

Decoding CAT 2006 Reading Comprehension

By Endeavor

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Reading Comprehension passages on CAT have always been the Achilles' heel for most test takers. To start with, this dread of RC can be attributed to the negligence shown towards working on improving English language by the students in the beginning. Reading is taken for granted in the early phases of preparation and one has to pay dearly for it later. This section comprises nearly 50 pc - 80 pc of the total the questions in the Verbal section on CAT paper. Unlike mathematics or reasoning, this area of testing cannot be mastered in a month or two. But, planned approach and consistent endeavour under proper guidance can help maximize score in this section. It makes great sense to introspect and identify one's strengths & weaknesses in different specific areas of Reading comprehension before starting the preparations.

CAT 2006 RC was no different. The message send by IIMs was very clear. - We are looking for people who are "well read". Virtually, it proved to be a nightmare for those who were not good readers. Gone are those days when there used to be many passages with 5-7 questions each and it used to be a game of speed reading. If we follow the changing colours of RC on CAT, one thing comes out glaring – The passages are getting smaller but denser. The challenge this time was not the time constraint but the density of the passages.

There were just 3 passages with 5 questions each. On average, students could afford to spend 10 minutes per passage, attempting those 5 questions only. On mere inspection, students were ecstatic but were left in despair on attempting them. But good readers sailed their way through attempting only the less dense ones. A very effective step could have been leaving an RC passage while attempting just two of them. In doing so, one could have given sufficient time to both the passage and getting maximum questions correct.

The three passages dealt with different topics. One on renewed attack on communism, the second one on principles of justice and society and the third one on psychology (types of thinking).

Let us dissect the three passages asked for comprehension on CAT 2006 paper and observe ourselves how easy it could be, if the approach is apropos. We will follow the time-tested method of epitomizing each and every paragraph, thus eventually getting the crux of the entire passage at the end. Students are recommended that they read the passage paragraph by paragraph and at the end of each paragraph take a mental pause, assimilate the information, and create a summary of the paragraph in his/her simple words. Even if one does not understand a line or two, no need to panic. Your task is to make out what the writer is trying to say in the entire paragraph.

Passage 1: Renewed Attacks on Communism

Fifteen years after communism was officially pronounced dead, its spectre seems once again to be haunting Europe. Last month, the Council of Europe's parliamentary assembly voted to condemn the "crimes of totalitarian communist regimes," linking them with Nazism and complaining that communist parties are still "legal and active in some countries." Now Goran Lindblad, the conservative Swedish MP behind the resolution, wants to go further. Demands that European Ministers launch a continent-wide anti-communist campaign - including school textbook revisions, official memorial days, and museums - only narrowly missed



the necessary two-thirds majority. Mr. Lindblad pledged to bring the wider plans back to the Council of Europe in the coming months.

He has chosen a good year for his ideological offensive: this is the 50th anniversary of Nikita Khrushchev's denunciation of Josef Stalin and the subsequent Hungarian uprising, which will doubtless be the cue for further excoriation of the communist record. Paradoxically, given that there is no communist government left in Europe outside Moldova, the attacks have if anything, become more extreme as time has gone on. A clue as to why that might be can be found in the rambling report by Mr. Lindblad that led to the Council of Europe declaration. Blaming class struggle and public ownership, he explained "different elements of communist ideology such as equality or social justice still seduce many" and "a sort of nostalgia for communism is still alive. "Perhaps the real problem for Mr. Lindblad and his right-wing allies in Eastern Europe is that communism is not dead enough - and they will only be content when they have driven a stake through its heart.

The fashionable attempt to equate communism and Nazism is in reality a moral and historical nonsense. Despite the cruelties of the Stalin terror, there was no Soviet Treblinka or Sobibor, no extermination camps built to murder millions. Nor did the Soviet Union launch the most devastating war in history at a cost of more than 50 million lives - in fact it played the decisive role in the defeat of the German war machine. Mr. Lindblad and the Council of Europe adopt as fact the wildest estimates of those - killed by communist regimes "(mostly in famines) from the fiercely contested Black Book of Communism, which also underplays the number of deaths attributable to Hitler. But, in any case, none of this explains why anyone might be nostalgic in former communist states, now enjoying the delights of capitalist restoration. The dominant account gives no sense of how communist regimes renewed themselves after 1956 or why Western leaders feared they might overtake the capitalist world well into the 1960s. For all its brutalities and failures, communism in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and elsewhere delivered rapid industrialization, mass education, job security, and huge advances in social and gender equality. Its existence helped to drive up welfare standards in the West, and provided a powerful counterweight to Western global domination.

