# CAT Verbal Ability and Reading Comprehension

## Sample Paper – 8

**Duration: 40 Minutes** **Maximum Marks: 72**

### Instructions

- This paper contains **24** questions modelled on the Verbal Ability and Reading Comprehension (VARC) section of **CAT**: **16** Reading Comprehension questions on four passages and **8** Verbal Ability questions.
- Each correct answer carries **+3 marks**. For **MCQs** there is a penalty of $-1$ **mark** for a wrong answer; **TITA** (Type-In-The-Answer) questions carry **no negative marking**. Unattempted questions score $0$.
- For an MCQ, exactly **one** option is correct. For a TITA question, type the required sequence or number directly (no options are given).
- Read each passage once for structure, then answer from the text; do not rely on outside knowledge.
- Recommended time is **40 minutes**, matching the real CAT sectional limit.

## Section I: Reading Comprehension

**Directions (Q1–Q4):** Read the passage and answer the questions that follow. The mind is often described as a calculating machine, but most of our daily judgements are made by shortcuts rather than sums. Faced with more information than we can weigh, we lean on rules of thumb that psychologists call heuristics. These shortcuts are not defects; they are what allow a person to decide quickly, and for most ordinary purposes they serve us well. A shopper who buys the brand she recognises is usually not making a mistake. The trouble begins when the same shortcuts, applied in the wrong setting, lead us confidently astray.

Consider the availability heuristic, the habit of judging how likely something is by how easily examples come to mind. Because vivid events are easier to recall, people routinely overestimate the risk of dramatic dangers, such as plane crashes, while underestimating the quiet, common ones, such as heart disease. The newspaper, by reporting the rare and startling, quietly distorts our sense of proportion. We are not reasoning from frequency at all; we are reasoning from the ease of memory, and mistaking one for the other.

A second bias, anchoring, shows how easily a number we have just seen can shape a judgement

it has no business shaping. When people are asked to estimate a quantity after being shown an arbitrary figure, their guesses drift toward that figure, even when they know it was chosen at random. The anchor sets a starting point, and adjustment away from it is usually too small. Negotiators exploit this without naming it: the first price mentioned tends to pull the final one toward itself.

What makes these biases stubborn is that awareness alone rarely cures them. Knowing about anchoring does not stop the pull of the anchor; it merely lets us notice, afterwards, that we were pulled. This is why the most effective remedies are not exhortations to think harder but changes to the situation, such as seeking a second opinion, considering the opposite, or arranging decisions so that the misleading cue is simply absent. The lesson is not that human judgement is hopeless. It is that judgement is systematically shaped by the way a question is posed, and that a wise decider works with that fact rather than pretending to rise above it.

**Q1.** Which of the following best captures the main idea of the passage?

(A) Mental shortcuts usually serve us well but can systematically mislead, and the best remedies change the situation rather than urging harder thinking.

(B) Human judgement is hopeless because it relies on shortcuts instead of careful calculation.

(C) Newspapers are the single most important cause of poor decision-making in modern life.

(D) Anchoring is the only cognitive bias that has any effect on real decisions.

**Q2.** According to the passage, the availability heuristic leads people to overestimate the risk of plane crashes because:

(A) plane crashes are, in fact, statistically more common than heart disease.

(B) newspapers deliberately lie about how often accidents occur.

(C) vivid, easily recalled events feel more likely than quiet, common ones.

(D) people carefully reason from the true frequency of each kind of event.

**Q3.** The passage suggests that a negotiator who names the first price is:

(A) carefully avoiding the influence of anchoring on the deal.

(B) exploiting anchoring to pull the final price toward that figure.

(C) choosing that price entirely at random with no purpose.

(D) proving that anchoring has no effect on trained bargainers.

**Q4.** Which statement best reflects the author's overall view of human judgement?

(A) It is fundamentally broken and cannot be improved in any way.

(B) It can be perfected simply by teaching people about biases.

(C) It is entirely unaffected by how a question is framed.

(D) It is systematically shaped by framing, so wise deciders design around that fact rather than pretend to transcend it.

**Directions (Q5–Q8):** Read the passage and answer the questions that follow. For most of human history the planets we knew were the handful visible in our own solar system. That the stars might host worlds of their own was an ancient guess, but proof arrived only in the 1990s, when astronomers confirmed the first planets orbiting other suns. Since then the count has grown into the thousands, and the question has shifted from whether such worlds exist to what they are like and whether any could harbour life. The difficulty is that a planet is faint and small beside its star, lost in glare like a firefly beside a searchlight. Astronomers have therefore learned to detect planets they cannot see.

