

CAT 2024 Slot 3 VARC Question Paper with Solutions

Q.1 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. To create a synapse, the neuron has specialized structures, often seen as tiny swellings, at its terminal end of the axon where it stores the chemicals that are emitted to transmit a signal to the next neuron.
2. This fetal warm-up act—the soldering of neural connections before the eyes actually function—is crucial to the performance of the visual system.
3. The reasons for this paring back of synapses is a mystery, but synaptic pruning is thought to sharpen and reinforce the “correct” synapses, while removing the weak and unnecessary ones.
4. Neural connections between the eyes and the brain are formed long before birth, establishing the wiring and the circuitry that allow a child to begin visualizing the world the minute she emerges from the womb.
5. During this rehearsal period, synapses—points of chemical connection—between nerve cells are generated in great excess, only to be pruned back during later development.

Answer: (1)

Solution:

By analyzing the coherence of the sentences, we see that all except Sentence 1 are logically linked to the process of synapse formation, pruning, and neural development. Sentence 1 stands out as it talks about the physical structure of the synapse, whereas the other sentences focus on the process and timeline of neural connections and synaptic pruning. Therefore, the odd sentence is 1.

 Quick Tip

When dealing with jumbled sentences, look for sentences that describe actions or events in a logical sequence. The odd sentence often deviates in context or focus.

Q.2 The passage given below is followed by four alternate summaries. Choose the option that best captures the essence of the passage.

When the tradwife puts on that georgic, pinstriped dress, she is not just admiring the visual cues of a fantastical past. She takes these dreams of storybook bliss literally, trac-

ing them backward in time until she reaches a logical conclusion that satisfies her. And by doing so, she ends up delivering an unhappy reminder of just how much our lives consist of artifice and playacting. The tradwife outrages people because of her deliberately regressive ideals. And yet her behaviour is, on some level, indistinguishable from the nontradwife's. The tradwife's trollish genius is to beat us at our own dress-up game. By insisting that the idyllic cottage daydream should be real, right down to the primitive gender roles, she leaves others feeling hollow, cheated. The hullabaloo and headaches she causes may be the price we pay for taking too many things at face value: our just deserts, served Instagram-perfect by a manicured hand on a gorgeous ceramic dish, with fat, mouthwatering maraschino cherries on top.

1. By promoting an idealized past, the tradwife exposes the artifice of contemporary values and mocks societal norms.
2. The tradwife, with her vintage dress and traditional roles, highlights the superficiality of modern life and challenges current societal norms.
3. The tradwife's commitment to outdated gender roles and retro fashion critiques the superficiality of today's societal ideals.
4. The tradwife's vintage dress and adherence to traditional roles reveal the artificial nature of modern life and its superficial values.

Answer: (2) The tradwife, with her vintage dress and traditional roles, highlights the superficiality of modern life and challenges current societal norms.

Solution:

The passage describes the tradwife's intentional return to traditional gender roles and vintage fashion, and how this challenges modern, superficial values. It emphasizes how her actions, while controversial, expose the artifice in modern life and question current societal expectations. The best summary captures this critique of contemporary society through her embrace of a bygone ideal. Therefore, the correct answer is option (2).

 Quick Tip

When reading passages for summary questions, focus on the central idea the passage conveys about societal values or critique. The correct option usually reflects this key point without getting lost in minor details.

Q.3 The passage given below is followed by four alternate summaries. Choose the option that best captures the essence of the passage.

Humans have managed to tweak the underlying biology of various plants and animals to produce high-tech crops and microbes. But regulating these entities is complicated, as the framework of policies and procedures are outdated and not flexible enough to adapt

to emerging technology. The question is whether regulation will ever be able to keep up with human innovation, to regulate living things, which are apt to be unpredictable and unique; to capture all the potential risks when new biological entities are introduced, or when they pass on variations of their genes?

1. Current regulation of biotechnology is outdated, but it is debatable if we can create a framework, imaginative and flexible, to cover all contingencies in this fast-changing area.
2. The mercurial nature of biological entities calls for scientists to shape the regulations governing emerging technology, with regular calibration to handle variations in the field.
3. The problem with formulating regulation for innovation in the scientific arena is that it is impossible to imagine the outcomes or risks related to the outcomes of all the research.
4. A new framework of rules and procedures for regulating the most recent research emerging from biotechnology is urgently needed, to keep up with this rapidly changing discipline

Answer: (1) Current regulation of biotechnology is outdated, but it is debatable if we can create a framework, imaginative and flexible, to cover all contingencies in this fast-changing area.

