

IBSAT Reading Comprehension

Sample Paper – 9

Duration: 26 Minutes

Maximum Marks: 30

Instructions

- This paper contains **30** Multiple Choice Questions (Single Correct Answer), modelled on the Reading Comprehension section of **IBSAT** (ICFAI Business School Aptitude Test).
- Each correct answer carries **+1 mark**. There is **no negative marking** for incorrect or unattempted answers, so attempt every question.
- The paper has **five passages**, each followed by **six** questions. Only **one** option is correct; choose the most appropriate answer based only on the passage.
- IBSAT is a computer-based test with no sectional time limit; attempt this practice paper in one timed sitting of about **26 minutes**.
- Use of mobile phones, calculators, dictionaries, or electronic gadgets is strictly prohibited.

Passage I

Directions (Q1–Q6): Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions that follow. Base your answers only on what is stated or implied in the passage.

Every negotiation is, at bottom, a puzzle in which each side must decide how much to reveal and how much to conceal. Game theory, the formal study of strategic choice, gives negotiators a language for this dilemma. Its central insight is deceptively simple: the best move for one party depends on what the other party is expected to do, so no offer can be judged in isolation. A demand that seems aggressive against a patient rival may seem timid against an impatient one, and a concession that looks generous today may merely invite a larger claim tomorrow.

Because outcomes are interdependent, reputation becomes a strategic asset. A bargainer known for walking away from unfair deals can credibly refuse lowball offers, while one who always splits the difference teaches opponents to open with extreme demands. This is why theorists stress commitment: tying one's hands, whether by a public promise or



a fixed mandate, can paradoxically strengthen a position by making retreat impossible and thereby forcing the other side to adjust.

Yet the theory also warns against treating every encounter as a battle to be won. Many negotiations are repeated rather than one-off, and in repeated dealings the shadow of the future disciplines greed. A party that exploits a momentary advantage may find cooperation withdrawn in later rounds, at a cost far exceeding the initial gain. The most durable agreements, then, are those that leave both sides with reason to return. Skilled negotiators use game theory not to outwit their counterparts once but to design arrangements in which honesty and restraint remain rational over time. Understood this way, strategy is less about domination than about shaping the incentives that govern a continuing relationship.

- Q1.** Which of the following best captures the central argument of the passage?
- (A) Game theory proves that an aggressive negotiator always defeats a patient one.
 - (B) Game theory reframes negotiation as interdependent strategic choice, favouring commitment and durable agreements that preserve cooperation.
 - (C) Negotiation is essentially a battle that skilled bargainers must always win outright.
 - (D) Reputation ceases to matter the moment a single deal has been concluded.
- Q2.** According to the passage, tying one's hands through a public promise can strengthen a position because it
- (A) signals weakness that the other side can exploit.
 - (B) guarantees a larger share of every deal.
 - (C) makes retreat impossible and thereby forces the other side to adjust.
 - (D) removes any need to maintain a reputation.
- Q3.** It can be inferred from the passage that a negotiator who “always splits the difference”



- (A) invites opponents to open with more extreme demands.
- (B) will always secure the fairest possible outcome.
- (C) has successfully committed to a fixed mandate.
- (D) is entirely immune to reputational effects.
- Q4.** In the passage, the word “shadow” (in “the shadow of the future”) most nearly means
- (A) darkness
- (B) suspicion
- (C) imitation
- (D) anticipated influence
- Q5.** The author mentions repeated rather than one-off negotiations primarily to
- (A) prove that reputation has no lasting value.
- (B) suggest that cooperation is always irrational.
- (C) explain why exploiting a short-term advantage can prove costly over time.
- (D) argue that game theory applies only to single encounters.
- Q6.** Which title best fits the passage?
- (A) Strategy as Relationship: What Game Theory Teaches Negotiators
- (B) The Case Against Ever Making a Concession
- (C) Why Aggressive Bargainers Always Prevail
- (D) The Irrelevance of Reputation in Modern Deals

Passage II

Directions (Q7–Q12): Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions that follow. Base your answers only on what is stated or implied in the passage.



For centuries wetlands were regarded as wastelands: soggy, mosquito-ridden tracts that stood between people and productive land. Draining them for farms, ports, and cities seemed an unambiguous mark of progress, and vast marshes were diked, filled, or ploughed under with little thought for what was lost. Only recently has that judgment been reversed, as scientists have catalogued the quiet services these ecosystems perform. A healthy wetland filters pollutants from water, stores floodwater that would otherwise inundate towns, and shelters an abundance of fish and birds out of all proportion to its size.

