

Question 1

To understand what the Everglades is today, you need to know what it once was. The pristine Everglades was a wetland that spanned the state of Florida south of Lake Okeechobee, about 2.9 million acres of mostly peatland covered by tall saw grass growing in shallow water. When the lake was full, water overflowed into the northern Everglades and moved slowly to the south in a 50-mile-wide sheet, a foot deep. In the 1880s people began to drain the Kissimmee River-Lake Okeechobee-Everglades watershed. Drainage exposed the organic muck soil, which produced extraordinary crop yields.

Today more than 50% of the historic Everglades has been eliminated. More than 1,400 miles of drainage canals and levees have been constructed in and around the Everglades for flood control. Widespread population growth and land-use modification for agriculture and industry have altered the natural wetlands, affecting the quantity and quality of drinking water and increasing human exposure to hydrologic hazards such as floods. Chemicals used in farming, including fertilizers, insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides, now often leak into the groundwater or nearby surface waters. Storm-water runoff from urban areas commonly transports heavy metals and nutrients into canals and the Biscayne aquifer.

The last 100 years have been tremendous change in the Everglades. Today the flow of water is controlled by a complex management system that includes canals, levees, and pumps. The Everglades has been called "the biggest artificial plumbing system in the world."

In the above passage, what is the meaning of hydrologic?

- a. catastrophic
- b. chemical
- c. water-based
- d. electronic

Question 2

Passage 1

The Taj Mahal, located in Agra, India, is one of the most magnificent examples of Islamic architecture. Shah Jahan, a Muslim ruler, built it in the seventeenth century as a tribute to his late wife. The style of the building seems to reflect that it was built for a beloved woman. Delicate white marble walls, accented by lofty arches and lacy scrollwork, support a series of domes. Four slender towers stand guard near the corners of the building. Overall, the style of the structure gives a striking impression of lightness, despite the heavy stone material. All of these characteristics lead to an almost otherworldly beauty, worth of any queen.

Passage 2

Although the Taj Mahal has long been recognized for its architectural beauty, it is often overlooked that Shah Jahan commissioned the building in 1632 as a tomb for his most beloved wife. The tomb is flanked on the west by a mosque, a Muslim place of worship. Arabic script is inlaid along the walls of the Taj Mahal, and it is rumored that the entire Muslim holy book, the Koran, is written along the structure's walls and supports. The architectural wonder of the Taj Mahal cannot be denied; however, it is vital to recognize the spiritual aspects that pervade one of the world's most recognizable buildings.

The authors of both passage 1 and 2 would most likely agree that the Taj Mahal

- a. is the most famous example of Islamic architecture
- b. was primarily designed to be a place of worship
- c. was originally intended as a memorial
- d. is not typical of buildings in India

Question 3
Passage 1

Charles Ives, the iconoclastic American composer who mixed everything from religious hymns to brass band marches to classical music into his symphonies, would have been right at home in the musical culture of contemporary America. Our musical tastes prove us to be robust explorers, unconstrained by tradition. We mix and match musical styles rather than preserve the preferences of our parents and grandparents. America has no single dominant musical culture. What characterizes our musical taste is how we listen, not what we listen to. As listeners, we commonly amalgamate a wide range of musical styles into our own personal soundtracks. The whole world's music is our music.

Passage 2

Music is often viewed as one of the most salient indicators of cultural identity. As a little boy, my entire musical universe consisted of Chinese classical music. I thought all kids grew up learning to play instruments such as the Erhu (a two-stringed fiddle) and the Xindi (a bamboo flute). After we immigrated to America, my ideas about music were turned upside down. In school my classmates seemed to be conversant in every conceivable musical genre. Their tastes rubbed off on me, and I became interested in a broad range of different styles. By the time I graduated from high school, I was as likely to listen to hip-hop or rock as to traditional Chinese music.

Which of the following best describes the relationship between the two passages?

