

## Tools may be neutral, leadership never truly is

**Automation** has quietly **slipped** into our everyday work lives. It schedules our meetings, screens our CVs, tracks our **productivity**, **predicts** our sales, and increasingly tells us what decision might be 'best.' Somewhere along this **rapid** adoption, a **convenient narrative** emerged: the system decided, the **algorithm flagged** it, technology made it **inevitable**.

That narrative is comforting — and dangerous. **Automation**, by itself, **is neutral**. It has no **intent**, no values, no **moral compass**. **Leadership**, on the other hand, **is** never neutral. Every **decision** to adopt automation, to **deploy** it **hastily** or thoughtfully, to use it as an enabler or as a **shield**, **reflects** human choices. Technology does not **absolve** responsibility; it **merely exposes** how leaders choose to **wield** power.

In Indian organisations today, automation is often sold as **efficiency at scale**. Faster processes. Fewer errors. Leaner teams. These benefits are real. But **what** often goes **unspoken is** the leadership mindset **driving** these transformations. When automation becomes a shortcut to avoid difficult conversations — about training, inclusion, workload, or **humane** timelines — it stops being progress and starts becoming a quiet **abdication** of responsibility.

Consider automated performance dashboards. They promise **objectivity**, yet they are built on **parameters** chosen by people. What gets measured is what leadership values. If **empathy**, **collaboration**, or long-term learning do not fit neatly into a spreadsheet, they risk being ignored altogether. When an employee is **labelled** 'underperforming' by a system, the real question is not whether the data is accurate, but whether leaders are willing to look beyond it.

Automation also reveals leadership courage — or the lack of it. It is easy to hide behind tools when decisions become unpopular. 'The system doesn't allow exceptions.' 'Policy is **automated**.' These phrases **sound** procedural, but they are deeply personal choices **disguised** as **inevitability**. Strong leadership is not about **resisting** automation; it is about standing **accountable** even when technology is involved. In a country like India, where work is deeply tied to **dignity** and **livelihood**, this **accountability** matters even more. **Automation** can either **widen inequities** or **bridge** them. It can **empower** first-generation professionals with access to opportunities — or silently exclude them through biased data and **rigid** filters. The difference lies not in the code, but in the **conscience** of those approving it. The most effective leaders I have observed do not treat automation as an authority. They treat it as an assistant. They ask uncomfortable questions: Who benefits? Who is left out? What assumptions are we hardcoding into this system? And most importantly — what responsibility remains ours, even after the tool is deployed?

**Leadership** in the age of automation **demands humility**. It requires admitting that not everything valuable can be automated, quantified, or **optimised**. Trust, judgement, and **ethical** clarity still belong

**firmly** in human hands. Automation may be neutral. But leadership never is. And in trying times, technology does not define the culture of an organisation — leaders do. **[Practice Exercise]**

- Red/blue coloring of words in the sentence indicates subject verb relationship; where 'red' denotes 'subject' and 'blue' denotes 'verb'.

## Vocabulary

1. **Automation** (noun) – robotics, mechanization, computerization, technization, industrialization स्वचालन
2. **Slip** (verb) – sneak, glide, creep, slide, drift चुपके से आना
3. **Productivity** (noun) – efficiency, output, yield, capacity, fecundity उत्पादकता
4. **Predict** (verb) – forecast, foresee, augur, portend, anticipate भविष्यवाणी करना
5. **Rapid** (adjective) – swift, quick, brisk, hurried, fleet तीव्र
6. **Convenient** (adjective) – advantageous, suitable, expedient, handy, opportunistic सुविधाजनक
7. **Narrative** (noun) – account, chronicle, story, portrayal, reportage वृत्तांत
8. **Algorithm** (noun) – procedure, calculation, formula, set of rules, logic कलन विधि
9. **Flag** (verb) – signal, indicate, mark, identify, highlight चिन्हित करना
10. **Inevitable** (adjective) – unavoidable, inescapable, certain, fated, inexorable अपरिहार्य
11. **Neutral** (adjective) – impartial, unbiased, objective, disinterested, non-partisan निष्पक्ष
12. **Intent** (noun) – purpose, motive, objective, aim, design इरादा
13. **Moral compass** (noun) – an inner sense of right and wrong that guides a person's behavior नैतिक दिशा-निर्देश
14. **Deploy** (verb) – station, position, install, utilize, distribute तैनात करना
15. **Hastily** (adverb) – hurriedly, rashly, impulsively, recklessly, precipitately जल्दबाजी में
16. **Shield** (noun) – protection, buffer, screen, guard, defense ढाल
17. **Reflect** (verb) – mirror, manifest, indicate, represent, demonstrate दर्शाना
18. **Absolve** (verb) – exonerate, exculpate, acquit, pardon, vindicate दोषमुक्त करना
19. **Merely** (adverb) – purely, simply, only, just, solely केवल
20. **Expose** (verb) – reveal, uncover, disclose, unveil, debunk बेनकाब करना
21. **Wield** (verb) – exert, exercise, brandish, employ, handle उपयोग करना
22. **Efficiency** (noun) – competence, efficacy, proficiency, adeptness, productivity कार्यकुशलता

