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**ENGLISH LANGUAGE
&
COMPREHENSION**

Comprehensive Study Course

**CIVIL SERVICES
EXAMINATION 2025**

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English Language & Comprehension

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE & COMPREHENSION

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CHAPTER

THEORY OF READING COMPREHENSION (RC'S)

Reading Comprehension (RC)

(As nearly 30% of the questions coming in CSAT paper are based on Reading Comprehension (RC's), It is very important to prepare RC's very well to excel in CSAT paper.)

Reading comprehension is the ability to read text, process it, and understand its meaning.

Reading Comprehension (RC) questions put to test a host of related skills such as:

- (a) Reading Ability
- (b) Comprehension
- (c) Retention / Verbal Memory
- (d) Analytical Ability
- (e) Ability to read and think simultaneously
- (f) Common Sense
- (g) General Awareness

Importance of Reading Comprehension Skills

Administrative duties demand comprehending, identifying, and analysing important aspects of a situation; drawing knowledgeable conclusions; forming ideas for implementing a plan of action mentally while scanning through reports and data, and more often than not, doing all these simultaneously.

Therefore, these skills are tested and Reading Comprehension provides the best way for testing these skills. Hence adopting a policy of 'practice makes perfect' and spending time improving one's RC solving ability is definitely a worthwhile exercise.



READING

A: Understanding Content

Understanding the content of the passage on which Reading Comprehension questions are based is essential to identify the correct answer. The subject of the passage can be diverse, ranging from philosophy to astronomy, from economics to art, or from history to science. The ease of understanding the RC passage depends upon the reading habit of student. However, there are certain generic aspects which lead to a proper understanding of any type of passage – where emphasis is placed on syntax rather than the subject matter of the passage. Getting well versed with these methods is important.

Key Sentence:

Certain sentences in the passage that convey the main idea or theme are called Key Sentences. They are essential in determining the flow of ideas and lay out the context of the passage. Hence, it is imperative to identify the Key Sentences while reading the passage.

Let's try to understand this concept with the help of an example.

Read the passage given below carefully:

The Roman Empire, as it existed in those days, must not be conceived of by the reader as united under one compact and consolidated government. It was, on the contrary, a vast congeries of nations, widely dissimilar in every respect from each other, speaking various languages, and having various customs and laws. They were all, however, more or less dependent upon, and connected with, the great central power. Some of these countries were provinces, and were governed by officers appointed and sent out by

the authorities at Rome. These Governors had to collect the taxes of their provinces, and also preside over and direct, in many important respects, the administration of justice. They had, accordingly, abundant opportunities to enrich themselves while thus in office, by collecting more money than they paid over to the government back home, and by taking bribes to favour the rich man's cause in court. Thus the more wealthy and prosperous provinces were objects of great competition among aspirants for office at Rome. Leading men would get these appointments, and, after remaining long enough in their provinces to acquire a fortune, would come back to Rome, and expend it on intrigues and manoeuvres to obtain even higher offices.

Once you have read the passage, try and summarize the key points of the passage. While summarizing or looking for key sentences, it would be helpful to ask questions like:



Questions:

What is the topic of the passage?

What is the view of the author?

What is the fundamental analysis/ argument/ hypothesis?

What are the points supporting fundamental analysis?

Are there any examples of the fundamental analysis?

Is there a conclusion to the passage? If yes, what is it?

The key ideas of the above passage are:

1. The Roman Empire as it existed in those days was not united under a central consolidated government.
2. It had disparate centres of power that functioned under a central rule.
3. The leaders of these autonomies became wealthy and grew in power.
4. This resulted in competition among such Governors for even higher offices.

The author's thoughts can be understood with key sentences like:

- (a) It was, on the contrary, a vast congeries of nations, widely dissimilar in every respect from each other.
- (b) They had, accordingly, abundant opportunities to enrich themselves while thus in office.

- (c) Leading men would get these appointments, and, after remaining long enough in their provinces to acquire a fortune, would come back to Rome, and expend it on intrigues and manoeuvres to obtain even higher offices.

All these sentences point to the areas where the flow of passage changes or gets strengthened. Phrases like 'on the contrary', 'but', 'contrary to this' are the ones that bring about change in the flow whereas 'obvious to say', 'it follows from this', and 'therefore' are used for concluding or strengthening ideas.

The language, content and writing style are important in determining the ease of readability of passage. However, with enough practice, one can train one's mind to look out for the key ideas and sentences that affect the follow of thought in the passage.

B: Reading Speed

The biggest hurdle faced by students while solving RC is the slow speed of reading. Although understanding what one reads is much more important than the speed at which one reads it, speed still remains crucial because of its immediate bearings on the entire process of solving RC questions. A student who reads slowly might be tempted to leave the RC questions and might miss out on certain easy questions.

Defining Reading Speed

It is crucial for the student to understand that reading speed is not just the number of words per minute; instead, it is actually the number of words read and understood per minute.

How to increase your Reading Speed?

The simple answer is: Developing a Good Reading Habit.

A good reading habit helps in grasping the finer nuances of the English language and also helps in building good communication skills.

Reading materials recommended to develop a good diversified reading habit are:

1. **Newspapers:** Reading newspaper daily is the easiest and most useful method of reading practice. The subject matter in the paper covers a wide range of topics, much like the RC section.

