

English Language for Competitive Exams
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Week - 01
Lecture – 03
Scientific passages and reading comprehension

Good morning. I hope you are repairing well for whatever exam you are intend to or whichever exam you are trying to take or intend to take. Now we have been talk talking about reading comprehension all this while; the point is that reading comprehension for in competitive exams can be very tricky section. So, far we have done literature, we have done a passage from Henry James, and we have done a few passages last time from novel by Edith Wharton.

Now, but reading comprehension exams they do not always look at works of literature; they nonfiction also it could be politics, it could be environment, it could be any other aspect of science even sports and current affairs. So, from this reading set onwards at least for the next few sets, you will encounter tougher passages not literally passages, these sets are nonfiction passages from different disciplines not just literature. So, unlike fiction passages these are often filled with factual statements and arguments, please remember that you will be tempted to or you may be tempted to answer questions based on your own familiarity with these topics, do not do that please always look at the context.

Remember you read the passage and to answer only the given questions in the context of the passage. It is a good idea, now to start preparing by reading the editorials in newspapers try to read international newspaper and magazines also, this section and I am talking about readings comprehension section in all competitive exams in general, they require not just reading, but analytical skills as well.

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PASSAGE 1

Intellectual property has become ubiquitous throughout the academy, despite a long history of being considered ideologically antithetical to traditional academic values of openness and sharing. Patents focus on innovation, trademarks on information, and copyright primarily on cultural expressions: together they constitute the benchmark regulation regime for universities and higher education. From publish-or-perish to patent-or-perish, a jungle of licenses, trade secrets, and confidentiality agreements has increasingly turned laboratories into walled and privatized spaces within universities. But more than a century ago, the Curies took a different view and chose not to patent radium. Refreshingly out of sync with current intellectual property reflexes, but hardly controversial at the time, this action of nonaction remains a watershed moment in the historical timeline of modern science. An almost mythological aura surrounds their disavowal of patenting and simultaneous embrace of "science for science's sake."

Let us move on to look at the first passage today, please look at the slide. Intellectual property has become ubiquitous throughout the academy, despite a long history of being considered ideologically antithetical to traditional academic values of openness and sharing.

Patents focus on innovation, trademarks on information, and copyright primarily on cultural expressions: together they constitute the benchmark regulation regime for universities and higher education. From publish-or-perish to patent-or-perish, a jungle of licenses, trade secrets, and confidentiality agreements has increasingly turned laboratories into walled and privatized spaces within universities. But more than a century ago, the Curies took a different view and chose not to patent radium. Refreshingly out of sync with current intellectual property reflexes, but hardly controversial at the time, this action of nonaction remains a watershed moment in the historical timeline of modern science. An almost mythological aura surrounds their disavowal of patenting and simultaneous embrace of "science for science's sake."

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What is the author's aim in this paragraph?

- A. To show how the modern scientific enterprise is entirely overrun by insidious capitalist concerns of 'ownership' and profit and not by the pursuit of knowledge.
- B. To show how the Curies were an exceptional couple and must be lauded as an example in these times of stringent IP laws.
- C. To show that laboratories have become corporatized.
- D. To show that the idea of intellectual property is against core academic values of sharing and openness.

Look at the questions now, what is the author's aim in this paragraph? Option a to show how the modern scientific enterprise is entirely overrun by insidious capitalist concerns of 'ownership' and profit and not by the pursuit of knowledge. B; to show how the Curies were an exceptional couple and must be lauded as an example in these times of stringent IP laws; to show that laboratories have become corporatized, d to show that the idea of intellectual property is against core academic values of sharing and openness. Please understand all these are very tempting options, anyone can be the correct one however, we have to look at the context and be very precise.

So, the best question response option b, please pay attention to the structure of the paragraph the author begins with the description of the present scenario and then begins another strength of thought with a but; and this is how he starts on the Curies. So, we know now that his aim is to contrast the Curies' work ethic with present in (Refer Time: 05:30) sense the answer is option b; and what is option b? To show how the Curies were an exceptional couple and must be lauded as an example in these times of stringent IP laws, please look at the slide again. I know that the option d is extremely tempting, to show that the idea of intellectual property is against core academic values of sharing and openness, where there is just a part of the passage the basic idea the aim is to show how the Curies were an exceptional couple, and how they are contrasted with the practices, the corporate practices of patenting and copyrighting in modern times.

