

CLAT WHISPERS

(CLAT Mentorship Program)

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Passage 1

Source: California State Polytechnic University, Pomona

In the face of accelerating climate change, the dominant narrative has increasingly shifted toward systemic reform—government regulation, corporate accountability, and international treaties. While these are undeniably essential, the growing emphasis on structural change has, paradoxically, led to a dangerous form of moral outsourcing. The belief that only institutions can solve the crisis has become a convenient excuse for individual inaction.

This framing is not only ethically flawed but strategically shortsighted. Individuals are not passive recipients of policy; they are the architects of political will. Every movement that has reshaped society—from civil rights to environmental protection—has been catalyzed by individual choices, voices, and sacrifices. To suggest that personal behavior is irrelevant in the climate fight is to ignore the historical record of social transformation.

Critics argue that focusing on individual responsibility distracts from the real culprits: fossil fuel companies, deregulated markets, and complicit governments. But this is a false dichotomy. Systemic change and individual action are not mutually exclusive; they are mutually reinforcing. It is individuals who organize, vote, protest, and pressure institutions. It is individuals who model sustainable practices that shift cultural norms. The idea that one must choose between personal ethics and collective reform is a rhetorical trap.

Moreover, the psychological effects of personal engagement are profound. When people feel that their actions matter, they are more likely to stay informed, participate politically, and support ambitious climate policies. Conversely, when they are told that their choices are meaningless, apathy sets in. The climate crisis is not just a technical problem; it is a moral and motivational one.

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To be clear, this is not a call for purity politics or eco-perfectionism. No one can live entirely outside the carbon economy. But the goal is not perfection—it is participation. The question is not whether your reusable bag will save the planet, but whether your daily choices align with the future you claim to want. Ethics begins where excuses end.

In the end, the climate crisis demands a new kind of citizenship—one that recognizes the power of the individual not as a consumer, but as a civic agent. Waiting for institutions to act while abdicating personal responsibility is not pragmatism; it is paralysis. The planet cannot afford spectators. It needs participants.

1. What rhetorical strategy does the author primarily use to challenge the idea that individual action is insignificant?

- A. Historical analogy to past social movements
- B. Statistical evidence of carbon footprints
- C. Appeals to scientific consensus
- D. Personal anecdotes of climate activism

2. Which of the following best describes the author's central thesis?

- A. Systemic reform is more effective than individual behavior in addressing climate change.
- B. Individual action is ethically necessary and politically catalytic in the climate movement.
- C. Climate change solutions must prioritize technological innovation over lifestyle changes.
- D. The focus on personal responsibility is a distraction from institutional accountability.

3. The author's tone throughout the passage can best be described as:

- A. Detached and analytical
- B. Urgent and morally assertive
- C. Skeptical and ironic
- D. Optimistic and celebratory

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4. Which of the following best captures the function of the fourth paragraph in the passage?

- A. It introduces a counterargument to the author's position.
- B. It provides empirical data to support the main thesis.
- C. It explores the psychological consequences of disengagement.
- D. It critiques the media's portrayal of climate activism.

5. Which of the following titles would best encapsulate the argument of the passage?

- A. The Carbon Footprint Fallacy
- B. Why Governments Must Lead the Climate Fight
- C. From Spectator to Citizen: Rethinking Climate Responsibility
- D. The End of Individualism in Environmental Ethics

Passage 2

Source: International Monetary Fund (IMF)

As automation and artificial intelligence continue to reshape the global economy, the question of how workers perceive these changes has become increasingly urgent. While much of the discourse has focused on technological capabilities and economic forecasts, relatively little attention has been paid to the subjective experiences of workers themselves. A recent cross-national survey of over 11,000 workers across advanced and emerging economies offers a more nuanced picture—one that complicates the binary of optimism and fear.