Recommended Newspapers: The Hindu, The Indian Express, The Economic Times

2. **Magazines** like Yojana and Kurukshetra etc.
3. **Fictional novels** like The Fountainhead, One Hundred Years of Solitude, Midnight's Children etc and Non – Fictional novels (priority over Fictional Novels) like The Argumentative Indian, I Do What I Do, The Discovery of India, The Story of My Experiments with Truth etc.

Other than reading material suggested above, conversing in English as often as possible would also help to complement Reading Comprehension. The more one reads, the more knowledge one gains (which will also help in Prelims General Studies Paper 1 and in UPSC personal interview) and the more chances one has of discussing and analysing this knowledge.

Comprehension

Comprehension is a complex process which necessitates learning specific reading skills; grasping the main idea of the passage; sequencing links from the factual data available, inferring and drawing conclusions based on the proper understanding of the RC passage. In a nut shell, comprehension can be described as the picture that comes to mind while reading passage.

A. Use of Comprehension Skills in RC solving

The flow of idea in a RC passage can be identified with the use of Comprehension skills. Understanding the detailed meaning of every sentence is not as important as understanding the content of a sentence in relation to the passage. The aim is to understand the usage of a particular sentence in a paragraph and not really data, details, date etc. Using certain techniques, sentences are placed in a paragraph and the paragraphs in a passage. Sometimes inferential questions are asked, they are only hinted at or implied in the passage and may not be explicitly mentioned. Such inferential questions necessitate a complete and thorough comprehension of the passage in order to be able to answer such questions correctly.

Here are some techniques that can be used to make comprehension easier:

- (a) **Detect Key Ideas:** There are certain key sentences that determine the flow of content in the passage. To make comprehension simpler, these sentences need to be detected during the first read of the passage.
- (b) **Summarize the Paragraph:** While reading the passage, develop a habit of mentally summarizing each paragraph and keep linking them as you proceed. This helps in understanding the overall idea of the passage and answer the inferential questions easily. It might be useful to write a short summary on a sheet of paper while doing the exercise.
- (c) **Determine the sentence links:** Sentences within a passage may be directly or subtly linked. Versatile reading helps to get into the habit of identifying sentence links. Inability to establish links between sentences could be a major cause for ideas being missed out.
- (d) **Ask for Questions:** When in doubt, ask questions. For example: Why has the author mentioned this example? What is the purpose of the second paragraph? Is the last paragraph a conclusion of the analysis discussed throughout the passage? These questions help in gaining a deeper perspective of the passage and helps in the comprehension.

Retention

RC passages may consist of ideas that are either directly or indirectly linked to each other or they may contain illustrations riddled with facts and figures based on which conclusions are drawn. The test taker needs to remember and assimilate all information that has been read to correctly answer RC questions.

Therefore, Retention or the ability to read and understand is an essential part of solving RC questions.

A. Importance of Retention in RC Solving

Having a good memory or being able to retain what is read is a necessary skill for attempting RC questions.

Retention helps in:

1. Answering direct questions i.e. questions based on facts mentioned in the passage.
2. Analyzing the passage while reading it.
3. Assimilating information and facts to draw conclusions after reading the passage.
4. Cutting down on re-reading time while answering the questions.
5. Verifying answers to the questions after solving them.

B. Improving Retention

The best way to improve retention is by simultaneously reading and assimilating the text of the passage. Listed below are some ways by which the ability to assimilate information can be effectively increased, thus improving retention capacity.

All passages, factual as well as analytical, have a central theme – an idea which is subsequently analyzed or elaborated on. This central theme should be identified and pictured in your mind. Once you paint an image of central idea in your mind, everything that is mentioned in the passage can be easily added to this image, thus acting as an aid to the retention process.

For example, if the passage is about some civilization, you can picture a group of nomads and keep adding information to this image as and when you read about them in the passage like how they dressed, what they ate, how they communicated etc.

Analytical passages can also be dealt with in a similar fashion, by forming a picture of the main idea in your mind and adding the details to this picture as the reading of the passage proceeds.

For example, If the passage is about latest budget or economic survey, then you can picture a debate with pros and cons of the budget/survey being represented by two groups of the people in the debate. Assimilation of the information becomes easier when you have something 'concrete' to work on, like a picture of central theme.

1. Reading the questions first

This strategy has always been debatable and there is no correct answer to the question – should the questions be read first or the passage? The only way of finding out is to actually practice this strategy and then weigh the pros and cons. Reading the questions before the passage gives you a more focussed approach while reading the passage because you would know roughly what you're looking for. Direct questions can be solved in this fashion, whereas the answer to the indirect ones can be determined after doing a thorough analysis of that particular part of the passage where answer lies. Further, there would be less scope for missing any vital information as important aspects will be already known

because of having read the questions first so special attention can be given to assimilate these important points while reading the passage.

2. Mapping the flow of thoughts

Retaining a large amount of data can be done by sequentially ordering sets of data; thus mapping the flow of thoughts as they appear. This is an efficient way of retaining information as it helps to map your visual understanding and underlines the significance of all the relevant data that has been mentioned in the passage. A diagram reconstructing the flow of thought can be drawn; new ideas can be added and connected with a link and factual information can be jotted down besides the idea it represents while the passage is being read.

