BLOGS

Passage-Based Questions on English for CLAT UG [Part 24]

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Passage 1 (P.1)

Throughout modern history, alliances between nations have rarely been permanent arrangements. Rather, they have reflected shifting calculations of national interest. A country may find it advantageous to cooperate with a partner in one decade, only to regard the same partner with suspicion in the next. This fluidity is not necessarily a sign of diplomatic failure; instead, it reflects the reality that international politics is shaped less by enduring friendship than by pragmatic assessment of power and security. Strategic alliances often emerge during moments of perceived threat. When states believe their security is endangered, they tend to seek partners who share similar concerns. Yet the very circumstances that produce alliances may also sow the seeds of their eventual dissolution. Once the immediate threat recedes or changes form, the incentives that originally bound the alliance together may weaken.

Another challenge arises from asymmetry among allied states. Powerful nations may expect smaller partners to align closely with their broader strategic objectives, while smaller states often attempt to preserve a degree of autonomy. This imbalance can create tensions within alliances, particularly when the interests of the partners begin to diverge. Moreover, alliances may generate unintended consequences. Rival powers sometimes interpret alliances as aggressive acts rather than defensive arrangements, prompting them to form counter-alliances of their own.

In this way, efforts to enhance security can paradoxically contribute to wider geopolitical competition. Nevertheless, alliances remain central to international diplomacy. Even if they are inherently unstable, they provide mechanisms for cooperation, deterrence, and collective action. The challenge for policymakers lies not in creating perfectly stable alliances—an impossible task – but in managing their inevitable evolution without allowing cooperation to deteriorate into conflict.

1. The central argument of the passage is that international alliances are ?

a. inherently unstable due to the absence of shared values

b. temporary arrangements shaped by shifting national interests

c. primarily motivated by cultural and historical ties

d. largely ineffective in maintaining international security

2. The author's reference to "asymmetry among allied states" primarily serves to highlight ?

a. the economic inequalities that exist between nations

b. the structural tensions that may arise within alliances

c. the cultural differences among allied populations

d. the diplomatic failures of smaller states

3. Which of the following statements would the author most likely agree with?

a. Alliances should be avoided because they inevitably lead to conflict.

b. Alliances can both enhance security and generate new geopolitical tensions.

c. Alliances remain stable as long as countries share ideological similarities.

d. Military alliances are gradually becoming irrelevant in modern diplomacy.

4. Which of the following developments would most strongly undermine the author's argument?

a. Evidence that alliances frequently collapse once threats disappear

b. Evidence that alliances sometimes deter aggression by rival states

c. Evidence that alliances between states often persist for centuries regardless of shifting interests

d. Evidence that powerful states often dominate decision-making within alliances

5. The author's tone throughout the passage can best be described as ?

a. analytical and cautiously pragmatic

b. strongly critical of global diplomacy

c. emotionally persuasive

d. indifferent toward geopolitical developments

Passage 2 (P.2)

Human beings possess a deep desire for certainty. We prefer to believe that our beliefs are correct, our judgments justified, and our understanding of the world secure. Yet much of philosophy has been devoted to questioning this confidence. Philosophers have repeatedly argued that the appearance of certainty often masks underlying assumptions that remain unexamined. Consider the way individuals form opinions about complex social issues. Many people adopt firm positions despite having only limited information.

They rely on intuition, social influences, or partial evidence, interpreting these fragments as sufficient proof of their conclusions. In doing so, they mistake confidence for knowledge. Philosophical inquiry challenges this tendency by encouraging skepticism toward seemingly obvious truths. Rather than accepting beliefs at face value, philosophers ask whether those beliefs can withstand rigorous scrutiny. This process does not necessarily lead to complete doubt; instead, it reveals the provisional nature of much human knowledge. The recognition that certainty is elusive does not imply that knowledge is impossible.

Rather, it suggests that knowledge is often tentative and subject to revision. Scientific progress, for instance, frequently involves replacing previously accepted theories with new explanations that better account for observed phenomena. Ultimately, the philosophical lesson may be one of intellectual humility. Acknowledging the limits of certainty does not weaken our pursuit of truth; it strengthens it by reminding us that understanding is an ongoing process rather than a final destination.