Solution:

The passage discusses how existing regulations for biotechnology are outdated and inadequate to address the rapid advancements in the field. It raises the challenge of whether regulation can evolve to keep up with human innovation, especially when it comes to the unpredictable nature of biological entities. The summary that best reflects this concern is option (1), as it captures the debate over creating a flexible regulatory framework to address the fast-evolving nature of biotechnology.

 Quick Tip

When summarizing a passage, focus on the core idea, which in this case is the debate over whether current regulations can keep up with fast-changing technology. The correct answer will capture the underlying issue raised in the passage.

Q.4 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. Part of the appeal of forecasting is not just that it seems to work, but that you don't seem to need specialized expertise to succeed at it.
2. The tight connection between forecasting and building a model of the world helps explain why so much of the early interest in the idea came from the intelligence community.

3. This was true even though the latter had access to classified intelligence.
4. One frequently cited study found that accurate forecasters' predictions of geopolitical events, when aggregated using standard scientific methods, were more accurate than the forecasts of members of the US intelligence community who answered the same questions in a confidential prediction market.
5. The aggregated opinions of non-experts doing forecasting have proven to be a better guide to the future than the aggregated opinions of experts.

Answer: (2)

Solution:

By analyzing the coherence of the sentences, we see that all sentences, except Sentence 2, are focused on the comparison between expert and non-expert forecasting accuracy. Sentence 2 introduces the intelligence community's early interest in forecasting, which is not directly related to the comparison between experts and non-experts. Therefore, the odd sentence is 2.

 Quick Tip

When working with jumbled sentences, identify the one that doesn't fit with the main idea or topic of the other sentences. Look for coherence in how the ideas develop.

Q.5 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: Taken outside the village of Trang Bang on June 8, 1972, the picture captured the trauma and indiscriminate violence of a conflict that claimed, by some estimates, a million or more civilian lives.

Paragraph: The horrifying photograph of children fleeing a deadly napalm attack has become a defining image not only of the Vietnam War but the 20th century. __ (1) __. Dark smoke billowing behind them, the young subjects' faces are painted with a mixture of terror, pain, and confusion. _ (2) _. Soldiers from the South Vietnamese army's 25th Division follow helplessly behind. _ (3) _. The picture was officially titled "The Terror of War," but the photo is better known by the nickname given to naked 9-year-old at its centre "Napalm Girl". _ (4) _.

1. Option 1
1. Option 2

1. Option 3
1. Option 4

Answer: (3) Option 3

Solution:

The missing sentence should fit the context of introducing the photograph and its significance, explaining its impact and context in relation to the Vietnam War. The most suitable position for the missing sentence is in Option 3, as it connects directly to the overall description of the image and its historical context. Option 3 is the best place to highlight the picture's significance and trauma associated with the war.

 Quick Tip

In these types of questions, look for where the sentence will enhance the flow of the paragraph, providing necessary background or context for the main subject introduced in the paragraph.

Q.6 The passage given below is followed by four alternate summaries. Choose the option that best captures the essence of the passage.

Lyric poetry is a genre of private meditation rather than public commitment. The impulse in Marxism toward changing a society deemed unacceptable in its basic design would seem to place demands on lyric poetry that such poetry, with its tendency toward the personal, the small scale, and the idiosyncratic, could never answer. There is within Marxism, however, also a strand of thought that would locate in lyric poetry alternative modes of perception and description that call forth a vision of worlds at odds with a repressive reality or that draw attention to the workings of ideology within the hegemonic culture. The poetic imagination may indeed deflect larger social concerns, but it may also be implicitly critical and utopian.

1. Marxism has internal contradictions due to which one strand of Marxism sees no merit in lyric poetry while another appreciates the alternative modes of perception in poetry.
2. The focus of lyric poetry as personal may not seem compatible with Marxism. However, it is possible to envisage lyric poetry as a symbol of resistance against an oppressive culture.
3. Marxism makes unreasonable demands on lyric poetry. However, lyric poetry has its own merits that are largely ignored by Marxism due to its personal nature.
4. The focus of lyric poetry is largely personal while that of Marxism is bringing change in society. Unless the difference is resolved, poetry will remain largely utopian.

Answer: (2) The focus of lyric poetry as personal may not seem compatible with Marxism. However, it is possible to envisage lyric poetry as a symbol of resistance against an oppressive culture.