C. Retention Tips:

Here are some tips and strategies to improve passage retention:

1. Make a mental note of all key figures, facts and sentences while reading the passage for the first time.
2. Make mental notes of factual information like dates, names, and quotes whenever they occur in the passage.
3. Avoid re- reading the passage for each and every question. Read the questions first if it helps to cut down on this habit.
4. Number the sentences whenever sequential information like reasons, solutions, inferences etc. is being conveyed in the passage.
5. For questions that contain sentences of the passage as options, it is easier if the questions and its options are read before the passage.
6. Try categorising the questions into direct and indirect before reading the passage. When this is done, read the passage and answer the direct questions simultaneously.
7. Read a lot of non fictional material as mentioned earlier in this chapter or material that deals with topics that are of no particular interest to you. Slowly you will realize that continual reading and practice improves retention in general.

Important Tip for solving RC questions

Option Elimination Technique:

A useful idea to effectively narrow down the choices is the elimination of incorrect options. Often the situation may arise where more than one option seems to be the correct answer. In such cases, these elimination techniques will help in identifying the options that appear to be right choice but are actually incorrect; by recognizing some defect in the option, or just by virtue of it being incomplete in some way or other. These elimination techniques will help you locate the key differentiating points between the options and will especially come in handy in cases where the options are very close or long or both.

The following is the list of inconsistencies that a test taker can be on the lookout for while analysing the options:

1. Verbosity

Certain options are too verbose to be correct. These options will unnecessarily elaborate upon the actual idea and add a few redundant or repeated ideas to give the appearance of a more complete answer. Verbose options which can be recognised by their extra length are a direct indicator of this type of trap and are to be avoided or eliminated. The correct answer is the one that gives the complete picture in the most precise manner.

2. Vagueness

Some options use short sentences and impressive words to give the appearance of being terse and apt at the same time. However, they end up being vague and incomplete. The best answer is not judged by its length or the quality of words used but by its clarity and completeness of idea. Never select an option if its implication is unclear or is not pertaining to the question.

3. Contradiction

These options are the easiest to eliminate because they tend to contradict the passage, either explicitly or implicitly. Detecting an explicit contradiction is just a question of reading the passage thoroughly. Implicit contradictions, too, are easy to discover but they require a clear understanding of the passage and its implication.

4. Irrelevance

Options that are not related to the question are usually used to fill up the void. These options might be based on an unrelated part of the same passage or might not be related to the entire passage at all. Like vague options, these options, too, are framed using impressive words and phrases that give an intellectual feel to them. These traps are identified easily if you have comprehended the question correctly.

Let's try to solve the question based on passage given below with the help of option elimination techniques

An air quality index (AQI) is a way to combine measurements of multiple air pollutants into a single number or rating. This index is ideally kept constantly updated and available in different places. The AQI is most useful when lots of pollution data are being gathered and when pollution levels are normally, but not always, low. In such cases, if pollution levels spike for a few days, the public can quickly take preventive action (like staying indoors) in response to an air quality warning. Unfortunately, that is not urban India. Pollution levels in many large Indian cities are so high that they remain well above any health or regulatory standard for large part of the year. If our index stays in the 'Red/Dangerous' region day after day, there is not much anyone can do, other than getting used to ignoring it.

(UPSC 2017)

Which among the following is the **most logical and rational inference** that can be made from the above passage?

- (a) Our governments are not responsible enough to keep our cities pollution free.
- (b) There is absolutely no need for air quality indices in our country.
- (c) **Air quality index is not helpful to the residents of many of our large cities.**
- (d) In every city, public awareness about pollution problems should increase.

The passage highlights the importance of Air Quality Index in providing information regarding Air pollution; however this only serves when the pollution level is low for most of the time and there is temporary spike in pollution level for at max few days. Public can take preventive action like staying indoors.

However in many Indian cities the pollution level is generally higher than many regulatory standards for large part of year, so AQI doesn't help much as people have to go outside for their work.

Option A is **irrelevant** according to the passage as the given statement is not related to the main idea of passage and is nowhere mentioned in the passage.

Option B is **factually incorrect**; the passage talks about the importance of AQI (read lines 3 to 6).

Option C is **correct** as it is given in the passage that in many Indian cities the pollution level is generally

higher than many regulatory standards for large part of year, so AQI doesn't help much as people have to go outside for their work.

Option D is **irrelevant** according to passage as the central theme of the passage is about AQI and its importance. The statement given in option is totally unrelated to the question hence can be easily eliminated.



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CHAPTER

TYPES OF QUESTIONS, STYLE AND TONE OF RC

In Reading Comprehension, it is very important to classify questions into different categories so that student knows beforehand how to solve those questions quickly and correctly.

RC questions can be classified into these different categories:

1. Main Theme or Central Idea

Description: These are the questions based on the passage as a whole, are topical in nature and query the author's motive for writing the passage.

What they test: These questions test your ability to analyze text and also exactly how well you have understood the exact nature of the passage.

Solving technique: The answers to such questions usually lie in the introduction or the concluding paragraph of the passage. A quick read of the first or last or both paragraphs will definitely provide you with an idea about the main theme of the passage.

Example:

Which of the following options best summarizes the passage?

2. Author's opinion, attitude or point of view

Description:

These questions are based on the author's point of view about the subject. The answers to these questions are never explicitly mentioned in the passage i.e. they have to be derived from the sentences used by the author to express his thoughts and opinions.

What they test:

These questions test your ability to judge the author's attitude or his stand on the subject by analyzing the content, style and phraseology used

in the passage. To correctly deduce the answers, you need to understand the trend of thought and reason employed by the author while writing the passage.

Solving technique: Look for sentences that determine the tone used by the author. The writing style of the passage also provides clue to the answers. If a particular part of the passage is in question, then try and understand the reasoning used by the author to explain that part. Another strategy is analyzing the kinds of adverbs and adjectives being used by the author to describe something. These words are indicative of his mood and the intensity of his thought.