23. **At scale** (phrase) – refers to doing something in a large volume or on a massive level बड़े पैमाने पर
24. **Unspoken** (adjective) – tacit, implicit, unstated, unexpressed, silent अनकहा
25. **Drive** (verb) – propel, impel, motivate, trigger, push प्रेरित करना
26. **Humane** (adjective) – compassionate, benevolent, kind, merciful, altruistic मानवीय
27. **Abdication** (noun) – renunciation, resignation, abandonment, surrender, relinquishment त्याग
28. **Objectivity** (noun) – neutrality, fairness, impartiality, detachment, justice निष्पक्षता
29. **Parameter** (noun) – criterion, factor, specification, guideline, limit मानक
30. **Empathy** (noun) – compassion, understanding, sensitivity, affinity, rapport सहानुभूति
31. **Collaboration** (noun) – cooperation, alliance, partnership, synergy, association सहयोग
32. **Label** (verb) – categorize, classify, tag, characterize, designate चिन्हित करना
33. **Automated** (adjective) – robotic, programmed, computerized, mechanical, unmanned स्वचालित
34. **Sound** (verb) – appear, seem, resonate, echo, suggest प्रतीत होना
35. **Disguised** (adjective) – cloaked, masked, concealed, shrouded, camouflaged प्रच्छन्न
36. **Inevitability** (noun) – certainty, necessity, fatedness, unavailability, compulsion अनिवार्यता
37. **Resist** (verb) – oppose, withstand, defy, thwart, confront विरोध करना
38. **Accountable** (adjective) – responsible, liable, answerable, amenable, obligated जवाबदेह
39. **Dignity** (noun) – self-respect, honor, stature, grace, nobility गरिमा
40. **Livelihood** (noun) – subsistence, sustenance, income, occupation, bread and butter आजीविका
41. **Accountability** (noun) – responsibility, answerability, liability, culpability, obligation जवाबदेही
42. **Widen** (verb) – broaden, expand, enlarge, distend, dilate बढ़ाना
43. **Inequity** (noun) – injustice, unfairness, disparity, bias, prejudice अन्याय
44. **Empower** (verb) – authorize, enable, emancipate, permit, entitle सशक्त बनाना
45. **Rigid** (adjective) – stiff, inflexible, stringent, unyielding, austere कठोर

46. **Conscience** (noun) – morals, principles, ethics, inner voice, integrity अंतरात्मा

47. **Humility** (noun) – modesty, meekness, diffidence, unpretentiousness, lowliness विनम्रता

48. **Optimise** (verb) – maximize, refine, improve, polish, perfect अनुकूलतम बनाना

49. **Ethical** (adjective) – moral, principled, righteous, virtuous, honorable नैतिक

50. **Firmly** (adverb) – securely, resolutely, steadfastly, staunchly, solidly मजबूती

## Summary of the Editorial

1. Automation has become deeply integrated into daily work life, handling tasks like scheduling, screening, tracking, and decision support.
2. A common belief has emerged that outcomes are driven by systems and algorithms rather than people.
3. This belief is misleading and risky because it shifts responsibility away from human decision-makers.
4. Technology and automation are neutral tools without intent, values, or moral judgement.
5. Leadership, however, is never neutral because it involves conscious human choices.
6. Decisions about how and why automation is adopted reflect leadership priorities and ethics.
7. Automation is often promoted in organisations as a path to efficiency, speed, and cost reduction.
8. Problems arise when leaders use automation to avoid difficult human issues like training, fairness, and workload balance.
9. Performance dashboards and automated metrics appear objective but are based on human-selected parameters.
10. What gets measured in automated systems reveals what leadership truly values.
11. Important qualities like empathy, collaboration, and long-term growth may be ignored if they are not easily measurable.
12. Leaders sometimes hide behind automated rules and policies to avoid accountability for tough decisions.
13. In contexts where jobs are tied to dignity and survival, leadership accountability in automation choices is especially critical.
14. Automation can either expand opportunity or deepen inequality depending on how leaders design and apply it.
15. Good leadership treats automation as a support tool, not an authority, and retains human responsibility, ethical judgement, and cultural direction.