The most productive method watches for tiny, regular dips in a star's brightness. When a planet passes in front of its star, as seen from Earth, it blocks a minute fraction of the light; a repeating dip of the right shape betrays an orbiting body. This transit method reveals the planet's size and the length of its year, and, crucially, it can be scaled up: a single telescope can monitor many thousands of stars at once, which is how the tally grew so quickly. Its limitation is geometry, for only planets whose orbits happen to lie edge-on to us will ever appear to transit.

A second method measures the star itself. A planet's gravity tugs its star into a small orbit of its own, and this wobble shifts the star's light slightly toward the red and then the blue as it recedes and approaches. Measuring that shift yields the planet's mass. Used together, the two methods give both size and mass, and hence density, the first clue to whether a world is rocky like Earth or gaseous like Jupiter.

Knowing a planet's size and mass, however, is not the same as knowing whether it could support life. For that, astronomers want to read its atmosphere. When starlight filters through the thin ring of a planet's air during a transit, certain wavelengths are absorbed, leaving a chemical fingerprint. In principle such fingerprints could reveal gases associated with life, though separating a genuine signal from noise, and from non-living explanations, remains formidably hard. The honest position is that we have found many worlds and can increasingly weigh and measure

them, but that the detection of life itself lies at the very edge of what present instruments can do.

**Q5.** The central idea of the passage is that:

(A) astronomers have already detected clear signs of life on several exoplanets.

(B) although we cannot see exoplanets directly, indirect methods now let us find and measure them, while detecting life remains at the edge of our ability.

(C) the transit method is the only way astronomers will ever be able to find planets.

(D) worlds orbiting other stars were already confirmed to exist in ancient times.

**Q6.** According to the passage, the transit method grew so productive mainly because:

(A) it can measure a planet's mass directly and precisely.

(B) it works regardless of how a planet's orbit is oriented toward Earth.

(C) it reveals the full chemical make-up of a planet's atmosphere.

(D) a single telescope can monitor many thousands of stars at once.

**Q7.** The "wobble" method described in the passage allows astronomers to determine a planet's:

(A) mass, from the shifting of its star's light toward red and blue.

(B) atmosphere, from the wavelengths absorbed during a transit.

(C) exact surface temperature and weather.

(D) orbital orientation relative to the Earth.

**Q8.** The author's overall attitude toward detecting life on exoplanets is best described as:

(A) confident that current instruments have already succeeded.

(B) dismissive of the whole search as fundamentally impossible.

(C) measured, acknowledging real progress while stressing that detecting life remains extremely hard.

(D) indifferent to whether life exists anywhere beyond Earth.

**Directions (Q9–Q12):** Read the passage and answer the questions that follow. Few plants have altered the course of human population as quietly as the potato. Domesticated thousands of years ago in the high Andes, it was for a long time unknown beyond South America. Spanish ships carried it to Europe in the sixteenth century, where it was at first regarded with suspicion, grown as a curiosity in botanical gardens or fed to livestock. Europeans distrusted a plant that grew underground, bore no resemblance to familiar grains, and belonged to a family that included known poisons. It took the better part of two centuries for the tuber to move from oddity to staple.

What eventually won people over was arithmetic. An acre planted with potatoes yielded far more calories than the same acre sown with grain, and the crop tolerated poor soils and cold climates where wheat struggled. For a peasant family, this meant that a small plot could feed more mouths through the winter. As the potato spread across northern Europe, populations that had lived close to the edge of subsistence began to grow. Historians have argued that the tuber, more than any other single crop, underwrote the population boom that preceded and fed the industrial age.

Yet the very qualities that made the potato so valuable also created danger. Farmers came to depend on a narrow range of varieties, and vast fields planted with genetically similar plants were exquisitely vulnerable to disease. When a water mould reached Ireland in the 1840s, where a large share of the population had come to rely on the potato almost exclusively, the crop failed in successive years. The resulting famine killed roughly a million people and drove many more to emigrate, a catastrophe rooted as much in dependence on a single crop as in the mould itself.

The potato's story is therefore double-edged, and it carries a lesson that reaches beyond food. A crop that lifts a population out of scarcity can, by that very success, make it fragile, for prosperity built on a single narrow foundation is prosperity exposed. Modern agriculture, with its immense fields of uniform, high-yielding varieties, has not escaped this bargain; it has only changed its scale. The humble potato, so easy to overlook, is a reminder that the sources of abundance and the sources of vulnerability are often one and the same.

**Q9.** According to the passage, Europeans were at first suspicious of the potato because:

(A) it produced far fewer calories per acre than grain did.

(B) it could not survive in cold climates or poor soils.

(C) it grew underground, looked unlike familiar grains, and belonged to a family that included poisons.

(D) it was far too expensive for ordinary families to grow.

