

UPSC CSAT

Reading Comprehension Practice Set

10 Passages | 50 Questions | Answer Key with Explanations

Instructions

1. Read each passage carefully and answer the five questions that follow it. Each question has four options, of which only one is the best answer.
2. Answer strictly on the basis of the passage. Do not bring in outside knowledge or personal opinion.
3. Suggested time: about 60 minutes for the full set (roughly 6 minutes per passage).
4. The answer key with explanations is given at the end. Attempt the full set before looking at it.

Passage 1: The Limits of GDP

Gross Domestic Product was designed in the 1930s as a tool to measure the total value of goods and services produced within an economy, chiefly so that governments could mobilise resources during the Depression and, later, the war. Its architects were careful to warn that it was an index of market activity and not a measure of the nation's welfare. Over the decades, however, the figure acquired an authority far beyond its design. A rising GDP came to be read as proof of social progress, and a falling one as proof of failure. This is misleading for several reasons. GDP counts the money spent on cleaning up an oil spill as a gain, while ignoring the loss of the fishery that the spill destroyed. It assigns no value to unpaid domestic work, though without it the market economy could scarcely function. It is blind to distribution: an economy in which a few prosper enormously can post the same growth rate as one in which gains are widely shared. Critics have therefore proposed alternatives, such as indices that incorporate health, education and environmental depletion. Yet defenders of GDP argue that its very narrowness is its strength: it is precise, comparable across countries and over time, and hard to manipulate. Broader indices, they contend, rest on subjective weightings that can be tailored to political ends. The sensible course may be not to discard GDP but to stop asking it questions it was never built to answer.

Q1.1 Which one of the following best expresses the central idea of the passage?

- (A) GDP was deliberately designed to conceal inequality.
- (B) Market activity bears no relation to social progress.
- (C) GDP is a useful but limited measure that has wrongly come to be treated as a gauge of national welfare.
- (D) GDP should be replaced immediately by composite indices of welfare.

Q1.2 According to the passage, which of the following is/are limitations of GDP?

1. It assigns no value to unpaid domestic work.
 2. It treats spending on repairing damage as an addition to output.
 3. It cannot be compared across countries.
- (A) 1 only
 - (B) 1 and 2 only
 - (C) 2 and 3 only
 - (D) 1, 2 and 3

Q1.3 The author's attitude towards the defenders of GDP can best be described as:

- (A) Dismissive
- (B) Indifferent
- (C) Hostile
- (D) Balanced, acknowledging their point while keeping GDP's limits in view

Q1.4 Which one of the following is an assumption underlying the defenders' claim that broader indices 'can be tailored to political ends'?

- (A) Weightings given to different components of such indices involve subjective choices.
- (B) Governments never publish accurate data.
- (C) Health and education cannot be measured at all.
- (D) GDP is entirely free from error.

Q1.5 '...stop asking it questions it was never built to answer.' This sentence implies that:

- (A) GDP has become outdated as a statistic.
- (B) Questions about the economy should not be asked.
- (C) GDP should be abolished.
- (D) GDP should be used for what it was designed to measure, with other tools used for questions of welfare.

Passage 2: Groundwater and the Commons

In large parts of peninsular and western India, the decline of groundwater is commonly blamed on the rapid spread of tube wells. The technology is indeed a part of the story, but it is not the whole of it. For centuries, communities in semi-arid regions relied on tanks, step-wells and check dams that captured monsoon runoff and allowed it to percolate slowly into the soil. These structures were maintained collectively, and rules about who could draw how much were enforced by social norms. When the state took over the management of water in the colonial and early post-independence periods, the incentive for communities to maintain such structures weakened; a tank that is somebody else's responsibility is easily neglected. Meanwhile, subsidised electricity for farm pumps made it cheap to draw water but gave no reason to conserve it. The result was a familiar tragedy: each farmer, acting rationally, deepened his bore well, and the aquifer on which all depended fell year after year. Recent experiments in some districts suggest a way out. Where villagers have been given the responsibility to measure their own water table, prepare a village water budget and decide cropping patterns accordingly, extraction has fallen without any coercive law. The lesson is that information and ownership may achieve what pricing and prohibition cannot.

Q2.1 According to the passage, the fall in groundwater levels is best explained by:

- (A) The failure of the monsoon over several decades.
- (B) The deliberate destruction of all traditional structures by colonial rulers.
- (C) The weakening of community management together with policies that made extraction cheap.
- (D) The spread of tube wells alone.