It would be easier to take the Council of Europe's condemnation of communist state crimes seriously if it had also seen fit to denounce the far bloodier record of European colonialism - which only finally came to an end in the 1970s. This was a system of racist despotism, which dominated the globe in Stalin's time. And while there is precious little connection between the ideas of fascism and communism, there is an intimate link between colonialism and Nazism. The terms lebensraum and konzentrationslager were both first used by the German colonial regime in South-West Africa (now Namibia), which committed genocide against the Herero and Nama peoples and bequeathed its ideas and personnel directly to the Nazi party.

Around 10 million Congolese died as a result of Belgian forced labour and mass murder in the early twentieth century; tens of millions perished in avoidable or enforced famines in British-ruled India; up to a million Algerians died in their war for independence, while controversy now rages in France about a new law requiring teachers to put a positive spin on colonial history. Comparable atrocities were carried out by all European colonialists, but not a word of condemnation from the Council of Europe. Presumably, European lives count for more.

No major twentieth century political tradition is without blood on its hands, but battles over history are more about the future than the past. Part of the current enthusiasm in official Western circles for dancing on the grave of communism is no doubt about relations with today's Russia and China. But it also reflects a determination to prove there is no alternative to the new global capitalist order - and that any attempt to find one is bound to lead to suffering. With the new imperialism now being resisted in the Muslim world and Latin America, growing international demands for social justice and ever greater doubts about whether the environmental crisis can be solved within the existing economic system, the pressure for alternatives will increase.

Summary

Paragraph 1 – The hatred towards the so called dead "communism" has revived and is gradually reaching to an extreme. The Council of Europe intensely condemned crimes committed by Communist states. Goran Lindblad, the Swedish MP is leading the attack against communism.



Paragraph 2 – When Communism has been now nearly extinct from Europe, why is the attack getting more rigorous? The Swedish MP believes that still some traces of communism remain. They probably want to get rid of them altogether.

Paragraph 3 – Communism is largely misunderstood. The deaths during the Communist regimes were due to many others reasons and not the cruelties of the leaders. Communism has delivered many good things and has helped the economy and the society grow.

Paragraph 4 – Colonialism committed many killings than did Communism and hence has a close connection to Nazism. Genocide in Namibia is an example.

Paragraph 5 – More examples to show the atrocities of the Colonists across the globe. Is it that only when Europeans are killed, everyone notices? Don't the lives of others count for?

Paragraph 6 – There are two reasons for raising this assault against communism by the European states – relations with Russia and China and drilling the view that there is no alternative to capitalism. But issues like environmental crisis and increasing demands for social justice may force us to look for options.

Overall summary of the passage: The writer seems to be criticizing the way European nations have unnecessarily unearthed the controversial issue of communism and are making a fuss about it. The motive, according to the author, is to show that there is no alternative to capitalism.

Questions - Answers

1. Among all the apprehensions that Mr. Goran Lindblad expresses against communism, which one gets admitted, although indirectly, by the author?
- (1) There is nostalgia for communist ideology even if communism has been abandoned by most European nations.
 - (2) Notions of social justice inherent in communist ideology appeal to critics of existing systems.
 - (3) Communist regimes were totalitarian and marked by brutalities and large scale violence.
 - (4) The existing economic order is wrongly viewed as imperialistic by proponents of communism.
 - (5) Communist ideology is faulted because communist regimes resulted in economic failures.

Solution:

A specific information question: A sitter! Go to paragraph 3 to get the answer. The correct answer is option (3). It can be inferred from the passage that the author agrees to the fact that the communist regimes were totalitarian and that there was violence on a large scale during those regimes. Let us go to those lines where author agrees. Read the 2nd line of paragraph 3, "Despite the cruelties of the ...millions". Read the 7th line of paragraph 3, "For all its brutalities...".

2. What, according to the author, is the real reason for a renewed attack against communism?
- (1) Disguising the unintended consequences of the current economic order such as social injustice and environmental crisis.
 - (2) Idealising the existing ideology of global capitalism.
 - (3) Making communism a generic representative of all historical atrocities, especially those perpetrated by the European imperialists.
 - (4) Communism still survives, in bits and pieces, in the minds and hearts of people.
 - (5) Renewal of some communist regimes has led to the apprehension that communist nations might overtake the capitalists.

