SKIP THE TRAPS · SOLVE THE SCALABLES

THE PASSAGE | READING COMPREHENSION

> Nothing can exist in a natural state which can be called good or bad by common assent, since every man who is in a natural state consults only his own advantage, and determines what is good or bad according to his own fancy and insofar as he has regard for his own advantage alone, and holds himself responsible to no one save himself by any law; and therefore sin cannot be conceived in a natural state, but only in a civil state, which is decreed by common consent what is good or bad, and each one holds himself responsible to the state.

Which one of the following statements best reflects the central idea of the passage given above?

Central Idea | Contrast Passage | Hidden Trap: a moral label the passage refuses to give

(a) The conceptions of what is right or wrong exist due to the formation of a state. ✓
Good and bad are fixed by common consent only in a civil state. Right and wrong need a state.

(b) Unless a ruling authority decides as to what is right or wrong, no man would be morally right.
Too strong. The passage says sin cannot be conceived, not that nobody can be right.

(c) Man is inherently immoral and selfish in a natural state.
The passage says nothing is good or bad there, so 'immoral' is a label it avoids.

(d) The idea of what is right or wrong is necessary for the survival of human species.
Survival is never mentioned.

CRACK THE HIDDEN RULE

A long single-sentence passage usually hides a contrast. Here it is natural state against civil state, and the word 'therefore' marks the conclusion.

The central idea sits after 'therefore': sin, and so right and wrong, belong only to the civil state.

Natural state: no common good or bad. Civil state: decreed by consent.

NATURAL STATE	CIVIL STATE	CENTRAL IDEA
No common good or bad	Good or bad by consent	Right and wrong need a state

WORKED IN 3 CLEAN STEPS

1 Mark the contrast
Natural state: each man follows his own advantage, so nothing is good or bad by common assent. Civil state: good and bad are decided by common consent.

2 Read the conclusion
After 'therefore': sin can be conceived only in a civil state.

3 Match the option
(a) says right and wrong exist because of a state. (b) overstates, (c) adds a moral label, (d) adds survival.

ANSWER: (a) The conceptions of what is right or wrong exist due to the formation of a state

THE 3-SECOND SHORTCUT

Find the 'therefore' and read only the sentence part after it. Pick the option that restates it without adding labels (immoral) or purposes (survival).

find the contrast | read after 'therefore' | no added labels

→ Option (c) is the trap: selfish is stated, immoral is not.
→ Option (b) says 'no man would be morally right', which is stronger than the text.

WHY ASPIRANTS LOSE MARKS HERE

1. **Choosing (c) because 'his own advantage' sounds selfish.** The passage calls nothing in the natural state good or bad.
2. **Choosing (b) because it mentions authority.** It turns 'cannot be conceived' into 'cannot be right'.
3. **Choosing (d) because morality seems useful.** Usefulness is never discussed.

ATTEMPT	FLAG	SKIP
~50 sec	if (a) and (b) look close	rarely
One contrast, one conclusion.	Pick the one that does not overstate.	Dense wording but a clear answer.

THE ONE-LINE TAKEAWAY

Find the contrast and the 'therefore'. The central idea is the sentence after it, stated without extra labels.

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