### Practice Exercise: SSC Pattern Based

1. **Which conclusion can best be inferred about the author's view of automation in leadership?**
  - A. Automation should replace most human leadership decisions entirely [Editorial Page]
  - B. Automation is useful but cannot replace ethical human judgement
  - C. Automation creates fairness automatically in every organisation
  - D. Automation reduces responsibility for leaders over time
2. **What does the author imply when saying automation can become a "quiet abdication of responsibility"?**
  - A. Leaders may use technology to avoid difficult human decisions
  - B. Technology silently improves organisational discipline always
  - C. Employees prefer automated systems over human supervisors
  - D. Automation removes the need for performance discussions
3. **What deeper message does the author convey about performance dashboards and metrics?**
  - A. Data tools always capture full employee contribution clearly
  - B. Metrics reflect leadership priorities more than reality
  - C. Dashboards eliminate bias in performance evaluation
  - D. Measurement systems are more humane than managers
4. **From the passage, what can be inferred about the author's concern regarding automation in Indian organisations?**
  - A. Automation mainly creates technical complexity for managers
  - B. Automation may affect dignity and fairness in employment decisions
  - C. Automation increases profit but reduces workplace speed
  - D. Automation is culturally unsuitable for Indian workplaces
5. **What does the author most strongly suggest about courageous leadership in automated environments?**
  - A. Courage means strictly following automated policy outputs
  - B. Courage means delaying automation wherever possible
  - C. Courage means remaining accountable despite tool decisions
  - D. Courage means allowing systems to make final judgments
6. **Direction: In the following question, the first and last sentences are fixed (S1 and S6). Arrange the intermediate sentences (P, Q, R, and S) in the correct logical order.**

S1: A book gifting scheme established by country music star Dolly Parton has expanded its reach to more children on the Isle of Man.

P: This initiative, known as the Imagination Library, began in Tennessee in 1995 before launching in the UK in 2007.

Q: Following its success in Douglas earlier this year, the scheme was recently extended to several northern villages and the western area of Patrick.

R: Organizers noted a fantastic response in these new areas, with nearly half of all eligible children registering in just four days.

S: The core mission remains focused on ensuring every child has equal access to high-quality books from the very start of their lives.

S6: With more funding secured, the program now aims to include areas like Ramsey and Peel, potentially providing newborns with a collection of up to 60 books.

A. SPQR

- B. QPRS  
C. PQRS  
D. PSQR
7. **Identify the part of the sentence that contains a grammatical error.**  
A. It is imperative that he B. understands the severity of the situation C. and that he makes D. a clear, concise, and decisive statement to the press.  
A. It is imperative that he  
B. understands the severity of the situation  
C. and that he makes  
D. a clear, concise, and decisive statement to the press.
8. **Identify the part of the sentence that contains a grammatical error.**  
A. The new employee B. seems to be C. a fast learner D. and more smarter than the last one.  
A. The new employee  
B. seems to be  
C. a fast learner  
D. and more smarter than the last one.
9. **Fill in the blank with the most appropriate preposition:**  
She persisted \_\_\_\_\_ all obstacles and criticism, proving her detractors wrong.  
A. against  
B. across  
C. through  
D. despite
10. **Fill in the blank with the most appropriate phrasal verb:**  
The startup failed to \_\_\_\_\_ the expectations it had generated among investors.  
A. live down  
B. live through  
C. live up to  
D. live over
11. **Choose the correctly spelt word:**  
A. Adversity  
B. Advercity  
C. Adverisity  
D. Adverciti
12. **Which of the following sentences uses the word "tear" with the same meaning as in the following sentence?**  
"A single tear rolled down her cheek"  
A. He carefully tried not to tear the delicate fabric.  
B. The little girl's tear brought her mother running  
C. Be careful not to tear the pages of the old book.  
D. The sharp edge of the paper can easily tear when handled roughly.
13. **Choose the correctly spelt word:**  
A. Precurious  
B. Pricarious  
C. Precarus