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What does 'action of nonaction' refer to here?

- A. The Curies did nothing with their research, preferring to enjoy research for research's sake.
- B. The Curies did not claim intellectual property rights to radium.
- C. The Curies decided that nonaction would prevent exploitation of radium.
- D. The Curies chose not to act on the consequences of patent infringement.

Now, look at the second question. Action of nonaction you came across this frame somewhere in that passages, the question is what does action of nonaction refer to here? Option a the curies did nothing with their research preferring to enjoy research for researches sake, the curies did not claim intellectual property rights to radium, c the curies decided that nonaction would prevent, exploitation of radium d the curies chose not to act on the consequences of patent infringement. What could be the correct answer?

The correct answer the exact answer is option b, here the author points out the surprising decision the curies made to not patent radium therefore, nonaction a deliberate nonaction on their part although option a is also partially right, the phrase was used specifically in the case of or in the context of pointing towards option b.

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PASSAGE 2

According to the *natural-rights* view of IP (intellectual property) held by some libertarians, creations of the mind are entitled to protection just as tangible property is. Both are the product of one's labour and one's mind. Because one owns one's labour, one has a natural law right to the fruit of one's labour. Other libertarian proponents of IP argue that certain ideas deserve protection as property rights because they are *created*. Rand supported patents and copyrights as "the legal implementation of the base of all property rights: a man's right to the product of his mind." For Rand, IP rights are, in a sense, the reward for productive work. It is only fair that a creator reap the benefits of others using his creation. For this reason, in part, she opposes perpetual patent and copyright—because future, unborn heirs of the original creator are not themselves responsible for the creation of their ancestors' work.

Now, let us look at passage 2. According to the natural-rights view of IP, that is intellectual property held by some libertarians, creations of the mind are entitled to protection just as tangible property is. Both are the product of one's labour and one's mind. Because one owns one's labour, one has a natural law right to the fruit of one's labour. Other libertarian proponents of IP argue that certain ideas deserve protection as property rights because they are created. Rand supported patents and copyrights as "the legal implementation of the base of all property rights: a man's right to the product of his mind." For Rand, IP rights are, in a sense, the reward for productive work. It is only fair that a creator reap the benefits of others using his creation.

For this reason, in part, she opposes perpetual patent and copyright—because future, unborn heirs of the original creator are not themselves responsible for the creation of their ancestors' work. Please go through the passage carefully questions will soon follow all right.

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What is the purpose of this passage?

- A. To show Rand's opinion that natural libertarianism is the most valid argument for IP.
- B. To show that the idea of 'perpetual' patent is flawed.
- C. To show the differences between two different kinds of libertarian arguments for IP – natural and individual.
- D. To show that the creation argument for IP is a better basis than the natural-right argument.

Now, look at the first question; what is the purpose of this passage? A to show Rand's opinion that natural libertarianism is the most valid argument for IP. B; to show that the idea of perpetual patent is flawed, to show the differences between two different kinds of libertarian arguments for IP natural and individual; to show that the creation argument for IP is a better basis than the natural right argument, and the right answer is option c, the purpose of the passage is to show the differences between two kinds of libertarian thought. One may be tempted to answer d, but the passage itself does not demonstrate that opinion it is only a description of two kinds of thought. Read the question carefully, do not just answer based on answer based on what you have read in the passage.

So, look at the option c again, to show the differences between two different kinds of libertarian arguments for IP natural and individual.

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Why is the idea of natural-right considered unfair by some libertarians?

- A. Because no human has a natural right to intellectual property.
- B. Because natural-right privileges unborn heirs and not the inventors themselves.
- C. Because natural-right curbs individual creativity and offers other inventors no incentive to work.
- D. Because natural-right rewards even those not directly responsible for the knowledge.