**Q10.** The passage indicates that the potato eventually became a staple mainly because:

(A) it yielded far more calories per acre and tolerated poor soils and cold.

(B) European governments compelled peasants by law to plant it.

(C) it was completely immune to disease and pests.

(D) it closely resembled the grains that people already knew and trusted.

**Q11.** It can be inferred that the Irish famine of the 1840s was so severe largely because:

(A) the water mould was in fact harmless to most potato varieties.

(B) Ireland had already abandoned the potato before the 1840s.

(C) the potato yielded too few calories to feed the population.

(D) much of the population depended on a narrow range of a single crop, leaving it exposed when that crop failed.

**Q12.** Which of the following best captures the central lesson the author draws from the potato's history?

(A) Modern agriculture has fully escaped the dangers of crop dependence.

(B) A crop that lifts a population out of scarcity can, through that very success, make it fragile.

(C) The potato was ultimately harmful and should never have been adopted at all.

(D) Population growth in northern Europe had nothing to do with the potato.

**Directions (Q13–Q16):** Read the passage and answer the questions that follow. Every wave of new machinery has been met by the same fear: that the machines will take the jobs and leave people idle. So far, across two centuries of mechanisation, that fear has proved largely unfounded, not because machines fail to replace human labour but because they also create demand for it elsewhere. The mechanical loom destroyed the handweaver's trade, yet the cotton industry it enabled employed far more people than the crafts it displaced. Automation has historically changed the mix of work rather than shrinking its total.

The reason lies in a distinction economists draw between substituting for workers and complementing them. A machine that does part of a job can make the remaining human part more valuable, not less. When cash machines took over the routine dispensing of money, the number of bank tellers did not collapse; freed from counting notes, tellers took on advisory and sales work, and cheaper branches meant more of them opened. The technology substituted for one task while complementing the worker who performed the others.

Whether the current wave of automation will follow this comforting pattern is, however, genuinely uncertain. What is new is the reach of the machines. Earlier automation took over physical and routine tasks, leaving judgement, language and perception to humans; the latest systems encroach on exactly those cognitive territories once thought safe. If a technology can substitute for the very abilities that previously let displaced workers move to new roles, the historical escape route may narrow. Optimists reply that entirely new kinds of work, unimaginable today, will emerge as they always have.

The likeliest outcome is neither mass idleness nor seamless adjustment, but a difficult transition whose costs fall unevenly. Even if automation creates as many jobs as it destroys, the new jobs may demand different skills, appear in different places, and reward different people than the old ones. A displaced driver is not automatically a data analyst. The central question, then, is less whether there will be enough work than whether the gains from automation are shared widely enough to cushion those it displaces. That is not a question about technology at all, but about the choices a society makes around it.

**Q13.** The passage is primarily concerned with:

(A) proving that automation has always caused mass unemployment throughout history.

(B) establishing that the mechanical loom was the most important invention in economic history.

(C) arguing that new technologies never create any genuinely new kinds of work.

(D) explaining that automation has historically reshaped rather than shrunk work, while noting that the current wave is uncertain and that its central challenge is sharing the gains.

**Q14.** The example of cash machines and bank tellers is used to show that:

(A) automation always reduces the number of workers in an industry.

(B) a machine can substitute for one task while making the worker who does the other tasks more valuable.

(C) bank tellers were completely and permanently replaced by machines.

(D) technology never changes the nature of a job in any way.

**Q15.** According to the passage, what makes the current wave of automation potentially different from earlier waves is that:

(A) it is spreading much more slowly than earlier machinery did.

(B) it affects only physical and routine tasks, as before.

(C) it encroaches on judgement, language and perception, the very abilities that once let displaced workers move into new roles.

(D) it has already been proven to create no new jobs whatsoever.

**Q16.** The author would most likely agree that the key challenge posed by automation is:

(A) whether the gains from automation are shared widely enough to cushion those it displaces.

(B) whether machines can ever fully and completely replace all human labour.

(C) whether the mechanical loom should ever have been invented at all.

(D) whether the new jobs will require exactly the same skills as the old ones.

## Section II: Verbal Ability

**Q17.** The four sentences below, labelled 1–4, form a coherent paragraph when arranged in the correct order. Type the correct sequence of numbers as your answer.

**1.** Yet the genius of the system lay not in the towering arches but in its

almost imperceptible slope.

**2.** The Romans built aqueducts to carry water across great distances into their crowded cities.

**3.** Gravity alone moved the water, and a channel that fell too steeply or too little would fail.

**4.** A drop of a few centimetres for every hundred metres was enough to keep it flowing for miles.

**(TITA — type in the answer as a sequence, e.g. 2341; no negative marking)**

**Q18.** Read the paragraph and choose the option that best captures its essence.

*"When a hive grows too crowded, a colony of honeybees does something remarkable: it splits, and half the bees leave with the old queen to found a new home. Scout bees fan out to inspect possible sites and return to advocate for them by dancing. Rival scouts compete, others are recruited, and only when enough bees back a single site does the swarm finally move. No individual bee decides; the choice emerges from the contest of many."*

(A) Honeybees swarm only because the queen commands them to find a new home.