Solution:

The passage discusses the tension between lyric poetry's personal and introspective nature and Marxism's societal focus. It suggests that while lyric poetry may not appear to align with Marxism, it can serve as a form of resistance to oppressive social structures, offering alternative modes of perception. Option (2) best encapsulates this idea by acknowledging the tension while suggesting a potential role for lyric poetry in opposing an oppressive culture.

 Quick Tip

When analyzing summaries, focus on the central theme of the passage and identify which option reflects the core idea of the text, while staying true to the author's argument or perspective.

Comprehension:

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

Fears of artificial intelligence (AI) have haunted humanity since the very beginning of the computer age. Hitherto these fears focused on machines using physical means to kill, enslave or replace people. But over the past couple of years new AI tools have emerged that threaten the survival of human civilisation from an unexpected direction. AI has gained some remarkable abilities to manipulate and generate language, whether with words, sounds or images. AI has thereby hacked the operating system of our civilisation.

Language is the stuff almost all human culture is made of. Human rights, for example, aren't inscribed in our DNA. Rather, they are cultural artefacts we created by telling stories and writing laws. Gods aren't physical realities. Rather, they are cultural artefacts we created by inventing myths and writing scriptures....What would happen once a non-human intelligence becomes better than the average human at telling stories, composing melodies, drawing images, and writing laws and scriptures? When people think about Chatgpt and other new AI tools, they are often drawn to examples like school children using AI to write their essays. What will happen to the school system when kids do that? But this kind of question misses the big picture. Forget about school essays. Think of the next American presidential race in 2024, and try to imagine the impact of AI tools that can be made to mass-produce political content, fake-news stories and scriptures for new cults...

Through its mastery of language, AI could even form intimate relationships with people, and use the power of intimacy to change our opinions and worldviews. Although there is no indication that AI has any consciousness or feelings of its own, to foster fake intimacy with humans it is enough if the AI can make them feel emotionally attached to it....

What will happen to the course of history when AI takes over culture, and begins producing stories, melodies, laws and religions? Previous tools like the printing press and radio helped spread the cultural ideas of humans, but they never created new cultural ideas of their own. AI is fundamentally different. AI can create completely new ideas, completely new culture....

Of course, the new power of AI could be used for good purposes as well. I won't dwell on this, because the people who develop AI talk about it enough....

We can still regulate the new AI tools, but we must act quickly. Whereas nukes cannot invent more powerful nukes, AI can make exponentially more powerful AI.... Unregulated AI deployments would create social chaos, which would benefit autocrats and ruin democracies. Democracy is a conversation, and conversations rely on language. When AI hacks language, it could destroy our ability to have meaningful conversations, thereby destroying democracy....And the first regulation I would suggest is to make it mandatory for AI to disclose that it is an AI. If I am having a conversation with someone, and I cannot tell whether it is a human or an AI—that's the end of democracy. This text has been generated by a human. Or has it?

Q.7 We can infer that the author is most likely to agree with which of the following statements?

1. One of the biggest casualties from the spread of unregulated AI is likely to be the democratic process.
2. Apart from its drawbacks, AI tools have been beneficial in boosting technological and industrial advance worldwide.
3. The commonly expressed fear that future AI developments will fatally harm humans is unfounded.
4. People's fears of the dangers of students using ChatGPT and other new AI tools are unfounded.

Answer: (1) One of the biggest casualties from the spread of unregulated AI is likely to be the democratic process.

Solution:

The passage emphasizes the threat AI poses to democracy, particularly how AI's mastery of language could destroy meaningful conversations and undermine democratic processes.

The author is concerned about unregulated AI and its potential to benefit autocrats and ruin democracies. Therefore, option (1) best reflects the author's viewpoint, as it directly aligns with the argument made in the passage about the dangers of unregulated AI to democracy.

 Quick Tip

When inferring an author's opinion, focus on the key themes and concerns raised in the passage. In this case, the author is primarily concerned about the threat AI poses to democratic processes and the need for regulation.

Q.8 The tone of the passage could best be described as

- (1) Alarmist, because the passage discusses scenarios of the influence of new AI tools on language and human emotions.
- (2) Cautionary, because the author lays out some adverse effects of the proliferation of unregulated AI tools.
- (3) Prescient, as the author analyses the future impact of the use of new AI tools on crucial areas of our society and culture.
- (4) Quizzical, as the passage poses several questions, concluding with the question of whether or not the passage content has been generated by AI.

Answer: (2) Cautionary, because the author lays out some adverse effects of the proliferation of unregulated AI tools.

Solution:

The passage discusses the potential negative consequences of unregulated AI tools, especially on language, democracy, and culture. The tone is concerned and warns against the uncontrolled proliferation of AI. Therefore, option (2) is the most accurate description of the tone of the passage.