Perhaps the most underappreciated function is carbon storage. The waterlogged soils of marshes and peatlands hold enormous quantities of carbon accumulated over millennia, locked away because the lack of oxygen slows decay. Drain such a wetland and that ancient store begins to oxidise, releasing greenhouse gases for decades. In this sense a wetland is not merely a habitat but a vault, and breaking it open carries a climate cost that dwarfs the modest farmland gained.

Restoration, however, is rarely as simple as letting the water return. Ecosystems that took thousands of years to assemble cannot be reconstituted overnight, and reflooding a drained field may produce a shallow pond rather than a functioning marsh. Success depends on patient attention to hydrology, sediment, and the slow recolonisation of native species. It also depends on people, for wetlands often lie near communities that rely on them, and conservation that ignores local livelihoods tends to fail. The emerging consensus is that these landscapes are worth far more intact than drained, and that protecting the wetlands still standing is cheaper and surer than repairing those already lost.

- Q7.** Which of the following best states the central idea of the passage?
- (A) Wetlands are wastelands whose drainage marks genuine human progress.
 - (B) Carbon storage is the only valuable function that wetlands perform.
 - (C) Restoring a drained wetland is quick and straightforward once water returns.
 - (D) Once dismissed as wastelands, wetlands are now recognised for vital services and are best protected intact.
- Q8.** According to the passage, why do waterlogged soils retain so much carbon?
- (A) Because native species deposit it there deliberately.
 - (B) Because the lack of oxygen slows decay, keeping the carbon locked away.



- (C) Because nearby farmland constantly adds fertiliser.
- (D) Because floodwater continually washes fresh carbon in.

Q9. It can be inferred from the passage that draining a peatland to create farmland is often a poor trade because

- (A) the resulting farmland is always completely infertile.
- (B) mosquitoes are certain to return within a few decades.
- (C) the climate cost of the carbon released can outweigh the farmland gained.
- (D) wetlands contain no carbon worth preserving in the first place.

Q10. In the passage, the word “vault” is used to suggest that a wetland

- (A) securely stores something valuable over very long periods.
- (B) is an empty and essentially lifeless space.
- (C) leaps suddenly from one state to another.
- (D) can be opened and refilled with little effort.

Q11. The author’s attitude toward the historical drainage of wetlands is best described as

- (A) admiring
- (B) critical
- (C) indifferent
- (D) nostalgic

Q12. The passage implies that successful wetland restoration

- (A) can be achieved simply by reflooding any drained field.
- (B) requires deliberately ignoring the needs of local communities.
- (C) happens almost overnight once the water is allowed back.
- (D) must account for hydrology, native species, and local livelihoods.



Passage III

Directions (Q13–Q18): Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions that follow. Base your answers only on what is stated or implied in the passage.

Few commodities have redrawn the map of the world as thoroughly as spices. In medieval Europe, pepper, cloves, nutmeg, and cinnamon were luxuries prized less for nutrition than for status, and they reached the continent only after passing through a long chain of Arab, Persian, and Venetian middlemen, each of whom took a share. By the time a sack of pepper arrived in a European market, its price bore little relation to its cost at the source, and the profits accruing to intermediaries were the stuff of legend. It was the desire to bypass these middlemen, as much as any thirst for discovery, that launched the great voyages of the fifteenth century.

When Portuguese ships finally rounded Africa and reached the Indian Ocean, they did not enter an empty stage. They intruded upon a dense and ancient network of trade, and they secured their position less by superior commerce than by force, seizing ports and imposing terms at gunpoint. The Dutch who followed were more ruthless still, monopolising the nutmeg of a few tiny islands by controlling every tree and destroying any that grew beyond their reach. What had been a diffuse trade became, for a time, a jealously guarded empire.

Yet monopoly proved hard to sustain. Seeds were smuggled, plantations sprang up elsewhere, and prices that had once seemed permanent began to fall. The spices that had financed fleets and fortresses gradually became ordinary groceries, affordable to households that once could never have dreamed of them. The empires built on them did not vanish, but their original justification dissolved. The story is a reminder that the value of a scarce good is rarely fixed, and that the effort to hoard it often sows the seeds of its eventual abundance.