Examples:

- What is the author's tone in second paragraph?
- According to the author, what can be a logical solution to the issue at hand?
- Which of the following is the author most likely to agree with?

Explicit Information

Description:

These are direct questions based on data, facts or opinions that are expressly mentioned in the passage. The answer options are generally direct sentences picked up from the passage.

What they test:

Questions based on explicit information test your retention skills. They test how well you:

- Remember the information you have read.
- Store the information
- Spot finer details while reading

Solving technique:

Make mental notes of factual information like names, dates and figures during the first read. It also makes a lot of sense to read the questions first as it gives an idea of what to look for while reading the passage. Questions based on explicit information should be verified by re-reading the specific part of the passage that contains the answer.

Examples:

- Which one of the following options is true according to the passage?
- Which one of the following options is NOT a driving force for young entrepreneurs?
- Why did the author move from his hometown to Paris?

Implied Information**Description:**

These questions are based on inferences drawn from facts and opinions mentioned in the passage. The answers are not directly stated in the passage but are implied/ inferred/ deduced from the passage.

What they test:

These questions test:

- Your ability to interpret and understand the arguments put forth by the author.
- The correctness of your analysis of the passage. In short, it fundamentally tests your comprehension skills as well as your capacity to relate to the author's opinions.

Solving technique:

Understanding the overall idea of the passage will help you answer these questions. While reading the passage, try and understand the arguments presented by the author. Since the options are not directly stated in the passage, it is essential that you correctly identify the flow of the passage, link various sub themes and arrive at an appropriate answer to the question.

Examples:

- As per the passage, which of the following options can be inferred?
- With which of the following arguments is the author most likely to agree?
- According to the passage, what could have been the reason behind the actions of the dictator?

Word/ Phrase in Context**Description:**

These questions are based on specific words or phrases mentioned in the passage. The question will quote these phrases and expect you to correctly understand the reason behind their usage. Sometimes, there may be synonym and antonym based questions, which test your understanding of the word in context of the passage. Your aim should be to understand the contextual meanings of the word with respect to the passage rather than its dictionary meanings.

What they test:

These questions test your ability to move beyond simply knowing the word and its literal meanings to understanding the language usage and subject matter of the passage. They test your reasoning skills and ability to relate to the author's ideas while reading the passage.

Solving technique:

A thorough second reading of the part of the passage from where the phrase has been picked up will help you correctly understand it in context of the passage.

Examples:

- What does the author mean when he says that the Spartans were 'as prone to Barbarism as Greeks were to Blasphemy'?
- Why does the author use the words 'stiff upper lip' to describe Sardar Patel?
- In the context of the passage, the phrase 'As good as it gets' means?
- From the options, find the word closest in meaning to the given word as it has been used in the passage?

Passage Structure or Technique**Description:**

These questions are based on the structure of the passage and the literary techniques used by the author in expressing his arguments. Questions dealing with strengthening and weakening arguments also fall in this category.

What they test:

These questions test your ability to analyze the structure of the passage and identify sentences and paragraphs as hypothesis, solutions, conclusions, assumptions, premises or arguments.

Solving technique:

A lot of reading practice will equip you with basic knowledge of literary techniques. Your ability to determine one argument from another will be enhanced by reading analytical passages from different sources.

Examples:

- (a) Which of these options best represent the structure of the passage?
- (b) What is the fundamental premise on which author has based his analysis?
- (c) What is the assumption made by the author when he says democracy will never fail?

Analogous Arguments

Description:

This is a rare question type that presents analogies of an argument mentioned in the passage as options. You are required to choose the option that is similar to or conforms to the reasoning along the same lines as the argument mentioned in the passage.

What they test:

These questions test your comprehension and ability to illustrate the analysis formed in your mind based on your reading of the passage. They also test your capacity to associate two separate illustrations that follow a single line of reasoning.

Solving technique:

The key to answering such questions is in understanding the base argument before having a look at the options. Then, eliminating the options by comparing them with the correctness of the line of reasoning provided in the question.

Examples:

- (a) Which of the following illustrations best represents the argument mentioned in the second paragraph?
- (b) The phrase 'look before you leap' is applicable in which one of the situations listed below?

Importance of Classifying Questions

Questions classification is a very useful exercise as it helps in predicting a lot about any passage. Here are some of those things that can be determined:

- A. The general level of difficulty of a passage can be determined. If the passage contains majority of Implied information questions, then it will be tougher than a passage that has many questions based on Explicit information. You can decide if the RC should be attempted based on this judgement.
- B. Reading questions before reading passage can sometimes prove to be quite effective. Knowing the categories of questions asked can give you an idea of how to proceed with the reading of the passage. For example, if there is a question that is based on Explicit information, look for the answer while reading the passage. This helps to cut down on re-reading time.
- C. Different types of questions require a different approach of solving the questions. Knowing the approaches of solving all categories of questions beforehand gives you a directed path of thinking and again, helps cutting down on time. For example, solving Explicit and Implicit questions types requires different skills and cannot be answered by following a similar approach.
- D. If all categories of questions are known and have been practised, the surprise element, that makes a test taker waste a lot of time during the exam, can be dampened. For example, structure and analogy question types can be troublesome if one does not know how to tackle them but these types donot come in exam that frequently.

Style and Tone

A very popular question across the spectrum of RC exercises is the identification of passage style. Style maintains its uniformity throughout the passage. Style is independent of content but it is dependent on the approach adopted by the author in stating his point of view on the topic, 'how' the passage has been written rather than 'what' is written in the passage is the criterion here.

