

Mock Test 10

Verbal Ability and Reading Comprehension VARC Set-10

Question 1

There is a sentence that is missing in the paragraph below. Look at the paragraph and decide in which blank (option 1, 2, 3, or 4) the following sentence would best fit:

Sentence: *The evidence persuaded researchers that the mounds were built by the ancestors of contemporary Indigenous Americans, not some mysterious, lost race.*

Paragraph:

As the field of archaeology matured and incorporated the scientific method, scholars began to reject the Moundbuilder Myth. By the end of the 19th century, the US government funded an investigation of mounds throughout North America to identify their creators. **(1)** The resulting *Twelfth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution (1890–91)* marked a new era in archaeology. **(2)** In time, the archaeological, cultural and biological evidence all pointed to shared ancestry with Asians, suggesting that the ancestors of Native Americans came to the continents via a land bridge between Siberia and Alaska. **(3)** The question of when did this migration begin remained. Poorly understood geological and cultural chronologies made it a difficult matter to address. **(4)** Radiometric dating methods were not invented until 1946, and strong rivalries between scientists promoting their own models confused the issue.

Question 2

There is a sentence that is missing in the paragraph below. Look at the paragraph and decide in which blank (option 1, 2, 3, or 4) the following sentence would best fit:

Sentence: *With nowhere else to go, they're spending more time on land in the Arctic.*

Paragraph:

When humans and polar bears meet, the encounters can often end in tragedy—for either the bear, the human or both. Conflict doesn't happen often, but global warming is complicating their lives. **(1)** Because climate change is causing sea ice to form later in the fall and melt earlier in the spring, the bears are fasting longer. **(2)** Some are seeking out easy calories from garbage dumps or piles of butchered whale remains. **(3)** Scientists counted 73 reports of wild polar bears attacking humans, which resulted in 20 human deaths and 63 human injuries. **(4)** To prevent human-bear encounters, scientists are developing early-warning radar detection systems they've nicknamed "bear-dar" to help alert northern communities when a bear is getting close.

Passage 1: Questions 3 to 6

Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow:

Generative AI produces emissions in three ways. First, carbon is burned to build the computer chips and data centers that AI runs on. Second, training a large language or other AI model requires power. Training a system like ChatGPT, for instance, can produce carbon emissions equivalent to those of several, if not several dozen, U.S. homes in a year, Jesse Dodge, a research scientist at the Allen Institute for AI, told me. Third, the chatbot or any other end product requires electricity every time it is used.

That might seem small, but those numbers could compound quickly as many billions of dollars continue pouring into generative AI. These programs may appear virtual, but they have real-world environmental consequences. The problem

Mock Test 10

is compounded by the fact that most AI tools are powered by data centers that still rely heavily on fossil fuels, even as they try to adopt greener practices.

AI may not be a “carbon bomb,” but it still requires enormous energy resources. The environmental footprint of generative AI cannot be ignored—yet very few activists are paying attention to this issue. As the author notes, “activists don’t chain themselves to data centers.” The lack of visibility of the infrastructure that powers AI helps conceal its environmental costs.

Question 3

According to the passage, why might data centers running AI continue to rely on fossil fuel sources for power, despite efforts to transition to renewable energy?

- A. The reconfiguration of the existing AI training setup, which is reliant on fossil fuels, to an energy-efficient one poses certain logistical challenges.
- B. The AI data centers require a high power supply consistently, which renewable sources may not reliably provide.
- C. Data centers cannot operate efficiently on renewable energy due to intermittent power generation.
- D. AI will exponentially increase the need for electricity, and this large demand for power cannot be met by renewable sources alone.

Question 4

"That the chatbots will be a carbon bomb is far from guaranteed." Which one of the following statements best expresses the idea here in the context of the passage?

- A. The environmental impact of chatbots is uncertain and may not be as significant as some fear, given potential advancements in energy-efficient technologies.
- B. Chatbots are undoubtedly causing severe carbon emissions at the moment, contrary to the common belief that they have little to no impact on the environment.
- C. The worries surrounding chatbots will be short-lived since they are unlikely to have a significant environmental impact in the future due to the use of renewable energy sources.
- D. Even though technology companies are trying to mitigate the impact of AI technologies, their carbon footprint is bound to increase in the future.