6. The passage primarily seeks to ?

a. demonstrate that knowledge is impossible to obtain
b. encourage skepticism toward claims of absolute certainty
c. criticise scientific inquiry for revising theories
d. argue that intuition is more reliable than evidence

7. The author’s discussion of scientific progress is intended to ?

a. illustrate how knowledge evolves through revision and correction
b. suggest that science frequently produces unreliable conclusions
c. demonstrate that philosophers reject scientific reasoning
d. emphasise the superiority of philosophical methods over science

8. Which of the following statements would most weaken the author’s argument?

a. Evidence that individuals frequently change their opinions after acquiring new information

b. Evidence that some mathematical truths can be demonstrated with complete certainty

c. Evidence that social influences shape many personal beliefs

d. Evidence that scientific theories are often revised over time

9. The author's recommendation of intellectual humility implies that individuals should ?

a. abandon their beliefs entirely

b. avoid forming opinions about complex issues

c. remain open to revising their beliefs when new evidence emerges

d. rely primarily on intuition rather than evidence

10. The passage suggests that the confidence people feel in their beliefs often results from ?

a. rigorous philosophical examination

b. incomplete evidence interpreted as definitive proof

c. systematic scientific reasoning

d. universal agreement among experts

Passage 3 (P.3)

Technological innovation is frequently celebrated for making life easier. From navigation applications that eliminate the need for paper maps to automated systems that perform complex calculations instantly, modern technologies promise efficiency and convenience. Yet this convenience may come with subtle costs. One concern involves the gradual erosion of certain cognitive skills. When individuals rely heavily on digital tools, they may exercise their own mental capacities less frequently. Navigation applications, for instance, guide users turn by turn, potentially reducing the need to remember routes or develop spatial awareness.

Another consequence lies in the way technology shapes decision-making. Algorithms increasingly filter information, recommending news articles, products, or entertainment options based on prior behaviour. While such recommendations may appear helpful, they can also limit exposure to unfamiliar perspectives, reinforcing existing preferences.

This phenomenon illustrates a broader paradox: technologies designed to expand human capabilities may simultaneously narrow certain forms of experience. By delegating tasks to

machines, individuals may lose opportunities to engage actively with the world around them. None of this implies that technological progress should be resisted. Rather, it suggests that societies must remain attentive to the unintended consequences of innovation. The challenge is not merely to invent new tools, but to ensure that their use enhances human capacities rather than quietly diminishing them.

11. The central paradox identified in the passage is that technology ?

a. simultaneously improves and limits aspects of human capability
b. inevitably reduces human intelligence
c. makes technological innovation unnecessary
d. completely replaces human decision-making

12. The example of navigation applications is primarily used to ?

a. criticise the design of digital maps
b. illustrate how reliance on technology may weaken certain cognitive skills
c. demonstrate the economic success of technology companies
d. argue that digital tools are inherently unreliable

13. Which of the following developments would most strengthen the author's concern about algorithmic recommendations?

a. Evidence that recommendation systems frequently suggest unfamiliar viewpoints
b. Evidence that recommendation systems consistently expose users to diverse perspectives
c. Evidence that users increasingly encounter information that reinforces their existing preferences
d. Evidence that algorithms sometimes fail to recommend any content

14. The author would most likely agree with which of the following statements?

a. Technological innovation inevitably harms society.
b. The benefits of technology outweigh any possible disadvantages.
c. Technological tools should be used with awareness of their broader effects.
d. Societies should abandon automated technologies entirely.

15. The author's tone throughout the passage is best described as ?

a. cautiously reflective

b. aggressively critical

c. entirely pessimistic

d. dismissive of technological innovation

Answers

1. B – The passage repeatedly says alliances change with national interest, so they are temporary and based on shifting security needs.
2. B – Asymmetry shows that powerful and weaker allies have different expectations, which can create tension inside the alliance.
3. B – The author says alliances help security but can also create rivalry and counter-alliances, so they have both positive and negative effects.
4. C – If alliances stayed stable for centuries regardless of interests, it would contradict the author's claim that alliances change with circumstances.
5. A – The tone is calm and balanced, explaining benefits and problems of alliances without strong emotion.
6. B – The passage argues that people feel too certain about their beliefs and philosophy teaches us to question that certainty.
7. A – Scientific progress is used as an example to show that knowledge keeps changing, so certainty is often temporary.
8. B – If some truths can be known with complete certainty, it weakens the claim that most knowledge is tentative.
9. C – Intellectual humility means being open to changing your views when new evidence comes.
10. B – People feel confident because they treat limited or incomplete evidence as final proof.
11. A – Technology both helps humans and reduces some of their abilities at the same time.
12. B – Navigation apps are an example of how overuse of technology weakens mental skills.
13. C – If algorithms keep showing similar content, it supports the concern about limited perspectives.
14. C – The author believes technology should be used carefully, with awareness of its effects
15. A – The tone is thoughtful and slightly cautious, not extreme or emotional.