The style of the passage can be identified by a serious reading and understanding of the opening and closing paragraph of the passage as these provides insight into the flow of thoughts throughout the passage. The style can also be determined by analyzing the author's choice of words, length of sentences and structure of passages in the passage.

Types of Styles

Here is the list of common styles:

1. Factual/ Event – based

This passage style comprises a list of events or facts which may or may not be stated chronologically. All statements in the passage will pertain to tangible facts, the truth of which is verifiable. A typical example is a news article based on some event that has occurred, enumerating the factual details and the related date of event.

2. Descriptive

A descriptive passage as the name suggests, is a narration of events, emotions, views or feelings of the author. Such passage contains author's descriptive opinion about the subject unlike the factual/event based style which merely lists facts related to the subject. A descriptive passage gives you a colourful view of events and helps you visualize the sequence of the events as if they are unfolding right in front of your eyes. It is usually garnished with lot of adverbs and adjectives.

A mahogany wooden plank is descriptive as compared to a wooden plank which is factual.

3. Analytical

In passages dealing with analytical style, the author presents the reader with his analysis of a subject. There is a very strong logical undercurrent flowing throughout the passage. The passage may contain problems, hypothesis, supporting arguments, counter arguments, expert opinions, assumptions and conclusions. The subject is discussed and analyzed by the author and based on this analysis, the reader forms opinions about the subject of the passage.

4. Argumentative

Argumentative passage gives the feel of a debate. The subject is generally an issue that has two sides to it. The author might support one side or may render support to both sides but there will definitely be a lot of counter- arguing in these passages. There will be discussion on the pros and cons of the subject issue and generally, a conclusion to the argument.

Tone

Tone indicates the mood or attitude of the author when he talks about the subject of the passage. The tone is not consistent throughout the passage and is more characteristic of the content of the passage than the writing style. A passage can have sentences and paragraphs signifying different tones. There are no fixed categories of tones as these are regular English words indicative of moods and emotions.

Here is a list of some common tones:

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1. Objective | 2. Didactic |
| 3. Optimistic | 4. Pessimistic |
| 5. Concerned | 6. Admiring |
| 7. Sentimental | 8. Satirical |
| 9. Cynical | 10. Sarcastic |

Difference between Style and Tone

Students often get confused between the style and tone of the passage, even though, these qualities are quite different from each other. Here are some pointers:

- A style is unique and remains consistent throughout the passage whereas tone can change depending on the subject of the matter as the passage unfolds. An example could be a passage where the author presents an analysis and therefore, starts off with an objective tone. Towards the end of the passage, his tone changes to one of optimism when he alludes to a possible solution based on the outcome of the analysis.
- Style is the way in which content is presented whereas Tone is related to the content itself.
- Styles are broadly classified into a few distinct types mentioned above, while Tones cannot be effectively classified as they are regular English words that indicate certain emotions , moods or attitudes.

Example

In this extremity, after many days, they arrived before a rich pavilion – all of green and crimson, bordered with gold and azure – the hooks of ivory, the cords of silk, while at the top stood a golden eagle, and at each corner a green silver griffin shining in the sun. Beautiful as was the tent, still more lovely was the lady who stood before it – a maiden queen – crowned with an imperial diadem, and clothed in a robe of green, with the body formed of lace of gold, and her crimson kirtle bound with violet – coloured velvet, the wide sleeves being embroidered with flowers of gold and rich pearls. Around her stood her maiden attendants in comely attire, with silver coronets on their heads and, and silver bows in their hands, while at their backs hung quivers full of golden arrows.

The tone here is clearly that of Admiration. The author seems to shower a lot of praise upon the visual impact created by the group that has just arrived.

List of Styles and Tones

The different types of styles and certain keywords by which to remember them are:

1. Factual/ Event based – Newspaper Article
2. Descriptive – Author’s description
3. Data Driven – Numbers, Figures
4. Narrative – Story, First person narration

5. Abstruse/ Abstract – Symbolic, Philosophical
6. Argumentative – Debate, Pros and Cons
7. Analytical – Analysis, Problem Solving

Tones

They are classified according to the mood of the author.

Positive Tones

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. Laudatory | 2. Sympathy |
| 3. Adulatory | 4. Compassion |
| 5. Approving | 6. Appreciating |
| 7. Optimistic | |

Negative Tones

- | | |
|------------------|----------------|
| 1. Demeaning | 2. Conceited |
| 3. Preachy | 4. Blaming |
| 5. Pessimistic | 6. Cynical |
| 7. Argumentative | 8. Disapproval |
| 9. Bragging | 10. Mocking |

Neutral Tones

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1. Objective | 2. Obvious |
| 3. Analytical | 4. Diplomatic |
| 5. Humorous | |



3

IMPLICIT STATEMENTS

CHAPTER

Introduction

Sometimes in CSAT paper, question related to Implicit Statements are asked. In this type of question you are given Main Statement (or passage) followed by a set of numbered statements. You are expected to decide whether each of the numbered statements is implied or implicit in the Main Statement.

A statement (a) is implicit or implied in another statement (b), if the statement (b) indirectly points to (a). An explicit statement is one in which the subject matter or conclusion to be drawn is directly mentioned.

Example:

“Ram stood first in the race”.

The conclusion that “Ram participated in the race and won” is explicit.