Question 5

Which one of the following statements best reflects the idea conveyed in the last paragraph of the passage?

- A. The internet's digital landscape has overshadowed the significance of its physical infrastructure, causing people to not pay adequate attention to the problems associated with it.
- B. The virtual nature of the internet has made it impossible to measure or quantify its carbon emissions accurately.
- C. The presence of two worlds within the internet conceals its substantial carbon footprint and environmental repercussions.
- D. The internet's perceived separation from the physical world has contributed to a lack of accountability for its environmental impact.

Question 6

The point that the author is most likely trying to drive home via his claim — “activists don’t chain themselves to data centers” — is that:

Mock Test 10

- A. Generative AI technologies are inherently less harmful to the environment compared to traditional sources of emissions, making them a less pressing concern for activists.
 - B. The absence of carbon emissions from the internet and AI technologies makes it challenging for activists to draw public attention to this environmental issue.
 - C. The environmental impact of generative AI is perceived to be so minimal that it does not warrant the same level of activism or regulatory scrutiny as other polluting industries.
 - D. Given the extent of carbon emissions produced by generative AI, the absence of activism or scrutiny in this domain is quite concerning.
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Question 7

Five sentences related to a topic are given below. Four of them can be put together to form a meaningful and coherent short paragraph. Identify the odd one out.

1. The result is the fruit known as Mongee bananas, which roughly translates as Incredible bananas.
 2. First there were avocados with no stones; now we have bananas with edible skin.
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 5. A Japanese farm uses what it calls the "freeze thaw awakening method" to grow bananas that have a softer, digestible peel.
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Five sentences related to a topic are given below. Four of them can be put together to form a meaningful and coherent short paragraph. Identify the odd one out.

1. The two countries have run an internationally recognised joint vaccine development programme for more than three decades.
 2. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said last fortnight that India and the US were working together to develop vaccines against the coronavirus.
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*Passage 2 and Questions Here is your formatted question paper (Questions 1–12) in clean exam format, with full passages and questions, **without** any answers or answer keys:*

VARC Section – Questions 1 to 12

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Mock Test 10

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Mock Test 10

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Mock Test 10

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Mock Test 10

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Passage 2: Questions 9 to 12

Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow:

For some Brexiteers, the point of leaving the EU was to shift the country back towards making things. Relinquishing the role of Europe's financial hub, the argument went, would mean a cheaper exchange rate that would help the country's long-dormant manufacturing sector. Many Remainers expected only half of that scenario to materialise: Brexit would indeed kill the golden goose of services trade but would not bring back the factories.

It seems as if both views were wrong. Goods exports have languished. But when it comes to services exports, Britain has enjoyed one of the best performances in the G7. According to analysis by the Resolution Foundation, services exports

Mock Test 10

grew by 2.4% a year between 2016 and 2022, faster than any G7 peer. This is largely driven by non-EU trade. In 2016, services to the EU accounted for 39% of all services exports; in 2022, that figure had fallen to 32%.

The statistics do need to be taken with a pinch of salt. Adjusting for discrepancies between the way trade is counted in GDP and export data can significantly change the picture. Moreover, many services exporters are using complex workarounds: for instance, selling services through foreign affiliates or registering operations elsewhere. These might work temporarily, but over time, regulation is expected to catch up and increase compliance costs.

Question 9

Which of the following best describes the "golden goose," as mentioned in the passage?

- A. The long-dormant manufacturing sector's potential revival due to cheaper exchange rates post-Brexit.
- B. The sustained success of Britain's services exports since Brexit despite the challenges faced by goods exports.
- C. The overall favorable performance of Britain's exports in the G7 countries after the new trade and cooperation agreement.
- D. The anticipated improvement in Britain's goods exports as regulators tighten restrictions on workarounds used by services firms.

