

Many human phenomena and characteristics – such as behaviors, beliefs, economies, genes, incomes, life expectancies, and other things – are influenced both by geographic factors and by non-geographic factors. Geographic factors mean physical and biological factors tied to geographic location, including climate, the distributions of wild plant and animal species, soils, and topography. Non-geographic factors include those factors subsumed under the term culture, other factors subsumed under the term history, and decisions by individual people. . . .

[T]he differences between the current economies of North and South Korea . . . cannot be attributed to the modest environmental differences between [them] . . . They are instead due entirely to the different [government] policies . . . At the opposite extreme, the Inuit and other traditional peoples living north of the Arctic Circle developed warm fur clothes but no agriculture, while equatorial lowland peoples around the world never developed warm fur clothes but often did develop agriculture. The explanation is straightforwardly geographic, rather than a cultural or historical quirk unrelated to geography. . . . Aboriginal Australia remained the sole continent occupied only by hunter/gatherers and with no indigenous farming or herding . . . [Here the] explanation is biogeographic: the Australian continent has no domesticable native animal species and few domesticable native plant species. Instead, the crops and domestic animals that now make Australia a food and wool exporter are all non-native (mainly Eurasian) species such as sheep, wheat, and grapes, brought to Australia by overseas colonists.

Today, no scholar would be silly enough to deny that culture, history, and individual choices play a big role in many human phenomena. Scholars don't react to cultural, historical, and individual-agent explanations by denouncing "cultural determinism," "historical determinism," or "individual determinism," and then thinking no further. But many scholars do react to any explanation invoking some geographic role, by denouncing "geographic determinism" . . .

Several reasons may underlie this widespread but nonsensical view. One reason is that some geographic explanations advanced a century ago were racist, thereby causing all geographic explanations to become tainted by racist associations in the minds of many scholars other than geographers. But many genetic, historical, psychological, and anthropological explanations advanced a century ago were also racist, yet the validity of newer non-racist genetic etc. explanations is widely accepted today.

Another reason for reflex rejection of geographic explanations is that historians have a tradition, in their discipline, of stressing the role of contingency (a favorite word among historians) based on individual decisions and chance. Often that view is warranted . . . But often, too, that view is unwarranted. The development of warm fur clothes among the Inuit living north of the Arctic Circle was not because one influential Inuit leader persuaded other Inuit in 1783 to adopt warm fur clothes, for no good environmental reason.

A third reason is that geographic explanations usually depend on detailed technical facts of geography and other fields of scholarship . . . Most historians and economists don't acquire that detailed knowledge as part of the professional training.

01. All of the following can be inferred from the passage EXCEPT:

- A. agricultural practices changed drastically in the Australian continent after it was colonised.
- B. individual dictat and contingency were not the causal factors for the use of fur clothing in some very cold climates.
- C. while most human phenomena result from culture and individual choice, some have bio-geographic origins.
- D. several academic studies of human phenomena in the past involved racist interpretations.

02. All of the following are advanced by the author as reasons why non-geographers disregard geographic influences on human phenomena EXCEPT their:
- A. dismissal of explanations that involve geographical causes for human behaviour.
  - B. belief in the central role of humans, unrelated to physical surroundings, in influencing phenomena.
  - C. lingering impressions of past geographic analyses that were politically offensive.
  - D. disciplinary training which typically does not include technical knowledge of geography.
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03. The examples of the Inuit and Aboriginal Australians are offered in the passage to show:
- A. how environmental factors lead to comparatively divergent paths in livelihoods and development.
  - B. human resourcefulness across cultures in adapting to their surroundings.
  - C. how physical circumstances can dictate human behaviour and cultures.
  - D. that despite geographical isolation, traditional societies were self-sufficient and adaptive.
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04. The author criticises scholars who are not geographers for all of the following reasons EXCEPT:
- A. their rejection of the role of biogeographic factors in social and cultural phenomena.
  - B. their outdated interpretations of past cultural and historical phenomena.
  - C. their labelling of geographic explanations as deterministic.
  - D. the importance they place on the role of individual decisions when studying human phenomena.
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The passage below is accompanied by four questions. Based on the passage, choose the best answer for each question.

For early postcolonial literature, the world of the novel was often the nation. Postcolonial novels were usually [concerned with] national questions. Sometimes the whole story of the novel was taken as an allegory of the nation, whether India or Tanzania. This was important for supporting anti-colonial nationalism, but could also be limiting – land-focused and inward-looking.

My new book "Writing Ocean Worlds" explores another kind of world of the novel: not the village or nation, but the Indian Ocean world. The book describes a set of novels in which the Indian Ocean is at the centre of the story. It focuses on the novelists Amitav Ghosh, Abdulrazak Gurnah, Lindsey Collen and Joseph Conrad [who have] centred the Indian Ocean world in the majority of their novels. . . . Their work reveals a world that is outward-looking – full of movement, border-crossing and south-south interconnection. They are all very different – from colonially inclined (Conrad) to radically anti-capitalist (Collen), but together draw on and shape a wider sense of Indian Ocean space through themes, images, metaphors and language. This has the effect of remapping the world in the reader's mind, as centred in the interconnected global south. . . .



The Indian Ocean world is a term used to describe the very long-lasting connections among the coasts of East Africa, the Arab coasts, and South and East Asia. These connections were made possible by the geography of the Indian Ocean. For much of history, travel by sea was much easier than by land, which meant that port cities very far apart were often more easily connected to each other than to much closer inland cities. Historical and archaeological evidence suggests that what we now call globalisation first appeared in the Indian Ocean. This is the interconnected oceanic world referenced and produced by the novels in my book. . . .

For their part Ghosh, Gurnah, Collen and even Conrad reference a different set of histories and geographies than the ones most commonly found in fiction in English. Those [commonly found ones] are mostly centred in Europe or the US, assume a background of Christianity and whiteness, and mention places like Paris and New York. The novels in [my] book highlight instead a largely Islamic space, feature characters of colour and centralise the ports of Malindi, Mombasa, Aden, Java and Bombay. . . . It is a densely imagined, richly sensory image of a southern cosmopolitan culture which provides for an enlarged sense of place in the world.

This remapping is particularly powerful for the representation of Africa. In the fiction, sailors and travellers are not all European. . . . African, as well as Indian and Arab characters, are traders, nakhodas (dhow ship captains), runaways, villains, missionaries and activists. This does not mean that Indian Ocean Africa is romanticised. Migration is often a matter of force; travel is portrayed as abandonment rather than adventure, freedoms are kept from women and slavery is rife. What it does mean is that the African part of the Indian Ocean world plays an active role in its long, rich history and therefore in that of the wider world.

05. All of the following claims contribute to the "remapping" discussed by the passage, EXCEPT:

- A. the global south, as opposed to the global north, was the first centre of globalisation.
- B. the world of early international trade and commerce was not the sole domain of white Europeans.
- C. cosmopolitanism originated in the West and travelled to the East through globalisation.
- D. Indian Ocean novels have gone beyond the specifics of national concerns to explore rich regional pasts.

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06. Which one of the following statements is not true about migration in the Indian Ocean world?

- A. Geographical location rather than geographical proximity determined the choice of destination for migrants.
  - B. The Indian Ocean world's migration networks were shaped by religious and commercial histories of the region.
  - C. The Indian Ocean world's migration networks connected the global north with the global south.
  - D. Migration in the Indian Ocean world was an ambivalent experience.
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07. On the basis of the nature of the relationship between the items in each pair below, choose the odd pair out:

- A. Postcolonial novels : Border-crossing
- B. Postcolonial novels : Anti-colonial nationalism
- C. Indian Ocean world : Slavery
- D. Indian Ocean novels : Outward-looking

08. All of the following statements, if true, would weaken the passage's claim about the relationship between mainstream English-language fiction and Indian Ocean novels EXCEPT:

- A. most mainstream English-language novels have historically privileged the Christian, white, male experience of travel and adventure.
- B. the depiction of Africa in most Indian Ocean novels is driven by an Orientalist imagination of its cultural crudeness.
- C. very few mainstream English-language novels have historically been set in American and European metropolitan centres.
- D. the depiction of Africa in most Indian Ocean novels is driven by a postcolonial nostalgia for an idyllic past.

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

[Fifty] years after its publication in English [in 1972], and just a year since [Marshall] Sahlins himself died—we may ask: why did [his essay] "Original Affluent Society" have such an impact, and how has it fared since? . . . Sahlins's principal argument was simple but counterintuitive: before being driven into marginal environments by colonial powers, hunter-gatherers, or foragers, were not engaged in a desperate struggle for meager survival. Quite the contrary, they satisfied their needs with far less work than people in agricultural and industrial societies, leaving them more time to use as they wished. Hunters, he quipped, keep bankers' hours. Refusing to maximize, many were "more concerned with games of chance than with chances of game." . . . The so-called Neolithic Revolution, rather than improving life, imposed a harsher work regime and set in motion the long history of growing inequality . . .