(B) A single scout bee inspects every possible site and selects the best one alone.

(C) Overcrowding is the only danger that a honeybee colony ever has to face.

(D) A swarm chooses its new home not by any single bee's decision but through a competition among scouts that gradually converges on one site.

**Q19.** Five sentences are given below. Four of them can be combined into a single coherent paragraph; one does not fit. Type the number of the sentence that does NOT belong.

**1.** Before the stirrup, a rider gripped his horse with his knees and could easily be thrown in combat.

**2.** The simple loop of metal or leather gave the mounted fighter a firm, stable platform.

**3.** With it, a warrior could brace himself and strike with the full weight of horse and man behind his lance.

**4.** Modern riding boots are designed with a raised heel so the foot cannot slip through.

**5.** Historians have linked the spread of this small device to the rise of heavily armoured cavalry.

**(TITA — type in the sentence number; no negative marking)**

**Q20.** The four sentences below, labelled 1–4, form a coherent paragraph when arranged in the correct order. Type the correct sequence of numbers as your answer.

**1.** A vessel was pierced with a small hole, and the falling level marked the passing hours.

**2.** Before mechanical clocks, one of the oldest ways to measure time was to watch water flow.

**3.** Ingenious makers corrected this by shaping the vessel so that the level fell at a steady rate.

**4.** Its great weakness was that water flows faster when the vessel is full than when it is nearly empty.

**(TITA — type in the answer as a sequence, e.g. 2341; no negative marking)**

**Q21.** Read the paragraph and choose the option that best captures its essence.

*"For centuries, a deep and lasting blue was among the hardest colours to produce, and the plants that yielded it were correspondingly precious. Indigo was grown, traded and fought over across three continents, and whole regions organised their agriculture around it. Then, in the late nineteenth century, chemists learned to synthesise the very same molecule in the laboratory. The synthetic dye was cheaper and more uniform, and within a few decades the vast plantations that had supplied the natural product all but vanished."*

(A) A natural blue dye that was once precious and widely traded collapsed as an industry once chemists learned to make the same colour synthetically and more cheaply.

(B) Blue has always been the easiest of all colours for dyers to produce.

(C) Synthetic indigo turned out to be more expensive than the natural product it replaced.

(D) Indigo plantations still dominate agriculture across three continents to this day.

**Q22.** Five sentences are given below. Four of them can be combined into a single coherent paragraph; one does not fit. Type the number of the sentence that does NOT belong.

**1.** In the nineteenth century, whale oil lit the lamps of much of the Western world.

**2.** Fleets sailed for years at a time in pursuit of the great animals across distant oceans.

**3.** The largest whales are among the biggest animals ever to have lived on the planet.

**4.** The discovery of petroleum offered a cheaper fuel and sent the whaling industry into decline.

**5.** For a time, the hunt supported thriving ports and a large fleet of specialised ships.

**(TITA — type in the sentence number; no negative marking)**

**Q23.** Read the paragraph and choose the option that best captures its essence.

*"The power loom did not merely speed up weaving; it moved the work out of the home and into the factory. A craft once carried on beside the hearth, at the weaver's own pace, became a job performed to the rhythm of a machine and the clock. What changed was not only how much cloth could be made, but where, by whom and under whose discipline it was made."*

(A) The power loom mattered only because it produced a larger quantity of cloth.

(B) Weaving by hand beside the hearth was always slower than anyone wished.

(C) The power loom transformed not just how much cloth was made but where, by whom and under whose discipline the work was done.

(D) Factory weaving was in every respect worse for workers than weaving at home had been.

**Q24.** Choose the option that most logically and coherently completes the paragraph.

*"The light scratch-plough of the Mediterranean worked well in dry, thin soils, merely breaking the surface to receive the seed. But the heavy, wet clays of northern Europe defeated it entirely.* _____*"*

(A) As a result, Mediterranean farmers gave up using the plough altogether.

(B) Only a heavier plough that could cut and turn the dense earth allowed those fertile northern lands to be farmed at last.

(C) The climate of the Mediterranean, meanwhile, grew steadily warmer over the following centuries.

(D) Scratch-ploughs were nonetheless painted in bright colours and paraded at harvest festivals.

