BLOGS

Passage-Based Questions on English for CLAT UG [Part 19]

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Passage 1 (P.1)

Memory is often mistaken for a vault, a secure chamber in which experiences are stored intact until retrieved. This metaphor is comforting but misleading. Contemporary cognitive science suggests that memory is not archival but reconstructive. Each act of remembering is less an act of retrieval and more an act of reassembly. The past is not recovered; it is reauthored. Yet the instability of memory does not diminish its authority in shaping identity. On the contrary, the self is built not from objective records but from remembered narratives. We become the stories we repeatedly tell about ourselves. The memory of failure may grow sharper with repetition, acquiring new emotional textures; the memory of success may soften, losing its vivid edges. Over time, recollection edits, arranges, and reframes. This dynamic process raises unsettling questions about authenticity. If memory is partly creative, then personal identity rests on interpretive acts rather than factual precision. But perhaps this is less a defect than a feature.

The capacity to reinterpret one’s past allows growth. A humiliating moment in youth can later be reframed as formative. Trauma, though never trivial, can be integrated into a broader narrative of resilience. However, the malleability of memory also introduces risk. Collective memory in societies functions similarly. Historical events are commemorated selectively. Some are amplified into defining myths; others are quietly omitted. What is remembered shapes what is valued.

What is forgotten shapes what is permitted to recur. Thus, memory operates at both individual and collective levels as a force of continuity and distortion. It provides coherence while simultaneously reshaping what it seeks to preserve. The question is not whether memory is reliable in a mechanical sense, but whether it is honest in its intention. Do we revise in order to understand, or do we revise in order to evade? The self, then, is neither a fixed archive nor a deliberate fiction. It is an evolving manuscript. Its revisions are inevitable. The ethical challenge lies in recognizing when revision becomes denial.

1. The author challenges the “vault” metaphor of memory primarily because it ?

a) Underestimates emotional experience

b) Romanticizes the past

c) Ignores neurological processes

d) Assumes memory stores experiences unchanged

2. The passage suggests that the instability of memory ?

a) Makes identity meaningless

b) Eliminates personal accountability

c) Enables reinterpretation and growth

d) Proves that memory is unreliable in all respects

3. The discussion of collective memory serves to ?

a) Criticize nationalism directly

b) Illustrate that memory’s reconstructive nature extends beyond individuals

c) Prove that societies manipulate history intentionally

d) Argue that history is entirely fictional

4. The author’s overall stance toward memory is best described as ?

a) Nuanced and reflective

b) Alarmist and accusatory

c) Cynical and dismissive

d) Purely scientific

5. The final sentence implies that the ethical concern is not memory’s inaccuracy but ?

a) Its emotional intensity

b) The intention behind its reinterpretation

c) Its neurological basis

d) Its role in legal disputes

Passage 2 (P.2)

Modern public discourse increasingly rewards speed over substance. Complex issues are compressed into slogans designed for rapid circulation rather than careful examination. The architecture of digital platforms privileges brevity, emotional intensity, and moral certainty. In such an environment, ambiguity appears as weakness. The consequences of this shift are subtle

yet significant. Policies concerning climate change, economic reform, or public health are inherently layered.

They involve trade-offs, incomplete data, and competing values. However, when these complexities are reduced to binary oppositions, the public imagination is narrowed. Citizens are encouraged to align with identities rather than evaluate evidence. This simplification is not always malicious. Many participants genuinely believe that clarity requires decisiveness. Yet clarity is not identical with reduction. A statement can be precise without being simplistic. The difficulty lies in sustaining attention long enough to accommodate nuance. Moreover, oversimplified debate produces polarization.

When arguments are framed as moral absolutes, compromise appears as betrayal. Opponents are cast not as interlocutors but as adversaries. The possibility of mutual correction diminishes. A democratic culture depends not merely on freedom of speech but on habits of listening. The willingness to revise one's position in light of new information is a civic virtue. However, such revision is rarely rewarded in highly visible arenas where consistency is equated with strength. The temptation of simplification will persist because it offers cognitive comfort. It reduces uncertainty and clarifies allegiance. Yet if democratic deliberation is to retain credibility, it must resist the seduction of easy coherence and recover respect for complexity.

6. The central concern of the passage is that public discourse ?

a) complex issues into simplistic binaries

b) Favors emotional expression over evidence

c) Has become more accessibleReduces

d) Is controlled entirely by digital corporations

7. The author distinguishes between clarity and reduction to argue that ?

a) All simple arguments are flawed

b) Slogans are inherently immoral

c) Ambiguity should always dominate debate

d) Precision can coexist with complexity

8. The passage implies that polarization increases when ?

a) Citizens read more widely.

b) Issues are framed as moral absolutes.

c) Evidence is presented slowly.

d) Debate occurs offline.