Moreover, foragers had other options. The contemporary Hadza of Tanzania, who had long been surrounded by farmers, knew they had alternatives and rejected them. To Sahlins, this showed that foragers are not simply examples of human diversity or victimhood but something more profound: they demonstrated that societies make real choices. Culture, a way of living oriented around a distinctive set of values, manifests a fundamental principle of collective self-determination. . . .

But the point [of the essay] is not so much the empirical validity of the data—the real interest for most readers, after all, is not in foragers either today or in the Paleolithic—but rather its conceptual challenge to contemporary economic life and bourgeois individualism. The empirical served a philosophical and political project, a thought experiment and stimulus to the imagination of possibilities.

With its title's nod toward *The Affluent Society* (1958), economist John Kenneth Galbraith's famously skeptical portrait of America's postwar prosperity and inequality, and dripping with New Left contempt for consumerism, "The Original Affluent Society" brought this critical perspective to bear on the contemporary world. It did so through the classic anthropological move of showing that radical alternatives to the readers' lives really exist. If the capitalist world seeks wealth through ever greater material production to meet infinitely expansive desires, foraging societies follow "the Zen road to affluence": not by getting more, but by wanting less. If it seems that foragers have been left behind by "progress," this is due only to the ethnocentric self-congratulation of the West. Rather than accumulate material goods, these societies are guided by other values: leisure, mobility, and above all, freedom. . . .

Viewed in today's context, of course, not every aspect of the essay has aged well. While acknowledging the violence of colonialism, racism, and dispossession, it does not thematize them as heavily as we might today. Rebuking evolutionary anthropologists for treating present-day foragers as "left behind" by progress, it too can succumb to the temptation to use them as proxies for the Paleolithic. Yet these characteristics should not distract us from appreciating Sahlins's effort to show that if we want to conjure new possibilities, we need to learn about actually inhabitable worlds.

09. We can infer that Sahlins's main goal in writing his essay was to:

- A. highlight the fact that while we started off as a fairly contented egalitarian people, we have progressively degenerated into materialism.
- B. put forth the view that, despite egalitarian origins, economic progress brings greater inequality and social hierarchies.
- C. hold a mirror to an acquisitive society, with examples of other communities that have chosen successfully to be non-materialistic.
- D. counter Galbraith's pessimistic view of the inevitability of a capitalist trajectory for economic growth.

10. The author mentions Tanzania's Hadza community to illustrate:

- A. that forager communities' lifestyles derived not from ignorance about alternatives, but from their own choice.
- B. how two vastly different ways of living and working were able to coexist in proximity for centuries.
- C. how pre-agrarian societies did not hamper the emergence of more advanced agrarian practices in contiguous communities.
- D. that hunter-gatherer communities' subsistence-level techniques equipped them to survive well into contemporary times.

11. The author of the passage criticises Sahlins's essay for its:

- A. outdated values regarding present-day foragers versus ancient foraging communities.
- B. failure to supplement its thesis with robust empirical data.
- C. critique of anthropologists who disparage the choices of foragers in today's society.
- D. cursory treatment of the effects of racism and colonialism on societies.



12. The author of the passage mentions Galbraith's "The Affluent Society" to:
- contrast the materialist nature of contemporary growth paths with the pacifist content ways of living among the foragers.
  - document the influence of Galbraith's cynical views on modern consumerism on Sahlins's analysis of pre-historic societies.
  - show how Galbraith's theories refute Sahlins's thesis on the contentment of pre-hunter-gatherer communities.
  - show how Sahlins's views complemented Galbraith's criticism of the consumerism and inequality of contemporary society.

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

RESIDENTS of Lozère, a hilly department in southern France, recite complaints familiar to many rural corners of Europe. In remote hamlets and villages, with names such as Le Bacon and Le Bacon Vieux, mayors grumble about a lack of local schools, jobs, or phone and internet connections. Farmers of grazing animals add another concern: the return of wolves. Eradicated from France last century, the predators are gradually creeping back to more forests and hillsides. "The wolf must be taken in hand," said an aspiring parliamentarian, Francis Palombi, when pressed by voters in an election campaign early this summer. Tourists enjoy visiting a wolf park in Lozère, but farmers fret over their livestock and their livelihoods. . . .

As early as the ninth century, the royal office of the Luparii—wolf-catchers—was created in France to tackle the predators. Those official hunters (and others) completed their job in the 1930s, when the last wolf disappeared from the mainland. Active hunting and improved technology such as rifles in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, plus the use of poison such as strychnine later on, caused the population collapse. But in the early 1990s the animals reappeared. They crossed the Alps from Italy, upsetting sheep farmers on the French side of the border. Wolves have since spread to areas such as Lozère, delighting environmentalists, who see the predators' presence as a sign of wider ecological health. Farmers, who say the wolves cause the deaths of thousands of sheep and other grazing animals, are less cheerful. They grumble that green activists and politically correct urban types have allowed the return of an old enemy.

Various factors explain the changes of the past few decades. Rural depopulation is part of the story. In Lozère, for example, farming and a once-flourishing mining industry supported a population of over 140,000 residents in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Today the department has fewer than 80,000 people, many in its towns. As humans withdraw, forests are expanding. In France, between 1990 and 2015, forest cover increased by an average of 102,000 hectares each year, as more fields were given over to trees. Now, nearly one-third of mainland France is covered by woodland of some sort. The decline of hunting as a sport also means more forests fall quiet. In the mid-to-late 20<sup>th</sup> century over 2m hunters regularly spent winter weekends tramping in woodland, seeking boars, birds and other prey. Today the Fédération Nationale des Chasseurs, the national body, claims 1.1m people hold hunting licences, though the number of active hunters is probably lower. The mostly protected status of the wolf in Europe—hunting them is now forbidden, other than when occasional culls are sanctioned by the state—plus the efforts of NGOs to track and count the animals, also contribute to the recovery of wolf populations.

As the lupine population of Europe spreads westwards, with occasional reports of wolves seen closer to urban areas, expect to hear of more clashes between farmers and those who celebrate the predators' return. Farmers' losses are real, but are not the only economic story. Tourist venues, such as parks where wolves are kept and the animals' spread is discussed, also generate income and jobs in rural areas.

13. The inhabitants of Lozère have to grapple with all of the following problems, EXCEPT:

- A. poor rural communication infrastructure.
  - B. lack of educational facilities.
  - C. decline in the number of hunting licences.
  - D. livestock losses.
- 

14. Which one of the following has NOT contributed to the growing wolf population in Lozère?

- A. The granting of a protected status to wolves in Europe.
  - B. The shutting down of the royal office of the Luparii.
  - C. An increase in woodlands and forest cover in Lozère.
  - D. A decline in the rural population of Lozère.
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15. The author presents a possible economic solution to an existing issue facing Lozère that takes into account the divergent and competing interests of:

- A. tourists and environmentalists.
  - B. environmentalists and politicians.
  - C. politicians and farmers.
  - D. farmers and environmentalists.
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16. Which one of the following statements, if true, would weaken the author's claims?

- A. Wolf attacks on tourists in Lozère are on the rise.
  - B. Having migrated out in the last century, wolves are now returning to Lozère.
  - C. The old mining sites of Lozère are now being used as grazing pastures for sheep.
  - D. Unemployment concerns the residents of Lozère.
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17. There is a sentence that is missing in the paragraph below. Look at the paragraph and decide where (option 1, 2, 3, or 4) the following sentence would best fit.

Sentence: This philosophical cut at one's core beliefs, values, and way of life is difficult enough.

Paragraph: The experience of reading philosophy is often disquieting. When reading philosophy, the values around which one has heretofore organised one's life may come to look provincial, flatly wrong, or even evil. \_\_\_(1)\_\_. When beliefs previously held as truths are rendered implausible, new beliefs, values, and ways of living may be required. \_\_\_(2)\_\_. What's worse, philosophers admonish each other to remain unsutured until such time as a defensible new answer is revealed or constructed. Sometimes philosophical writing is even strictly critical in that it does not even attempt to provide an alternative after tearing down a cultural or conceptual citadel. \_\_\_(3)\_\_. The reader of philosophy must be prepared for the possibility of this experience. While reading philosophy can help one clarify one's values, and even make one self-conscious for the first time of the fact that there are good reasons for believing what one believes, it can also generate unremediated doubt that is difficult to live with. \_\_\_(4)\_\_.

- A. Option 1
- B. Option 3
- C. Option 2
- D. Option 4

18. There is a sentence that is missing in the paragraph below. Look at the paragraph and decide where (option 1, 2, 3, or 4) the following sentence would best fit.

Sentence: The discovery helps to explain archeological similarities between the Paleolithic peoples of China, Japan, and the Americas.