- Q13.** Which statement best captures the central idea of the passage?
- (A) The pursuit and monopolisation of spices reshaped empires, yet the very scarcity that drove it eventually gave way to abundance.
 - (B) Spices were valued in medieval Europe chiefly for their nutritional benefits.
 - (C) The great European voyages were motivated purely by scientific curiosity.
 - (D) The Dutch and Portuguese monopolies over spices proved permanent and unbreakable.

- Q14.** According to the passage, why did a sack of pepper cost so much more



in Europe than at its source?

- (A) Because European farmers grew it at great expense.
- (B) Because it spoiled quickly and much of it was lost in transit.
- (C) Because a long chain of middlemen each took a share along the way.
- (D) Because European governments taxed it very heavily.

Q15. It can be inferred from the passage that the Portuguese secured their position in the Indian Ocean primarily by

- (A) offering consistently better prices than local traders.
- (B) discovering a region that was empty and untraded.
- (C) forming equal partnerships with established Arab merchants.
- (D) using military force to seize ports and dictate terms.

Q16. In the passage, the word “diffuse” most nearly means

- (A) concentrated in a single place
- (B) spread out among many participants
- (C) conducted entirely in secret
- (D) consistently unprofitable

Q17. The author’s tone in describing the Dutch nutmeg monopoly is best described as

- (A) disapproving
- (B) admiring
- (C) neutral and detached
- (D) nostalgic

Q18. Which of the following would make the best title for the passage?

- (A) The Nutritional Value of Medieval Spices
- (B) Portugal and the Science of Ocean Navigation



- (C) From Coveted Luxury to Common Grocery: Spices and Empire
- (D) Why Trade Monopolies Always Endure

Passage IV

Directions (Q19–Q24): Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions that follow. Base your answers only on what is stated or implied in the passage.

For much of the twentieth century, the adult brain was imagined as a finished structure, its wiring fixed in childhood and thereafter only capable of gradual decline. That picture has been overturned. Neuroscientists now describe the brain as plastic, meaning it continually rewires itself in response to experience, forming new connections between neurons and pruning those that fall into disuse. Learning, in this view, is not the filling of a static vessel but the physical reshaping of tissue, and it continues, in some measure, throughout life.

The mechanism is often summarised in a simple phrase: neurons that fire together wire together. When two brain cells are repeatedly activated at the same time, the connection between them strengthens, so that activating one more readily triggers the other. Practise a skill and the circuits it relies on grow more efficient; neglect it and those same circuits weaken. This is why mastery demands repetition, and why a movement that once required conscious effort can become automatic. The brain economises by making frequently travelled paths easier to travel.

Plasticity, however, is not uniformly benign. The same process that entrenches a useful habit can entrench a harmful one, and circuits shaped by anxiety or addiction can be as durable as those shaped by music or language. Nor is rewiring effortless; meaningful change usually requires attention, effort, and sleep, during which the day's fragile connections are consolidated. What the science offers is not a promise of easy transformation but a corrected sense of possibility. The adult brain is neither frozen nor infinitely malleable. It is a living organ that responds to how it is used, rewarding sustained and deliberate practice while quietly reinforcing whatever we happen to do most often.

- Q19.** Which of the following best states the central idea of the passage?
- (A) The adult brain is a finished structure whose wiring is fixed in childhood.
- (B) The brain is plastic, physically rewiring itself through experience, so that learning reshapes tissue throughout life.
- (C) Neuroplasticity guarantees that transformation is easy and effortless.
- (D) Only harmful habits can be entrenched by repeated activation of circuits.



- Q20.** According to the passage, what does the phrase “neurons that fire together wire together” describe?
- (A) The gradual and irreversible decline of the ageing brain.
 - (B) The pruning of unused connections and nothing more.
 - (C) The purely random formation of entirely new neurons.
 - (D) The strengthening of the connection between cells repeatedly activated at the same time.
- Q21.** It can be inferred that the author mentions anxiety and addiction in order to show that plasticity
- (A) affects only children and not adults.
 - (B) is always beneficial to the individual.
 - (C) can entrench harmful patterns as firmly as useful ones.
 - (D) plays no real role in shaping day-to-day habits.
- Q22.** The author’s attitude toward the claim that the brain can be easily transformed is best described as
- (A) measured and cautious
 - (B) enthusiastically optimistic
 - (C) dismissive and mocking
 - (D) anxious and alarmed
- Q23.** The author mentions sleep primarily in order to
- (A) suggest that learning requires no real effort.
 - (B) prove that plasticity ends entirely in adulthood.
 - (C) argue that established habits can never be changed.
 - (D) point out a condition under which fragile new connections are consolidated.
- Q24.** Which of the following would make the best title for the passage?