Q2.2 Which one of the following is the most logical inference from the passage?

- (A) Subsidised electricity should be withdrawn at once.
- (B) Collective responsibility is important for the sustainable use of shared resources.
- (C) Traditional water structures are technically superior to tube wells.
- (D) Aquifers cannot be replenished once depleted.

Q2.3 The 'familiar tragedy' mentioned in the passage refers to:

- (A) A state ban on the digging of tube wells.
- (B) The ignorance of farmers about water tables.
- (C) Individually rational behaviour leading to collective depletion of a shared resource.
- (D) The failure of the monsoon in semi-arid regions.

Q2.4 Which of the following statements is NOT supported by the passage?

- (A) Social norms once regulated how much water could be drawn.
- (B) Cheap electricity reduced the incentive to conserve water.
- (C) Village-level water budgeting has reduced extraction in some districts.
- (D) Pricing and prohibition have conclusively failed in all regions.

Q2.5 Which of the following policies would the author most likely favour?

- (A) Giving local communities the data and the authority to decide how their water is used.
- (B) A complete ban on bore wells.
- (C) Complete privatisation of groundwater.
- (D) Discouraging cultivation in semi-arid regions.

Passage 3: Languages and Knowledge

Of the roughly seven thousand languages spoken in the world today, linguists estimate that nearly half may disappear by the end of this century. The usual reaction is a shrug: if people abandon a language for one that offers better jobs and wider communication, who are we to object? But this view treats a language as mere code, a replaceable vehicle for messages that could be conveyed equally well in any other. A language is also a store of accumulated knowledge. Communities that have lived for generations in a particular landscape often possess a vocabulary that classifies plants, soils, weather and animal behaviour with a precision that scientific taxonomies have yet to match. When the last fluent speakers die, much of this knowledge dies with them, because it is rarely recorded and cannot always be translated. Nor is the loss merely practical. Languages embody distinct ways of structuring experience, such as how time, kinship or obligation is expressed, and each one thus represents an experiment in human thought. Yet it would be unrealistic to blame speakers for the shift. Parents who encourage children to learn a dominant language are making a sensible bet on their future. The remedy therefore lies not in reproaching them but in making it possible for minority languages to be used in schools, courts and markets so that speaking them carries no economic penalty.

Q3.1 Which one of the following best summarises the passage?

- (A) Dominant languages should be discouraged in schools.
- (B) The loss of languages means a loss of knowledge and perspectives, and can be countered by removing the economic disadvantage of speaking minority languages.
- (C) Languages are merely codes that can be replaced without loss.
- (D) People should be compelled to use their mother tongues.

Q3.2 The author is critical of the 'shrug' mainly because it:

- (A) Overestimates the number of languages at risk.
- (B) Treats a language as replaceable code and ignores the knowledge it holds.
- (C) Assumes all languages are equally widely spoken.
- (D) Ignores the economic reasons for language shift.

Q3.3 Consider the following inferences:

1. Parents who shift to a dominant language for their children are acting irrationally.
2. Economic incentives play a role in language shift.
3. Translation cannot always preserve traditional knowledge.

Which of the above can be correctly inferred?

- (A) 1 and 2 only
- (B) 2 and 3 only
- (C) 1 and 3 only
- (D) 1, 2 and 3

Q3.4 The remedy proposed by the author is to:

- (A) Teach all subjects only in the dominant language.
- (B) Enable minority languages to be used in institutions so that no economic penalty attaches to speaking them.
- (C) Penalise speakers who abandon their languages.
- (D) Record vocabularies in dictionaries and leave the rest to chance.

Q3.5 'Each one thus represents an experiment in human thought.' This means that:

- (A) Each language offers a distinct way of organising experience.
- (B) Languages are artificial constructs.
- (C) Languages are laboratories run by scientists.
- (D) Linguists have experimented with every language.