However, the conclusion that “There was at least one more person in the race with Ram” is Implicit as it is not directly mentioned in the statement but it is obvious that in a race (a contest of speed) there must be more than just one participant or it would not be a race.

Terms Involved

What does “Implied” or “Implicit” mean?

Simple Definition: A conclusion drawn is Implicit, if it follows from the data given in the passage.

Detailed Definition: A statement is Implicit if and only if there is no ambiguity regarding the conclusion drawn from the data in the given passage.

A statement cannot be Implicit if there is any doubt regarding the conclusion drawn on the basis of the given data.

Another way of defining Implicit Statement – **Implicit Statement is that statement that is suggested in the passage but not stated directly.**

Let’s try to understand the meaning with the help of an example.

Example:

“Virat was not the captain of the Indian Cricket team that won the tri-series in Australia”.

This statement implies the following:

1. India has a Cricket team.
2. There are players other than Virat in the team.
3. Someone other than Virat was the captain of the Indian cricket team.

However, the statement does not imply the following:

1. Virat can never be the captain of the Indian cricket team.
2. Virat would be the best captain for the Indian cricket team.

So we can see that though first three statements were not stated directly in the question statement, they were implied in the question statement.

Solved Examples:

Instructions for questions:

Conclusion is drawn from the main paragraph in each question. Find whether the conclusion is implied or not.

Some sportsmen prefer keeping the colour yellow with them because they feel it has a positive psychological effect.

Conclusion: Yellow clothes help in motivation.

Solution: It is a preference of some players based on personal feeling. The yellow colour they keep could be in the form of small cloth, a small yellow ring, or any other form which has the colour yellow (and not necessarily yellow clothes).

Hence the conclusion is not implied in the main statement.

The doctor has asked Raman to stop drinking alcoholic beverages if he wants to improve his health.

Conclusion: Raman is an alcoholic.

Solution: Any person who drinks alcoholic beverages is not necessarily an alcoholic. An alcoholic is someone who is addicted to alcohol. This is not implied in the statement because the doctor is merely advising Raman to stop drinking. It's possible that Raman drinks alcoholic beverages once in a month (does not qualify as an alcoholic) and it still affects his health.

Hence the conclusion is not implied in the main statement.

Telecom companies are growing at a phenomenal rate in India mainly due to vast population.

Conclusion: Growth of companies in the telecom industry is dependent on the population of the country in which they operate.

Solution: There is a direct reasoning provided in the statement which supports the conclusion. If the main reason for growth is the population, then one can say that growth depends upon the population.

Hence the conclusion is implied in the main statement.

Comfortable office furniture greatly increases the productivity of employees involved in the desk jobs.

Conclusion: To improve employee productivity, it is necessary to buy expensive furniture.

Solution: There is no co-relation between expensive furniture and productivity. Inexpensive furniture may be more useful and help productivity; expensive furniture may be less useful and not really improve the productivity.

Hence the conclusion is not implied in the main statement.

“The existence of state is in its utility. It exists because it is necessary and people are bound to obey it and if they do not, human society will not exist”.

Which one of the following expresses the view implied in the above statement?

- (a) A state and its people are reasons for each other's existence.
- (b) The utility of a state compels people to obey it and maintain a human society.
- (c) A state exists because of its people and their society.
- (d) If people refuse to obey the state they are likely to lose their society.

Solution: The given paragraph does not say that the state is dependent on its people and vice versa. Therefore, eliminate Option A and C. Option D with “lose” is incorrect as there won't exist a society if people do not obey the state.

Hence the correct answer is Option B.



4

CRITICAL REASONING

CHAPTER

Introduction

UPSC CSAT paper apart from Reading Comprehension questions also includes Critical Reasoning questions in various forms, which usually comprise a short paragraph followed by questions on: conclusions; assumptions; inferences; and strengthening or weakening arguments, related to the given paragraph.

Other question types like “Fact, Inference and Judgement”, “Probably/Definitely, True or False”, “Course of Action”, “Cause-Effect” and “Syllogisms” are also included under the category of Critical Reasoning.

To solve these questions it is important to understand the context of the paragraph from which they are asked.

Understanding Critical Reasoning

Meaning:

“Critical Reasoning” implies arriving at a logical conclusion after a careful evaluation of all relevant data and assumptions.

The type of questions based on critical reasoning usually have a small passage on the basis of which certain questions are asked. This question type is asked to evaluate your ability to think logically and draw inferences, derive conclusions or make judgements on the basis of given data.

Important Terms:

- A. Premise
- B. Assumption
- C. Inference
- D. Conclusion

A. Premise

Definition: “A premise is a statement that is assumed to be true and from which conclusion can be drawn”.

A premise is the basis of an argument. There cannot be any argument without a premise on which it is based. However, there can be more than one premise on which an argument is based.

Example: “Unfit players hamper the progress of the entire team. That is the reason Nehra should not be selected in the team”.

Here the premise is that “Unfit players hamper the progress of the entire team” and the subsequent argument is based on it.

B. Assumption:

Definition: “An assumption is a statement which can be either true or false, but is accepted as true only for the purpose of the argument which follows”.

An assumption is that which, although not explicitly mentioned, is taken for granted and on the basis of which a conclusion is drawn.

Using Same Example as given above:

“Unfit players hamper the progress of the entire team. That is the reason Nehra should not be selected in the team”.

In this case assumption is that “Nehra is Unfit”. Even though this assumption is not explicitly mentioned in the passage; but, without this assumption the argument falls apart.