- a. Passage 1 discusses musical styles that are criticized in Passage 2.
- b. Passage 1 provides a broader context for the experiences described in Passage 2.
- c. Passage 1 provides a personal interpretation of the thesis put forth in Passage 2.
- d. Passage 2 cites examples referred to in Passage 1 to correct a common misconception.

Question 4
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The author of Passage 1 would most likely describe the listening habits discussed in the last sentence of Passage 2 as

- a. surprisingly bold
- b. regrettably conservative
- c. embarrassingly pretentious
- d. characteristically American

Question 5

Although the first internal-combustion-powered vehicle was created in 1885, automotive history did not begin until 1907. That was the year that Henry Ford's revolutionary assembly line began churning out his Model T automobiles. Ford's grand vision was to make the car an integral part of the American lifestyle, and his mass production techniques allowed him to sell his Model T at unbelievably low prices - the cost of the car was \$950 in 1907 and had dropped to under \$300 by 1926. Soon, there were more cars in the United States than households. A new era of freedom and mobility had begun.

It may be inferred from the above passage that _____

- a. Ford's refinements to automobile technology allowed him to produce better quality, cheaper cars.
- b. Most Americans owned a Model T by 1926.
- c. One of Ford's contributions to automobile history was the introduction of the assembly line.
- d. The price of the Model T continued to drop after 1926.

Question 6

During the first decade of the nineteenth century, the geographic image of western North America began to change dramatically. Based on the observations of the explorers Meriwether Lewis and George Rogers Clark, information gathered from native people, and Clark's own cartographic imagination, this image evolved from an almost empty interior with a hypothetical single mountain range serving as a western continental divide to an intricate one showing a labyrinth of mountains and rivers. A continent that had once seemed empty and simple was now becoming full and complex.

The Lewis and Clark expedition established the precedent for army exploration in the West. Major Stephen H. Long's Scientific Expedition (1819 - 1820) advanced that tradition, this time centering attention on the central and southern Great Plains and the Front Range of the Rockies. For the first time, an American exploring party included professional scientists and two skilled artists. While not every future American expedition took along such skilled observers, the pattern was set for increasingly scientific exploration.

It would take another 50 years after Lewis and Clark to complete the cartographic image of the West we know today. Other explorers and mapmakers followed, each revealing new geographic and scientific details about specific parts of the western landscape. But this revealing process was not a simple one. New knowledge did not automatically replace old ideas; some notions - especially about river passages across the West - persisted well into the nineteenth century. In the decades after Lewis and Clark, the company of western explorers expanded to include fur traders, missionaries, and government topographers, culminating in the 1850s when the Army's Corps of Topographical Engineers surveyed the southwestern and northwestern boundaries of the United States as well as the potential routes for a transcontinental railroad. By the time of the Civil War, an ocean-to-ocean American empire with borders clearly defined was a fact of continental life.

Which of the following best summarizes the above passage?

- a. Western North America has a single mountain range that was unknown before the nineteenth century.
- b. Nineteenth-century explorers found western North America to be geographically more complex than they had originally thought.
- c. Western North America was barren and mostly empty before the early nineteenth century.
- d. Lewis and Clark discovered many rivers in western North America.

Question 7

Heroes were an important part of Greek mythology, but the characteristics that Greeks admitted in a hero are not necessarily identical to those we admire today. Greek heroes are not always what modern readers might think of as "good role models." Their actions may strike us as morally dubious.

For example, consider the encounter between the legendary Greek hero Odysseus and the Cyclops. The Cyclops was one of a race of giants who lived by themselves on a remote, rarely visited island. The name Cyclops means "round eye," because these giants had only one eye in the middle of their forehead. They lived in caves, tended flocks of sheep, and ate the produce of their fields; they were shepherds.