Paragraph: The researchers also uncovered an unexpected genetic link between Native Americans and Japanese people. \_\_\_(1)\_\_. During the deglaciation period, another group branched out from northern coastal China and travelled to Japan. \_\_\_(2)\_\_. "We were surprised to find that this ancestral source also contributed to the Japanese gene pool, especially the indigenous Ainu," says Li. \_\_\_(3)\_\_. They shared similarities in how they crafted stemmed projectile points for arrowheads and spears. \_\_\_(4)\_\_. "This suggests that the Pleistocene connection among the Americas, China, and Japan was not confined to culture but also to genetics," says senior author Qing-Peng Kong, an evolutionary geneticist at the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

- A. Option 1
- B. Option 2
- C. Option 4
- D. Option 3



19. Five jumbled up sentences (labelled 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5), related to a topic, are given below. Four of them can be put together to form a coherent paragraph. Identify the odd sentence and key in the number of that sentence as your answer.

1. In English, there is no systematic rule for the naming of numbers; after ten, we have "eleven" and "twelve" and then the teens: "thirteen", "fourteen", "fifteen" and so on.
  2. Even more confusingly, some English words invert the numbers they refer to: the word "fourteen" puts the four first, even though it appears last.
  3. It can take children a while to learn all these words, and understand that "fourteen" is different from "forty".
  4. For multiples of 10, English speakers switch to a different pattern: "twenty", "thirty", "forty" and so on.
  5. If you didn't know the word for "eleven", you would be unable to just guess it – you might come up with something like "one-teen".
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20. Five jumbled up sentences (labelled 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5), related to a topic, are given below. Four of them can be put together to form a coherent paragraph. Identify the odd sentence and key in the number of that sentence as your answer.

1. Having an appreciation for the workings of another person's mind is considered a prerequisite for natural language acquisition, strategic social interaction, reflexive thought, and moral judgment.
  2. It is a 'theory of mind' though some scholars prefer to call it 'mentalizing' or 'mindreading', which is important for the development of one's cognitive abilities.
  3. Though we must speculate about its evolutionary origin, we do have indications that the capacity evolved sometime in the last few million years.
  4. This capacity develops from early beginnings in the first year of life to the adult's fast and often effortless understanding of others' thoughts, feelings, and intentions.
  5. One of the most fascinating human capacities is the ability to perceive and interpret other people's behaviour in terms of their mental states.
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21. The four sentences (labelled 1, 2, 3 and 4) given below, when properly sequenced, would yield a coherent paragraph. Decide on the proper sequencing of the order of the sentences and key in the sequence of the four numbers as your answer.

1. Algorithms hosted on the internet are accessed by many, so biases in AI models have resulted in much larger impact, adversely affecting far larger groups of people.
  2. Though "algorithmic bias" is the popular term, the foundation of such bias is not in algorithms, but in the data; algorithms are not biased, data is, as algorithms merely reflect persistent patterns that are present in the training data.
  3. Despite their widespread impact, it is relatively easier to fix AI biases than human-generated biases, as it is simpler to identify the former than to try to make people unlearn behaviors learnt over generations.
  4. The impact of biased decisions made by humans is localised and geographically confined, but with the advent of AI, the impact of such decisions is spread over a much wider scale.
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22. The four sentences (labelled 1, 2, 3 and 4) given below, when properly sequenced, would yield a coherent paragraph. Decide on the proper sequencing of the order of the sentences and key in the sequence of the four numbers as your answer.

1. What precisely are the "unusual elements" that make a particular case so attractive to a certain kind of audience?
  - 2 . It might be a particularly savage or unfathomable level of depravity, very often it has something to do with the precise amount of mystery involved.
  3. Unsolved, and perhaps unsolvable cases offer something that "ordinary" murder doesn't.
  4. Why are some crimes destined for perpetual re-examination and others locked into permanent obscurity?
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23. The passage given below is followed by four alternate summaries. Choose the option that best captures the essence of the passage.

Manipulating information was a feature of history long before modern journalism established rules of integrity. A record dates back to ancient Rome, when Antony met Cleopatra and his political enemy Octavian launched a smear campaign against him with "short, sharp slogans written upon coins." The perpetrator became the first Roman Emperor and "fake news had allowed Octavian to hack the republican system once and for all". But the 21<sup>st</sup> century has seen the weaponization of information on an unprecedented scale. Powerful new technology makes the fabrication of content simple, and social networks amplify falsehoods peddled by States, populist politicians, and dishonest corporate entities. The platforms have become fertile ground for computational propaganda, 'trolling' and 'troll armies'.

- A. Disinformation, which is mediated by technology today, is not new and has existed since ancient times.
  - B. People need to become critical of what they read, since historically, weaponization of information has led to corruption.
  - C. Use of misinformation for attaining power, a practice that is as old as the Octavian era, is currently fueled by technology.
  - D. Octavian used fake news to manipulate people and attain power and influence, just as people do today.
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24. The passage given below is followed by four alternate summaries. Choose the option that best captures the essence of the passage.

Colonialism is not a modern phenomenon. World history is full of examples of one society gradually expanding by incorporating adjacent territory and settling its people on newly conquered territory. In the sixteenth century, colonialism changed decisively because of technological developments in navigation that began to connect more remote parts of the world. The modern European colonial project emerged when it became possible to move large numbers of people across the ocean and to maintain political control in spite of geographical dispersion. The term colonialism is used to describe the process of European settlement, violent dispossession and political domination over the rest of the world, including the Americas, Australia, and parts of Africa and Asia.

- A. Colonialism surged in the 16<sup>th</sup> century due to advancements in navigation, enabling British settlements abroad and global dominance.
  - B. As a result of developments in navigation technology, European colonialism, led to the displacement of indigenous populations and global political changes in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.
  - C. Colonialism, conceptualized in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, allowed colonizers to expand their territories, establish settlements, and exercise political power.
  - D. Technological advancements in navigation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, transformed colonialism, enabling Europeans to establish settlements and exert political dominance over distant regions.
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The passage below is accompanied by four questions. Based on the passage, choose the best answer for each question.

The Second Hand September campaign, led by Oxfam . . . seeks to encourage shopping at local organisations and charities as alternatives to fast fashion brands such as Primark and Boohoo in the name of saving our planet. As innocent as mindless scrolling through online shops may seem, such consumers are unintentionally—or perhaps even knowingly—contributing to an industry that uses more energy than aviation. . . .

Brits buy more garments than any other country in Europe, so it comes as no shock that many of those clothes end up in UK landfills each year: 300,000 tonnes of them, to be exact. This waste of clothing is destructive to our planet, releasing greenhouse gasses as clothes are burnt as well as bleeding toxins and dyes into the surrounding soil and water. As ecologist Chelsea Rochman bluntly put it, "The mismanagement of our waste has even come back to haunt us on our dinner plate."

It's not surprising, then, that people are scrambling for a solution, the most common of which is second-hand shopping. Retailers selling consigned clothing are currently expanding at a rapid rate . . . If everyone bought just one used item in a year, it would save 449 million lbs of waste, equivalent to the weight of 1 million Polar bears. "Thrifting" has increasingly become a trendy practice. London is home to many second-hand, or more commonly coined 'vintage', shops across the city from Bayswater to Brixton.

So you're cool and you care about the planet; you've killed two birds with one stone. But do people simply purchase a second-hand item, flash it on Instagram with #vintage and call it a day without considering whether what they are doing is actually effective?

According to a study commissioned by Patagonia, for instance, older clothes shed more microfibres. These can end up in our rivers and seas after just one wash due to the worn material, thus contributing to microfibre pollution. To break it down, the amount of microfibres released by laundering 100,000 fleece jackets is equivalent to as many as 11,900 plastic grocery bags, and up to 40 per cent of that ends up in our oceans. . . . So where does this leave second-hand consumers? [They would be well advised to buy] high-quality items that shed less and last longer [as this] combats both microfibre pollution and excess garments ending up in landfills. . . .

Luxury brands would rather not circulate their latest season stock around the globe to be sold at a cheaper price, which is why companies like ThredUP, a US fashion resale marketplace, have not yet caught on in the UK. There will always be a market for consignment but there is also a whole generation of people who have been taught that only buying new products is the norm; second-hand luxury goods are not in their psyche. Ben Whitaker, director at Liquidation Firm B-Stock, told Prospect that unless recycling becomes cost-effective and filters into mass production, with the right technology to partner it, "high-end retailers would rather put brand before sustainability."

01. The central idea of the passage would be undermined if:
- A. Primark and Boohoo recycled their clothes for vintage stores.
  - B. customers bought all their clothes online.
  - C. second-hand stores sold only high-quality clothes.
  - D. clothes were not thrown and burnt in landfills.