Look at the second question, why is the idea of natural right considered unfair by some libertarians? A; because no human has a natural right to intellectual property; b because natural right privileges unborn heirs and not the inventors themselves; c because natural right curbs individual creativity and offers other inventors no incentive to work; and d because natural right rewards even those not directly responsible for the knowledge.

So, what could be the best answer here? The best answer is option d, because natural right rewards even those not directly responsible for the knowledge. So, why now see if the passage all about natural right does privilege, unbound air and could potentially they may dis enfranchise research, they may this empower research, but what does the passages say? Argument Rands argument is that natural right does not a reward those responsible for the research, and even rewards unbound airs the idea of deserving reward informs Rands idea; that is why option d is the right answer.

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PASSAGE 3

The Biotechnology industry is primarily made up of small, single product start-up companies. There is a close relationship between basic and applied science in the biotechnology field, and the biotechnology industry has a highly educated workforce. Due to the close association between academic laboratories and industrial laboratories, biotechnology companies developed a culture that borrows several features of university setting. The highly skilled work force required for the biotechnology industry can only be made available when the industry continues to attract academic scientists to the industry. Here, it becomes pertinent for the biotechnology industry to maintain a university-like atmosphere and provide good economic incentives to the researchers, encouraging them to maintain a high level of innovation. Further, due to the influence of academic research on biotechnology industry, the research ethos is encouraged with the encouragement of publication and sharing of results.

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Please go through the passage carefully, try to find out the main idea. Now look at the questions, why do biotechnology industries maintain university like cultures? A. Because a culture of high innovation and sharing of publications encourages academic minds to join.

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Why do biotechnology industries maintain university-like cultures?

- A. Because a culture of high innovation and sharing of publications encourages academic minds to join.
- B. Because this ensures good economic incentives and encourages the best minds to join them.
- C. Because they are different from large applied science industries.
- D. Because they are closely associated with academic laboratories.

B; because this ensures good economic incentives and encourages the best minds to join them; c because they are different from large applied science industries; d because they are closely associated with academic laboratories. And what do you think is the best answer? Best option is option a, in this passage the author notes that biotechnology industry is replicate a university atmosphere, because academic cultures of publication and knowledge sharing incentive or incentivise, highly educated people to join all other points are true, but a option a answers the particular question directly. So, pay attention to the question all points might be drawn from the paragraph, but only one option corresponds exactly corresponds to the question.

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PASSAGE 4

Patenting of human gene and gene fragments has significant legal, social and policy implications as it exerts a wide range of effects on the accessibility of genetic research tools, genetic innovation, health policies, patients' rights, clinical practice and the society at large. The potential of genetic research to produce commercial results has led to the rapid commercialisation of basic genetic research through commercial agreements and patents. The commercialisation of basic genetic research has threatened the free flow and open sharing of academic knowledge. The increased commercialisation of upstream (basic) genetic research has led to patenting of gene fragments such as ESTs and SNPs, which are basically research tools. Patenting of these genetic research tools may stifle genetic innovation as a researcher has to negotiate with the patentee about the license terms before using such a research tool. Patenting of genetic testing especially in the field of diagnostics has also become a very controversial issue. Overbroad patent claims and aggressive licensing strategies stifle the innovation process.

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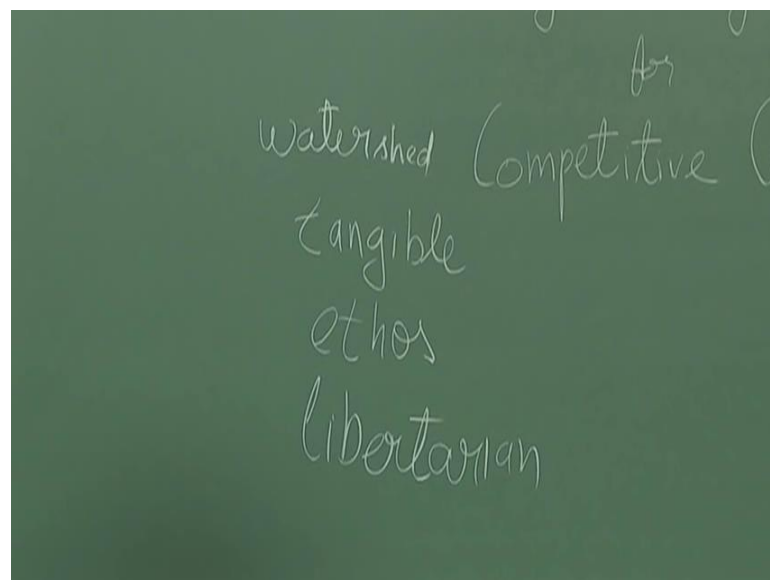
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Look at the complex structures, try to find out or identify the central idea the aim basic aim of the passage. Now my question to you is I would like you to condense the author's argument in two to three lines, this is one very frequently repeated question in some of the competitive exams. So, condensation summarize the authors argument in 2 to 3 lines,