Passage 4: Informal Settlements

Planners often regard informal settlements as an aberration, a failure of the city to keep pace with its population. The dominant response has been demolition and relocation to the periphery, where cheap tenements are built. Experience shows that this strategy frequently fails. Residents relocated to distant sites lose proximity to the jobs, markets and informal networks of credit and childcare on which their livelihood depends. Many return to the city centre, creating fresh settlements and leaving the new tenements empty. This pattern suggests that the informal settlement is not an aberration but a rational solution to a problem which the formal housing market has not solved: how can a low-income worker live close to work at a cost she can afford? An alternative approach, in-situ upgrading, accepts the settlement's location and improves it by providing water, sanitation, secure tenure and paved lanes, leaving the residents to improve their own homes incrementally. Such upgrading costs far less per household than new construction and disrupts fewer lives. Its critics argue that it legitimises encroachment on public land and may encourage further informal occupation. These concerns are not trivial, but they are arguments for clear rules about eligibility and cut-off dates, not for rejecting the approach altogether.

Q4.1 According to the author, informal settlements are best understood as:

- (A) A problem caused by migration alone.
- (B) A temporary problem that demolition can solve.
- (C) A rational response to the unaffordability of housing close to workplaces.
- (D) The outcome of lawlessness among migrants.

Q4.2 According to the passage, relocation to the periphery often fails because:

- (A) Governments lack funds to build tenements.
- (B) Residents prefer rural life.
- (C) It separates residents from their livelihoods and support networks.
- (D) The tenements are poorly constructed.

Q4.3 Which one of the following can be inferred about in-situ upgrading?

- (A) It is more cost-effective and less disruptive than relocation.
- (B) It eliminates all informal settlements.
- (C) It requires prior demolition of existing homes.
- (D) It requires residents to leave until work is complete.

Q4.4 The author's response to critics of in-situ upgrading is to:

- (A) Concede that their objections are conclusive.
- (B) Accept that the concerns are real but argue that they can be met through clear rules rather than by rejecting the approach.
- (C) Dismiss the objections as baseless.
- (D) Ignore the objections.

Q4.5 Consider the following statements:

1. New tenements on the periphery have sometimes remained vacant.
2. Informal networks of credit and childcare contribute to the livelihoods of low-income residents.
3. In-situ upgrading has completely stopped encroachment on public land.

Which of the above is/are supported by the passage?

- (A) 1 and 2 only
- (B) 2 and 3 only
- (C) 1 and 3 only
- (D) 1, 2 and 3

Passage 5: Uncertainty in Science

Uncertainty is often mistaken for ignorance, and the mistake is exploited in public debates on science. When a climate scientist says that the temperature may rise by between two and four degrees by the end of the century depending on emissions, a sceptic may seize on the range as evidence that nothing is known. But a range is a statement of knowledge, not its absence. It tells us that the lower figure is as far as the most favourable assumptions can take us, and that no credible set of assumptions yields a rise of zero. Scientific uncertainty comes in different forms. Some arises because we cannot know future human choices; that is a matter of scenarios, not of scientific doubt. Some arises from limits in our understanding of processes such as cloud formation; that can be narrowed by research. Some, finally, is irreducible, since small differences in initial conditions can grow into large differences in outcomes. A policymaker who demands certainty before acting will wait forever; one who treats every uncertainty as a licence for inaction will be misled. The wise approach is the one adopted by an engineer designing a bridge: she does not know the exact load it will carry, but she knows its range, and she builds in margins accordingly.

Q5.1 Which one of the following best states the central message of the passage?

- (A) Uncertainty is a form of knowledge that can be bounded, and prudent decisions can be made despite it.
- (B) Engineers are better judges of risk than scientists.
- (C) Policymakers should postpone action until complete certainty is available.
- (D) Climate science is too unreliable to guide policy.

Q5.2 According to the passage, which type of uncertainty can be reduced through further research?

- (A) None of the above.
- (B) Uncertainty arising from sensitivity to initial conditions.
- (C) Uncertainty about future human choices.
- (D) Uncertainty from limited understanding of processes such as cloud formation.

Q5.3 The analogy of the bridge engineer is used to show that:

- (A) Bridges often fail because of uncertainty.
- (B) Sound decisions are possible without exact knowledge if the range is known and margins are provided.
- (C) Climate science is identical to civil engineering.
- (D) Safety margins are a wasteful practice.

Q5.4 The error of the sceptic, as portrayed in the passage, is that he:

- (A) Refuses to read scientific studies.
- (B) Overestimates the likely rise in temperature.
- (C) Treats a stated range as evidence that nothing is known.
- (D) Ignores different emission scenarios.

