below is accompanied by four questions. Based on the passage, choose the best answer for each question.

Landing in Australia, the British colonists weren’t much impressed with the small-bodied, slender-snouted marsupials called bandicoots. “Their muzzle, which is much too long, gives them an air exceedingly stupid,” one naturalist noted in 1805. They nicknamed one type the “zebra rat” because of its black-striped rump.

Silly-looking or not, though, the zebra rat—the smallest bandicoot, more commonly known today as the western barred bandicoot—exhibited a genius for survival in the harsh outback, where its ancestors had persisted for some 26 million years. Its births were triggered by rainfall in the bone-dry desert. It carried its breath-mint-size babies in a backward-facing pouch so mothers could forage for food and dig shallow, camouflaged shelters.

Still, these adaptations did not prepare the western barred bandicoot for the colonial-era transformation of its ecosystem, particularly the onslaught of imported British animals, from cattle and rabbits that damaged delicate desert vegetation to ravenous house cats that soon developed a taste for bandicoots. Several of the dozen-odd bandicoot species went extinct, and by the 1940s the western barred bandicoot, whose original range stretched across much of the continent, persisted only on two predator-free islands in Shark Bay, off Australia’s western coast.

“Our isolated fauna had simply not been exposed to these predators,” says Reece Pedler, an ecologist with the Wild Deserts conservation program.

Now Wild Deserts is using descendants of those few thousand island survivors, called Shark Bay bandicoots, in a new effort to seed a mainland bandicoot revival. They’ve imported 20 bandicoots to a preserve on the edge of the Strzelecki Desert, in the remote interior of New South Wales. This sanctuary is a challenging place, desolate much of the year, with one of the world’s most mercurial rainfall patterns—relentless droughts followed by sudden drenching floods.

The imported bandicoots occupy two fenced “exclosures,” cleared of invasive rabbits (courtesy of Pedler’s sheepdog) and of feral cats (which slunk off once the rabbits disappeared). A third fenced area contains the program’s Wild Training Zone, where two other rare marsupials (bilbies, a larger type of bandicoot, and mulgaras, a somewhat fearsome fuzzball known for sucking the brains out of prey) currently share terrain with controlled numbers of cats, learning to evade them. It’s unclear whether the Shark Bay bandicoots, which are perhaps even more predator-naïve than their now-extinct mainland bandicoot kin, will be able to make that kind of breakthrough.

For now, though, a recent surge of rainfall has led to a bandicoot joey boom, raising the Wild Deserts population to about 100, with other sanctuaries adding to that number. There are also signs of rebirth in the landscape itself. With their constant digging, the bandicoots trap moisture and allow for seed germination so the cattle-damaged desert can restore itself.

They have a new nickname—a flattering one, this time. “We call them ecosystem engineers,” Pedler says.

Q.21: Which one of the following options does NOT represent the characteristics of the western barred bandicoot?

1. Long thin nose, black striped back, pouch for joeys
2. Shallow diggers having an elongated muzzle
3. Smallest black striped marsupial that uses camouflage and dig
4. Look of a rat but with a baby pouch and a slender snout

Answer: (3)

Solution:

Step 1: The passage describes the western barred bandicoot's features, including its long thin nose (referred to as a "slender snout"), black-striped back, and backward-facing pouch used for carrying babies.

Step 2: Option (3) states, "Smallest black striped marsupial that uses camouflage and dig," which is partially correct in describing the bandicoot's size and ability to dig. However, it inaccurately describes camouflage as one of its defining traits. The passage mentions the bandicoot digs shallow shelters but doesn't emphasize camouflage as a key characteristic.

Therefore, the correct answer is (3), as it incorrectly includes camouflage, which is not highlighted as a major trait in the passage.

 Quick Tip

In questions that ask about characteristics, pay attention to the specific traits emphasized in the passage. Any feature not explicitly described is likely to be the incorrect option.

Q.22: The text uses the word 'exclosures' because Wild Deserts has adopted a measure of

1. restoring cattle damaged deserts to green landscapes.
2. excluding animals to make the islands predator-free.
3. barring the entry of invasive species.
4. ridding the main desert of feral cats and large bilbies.

Answer: (2)

Solution:

Step 1: The passage describes how Wild Deserts created "exclosures" to keep out predators such as rabbits and feral cats in order to protect the bandicoots.

Step 2: The term "exclosures" refers to areas where animals are excluded. The purpose of these areas, as described in the passage, is to create predator-free zones for the bandicoots, making it clear that the primary measure being discussed is the exclusion of animals to make the islands predator-free.

Step 3: Option (2) correctly identifies the purpose of the exclosures, which is to make the islands predator-free and protect the bandicoots.

Therefore, the correct answer is (2).

 Quick Tip

In questions about specific terms or actions described in the passage, focus on the context in which those terms are used. In this case, “exclosures” are used to describe areas where animals are excluded for the protection of species.

Q.23: Which one of the following statements provides a gist of this passage?

1. The onslaught of animals, such as cattle, rabbits, and housecats, brought in by the British led to the extinction of the western barred bandicoot.
2. The negligent attitude of the British colonists towards these bandicoots evidenced by the names given to them led to their annihilation.
3. A type of bandicoot was nearly wiped out by invasive species but rescuers now pin hopes on a remnant island population.
4. Marsupials are going extinct due to the colonial era transformation of the ecosystem which also destroyed natural vegetation.

Answer: (3)

Solution:

Step 1: The passage discusses the near extinction of the western barred bandicoot due to the invasion of non-native species, such as cattle, rabbits, and house cats, brought by the British colonists.

Step 2: It also describes how the bandicoots are now being saved through a conservation effort using survivors from an island population in Shark Bay, showing that rescuers are focusing on this remnant population for future revival.

Step 3: Option (3) best captures this essence, highlighting both the near-extinction of the bandicoot and the current efforts to revive it using a remnant population. Therefore, the correct answer is (3).

 Quick Tip

In questions asking for the gist of the passage, focus on identifying the main events or themes. The answer should capture the central story or concept without focusing too narrowly on one detail.

Q.24: According to the text, the western barred bandicoots now have a flattering name because they have

1. aided in altering an arid environment.

2. led a revival in preserving the species.
3. led to a surge and increase of rainfall.
4. grown fivefold in terms of population.

Answer: (1)

Solution:

Step 1: The passage mentions that the bandicoots have been instrumental in restoring the damaged desert environment by trapping moisture and promoting seed germination, which helps in the restoration of the ecosystem.

Step 2: This significant ecological role has earned the bandicoots the nickname “ecosystem engineers,” a flattering name that acknowledges their contribution to transforming the environment.

Step 3: Option (1) correctly identifies this role of the bandicoots in altering the environment, which is why they are called “ecosystem engineers.”

Therefore, the correct answer is (1).

 Quick Tip

When answering questions about the main role or impact of a subject, focus on the significant actions or outcomes described in the passage. In this case, the role of the bandicoots in restoring the ecosystem is central to the explanation of their new nickname.