- (A) The Frozen Adult Brain
- (B) The Living Brain: How Experience Rewires Us
- (C) Why All Learning Ends in Childhood
- (D) Addiction as the Brain's Inevitable Fate

Passage V

Directions (Q25–Q30): Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions that follow. Base your answers only on what is stated or implied in the passage.

The economy most of us grew up with runs in a straight line. Raw materials are extracted, turned into products, used for a while, and then discarded, a pattern often summed up as take, make, waste. For a long time this linear model seemed the natural way of things, its costs hidden in cheap resources and distant landfills. The idea of a circular economy challenges that assumption at its root, proposing that materials should flow in loops, kept in use for as long as possible and recovered rather than thrown away. In principle the shift is straightforward. Products can be designed so that they last longer, are easier to repair, and can be dismantled into parts that feed new manufacturing. A worn component becomes not rubbish but raw material, and what one process rejects another consumes. Advocates argue that such an arrangement is not merely greener but often cheaper, since a firm that recovers its own materials is less exposed to the swings of commodity prices and the scarcity of virgin resources.

The obstacles, though, are considerable. Much of today's industry is built around the assumption of disposal, and redesigning products for longevity can clash with business models that depend on frequent replacement. Recycling itself is imperfect: many materials degrade each time they are reprocessed, and collecting and sorting waste is costly. A genuinely circular system therefore asks for more than better bins; it asks for changes in design, ownership, and even the way we measure prosperity. Whether such a transformation arrives will depend less on any single technology than on whether producers and consumers can be persuaded that keeping materials in use is not a sacrifice but a smarter way to create lasting value.

Q25. Which of the following best captures the central idea of the passage?

- (A) The circular economy proposes looping materials back into use as an alternative to the wasteful linear model, though it faces real obstacles.
- (B) The linear take-make-waste model is the only workable way to run an economy.
- (C) Recycling on its own is enough to achieve a fully circular economy.



(D) Circular design offers firms no financial advantage of any kind.

Q26. According to the passage, why might recovering its own materials benefit a firm financially?

(A) Because customers will always pay a premium for recycled goods.

(B) Because disposing of waste has become entirely free.

(C) Because virgin resources are guaranteed never to run short.

(D) Because it leaves the firm less exposed to commodity-price swings and resource scarcity.

Q27. It can be inferred from the passage that redesigning products for longevity is difficult partly because

(A) longer-lasting products are essentially impossible to manufacture.

(B) consumers categorically refuse to repair anything they own.

(C) it can conflict with business models that depend on frequent replacement.

(D) recycling has already solved the entire waste problem.

Q28. In the passage, the word “loops” most nearly refers to

(A) errors that are repeated endlessly.

(B) cycles in which materials are recovered and reused.

(C) decorative shapes added to a product.

(D) gaps that appear in a supply chain.

Q29. The author’s overall attitude toward the circular economy is best described as

(A) sympathetic but realistic about the obstacles.

(B) hostile and dismissive.

(C) entirely indifferent.

(D) uncritically enthusiastic.



- Q30.** The author states that a circular system “asks for more than better bins” primarily in order to
- (A) argue that recycling bins are completely useless.
 - (B) suggest that the transformation is purely a technological one.
 - (C) stress that the change requires deeper shifts in design, ownership, and measures of prosperity.
 - (D) claim that consumers bear no responsibility for the outcome.



Detailed Solutions

Q1.

Solution

Concept — Main idea: Choose the option that captures the whole argument, not a single supporting detail.

Passage support: The passage says the best move “depends on what the other party is expected to do,” establishing interdependence. It stresses commitment and reputation as tools. It closes that strategy is about “shaping the incentives that govern a continuing relationship.”

Why other options are wrong:

- Option A: The passage never claims aggression always wins; it says the same demand can look aggressive or timid depending on the rival.
- Option C: The text explicitly warns against treating every encounter as a battle to be won.
- Option D: The passage calls reputation a lasting strategic asset, not something that stops mattering.

Final Answer: Interdependence, commitment, durable cooperation ⇒ **B**

Answer: (B) [Go Back to Q1](#)

Q2.

Solution

Concept — Detail retrieval: Match the question to the exact clause that states the reason.