 Quick Tip

To identify the tone of a passage, look for words and phrases that reflect the author's attitude toward the subject. In this case, the tone is cautionary because the author is warning about potential risks associated with AI.

Q.9 The author terms language “the operating system of our civilization” for all the

following reasons EXCEPT that it

- (1) Has laid the foundation for the creation of cultural artefacts through writing and telling of stories.
- (2) Is the basis of AI tools like ChatGPT which can be used to generate academic content and opinion.
- (3) Can influence political views and opinions as it engenders close emotional ties among people.
- (4) Is fundamental to the articulation and spread of human values and culture in our society.

Answer: (2) Is the basis of AI tools like ChatGPT which can be used to generate academic content and opinion.

Solution:

The author refers to language as the "operating system of our civilization" to highlight its fundamental role in shaping culture, human values, and communication. The passage does not discuss AI tools like ChatGPT as a reason for this term. Option (2) is the exception, as it shifts focus from the traditional role of language in human civilization to its use in AI tools, which is not the point the author is making.

 Quick Tip

When answering "EXCEPT" questions, focus on the key points discussed in the passage and identify the option that doesn't align with the author's argument.

Q.10 The author identifies all of the following as dire outcomes of the capture of language by AI EXCEPT that it could

- (1) Eventually subvert democratic processes through the mass creation and spread of fake political content and news.
- (2) Apply its mastery of language to create strong emotional ties which could exacerbate the polarization of political views.
- (3) Spawn a completely new culture through its ability to create new ideas and opinions.
- (4) Out-strip human creativity and endeavours in the spheres such as art and music and, in the formulation of laws.

Answer: (2) Apply its mastery of language to create strong emotional ties which could

exacerbate the polarization of political views.

Solution:

In the passage, the author discusses how AI could subvert democratic processes, create new cultures, and outstrip human creativity. However, the author does not specifically mention the creation of emotional ties to exacerbate political polarization as a dire outcome of AI's capture of language. Therefore, option (2) is the exception, and the correct answer.

💡 Quick Tip

For "EXCEPT" questions, focus on what the author has explicitly mentioned as the main consequences or concerns and eliminate the option that is not part of the argument.

Comprehension:

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

There is a group in the space community who view the solar system not as an opportunity to expand human potential but as a nature preserve, forever the provenance of an elite group of scientists and their sanitary robotic probes. These planetary protection advocates [call] for avoiding "harmful contamination" of celestial bodies. Under this regime, NASA incurs great expense sterilizing robotic probes in order to prevent the contamination of entirely theoretical biospheres. . . .

Transporting bacteria would matter if Mars were the vital world once imagined by astronomers who mistook optical illusions for canals. Nobody wants to expose Martians to measles, but sadly, robotic exploration reveals a bleak, rusted landscape, lacking oxygen and flooded with radiation ready to sterilize any Earthly microbes. Simple life might exist underground, or down at the bottom of a deep canyon, but it has been very hard to find with robots. . . . The upsides from human exploration and development of Mars clearly outweigh the welfare of purely speculative Martian fungi. . . .

The other likely targets of human exploration, development, and settlement, our moon and the asteroids, exist in a desiccated, radiation-soaked realm of hard vacuum and extreme temperature variations that would kill nearly anything. It's also important to note that many international competitors will ignore the demands of these protection extremists in any case. For example, China recently sent a terrarium to the moon and germinated a plant seed—with, unsurprisingly, no protest from its own scientific community. In contrast, when it was recently revealed that a researcher had surreptitiously

smuggled super-resilient microscopic tardigrades aboard the ill-fated Israeli Beresheet lunar probe, a firestorm was unleashed within the space community. . . .

NASA's previous human exploration efforts made no serious attempt at sterility, with little notice. As the Mars expert Robert Zubrin noted in the *National Review*, U.S. lunar landings did not leave the campsites cleaner than they found it. Apollo's bacteria-infested litter included bags of feces. Forcing NASA's proposed Mars exploration to do better, scrubbing everything and hauling out all the trash, would destroy NASA's human exploration budget and encroach on the agency's other directorates, too. Getting future astronauts off Mars is enough of a challenge, without trying to tote weeks of waste along as well.