## Detailed Solutions

**Q1.**

**Solution**

**Concept — Main idea:** The main idea is the single claim the whole passage builds, not one example within it.

**Step 1 — Track the arc:** The passage says heuristics are useful shortcuts that usually serve us well, then shows two ways they mislead (availability, anchoring), and closes that awareness alone does not cure them, so the best fixes change the situation.

**Step 2 — Match to an option:** Option A names both halves, that shortcuts serve us well yet mislead, and that the best remedies change the situation rather than urge harder thinking.

**Why other options are wrong:**

- B: The passage explicitly says "The lesson is not that human judgement is hopeless," so B reverses it.
- C: The newspaper is one illustration of the availability heuristic, not the passage's central claim.
- D: Anchoring is one of two biases discussed, not the only bias that matters.

**Final Answer:** Shortcuts help but mislead; fix the situation $\Rightarrow$ $\boxed{\text{A}}$

**Answer: (A)** Go Back to Q 1

**Q2.**

**Solution**

**Concept — Specific detail:** The answer must be the reason the passage states, not a plausible outside one.

**Step 1 — Locate the cause:** Paragraph 2 says "Because vivid events are easier to recall, people routinely overestimate the risk of dramatic dangers," and that "we are reasoning from the ease of memory."

**Step 2 — Match:** Option C restates that vivid, easily recalled events feel more likely than quiet, common ones.

**Why other options are wrong:**

- A: The passage treats heart disease as the more common risk, so A is factually

reversed by the text.

- B: The newspaper "quietly distorts" by reporting the rare and startling; deliberate lying is never claimed.
- D: The passage says we are "not reasoning from frequency at all," so D contradicts it.

**Final Answer:** Vivid events feel more likely $\Rightarrow$ C

**Answer: (C)** Go Back to Q 2

## Q3.

### Solution

**Concept — Inference from a stated mechanism:** A valid inference restates how the passage says anchoring works.

**Step 1 — Find the sentence:** "Negotiators exploit this without naming it: the first price mentioned tends to pull the final one toward itself."

**Step 2 — Match:** Option B says the negotiator exploits anchoring to pull the final price toward that figure.

**Why other options are wrong:**

- A: The negotiator uses anchoring, not avoids it.
- C: The randomly chosen figure in the passage refers to the experiment, not to the negotiator's deliberate first price.
- D: The passage shows anchoring works, so B, not D, follows.

**Final Answer:** Exploiting anchoring to pull the price $\Rightarrow$ B

**Answer: (B)** Go Back to Q 3

## Q4.

### Solution

**Concept — Author's view:** Identify the stance stated in the closing lines.

**Step 1 — Read the close:** "The lesson is not that human judgement is hopeless. It is that judgement is systematically shaped by the way a question is posed, and that a wise decider works with that fact."

**Step 2 — Match:** Option D restates this exactly, framing plus designing around it.

**Why other options are wrong:**

- A: The passage explicitly denies that judgement is hopeless.
- B: The passage says "awareness alone rarely cures" bias, so learning about biases does not perfect judgement.
- C: The whole point is that framing does affect judgement, so C is the opposite.

**Final Answer:** Framing shapes judgement; design around it $\Rightarrow$ $\boxed{D}$

**Answer: (D)** Go Back to Q 4

## Q5.

### Solution

**Concept — Central idea:** The thesis is the balance the whole passage strikes, not a single detail.

**Step 1 — Track the arc:** A planet is too faint to see directly, so astronomers detect it indirectly (transit, wobble, atmosphere), yet the passage ends that detecting life "lies at the very edge of what present instruments can do."

**Step 2 — Match:** Option B captures both halves, indirect detection succeeds while finding life stays hard.

**Why other options are wrong:**

- A: No clear signs of life have been detected; the passage says the opposite.
- C: The wobble and atmosphere methods are also discussed, so transit is not the only way.
- D: Confirmation came "only in the 1990s," not in ancient times.

**Final Answer:** Indirect detection works; life stays hard $\Rightarrow$ $\boxed{B}$

**Answer: (B)** Go Back to Q 5

## Q6.

### Solution

**Concept — Specific detail:** Pick the reason the passage gives for the transit method's productivity.

**Step 1 — Find it:** "It can be scaled up: a single telescope can monitor many thousands of stars at once, which is how the tally grew so quickly."

**Step 2 — Match:** Option D restates this scaling advantage.

**Why other options are wrong:**

- A: Mass comes from the wobble method, not the transit.
- B: The transit's limitation is geometry; only edge-on orbits transit, so B is false.
- C: Reading the atmosphere is a separate, harder step, not why the transit tally grew.