Contrary to popular assumptions, the survey reveals that workers in emerging markets tend to view automation more positively than their counterparts in advanced economies. This optimism is often linked to expectations of increased productivity, job creation in new sectors, and the potential for upward mobility. In contrast, workers in wealthier nations—particularly those who are older, less educated, or employed in routine-intensive jobs—express greater anxiety about job displacement and skill obsolescence.

These perceptions are not merely reflections of economic conditions; they are shaped by institutional and cultural factors. For instance, workers in countries with strong labor protections and robust

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retraining programs are more likely to see automation as an opportunity rather than a threat. Conversely, in contexts where social safety nets are weak or absent, automation is often perceived as a harbinger of precarity.

One of the most striking findings is the role of education and job satisfaction in shaping attitudes toward automation. Workers with higher levels of education and greater satisfaction in their current roles are more likely to believe that they can adapt to technological change. They are also more inclined to support policies that promote reskilling and lifelong learning. This suggests that perceptions of automation are not fixed but can be influenced by policy interventions and workplace culture.

The implications of these findings are significant. If automation is to be a force for inclusive growth rather than deepening inequality, policymakers must address not only the structural dimensions of labor markets but also the psychological and perceptual ones. Building trust in the future of work requires more than economic modeling; it demands a concerted effort to engage workers as active participants in shaping that future.

1. What is the primary function of the third paragraph in the structure of the passage?

- A. To present statistical data supporting the survey's methodology
- B. To explore how national policies influence worker perceptions of automation
- C. To critique the lack of social safety nets in emerging economies
- D. To argue that automation is universally perceived as a threat

2. Which of the following best captures the author's implicit assumption about the role of education in the automation debate?

- A. Education guarantees immunity from job displacement
- B. Higher education correlates with greater adaptability and optimism
- C. Educational attainment is irrelevant in the face of technological disruption
- D. Only technical education can prepare workers for automation

3. Which of the following inferences is most strongly supported by the passage?

- A. Workers in advanced economies are more likely to benefit from automation

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- B. Cultural attitudes toward work have no bearing on automation anxiety
- C. Institutional support systems can mediate the psychological impact of automation
- D. Automation will eliminate more jobs than it creates in the long term

4. What is the author's likely purpose in referencing both emerging and advanced economies?

- A. To highlight the global uniformity of automation's effects
- B. To contrast levels of technological development
- C. To demonstrate the variability of worker sentiment across contexts
- D. To argue that emerging economies are more vulnerable to disruption

5. Which of the following titles would best reflect the central argument of the passage?

- A. Automation and the End of Work
- B. Perception and Policy in the Age of Machines
- C. The Global Divide in Technological Innovation
- D. Why Workers Fear the Future

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Answers:

Passage 1

1. A

a. correct - The author directly challenges the idea that individual action is irrelevant by stating, "Every movement that has reshaped society—from civil rights to environmental protection—has been catalyzed by individual choices, voices, and sacrifices," using historical movements as an analogy.

b. incorrect - The passage makes arguments about ethics and politics but does not use statistical evidence of carbon footprints to do so.

c. incorrect - The passage is a philosophical and political argument, not a scientific one, and does not appeal to scientific consensus.

d. incorrect - The author uses historical analogies, not personal anecdotes, to support the argument.

2. B

a. incorrect - This is the view the author is arguing against. The passage critiques the "dominant narrative" that has shifted "toward systemic reform" at the expense of individual action.

b. correct - This statement accurately captures the author's central thesis that individual action is not only a moral duty ("ethically necessary") but also a crucial driver of systemic change ("politically catalytic").

c. incorrect - The passage focuses on the interplay between individual behavior and systemic reform, not on technological innovation.

d. incorrect - This is the counterargument that the author explicitly refutes, calling the idea that one must choose between personal and collective action a "false dichotomy" and a "rhetorical trap".

3. B

a. incorrect - The tone is not detached. The author uses strong, morally charged language like "dangerous," "ethically flawed," "paralysis," and "moral and motivational" problem.

b. correct - The author's tone is clearly urgent ("The planet cannot afford spectators") and makes strong claims about right and wrong ("ethically flawed," "Ethics begins where excuses end"), making it morally assertive.