A reasonable compromise is to continue on the course laid out by the U.S. government and the National Research Council, which proposed a system of zones on Mars, some for science only, some for habitation, and some for resource exploitation. This approach minimizes contamination, maximizes scientific exploration . . . Mars presents a stark choice of diverging human futures. We can turn inward, pursuing ever more limited futures while we await whichever natural or manmade disaster will eradicate our species and life on Earth. Alternatively, we can choose to propel our biosphere further into the solar system, simultaneously protecting our home planet and providing a backup plan for the only life we know exists in the universe. Are the lives on Earth worth less than some hypothetical microbe lurking under Martian rocks?

Q.11 The contrasting reactions to the Chinese and Israeli “contaminations” of lunar space

- (1) Are evidence of China's reasonable approach towards space contamination.
- (2) Are valid as the contamination of the lunar environment from animal sources is far greater than from plants.
- (3) Indicate that national scientists may have different sensitivities to issues of biosphere protection.
- (4) Reveal global biases prevalent in attitudes towards different countries.

Answer: (3) Indicate that national scientists may have different sensitivities to issues of biosphere protection.

Solution:

The passage describes contrasting reactions to the Chinese and Israeli lunar “contaminations,” highlighting that while China's actions went unchallenged, the Israeli incident sparked a firestorm. This suggests that different national scientists have varying sensitivities when it comes to issues of biosphere protection, which is the main point of the

passage. Therefore, option (3) is the correct answer.

 Quick Tip

When analyzing contrasting reactions, look for explanations that focus on the differences in perspectives or attitudes between groups or countries. In this case, the passage points out the varied sensitivities of scientists from different nations.

Q.12 The author's overall tone in the first paragraph can be described as

- (1) Equivocal about the reasons extended by the group of scientists seeking to limit space exploration.
- (2) Indifferent to the elitism of a few scientists aiming to corner space exploration.
- (3) Approving of the amount of money NASA spends to restrict the spread of contamination in space.
- (4) Sceptical about the excessive efforts to sanitise planets where life has not yet been proven to exist.

Answer: (4) Sceptical about the excessive efforts to sanitise planets where life has not yet been proven to exist.

Solution:

In the first paragraph, the author criticizes the excessive efforts to sterilize robotic probes and prevent contamination, arguing that the efforts seem unnecessary given that Mars, for example, has not shown signs of life. The author's tone is skeptical about these excessive measures. Therefore, option (4) is the correct answer.

 Quick Tip

To identify the tone in a passage, focus on the author's attitude toward the subject matter. Words like "excessive" and "sceptical" point to an attitude of doubt or questioning, which is reflected in the first paragraph.

Q.13 The author mentions all of the following reasons to dismiss concerns about contaminating Mars EXCEPT:

- (1) Efforts to contain contamination on Mars are likely to be derailed as competitor coun-

tries may not follow similar restrictions.

(2) The use of similar probes on astronomical bodies like the moon have had little effect on the environment.

(3) The lack of evidence of living organisms on Mars makes possible contamination from earthly microbes a moot point.

(4) Earlier explorations have already contaminated pristine space environments.

Answer: (2) The use of similar probes on astronomical bodies like the moon have had little effect on the environment.

Solution:

In the passage, the author dismisses concerns about contamination on Mars by pointing out that there is no evidence of life on Mars, that previous space missions have already contaminated environments, and that other countries may not adhere to contamination protocols. However, the passage does not mention the lack of impact of similar probes on the moon's environment, making option (2) the exception.

 Quick Tip

For "EXCEPT" questions, identify the point not made by the author in the passage. Focus on the central argument, and look for an answer that is not supported by the details presented.

Q.14 The author is unlikely to disagree with any of the following EXCEPT:

(1) The exorbitant costs of continuing to keep the space environment pristine may be unsustainable.

(2) That while NASA's earlier missions were not ideal in their approach to space contamination, they likely did no grave damage.

(3) The proposal for a zonal segregation of the Martian landscape into regions for different purposes.

(4) Space contamination should be minimised until the possibility of life on the astronomical body being explored is ruled out.

Answer: (4) Space contamination should be minimised until the possibility of life on the astronomical body being explored is ruled out.

Solution:

The author is skeptical about the excessive efforts to sterilize space exploration missions, suggesting that the focus should be on the practical exploration of space rather than just minimizing contamination. The author is likely to disagree with the idea of minimizing contamination until the possibility of life is completely ruled out. This view is contrary to the author's argument that life on Mars is unlikely and that human exploration should proceed. Therefore, option (4) is the exception.

 Quick Tip

For "EXCEPT" questions, focus on the idea that contradicts the author's argument or perspective, and choose the option that reflects that contradiction.

Q.15 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: This reality is putting stress on employees who have to pay for transport, desk lunches, more childcare, clothing and that after-work socialisation – costs they haven't incurred for nearly two years.