Odysseus visited the island as part of his exploration to look for supplies. He brought with him a flask of wine. Although he was regarded as an intruder by the Cyclops, he helped himself to the giant's supplies without permission. The Cyclops became very angry. To ease the anger, Odysseus served him some wine. The Cyclops enjoyed the wine and asked for more. Later, when the Cyclops is in a wine-induced stupor, Odysseus attacks him in the eye. Later Odysseus brags to his comrades about blinding the one-eyed creature.

This does not mean the Greeks admitted thievery and bragging, however. What they admitted about Odysseus, in this instance, was his capacity for quick thinking. Odysseus was also known for pulling off great feats with panache and self-confidence.

Not all Greek heroes were admired for the same reasons. Some, such as Odysseus, were admired for their resourcefulness and intelligence, whereas others, such as Herakles, were known for their strength and courage. Some were not particularly resourceful but depended on help to accomplish their tasks.

Whether or not a given action or quality was admired depended upon its ultimate results. Being headstrong might succeed in one instance but lead to failure in another. The Greeks held the characters in their legends accountable for their actions, and a hero might be punished as well as rewarded.

Based on the above passage, why did the Greeks admire Odysseus?

- a. He could react quickly to a situation.
- b. He was a good role model.
- c. He attacked when the Cyclops was incapacitated.
- d. He was a hero in Greek mythology.

Question 8

I have always viewed a chairmaker's shop as a place alive with sounds. Curly wood shavings crackle like popcorn under the stomps of heavy work boots. Sharp drawknives sing shrilly as they skate across the surface of rough-sewn spindles. Coarse files cough and wheeze as they scrape away, while the table saw hums contentedly in the center of the room. The true craftsman listens intently to these sounds; one might say that he engages in an ongoing conversation with them. The slightest variation in a tool's familiar tune will cause him to alter his stroke, or pause to sharpen the tool's blade.

The rhetorical device featured most prominently in the above passage is _____

- a. metaphorical language
- b. flashback
- c. irony
- d. veiled allusion

Question 9

Though most people know the definition of the word "boycott," few know its origin. Named for Captain Charles Boycott, the word as we know it owes less to him than to Irish nationalist Charles Parnell. Parnell organized Irish farmers and convinced them to fix their rent rates. When Boycott refused, Parnell unleashed the power of the people. A band of hostile peasants forced the Captain's servants to leave. There were no laborers to gather the harvest and no stablemen to care for the animals. Boycott was not allowed to enter stores or make purchases. Eventually, Boycott and his wife fled Ireland, and Parnell was hailed as the workingman's hero.

It can be most reasonably inferred from the above passage that _____

- a. Boycott's land was not harvested that year
- b. Parnell was popular among all Irishmen
- c. the farmers threatened Boycott with physical harm
- d. the farmers would never have organized without Parnell's help

Question 10

Since 1970, national parks have had to double the number of signs warning visitors of possible hazards. The new signs have a dual purpose in that they also protect the parks from unnecessary litigation. In 1972, the National Parks Service in Yellowstone was forced to pay more than \$87,000 to the victim of a bear attack. This ruling prompted Yellowstone historian Lee Whittlesley to write, "Analogously I could ask, should New York's Central Park have signs every ten feet saying, 'Danger! Muggers!' just because a non-streetwise, non-New Yorker might go walking there?"

The reference to "the victim" in the above passage serves primarily to

- a. support a previous claim
- b. summarize a counterargument
- c. restate an inconsistency
- d. suggest a possible solution

Question 11

The evidence is growing and is more convincing than ever! People of all ages who are generally inactive can improve their health and well-being by becoming active at a moderate intensity on a regular basis.

Regular physical activity substantially reduces the risk of dying of coronary heart disease, the nation's leading cause of death, and decreases the risk of stroke, colon cancer, diabetes, and high blood pressure. It also helps to control weight; contributes to healthy bones, muscles, and joints; reduces falls among older adults; helps to relieve the pain of arthritis; reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression; and is associated with fewer hospitalizations, physician visits, and medications. Moreover, physical activity need not be strenuous to be beneficial; people of all ages benefit from participating in regular, moderate-intensity physical activity, such as 30 minutes of brisk walking five or more times a week.