Passage support: The passage says commitment, “tying one’s hands,” can strengthen a position “by making retreat impossible and thereby forcing the other side to adjust.” This is the stated mechanism, word for word.

Why other options are wrong:

- Option A: The passage treats commitment as a source of strength, not a signal of weakness.
- Option B: No guarantee of a larger share is claimed; the point is credibility.
- Option D: Reputation is still described as valuable, not made unnecessary.

Final Answer: It makes retreat impossible and forces adjustment ⇒ **C**



Answer: (C) [Go Back to Q2](#)

Q3.

Solution

Concept — Inference: Draw the conclusion the text points to about a habitual concession-splitter.

Passage support: The passage states that a bargainer “who always splits the difference teaches opponents to open with extreme demands.” The implication is that predictable concession invites more aggressive opening offers.

Why other options are wrong:

- Option B: Splitting the difference is presented as a weakness, not a route to the fairest outcome.
- Option C: A fixed mandate is an example of commitment, the opposite of always splitting.
- Option D: The passage ties this behaviour directly to reputational effects.

Final Answer: It invites more extreme opening demands ⇒ **A**

Answer: (A) [Go Back to Q3](#)

Q4.

Solution

Concept — Vocabulary in context: Read “shadow” in its sentence rather than by its literal meaning.

Passage support: The phrase is “the shadow of the future disciplines greed.” It refers to how the prospect of later rounds influences present behaviour. So “shadow” means the anticipated influence of what is to come.

Why other options are wrong:

- Option A: “Darkness” is the literal sense, irrelevant here.
- Option B: “Suspicion” adds a hostility the sentence does not carry.
- Option C: “Imitation” does not fit the idea of future consequences.

Final Answer: Anticipated influence of the future ⇒ **D**

Answer: (D) [Go Back to Q4](#)



Q5.

Solution

Concept — Author’s purpose: Ask what function the reference to repeated dealings serves in the argument.

Passage support: Right after introducing repeated negotiations, the passage warns that a party who exploits a momentary advantage “may find cooperation withdrawn in later rounds, at a cost far exceeding the initial gain.” The example exists to show the cost of short-term exploitation.

Why other options are wrong:

- Option A: The passage upholds reputation’s value rather than denying it.
- Option B: It argues restraint is rational, not that cooperation is irrational.
- Option D: The whole point is that many negotiations are repeated, not single.

Final Answer: To show short-term exploitation is costly over time ⇒

Answer: (C) [Go Back to Q5](#)

Q6.

Solution

Concept — Best title: A good title names the theme without narrowing to one detail or distorting it.

Passage support: The passage recasts strategy as “shaping the incentives that govern a continuing relationship” and says it is “less about domination than about” relationship. A title about strategy as relationship fits the whole piece.

Why other options are wrong:

- Option B: The passage does not reject all concessions; it discusses when they help or hurt.
- Option C: It denies that aggression always prevails.
- Option D: Reputation is central to the argument, not irrelevant.

Final Answer: Strategy as Relationship ⇒

Answer: (A) [Go Back to Q6](#)



Q7.

Solution

Concept — Main idea: Find the claim the whole passage builds toward.

Passage support: The passage opens by noting wetlands were dismissed as wastelands, then catalogues their services. It ends that they are “worth far more intact than drained” and that protecting standing wetlands is cheaper than repair. The arc is from dismissal to recognition and protection.

Why other options are wrong:

- Option A: This is the outdated view the passage overturns.
- Option B: Carbon storage is one function among several, not the only one.
- Option C: The passage explicitly says restoration is not simple or quick.

Final Answer: From dismissed wasteland to valued, protected asset ⇒ **D**

Answer: (D) [Go Back to Q7](#)

Q8.

Solution

Concept — Detail retrieval: Locate the stated cause of carbon retention.

Passage support: The passage says waterlogged soils hold carbon “locked away because the lack of oxygen slows decay.” Slow decay in oxygen-poor soil is the given reason.

Why other options are wrong:

- Option A: Native species are linked to biodiversity, not carbon deposition.
- Option C: Fertiliser from farmland is never mentioned as a carbon source.
- Option D: Floodwater is discussed for flood storage, not carbon input.

Final Answer: Lack of oxygen slows decay ⇒ **B**

Answer: (B) [Go Back to Q8](#)



Q9.

Solution

Concept — Inference: Combine the carbon-vault idea with the “modest farmland gained.”