Paragraph:

___(1)___ Prices are rising at their fastest rate in 40 years, consequently, return-to-office-related costs have shot up – think petrol and food, for instance. ___(2)___ Yet wages haven't kept up with inflation – even despite the salary growth many workers have enjoyed during a favourable pandemic labour market. ___(3)___ This is especially jarring for workers who were able to save during remote work, when these expenditures weren't a factor. ___(4)___ In April 2022, Umus, a London university lecturer, told BBC Worklife that they were spending nearly a quarter of what they made every day on return-to-work costs.

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

Answer: (1) Option 3

Solution:

The sentence about the stress on employees due to rising costs fits best after the sentence discussing how wages have not kept up with inflation. The sentence logically expands on the idea that inflation has affected employees' ability to save and has put pressure on them financially. Therefore, option (3) is the correct fit.

 Quick Tip

When selecting the right position for a missing sentence, focus on the logical flow of the ideas. The sentence should build on the ideas already presented in the paragraph.

Comprehension:

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

Moutai has been the global booze sensation of the decade. A bottle of its Flying Fairy which sold in the 1980s for the equivalent of a dollar now retails for \$400. Moutai's listed shares have soared by almost 600% in the past five years, outpacing the likes of Amazon. . . . It does this while disregarding every Western marketing mantra. It is not global, has meagre digital sales and does not appeal to millennials. It scores pitifully on environmental, social and governance measures. In the Boy Scout world of Western business it would leave a bad taste, in more ways than one.

Moutai owes its intoxicating success to three factors—not all of them easy to emulate. First, it profits from Chinese nationalism. Moutai is known as the “national liquor”. It was used to raise spirits and disinfect wounds in Mao's Long March. It was Premier Zhou Enlai's favourite tippie, shared with Richard Nixon in 1972. Its centuries-old craftsmanship—it is distilled eight times and stored for years in earthenware jars—is a source of national pride. It also claims to be hangover-proof, which would make it an invention to rival gunpowder....

Second, it chose to serve China's super-rich rather than its middle class. Markets are littered with the corpses of firms that could not compete in the cut-throat battle for Chinese middle-class wallets. And the country's premium market is massive—at 73m-strong, bigger than the population of France, notes Euan McLeish of Bernstein, an investment firm, and still less crowded with prestige brands than advanced economies. Moutai is to these well-heeled drinkers what vintage champagne is to the rest of the world....

Third, Moutai looks beyond affluent millennials and digital natives. The elderly and the middle-aged, it found, can be just as lucrative. Its biggest market now is (male) drinkers in their mid-30s. Many have no siblings, thanks to four decades of China's one-child policy—which also means their elderly parents can splash out on weddings and banquets. Moutai is often a guest of honour.

Moutai has succeeded thanks to nationalism, elitism and ageism, in other words—not in spite of this unholy trinity. But it faces risks. The government is its largest share-

holder—and a meddlesome one. It appears to want prices to remain stable. Exorbitantly priced booze is at odds with its professed socialist ideals. Yet minority investors—including many foreign funds—lament that Moutai’s wholesale price is a third of what it sells for in shops. Raising it could boost the company’s profits further. Instead, in what some see as a travesty of corporate governance, its majority owner has plans to set up its own sales channel.....

In the long run, its biggest risk may be millennials. As they grow older, health concerns, work-life balance and the desire for more wholesome pursuits than binge-drinking may curb the “Ganbei!” toasting culture [heavy drinking] on which so much of the demand for Moutai rests. For the time being, though, the party goes on.

Q.16 The phrase “would make it an invention to rival gunpowder” has been used in the passage in a sense that is

- (1) Synonymical.
- (2) Metaphorical.
- (3) Substantive.
- (4) Literal.

Answer: (2) Metaphorical.

Solution:

The phrase “an invention to rival gunpowder” is used metaphorically to emphasize the significance of Moutai’s claim to be hangover-proof, likening it to a revolutionary discovery. This is not meant literally but to suggest the potential impact of the product. Therefore, the correct answer is option (2).

💡 Quick Tip

When a phrase is used figuratively to highlight an idea or effect, it is a metaphor. Look for expressions that compare one thing to another without using “like” or “as.”

Q.17 Which one of the following is both a reason for Moutai’s success as well as a possible threat to that success?

- (1) Its appeal to the rich.

- (2) Chinese love of liquor-filled celebration.
- (3) Government involvement in its business.
- (4) Its appeal to the older age group.

Answer: (4) Its appeal to the older age group.