Question 10

"These figures do need to be taken with a pinch of salt."

Based on the passage, the author makes the above claim to:

- A. Highlight that the trade figures cited by the Resolution Foundation might be inaccurate, but still relevant in understanding Britain's export status post-Brexit.
- B. Suggest that correcting the inflated trade figures would actually place Britain lower among the G7 countries rather than at the top.
- C. Indicate that adjusting the trade data to reconcile different measures of gross domestic product conveys a different story to the increase in services exports.
- D. Point out that measuring services trade can be challenging because it often involves intangible activities that are difficult to track precisely.

Question 11

All of the following can be understood to be true based on the passage EXCEPT:

- A. Compared to the trade in commodities, the trade in services is less dependent on the EU, constituting a lower proportion of exports going to the EU.
- B. Regulations are going to become stricter, and the costs associated with workarounds will eventually erode the competitive advantage of UK services exporters.
- C. The less established single market for services might be one potential cause of the difference between exports of commodities and services to the EU.
- D. Service firms may have discovered ways to overcome trade barriers, such as selling through affiliates or utilising shell companies, but the long-term effectiveness of such tactics remains unclear.

Question 12

Mock Test 10

Based on the passage, which of the following is NOT a reason for the divergence between goods and services exports after Brexit?

- A. The changes in trade patterns caused by Brexit and the pandemic allowed services exports to be less impacted by trade frictions and export tariffs compared to goods exports.
- B. The rapid recovery of the American economy post-pandemic, along with increased demand for British services, has significantly boosted service exports to the United States.
- C. Service firms have utilised certain workarounds to deal with trade frictions, which would possibly explain the rise in service exports from the 2019 levels.
- D. Britain's services trade is less dependent on the EU than goods trade, resulting in services exports performing relatively better than goods exports.

Directions for Questions 12–13: The following questions consist of four sentences. Rearrange them to form a coherent paragraph and select the correct sequence as your answer.

Question 12

1. Such a society, he argues, is marked by the absence of a shared moral consensus and is instead characterised by individualism, relativism, and fragmentation.
2. Sociologist Zygmunt Bauman introduced the term “liquid modernity” to describe the contemporary state of constant change and instability in social and personal life.
3. He believes that traditional structures and institutions, which once offered stability and guidance, have weakened or dissolved.
4. As a result, individuals are left to navigate complex choices about identity, relationships, and values on their own.

Question 13

1. This opens up the possibility of a conflict between our own identities and how we are perceived by others.
2. In addition to being able to think about ourselves, self-conscious beings can recognise that we are the objects of other people's thoughts.
3. We also have identities: self-beliefs that are sources of meaning, purpose and value, and that help to constrain our choices and actions.
4. Human beings are self-conscious creatures: we can conceptualise ourselves as psychological beings, forming beliefs about who and what we are.

Question 14

1. To 19th-century transcendentalists such as Henry David Thoreau, it is an inward matter of self-determination, of 'what a man thinks of himself.'
2. To the ancient Greek philosophers, fate is the external product of divine will, 'the thread of your destiny.'

Mock Test 10

3. To modern cosmologists, fate is something else entirely: a sweeping, impersonal physical process that can be boiled down into a single, momentous number known as the Hubble Constant.
4. What determines our fate?

Passage for Questions 15–18

Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow.

My colleagues and I recently explored this social side of stress by studying the dynamics of stress in a group of about 300 early and mid-career adults enrolled in a professional graduate programme. We surveyed each of these participants about their stress levels at four different times, over the course of six months. In analysing the data, we found evidence that a person's social interactions with others in their network were significantly related to how their stress changed over time. Specifically, an individual's stress level tended to change in the direction of the stress levels of the peers they interacted with. This was the case even when we accounted for people's tendency to select friends who have similar stress levels, which suggests that the changes in stress that we observed were partly due to social influence. These results provide evidence that stress levels and social networks are interdependent and co-evolve over time.