Passage support: The passage says draining releases the ancient carbon store for decades and that this “climate cost dwarfs the modest farmland gained.” So the exchange favours climate loss over farm benefit.

Why other options are wrong:

- Option A: The passage calls the farmland modest, not always infertile.
- Option B: Mosquitoes are part of the old wasteland image, not the trade-off argument.
- Option D: The passage stresses that wetlands hold enormous carbon.

Final Answer: Released-carbon cost outweighs the farmland ⇒

Answer: (C) [Go Back to Q9](#)

Q10.

Solution

Concept — Vocabulary in context: Interpret the metaphor “vault” from its surrounding sense.

Passage support: The passage calls a wetland “not merely a habitat but a vault,” one whose ancient carbon is “locked away” until “breaking it open” releases it. A vault here means a secure store of something valuable held over time.

Why other options are wrong:

- Option B: A vault stores value; it is not empty or lifeless.
- Option C: This confuses “vault” with the sense of leaping, not intended here.
- Option D: The passage stresses how hard it is to reopen and restore, not how easy.

Final Answer: A secure long-term store of value ⇒

Answer: (A) [Go Back to Q10](#)



Q11.

Solution

Concept — Tone: Judge how the author frames past drainage.

Passage support: The passage says marshes were destroyed “with little thought for what was lost” and that the old judgment has been “reversed.” The framing faults the earlier practice, marking a critical stance.

Why other options are wrong:

- Option A: There is no admiration for the drainage.
- Option C: The pointed phrasing rules out indifference.
- Option D: The author regrets, rather than fondly recalls, the loss.

Final Answer: Critical of historical drainage ⇒ **B**

Answer: (B) [Go Back to Q11](#)

Q12.

Solution

Concept — Inference: Gather the conditions the passage attaches to successful restoration.

Passage support: Restoration “depends on patient attention to hydrology, sediment, and the slow recolonisation of native species.” It “also depends on people,” since ignoring local livelihoods tends to fail. Together these are the requirements.

Why other options are wrong:

- Option A: Reflooding alone may yield only a shallow pond, the passage warns.
- Option B: It says ignoring communities causes failure, the opposite of ignoring them.
- Option C: The passage denies restoration happens overnight.

Final Answer: Needs hydrology, species, and livelihoods ⇒ **D**

Answer: (D) [Go Back to Q12](#)



Q13.

Solution

Concept — Main idea: Capture the full arc from scarcity and empire to eventual abundance.

Passage support: The passage traces how spice profits launched voyages and empires, then notes monopoly “proved hard to sustain” and spices “became ordinary groceries.” It closes that hoarding “often sows the seeds of its eventual abundance.”

Why other options are wrong:

- Option B: Spices were prized “less for nutrition than for status.”
- Option C: The voyages were driven by the wish to bypass middlemen, not pure curiosity.
- Option D: The passage says monopoly could not be sustained.

Final Answer: Empire-building scarcity gave way to abundance ⇒

Answer: (A) [Go Back to Q13](#)

Q14.

Solution

Concept — Detail retrieval: Find the stated reason for the price gap.

Passage support: The passage says spices reached Europe “only after passing through a long chain of Arab, Persian, and Venetian middlemen, each of whom took a share.” By arrival, price “bore little relation to its cost at the source.”

Why other options are wrong:

- Option A: Spices were grown at the source, not by European farmers.
- Option B: Spoilage in transit is not the reason given.
- Option D: Heavy European taxation is never mentioned.

Final Answer: A chain of middlemen each took a share ⇒

Answer: (C) [Go Back to Q14](#)



Q15.

Solution

Concept — Inference: Read how the Portuguese established themselves.

Passage support: The passage says they secured their position “less by superior commerce than by force, seizing ports and imposing terms at gunpoint.” The clear implication is that military force, not trade skill, was decisive.

Why other options are wrong:

- Option A: The passage denies it was superior commerce, which includes pricing.
- Option B: They entered “not an empty stage” but a dense trade network.
- Option C: They imposed terms by force rather than equal partnership.

Final Answer: By military force ⇒

Answer: (D) [Go Back to Q15](#)

Q16.

Solution

Concept — Vocabulary in context: Contrast “diffuse” with the “jealously guarded empire” it becomes.

Passage support: The passage says “what had been a diffuse trade became, for a time, a jealously guarded empire.” The contrast is between a trade shared among many and one monopolised, so diffuse means spread across many participants.