Solution:

Moutai's success is partly due to its appeal to the older age group, who have the purchasing power and cultural ties to Moutai. However, as millennials grow older, health concerns and changing preferences could become a threat to this consumer base. Therefore, option (4) is both a reason for success and a potential risk.

 Quick Tip

When a factor is both a strength and a risk, it often relates to changing market dynamics or evolving consumer preferences.

Q.18 In the context of the passage we can infer that to succeed in the liquor industry in China, a marketing firm must consider all of the following factors affecting the Chinese liquor market EXCEPT that

- (1) There are few competitors to meet the demands of high-end liquor consumers.
- (2) There is money to be made from marketing to the middle class.
- (3) The government may control the pricing of products.
- (4) The competition for winning over the middle class is very stiff.

Answer: (2) There is money to be made from marketing to the middle class.

Solution:

The passage suggests that Moutai specifically targets the super-rich rather than the middle class, where competition is fierce. Marketing to the middle class is not seen as a key strategy for Moutai's success, and this is why option (2) is the exception.

 Quick Tip

Look for details in the passage that specify which consumer groups a company targets. In this case, Moutai is focused on the wealthy rather than the middle class.

Q.19 In the context of the passage, it is most likely that the author refers to Moutai’s marketing strategy as “the unholy trinity” because

- (1) It exposes the firm to long-term risks.
- (2) There is nothing holy about marketing techniques for liquor.
- (3) It contradicts the Western strategy of marketing.
- (4) It profits from Chinese nationalist feelings.

Answer: (3) It contradicts the Western strategy of marketing.

Solution:

The author refers to Moutai’s marketing strategy as “the unholy trinity” because it relies on nationalism, elitism, and ageism—factors that diverge from the Western marketing strategies which typically emphasize inclusivity, sustainability, and appeal to a broad demographic. Therefore, option (3) is the most likely explanation.

 Quick Tip

When analyzing figurative language like “unholy trinity,” focus on the author’s tone and the context in which the phrase is used. Here, the strategy goes against typical Western marketing principles.

Q.20 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: Many have had to leave their homes behind, with more than 1.3 million people being displaced due to the drought.

Passage:

Somalia has been dealing with an enormous humanitarian catastrophe, driven by the

longest and most severe drought the country has experienced in at least 40 years. ⁽¹⁾ Five consecutive rainy seasons have followed.

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

Answer: (1) Option 4

Solution:

The missing sentence, “Many have had to leave their homes behind, with more than 1.3 million people being displaced due to the drought,” fits best after the description of the damage caused by the drought, in the context of how the disaster has displaced many people. It directly ties to the next sentence discussing the loss of livestock and livelihoods. Therefore, option (4) is the correct fit.

 Quick Tip

When placing a missing sentence, consider the flow of ideas. The missing sentence should logically bridge the context and contribute to the unfolding narrative of the passage.

Comprehension Passage:

Languages become endangered and die out for many reasons. Sadly, the physical annihilation of communities of native speakers of a language is all too often the cause of language extinction. In North America, European colonists brought death and destruction to many Native American communities. This was followed by US federal policies restricting the use of indigenous languages, including the removal of native children from their communities to federal boarding schools where native languages and cultural practices were prohibited. As many as 75 percent of the languages spoken in the territories that became the United States have gone extinct, with slightly better language survival rates in Central and South America . . .

Even without physical annihilation and prohibitions against language use, the language of the “dominant” cultures may drive other languages into extinction; young people see education, jobs, culture and technology associated with the dominant language and focus their attention on that language. The largest language “killers” are English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Russian, Hindi, and Chinese, all of which have privileged status as dominant languages threatening minority languages.

When we lose a language, we lose the worldview, culture and knowledge of the people who spoke it, constituting a loss to all humanity. People around the world live in direct contact with their native environment, their habitat. When the language they speak goes extinct, the rest of humanity loses their knowledge of that environment, their wisdom about the relationship between local plants and illness, their philosophical and religious beliefs as well as their native cultural expression (in music, visual art and poetry) that has enriched both the speakers of that language and others who would have encountered that culture. . . .

As educators deeply immersed in the liberal arts, we believe that educating students broadly in all facets of language and culture . . . yields immense rewards. Some individuals educated in the liberal arts tradition will pursue advanced study in linguistics and become actively engaged in language preservation, setting out for the Amazon, for example, with video recording equipment to interview the last surviving elders in a community to record and document a language spoken by no children.