We also found that the strength of social influence on stress is not the same for everyone. Our results suggest that a person is likely subject to stronger social influence on stress when their circle of social contacts expresses more similar stress levels—for instance, when one's coworkers are all generally stressed out, or all tend to have similarly low levels of stress. This finding resonates with classic 'attitude convergence' research, which suggests that a person is more likely to conform to others' attitudes when there is a stronger consensus among those others. If the social information received from others is consistent, it is more likely to be considered trustworthy and to encourage someone to reappraise the situation.

In addition, we showed that certain personality characteristics can help to mitigate stress contagion from peers. Those who scored low on measures of neuroticism, who had high levels of conscientiousness, or who had a high 'internal control orientation' seemed to be less susceptible to social influence on their stress levels. This makes sense in light of what each of these characteristics represents:

Neuroticism is a trait characterised by, among other things, vulnerability, anxiousness and moodiness. People with a low level of neuroticism are likely to rely less on social cues in interpreting their situation, worry less about social rejection when their own appraisals differ from their peers, and engage less in revisiting stressful events with friends.

Conscientiousness is reflected in self-discipline, deliberation and planful thinking. High levels of conscientiousness may help people to monitor the dynamics of their feelings and their peers' feelings, and then conduct effective emotion regulation based on this knowledge, such as seeking support from a family member to help calm themselves after they've had a nerve-racking conversation with a stressed-out classmate.

People with an internal control orientation (those who perceive themselves as being in control of their lives) have reported greater confidence in their own judgments. Their trust in their own ability to assess the demands and coping resources at play in a situation may make them less likely to yield to the influence of how others are responding.

Question 15

According to the study's findings on the strength of social influence on stress, which of the following statements is most consistent with the concept of 'attitude convergence' research?

- A. The extent of social influence on stress is determined by the consistency and similarity of stress levels among an individual's social contacts.

Mock Test 10

- B. Social influence on stress is most prominent when individuals interact with peers who exhibit a wide range of stress levels.
 - C. Individuals who have a diverse circle of social contacts with varying stress levels are less likely to be influenced by their peers' stress.
 - D. Individuals who interact with a small social group with fairly similar levels of stress experience a stronger social influence of stress.
-

Question 16

“These results provide evidence that stress levels and social networks are interdependent and co-evolve over time.”

To strengthen this causal relationship, which of the following pieces of evidence would be most relevant?

- A. A study conducted in a different cultural context replicated similar findings regarding the impact of social networks on stress dynamics.
 - B. A survey showed that people who have strong social ties experience lower stress levels than those who are socially isolated.
 - C. Long-term studies show that the addition of team members with lower stress levels to teams in high-stress jobs produced a consistent decrease in the stress levels of all the members of the team.
 - D. Long-term studies show that employees in high-stress fields who interacted with a wider range of people had lower stress levels on average than those who interacted with only their peers.
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Question 17

Which of the following observations hold true in the context of the study's findings?

- A. Individuals experiencing higher stress levels are more susceptible to social influence, and their stress tends to align with the dominant stress levels of their peers within their social circle.
 - B. Attitude convergence explains why people tend to isolate themselves from social interactions when they experience stress, leading to a reduction in social influence on their stress levels.
 - C. Individuals with higher conscientiousness are more prone to attitude convergence, as they diligently monitor the stress levels of their peers and align their emotions accordingly.
 - D. Individuals with low levels of neuroticism are less likely to conform to others' attitudes, making them more resistant to the social influence of stress within their network.
-

Question 18

Which of the following criticisms about the study can be refuted using the information in the passage?

- A. It remains unclear whether social interactions primarily cause stress changes or if other factors could be at play.
 - B. It might be challenging to entirely separate the effects of social influence from shared environmental factors that could impact both stress and social connections.
 - C. It relied on participants self-reporting their stress levels and social interactions, which can be influenced by recall bias and individuals' subjective interpretations.
 - D. It fails to account for social network complexity, wherein an individual might have multiple close-contact social circles, each with varying influence on stress levels.
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Mock Test 10

Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow.