C. Inference:

Definition: “A logical process of drawing conclusion from a collection of data and from relationships between data and potential conclusions”.

An inference is logically derived on the basis of factual data, which along with assumption leads to the conclusion.

Using Same Example as given above:

“Unfit players hamper the progress of the entire team. That is the reason Nehra should not be selected in the team”.

In this case, “Nehra is going to hamper the entire team” is an inference based on the premise that unfit players hamper the team and on the assumption that Nehra is unfit.

Other inferences can also be made like: “Nehra was considered for selection of the team” or “Nehra wanted to be part of the team”.

Such statements though not explicitly mentioned can also be logically derived

D. Conclusion

Definition: “A conclusion is a final proposition, which is arrived at after the consideration of evidences, assumptions or premises”.

A conclusion is what the author of an argument arrives at following the premise, the data given, the assumptions made and the inference drawn.

Using Same Example as given above:

“Unfit players hamper the progress of the entire team. That is the reason Nehra should not be selected in the team”.

In this case, “Nehra should not be selected in the team” is the conclusion.

For more clarity about this concept let's take another example.

“Recruitment managers dislike candidates who are not punctual and who arrive late for interviews. Hence, it is unlikely that Rahul will be selected for the job today”.

In this case, the Premise is: “Recruitment managers dislike candidates who are not punctual and who arrive late for interviews”.

The assumption is: “Rahul was late for the interview”.

The Inference drawn is: “The recruitment manager will probably dislike Rahul because he was late”.

The Conclusion is: “Rahul will not be selected for the job”.

After understanding this basic concept, it is also important to keep in mind the most common flaws in reasoning as these flaws will lead to selecting wrong option, even though, you correctly figure out premise and assumption. The reason is that these flaws may lead to faulty inferences and hence will result in drawing wrong conclusion based on assumptions.

Common Flaws in Critical Reasoning

A. Association – Causation Flaw

The Association: Causation Flaw refers to thinking that an event is the cause of another merely because it precedes the other event chronologically.

Question based on this principle try to lead you into erroneously thinking that, an event or action led to another merely because of the sequence in which they appeared, thus giving rise to Association - Causation Flaw.

The sequence of events or chronology is not a criterion for arriving at a solution, when there is actually no cause – effect relationship. In Critical reasoning, the knowledge of this common flaw should be used to correctly assess an argument and by keeping this principle in mind “Cause – Effect” type questions can be solved easily.

Let's try to understand this with the help of an example

Consider the following statement:

“India got Independence after the end of second World-war”

If a conclusion is drawn from this statement – “India got Independence because of the second World war” – then it is faulty because even though Indian independence chronologically follows the Second World War there is no cause – effect relationship in the given statement.

B. Composition Flaw

This refers to thinking that something that applies to one particular action, event or situation is also applicable to other actions, events or situations in general. Difficult reasoning questions usually encourage you to make this mistake. You should always carefully check a critical reasoning question to see whether the example presented can be considered representative of the general population; i.e. you should verify whether you can logically extrapolate the given example to the general population/situation.

Example: “Today's Physics test was very difficult”.

If a conclusion is drawn from this statement – “Physics is generally a difficult subject for most students” – then it is faulty because you cannot extrapolate the difficulty of Physics as a subject in general on the basis of test.

C. Fallacy of Analogy

This refers to thinking that the line of reasoning used in one scenario applies to another scenario by assuming that all parameters remain the same. You should be careful to compare the two scenarios to see whether there is subtle change in the situation which makes the parallel reasoning inappropriate. The important thing in this case is to identify what exactly causes the difference between the two similar scenarios. In critical reasoning it is also extremely important to avoid **over-analyzing** an argument.

Example: "Students who study for eight hours a day are successful in the examination. So sportsmen who want to win the tournament should practice for eight hours every day".

This argument is faulty because the reasoning for success in studies cannot be applied directly to sports which can have many other considerations.

D. Red Herring

This refers to being diverted from the actual argument by some topic which seems relevant but is actually not related to the argument at hand. Difficult questions in critical reasoning try to throw you off track by introducing concepts which trap you into thinking on the basis of what you already know rather than sticking to the information given.

Example: "People who do not want to pay Income tax according to the law should not be forced because the Government has other sources of revenue which it can use to cover the deficit".

This is faulty because the law should be enforced regardless of whether the Government can cover up the deficit caused by people breaking the law.

E. Argumentum Ad Populum

This refers to the assumption that a particular argument is valid because many people think so. This reasoning is improper because the opinion of many people is not the criterion to determine the validity of any argument.

Example: "The claim made by environmental agencies about the adverse effects of global warming is not valid because most of the people in India say that they do not feel there is any difference in the climate and they are not affected by it".

This argument is faulty because the opinion of the people cannot determine the validity of an argument which is based on scientific facts.

F. Non Sequitur

This refers to making an argument by stating a conclusion after presenting the premise even though the conclusion cannot be logically drawn from the premise.

Example: "It is difficult for sportsmen, especially cricketers to play continuously for many months at a stretch. Therefore, we must build a sports academy which trains many more sports people".

This is faulty because the conclusion drawn does not follow from the stated premise.

G. Faulty Appeal to Authority

This refers to using the view of a person or organisation specializing in one field to support an argument in another field. This fallacy can be identified when the authority which is referred to in an argument is not an expert on the subject being discussed in the argument.

Example: "The famous actor Shahrukh has invested a lot of money in the stock market. The stock market must be generating a very good return on investment".