Certainly, though, the vast majority of students will not pursue this kind of activity. For these students, a liberal arts education is absolutely critical from the twin perspectives of language extinction and global citizenship. When students study languages other than their own, they are sensitized to the existence of different cultural perspectives and practices. With such an education, students are more likely to be able to articulate insights into their own cultural biases, be more empathetic to individuals of other cultures, communicate successfully across linguistic and cultural differences, consider and resolve questions in a way that reflects multiple cultural perspectives, and, ultimately extend support to people, programs, practices, and policies that support the preservation of endangered languages.

There is ample evidence that such preservation can work in languages spiraling toward extinction. For example, Navajo, Cree and Inuit communities have established schools in which these languages are the language of instruction and the number of speakers of each has increased.

Q.21 It can be inferred from the passage that it is likely South America had a slightly better language survival rate than North America for all of the following reasons EXCEPT:

- (1) The colonial government was unable to mainstream the locals.
- (2) Locals were provided job opportunities in the colonial administration.
- (3) European colonists allowed children of native speakers to stay at home with their families.

(4) Not many native speakers were killed by European colonists.

Answer: (2) Locals were provided job opportunities in the colonial administration.

Solution:

The passage mentions that in South America, slightly better language survival rates occurred, which could be due to factors like less physical annihilation and less harsh colonial policies. However, there is no indication in the passage that providing job opportunities to locals in colonial administrations was a factor. Therefore, option (2) is the exception.

 Quick Tip

For "EXCEPT" questions, focus on what the passage does not support or mention as a reason for the outcome discussed.

Q.22 The author believes that a liberal arts education combined with participation in language preservation empowers students in all of the following ways EXCEPT that they will

- (1) Overcome cultural barriers to communication.
- (2) Establish schools to preserve languages spiralling towards extinction.
- (3) Learn different languages.
- (4) Develop a better understanding of their own culture.

Answer: (2) Establish schools to preserve languages spiraling towards extinction.

Solution:

While the author emphasizes the importance of language preservation, the passage notes that only a small number of students will actively engage in linguistics and language preservation activities such as setting up schools. Most students will gain broader cultural insights but not necessarily participate in the establishment of schools. Therefore, option (2) is the exception.

 Quick Tip

"EXCEPT" questions focus on identifying the one outcome that does not align with the author's argument or statement.

Q.23 In the context of the passage, which one of the following hypothetical scenarios, if true, is NOT an example of the kind of loss that occurs when a language becomes extinct?

- (1) The Andamanese language has a word to describe someone who has lost a step-sister. When the language dies, we will lose the concept of the word and the emotions it evokes.
- (2) The Lamkangs of Manipur have only 3 remaining native speakers of the language. When they die, we will lose one more group from the government list of indigenous tribes.
- (3) The Inuits of Alaska have 35 different words to describe the texture of snow. When the language becomes extinct, we will lose that understanding of nature.
- (4) The Nicobarese language describes 20 different moods of the ocean. By the time the last speaker is educated in a Central Board school, they will have forgotten their language.

Answer: (2) The Lamkangs of Manipur have only 3 remaining native speakers of the language. When they die, we will lose one more group from the government list of indigenous tribes.

Solution:

The passage focuses on how language extinction leads to a loss of cultural knowledge, environmental wisdom, and unique concepts. Option (2) refers to the loss of a group from an official list, which is more about administrative categorization than a loss of knowledge or culture. Therefore, option (2) is not a direct consequence of language extinction.

 Quick Tip

In these types of questions, focus on the direct cultural, philosophical, or environmental losses that are discussed in the passage.

Q.24 Which one of the following hypothetical scenarios, if true, would most strongly undermine the central ideas of the passage?

- (1) Schools that teach endangered languages can preserve the language only for a generation.
- (2) Most liberal arts students will pursue jobs in publishing and human resource management rather than doctorates in linguistics.
- (3) Recording a dying language that has only a few remaining speakers freezes it in time: it stops evolving further.
- (4) A liberal arts education requires that, in addition to being fluent in English, students gain fluency in two of the top five most spoken languages globally.

Answer: (4) A liberal arts education requires that, in addition to being fluent in English, students gain fluency in two of the top five most spoken languages globally.

Solution:

The passage advocates for a liberal arts education that sensitizes students to cultural and linguistic diversity, encouraging the preservation of endangered languages. Option (4) would undermine this idea because it focuses on fluency in the major global languages, which could discourage students from learning and preserving endangered languages. Therefore, option (4) would contradict the central ideas of the passage.

 Quick Tip

The answer that most directly contradicts the passage's central argument, which is about language preservation and cultural understanding, is usually the correct one.