Solution:

A specific information question: The author talks about the reasons for the renewed attack on communism in the last paragraph. So obviously your eyes should go there to locate the answer. The correct answer is (2). Refer to these lines from the last paragraph, "Part of the... lead to sufferings".

3. The author cites examples of atrocities perpetrated by European colonial regimes in order to
- (1) Compare the atrocities committed by colonial regimes with those of communist regimes.
 - (2) Prove that the atrocities committed by colonial regimes were more than those of communist



regimes.

- (3) Prove that, ideologically, communism was much better than colonialism and Nazism.
- (4) Neutralise the arguments of Mr. Lindblad and to point out that the atrocities committed by colonial regimes were more than those of communist regimes.
- (5) Neutralise the arguments of Mr. Lindblad and to argue that one needs to go beyond and look at the motives of these regimes.

Solution:

Implied idea question: The answer to this question actually starts from the arguments given by Mr. Lindblad for the renewed attack on communism. The author cites the examples of atrocities by colonialist in order to neutralise the arguments of Mr. Lindblad. Thus, the correct answer is (5). Option (1), option (2) and option (3) are straightaway ruled out. Now between the 4th option and the 5th option, 5th option is better because from the starting of the 3rd paragraph, the passage goes on to describe that the motives of the colonial regimes were different from the communists and how it is wrong to equate Nazism and communism.

4. Why, according to the author, is Nazism closer to colonialism than it is to communism?
 - (1) Both colonialism and Nazism were examples of tyranny of one race over another.
 - (2) The genocides committed by the colonial and the Nazi regimes were of similar magnitude.
 - (3) Several ideas of the Nazi regime were directly imported from colonial regimes.
 - (4) Both colonialism and Nazism are based on the principles of imperialism.
 - (5) While communism was never limited to Europe, both the Nazis and the colonialists originated in Europe.

Solution:

Implied idea question: The correct answer is (1). Option (2) and (5) are out of context. In all the other options except the 1st option, the reasons are given as to how Nazism is close to colonialism but only in the 1st option it is mentioned as to how it is closer to colonialism than it is to communism. After reading the passage we know that while both colonialism and Nazism were examples of tyranny of one race over another, this was not the case with communism.

5. Which of the following cannot be inferred as a compelling reason for the silence of the Council of Europe on colonial atrocities?
 - (1) The Council of Europe being dominated by erstwhile colonialists.
 - (2) Generating support for condemning communist ideology.
 - (3) Unwillingness to antagonize allies by raking up an embarrassing past.
 - (4) Greater value seemingly placed on European lives.
 - (5) Portraying both communism and Nazism as ideologies to be condemned.

Solution:

Implied idea question: This question demands the understanding of the whole passage in depth, as we are to find a non-compelling reason. If one has read the passage reasonably well, he should be in a position to make out option (4) as the correct answer. Out of the given four options, it is very clear that all the other options except the 4th option can be the reasons for the silence of the Council of Europe on colonial atrocities. In the last line in the 5th paragraph, the author says "Presumably, European lives count for more", which a sarcastic comment made by the author and which cannot be a compelling reason for the silence for the Council of Europe on colonial atrocities.

Comment: Overall, this passage should have been a bonus for the students as it did not pose any challenge to reading nor the questions were abstruse to that level. One should have got all five corrects or at least four corrects in worst scenario. The key here was to segment the passage and understand the flow of the passage.

Passage 2: Principles of Justice

My aim is to present a conception of justice which generalizes and carries to a higher level of abstraction the familiar theory of the social contract. In order to do this we are not to think of the original contract as one to enter a particular society or to set up a particular form of government. Rather, the idea is that the principles of justice for the basic structure of society are the object of the original agreement. They are the principles



that free and rational persons concerned to further their own interests would accept in an initial position of equality. These principles are to regulate all further agreements; they specify the kinds of social cooperation that can be entered into and the forms of government that can be established. This way of regarding the principles of justice, I shall call justice as fairness. Thus, we are to imagine that those who engage in social cooperation choose together, in one joint act, the principles which are to assign basic rights and duties and to determine the division of social benefits. Just as each person must decide by rational reflection what constitutes his good, that is, the system of ends which it is rational for him to pursue, so a group of persons must decide once and for all what is to count among them as just and unjust. The choice which rational men would make in this hypothetical situation of equal liberty determines the principles of justice.