Q5.5 Consider the following statements:

1. A range of projected outcomes implies that no outcome can be ruled out.
2. Uncertainty about future human choices is different from scientific doubt.
3. Some uncertainty may never be fully eliminated.

Which of the above is/are consistent with the passage?

- (A) 1 and 2 only
- (B) 2 and 3 only
- (C) 1 and 3 only
- (D) 1, 2 and 3

Passage 6: Decentralisation and Accountability

Decentralisation is often defended on the ground that local governments know local needs better than distant capitals. This is true but incomplete. The deeper case rests on accountability. When a village council collects taxes and spends them on a school or a drain, citizens can see directly what they have paid for and can hold their representatives to account in a way that is impossible when funds arrive from a remote source. Yet in practice, many local bodies in India remain dependent on grants from higher levels of government, with little power to raise revenue of their own. Their officials are answerable upward to the officials who release the funds, and not downward to the citizens they serve. The paradox is that giving local bodies more responsibilities without giving them the power to tax may weaken, not strengthen, accountability. Some argue that local bodies lack the capacity to administer taxes and should not be trusted with them. But capacity is built by exercising responsibility, not by being denied it. A body that never collects revenue never learns how to, and a citizenry that never pays local taxes never learns to demand local services.

Q6.1 The central argument of the passage is that:

- (A) Local governments should be abolished.
- (B) Real decentralisation requires local revenue powers, because accountability depends on the link between taxes paid and services received.
- (C) Higher governments should manage all local services.
- (D) Capacity-building must be completed before any responsibility is devolved.

Q6.2 The 'paradox' mentioned in the passage is that:

- (A) More responsibilities without the power to tax can weaken rather than strengthen accountability.
- (B) Local bodies know local needs but choose to ignore them.
- (C) Grants from higher governments exceed local taxes.
- (D) Citizens pay taxes but receive no services.

Q6.3 The author responds to the argument that local bodies lack capacity by saying that:

- (A) The argument is entirely correct.
- (B) Capacity develops through the exercise of responsibility.
- (C) Capacity is irrelevant to taxation.
- (D) Only training programmes can create capacity.

Q6.4 Which one of the following is an assumption underlying the author's argument on accountability?

- (A) Higher governments are inherently corrupt.
- (B) Citizens are more likely to scrutinise spending funded by their own taxes.
- (C) Local officials are more honest than state officials.
- (D) Villagers prefer paying taxes to receiving grants.

Q6.5 Which one of the following can be inferred from the passage?

- (A) Capacity is irrelevant to governance.
- (B) Dependence on grants makes local officials answerable to those who release funds.
- (C) Local bodies in India have no responsibilities.
- (D) All grants should be stopped immediately.

Passage 7: Automation and Work

Every wave of automation has been accompanied by predictions of mass unemployment, and so far these have proved exaggerated. The power loom did not leave the weavers idle for ever; it lowered the cost of cloth, expanded demand, and created new jobs in factories, trading and repair. Optimists conclude that the same will occur with artificial intelligence. The comparison, however, is imperfect in two respects. First, the speed of change matters. A transition that unfolds over fifty years allows a generation to retire and its children to train for different work; one that unfolds in ten does not. Second, earlier machines replaced muscle, leaving the human advantage in cognition intact. Machines that perform cognitive tasks may erode the advantage on which displaced workers would have relied. None of this proves that employment will collapse. It does suggest that the benefits of automation will not be distributed automatically. Aggregate output may grow while particular groups, regions or age cohorts bear the losses. Societies that have managed technological change well have invested heavily in education, retraining and income support during transitions. The challenge is therefore less a question of whether work will exist than of who will have access to it, and on what terms.

Q7.1 The author's position on automation can be best described as:

- (A) Automation is harmless to workers.
- (B) Past experience gives reassurance but is an imperfect guide, and the gains from automation need policy support to be widely shared.
- (C) Retraining programmes are of no use.
- (D) Mass unemployment is inevitable.

Q7.2 The two respects in which the comparison with earlier technological change is imperfect are:

- (A) Demand and supply of labour.
- (B) Cost and quality of goods.
- (C) The speed of change and the nature of the tasks being replaced.
- (D) Regions and age groups affected.

Q7.3 The example of the power loom is cited to show that:

- (A) Automation in the past lowered costs, expanded demand and created new kinds of jobs.
- (B) Weavers were never harmed by mechanisation.
- (C) Factories are better than handicrafts.
- (D) Artificial intelligence will certainly create jobs.