not just write a summary text book kind of summary, but condense the idea. Now remember the question is to condense the argument not to analyse, we are not asking you are the examiner is not asking you to provide your own opinion or criticize. So, read the passage carefully and note that I know the key arguments in a brief summary. You are answer can be anything, but the closest that I can come up with this that in the above passage and this could be your condensation, the author argues that patent loss are especially harmful in genetic research, because it has health implications the commercialisation of genetic research is harmful, to the process of research and knowledge sharing.

So, that is what the author is trying to tell you. Always remember whenever you are asked to give you condensation or a brief summary or the over archiving statement, you should not mention a specifics for example, genetic ESTs and so on. Instead you should also mention authors or the authors opinion understands, whenever you are asked to condense remember to mention or a state the authors opinion. I will like to give you couple of difficult words and open your oxford dictionary; tangible, ethos, libertarian.

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Please look at the board, try to find out the exact meanings; this is your activity. So, tangible, what is tangible? Which is something which is perceptible by touch, something you can test; so this is a tangible object, there has to be tangible output result of some research. Ethos; ethos is the characteristics spirit of a culture or era or community. So,

ethos of research in this institute, the ethos of work culture in your organization, so this is what you know the practice the ethics, the characteristic spirit of some place. And meaning of libertarian is a person who believes in free will comes from the word liberty. So, noun and watershed is a very common and very frequently occurring word, it means an event a period marking a turning point in a situation.

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Sources:

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Singh, Kshitij Kumar. *Biotechnology and Intellectual Property Rights: Legal and Social Implications*. Springer, 2014.

Wirtén, Eva Hemmungs. *Making Marie Curie: Intellectual Property and Celebrity Culture in an age of information*. University of Chicago Press, 2015.

Now, watershed work or watershed event in the history of civilization; please look at the sources of these passages that we did today.

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PASSAGE 1

The air to which Germany was given the empire, in the words of Johann Paul Richter, was that numinous, vaporous mist of metaphysical complexity. Some of this was interpreted as genius, much as magic. Power it was not, since the Germany that entered the eighteenth century was a loose conglomeration of variously sovereign principalities, nurtured on deep thought, fine music and hard rye bread which, in terms of power, seemed an essential futility. Some were sustained by memories of a past as inheritors of the power and prestige of the Roman Empire, as a bulwark against the menace from the east, as myrmidons of Imperial greatness, as champions of Martin Luther and reformed Christianity. Others were still in the vanguard of Latinity, in their devotion to Rome, sandwiched as they were between Rome's two protectors, the empires of Austria and France.

So, let us look at this passage now, it belongs to a very different category and not what we have been doing so far, let us look at this. The air to which Germany was given the empire, in the words of Johann Paul Richter, was that numinous, vaporous mist of metaphysical complexity. Some of this was interpreted as genius, much as magic. Power it was not, since the Germany that entered the eighteenth century was a loose conglomeration of variously sovereign principalities, nurtured on deep thought, fine music and hard rye bread which, in terms of power, seemed an essential futility.

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How did Germany become an empire?

- A. Through a numinous, light mist.
- B. Through an inherent complexity of the German psyche.
- C. Through artistic genius and deep intellect.
- D. Through rye bread.
- E. None of the above

Now, here is your question, how did Germany become an empire, what is the author saying? Through a numinous light mist, through an inherent complexity of the German psyche, through artistic genius and deep intellect through rye bread, none of the above e. Remember you can this is also a possibility to get none of the above or all of the above kind of an option; be careful with this also it may or may not be true.