**Final Answer:** One telescope watches thousands of stars $\Rightarrow$ $\boxed{D}$

**Answer: (D)** Go Back to Q 6

## Q7.

### Solution

**Concept — Specific detail:** Match the "wobble" method to what it yields.

**Step 1 — Find it:** The planet's gravity "tugs its star into a small orbit," shifting its light toward red and blue, and "measuring that shift yields the planet's mass."

**Step 2 — Match:** Option A restates mass from the shifting starlight.

**Why other options are wrong:**

- B: Reading the atmosphere is the separate transmission method, not the wobble.
- C: Surface temperature is never claimed to come from the wobble.
- D: Orbital orientation is a matter for the transit's geometry, not the wobble.

**Final Answer:** Mass, from the shifting starlight $\Rightarrow$ $\boxed{A}$

**Answer: (A)** Go Back to Q 7

## Q8.

### Solution

**Concept — Tone/attitude:** Choose the description that fits the author's stance throughout.

**Step 1 — Weigh the cues:** The author reports real progress ("we have found many worlds and can increasingly weigh and measure them") but stresses that detecting life "remains formidably hard" and lies "at the very edge" of present instruments.

**Step 2 — Match:** Option C (measured, acknowledging progress while stressing the difficulty) fits both cues.

**Why other options are wrong:**

- A: The author says life has not yet been detected, so not confident of success.
- B: The search is treated as hard, not impossible or worthless.
- D: The careful discussion rules out indifference.

**Final Answer:** Measured: real progress but hard $\Rightarrow$ C

**Answer: (C)** Go Back to Q 8

## Q9.

### Solution

**Concept — Specific detail:** Match the stated reasons for early suspicion.

**Step 1 — Find them:** "Europeans distrusted a plant that grew underground, bore no resemblance to familiar grains, and belonged to a family that included known poisons."

**Step 2 — Match:** Option C lists exactly these three reasons.

**Why other options are wrong:**

- A: The potato in fact yielded more calories per acre, which later won people over.
- B: It tolerated poor soils and cold; that was a strength, not a weakness.
- D: Cost is never given as a reason for the early distrust.

**Final Answer:** Underground, unlike grains, poisonous family $\Rightarrow$ C

**Answer: (C)** Go Back to Q 9

## Q10.

### Solution

**Concept — Specific detail:** Choose the reason the passage gives for the potato becoming a staple.

**Step 1 — Find it:** "An acre planted with potatoes yielded far more calories than the same acre sown with grain, and the crop tolerated poor soils and cold climates where wheat struggled."

**Step 2 — Match:** Option A restates the calorie yield plus tolerance of poor soils and cold.

**Why other options are wrong:**

- B: No law is mentioned; the passage says "arithmetic" won people over.
- C: The passage stresses the crop was "exquisitely vulnerable to disease," the opposite of immune.
- D: The tuber bore "no resemblance to familiar grains," so D contradicts the text.

**Final Answer:** More calories, tolerant of poor soil and cold ⇒ A

**Answer: (A)** Go Back to Q 10

## Q11.

### Solution

**Concept — Inference:** A valid inference draws out the cause the passage points to.

**Step 1 — Find the reasoning:** The famine was "a catastrophe rooted as much in dependence on a single crop as in the mould itself," after "a large share of the population had come to rely on the potato almost exclusively."

**Step 2 — Match:** Option D restates that heavy dependence on one narrow crop left the population exposed.

**Why other options are wrong:**

- A: The mould in fact destroyed the crop, so it was not harmless.
- B: Ireland relied heavily on the potato, not abandoned it.
- C: The potato's high calorie yield is praised earlier; too few calories is not the cause.

**Final Answer:** Heavy dependence on one crop ⇒ D

**Answer: (D)** Go Back to Q 11

## Q12.

**Solution**

**Concept — Central lesson:** The lesson is the general principle the author draws, stated in the final paragraph.

**Step 1 — Find it:** "A crop that lifts a population out of scarcity can, by that very success, make it fragile, for prosperity built on a single narrow foundation is prosperity exposed."

**Step 2 — Match:** Option B restates this double-edged lesson.

**Why other options are wrong:**

- A: The passage says modern agriculture "has not escaped this bargain," so A is false.
- C: The potato is credited with lifting populations out of scarcity, so "never adopted" misreads the tone.
- D: Historians credit the tuber with underwriting the population boom, so D contradicts the text.

**Final Answer:** Success can make a population fragile $\Rightarrow$ $\boxed{\text{B}}$

**Answer: (B)** Go Back to Q 12

## Q13.

**Solution**

**Concept — Main concern:** The whole passage, not one paragraph, sets the topic.

**Step 1 — Track the arc:** Automation has historically reshaped work rather than shrunk it (loom, tellers), yet the current wave is uncertain, and the passage ends on whether the gains are shared widely enough.