02. The act of "thrifting", as described in the passage, can be considered ironic because it:
- A. has created environmental problems.
  - B. is an anti-consumerist attitude.
  - C. is not cost-effective for retailers.
  - D. offers luxury clothing at cut-rate prices.
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03. Based on the passage, we can infer that the opposite of fast fashion, 'slow fashion', would most likely refer to clothes that:
- A. do not shed microfibres.
  - B. are of high quality and long lasting.
  - C. are sold by genuine vintage stores.
  - D. do not bleed toxins and dyes.
- 
04. According to the author, companies like ThredUP have not caught on in the UK for all of the following reasons EXCEPT that:
- A. recycling is currently not financially attractive for luxury brands.
  - B. luxury brands do not like their product to be devalued.
  - C. the British don't buy second-hand clothing.
  - D. luxury brands want to maintain their brand image.
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The passage below is accompanied by four questions. Based on the passage, choose the best answer for each question.

Over the past four centuries liberalism has been so successful that it has driven all its opponents off the battlefield. Now it is disintegrating, destroyed by a mix of hubris and internal contradictions, according to Patrick Deneen, a professor of politics at the University of Notre Dame. . . . Equality of opportunity has produced a new meritocratic aristocracy that has all the aloofness of the old aristocracy with none of its sense of noblesse oblige. Democracy has degenerated into a theatre of the absurd. And technological advances are reducing ever more areas of work into meaningless drudgery. "The gap between liberalism's claims about itself and the lived reality of the citizenry" is now so wide that "the lie can no longer be accepted," Mr Deneen writes. What better proof of this than the vision of 1,000 private planes whisking their occupants to Davos to discuss the question of "creating a shared future in a fragmented world"? . . .

Deneen does an impressive job of capturing the current mood of disillusionment, echoing left-wing complaints about rampant commercialism, right-wing complaints about narcissistic and bullying students, and general worries about atomisation and selfishness. But when he concludes that all this adds up to a failure of liberalism, is his argument convincing? . . . He argues that the essence of liberalism lies in freeing individuals from constraints. In fact, liberalism contains a wide range of intellectual traditions which provide different answers to the question of how to trade off the relative claims of rights and responsibilities, individual expression and social ties. . . . liberals experimented with a range of ideas from devolving power from the centre to creating national education systems.

Mr Deneen's fixation on the essence of liberalism leads to the second big problem of his book: his failure to recognise liberalism's ability to reform itself and address its internal problems. The late 19<sup>th</sup> century saw America suffering from many of the problems that are reappearing today, including the creation of a business aristocracy, the rise of vast companies, the corruption of politics and the sense that society was dividing into winners and losers. But a wide variety of reformers, working within the liberal tradition, tackled these problems head on. Theodore Roosevelt took on the trusts. Progressives cleaned up government corruption. University reformers modernised academic syllabuses and built ladders of opportunity. Rather than dying, liberalism reformed itself.

Mr Deneen is right to point out that the record of liberalism in recent years has been dismal. He is also right to assert that the world has much to learn from the premodern notions of liberty as self-mastery and self-denial. The biggest enemy of liberalism is not so much atomisation but old-fashioned greed, as members of the Davos elite pile their plates ever higher with perks and share options. But he is wrong to argue that the only way for people to liberate themselves from the contradictions of liberalism is "liberation from liberalism itself". The best way to read "Why Liberalism Failed" is not as a funeral oration but as a call to action: up your game, or else.

05. The author of the passage faults Deneen's conclusions for all of the following reasons, EXCEPT:

- A. its repeated harking back to premodern notions of liberty.
  - B. its failure to note historical instances in which the process of declining liberalism has managed to reverse itself.
  - C. its very narrow definition of liberalism limited to individual freedoms.
  - D. its extreme pessimism about the future of liberalism today and predictions of an ultimate decline.
- 

06. The author of the passage is likely to disagree with all of the following statements, EXCEPT:

- A. the essence of liberalism lies in greater individual self-expression and freedoms.
  - B. liberalism was the dominant ideal in the past century, but it had to reform itself to remain so.
  - C. claims about liberalism's disintegration are exaggerated and misunderstand its core features.
  - D. if we accept that liberalism is a dying ideal, we must work to find a viable substitute.
- 

07. All of the following statements are evidence of the decline of liberalism today, EXCEPT:

- A. "... the creation of a business aristocracy, the rise of vast companies ..."
  - B. "And technological advances are reducing ever more areas of work into meaningless drudgery."
  - C. "Democracy has degenerated into a theatre of the absurd."
  - D. "'The gap between liberalism's claims about itself and the lived reality of the citizenry' is now so wide that 'the lie can no longer be accepted,' ..."
-



08. The author of the passage refers to "the Davos elite" to illustrate his views on:

- A. the way the debate around liberalism has been captured by the rich who have managed to insulate themselves from economic hardships.
- B. the fact that the rise in liberalism had led to a greater interest in shared futures from unlikely social classes.
- C. the unlikelihood of a return to the liberalism of the past as long as the rich continue to benefit from the decline in liberal values.
- D. the hypocrisy of the liberal rich, who profess to subscribe to liberal values while cornering most of the wealth.

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

The Positivists, anxious to stake out their claim for history as a science, contributed the weight of their influence to the cult of facts. First ascertain the facts, said the positivists, then draw your conclusions from them. . . . This is what may [be] called the common-sense view of history. History consists of a corpus of ascertained facts. The facts are available to the historian in documents, inscriptions, and so on . . . [Sir George Clark] contrasted the "hard core of facts" in history with the surrounding pulp of disputable interpretation forgetting perhaps that the pulpy part of the fruit is more rewarding than the hard core. . . . It recalls the favourite dictum of the great liberal journalist C. P. Scott: "Facts are sacred, opinion is free". . .

What is a historical fact? . . . According to the common-sense view, there are certain basic facts which are the same for all historians and which form, so to speak, the backbone of history—the fact, for example, that the Battle of Hastings was fought in 1066. But this view calls for two observations. In the first place, it is not with facts like these that the historian is primarily concerned. It is no doubt important to know that the great battle was fought in 1066 and not in 1065 or 1067, and that it was fought at Hastings and not at Eastbourne or Brighton. The historian must not get these things wrong. But [to] praise a historian for his accuracy is like praising an architect for using well-seasoned timber or properly mixed concrete in his building. It is a necessary condition of his work, but not his essential function. It is precisely for matters of this kind that the historian is entitled to rely on what have been called the "auxiliary sciences" of history—archaeology, epigraphy, numismatics, chronology, and so forth. . . .

The second observation is that the necessity to establish these basic facts rests not on any quality in the facts themselves, but on an apriori decision of the historian. In spite of C. P. Scott's motto, every journalist knows today that the most effective way to influence opinion is by the selection and arrangement of the appropriate facts. It used to be said that facts speak for themselves. This is, of course, untrue. The facts speak only when the historian calls on them: it is he who decides to which facts to give the floor, and in what order or context. . . . The only reason why we are interested to know that the battle was fought at Hastings in 1066 is that historians regard it as a major historical event. . . . Professor Talcott Parsons once called [science] "a selective system of cognitive orientations to reality." It might perhaps have been put more simply. But history is, among other things, that. The historian is necessarily selective. The belief in a hard core of historical facts existing objectively and independently of the interpretation of the historian is a preposterous fallacy, but one which it is very hard to eradicate.

09. All of the following, if true, can weaken the passage's claim that facts do not speak for themselves, EXCEPT:

- A. the truth value of a fact is independent of the historian who expresses it.
  - B. facts, like truth, can be relative: what is fact for person X may not be so for person Y.
  - C. a fact, by its very nature, is objective and universal, irrespective of the context in which it is placed.
  - D. the order in which a series of facts is presented does not have any bearing on the production of meaning.
- 

10. If the author of the passage were to write a book on the Battle of Hastings along the lines of his/her own reasoning, the focus of the historical account would be on:

- A. deriving historical facts from the relevant documents and inscriptions.
  - B. providing a nuanced interpretation by relying on the auxiliary sciences.
  - C. exploring the socio-political and economic factors that led to the Battle.
  - D. producing a detailed timeline of the various events that led to the Battle.
- 

11. According to this passage, which one of the following statements best describes the significance of archaeology for historians?

- A. Archaeology helps historians to carry out their primary duty.
  - B. Archaeology helps historians to interpret historical facts.
  - C. Archaeology helps historians to ascertain factual accuracy.
  - D. Archaeology helps historians to locate the oldest civilisations in history.
- 

12. All of the following describe the "common-sense view" of history, EXCEPT:

- A. history is like science: a selective system of cognitive orientations to reality.
  - B. only the positivist methods can lead to credible historical knowledge.
  - C. history can be objective like the sciences if it is derived from historical facts.
  - D. real history can be found in ancient engravings and archival documents.
- 

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

Umberto Eco, an Italian writer, was right when he said the language of Europe is translation. Netflix and other deep-pocketed global firms speak it well. Just as the EU employs a small army of translators and interpreters to turn intricate laws or impassioned speeches of Romanian MEPs into the EU's 24 official languages, so do the likes of Netflix. It now offers dubbing in 34 languages and subtitling in a few more. . . .