Despite the proven benefits of physical activity, more than 50% of American adults do not get enough physical activity to provide health benefits. Twenty-five percent of adults are not active at all in their leisure time. Activity decreases with age and is less common among women than men and among those with lower income and less education. Furthermore, there are racial and ethnic differences in physical activity rates, particularly among women. Insufficient physical activity is not limited to adults. More than a third of young people in grades 9-12 do not regularly engage in vigorous-intensity physical activity. Daily participation in high school physical education classes dropped from 42% in 1991 to 32% in 2001.

Physical activity can bring many health benefits. People who enjoy participating in moderate-intense or vigorous-intensity physical activity on a regular basis benefit by lowering their risk of developing coronary heart disease, stroke, non-insulin-dependent (type 2) diabetes mellitus, high blood pressure, and colon cancer by 30-50 percent. Additionally, active people have lower premature death rates than people who are the least active.

According to the above passage, which of the following is NOT a benefit of regular exercise?

- a. Lowering blood pressure
- b. Reducing colon cancer
- c. Reducing fatty acids
- d. Reducing coronary heart disease

Question 12

PASSAGE: How did one village bring disaster on itself? On a morning in early spring, 1873, the people of Oberfest left their houses and took refuge in the town hall. No one knows why precisely. A number of rumors had raced through the town during recent weeks, were passed on and converted to news; predictions became certainties. On this particular morning, fear turned into terror, and people rushed through the narrow streets, carrying their most precious possessions, pulling their children and dashing into the great hall. The doors were nailed shut, and men took their turns watching out the window. Two days passed. When no disaster came, the fear grew worse, because the people began to suspect that the danger was already in the hall, locked inside. No one spoke to anybody else; people watched each other, looking for signs. It was the children who rang the great bell in the first bell tower—a small band of bored children found the bell rope and swung on it—set the bell clanging. This was the traditional signal of alarm, and in a moment the elders were dashing in panic to all the other bell towers and ringing the bells. For nearly an hour, the valley reverberated with the wild clangor—and then, a thousand feet above, the snow began to crack, and the avalanche began; a massive cataract of ice and snow thundered down and buried the town, silencing the bells. There is no trace of Oberfest today, not even a spire, because the snow is so deep; and, in the shadow of the mountains, it is very cold.

Which word best expresses the main idea of the passage?

- a. dialogue
- b. illustrations
- c. setting
- d. rhythm

Question 13

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Which of the following best represents the main idea of the above passage?

- a. Even a moderate amount of exercise has health benefits.
- b. People who do not exercise need to be convinced to do so.
- c. Exercise cures heart disease and decreases stroke.
- d. Strenuous exercise is better than moderate exercise.

Question 14

PASSAGE: Law enforcement officers in some states are now issuing e-tickets for speeding. The e-tickets are mailed to the registered owner of the vehicle that was "clocked" speeding. It is no longer necessary for an officer to pull you over and issue a paper ticket. You might fly by an officer and think you're in the clear. Several days later in the mail you might receive an e-ticket for speeding past the cruiser.

From the above passage, how will e-tickets be issued?

- a. mailed to the vehicle owner
- b. emailed to the vehicle owner
- c. posted on Facebook
- d. written by an officer and handed to the driver

Question 15

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According to the above passage, which event set the pattern for scientific exploration in the West?

- a. The exploration of the Army's Corps of Topographical Engineers
- b. Long's Scientific Exploration
- c. The exploration of Lewis and Clark
- d. The discovery of a major mountain range in the West

ANSWERS: ASVAB Practice Test – Paragraph Comprehension

1. A
2. B
3. B
4. D
5. C
6. B
7. A
8. A
9. B
10. A
11. C
12. C
13. A
14. A
15. B