**Step 2 — Match:** Option D captures all three moves, reshaping, uncertainty, and the sharing question.

**Why other options are wrong:**

- A: The passage says the fear of mass unemployment "has proved largely unfounded."
- B: The loom is one example, not the passage's subject.
- C: The passage says new kinds of work "will emerge as they always have," so C is denied.

**Final Answer:** Reshaping, uncertainty, sharing the gains $\Rightarrow$ $\boxed{\text{D}}$

**Answer: (D)** Go Back to Q 13

## Q14.

### Solution

**Concept — Function of an example:** An example illustrates the point stated around it.

**Step 1 — Read the context:** Cash machines took over "the routine dispensing of money," yet tellers "took on advisory and sales work": "The technology substituted for one task while complementing the worker who performed the others."

**Step 2 — Match:** Option B restates substitution for one task plus complementing the worker on the rest.

**Why other options are wrong:**

- A: The number of tellers "did not collapse," so automation did not simply reduce workers.
- C: Tellers were not completely replaced; more branches opened.
- D: The example shows the job did change, so D is false.

**Final Answer:** Substitute one task, complement the worker $\Rightarrow$ B

**Answer: (B)** Go Back to Q 14

## Q15.

### Solution

**Concept — Inference:** Identify what the passage says is genuinely new this time.

**Step 1 — Find it:** "Earlier automation took over physical and routine tasks, leaving judgement, language and perception to humans; the latest systems encroach on exactly those cognitive territories once thought safe."

**Step 2 — Match:** Option C restates the encroachment on judgement, language and perception, the abilities that once let workers move on.

**Why other options are wrong:**

- A: Speed of spread is not the stated difference.
- B: Affecting only physical and routine tasks describes earlier waves, not the new one.
- D: The passage does not claim it has been proven to create no new jobs;

optimists argue the reverse.

**Final Answer:** It reaches judgement, language and perception $\Rightarrow$ C

**Answer: (C)** Go Back to Q 15

## Q16.

### Solution

**Concept — Author's view:** Identify the question the author names as central in the close.

**Step 1 — Read the close:** "The central question, then, is less whether there will be enough work than whether the gains from automation are shared widely enough to cushion those it displaces."

**Step 2 — Match:** Option A restates the sharing-of-gains question exactly.

**Why other options are wrong:**

- B: The author says the question is "less whether there will be enough work," so B is the question he sets aside.
- C: Whether the loom should have existed is not the challenge posed.
- D: The passage notes the new jobs "may demand different skills," so identical skills is not the issue.

**Final Answer:** Whether the gains are shared widely $\Rightarrow$ A

**Answer: (A)** Go Back to Q 16

## Q17.

### Solution

**Concept — Para-jumble:** Find the general opening, then follow the elaboration to the closing detail.

**Step 1 — Opening sentence:** Sentence 2 introduces the topic (the Romans built aqueducts to carry water into cities); it needs no prior context, so it opens.

**Step 2 — The turn:** Sentence 1 begins "Yet the genius of the system lay not in the towering arches but in its almost imperceptible slope," shifting attention to the slope, so it follows 2.

**Step 3 — Elaboration:** Sentence 3 explains why the slope matters ("Gravity alone moved the water . . . a channel that fell too steeply or too little would fail"), so it

follows 1.

**Step 4 — Closing detail:** Sentence 4 gives the precise figure ("A drop of a few centimetres for every hundred metres"), completing the point, so it ends.

**Order:** $2 \to 1 \to 3 \to 4$.

**Final Answer:** $\boxed{2134}$

**Answer: (2134)** Go Back to Q 17

## Q18.

### Solution

**Concept — Para-summary:** The best summary keeps the author's core claim without adding or reversing it.

**Step 1 — Core claim:** A swarm's new home is chosen not by any one bee but by a contest among scouts that converges on a single site: "No individual bee decides; the choice emerges from the contest of many."

**Step 2 — Match:** Option D captures the collective, competition-driven decision.

**Why other options are wrong:**

- A: The passage says no individual, including the queen, decides.
- B: Many scouts inspect and compete; not one bee selecting alone.
- C: Overcrowding is the trigger, but the passage does not claim it is the only danger bees face.

**Final Answer:** A collective contest among scouts converges on one site $\Rightarrow \boxed{D}$

**Answer: (D)** Go Back to Q 18

## Q19.

### Solution

**Concept — Odd sentence out:** Four sentences share one theme; the outlier shifts topic or time frame.

**Step 1 — Find the theme:** Sentences 1, 2, 3 and 5 describe the stirrup's effect on mounted warfare (instability before it, the stable platform, bracing to strike, the rise of armoured cavalry).

**Step 2 — Spot the outlier:** Sentence 4 jumps to modern riding boots and heel

design, a present-day safety detail outside the historical, military narrative.