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c. incorrect - The tone is direct and earnest, not skeptical or ironic.

d. incorrect - The tone is more of a call to action in the face of a crisis than it is celebratory or optimistic.

4. C

a. incorrect - This paragraph supports the author's main argument; it does not introduce a counterargument.

b. incorrect - The paragraph discusses psychological effects, not empirical data in a statistical sense.

c. correct - This paragraph's function is to explore the "psychological effects of personal engagement," arguing that feeling one's actions matter prevents apathy, while feeling they are meaningless leads to it. This directly addresses the consequences of disengagement.

d. incorrect - The paragraph focuses on individual psychology, not media portrayals of activism.

5. C

a. incorrect - The author argues for the importance of individual action, so a title suggesting it's a "fallacy" would be contradictory.

b. incorrect - This title reflects the viewpoint that the author is arguing against—the idea that only governments can lead the fight.

c. correct - This title perfectly encapsulates the passage's central argument: a call for individuals to move from being passive "spectators" to active "civic agents" or "participants," thereby "rethinking climate responsibility".

d. incorrect - The passage argues for a renewed sense of individual civic agency, not the "end of individualism".

Passage 2

1. B

a. incorrect - This paragraph does not present statistical data on methodology; it discusses the influence of national policies.

b. correct - This paragraph's primary function is to explain how "institutional and cultural factors," such as "strong labour protections and robust retraining programs," shape whether workers view automation as an opportunity or a threat.

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c. incorrect - While the paragraph mentions weak social safety nets, its main purpose is to explain their effect on perception, not to critique the economies themselves.

d. incorrect - The paragraph explains why automation is perceived differently in different contexts, contradicting the idea that it is universally seen as a threat.

2. B

a. incorrect - The passage does not suggest education guarantees immunity, only that it correlates with greater optimism and perceived adaptability.

b. correct - The passage explicitly states that "Workers with higher levels of education... are more likely to believe that they can adapt to technological change," which supports the assumption that higher education correlates with adaptability and optimism.

c. incorrect - The passage argues the opposite, stating that education plays one of the "most striking" roles in shaping attitudes toward automation.

d. incorrect - The passage refers to "higher levels of education" and "lifelong learning" in general, not just technical education.

3. C

a. incorrect - The passage states that workers in advanced economies express "greater anxiety," suggesting they do not perceive themselves as more likely to benefit.

b. incorrect - The passage explicitly states that perceptions are shaped by "institutional and cultural factors," contradicting this option.

c. correct - This inference is strongly supported by the statement that "workers in countries with strong labour protections and robust retraining programs are more likely to see automation as an opportunity rather than a threat," showing that such systems can mediate the psychological effects.

d. incorrect - The passage focuses on worker *perceptions* of automation, not on making long-term economic forecasts about job creation or elimination.

4. C

a. incorrect - The author's purpose is to highlight the differences, not the uniformity, of automation's effects and perceptions.

b. incorrect - While levels of development are different, the primary purpose of the comparison is to analyze worker sentiment, not the technology itself.

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c. correct - The passage explicitly contrasts the "more positively" view in emerging markets with the "greater anxiety" in advanced economies to demonstrate that worker sentiment is not monolithic but varies significantly by context.

d. incorrect - The passage suggests workers in emerging economies are more optimistic, which contradicts the idea that they are more vulnerable, at least in terms of perception.

5. B

a. incorrect - The passage is about the perception of automation, not a prediction of the "End of Work".

b. correct - This title accurately captures the two central themes of the passage: how automation is perceived by workers ("Perception") and how government and corporate actions ("Policy") can influence both the perceptions and the outcomes in the "Age of Machines".

c. incorrect - The passage is about worker perceptions, not a "Global Divide in Technological Innovation".

d. incorrect - While the passage discusses fear, it also discusses optimism, making this title too one-sided. The focus is on the reasons for these varied perceptions.

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