Why other options are wrong:

- Option A: “Concentrated” is the opposite of the intended sense.
- Option C: Secrecy is not implied by the contrast.
- Option D: The trade was highly profitable, not unprofitable.

Final Answer: Spread among many participants ⇒

Answer: (B) [Go Back to Q16](#)



Q17.

Solution

Concept — Tone: Note the loaded words used for the Dutch monopoly.

Passage support: The passage calls the Dutch “more ruthless still,” describing them “controlling every tree and destroying any that grew beyond their reach.” Such wording signals disapproval.

Why other options are wrong:

- Option B: “Ruthless” and “destroying” are not admiring terms.
- Option C: The charged vocabulary is not neutral or detached.
- Option D: There is no fond, backward-looking longing here.

Final Answer: Disapproving ⇒

Answer: (A) [Go Back to Q17](#)

Q18.

Solution

Concept — Best title: Pick a title that spans the passage’s movement from luxury to commonplace.

Passage support: The passage moves from spices as status luxuries and imperial prizes to their becoming “ordinary groceries.” A title tracing that shift alongside empire captures the whole.

Why other options are wrong:

- Option A: Nutrition is explicitly downplayed in the text.
- Option B: Navigation science is not the passage’s focus.
- Option D: The passage argues monopolies did not endure.

Final Answer: From Coveted Luxury to Common Grocery ⇒

Answer: (C) [Go Back to Q18](#)



Q19.

Solution

Concept — Main idea: Identify the central claim that reframes the adult brain.

Passage support: The passage says the old fixed-brain picture “has been overturned” and that the brain is plastic, “continually rewires itself in response to experience.” Learning is “the physical reshaping of tissue” that “continues throughout life.”

Why other options are wrong:

- Option A: This is the discredited old view.
- Option C: The passage denies transformation is easy or effortless.
- Option D: Both useful and harmful habits can be entrenched, not only harmful ones.

Final Answer: A plastic brain reshaped by experience ⇒

Answer: (B) [Go Back to Q19](#)

Q20.

Solution

Concept — Detail retrieval: Match the phrase to its explanation in the text.

Passage support: The passage explains that “when two brain cells are repeatedly activated at the same time, the connection between them strengthens.” That is precisely what “fire together wire together” names.

Why other options are wrong:

- Option A: Decline is the old view, not this mechanism.
- Option B: Pruning is a separate process; this phrase is about strengthening.
- Option C: The phrase concerns connections, not random new neurons.

Final Answer: Strengthening of co-activated connections ⇒

Answer: (D) [Go Back to Q20](#)



Q21.

Solution

Concept — Inference: Work out why the two negative examples appear.

Passage support: The passage says “the same process that entrenches a useful habit can entrench a harmful one,” with anxiety or addiction “as durable as” music or language. The examples show plasticity is not always benign.

Why other options are wrong:

- Option A: Plasticity is presented as lifelong, not child-only.
- Option B: The examples exist to show it is not always beneficial.
- Option D: They demonstrate plasticity’s strong role in habit, not its absence.

Final Answer: Harmful patterns can be entrenched too ⇒

Answer: (C) [Go Back to Q21](#)

Q22.

Solution

Concept — Tone: Gauge how the author treats claims of easy change.

Passage support: The passage offers “not a promise of easy transformation but a corrected sense of possibility.” It calls the brain “neither frozen nor infinitely malleable,” a balanced, guarded stance.

Why other options are wrong:

- Option B: The author tempers optimism rather than embracing it.
- Option C: The tone is serious, not mocking.
- Option D: There is no alarm, only careful qualification.

Final Answer: Measured and cautious ⇒

Answer: (A) [Go Back to Q22](#)



Q23.

Solution

Concept — Author’s purpose: Ask what role the mention of sleep plays.

Passage support: The passage says meaningful change requires “attention, effort, and sleep, during which the day’s fragile connections are consolidated.” Sleep is cited as the condition that consolidates new links.

Why other options are wrong:

- Option A: It is listed among the efforts change demands, not as proof effort is unneeded.
- Option B: Sleep supports ongoing plasticity, not its end.
- Option C: The point is that change is possible, not impossible.

Final Answer: Sleep consolidates fragile new connections ⇒ **D**

Answer: (D) [Go Back to Q23](#)

Q24.

Solution

Concept — Best title: Choose a title reflecting a lifelong, experience-shaped brain.

Passage support: The passage describes “a living organ that responds to how it is used,” rewired by experience throughout life. A title about the living brain and experience fits.