9. The tone of the editorial is best described as ?

a) Outraged and accusatory

b) Detached and technical

c) Concerned yet analytical

d) Satirical and mocking

10. The phrase “cognitive comfort” suggests that simplification ?

a) Enhances intellectual rigor

b) Eliminates uncertainty in a reassuring way

c) Increases democratic participation

d) Encourages critical thinking

Passage 3 (P.3)

The public library where I spent my adolescence was not architecturally remarkable. It had fluorescent lighting, thin carpet, and shelves that leaned slightly inward as if in quiet fatigue. Yet within those walls I encountered a world that extended far beyond the narrow radius of my neighborhood. On weekday afternoons, the building hummed with subdued industry. Retirees read newspapers at the long oak tables. Students leafed through exam guides with visible urgency.

The librarians moved with a kind of disciplined gentleness, correcting misfiled volumes without spectacle. There was an unspoken code: silence was not enforced but shared. When the notice appeared announcing reduced funding, it seemed temporary. Budget constraints were framed as procedural adjustments. But weeks later, the hours shortened. Then entire sections were cordoned off. Finally, a printed sheet taped to the entrance declared indefinite closure pending “administrative review.” I returned on the final open day. The atmosphere was strangely subdued. Some patrons borrowed more books than usual, as if hoarding time itself. Others simply sat longer than necessary.

I realized then that the library’s value had never been limited to its inventory. It was a space where attention was normalized. Distraction did not dominate. The room offered not merely information but permission permission to linger over ideas without immediate utility. When the doors locked, nothing dramatic occurred. There were no protests, no speeches. The closure was

bureaucratic and quiet. Yet the absence altered the neighborhood subtly.

Students gathered elsewhere, but the quality of concentration shifted. The digital alternatives were efficient but impatient. I do not romanticize the past. The library was imperfect, occasionally underfunded, and often overlooked. But its disappearance clarified what had previously been taken for granted: that spaces devoted to sustained thought are fragile. They depend less on nostalgia than on collective will.

11. The narrator's primary realization about the library occurs when ?

a) Funding is first reduced

b) The librarians begin reorganizing shelves

c) The final closure notice appears

d) He observes patrons on the last open day

12. The description of the library's physical features serves mainly to ?

a) Criticize its outdated design

b) Contrast its modest appearance with its deeper significance

c) Emphasize financial mismanagement

d) Suggest negligence by authorities

13. The author contrasts the library with digital alternatives to suggest that ?

a) Technology is harmful

b) Physical books are superior in all respects

c) Digital spaces lack the same culture of sustained attention

d) Online resources are inaccessible

14. The tone of the narrative is ?

a) Bitter and resentful

b) Sentimental but reflective

c) Detached and indifferent

d) Dramatic and exaggerated

15. The final paragraph implies that institutions like libraries endure only if ?

a) They are commercially profitable.

b) They modernize technologically.

c) Communities actively value and sustain them.

d) Governments mandate attendance.

Answers

1. D – The author rejects the “vault” metaphor because memory does not store events exactly as they happened; it reconstructs them each time we remember.
2. C – The passage suggests that the flexibility of memory allows people to reinterpret past experiences in ways that support personal development.
3. B – By discussing collective memory, the author shows that societies also selectively reconstruct the past just as individuals do.
4. A – The author neither fully criticizes nor fully praises memory but thoughtfully examines both its creative potential and its risks.
5. B – The final line stresses that the real ethical issue is why we revise memories—whether to understand honestly or to avoid uncomfortable truths.
6. A – The passage warns that modern discourse compresses complicated policies into slogans and opposing camps.
7. D – The author argues that clarity does not require oversimplification; arguments can remain precise while still acknowledging complexity.
8. B – When debates are presented as absolute right-versus-wrong conflicts, compromise becomes difficult and polarization increases.
9. C – The author expresses worry about the state of public debate but does so through careful reasoning rather than emotional accusation.
10. B – “Cognitive comfort” refers to the psychological ease people feel when complicated issues are simplified into clear, certain positions.
11. D – Seeing how people linger, borrow extra books, and quietly occupy the space makes the narrator realise the library’s deeper value.
12. B – The ordinary physical description highlights that despite its simplicity, the library played an important intellectual and social role.
13. C – The narrator suggests that while digital tools are efficient, they do not foster the same patient focus that the library environment encouraged.
14. B – The passage expresses quiet nostalgia for the library while also thoughtfully reflecting on its broader significance.

15. C – The final lines suggest that spaces for thoughtful engagement survive only when communities collectively choose to support and protect them.