The economics of European productions are more appealing, too. American audiences are more willing than before to give dubbed or subtitled viewing a chance. This means shows such as "Lupin", a French crime caper on Netflix, can become global hits. . . . In 2015, about 75% of Netflix's original content was American; now the figure is half, according to Ampere, a media-analysis company. Netflix has about 100 productions under way in Europe, which is more than big public broadcasters in France or Germany. . . .

Not everything works across borders. Comedy sometimes struggles. Whodunits and bloodthirsty maelstroms between arch Romans and uppity tribesmen have a more universal appeal. Some do it better than others. Barbarians aside, German television is not always built for export, says one executive, being polite. A bigger problem is that national broadcasters still dominate. Streaming services, such as Netflix or Disney+, account for about a third of all viewing hours, even in markets where they are well-established. Europe is an ageing continent. The generation of teens staring at phones is outnumbered by their elders who prefer to gawp at the box.

In Brussels and national capitals, the prospect of Netflix as a cultural hegemon is seen as a threat. "Cultural sovereignty" is the watchword of European executives worried that the Americans will eat their lunch. To be fair, Netflix content sometimes seems stuck in an uncanny valley somewhere in the mid-Atlantic, with local quirks stripped out. Netflix originals tend to have fewer specific cultural references than shows produced by domestic rivals, according to Enders, a market analyst. The company used to have an imperial model of commissioning, with executives in Los Angeles cooking up ideas French people might like. Now Netflix has offices across Europe. But ultimately the big decisions rest with American executives. This makes European politicians nervous.

They should not be. An irony of European integration is that it is often American companies that facilitate it. Google Translate makes European newspapers comprehensible, even if a little clunky, for the continent's non-polyglots. American social-media companies make it easier for Europeans to talk politics across borders. (That they do not always like to hear what they say about each other is another matter.) Now Netflix and friends pump the same content into homes across a continent, making culture a cross-border endeavour, too. If Europeans are to share a currency, bail each other out in times of financial need and share vaccines in a pandemic, then they need to have something in common—even if it is just bingeing on the same series. Watching fictitious northern and southern Europeans tear each other apart 2,000 years ago beats doing so in reality.

13. Based on information provided in the passage, all of the following are true, EXCEPT:

- A. European television productions have the potential to become global hits.
- B. only half of Netflix's original programming in the EU is now produced in America.
- C. national broadcasters dominate in the EU in terms of total television viewing hours.
- D. Netflix has been able to transform itself into a truly European entity.

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14. The author sees the rise of Netflix in Europe as:

- A. a unifying force.
  - B. a looming cultural threat.
  - C. filling an entertainment gap.
  - D. an economic threat.
-



15. Which one of the following research findings would weaken the author's conclusion in the final paragraph?

- A. Research shows that Netflix has been gradually losing market share to other streaming television service providers.
- B. Research shows there is a wide variance in the popularity and viewing of Netflix shows across different EU countries.
- C. Research shows that older women across the EU enjoy watching romantic comedies on Netflix, whereas younger women prefer historical fiction dramas.
- D. Research shows that Netflix hits produced in France are very popular with North American audiences.

16. Based only on information provided in the passage, which one of the following hypothetical Netflix shows would be most successful with audiences across the EU?

- A. A trans-Atlantic romantic drama set in Europe and America.
- B. An original German TV science fiction production.
- C. A murder mystery drama set in North Africa and France.
- D. An Italian comedy show hosted by an international star.

17. There is a sentence that is missing in the paragraph below. Look at the paragraph and decide where (option 1, 2, 3, or 4) the following sentence would best fit.

**Sentence:** And probably much earlier, moving the documentation for kissing back 1,000 years compared to what was acknowledged in the scientific community.

**Paragraph:** Research has hypothesised that the earliest evidence of human lip kissing originated in a very specific geographical location in South Asia 3,500 years ago.\_\_(1)\_\_. From there it may have spread to other regions, simultaneously accelerating the spread of the herpes simplex virus 1. According to Dr Troels Pank Arbøll and Dr Sophie Lund Rasmussen, who in a new article in the journal Science draw on a range of written sources from the earliest Mesopotamian societies, kissing was already a well-established practice 4,500 years ago in the Middle East.\_\_(2)\_\_. In ancient Mesopotamia, people wrote in cuneiform script on clay tablets.\_\_(3)\_\_. Many thousands of these clay tablets have survived to this day, and they contain clear examples that kissing was considered a part of romantic intimacy in ancient times.\_\_(4)\_\_. "Kissing could also have been part of friendships and family members' relations," says Dr Troels Pank Arbøll, an expert on the history of medicine in Mesopotamia.

- A. Option 4
- B. Option 3
- C. Option 1
- D. Option 2

18. There is a sentence that is missing in the paragraph below. Look at the paragraph and decide where (option 1, 2, 3, or 4) the following sentence would best fit.

Sentence: Dualism was long held as the defining feature of developing countries in contrast to developed countries, where frontier technologies and high productivity were assumed to prevail.

Paragraph: \_\_\_(1)\_\_. At the core of development economics lies the idea of 'productive dualism': that poor countries' economies are split between a narrow 'modern' sector that uses advanced technologies and a larger 'traditional' sector characterized by very low productivity. \_\_\_(2)\_\_. While this distinction between developing and advanced economies may have made some sense in the 1950s and 1960s, it no longer appears to be very relevant. A combination of forces have produced a widening gap between the winners and those left behind. \_\_\_(3)\_\_. Convergence between poor and rich parts of the economy was arrested and regional disparities widened. \_\_\_(4)\_\_. As a result, policymakers in advanced economies are now grappling with the same questions that have long preoccupied developing economies: mainly how to close the gap with the more advanced parts of the economy.

- A. Option 1
- B. Option 2
- C. Option 3
- D. Option 4

19. Five jumbled up sentences (labelled 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5), related to a topic, are given below. Four of them can be put together to form a coherent paragraph. Identify the odd sentence and key in the number of that sentence as your answer.

1. Self-care particularly links to loneliness, behavioural problems, and negative academic outcomes.
2. "Latchkey children" refers to children who routinely return home from school to empty homes and take care of themselves for extended periods of time.
3. Although self-care generally points to negative outcomes, it is important to consider that the bulk of research has yet to track long-term consequences.
4. In research and practice, the phrase "children in self-care" has come to replace latchkey in an effort to more accurately reflect the nature of their circumstances.
5. Although parents might believe that self-care would be beneficial for development, recent research has found quite the opposite.

20. Five jumbled up sentences (labelled 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5), related to a topic, are given below. Four of them can be put together to form a coherent paragraph. Identify the odd sentence and key in the number of that sentence as your answer.

1. The banning of Northern Lights could be considered a precursor to censoring books for "moral", world view or religious reasons.
2. Attempts to ban books are attempts to silence authors who have summoned immense courage in telling their stories.
3. Now the banning and challenging of books in the US has escalated to an unprecedented level.
4. The widely acclaimed fantasy novel Northern Lights was banned in some parts of the US, and was the second most challenged book in the US.
5. The American Library Association documented an unparalleled number of reported book challenges in 2022, about 2,500 unique titles.

21. The four sentences (labelled 1, 2, 3 and 4) given below, when properly sequenced, would yield a coherent paragraph. Decide on the proper sequencing of the order of the sentences and key in the sequence of the four numbers as your answer.

1. Contemporary African writing like 'The Bottled Leopard' voices this theme using two children and two backgrounds to juxtapose two varying cultures.
  2. Chukwuemeka Ike explores the conflict, and casts the Western tradition as condescending, enveloping and unaccommodating towards local African practice.
  3. However, their views contradict the reality, for a rich and sustaining local African cultural ethos exists for all who care, to see and experience.
  4. Western Christian concepts tend to deny or feign ignorance about the existence of a genuine and enduring indigenous African tradition.
- 

22. The four sentences (labelled 1, 2, 3 and 4) given below, when properly sequenced, would yield a coherent paragraph. Decide on the proper sequencing of the order of the sentences and key in the sequence of the four numbers as your answer.

1. Like the ants that make up a colony, no single neuron holds complex information like self-awareness, hope or pride.
  2. Although the human brain is not yet understood enough to identify the mechanism by which emergence functions, most neurobiologists agree that complex interconnections among the parts give rise to qualities that belong only to the whole.
  3. Nonetheless, the sum of all neurons in the nervous system generate complex human emotions like fear and joy, none of which can be attributed to a single neuron.
  4. Human consciousness is often called an emergent property of the human brain.
- 

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

Heatwaves are becoming longer, frequent and intense due to climate change. The impacts of extreme heat are unevenly experienced; with older people and young children, those with pre-existing medical conditions and on low incomes significantly more vulnerable. Adaptation to heatwaves is a significant public policy concern. Research conducted among at-risk people in the UK reveals that even vulnerable people do not perceive themselves as at risk of extreme heat; therefore, early warnings of extreme heat events do not perform as intended. This suggests that understanding how extreme heat is narrated is very important. The news media play a central role in this process and can help warn people about the potential danger, as well as about impacts on infrastructure and society.