Q7.4 According to the last sentence, the real challenge posed by automation is:

- (A) Whether any work will remain.
- (B) Who will have access to work and on what terms.
- (C) How quickly technology can be developed.
- (D) How to slow down artificial intelligence.

Q7.5 Consider the following statements:

1. Growth in aggregate output ensures that all groups benefit.
 2. Slower transitions give societies more time to adjust.
 3. Income support has helped societies manage technological change.
- Which of the above can be inferred from the passage?

- (A) 1 and 2 only
- (B) 2 and 3 only
- (C) 1 and 3 only
- (D) 1, 2 and 3

Passage 8: Nature's Unpriced Services

When we speak of nature's contribution to the economy, we usually think of timber, fish and minerals, things that are harvested and sold. Far more valuable, and far less visible, are the services that ecosystems perform without charge. Insects pollinate a large share of the crops that humans eat; wetlands purify water and absorb floods; forests regulate local rainfall. Because these services are not bought and sold, they carry no price, and what carries no price tends to be treated as worthless. A farmer who clears a hedgerow to add a few rows of crop gains an immediate and measurable benefit; the loss of the pollinators that nested there is spread across the entire neighbourhood and appears only in later seasons as thinner yields. This mismatch between private gain and shared loss is why markets alone tend to over-exploit nature. Attempts to assign monetary values to ecosystem services have been criticised on the ground that nature's worth cannot be reduced to a figure. The criticism has force, but the alternative is not a world in which nature is valued infinitely; it is one in which nature is valued at zero by default. Even imperfect estimates may help ensure that the costs of destroying a wetland are weighed in the same ledger as the profits from draining it.

Q8.1 The passage is primarily concerned with:

- (A) Why ecosystem services are undervalued and why even imperfect valuation may help.
- (B) The commercial value of timber and minerals.
- (C) The irresponsibility of farmers.
- (D) The decline of pollinating insects.

Q8.2 According to the passage, markets tend to over-exploit nature because:

- (A) Farmers are ignorant of ecology.
- (B) Governments subsidise destruction.
- (C) Private gains are immediate and measurable while losses are spread out and delayed.
- (D) Nature is assigned infinite value.

Q8.3 The author's response to critics who oppose monetary valuation of nature is that:

- (A) Nature should be valued as infinite.
- (B) Valuation should be abandoned.
- (C) The criticism is entirely baseless.
- (D) The criticism has force, but the practical alternative is to treat nature as worth nothing by default.

Q8.4 Which of the following is NOT cited in the passage as an ecosystem service?

- (A) Absorption of floods
- (B) Purification of water
- (C) Pollination of crops
- (D) Supply of minerals through mining

Q8.5 The phrase 'valued at zero by default' implies that:

- (A) Markets deliberately assign zero value.
- (B) Nature has no real worth.
- (C) When no price is attached, decisions tend to treat the service as costless.
- (D) Economists have declared nature worthless.

Passage 9: Rules and Discretion

Rules are written for the typical case, and public servants meet atypical cases every day. A rule that requires every applicant for a pension to produce a birth certificate works well for most, but not for an elderly widow born in a village where births were never registered. In such situations the official has discretion: she may insist on the letter of the rule, bend it, or find a way to serve its purpose within it. Each course carries risk. The rigid official is safe from censure but may defeat the very purpose of the rule. The one who bends it may help the widow, but sets a precedent that others will exploit, and opens a door to favouritism. Some institutions respond by removing discretion altogether, adding rule upon rule to cover every contingency. But this merely transfers the problem, since no code can anticipate every circumstance, and a bureaucracy that cannot adapt becomes an obstacle to the citizens it exists to serve. A more promising path is to confer discretion together with the duty to record reasons. An official who must write down why an exception was made, and know that the record can be reviewed, is more likely to act in a manner she could defend in public.

Q9.1 The approach favoured by the author for handling atypical cases is:

- (A) Strict adherence to the letter of every rule.
- (B) Eliminating discretion altogether.
- (C) Allowing discretion, coupled with a duty to record reasons that can be reviewed.
- (D) Granting discretion without any oversight.

Q9.2 Which of the following is a risk associated with bending a rule, according to the passage?