**Step 3 — Confirm coherence without it:** 1, 2, 3, 5 form a clean paragraph on the stirrup and cavalry.

**Final Answer:** Sentence 4 does not belong $\Rightarrow \boxed{4}$

**Answer: (4)** Go Back to Q 19

## Q20.

### Solution

**Concept — Para-jumble:** Locate the general opener, then the mechanism, its flaw, and the fix.

**Step 1 — Opening:** Sentence 2 introduces the idea (before mechanical clocks, time was measured by watching water flow); it opens.

**Step 2 — Mechanism:** Sentence 1 describes the device (a vessel pierced with a hole whose falling level marked the hours), so it follows 2.

**Step 3 — The flaw:** Sentence 4 ("Its great weakness was that water flows faster when the vessel is full . . . ") points back to that vessel, so it follows 1.

**Step 4 — The fix:** Sentence 3 ("Ingenious makers corrected this . . . ") answers the weakness, so it closes.

**Order:** $2 \to 1 \to 4 \to 3$.

**Final Answer:** $\boxed{2143}$

**Answer: (2143)** Go Back to Q 20

## Q21.

### Solution

**Concept — Para-summary:** Keep the passage's full arc, from precious natural dye to collapse after synthesis.

**Step 1 — Core claim:** A once-precious, widely traded blue dye "all but vanished" once chemists synthesised the same molecule more cheaply and uniformly.

**Step 2 — Match:** Option A restates this rise-and-collapse driven by cheaper synthetic dye.

**Why other options are wrong:**

- B: The passage says a deep blue was "among the hardest colours to produce," not the easiest.
- C: The synthetic dye was "cheaper," not more expensive.
- D: The plantations "all but vanished," so they do not still dominate agriculture.

**Final Answer:** Cheaper synthetic dye collapsed the natural-indigo industry $\Rightarrow \boxed{A}$

**Answer: (A)** Go Back to Q 21

## Q22.

### Solution

**Concept — Odd sentence out:** The four related sentences form one narrative; the outlier adds an unrelated fact.

**Step 1 — Find the theme:** Sentences 1, 2, 4 and 5 trace the whaling industry (whale oil for lamps, the fleets, the ports and ships, the decline after petroleum).

**Step 2 — Spot the outlier:** Sentence 3 is a natural-history aside about whales being among the largest animals ever, unrelated to the industry and its decline.

**Step 3 — Confirm:** 1, 2, 5, 4 read as a coherent paragraph without 3.

**Final Answer:** Sentence 3 does not belong $\Rightarrow \boxed{3}$

**Answer: (3)** Go Back to Q 22

## Q23.

### Solution

**Concept — Para-summary:** Preserve the passage's point that the loom changed more than output.

**Step 1 — Core claim:** The power loom "did not merely speed up weaving; it moved the work out of the home and into the factory," changing "where, by whom and under whose discipline" cloth was made.

**Step 2 — Match:** Option C restates the shift in place, workforce and discipline, not just quantity.

**Why other options are wrong:**

- A: The passage says the loom did "not merely speed up weaving," so quantity alone misses the point.

- B: The relative slowness of hand weaving is not the paragraph's claim.
- D: The passage describes the change in discipline without judging factory work worse "in every respect."

**Final Answer:** It changed where, by whom and under whose discipline ⇒ C

**Answer: (C)** Go Back to Q 23

## Q24.

### Solution

**Concept — Sentence completion:** The ending must resolve the contrast the paragraph sets up.

**Step 1 — Track the logic:** The light scratch-plough suited thin Mediterranean soils but "defeated" by the heavy, wet clays of the north, setting up the need for a different tool.

**Step 2 — Match:** Option B supplies the resolution: only a heavier plough that could cut and turn the dense earth let those northern lands be farmed at last.

**Why other options are wrong:**

- A: The scratch-plough worked well in the south, so abandoning it there does not follow.
- C: The Mediterranean climate is an irrelevant tangent to the plough problem.
- D: Painting ploughs for festivals ignores the set-up about heavy clay soils.

**Final Answer:** A heavier plough opened the northern lands ⇒ B

**Answer: (B)** Go Back to Q 24

# Answer Key

| Q | Ans | Q | Ans | Q | Ans | Q | Ans | Q | Ans |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | A | 2 | C | 3 | B | 4 | D | 5 | B |
| 6 | D | 7 | A | 8 | C | 9 | C | 10 | A |
| 11 | D | 12 | B | 13 | D | 14 | B | 15 | C |
| 16 | A | 17 | 2134 | 18 | D | 19 | 4 | 20 | 2143 |
| 21 | A | 22 | 3 | 23 | C | 24 | B | | |