In "justice as fairness", the original position is not an actual historical state of affairs. It is understood as a purely hypothetical situation characterized so as to lead to a certain conception of justice. Among the essential features of this situation is that no one knows his place in society, his class position or social status, nor does anyone know his fortune in the distribution of natural assets and abilities, his intelligence, strength, and the like. I shall even assume that the parties do not know their conceptions of the good or their special psychological propensities. The principles of justice are chosen behind a veil of ignorance. This ensures that no one is advantaged or disadvantaged in the choice of principles by the outcome of natural chance or the contingency of social circumstances. Since all are similarly situated and no one is able to design principles to favour his particular condition, the principles of justice are the result of a fair agreement or bargain.

Justice as fairness begins with one of the most general of all choices which persons might make together, namely, with the choice of the first principles of a conception of justice which is to regulate all subsequent criticism and reform of institutions. Then, having chosen a conception of justice, we can suppose that they are to choose a constitution and a legislature to enact laws, and so on, all in accordance with the principles of justice initially agreed upon. Our social situation is just if it is such that by this sequence of hypothetical agreements we would have contracted into the general system of rules which defines it. Moreover, assuming that the original position does determine a set of principles, it will then be true that whenever social institutions satisfy these principles, those engaged in them can say to one another that they are cooperating on terms to which they would agree if they were free and equal persons whose relations with respect to one another were fair. They could all view their arrangements as meeting the stipulations which they would acknowledge in an initial situation that embodies widely accepted and reasonable constraints on the choice of principles. The general recognition of this fact would provide the basis for a public acceptance of the corresponding principles of justice. No society can, of course, be a scheme of cooperation which men enter voluntarily in a literal sense; each person finds himself placed at birth in some particular position in some particular society, and the nature of this position materially affects his life prospects. Yet a society satisfying the principles of justice as fairness comes as close as a society can to being a voluntary scheme, for it meets the principles which free and equal persons would assent to under circumstances that are fair.

Summary

Paragraph 1 – What is conception of Justice and how are the principles of justice laid? As one decides what is fair (just) for him, similarly a group of people should decide what is just and unjust for the society.

Paragraph 2 – In 'Justice of fairness', the original situation is a hypothetical situation, where a person (or say a group) is imagined to be unaware of his class, social status, strengths, intelligence etc. When the principles of justice are being chosen, the members of the society overlook their personal interests and individual needs. Only then, can principles of justice be called fair and be established for the common good.

Paragraph 3 – The people who make a society view the principles as satisfactory only if they know that they would co-operate on the same terms if they were all free and equal in all respects. Such a society would be equal to a society (voluntary scheme) in which free and equal persons make fair rules.

Overall Summary of the passage: The building of a Just society basically rests upon the laying of the principles of justice, how the principles are designed and what should be taken into account while designing these principles.



Questions - Answers

1. A just society, as conceptualized in the passage, can be best described as:
- (1) A Utopia in which everyone is equal and no one enjoys any privilege based on their existing positions and powers.
 - (2) A hypothetical society in which people agree upon principles of justice which are fair.
 - (3) A society in which principles of justice are not based on the existing positions and powers of the individuals.
 - (4) A society in which principles of justice are fair to all.
 - (5) A hypothetical society in which principles of justice are not based on the existing positions and powers of the individuals.

Solution:

Main Idea question: One needs to go under the skin of the passage to make out the answer to this question. But one who has read the passage once could be smart to use the process of elimination. In the third line of the third paragraph the author describes the criteria for the formation of Just society, from where one can make out that it is not a hypothetical society (as it is formed from the sequence of hypothetical agreement, but it is not hypothetical itself). So, one should immediately eliminate option (1), option (2) and option (5). Option (2) is the best description of the Just society as per paragraph no. 2.

2. The original agreement or original position in the passage has been used by the author as:
- (1) A hypothetical situation conceived to derive principles of justice which are not influenced by position, status and condition of individuals in the society.
 - (2) A hypothetical situation in which every individual is equal and no individual enjoys any privilege based on the existing positions and powers.
 - (3) A hypothetical situation to ensure fairness of agreements among individuals in society.
 - (4) An imagined situation in which principles of justice would have to be fair.
 - (5) An imagined situation in which fairness is the objective of the principles of justice to ensure that no individual enjoys any privilege based on the existing positions and powers.