This argument is faulty because the actor's judgement in the field of stocks cannot be taken as basis for saying that the stock market will generate good returns.

Following are some common flaws in critical reasoning which should be considered while solving a critical reasoning question. By identifying the type of flaw, the wrong options can be eliminated easily. Practising questions of each type will help in identifying the flaws more easily in examination and will make you more confident in tackling critical reasoning questions.

Now after learning these concepts, let's have a look at different type of questions that can be asked in Critical reasoning. The types of questions usually asked in this section are as follow:

1. Identifying the conclusion

The conclusion that can be drawn on the basis of the inference in the given passage is selected.

2. Identifying the assumption

Choose the assumption mentioned in the given passage used by the author, to draw the conclusion.

3. Identifying the strengthening argument

The statement which most strongly supports the argument in the given passage is chosen.

4. Identifying the weakening argument

The statement which undermines or weakens the argument in the given passage is selected.

5. Parallel Reasoning

A pattern of reasoning from the options given which is similar to the reasoning in the given passage is identified.

Solved Examples:

Tobacco companies have found a way out of the ban on advertising their products in newspapers and on TV. A study of 58 Bollywood movies released in the last 3 years shows that more scenes depicting actors smoking are shown now than 3 years ago.

Which of the following statements can be inferred from the passage?

- (a) Tobacco companies earn a lot of publicity through movies.
- (b) The ban on advertising tobacco products can now be lifted.
- (c) Children are wise enough to not fall for these subliminal messages.
- (d) Tobacco companies are doing the unthinkable.

Answer: (a)

Explanation:

The main information in the passage is that tobacco companies cannot advertise in newspaper and on TV, so they are using films to depict their products. This is in sync with Option A.

Simply because tobacco companies have found a way does not make a case for lifting the ban hence Option B is incorrect

Option C is an opinion and Option D is very generic Hence Option A is correct answer.

America is one country that has no shortage of guns. Almost anyone can lay his hands on them. It isn't surprising then that the number of gun related crimes is always on the rise. This is why all law abiding citizens must be allowed to keep a gun on their person or property and therefore protect themselves.

Which of the following statements will weaken the argument?

- (a) Using guns for protection is everyone's fundamental right.
- (b) Policeman cannot be available whenever a crime is underway.
- (c) 55% of all guns used in crimes are stolen from the homes of law abiding citizens.
- (d) Guns are dangerous regardless of who has them.

Answer: (c)

Explanation:

We have to find that option which will weaken the argument that all law abiding citizens must be allowed to kept a gun.

Option A and Option B only strengthen the argument hence incorrect

Option D is generic although it is possible answer.

Option C weakens the argument most as it specifies that most of the guns used in crimes are stolen from homes of law abiding citizen hence by allowing law abiding citizens having guns may increase the crime rate, hence Option C scores over Option D and is correct.

The rate of question paper leaks in Mumbai is up by a whopping 90% from last year. The leak springs from the office of the Vice – Chancellor, according to some students. They claim that the VC has never launched a private investigation into the leaks, and neither has he reprimanded any one.

The argument above would be weakened if it were true that:

- (a) 40% of the leaks turn out to be of incorrect papers.
- (b) The VC was out of town while the examinations were being conducted.
- (c) The VC has been holding meeting with his staff and also appointed a private detective.
- (d) Reprimanding staff results in strikes and delays in paper assessments since the staff union is very strong in the University.

Answer: (c)

Explanation:

If Option C is true, then the allegation against the VC holds no water.

Option A, B and D fall when compared to Option C. Hence Option C is correct answer.

The pace of economic expansion in Europe has slowed considerably in recent years; with the outlook clouded by uncertainty, growth is expected to plateau at about 5% for both 2016 and 2017. Sluggish exports played a significant role in this slowdown, but so did moderate domestic demand. Worse, a confluence of downside risks could lead to further moderation in the pace of growth.

Which of the following is the most critical and rational inference that can be made from passage?

- (a) Financial instability is inevitable in Europe.
- (b) Slow exports cause economic slowdown in country.
- (c) A firm fiscal position is required to cope up with economic slowdown.
- (d) GDP growth is dependent on the imports and exports of a country.

Answer: (c)

Explanation:

Option A does not lead us to infer that financial instability in Europe is inevitable just because the economic expansion has slowed in recent years.

Option B is incorrect as the passage states that a slow export is a contributing factor to the economic slowdown and not the only factor.

Option C is correct as it can be inferred that a strong economy with financial stability will survive economic slowdown.

Option D with GDP growth cannot be corroborated from the passage.

Hence Option C is correct.

The number of deaths among the army personnel is 8 in 1000, but among the civilian population it is 20 per 1000.

[CSAT 2014]

Which one of the following inferences can be drawn from this statement?

- (a) It is better to join army.
- (b) The relationship is fortuitous.
- (c) Quality of life index is very high in armed forces.
- (d) The groups cannot be compared due to their heterogeneity.

Solution:

The two groups of army personnel and civilians are completely unrelated. Both groups are subject to different probable causes of death. For example, army personnel are subjected to the risk of death while fighting in war that is something that civilian may not necessarily be exposed to.

Therefore two groups are heterogeneous and cannot be compared. **Option D is correct.**

Option A is incorrect because joining the army does not preclude death.

Option B is incorrect because it is unclear which relationship is being referred to as fortuitous here – relationship between 2 groups or relationship between death and each group.

Option C is incorrect because we have no data regarding quality of life within the armed forces.

Correct answer therefore is Option D.