- (A) It sets a precedent that others may exploit and opens the door to favouritism.
- (B) It reduces the official's salary.
- (C) It makes the rule stricter in future.
- (D) It makes citizens avoid government offices.

Q9.3 The author argues that adding more and more rules does not solve the problem because:

- (A) Rules are expensive to draft.
- (B) Officials dislike rules.
- (C) Citizens ignore rules.
- (D) No set of rules can anticipate every circumstance.

Q9.4 The rigid official is described in the passage as:

- (A) Likely to be corrupt.
- (B) Always unjust to citizens.
- (C) The most efficient kind of official.
- (D) Safe from censure but liable to defeat the purpose of the rule.

Q9.5 Consider the following statements about the requirement to record reasons:

1. It encourages officials to act in ways they can defend publicly.
2. It removes the need for rules.
3. It makes exceptions open to review.

Which of the above is/are supported by the passage?

- (A) 1 and 3 only
- (B) 1 and 2 only
- (C) 2 and 3 only
- (D) 1, 2 and 3

Passage 10: Heritage and Community

A monument that is preserved but empty of meaning is merely a stone. Heritage conservation in many countries has been framed as a matter of physical protection: cordoning off a structure, restricting access, and repairing masonry. This approach rests on the belief that the greatest threat to heritage is the public. The belief is partly justified; crowds do damage, and unregulated tourism can erode the very sites on which it feeds. But a policy that treats citizens only as threats cultivates indifference. People who are barred from a place are unlikely to defend it. Experience in several regions shows that sites remain best protected when nearby communities derive some benefit from them, whether through guiding, crafts, or festivals held at the site, and have a say in how they are managed. Such participation also preserves what experts call intangible heritage, the rituals, songs and skills associated with a place, which cannot be conserved by repair alone. Tourism, then, is neither villain nor saviour. Managed without regard for the community, it degrades the site; managed with the community, it can finance conservation and sustain living traditions. The task of policy is to make the second outcome more likely than the first.

Q10.1 The main argument of the passage is that:

- (A) Heritage is best protected when local communities have a stake and a say in its management.
- (B) Conservation should be left only to experts.
- (C) Physical protection is sufficient to conserve heritage.
- (D) Tourism should be banned at heritage sites.

Q10.2 'A monument that is preserved but empty of meaning is merely a stone.' This suggests that:

- (A) Only structural repair matters.
- (B) Stones have no value.
- (C) Conservation should also consider the living traditions and communities associated with a monument.
- (D) Monuments have no importance.

Q10.3 Which one of the following statements is supported by the passage?

- (A) Unregulated tourism can damage the sites it depends upon.
- (B) Restricting access always protects heritage.
- (C) Tourism always finances conservation.
- (D) Local communities are the main threat to monuments.

Q10.4 According to the passage, intangible heritage refers to:

- (A) Heritage that has been lost.
- (B) Revenue earned from tourism.
- (C) Physical structures such as temples and forts.
- (D) Rituals, songs and skills associated with a place, which cannot be conserved by repair alone.

Q10.5 'Tourism, then, is neither villain nor saviour.' This means that:

- (A) Tourism is irrelevant to heritage.
- (B) The impact of tourism depends on how it is managed.
- (C) Tourism is always harmful.
- (D) Tourism is always beneficial.

Answer Key and Explanations

Passage	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
1	C	B	D	A	D
2	C	B	C	D	A
3	B	B	B	B	A
4	C	C	A	B	A
5	A	D	B	C	B
6	B	A	B	B	B
7	B	C	A	B	B
8	A	C	D	D	C
9	C	A	D	D	A
10	A	C	A	D	B

Passage 1 - The Limits of GDP

Q1.1 - (C). The author does not call for scrapping GDP, nor does the passage claim it was designed to hide inequality. The point is that GDP measures market activity and is misread as welfare.

Q1.2 - (B). Statements 1 and 2 are stated directly. Statement 3 is contradicted: defenders say GDP is comparable across countries.

Q1.3 - (D). The author reports the defenders' argument fairly and then suggests a middle course.

Q1.4 - (A). The claim that an index can be tailored follows only if its weights are a matter of judgement.

Q1.5 - (D). The author's closing advice is to retain GDP but not to use it as a welfare measure.

Passage 2 - Groundwater and the Commons

Q2.1 - (C). The passage says tube wells are 'not the whole' of the story and adds weakened community responsibility and subsidised power.