- D. Precarious
14. **Choose the correct meaning of the idiom: Star-crossed lovers**
- A. Lovers whose relationship is doomed
  - B. Lovers facing many challenges
  - C. Very successful lovers
  - D. Happy lovers
15. **Select the most appropriate antonym of the word: Sporadic**
- A. Infrequent
  - B. Occasional
  - C. Frequent
  - D. Intermittent
16. **Choose the correct one-word substitute for:**  
A place where dead bodies are kept for examination
- A. Cemetery
  - B. Morgue
  - C. Hospital
  - D. Clinic
17. **Select the most appropriate antonym of the word: Fastidious**
- A. Meticulous
  - B. Sloppy
  - C. fussy
  - D. perceptive
18. **Choose the correct one-word substitute for:**  
A person who performs magic tricks
- A. Magician
  - B. Sorcerer
  - C. Wizard
  - D. Illusionist
19. **Choose the most suitable option to replace the highlighted part of the sentence:**  
Except for **you and me, no one knew** Radha.
- A. Except for you and I, no one knew Radha
  - B. Except for you and me, no one knew Radha
  - C. Except you and I, no one knew Radha
  - D. Except for I and you, no one knew Radha
20. **Choose the correct passive voice transformation of the sentence:**  
Why did the brilliant detective suddenly solve the complex mystery?
- A. Why was the complex mystery suddenly solved by the brilliant detective?
  - B. Why was the complex mystery suddenly been solved by the brilliant detective?
  - C. Why has the complex mystery been suddenly solved by the brilliant detective?
  - D. Why did the complex mystery be solved by the brilliant detective?

**Comprehension**

Our guide, Thomas Mulonga, leads us single file (1) \_\_\_ the mopane woodland of Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park, near Victoria Falls, Zambia. I'm on high alert, scanning the bush for signs of life, half hoping, half fearing we will find something. Two armed wildlife scouts (2) \_\_\_ our

group, rifles slung across their shoulders. We are tracking near-threatened southern white rhinoceros, though it's hard not to think about what else moves through this dry savannah: notoriously aggressive hippos, unpredictable Cape buffalo prone to (3) \_\_\_\_, elephants slipping through the trees, (4) \_\_\_\_ baboons barking in the shadows. We've seen many of them before from the safety of a vehicle. But now we are on a walking safari – and on foot, the calculus is different. Mulonga walks as if he belongs to the landscape, pausing often and listening more than speaking. He stops and points to a shallow (5) \_\_\_\_ in the dust. "Fresh," he mouths. Then we see him. An imposing patriarch lies sprawled in the sun, massive and still, like a sleeping dog. "It's Louis II," Mulonga says quietly. We are close enough to see the craggy folds of the white rhino's dusty, crepey skin, etched with what resemble dry riverbeds meandering across his immense frame. There is no windshield on a walking safari, no engine for a quick getaway – only open bush and a few yards of earth between us. A walking safari, I begin to understand, is not simply about seeing wildlife. It's about entering a world up close and on its own terms.

21. **What should come in the place of blank number (1)?**
  - A. along
  - B. amidst
  - C. through
  - D. into
22. **What should come in the place of blank number (2)?**
  - A. bracket
  - B. shield
  - C. patrol
  - D. surround
23. **What should come in the place of blank number (3)?**
  - A. siege
  - B. barrage
  - C. invasion
  - D. invasion
24. **What should come in the place of blank number (4)?**
  - A. sullen
  - B. cantankerous
  - C. mute
  - D. boisterous
25. **What should come in the place of blank number (5)?**
  - A. trench
  - B. crevice
  - C. ravine
  - D. indentation

## Answers

1. B    2. A    3. B    4. B    5. C    6. C    7. B    8. D    9. C    10. C    11. A    12. B  
 13. D    14. A    15. C    16. B    17. B    18. A    19. A    20. A    21. C    22. A    23. D    24. B  
 25. D

[\[Practice Exercise\]](#)

## Explanations

- B) Automation is useful but cannot replace ethical human judgement**  
 The passage repeatedly stresses that automation is neutral while leadership is value-driven. The author argues that responsibility, ethics, and judgement must remain with leaders, showing automation is supportive — not a substitute.  
 A is incorrect because the author rejects total dependence on automation.  
 C is incorrect because bias and exclusion risks are highlighted.  
 D is incorrect because the text says responsibility remains human.
- A) Leaders may use technology to avoid difficult human decisions**  
 The passage suggests some leaders hide behind automated systems to avoid conversations about fairness, training, or workload. This implies avoidance of accountability — not improvement.  
 B is incorrect because the tone is cautionary, not celebratory.  
 C is incorrect because employee preference is never claimed.  
 D is incorrect because the author says leaders must still engage beyond data.
- B) Metrics reflect leadership priorities more than reality**  
 The passage states that what gets measured reflects what leadership values. Qualities like empathy or collaboration may be ignored if not measurable — showing metrics mirror priorities, not total truth.  
 A is incorrect because limits of measurement are emphasized.  
 C is incorrect because bias can exist in chosen parameters.  
 D is incorrect because human judgement is presented as essential.
- B) Automation may affect dignity and fairness in employment decisions**  
 The author links automation with dignity, livelihood, inequity, and exclusion, especially in the Indian context. This shows concern about fairness and human impact — not technical difficulty or cultural mismatch. The passage never claims automation slows work or is unsuitable for India.
- C) Courage means remaining accountable despite tool decisions**  
 The text emphasizes that strong leaders do not hide behind systems and remain answerable for outcomes even when technology is involved. It does not recommend blind compliance, delay of automation, or full surrender of judgment to systems.
- C) PQRS**  
 Sentence P, पैराग्राफ की शुरुआत में आएगा क्योंकि यह S1 में बताई गई "scheme" का आधिकारिक नाम (Imagination Library) और इतिहास बताकर एक factual ground तैयार करता है। किसी भी विस्तार की चर्चा से पहले पहल (initiative) की पहचान करना आवश्यक है।  
 Sentence Q, Sentence P के बाद आएगा क्योंकि यह S1 में बताए गए विस्तार के "scale" (विस्तार) को स्थानीय स्तर (Douglas और Patrick) पर स्पष्ट करता है। यह भौगोलिक जानकारी की specific detail जोड़ता है।