The best option is none of the above; read the passage carefully the author has not committed to a single answer in the paragraph, he says that some people think the reason

is you know complexity of the German mind and the way they were brought append they cultural intellectual strength, all the options given, but in ever even sense and opinion himself. So, none of the above statements are correct.

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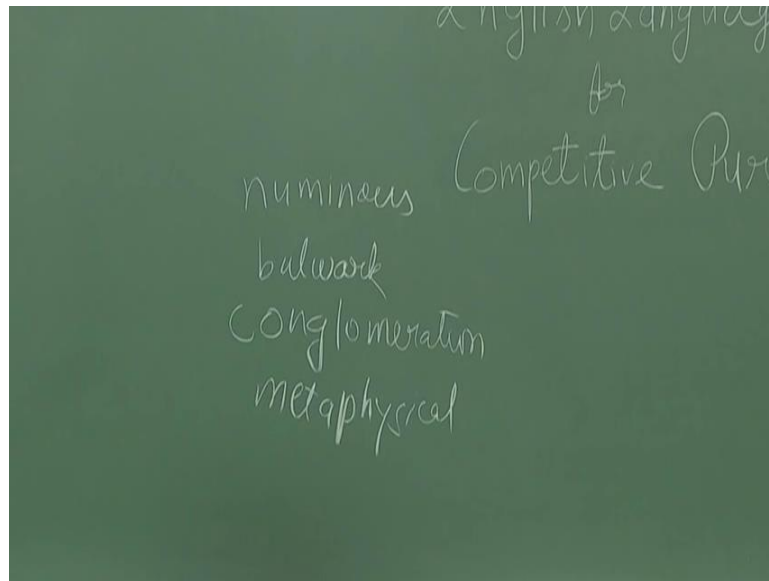
What does the word vanguard refer to here?

- A. The teachers and students of Latinity.
- B. The champions of the superiority of Latinity.
- C. The pioneers of Latinity.
- D. The true protectors of Latinity.

Look at the second question or set, what does the word vanguard refer to here? Vanguard should be in single inverted commas. A the teachers and students of Latinity; b the champions of the superiority of Latinity; c the pioneers of Latinity; and d the true protectors of Latinity, look at the options carefully. The best option is c; the word vanguard refers to people at the forefront the pioneers of something, even if you do not know the meaning of the word try to read the sentence within the context, and eliminate unsuitable options.

Now, I will give you a list of words, please take them down and start looking of the meanings.

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The first is numinous, bulwark, conglomeration, and metaphysical please start looking these words up. Numinous bulwark conglomeration metaphysical; I will give you some time please look up the meanings of these words please look at the board. So, coming to these words as list of words; numinous is having or to have a strong religious or a spiritual quality indicating or suggesting the presence of a divinity, the strange numinous beauty of an architectural marvel.

Bulwark is a defensive wall to create a bulwark, the security forces are bulwark against the something the breakdown of law and order in society, so a defensive wall. Conglomeration is a number of different things, parts, items that are grouped together collections. So, it is a collection lose conglomeration of some pieces, or some people, or some groups, or some organizations. Metaphysical is more or less of philosophical term, which means transcending physical matter or the laws of nature.

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PASSAGE 2

German-speaking central Europe at that time was composed of over 300 sovereign principalities, secular and ecclesiastical, electorates, dukedoms, counties, free cities and church estates. Some were ancient sovereignties reaching back to the Middle ages, some owed their existence to a decision of the Holy Roman Emperor, and some were the creation of disputed inheritance split among princely scions, or the result of war. The Holy Roman Empire was a largely toothless tiger but still, in emotional and juridical terms, a tiger. In individual states political activism was discouraged, and intellectuals looked outside of Germany for stimulus. French was the language of the court, Frenchmen were invited to serve the state as savants and administrators, and the natives were left to grumble but accept, so strong was the prestige of the ruler. To demonstrate a not entirely slavish dependence, the challenge of new ideas from England was beginning to be felt but devotion, even subservience, to the ruling prince was the rule, and society, under the influence of both French and English, or more often Scottish, ideas, became increasingly secular.