- A. Protection from heat waves is important but current reports and public policies seem ineffective.
  - B. Heatwaves pose an enormous risk; the media plays a pivotal role in alerting people to this danger.
  - C. People are vulnerable to heatwaves caused due to climate change, measures taken are ineffective.
  - D. News stories help in warning about heatwaves, but they have to become more effective.
-



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

People spontaneously create counterfactual alternatives to reality when they think "if only" or "what if" and imagine how the past could have been different. The mind computes counterfactuals for many reasons. Counterfactuals explain the past and prepare for the future, they implicate various relations including causal ones, and they affect intentions and decisions. They modulate emotions such as regret and relief, and they support moral judgments such as blame. The ability to create counterfactuals develops throughout childhood and contributes to reasoning about other people's beliefs, including their false beliefs.

- A. People create counterfactual alternatives to reality for various reasons, including reasoning about other people's beliefs.
  - B. Counterfactual thinking helps to reverse past and future actions and reason out false beliefs.
  - C. Counterfactual alternatives to reality are created for a variety of reasons and is part of one's developmental process.
  - D. Counterfactuals help people to prepare for the future by understanding intentions and making decisions.
-

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

The biggest challenge [The Nutmeg's Curse by Ghosh] throws down is to the prevailing understanding of when the climate crisis started. Most of us have accepted . . . that it started with the widespread use of coal at the beginning of the Industrial Age in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and worsened with the mass adoption of oil and natural gas in the 20<sup>th</sup>. Ghosh takes this history at least three centuries back, to the start of European colonialism in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. He [starts] the book with a 1621 massacre by Dutch invaders determined to impose a monopoly on nutmeg cultivation and trade in the Banda islands in today's Indonesia. Not only do the Dutch systematically depopulate the islands through genocide, they also try their best to bring nutmeg cultivation into plantation mode. These are the two points to which Ghosh returns through examples from around the world. One, how European colonialists decimated not only indigenous populations but also indigenous understanding of the relationship between humans and Earth. Two, how this was an invasion not only of humans but of the Earth itself, and how this continues to the present day by looking at nature as a 'resource' to exploit. . . . We know we are facing more frequent and more severe heatwaves, storms, floods, droughts and wildfires due to climate change. We know our expansion through deforestation, dam building, canal cutting – in short, terraforming, the word Ghosh uses – has brought us repeated disasters . . . Are these the responses of an angry Gaia who has finally had enough? By using the word 'curse' in the title, the author makes it clear that he thinks so. I use the pronoun 'who' knowingly, because Ghosh has quoted many non-European sources to enquire into the relationship between humans and the world around them so that he can question the prevalent way of looking at Earth as an inert object to be exploited to the maximum. As Ghosh's text, notes and bibliography show once more, none of this is new. There have always been challenges to the way European colonialists looked at other civilisations and at Earth. It is just that the invaders and their myriad backers in the fields of economics, politics, anthropology, philosophy, literature, technology, physics, chemistry, biology have dominated global intellectual discourse. . . . There are other points of view that we can hear today if we listen hard enough. Those observing global climate negotiations know about the Latin American way of looking at Earth as Pachamama (Earth Mother). They also know how such a framing is just provided lip service and is ignored in the substantive portions of the negotiations. In The Nutmeg's Curse, Ghosh explains why. He shows the extent of the vested interest in the oil economy – not only for oil-exporting countries, but also for a superpower like the US that controls oil drilling, oil prices and oil movement around the world. Many of us know power utilities are sabotaging decentralised solar power generation today because it hits their revenues and control. And how the other points of view are so often drowned out.

01. On the basis of information in the passage, which one of the following is NOT a reason for the failure of policies seeking to address climate change?
- A. The greed of organisations benefiting from non-renewable energy resources.
  - B. The marginalised status of non-European ways of looking at nature and the environment.
  - C. The decentralised characteristic of renewable energy resources like solar power.
  - D. The global dominance of oil economies and international politics built around it.
-

02. Which one of the following best explains the primary purpose of the discussion of the colonisation of the Banda islands in "The Nutmeg's Curse"?

- A. To illustrate how systemic violence against the colonised constituted the cornerstone of colonialism.
  - B. To illustrate the first instance in history when the processes responsible for climate change were initiated.
  - C. To illustrate the role played by the cultivation of certain crops in the plantation mode in contributing to climate change.
  - D. To illustrate how colonialism represented and perpetuated the mindset that has led to climate change.
- 

03. All of the following can be inferred from the reviewer's discussion of "The Nutmeg's Curse", EXCEPT:

- A. academic discourses have always served the function of raising awareness about environmental preservation.
  - B. environmental preservation policy makers can learn a lot from non-European and/or pre-colonial societies.
  - C. the contemporary dominant perception of nature and the environment was put in place by processes of colonialism.
  - D. the history of climate change is deeply intertwined with the history of colonialism.
- 

04. Which one of the following, if true, would make the reviewer's choice of the pronoun "who" for Gaia inappropriate?

- A. Modern western science discovers new evidence for the Earth being an inanimate object.
  - B. Ghosh's book has a different title: "The Nutmeg's Revenge".
  - C. Non-European societies have perceived the Earth as a non-living source of all resources.
  - D. There is a direct cause-effect relationship between human activities and global climate change.
- 

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

Steven Pinker's new book, "Rationality: What It Is, Why It Seems Scarce, Why It Matters," offers a pragmatic dose of measured optimism, presenting rationality as a fragile but achievable ideal in personal and civic life. . . . Pinker's ambition to illuminate such a crucial topic offers the welcome prospect of a return to sanity. . . . It's no small achievement to make formal logic, game theory, statistics and Bayesian reasoning delightful topics full of charm and relevance.



It's also plausible to believe that a wider application of the rational tools he analyzes would improve the world in important ways. His primer on statistics and scientific uncertainty is particularly timely and should be required reading before consuming any news about the [COVID] pandemic. More broadly, he argues that less media coverage of shocking but vanishingly rare events, from shark attacks to adverse vaccine reactions, would help prevent dangerous overreactions, fatalism and the diversion of finite resources away from solvable but less-dramatic issues, like malnutrition in the developing world.

It's a reasonable critique, and Pinker is not the first to make it. But analyzing the political economy of journalism – its funding structures, ownership concentration and increasing reliance on social media shares – would have given a fuller picture of why so much coverage is so misguided and what we might do about it.

Pinker's main focus is the sort of conscious, sequential reasoning that can track the steps in a geometric proof or an argument in formal logic. Skill in this domain maps directly onto the navigation of many real-world problems, and Pinker shows how greater mastery of the tools of rationality can improve decision-making in medical, legal, financial and many other contexts in which we must act on uncertain and shifting information. . . .

Despite the undeniable power of the sort of rationality he describes, many of the deepest insights in the history of science, math, music and art strike their originators in moments of epiphany. From the 19<sup>th</sup>-century chemist Friedrich August Kekulé's discovery of the structure of benzene to any of Mozart's symphonies, much extraordinary human achievement is not a product of conscious, sequential reasoning. Even Plato's Socrates – who anticipated many of Pinker's points by nearly 2,500 years, showing the virtue of knowing what you do not know and examining all premises in arguments, not simply trusting speakers' authority or charisma – attributed many of his most profound insights to dreams and visions. Conscious reasoning is helpful in sorting the wheat from the chaff, but it would be interesting to consider the hidden aquifers that make much of the grain grow in the first place.

The role of moral and ethical education in promoting rational behavior is also underexplored. Pinker recognizes that rationality "is not just a cognitive virtue but a moral one." But this profoundly important point, one subtly explored by ancient Greek philosophers like Plato and Aristotle, doesn't really get developed. This is a shame, since possessing the right sort of moral character is arguably a precondition for using rationality in beneficial ways.