Sentence R, Sentence Q के बाद आएगा क्योंकि इसमें उपयोग किया गया वाक्यांश "these new areas" सीधे Sentence Q में बताए गए गांवों और क्षेत्रों से जुड़ा है। यह उन क्षेत्रों में मिली सफलता का factual ground देता है।

Sentence S, Sentence R के बाद आएगा क्योंकि यह पूरे scenario को एक "conclusion" की ओर ले जाता है। यहाँ "start of their lives" वाली बात सीधे S6 में दिए गए "newborns" (नवजात शिशुओं) के संदर्भ से जुड़कर एक मजबूत कड़ी (bridge) बनाती है।

- Sentence P follows S1 because it provides the factual ground by identifying the specific name and historical origins of the initiative. It is the most logical step to name the scheme before detailing its local expansion.
  - Sentence Q follows P because it identifies the scale of the current expansion on the Isle of Man. It provides the specific details regarding the northern villages and western areas.
  - Sentence R follows Q because it contains the mandatory pronoun link "these new areas," which refers back to the locations mentioned in Q. It validates the expansion with a specific detail about registration rates.
  - Sentence S follows R because it serves as the conclusion and a bridge to the final sentence. The mention of "the very start of their lives" in S creates a direct thematic link to the "newborns" mentioned in S6, rounding off the paragraph.
7. B) 'understands' के बदले '**understand**' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि imperative / necessary / important / essential + that + subject + base form of verb (Subjunctive Mood) की आवश्यकता होती है; जैसे—  
It is imperative that he be present.  
It is essential that she submit the form in time.
- 'understand' will be used instead of 'understands' because after expressions like imperative / necessary / essential + that + subject, the base form of the verb (Subjunctive Mood) is required; Like—  
It is imperative that he be present.  
It is essential that she submit the form in time.
8. D) 'more smarter' के बदले '**smarter**' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि comparative degree में more + -er एक साथ नहीं आते; सिर्फ smarter प्रयुक्त होगा; जैसे—  
He is smarter than his brother.
- 'smarter' will be used instead of 'more smarter' because in comparative degree we do not use more with adjectives already ending in -er; Like—  
He is smarter than his brother.
9. C) यहाँ सही preposition "**through**" है क्योंकि यह verb "persist" के meaning के साथ सबसे अच्छी तरह fit बैठती है। Persist का मतलब होता है difficulties के दौरान लगातार आगे बढ़ते रहना। "Through" यह दिखाता है कि उसने obstacles और criticism को face करते हुए, उनके बीच से गुजरते हुए अपना काम जारी रखा।  
"Against" ज्यादा confrontational लगता है और persist के साथ natural नहीं है। "Across" physical movement को दिखाता है, इसलिए यहाँ fit नहीं होता। "Despite" का मतलब in spite of होता है, लेकिन वह endurance और process को उतना clearly नहीं दिखाता जितना "through" दिखाता है।  
इसलिए sentence में "persisted through all obstacles and criticism" सबसे appropriate है।