Solution:

Logical structure question: The correct answer is (1). Refer to these lines of the second paragraph, "It is understood social circumstances".

3. Which of the following best illustrates the situation that is equivalent to choosing "the principles of justice" behind a "veil of ignorance"?
- (1) The principles of justice are chosen by businessmen, who are marooned on an uninhabited island after a shipwreck, but have some possibility of returning.
 - (2) The principles of justice are chosen by a group of school children whose capabilities are yet to develop.
 - (3) The principles of justice are chosen by businessmen, who are marooned on an uninhabited island after a shipwreck and have no possibility of returning.
 - (4) The principles of justice are chosen assuming that such principles will govern the lives of the rule makers only in their next birth if the rule makers agree that they will be born again.
 - (5) The principles of justice are chosen by potential immigrants who are unaware of the resources necessary to succeed in a foreign country.

Solution:

Further application question: The correct option is (4). Here, option (4) is the best choice because in the next birth no one is sure of having the same power, same position in the society, nor do they know the class status they will have, their fortune, nor do they know if they will have the same natural abilities or assets. Hence, it is closest to the situation described in the 2nd paragraph. Hence option (4) is correct.

4. Why, according to the passage, do principles of justice need to be based on an original agreement?
- (1) Social institutions and laws can be considered fair only if they conform to principles of justice.
 - (2) Social institutions and laws can be fair only if they are consistent with the principles of justice as initially agreed upon.
 - (3) Social institutions and laws need to be fair in order to be just.



- (4) Social institutions and laws evolve fairly only if they are consistent with the principles of justice as initially agreed upon.
- (5) Social institutions and laws conform to the principles of justice as initially agreed upon.

Solution:

Direct information question: The correct answer is (2). Refer to these lines of paragraph 3, "Then, having which defines it".

5. Which of the following situations best represents the idea of justice as fairness, as argued in the passage?
- (1) All individuals are paid equally for the work they do.
 - (2) Everyone is assigned some work for his or her livelihood.
 - (3) All acts of theft are penalized equally.
 - (4) All children are provided free education in similar schools.
 - (5) All individuals are provided a fixed sum of money to take care of their health.

Solution:

Further application question: Here one needs to apply the concept of 'Justice as fairness' learnt in the passage to the situations mentioned in the options, to check which of the options matches with the definition. The correct answer is (4). The idea of justice as fairness as described in 1st paragraph closely resembles the idea mentioned in (4).

Comment: The passage seemed threatening but not the questions. If one had an overview of the passage also, answering 2-3 questions would have been quite possible. Definitely, tougher than the other two passages, but in that case one should attempt this passage at the end.

Passage 3: Dogmatic thinking and Critical thinking

Our propensity to look out for regularities, and to impose laws upon nature, leads to the psychological phenomenon of dogmatic thinking or, more generally, dogmatic behaviour: we expect regularities everywhere and attempt to find them even where there are none; events which do not yield to these attempts we are inclined to treat as a kind of "background noise"; and we stick to our expectations even when they are inadequate and we ought to accept defeat. This dogmatism is to some extent necessary. It is demanded by a situation which can only be dealt with by forcing our conjectures upon the world. Moreover, this dogmatism allows us to approach a good theory in stages, by way of approximations: if we accept defeat too easily, we may prevent ourselves from finding that we were very nearly right.

It is clear that this dogmatic attitude, which makes us stick to our first impressions, is indicative of a strong belief; while a critical attitude, which is ready to modify its tenets, which admits doubt and demands tests, is indicative of a weaker belief. Now according to Hume's theory, and to the popular theory, the strength of a belief should be a product of repetition; thus it should always grow with experience, and always be greater in less primitive persons. But dogmatic thinking, an uncontrolled wish to impose regularities, a manifest pleasure in rites and in repetition as such, is characteristic of primitives and children; and increasing experience and maturity sometimes create an attitude of caution and criticism rather than of dogmatism.