05. The author refers to the ancient Greek philosophers to:

- A. indicate the various similarities between their thinking and Pinker's conclusions.
  - B. reveal gaps in Pinker's discussion of the importance of ethical considerations in rational behaviour.
  - C. show how dreams and visions have for centuries influenced subconscious behaviour and pathbreaking inventions.
  - D. highlight the influence of their thinking on the development of Pinker's arguments.
-

06. The author mentions Kekulé's discovery of the structure of benzene and Mozart's symphonies to illustrate the point that:
- A. great innovations across various fields can stem from flashes of intuition and are not always propelled by logical thinking.
  - B. unlike the sciences, human achievements in other fields are a mix of logical reasoning and spontaneous epiphanies.
  - C. Pinker's conclusions on sequential reasoning are belied by European achievements which, in the past, were more rooted in unconscious bursts of genius.
  - D. it is not just the creative arts, but also scientific fields that have benefitted from flashes of creativity.
- 
07. According to the author, for Pinker as well as the ancient Greek philosophers, rational thinking involves all of the following EXCEPT:
- A. the belief that the ability to reason logically encompasses an ethical and moral dimension.
  - B. an awareness of underlying assumptions in an argument and gaps in one's own knowledge.
  - C. the primacy of conscious sequential reasoning as the basis for seminal human achievements.
  - D. arriving at independent conclusions irrespective of who is presenting the argument.
- 
08. The author endorses Pinker's views on the importance of logical reasoning as it:
- A. equips people with the ability to tackle challenging practical problems.
  - B. focuses public attention on real issues like development rather than sensational events.
  - C. provides a moral compass for resolving important ethical dilemmas.
  - D. helps people to gain expertise in statistics and other scientific disciplines.
- 

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

In 2006, the Met [art museum in the US] agreed to return the Euphronios krater, a masterpiece Greek urn that had been a museum draw since 1972. In 2007, the Getty [art museum in the US] agreed to return 40 objects to Italy, including a marble Aphrodite, in the midst of looting scandals. And in December, Sotheby's and a private owner agreed to return an ancient Khmer statue of a warrior, pulled from auction two years before, to Cambodia.

Cultural property, or patrimony, laws limit the transfer of cultural property outside the source country's territory, including outright export prohibitions and national ownership laws. Most art historians, archaeologists, museum officials and policymakers portray cultural property laws in general as invaluable tools for counteracting the ugly legacy of Western cultural imperialism.



During the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century – an era former Met director Thomas Hoving called "the age of piracy" – American and European art museums acquired antiquities by hook or by crook, from grave robbers or souvenir collectors, bounty from digs and ancient sites in impoverished but art-rich source countries. Patrimony laws were intended to protect future archaeological discoveries against Western imperialist designs. . . .

I surveyed 90 countries with one or more archaeological sites on UNESCO's World Heritage Site list, and my study shows that in most cases the number of discovered sites diminishes sharply after a country passes a cultural property law. There are 222 archaeological sites listed for those 90 countries. When you look into the history of the sites, you see that all but 21 were discovered before the passage of cultural property laws. . . .

Strict cultural patrimony laws are popular in most countries. But the downside may be that they reduce incentives for foreign governments, nongovernmental organizations and educational institutions to invest in overseas exploration because their efforts will not necessarily be rewarded by opportunities to hold, display and study what is uncovered. To the extent that source countries can fund their own archaeological projects, artifacts and sites may still be discovered. . . . The survey has far-reaching implications. It suggests that source countries, particularly in the developing world, should narrow their cultural property laws so that they can reap the benefits of new archaeological discoveries, which typically increase tourism and enhance cultural pride. This does not mean these nations should abolish restrictions on foreign excavation and foreign claims to artifacts.

China provides an interesting alternative approach for source nations eager for foreign archaeological investment. From 1935 to 2003, China had a restrictive cultural property law that prohibited foreign ownership of Chinese cultural artifacts. In those years, China's most significant archaeological discovery occurred by chance, in 1974, when peasant farmers accidentally uncovered ranks of buried terra cotta warriors, which are part of Emperor Qin's spectacular tomb system.

In 2003, the Chinese government switched course, dropping its cultural property law and embracing collaborative international archaeological research. Since then, China has nominated 11 archaeological sites for inclusion in the World Heritage Site list, including eight in 2013, the most ever for China.

09. From the passage we can infer that the author is likely to advise poor, but archaeologically-rich source countries to do all of the following, EXCEPT:
- A. to find ways to motivate other countries to finance archaeological explorations in their country.
  - B. allow foreign countries to analyse and exhibit the archaeological finds made in the source country.
  - C. adopt China's strategy of dropping its cultural property laws and carrying out archaeological research through international collaboration.
  - D. fund institutes in other countries to undertake archaeological exploration in the source country reaping the benefits of cutting-edge techniques.
- 
10. It can be inferred from the passage that archaeological sites are considered important by some source countries because they:
- A. give a boost to the tourism sector.
  - B. are a symbol of Western imperialism.
  - C. generate funds for future discoveries.
  - D. are subject to strict patrimony laws.



11. Which one of the following statements, if true, would undermine the central idea of the passage?

- A. Affluent archaeologically-rich source countries can afford to carry out their own excavations.
- B. Museums established in economically deprived archaeologically-rich source countries can display the antiques discovered there.
- C. Western countries will have to apologise to countries for looting their cultural property in the past century.
- D. UNESCO finances archaeological research in poor, but archaeologically-rich source countries.

12. Which one of the following statements best expresses the paradox of patrimony laws?

- A. They were intended to protect cultural property, but instead resulted in the neglect of historical sites.
- B. They were aimed at protecting cultural property, but instead reduced business for auctioneers like Sotheby's.
- C. They were aimed at protecting cultural property, but instead reduced new archaeological discoveries.
- D. They were intended to protect cultural property, but instead resulted in the withholding of national treasure from museums.

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

Understanding romantic aesthetics is not a simple undertaking for reasons that are internal to the nature of the subject. Distinguished scholars, such as Arthur Lovejoy, Northrop Frye and Isaiah Berlin, have remarked on the notorious challenges facing any attempt to define romanticism. Lovejoy, for example, claimed that romanticism is "the scandal of literary history and criticism" . . . The main difficulty in studying the romantics, according to him, is the lack of any "single real entity, or type of entity" that the concept "romanticism" designates. Lovejoy concluded, "the word 'romantic' has come to mean so many things that, by itself, it means nothing" . . .

The more specific task of characterizing romantic aesthetics adds to these difficulties an air of paradox. Conventionally, "aesthetics" refers to a theory concerning beauty and art or the branch of philosophy that studies these topics. However, many of the romantics rejected the identification of aesthetics with a circumscribed domain of human life that is separated from the practical and theoretical domains of life. The most characteristic romantic commitment is to the idea that the character of art and beauty and of our engagement with them should shape all aspects of human life. Being fundamental to human existence, beauty and art should be a central ingredient not only in a philosophical or artistic life, but also in the lives of ordinary men and women. Another challenge for any attempt to characterize romantic aesthetics lies in the fact that most of the romantics were poets and artists whose views of art and beauty are, for the most part, to be found not in developed theoretical accounts, but in fragments, aphorisms and poems, which are often more elusive and suggestive than conclusive.

Nevertheless, in spite of these challenges the task of characterizing romantic aesthetics is neither impossible nor undesirable, as numerous thinkers responding to Lovejoy's radical skepticism have noted. While warning against a reductive definition of romanticism, Berlin, for example, still heralded the need for a general characterization: "

Nevertheless, in spite of these challenges the task of characterizing romantic aesthetics is neither impossible nor undesirable, as numerous thinkers responding to Lovejoy's radical skepticism have noted. While warning against a reductive definition of romanticism, Berlin, for example, still heralded the need for a general characterization: "[Although] one does have a certain sympathy with Lovejoy's despair...[he is] in this instance mistaken. There was a romantic movement...and it is important to discover what it is" . . .

Recent attempts to characterize romanticism and to stress its contemporary relevance follow this path. Instead of overlooking the undeniable differences between the variety of romanticisms of different nations that Lovejoy had stressed, such studies attempt to characterize romanticism, not in terms of a single definition, a specific time, or a specific place, but in terms of "particular philosophical questions and concerns" . . .

While the German, British and French romantics are all considered, the central protagonists in the following are the German romantics. Two reasons explain this focus: first, because it has paved the way for the other romanticisms, German romanticism has a pride of place among the different national romanticisms . . . Second, the aesthetic outlook that was developed in Germany roughly between 1796 and 1801–02 – the period that corresponds to the heyday of what is known as "Early Romanticism" . . . – offers the most philosophical expression of romanticism since it is grounded primarily in the epistemological, metaphysical, ethical, and political concerns that the German romantics discerned in the aftermath of Kant's philosophy.

13. According to the romantics, aesthetics:

- A. is widely considered to be irrelevant to human existence.
- B. permeates all aspects of human life, philosophical and mundane.
- C. should be confined to a specific domain separate from the practical and theoretical aspects of life.
- D. is primarily the concern of philosophers and artists, rather than of ordinary people.

14. Which one of the following statements is NOT supported by the passage?

- A. Recent studies on romanticism seek to refute the differences between national romanticisms.
- B. Romantic aesthetics are primarily expressed through fragments, aphorisms, and poems.
- C. Many romantics rejected the idea of aesthetics as a domain separate from other aspects of life.
- D. Characterising romantic aesthetics is both possible and desirable, despite the challenges involved.

15. The main difficulty in studying romanticism is the:

- A. absence of written accounts by romantic poets and artists.
- B. elusive and suggestive nature of romantic aesthetics.
- C. controversial and scandalous history of romantic literature.
- D. lack of clear conceptual contours of the domain.

