BLOGS

Passage-based Reading Comprehension Questions for CLAT 2026

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Passage 1

America was a different world. A world of paved roads, fast food, and a bewildering array of choices. For Baba, it was a gilded cage. He, the Lion of Kabul, reduced to working at a gas station, his pride wounded, his status stripped away. His interactions with the mundane realities of American life were often fraught with frustration and a quiet dignity that refused to be entirely extinguished.

For me, America was a chance to reinvent myself, to shed the skin of the cowardly boy I had been. Yet, the past clung to me like a shadow, a constant reminder of the life I had left behind and the people I had wronged.

The immigrant experience, as we lived it, was a tightrope walk between assimilation and the preservation of identity, a constant negotiation between the person you were and the person you were becoming in a foreign land. We were Afghan in America, a hyphenated existence, forever caught between two worlds.

1. The phrase “a gilded cage” when referring to America for Baba suggests:

A. America offered him great wealth but no freedom.

B. America was superficially attractive but restrictive for him.

C. He felt trapped and unhappy despite the outward appearance of comfort.

D. The material comforts of America were meaningless to him.

Correct Answer: C

Explanation: A gilded cage is something that appears beautiful or luxurious on the outside but is still a prison. This implies Baba felt trapped and unhappy in America despite the potential for comfort, due to the loss of his status and identity.

2. The narrator's experience in America is characterized by:

A. Complete freedom from the past.

B. Easy assimilation into the new culture.

C. A struggle to escape his past and reconcile his identity.

D. Immediate acceptance and success.

Correct Answer: C

Explanation: The passage states the narrator saw America as a chance to "reinvent myself" but also that "the past clung to me like a shadow," indicating a struggle to overcome his past and shape his new identity.

3. The concept of a "hyphenated existence" for Afghan immigrants refers to:

A. The need to use hyphenated names in America.

B. Being caught between their Afghan identity and American life.

C. The difficulty of speaking English.

D. The division within the Afghan immigrant community.

Correct Answer: B

Explanation: A hyphenated identity, in this context, describes the experience of belonging to two cultures or nations simultaneously, being "Afghan in America," caught "between two worlds."

Passage 2

Rahim Khan's phone call was the catalyst, the spark that reignited the dormant embers of my guilt and shame. "There is a way to be good again," he said, words that resonated deep within me, touching the core of my buried desires for redemption.

Going back to Afghanistan, a land ravaged by war and ruled by the Taliban, was a perilous journey, a descent into the heart of darkness. But it was also a pilgrimage, a necessary return to confront the ghosts of my past and attempt to atone for the sins of my youth. The Afghanistan I returned to was unrecognizable, scarred by conflict, its people living under a brutal regime.

Yet, amidst the ruins, there were glimmers of resilience, of hope, and the enduring power of the human spirit. My mission to find Sohrab, Hassan's son, was not just about fulfilling a promise; it was about reclaiming a part of myself, about finally taking a stand, about becoming the person Baba had always wanted me to be, the person I had failed to be that winter day in 1975.

4. Rahim Khan's words, "There is a way to be good again," suggest:

A. He was offering the narrator a simple solution to his problems.

B. He was aware of the narrator's guilt and presenting an opportunity for atonement.

C. He believed the narrator had lost all hope of redemption.

D. He was unaware of the depth of the narrator's past actions.

Correct Answer: B

Explanation: The phrase directly implies that the narrator was "not good" and that there was a path to becoming "good again," indicating Rahim Khan understood the narrator's internal conflict and was offering a chance for redemption.

5. The narrator describes his return to Afghanistan as both a "perilous journey" and a "pilgrimage." This juxtaposition highlights:

A. The conflicting emotions he felt about going back.

B. The physical dangers and the spiritual significance of the trip.

C. The external obstacles and internal motivations for his return.

D. All of the above.

Correct Answer: D

Explanation: The description encompasses the external dangers ("perilous journey," "descent into the heart of darkness") and the internal, purposeful nature of the trip ("pilgrimage," "confront the ghosts of my past," "attempt to atone"), thus covering conflicting emotions, physical/spiritual aspects, and external/internal factors.

6. Finding Sohrab is described as not just fulfilling a promise but also about "reclaiming a part of myself." This implies:

A. Sohrab physically resembled the narrator's younger self.

B. Saving Sohrab was a way for the narrator to symbolically save himself from his past.

C. Sohrab possessed qualities the narrator had lost.

D. The narrator saw himself in Sohrab's difficult situation.

Correct Answer: B

Explanation: "Reclaiming a part of myself" in the context of atoning for past sins suggests that saving Sohrab, the son of the person he betrayed, was a way for the narrator to mend his own damaged sense of self and achieve a form of personal redemption.

Passage 3

Sohrab, with his haunted eyes and silent demeanor, was a living testament to the atrocities Afghanistan had endured. He carried the weight of his own trauma, a burden no child should bear. His initial silence, his withdrawal from the world, was a stark contrast to the vibrant, joyful Hassan I remembered.

Saving Sohrab became my singular focus, a way to honor Hassan's memory and, perhaps, to finally silence the voice of guilt that had whispered in my ear for decades. The complexities of adopting Sohrab, navigating bureaucratic hurdles and cultural differences, added another layer to the already challenging process of healing and reconciliation.

Sohrab's attempted suicide was a shattering moment, a stark reminder of the deep scars left by war and loss. It underscored the novel's exploration of the long-lasting impact of trauma, not just on individuals but on generations. The fragile hope for Sohrab's recovery and our eventual journey to America symbolizes a potential for a new beginning, albeit one forever marked by the past.

7. Sohrab's "haunted eyes and silent demeanor" are presented as a "living testament" to:

A. The hardships faced by children in general.

B. The specific impact of the atrocities in Afghanistan.

C. His inherent introverted personality.

D. The trauma of losing his parents.

Correct Answer: B

Explanation: The phrase directly links Sohrab's condition to "the atrocities Afghanistan had endured," presenting him as evidence of the suffering caused by the conflict.

8. The contrast drawn between Sohrab's silence and the narrator's memory of Hassan serves to:

A. Show how trauma can fundamentally change a person.

B. Highlight the differences between father and son.

C. Suggest that Sohrab did not inherit Hassan's resilience.

D. Emphasize the narrator's selective memory.

Correct Answer: A

Explanation: The contrast between Hassan's past joy and Sohrab's current silence/withdrawal illustrates the devastating impact of the trauma Sohrab has experienced, fundamentally altering his demeanor compared to his father.

9. Sohrab's attempted suicide is presented as a moment that:

A. Leads to the narrator's despair and surrender.

B. Reveals the true extent of his psychological trauma.

C. Causes the narrator to abandon his mission.

D. Is merely a plot device to increase tension.

Correct Answer: B

Explanation: The passage states it was a "shattering moment" and a "stark reminder of the deep scars left by war and loss," underscoring the profound psychological impact of the trauma Sohrab has suffered.

10. The "fragile hope for Sohrab's recovery and our eventual journey to America" symbolizes:

A. A complete and easy escape from the past.

B. The possibility of healing and a new start, despite lasting scars.

C. The abandonment of Afghan culture and identity.

D. The narrator’s ultimate failure to fully redeem himself.

Correct Answer: B

Explanation: The hope is described as “fragile” and the new beginning is “forever marked by the past,” indicating that while healing and a new start are possible, the trauma and history will always remain a part of their lives.

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