Now, let us look at the second passage which is related to the same topic. German-speaking central Europe at that time was composed of over 300 sovereign principalities, secular and ecclesiastical, electorates, dukedoms, counties, free cities and church estates. Some were ancient sovereignties reaching back to the middle ages, some owed their existence to a decision of the Holy Roman Emperor, and some were the creation of disputed inheritance split among princely scions, or the result of war.

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"...devotion, even subservience, to the ruling prince was the rule..." What is the purpose of this sentence?

- A. To show that despite borrowing from foreign ideas, sovereignty of the royal head was respected.
- B. To show that the German populace was very devoted to their prince and royal family.
- C. To show that the punishment for disloyalty was so severe that people were slavishly devoted to the ruling prince.
- D. To show that the challenges of English ideas were felt in the way of increased devotion to the prince.

Now, look at the question; look at the slide devotion even subservience to the ruling prince was the rule, what is the purpose of this sentence what is the author trying to tell you? Options are to show that a to show that despite borrowing from foreign ideas sovereignty of the royal head was respected; b to show that the German populace was very devoted to their prince and royal family; c to show that the punishment for disloyalty was so severe that people were slavishly devoted to the ruling prince, and d to show that the challenges of English ideas were felt in the way of increased devotion to the prince, what is he trying to tell us and the best option is a.

Option c; remember there is no mention of punishment anywhere right. So, it is a very obvious elimination, you have to reread the passage it says that despite for an intellectual inspiration people were still devoted to the ruler, partly to demonstrate national solvent is therefore, option a is the best answer.

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What does the phrase 'toothless tiger' in the passage refer to?

- A. To the fact that a tiger without its teeth is powerless.
- B. To the fact that the Holy Roman empire is no longer as powerful as it once was.
- C. To the fact that the Holy Roman empire lost its power because it was prey to disputing scions of royal families.
- D. To the fact that emotionally and legally, no one was concerned about the Holy Roman empire.

Look at the second set of questions here; what does the phrase toothless tiger in the passage refer to? Toothless tiger a to the fact that a tiger without its teeth is powerless; b to the fact that the Holy Roman empire is no longer as powerful as it once was; c to the fact that the Holy Roman empire lost its power, because it was prey to disputing scions of royal families and that the last one is that emotionally and legally no one was concerned about the holy roman empire, which do you think is the best response.

The best is obviously b; toothless tiger does not mean literally a tiger or but in the context of the passage it refers to the Holy Roman Empire, which had lost its infinite power. Once it was very powerful, but a still a tiger by in the time in events of the events, by the time of the events in the passage, it could not wheel as much power as before, but it still for name sake it was still very powerful like a tiger, but toothless. So, power in name, but really could not have any real say it did not have any sway. So, some of the words that I want you to now look at is or are some of the words that I want you to look at are ecclesiastical, juridical, subservience; we have already done toothless tiger. So, ecclesiastical, juridical and subservience what do these words mean.

Please look up the meanings of these words. So, ecclesiastical you know is it relates to the church, the Christian church or the clergy we often use the word ecclesiastical hierarchy. Juridical is adjective which relates to the judicial preceding and the

administration of the law, and subservience or to be subservient is someone who is willing to obey others unquestioningly, so subservient.

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PASSAGE 3

Germany was divided between the three main Christian confessions, Roman Catholic, Lutheran and Calvinist. The faithful did not always follow the profession of the ruler – there were more Protestant subjects throughout the empire though a greater number of Catholic princes – but the ruler did prescribe whatever limitations there were on dissidence: on who could hold office, what feasts they observed, what was taught in schools and universities. Expulsion rather than outright persecution was used to achieve conformity, and there was considerable movement from one principality to another. The dislike of one Christian belief for another and polemical wars of words, often spilling over into violence, still racked communities, but the common culture was one where obedience to the secular ruler was the sovereign requirement. What religion you professed should be optional.