Almost wherever you look, companies are scaling back their ambitions. Meta, the owner of Facebook, recently said it would invest less in 2023 than previously promised. Disney is slimming its capex plans for this year by a tenth, meaning punier investment in its theme parks. Calavo Growers, a huge producer of avocados and other fruit, intends to reduce capital expenditures (capex) "while we navigate near-term uncertainties". The anecdotes are part of an unfortunate broader trend.

Investment is the most volatile component of GDP. When it soars, the economy as a whole tends to do the same. Extra capex and R&D boost productivity, raising incomes and living standards. There were hopes that the Covid-19 pandemic would mark the start of a new "capex supercycle". In response to the crisis, firms ramped up spending on everything: digitisation, supply chains and more. Rich-world fixed investment took just 18 months to regain its pre-pandemic peak, a fraction of the time it took after the global financial crisis of 2007–09. In 2021 and 2022, firms in the S&P 500 index of large American firms spent \$2.5 trillion, equivalent to 5% of the country's GDP, on capex and R&D—a real-term rise of around a fifth compared with 2018–19.

Thus the latest figures are sobering. What people thought was the start of a structural trend may, in fact, have been end-of-lockdown exuberance. Businesses are revising down future capex investment, too. Our analysis of the plans of around 700 big, listed American and European firms suggests that real-term spending will fall by 1% in 2023. Markets have caught on to this change. In Europe, for instance, the share prices of companies that usually do well when capital spending is high—such as semiconductor and chemicals companies—soared relative to the broader stock market in 2021 but have since fallen back.

Why is the boom coming to an end? Three potential explanations are the most convincing. The first is that companies have less cash to burn than even a few months ago. Firms across the rich world accumulated extraordinarily high cash balances during the pandemic, in part because of grants and loans from governments.

The second relates to global economic conditions. Supply-chain snarl-ups are not as bad as in 2021, meaning there is less need to invest in extra capacity or stock up on inventory. Figures from PitchBook, a data provider, suggest that in the fourth quarter of 2022, the number of venture-capital deals in supply-chain tech fell by about half compared with the year before. Inflation has eaten into consumers' real incomes—and businesses are less likely to invest in new products and services if they worry that no one will buy them. Meanwhile, survey data suggest that higher interest rates are also prompting cuts.

The third factor may be the most significant. The capex boom was largely based on the assumption that pandemic lifestyles would last forever, prompting economic reallocation that would require an ever-larger number of new technologies. In many ways, however, the post-pandemic economy looks remarkably similar to the pre-pandemic one. It turns out there is a limit to people's Netflix consumption and Peloton use. Spending on services has nearly caught up with spending on goods.

Question 19

Which of the following could be a valid inference regarding the global economy from the passage?

- A. Investment is a key driver of economic growth and productivity, and a decline in investment is likely to have ripple effects across the economy.
- B. While some believe that the global economy will soon return to the pre-pandemic growth trajectory, others claim that the pandemic has, in fact, created a permanent shift in the economy.
- C. Governments need to increase their spending and direct more funds towards grants and loans in order to ensure that firms have enough cash to invest more into relevant technologies and services.
- D. The decline in capital expenditures signifies that businesses around the world are increasingly becoming less ambitious due to pandemic-induced cash shortfalls, and the gradual return to the pre-pandemic lifestyle.

Question 20

The "broader trend" mentioned in the first paragraph refers to:

- A. how economies around the world have peaked, signalling either stagnancy or recession in the near future.
- B. a decrease in purchasing power of the firms, which could eventually trigger a global recession.
- C. how most companies redirected their spending from capital expenditure to revenue expenditure in a bid to generate more profits.
- D. a reduction in investments and capital expenditures by companies, which has important implications for the economy as a whole.

Question 21

"It turns out there is a limit to people's Netflix consumption and Peloton use."

Which of the following best captures the point that the author is trying to make via the above statement?