My logical criticism of Hume's psychological theory, and the considerations connected with it, may seem a little removed from the field of the philosophy of science. But the distinction between dogmatic and critical thinking, or the dogmatic and the critical attitude, brings us right back to our central problem. For the dogmatic attitude is clearly related to the tendency to verify our laws and schemata by seeking to apply them and to confirm them, even to the point of neglecting refutations, whereas the critical attitude is one of readiness to change them - to test them; to refute them; to falsify them, if possible. This suggests that we may identify the critical attitude with the scientific attitude, and the dogmatic attitude with the one which we have described as pseudo-scientific. It further suggests that genetically speaking the pseudo-scientific attitude is more primitive than, and prior to, the scientific attitude: that it is a pre-scientific attitude. And this primitivity or priority also has its logical aspect. For the critical attitude is not so much opposed to the dogmatic attitude as super-imposed upon it: criticism must be directed against existing and influential beliefs in need of critical revision - in other words, dogmatic beliefs. A critical attitude needs for its raw material, as it were theories or beliefs which are held more or less dogmatically.



Thus, science must begin with myths, and with the criticism of myths; neither with the collection of observations, nor with the invention of experiments, but with the critical discussion of myths, and of magical techniques and practices. The scientific tradition is distinguished from the pre-scientific tradition in having two layers. Like the latter, it passes on its theories; but it also passes on a critical attitude towards them. The theories are passed on, not as dogmas, but rather with the challenge to discuss them and improve upon them.

The critical attitude, the tradition of free discussion of theories with the aim of discovering their weak spots so that they may be improved upon, is the attitude of reasonableness, of rationality. From the point of view here developed, all laws, all theories, remain essentially tentative, or conjectural, or hypothetical, even when we feel unable to doubt them any longer. Before a theory has been refuted we can never know in what way it may have to be modified.

Summary

Paragraph 1 – Dogmatic attitude is to be inclined to lay down principles as undeniably true, which is nothing but an outcome of our liking to look for regularities everywhere. This dogmatic attitude may make us think and test all the possibilities many times while understanding and accepting a good theory.

Paragraph 2 – Differences between Dogmatic attitude and Critical attitude; Critical attitude (weaker belief) is open for verifications and changes whereas dogmatic attitude (stronger belief) is more about sticking to one thing. Hume's theory says repetition makes a belief strong, so non-primitive (experienced) people should carry dogmatic attitude and the primitives (or children) should carry a critical attitude (i.e. they should be open to changes). But the author says that it is just the reverse in the real life.

Paragraph 3 – A relation between the dogmatic thinking and the critical thinking; Critical thinking is called scientific thinking and the Dogmatic thinking Pseudo-scientific or pre-scientific. As pre-scientific theory comes before scientific thinking, dogmatic thinking has to form a base of critical thinking.

Paragraph 4 – Science starts with discussion and criticism of myths. The scientific tradition (method) is a two layered structure. A theory is passed, along with some critical attitude from one layer to another. These theories are not passed as hard core rules but are open to changes and improvements.

Paragraph 5 – A theory involving open discussions is a theory of rationality. So, all the theories are essentially tentative though we may take them to be true. We never know what the next modification is before a theory is rejected.

Overall summary of the passage: There exists two types of behaviours – Dogmatic (rigid or non-conformist) and Critical (open for verification). Pre-scientific traditions pass on the theories along with a critical attitude to the scientific tradition, wherein the theories are improved upon. Thus, all theories remain tentative only as we do not know before they are rejected; in what ways they can be modified.

Questions – Answers

1. In the context of science, according to the passage, the interaction of dogmatic beliefs and critical attitude can be best described as:
- (1) A duel between two warriors in which one has to die.
 - (2) The effect of a chisel on a marble stone while making a sculpture.
 - (3) The feedstock (natural gas) in fertilizer industry being transformed into fertilizers.
 - (4) A predator killing its prey.
 - (5) The effect of fertilizers on a sapling.

Solution:

Further application question: You need to understand the connection between the two thinking to get the answer. But one may still get the answer from the last few lines of paragraph 3. The correct answer is (2). It is "critical attitude needs for its raw material, as it were, theories or beliefs which are held more or less dogmatically". Refer to these lines of paragraph 3, "For the critical



.....dogmatically". From this information we can relate the effect of chisel (critical attitude) on a marble stone (dogmatic belief).