- The correct preposition is “through” because it best matches the meaning of the verb “persist.” The verb persist implies continuing an effort while facing difficulties over a period of time. Using “through” shows that she continued her work during and across all the obstacles and criticism, enduring them rather than avoiding them. In contrast, “against” sounds confrontational and is not commonly used with persist, “across” suggests physical movement, and “despite” means “in spite of” but does not highlight the idea of enduring difficulties step by step. Therefore, “through” is the most appropriate choice in this context.
10. C) ‘Live up to’ का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि पूरे संदर्भ में sentence यह दिखा रहा है कि स्टार्ट-अप निवेशकों में जो उम्मीदें पैदा कर चुका था, वह उन उम्मीदों पर खरा नहीं उतर सका। यहाँ “failed to \_\_\_ the expectations” में अपेक्षित अर्थ है उम्मीदों को पूरा करना, इसलिए “live up to” सबसे उपयुक्त विकल्प है।
- ‘Live up to’ should be used because in the entire context the sentence conveys that the startup could not meet or fulfill the expectations it had created among investors. In “failed to \_\_\_ the expectations,” the intended meaning is to satisfy/fulfill expectations, thus “live up to” is the most appropriate choice.
11. A) The correctly spelt word is Adversity which means “difficult or unpleasant situation” विपत्ति / कठिनाई।
12. B) Highlighted वाक्य में ‘tear’ का अर्थ है — आँसू (a drop of liquid from the eye)। विकल्प B में भी ‘tear’ का अर्थ आँसू ही है — छोटी लड़की का आँसू। इसलिए यह same meaning का सही उदाहरण है।  
In the highlighted sentence, ‘tear’ means a drop of liquid from the eye.  
Option B also uses ‘tear’ with the same meaning — the little girl’s tear.  
Thus, option B matches the same meaning.
13. D) The correctly spelt word is Precarious which means “unsafe, uncertain, or risky” असुरक्षित / अनिश्चित / जोखिमपूर्ण।
14. A) **Star-crossed lovers** (idiom) - Lovers whose relationship is doomed भाग्य से विपरीत प्रेमी / जिनका प्रेम सफल नहीं होता
15. C) **Sporadic** (adjective) – Occurring at irregular intervals, scattered, occasional. छिटपुट / अनियमित  
Antonym: **Frequent** (adjective) – Occurring often, regular, repeated. बार-बार होने वाला / नियमित
- **Infrequent** (adjective) – Rare, uncommon, occasional. कम होने वाला
  - **Occasional** (adjective) – Sporadic, irregular, intermittent. कभी-कभार
  - **Intermittent** (adjective) – Occurring at intervals, on and off. रुक-रुक कर होने वाला
16. B) **Morgue** (noun) – a place where dead bodies are kept for examination शव-गृह / मुर्दाघर
- **Cemetery** (noun) – a place where dead are buried कब्रिस्तान
  - **Hospital** (noun) – place for medical treatment अस्पताल
  - **Clinic** (noun) – small medical treatment facility चिकित्सालय
17. B) **Fastidious** (adjective) – picky, fussy, meticulous, demanding, choosy बहुत चुनिंदा / बेहद सूक्ष्मतापूर्ण  
Antonym: **Sloppy** (adjective) – careless, untidy, negligent, messy, lax लापरवाह / अस्त-व्यस्त
- **Meticulous** (adjective) – very careful, precise, thorough, exacting बेहद सावधान

- **Fussy** (adjective) – overly selective, hard to please, finicky चुस्त-चुनिंदा / नुक्ताचीनी करने वाला
- **Perceptive** (adjective) – observant, insightful, discerning सूझ-बूझ वाला

18. A) **Magician** (noun) – a general term for someone who does magic जादूगर

**Illusionist** (noun) – a person who performs magic tricks by creating illusions जादू के करतब दिखाने वाला / भ्रम पैदा करने वाला कलाकार

**Sorcerer** (noun) – a person believed to use supernatural powers तांत्रिक / जादू-टोना करने वाला

**Wizard** (noun) – a man with magical powers (often in stories) जादूगर चरित्र

19. A) इस sentence में Option A – “**Except for you and I, no one knew Radha**” को सही माना जाता है क्योंकि “you and I” को एक compound subject expression के रूप में लिया जाता है। English में जब दो pronouns “and” से जुड़े होते हैं, तो उन्हें अक्सर subject position में रखा जाता है, और इसी कारण “I” का प्रयोग किया जाता है। Sentence का focus इस बात पर है कि कौन लोग Radha को जानते थे, और इस idea को express करने के लिए “you and I” एक collective reference की तरह काम करता है।

हालाँकि everyday spoken English में लोग “you and me” भी इस्तेमाल करते हैं, लेकिन formal sentence structure में “you and I” को अधिक acceptable माना जाता है क्योंकि यह grammatical symmetry बनाए रखता है और sentence को अधिक formal और structured बनाता है। इसलिए Option A को most suitable replacement माना जाता है।

In this sentence, Option A – “Except for you and I, no one knew Radha” is considered correct because “you and I” functions as a compound pronoun unit. When two pronouns are joined by “and,” they are commonly treated as a collective subject form, which leads to the use of “I” rather than “me.” The sentence emphasizes who knew Radha, and “you and I” presents that group in a unified and formal way.