16. According to the passage, recent studies on romanticism avoid "a single definition, a specific time, or a specific place" because they:

- A. prefer to highlight the paradox of romantic aesthetics as a concept.
- B. seek to discredit Lovejoy's scepticism regarding romanticism.
- C. understand that the variety of romanticisms renders a general analysis impossible.
- D. prefer to focus on the fundamental concerns of the romantics.

17. There is a sentence that is missing in the paragraph below. Look at the paragraph and decide where (option 1, 2, 3, or 4) the following sentence would best fit.

Sentence: For theoretical purposes, arguments may be considered as freestanding entities, abstracted from their contexts of use in actual human activities.

Paragraph : \_\_\_\_(1)\_\_. An argument can be defined as a complex symbolic structure where some parts, known as the premises, offer support to another part, the conclusion. Alternatively, an argument can be viewed as a complex speech act consisting of one or more acts of premising (which assert propositions in favor of the conclusion), an act of concluding, and a stated or implicit marker ("hence", "therefore") that indicates that the conclusion follows from the premises.\_\_(2)\_\_. The relation of support between premises and conclusion can be cashed out in different ways: the premises may guarantee the truth of the conclusion, or make its truth more probable; the premises may imply the conclusion; the premises may make the conclusion more acceptable (or assertible).\_\_(3)\_\_. But depending on one's explanatory goals, there is also much to be gained from considering arguments as they in fact occur in human communicative practices.\_\_(4)\_\_.

- A. Option 1
- B. Option 4
- C. Option 2
- D. Option 3

18. There is a sentence that is missing in the paragraph below. Look at the paragraph and decide where (option 1, 2, 3, or 4) the following sentence would best fit.

Sentence: Beyond undermining the monopoly of the State on the use of force, armed conflict also creates an environment that can enable organized crime to prosper.

Paragraph: \_\_\_\_(1)\_\_. Linkages between illicit arms, organized crime, and armed conflict can reinforce one another while also escalating and prolonging violence and eroding governance.\_\_(2)\_\_. Financial gains from crime can lengthen or intensify armed conflicts by creating revenue streams for non-State armed groups (NSAGs).\_\_(3)\_\_. In this context, when hostilities cease and parties to a conflict move towards a peaceful resolution, the widespread availability of surplus arms and ammunition can contribute to a situation of 'criminalized peace' that obstructs sustainable peacebuilding efforts.\_\_(4)\_\_.

- A. Option 2
- B. Option 4
- C. Option 1
- D. Option 3



19. Five jumbled up sentences (labelled 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5), related to a topic, are given below. Four of them can be put together to form a coherent paragraph. Identify the odd sentence and key in the number of that sentence as your answer.

1. Although hard skills have traditionally ruled the roost, some companies are moving away from choosing prospective hires based on technical abilities alone.
  2. Companies are shaking off the old definition of an ideal candidate and ditching the idea of looking for the singularly perfect candidate altogether.
  3. Now, some job descriptions are frequently asking for candidates to demonstrate soft skills, such as leadership or teamwork.
  4. That's not to say that practical know-how is no longer required – some jobs still call for highly specific expertise
  5. The move towards prioritising soft skills "is a natural response to three years of the pandemic" says a senior recruiter at Cenlar FSB.
- 

20. Five jumbled up sentences (labelled 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5), related to a topic, are given below. Four of them can be put together to form a coherent paragraph. Identify the odd sentence and key in the number of that sentence as your answer.

1. Boa Senior, who lived through the 2004 tsunami, the Japanese occupation and diseases brought by British settlers, was the last native of the island chain who was fluent in Bo.
  2. The indigenous population has been steadily collapsing since the island chain was colonised by British settlers in 1858 and used for most of the following 100 years as a colonial penal colony.
  3. Taking its name from a now-extinct tribe, Bo is one of the 10 Great Andamanese languages, which are thought to date back to pre-Neolithic human settlement of south-east Asia.
  4. The last speaker of an ancient tribal language has died in the Andaman Islands, breaking a 65,000-year link to one of the world's oldest cultures.
  5. Though the language has been closely studied by researchers of linguistic history, Boa Senior spent the last few years of her life unable to converse with anyone in her mother tongue.
- 

21. The four sentences (labelled 1, 2, 3 and 4) given below, when properly sequenced, would yield a coherent paragraph. Decide on the proper sequencing of the order of the sentences and key in the sequence of the four numbers as your answer.

1. Veena Sahajwalla, a materials scientist at the University of New South Wales, believes there is a new way of solving this problem.
  2. Her vision is for automated drones and robots to pick out components, put them into a small furnace and smelt them at specific temperatures to extract the metals one by one before they are sent off to manufacturers for reuse.
  3. E-waste contains huge quantities of valuable metals, ceramics and plastics that could be salvaged and recycled, although currently not enough of it is.
  4. She plans to build microfactories that can tease apart the tangle of materials in mobile phones, computers and other e-waste.
-

22. The four sentences (labelled 1, 2, 3 and 4) given below, when properly sequenced, would yield a coherent paragraph. Decide on the proper sequencing of the order of the sentences and key in the sequence of the four numbers as your answer.

1. Centuries later formal learning is still mostly based on reading, even with the widespread use of other possible education-affecting technologies such as film, radio, and television.
2. One of the immediate and recognisable impacts of the printing press was on how people learned; in the scribal culture it primarily involved listening, so memorization was paramount.
3. The transformation of learners from listeners to readers was a complex social and cultural phenomenon, and it was not until the industrial era that the concept of universal literacy took root.
4. The printing press shifted the learning process, as listening and memorisation gradually gave way to reading and learning no longer required the presence of a mentor; it could be done privately.

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

Gradually, life for the island's birds is improving. Antarctic prions and white-headed petrels, which also nest in burrows, had managed to cling on in some sites while pests were on the island. Their numbers are now increasing. "It's fantastic and so exciting," Shaw says. As birds return to breed, they also poo. This adds nutrients to the soil, which in turn helps the plants to grow back stronger. Tall plants then help burrowing birds hide from predatory skuas. "It's this wonderful feedback loop," Shaw says. Today, the "pretty paddock" that Houghton first experienced has been transformed. "The tussock is over your head, and you're dodging all these penguin tunnels," she says. The orchids and tiny herb that had been protected by fencing have started turning up all over the place.

- A. There is an increasing number of predatory birds and plants on the island despite the presence of pests which is a positive development.
  - B. In the absence of pests, life on the island is now protected, and there has been a revival of a variety of birds and plants.
  - C. There is a huge positive transformation of the ecosystem of the island when brought under environmental protection.
  - D. Flowering plants, herbs and birds are now being protected on this wonderful Antarctic island.
-

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

The weight of society's expectations is hardly a new phenomenon but it has become particularly draining over recent decades, perhaps because expectations themselves are so multifarious and contradictory. The perfectionism of the 1950s was rooted in the norms of mass culture and captured in famous advertising images of the ideal white American family that now seem self-satirising. In that era, perfectionism meant seamlessly conforming to values, behaviour and appearance: chiselled confidence for men, demure graciousness for women. The perfectionist was under pressure to look like everyone else, only more so. The perfectionists of today, by contrast, feel an obligation to stand out through their idiosyncratic style and wit if they are to gain a foothold in the attention economy.

- A. Though long-standing, the pressure to appear perfect and thereby attract attention, has evolved over time from one of conformism to one of non-conformism.
  - B. The pressure to appear perfect has been the cause of tension and conflict because the idea itself has been in a state of flux and hard to define.
  - C. The desire to attract attention is so deep-rooted in individual consciousness that people are willing to go to any lengths to achieve it.
  - D. The image of perfectionism is reflected in and perpetuated by the media; and people do their best to adhere to these ideals.
-



**VARC Slot 1 Answer Key**

Question No.	Answer
1	Option C
2	Option A
3	Option C
4	Option B
5	Option C
6	Option C
7	Option A
8	Option A
9	Option C
10	Option A
11	Option D
12	Option D
13	Option C
14	Option B
15	Option D
16	Option A
17	Option C
18	Option D
19	Answer is 3
20	Answer is 2
21	Answer is 4123
22	Answer is 4123
23	Option C
24	Option D

**VARC Slot 2 Answer Key**

Question No.	Answer
1	Option C
2	Option A
3	Option B
4	Option C
5	Option A
6	Option B
7	Option B
8	Option D
9	Option B
10	Option C
11	Option C
12	Option A
13	Option D
14	Option A
15	Option B
16	Option C
17	Option D
18	Option B
19	Answer is 3
20	Answer is 2
21	Answer is 4312
22	Answer is 4132
23	Option B
24	Option C

**VARC Slot 3 Answer Key**

Question No.	Answer
1	Option C
2	Option D
3	Option A
4	Option C
5	Option B
6	Option A
7	Option C
8	Option A
9	Option D
10	Option A
11	Option D
12	Option C
13	Option B
14	Option A
15	Option D
16	Option D
17	Option D
18	Option D
19	Answer is 2
20	Answer is 2
21	Answer is 3142
22	Answer is 2431
23	Option B
24	Option A