Q2.2 - (B). The passage does not claim traditional structures are technically superior, call for ending subsidies at once, or say aquifers cannot recover. It consistently links sustainability to shared responsibility.

Q2.3 - (C). Each farmer deepens his own well, and the common aquifer falls.

Q2.4 - (D). The author says information and ownership 'may achieve what pricing and prohibition cannot'. This is a suggestion, not proof of conclusive failure everywhere.

Q2.5 - (A). The author's closing lesson stresses information and ownership at the village level.

Passage 3 - Languages and Knowledge

Q3.1 - (B). The passage argues for the value of languages and for a remedy that does not blame speakers.

Q3.2 - (B). The passage says the 'shrug' view treats a language as 'mere code'.

Q3.3 - (B). The author calls the parents' choice 'a sensible bet', so 1 is wrong. 2 and 3 follow from the text.

Q3.4 - (B). The remedy is use in schools, courts and markets without economic penalty.

Q3.5 - (A). The sentence follows the point that languages structure time, kinship and obligation differently.

Passage 4 - Informal Settlements

Q4.1 - (C). The author calls them 'a rational solution' to the problem of affordable housing near work.

Q4.2 - (C). The passage says relocated residents lose proximity to jobs, markets and informal networks.

Q4.3 - (A). The passage states it costs less per household and disrupts fewer lives.

Q4.4 - (B). The author calls the concerns 'not trivial' but proposes rules on eligibility and cut-off dates.

Q4.5 - (A). Statement 3 is not claimed anywhere; critics merely fear it may encourage encroachment.

Passage 5 - Uncertainty in Science

Q5.1 - (A). The author says a range is knowledge and recommends acting with margins.

Q5.2 - (D). The passage says limits in understanding of processes 'can be narrowed by research'.

Q5.3 - (B). She does not know the exact load but builds in margins for its range.

Q5.4 - (C). The passage says the sceptic 'seizes on the range as evidence that nothing is known'.

Q5.5 - (B). The passage says that no credible assumptions yield a rise of zero, so some outcomes are ruled out. Statement 1 is therefore wrong.

Passage 6 - Decentralisation and Accountability

Q6.1 - (B). The author argues accountability depends on a visible link between taxes and services.

Q6.2 - (A). This is stated in the passage's own words.

Q6.3 - (B). The passage says capacity 'is built by exercising responsibility, not by being denied it'.

Q6.4 - (B). The argument depends on citizens being more watchful when it is their own money.

Q6.5 - (B). The passage says officials are answerable upward to those who release funds.

Passage 7 - Automation and Work

Q7.1 - (B). The author rejects both alarmism and complacency.

Q7.2 - (C). The passage says 'First, the speed of change... Second, earlier machines replaced muscle'.

Q7.3 - (A). The loom example supports the optimists' case, which the author then qualifies.

Q7.4 - (B). The sentence says it is 'less a question of whether work will exist than of who will have access to it'.

Q7.5 - (B). Statement 1 is contradicted by the observation that some groups bear the losses.

Passage 8 - Nature's Unpriced Services

Q8.1 - (A). The passage moves from unpriced services to the case for imperfect valuation.

Q8.2 - (C). The hedgerow example illustrates this mismatch.

Q8.3 - (D). The author concedes the critique has force but points to the default of zero.

Q8.4 - (D). Minerals are mentioned as harvested resources, not as free ecosystem services.

Q8.5 - (C). Because ecosystem services carry no price, they tend to be ignored in decisions.

Passage 9 - Rules and Discretion

Q9.1 - (C). This is stated in the last three sentences.

Q9.2 - (A). Stated directly in the passage.

Q9.3 - (D). 'No code can anticipate every circumstance.'

Q9.4 - (D). Stated directly in the passage.

Q9.5 - (A). The passage never says rules become unnecessary; discretion operates alongside rules.

Passage 10 - Heritage and Community

Q10.1 - (A). The passage argues that exclusion breeds indifference and participation sustains protection.

Q10.2 - (C). The opening sentence prepares the ground for the argument about intangible heritage.

Q10.3 - (A). The author says unregulated tourism can erode 'the very sites on which it feeds'.

Q10.4 - (D). Stated directly in the passage.

Q10.5 - (B). The next sentences contrast managing tourism with and without the community.