Although “you and me” is frequently used in everyday speech, “you and I” is often preferred in more formal sentence constructions because it maintains grammatical balance and a consistent pronoun form. Therefore, Option A is regarded as the most suitable replacement in this context.

20. A) **Why was the complex mystery suddenly solved by the brilliant detective?**

Active से Passive Voice में बदलने के लिए, Active वाक्य का Object Passive वाक्य का Subject बन जाता है और Verb को Passive रूप में बदला जाता है। यहाँ वाक्य Interrogative है, इसलिए Question शब्द (Why) वाक्य की शुरुआत में ही रखा जाता है। Active वाक्य में “did solve” (Past Indefinite) है, जिसका Passive रूप “was solved” होता है। Object “the complex mystery” Passive में Subject बन गया है और “by the brilliant detective” के रूप में Agent प्रयोग हुआ है। इसलिए सही Passive वाक्य होगा –

Why was the complex mystery suddenly solved by the brilliant detective?

To change an Active Interrogative sentence into Passive Voice, the object becomes the subject, and the verb shifts to its passive form while retaining the question pattern. Here, “Why” remains at the beginning, and the Past Indefinite verb “did solve” transforms to “was solved”.

Thus, the correct passive transformation is –

Why was the complex mystery suddenly solved by the brilliant detective?

21. C) **through** सही है क्योंकि इसका इस्तेमाल तब होता है जब कोई व्यक्ति पेड़ों और झाड़ियों जैसी 3D space के अंदर से गुजरता है। “along” का मतलब किसी रास्ते के किनारे-किनारे (parallel) चलना है। “amidst” का मतलब ‘के बीच’ (surrounded by) होता है, लेकिन यह movement को क्लीयरली नहीं दिखाता। “into”

का मतलब बाहर से अंदर जाना है, लेकिन 'through' का मतलब जंगल के एक हिस्से से दूसरे हिस्से तक पूरी तरह navigate करना है।

The correct answer is "through". It is specifically used to indicate movement within and out of a dense, three-dimensional environment like a woodland. "Along" implies moving parallel to a line or path. "Amidst" means surrounded by, but lacks the clear implication of forward traversal. "Into" only describes the act of entering, whereas "through" captures the ongoing journey passing within the forest.

22. A) **bracket** सही है क्योंकि इसका मतलब है किसी ग्रुप के दोनों छोर (आगे और पीछे) पर position लेना ताकि बीच वाले लोग सेफ रहें। पैसेज में साफ़ लिखा है कि टूरिस्ट "single file" (एक के पीछे एक लाइन में) चल रहे हैं और दो armed scouts राइफल लेकर उन्हें प्रोटेक्ट कर रहे हैं, जिसे tactical language में 'bracket' करना कहते हैं। "surround" पूरी तरह गलत है क्योंकि सिर्फ 2 लोग पूरी लंबी लाइन को चारों तरफ से गोल नहीं 'घेर' सकते। "patrol" का मतलब सिर्फ गश्त लगाना है, इसमें कोई fixed safety formation नहीं होती। "shield" का मतलब सिर्फ एक साइड (सामने) खड़े होकर बचाना है।

The correct answer is "bracket" because it specifically means taking a defensive position at both ends (front and rear) of a line. The passage describes the tourists walking in a single file line with two armed scouts protecting them, and bracketing perfectly defines this tactical formation. "Surround" is physically impossible for only two scouts to do around a whole group. "Patrol" implies wandering an area to keep watch, not holding a specific geometric formation. "Shield" generally means to stand in front of something to block it, missing the dual-ended coverage.

23. D) **ambush** सही है क्योंकि इसका मतलब छिपकर अचानक किया जाने वाला हमला (surprise attack) है। पैसेज ऑथर के मन के डर को दिखा रहा है कि पैदल सफारी खतरनाक क्यों है, और Cape buffalo झाड़ियों में छिपकर इंतज़ार करने और अचानक हमला करने के लिए notoriously फेमस हैं। "siege" पूरी तरह गलत है क्योंकि इसका मतलब किसी किले या शहर को महीनों तक घेर कर रखना है, जानवर ऐसा नहीं करते। "barrage" का मतलब लगातार गोलियों या पत्थरों की बारिश करना है, जो जानवर नहीं कर सकते। "invasion" एक देश पर सेना का हमला है।

The correct answer is "ambush" because it means a surprise attack from a hidden position. The passage implies the inherent danger of a walking safari, highlighting that Cape buffalo are notorious for hiding in the brush to launch sudden attacks. "Siege" is logically unjustifiable because it means a prolonged military blockade. "Barrage" requires firing multiple projectiles like bullets, which an animal cannot do. "Invasion" implies an organized army crossing a border to conquer territory.