2. According to the passage, the role of a dogmatic attitude or dogmatic behaviour in the development of science is
- (1) Critical and important, as, without it, initial hypotheses or conjectures can never be made.
 - (2) Positive, as conjectures arising out of our dogmatic attitude become science.
 - (3) Negative, as it leads to pseudo-science.
 - (4) Neutral, as the development of science is essentially because of our critical attitude.
 - (5) Inferior to critical attitude, as a critical attitude leads to the attitude of reasonableness and rationality.

Solution:

Implied Idea question: The correct answer is (1). Here the contention is between option (1) and (2). Now, a Conjecture means an opinion or conclusion formed on the basis of incomplete information; nowhere in the passage has it been mentioned that conjectures arising out of dogmatic attitude become science. It says that science begins with myths and with the criticism of myths but it doesn't say conjectures become science. However the 1st option is correct because it says that without dogmatic attitude the initial hypothesis will not be available, and hence it is critical and important in the development of science.

3. Dogmatic behaviour, in this passage, has been associated with primitives and children. Which of the following best describes the reason why the author compares primitives with children?
- (1) Primitives are people who are not educated, and hence can be compared with children, who have not yet been through school.
 - (2) Primitives are people who, though not modern, are as innocent as children.
 - (3) Primitives are people without a critical attitude, just as children are.
 - (4) Primitives are people in the early stages of human evolution; similarly, children are in the early stages of their lives.
 - (5) Primitives are people who are not civilized enough, just as children are not.

Solution:

Further application question: The correct answer is (4). Refer these lines of paragraph 2, "But dogmatic thinking increasing experience and maturity sometimes create an attitude of caution and criticism rather than dogmatism."

4. Which of the following statements best supports the argument in the passage that a critical attitude leads to a weaker belief than a dogmatic attitude does?
- (1) A critical attitude implies endless questioning, and, therefore, it cannot lead to strong beliefs.
 - (2) A critical attitude, by definition, is centred on an analysis of anomalies and "noise".
 - (3) A critical attitude leads to questioning everything, and in the process generates "noise" without any conviction.
 - (4) A critical attitude is antithetical to conviction, which is required for strong beliefs.
 - (5) A critical attitude leads to questioning and to tentative hypothesis.

Solution:

Implied idea question: The author firmly believes that the critical attitude is the attitude of reasonableness and of rationality. It indicates tentative hypothesis and the rigid ones. The correct option is (5). This can be directly inferred from the last paragraph.

5. According to the passage, which of the following statements best describes the difference between science and pseudo-science?
- (1) Scientific theories or hypothesis are tentatively true whereas pseudo-sciences are always true.
 - (2) Scientific laws and theories are permanent and immutable whereas pseudo-sciences are contingent on the prevalent mode of thinking in a society.
 - (3) Science always allows the possibility of rejecting a theory or hypothesis, whereas pseudo-sciences seek to validate their ideas or theories.
 - (4) Science focuses on anomalies and exceptions so that fundamental truths can be uncovered, whereas pseudo-sciences focus mainly on general truths.



- (5) Science progresses by collection of observations or by experimentation, whereas pseudo-sciences do not worry about observations and experiments.

Solution:

Implied idea question: The pseudo-science is nothing by dogmatic attitude (rigid and non-conformist). This is evident from paragraph 3. The correct answer is (3). Refer to these lines of paragraph 3, "For the Pseudo - scientific".

Comment: The passage should have been attempted thoroughly as not only the idea in passage was simple but also the questions were perspicuous. Apparently, it looks challenging, but the golden rule is one should not get intimidated by the topic of the passage. Looks are deceptive!

A word of wisdom for CAT 2007

To alleviate the apprehension of Reading Comprehension, firstly, a candidate should seriously pursue mastering reading skills, which is essentially a combination of speed & comprehension. It requires diligent effort over a period of time, before any change can be seen. In the beginning, voracious reading is recommended. This enables one to subconsciously push reading speed and save time. Read some meaningful reading material that you are comfortable with but gradually switch over to something challenging.

On the test, one has to prioritise the passages to be done. Use skimming and scanning techniques to find out which one is to be attempted first. Here, the nature of the questions, topic and the length of the passage etc. are to be taken into account. Secondly, use the process of elimination effectively. One is to select the best option of all the options.

Remember! The test focuses on comprehension skills, ability to read between the lines and discourages "mechanical preparedness".

The author **Chandramauli Bhatt** is Senior Faculty, Endeavor Careers Pvt. Ltd., Ahmedabad and a versatile CAT Trainer.

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