- A. In the post-pandemic setup, people do not want to stay at home, which is resulting in less usage of services such as Netflix or home gym accessories such as Peloton.
- B. Many companies were not able to fully adapt and reallocate resources towards pandemic-induced requirements such as digitisation, supply chains, and other new technologies.
- C. The assumptions underlying the capex boom were misconceived since the surge in demand for certain goods and services during the pandemic was temporary and not sustainable in the long term.
- D. Though pre-pandemic trends were considered to be obsolete, the post-pandemic economy is now beginning to resemble the pre-pandemic one increasingly.

Question 22

The statement "Rich-world fixed investment took just 18 months to regain its pre-pandemic peak" is best supplemented by which other line in the passage?

- A. In 2021 and 2022, firms in the S&P 500 index of large American firms spent \$2.5trn, equivalent to 5% of the country's GDP, on capex and R&D, a real-term rise of around a fifth compared with 2018–19.
- B. In many ways, however, the post-pandemic economy looks remarkably similar to the pre-pandemic one.
- C. Firms across the rich world accumulated extraordinarily high cash balances during the pandemic, in part because of grants and loans from governments.
- D. Spending on services has nearly caught up with spending on goods.

Question 23

Read the paragraph and choose the option that best captures its essence:

Eighty years ago, a middle-aged, mid-ranking diplomat sank into deep depression and watched his hair turn grey in days, as he saw the streets of Bordeaux filling with Jewish refugees fleeing the Nazis. As Portugal's consul in Bordeaux, Aristides de Sousa Mendes faced a moral dilemma. Should he obey government orders or listen to his own conscience and supply Jews with the visas that would allow them to escape from advancing German forces? Sousa Mendes' remarkable response means he is remembered as a hero by survivors and descendants of the thousands he helped to flee. But his initiative also spelt the end of a diplomatic career under Portuguese dictator António de Oliveira Salazar, and

Mock Test 10

the rest of his life was spent in penury. Portugal finally granted official recognition to its disobedient diplomat on 9 June, and parliament decided a monument in the National Pantheon should bear his name.

- A. Portugal finally granted official and monumental recognition to Aristides de Sousa Mendes, a diplomat who lived in extreme poverty after being sacked for disobeying the then government orders and supplying Jews with the visas that allowed them to escape from the Nazis.
 - B. The Portuguese diplomat Aristides de Sousa Mendes who supplied Jews with the visas that would allow them to escape from the Nazis was punished by Portuguese dictator António de Oliveira Salazar, and the rest of his life was spent in penury.
 - C. The Portuguese diplomat Aristides de Sousa Mendes who supplied Jews with the visas that would allow them to escape from the Nazis would be officially and monumentally recognised by Portugal as a hero in the National Pantheon
 - D. Portugal's consul in Bordeaux, Aristides de Sousa Mendes faced a moral dilemma between obeying the government orders or listening to his own conscience and supplying the Jews with the visas that would allow them escape from the Nazis.
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Question 24

Read the paragraph and choose the option that best captures its essence:

For 30 to 40 years after the end of the Second World War, Paul Samuelson was one of the best-known economists of all time. His name would have been familiar not just to other economists and students but to readers of *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and, above all, *Newsweek*, where he had a regular column for 15 years. In parts of the world, Samuelson's fame even eclipsed that of John Maynard Keynes, who had been a major public figure as well as an economist. And yet there is a paradox at the heart of Samuelson's work.

- A. Samuelson's fame even eclipsed that of John Maynard Keynes because of a paradox at the heart of Samuelson's work.
 - B. Paul Samuelson was the best-known economists of all time despite a paradox at the heart of his work.
 - C. Despite his immense popularity as an economist for decades following the second world war, Paul Samuelson's work was paradoxical at its core.
 - D. Paul Samuelson is one of the best known Post-World War 2 economists of all time and his paradoxical work earned him a reputation that eclipsed even the reputation of Keynes.
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Mock Test 10

Answer Key

1. (c)
2. (b)
3. (d)
4. (a)
5. (b)
6. (a)
7. (d)
8. (b)
9. (c)
10. (b)
11. (d)
12. 2134
13. 4321
14. 4213
15. (a)
16. (c)
17. (d)
18. (a)
19. (a)
20. (d)
21. (c)
22. (c)
23. (a)
24. (c)