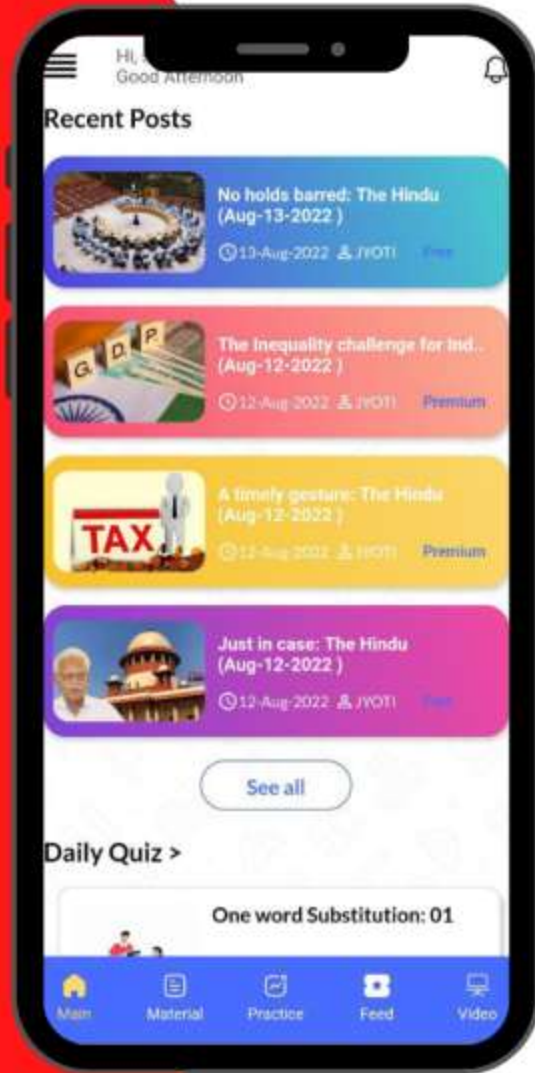
24. B) **cantankerous** सही है क्योंकि इसका मतलब स्वभाव से बहुत चिड़चिड़ा, शोर मचाने वाला और झगड़ालू (grumpy) होना है। पैसेज में बबून बंदरों को shadows में "barking" (भौंकते और शोर मचाते हुए) दिखाया गया है, जो उनके जंगली और चिड़चिड़े nature को एकदम सही describe करता है। "sullen" पूरी तरह गलत है क्योंकि इसका मतलब 'चुपचाप' गुस्सा होना है, जो पैसेज के "barking" वर्ड को contradict करता है। "boisterous" का मतलब खुशी और पार्टी वाला शोर है, जबकि यहाँ सफारी का माहौल डरावना है। "mute" का मतलब गूंगा (आवाज़ ना निकाल पाना) है, जो भौंकने वाले जानवरों के लिए impossible है।

The correct answer is "cantankerous" because it means bad-tempered, argumentative, and irritable. The passage describes the baboons barking in the shadows, and this word perfectly captures their noisy, grumpy, and uncooperative wild nature. "Sullen" is unjustifiable because it means angrily silent or sulking, which directly contradicts the word "barking". "Boisterous"

describes loud, cheerful, energetic noise, which ruins the tense, scary atmosphere. "Mute" means unable to speak or make a sound, making it completely impossible for barking animals.

25. D) **indentation** सही है क्योंकि इसका मतलब किसी surface पर दबाव की वजह से बना एक छोटा सा गड्ढा या physical dip है। पैसेज में guide धूल में एक ताज़ा निशान देखकर रुकता है, जो असल में एक भारी rhino के पैर के दबाव से बना ताज़ा गड्ढा (footprint) है। "trench" गलत है क्योंकि यह इंसानों या मशीनों की खोदी हुई लंबी और गहरी खाई होती है। "crevice" पत्थर या बर्फ की चट्टान में आई एक दरार होती है, यह धूल (dust) में नहीं बन सकती। "ravine" एक बहुत बड़ी प्राकृतिक घाटी है, जिसे कोई जानवर अपने पैर से नहीं बना सकता।

The correct answer is "indentation" because it correctly describes a small, shallow depression made by pressure. The passage implies the guide has spotted a fresh footprint in the dust, pressed into the earth by the heavy rhino. "Trench" is a long, narrow, and deep ditch dug into the ground by humans or machines. "Crevice" is a narrow crack or fracture, exclusively found in hard surfaces like rock or ice, not soft dust. A "ravine" is a massive, deep valley formed by water erosion, which an animal cannot make.



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