BLOGS

Point at Issue – Critical Reasoning

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As lawyers you shall be tasked with resolving conflicts of various kinds. A skill that will help you in this will be the ability to identify issues correctly. At the centre of every conflict are one or more issues. Your job will be to look through the information provided to you and find out this source of conflict.

CLAT gives you the opportunity to start early on this journey through point at issue questions.

These questions are part of the Critical Reasoning syllabus and can typically be encountered in the Logical Reasoning section of the examination. Judging by difficulty level these are some of the simplest questions you can come across but only if you are ready to pay a little bit of attention to the details.

The questions follow a standard format. You are presented with a conversation between two individuals which usually spans between 2 to 6 dialogues. A preliminary reading will make you realize that the two are actually arguing about something. Your task is to find out what they are arguing about.

Seems quite simple, right? Scoring well is simple if you keep the following things in mind.

Firstly, be careful to read the entire conversation before you select your answer.

Reading the first two dialogues (in the case of big conversations) may have you thinking that you have the correct answer when you actually do not. It is possible that the first few dialogues pertain to a bigger issue which is revealed later on in the conversation.

Secondly, make sure the option you are choosing contains the issue that the two individuals disagree over. Finding the common element in the conversation is not your only objective.

There might be something that the parties agree over in addition to another point which they disagree over. Your objective is to find the latter and just a commonality based approach is surely not the right way to go.

Thirdly, make sure that there is a common element. Confused? Well the idea is to find the common idea that two parties disagree over**.**

Disagreement is the important factor over here. Do not be tempted to select an option which mentions some point that only one of the parties makes or a point that neither make. You should be particularly careful about this. Your job is not to choose an option which makes a related point. Remember that your task is to choose an option which reiterates the actual issue.

Fourthly, read the question and be certain about what it wants you to do. Sometimes you may find the odd point of agreement question amidst all the point of disagreement questions.

Do not blindly choose a point of disagreement just because the rest of the questions have asked you to do the same.

As always remember to choose **the most appropriate answer**.

Look at the following examples to get a better idea.

1. Akash: The law needs to be changed. There are a lot of people who are not getting justice.

Priya: The reason people are not getting justice is that they are unaware of their rights. Awareness is required in order to ensure that people get the justice that they deserve.

What is the point of disagreement here?

1. The law enforcement officials are inefficient
2. Only the rich can afford to get justice
3. The law is not responsible for lack of availability of justice
4. There is no justice in this world

The **correct answer is c- The law is not responsible for lack of availability of justice** The other three options state points which are related to the points highlighted in the conversation but are not actually present in the conversation.

1. Yash: Planting more trees is the solution to deforestation.

Aarti: Deforestation is caused by recklessness on the part of human beings. A change in mindset is more important.

Yash: The environment is decaying on its own. There is not much hat human beings can do to stop that.

Aarti: The only reason for environmental degradation is that humans are not bothered about the consequences of their actions on the environment.

What is the point at issue here?

1. The environment is decaying
2. Human behaviour is responsible for environmental degradation
3. Deforestation is a problem which can be solved
4. Mindsets are difficult to change

The **correct answer is b- Human behaviour is responsible for environmental degradation** The first option mentions a point that both parties agree about while the third option is mentioned only by one of the parties. The fourth option is incorrect because it is out of the scope of the conversation.

1. Alan: All human beings are selfish. All we think about is our own good.

Charlie: You are too quick to generalize! There are many of us who care for the well being of others.

Alan: That may be so, however all the good deeds we do have something that will benefit us.

Charlie: What about charity? How does that make us selfish?

Alan: Charity creates a positive public image for people so it does end up serving their own cause.

Charlie: I think your habit of streamlining human behaviour is problematic.

What is the point of contention here?

1. Alan is a pessimistic individual
2. Charity serves selfish interests
3. Generalization is a bad habit
4. Human beings are selfish in nature

The **correct answer is d- Human beings are selfish in nature**. The first option is opinionated and clearly not the topic of discussion. The second option mentions only Alan's point of view while the third option makes a reference to the opinion held by Charlie.

Now practice these questions to brush up on your skills.

1. Puja: Western cultural influences are overwhelming our traditional culture

Ayush: I don't think so. On the contrary I feel that the advent of Western cultural ideas has strengthened the base of our traditions.

What is the point of agreement here?

1. Western cultural influences are having an impact on traditional culture
2. The East is better than the West
3. There is nothing common between the East and the West
4. Teenagers are attracted to Western culture

1. Priya: Hair extensions are so cool. They make my hair look so pretty.

Anna: I think you looked better without them.

Priya: But now I have longer hair!

Anna: Length does not always matter. It is the way you style your hair that determines how you look.

What is the point at issue here?

1. Hair extensions are used for increasing hair length
2. Hair extensions do not increase the beauty of Priya's hair
3. Hair extensions should be put in only by experts
4. Hair extensions are difficult to maintain

1. Yamini: The price of property is increasing so much due to the triumph of the land mafia.

Hetal: There exists no land mafia in India.

Yamini: Sure they do. I have heard about them from a friend.

Hetal: Your source is hearsay? I can assure you that there is no such thing that exists in India.

What is the point at issue here?

1. Hearsay is not a reliable source of information
2. Land is expensive in the urban areas
3. Yamini has unreliable friends

4. Land mafia exists in India

1. Damini: There is so much politics around us. On top of that we have to study a subject called political science! What use it to us?

Janvi: Political science teaches us about relations between countries around the world and also about the political situation in our own country. The subject also tells us about the political structure of our country.

Damini: How will knowing all of this help me in any way?

Janvi: It makes you aware about your surroundings and empowers you to make a change in the system that you so often end up complaining about.

What is the point of disagreement here?

1. Yamini is unable to appreciate the education system
2. Political science is a useful subject
3. Empowerment is important for change
4. Politics is omnipresent

1. Faizal: Roses are so beautiful and soft. They are the best flowers in the world.

Rakesh: Roses have sharp thorns which can hurt people easily. Anything with the potential of hurting people cannot be called beautiful.

What is the point at issue here?

1. Roses are among the flowers preferred in wedding bouquets
2. Roses have thorns
3. Roses are beautiful
4. Roses are a product of grafting

Answer Key

1. a- Western cultural influences are having an impact on traditional culture. The other options though related to the topic at the centre of the conversation go unmentioned.

1. b- Hair extensions do not increase the beauty of Priya’s hair. The first option is a reiteration of Priya’s second dialogue and not the point of disagreement. While the third and fourth options

are useful suggestion they are out of the scope of the conversation.

1. d- Land mafia exists in India. The first and second options refer to passing remarks made during the conversation while the third option refers to an unmentioned point.

1. b- Political science is a useful subject. The first option is out of the scope of the conversation. The third and fourth options present views expressed by only one of the parties.

1. c- Roses are beautiful. The first and fourth options refer to ideas not mentioned in the conversation. On the other hand option b refers to a view presented by one party only. This Article is in association with CLATapult.com