Why other options are wrong:

- Option A: The “frozen” brain is the view the passage rejects.
- Option C: The passage says learning continues, not that it ends in childhood.
- Option D: Addiction is one example, not the brain’s inevitable fate.

Final Answer: The Living Brain: How Experience Rewires Us ⇒ **B**

Answer: (B) [Go Back to Q24](#)



Q25.

Solution

Concept — Main idea: Capture both the proposal and its acknowledged difficulty.

Passage support: The passage says the circular economy proposes that “materials should flow in loops,” as an alternative to take-make-waste. It then devotes a paragraph to obstacles that are “considerable.” The main idea joins the proposal with its real challenges.

Why other options are wrong:

- Option B: The passage challenges the linear model rather than endorsing it as the only option.
- Option C: It states recycling is imperfect and not sufficient alone.
- Option D: Advocates argue circular design is often cheaper, so it does offer advantages.

Final Answer: Loops as an alternative, with real obstacles ⇒ **A**

Answer: (A) [Go Back to Q25](#)

Q26.

Solution

Concept — Detail retrieval: Find the stated financial benefit of material recovery.

Passage support: The passage says a firm that recovers its own materials “is less exposed to the swings of commodity prices and the scarcity of virgin resources.” That reduced exposure is the given benefit.

Why other options are wrong:

- Option A: A guaranteed premium from customers is never claimed.
- Option B: The passage says collecting and sorting waste is costly, not free.
- Option C: It cites the scarcity of virgin resources, not their endless supply.

Final Answer: Less exposure to price swings and scarcity ⇒ **D**

Answer: (D) [Go Back to Q26](#)



Q27.

Solution

Concept — Inference: Identify why longevity-focused design meets resistance.

Passage support: The passage states that “redesigning products for longevity can clash with business models that depend on frequent replacement.” That clash is the inferred difficulty.

Why other options are wrong:

- Option A: The passage says products can be designed to last, so it is not impossible.
- Option B: No claim is made that consumers refuse all repair.
- Option D: The passage says recycling is imperfect and has not solved waste.

Final Answer: It clashes with replacement-based business models ⇒ **C**

Answer: (C) [Go Back to Q27](#)

Q28.

Solution

Concept — Vocabulary in context: Read “loops” against the take-make-waste line it opposes.

Passage support: The passage says materials “should flow in loops, kept in use for as long as possible and recovered rather than thrown away.” Here loops are reuse cycles that return materials to use.

Why other options are wrong:

- Option A: There is no sense of repeated error.
- Option C: A decorative shape is unrelated to the argument.
- Option D: A supply-chain gap is the opposite of a closed reuse cycle.

Final Answer: Cycles of recovery and reuse ⇒ **B**

Answer: (B) [Go Back to Q28](#)



Q29.

Solution

Concept — Tone: Weigh the author’s balance of support and caution.

Passage support: The author presents the circular economy’s promise and its cheaper, greener case, yet insists “the obstacles are considerable.” This mix marks a sympathetic but realistic stance.

Why other options are wrong:

- Option B: The author is not hostile; the idea is treated seriously.
- Option C: Detailed engagement rules out indifference.
- Option D: The frank treatment of obstacles rules out uncritical enthusiasm.

Final Answer: Sympathetic but realistic ⇒

Answer: (A) [Go Back to Q29](#)

Q30.

Solution

Concept — Author’s purpose: Ask why the “more than better bins” phrase is used.

Passage support: The passage says a genuinely circular system “asks for more than better bins; it asks for changes in design, ownership, and even the way we measure prosperity.” The phrase stresses that deeper structural change, not just recycling, is required.

Why other options are wrong:

- Option A: It does not call bins useless, only insufficient by themselves.
- Option B: The passage says the outcome depends less on any single technology.
- Option D: It names both producers and consumers, so consumers are not exempt.

Final Answer: Deeper shifts in design, ownership, prosperity ⇒

Answer: (C) [Go Back to Q30](#)



Answer Key

Q	Ans	Q	Ans	Q	Ans	Q	Ans	Q	Ans
1	B	2	C	3	A	4	D	5	C
6	A	7	D	8	B	9	C	10	A
11	B	12	D	13	A	14	C	15	D
16	B	17	A	18	C	19	B	20	D
21	C	22	A	23	D	24	B	25	A
26	D	27	C	28	B	29	A	30	C