Now, let us look at the next passage 3. Germany was divided between the three main Christian confessions, Roman Catholic, Lutheran and Calvinist. The faithful did not always follow the profession of the ruler-there were there were more protestant subjects throughout the empire though a greater number of catholic princes-but the ruler did prescribe whatever limitations there were on dissidence: on who could hold office, what feasts they observed, what was taught in schools and universities.

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Now, I would like you to pick out the phrase in the passage which says or which means that people who did not adieu to the religious norms, or force to leave their region more than touchier or incarcerated. Where do you find this meaning, look at the passage again where do you find this idea? Expulsion rather than outright persecution, so they were not touchier they was just expelled. So, expulsion rather than outright persecution was used to achieve conformity, this is the answer. Your second question to condense the author

argument in 2 to 3 lines, remember you should focus on themes not facts do not give a specifics, identify the authors opinion and is aim in the passage and write that. So, condense the author's argument in 2 to 3 lines.

What is the passage about? So, one example could be that although there were several religious differences among the Christians of Germany, obedience to the leader was Paramount that is what the author is trying to tell you religion difference although important did not explicitly threaten the safety of the German people. So, this is how you condense.

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PASSAGE 4

As the eighteenth century progressed, overtaken by the excesses of a French model revolution, a retreat from rationalism became almost a stampede. The illuminati, ragged revolutionaries in philosophic clothing, were threatening the ordered society with disorder, irreligion and chaos. Enlightenment was proving to be a nursery for upset; it had diminished what had been the deep spiritual longings of a people predisposed to mysticism and obscurity. The roots of romanticism in Germany lay in something less cerebral, more instinctive. It accepted that nature was governed by its own laws against which Man was historically in conflict, but it could be tamed. Man was historically in conflict, but it could be tamed. It could be rendered sublime, not by reason but by imagination.

Now, look at the fourth passage read the passage. As the eighteenth century progressed, overtaken by the excesses of a French model revolution, a retreat from rationalism became almost a stampede. The illuminati, ragged revolutionaries in philosophic clothing, were threatening the ordered society with disorder, irreligion and chaos. Enlightenment was proving to be a nursery for upset; it had diminished what had been the deep spiritual longings of a people predisposed to mysticism and obscurity. The roots of romanticism in Germany lay in something less cerebral, more instinctive. It accepted that nature was governed by its own laws against which man was historically in conflict, but it could be tamed man was historically in conflict, but it could be tamed. It could be rendered sublime, not by reason, but by imagination.

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Why was the retreat from rationalism a stampede?

- A. Because of the revolutionaries called the illuminati, who were especially badly-behaved.
- B. Because of the results of the French Revolution.
- C. Because the excessive focus on rationality did not suit German culture.
- D. Because the German man was historically in conflict.

Look at the questions now, why was the retreat from rationalism a stampede? A because of the revolutionaries called the illuminati who were especially badly behaved; b because of the results of the French revolution; c because the excessive focus on rationality did not suit German culture, and d because the German man was historically in conflict. And the best option is option c look at the option, because the excessive focus on rationality did not suit German culture that is the right answer. The idea is the German people did not like the rationalist thinking forced on them, because they were also emotionally and artistically inclined.

Now, I would like you to take down a list of words that you have already seen in the passage and find the meanings of these words. First words cerebral, second word sublime. So, cerebral sublime polemical and persecution; I will repeat cerebral sublime polemical and persecution. Look up the word the meanings of these words, cerebral which is related to the human mind cerebrum of the brain, than you have sublime which is adjective words sublime is of great excellence beauty, almost heavenly a sublime beauty a sublime experience, you have polemical which involves strongly critical disputations writing or speech.

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Source:

Cavaliero, Roderick. *Genius, Power and Magic: A Cultural History of Germany from Goethe to Wagner*.
IB Tauris, 2013.

So, a polemical essay it takes sides for or against and persecution of course, it means hostility and ill treatment. Here is the source of this article of these passages, if you want to read more about this then please go through the entire article is taken from genius power and magic, a cultural history of Germany from Goethe to Wagner.

Thank you very much.