

8 Feb 2013

Reading Comprehension

Reading Comprehension is generally designed to test your ability to read a passage and understand its contents and your ability to draw inferences on the basis of what is read. In other words, your ability to grasp the contents of the passage in a relatively short span of time is what is being tested.

Aspects to consider:

- Read between the Paragraphs.
- Read for Main Idea and Primary Purpose of the passage.
- Write down the Main Idea and Primary purpose after each paragraph and create a thought flowchart.
- The Main Idea of the passage is the repeated idea in each of the Main ideas (of the paragraphs)
- The primary purpose is mostly the Primary purpose of the concluding paragraph.
- Classify the passages, such as
 - Explanatory (Mostly Science passages, explain one theory/phenomenon in detail)
 - Comparative (two or more point of views on a theory/topic. Doesn't go in much detail)
 - Argumentative (Subjective, opinionated. Mostly social science/business topics & Pros and cons of a topic with author's views on them)
- Paraphrase the text to simplify.
- Don't over read. Skip examples, dates, lengthy names, any details which can be referred in case something is asked explicitly.
- Don't go for choices which hold true only for one part of the author's argument.
- Don't go for choices which exaggerate the author's conclusion.
- Don't fill in the blanks yourself. Use only as much is there in the passage.
- At the end of reading, ask yourself questions like: What was the passage about? What was author's motive in writing all this?
- Read quickly through soporific passages.
- Read the first question before the passage.

Practice questions

Read the statement or passage and then choose the best answer to the question. Answer the question based on what is stated or implied in the statement or passage.

1. In the words of Thomas DeQuincey, “It is notorious that the memory strengthens as you lay burdens upon it.” If, like most people, you have trouble recalling the names of those you have just met, try this: The next time you are introduced, plan to remember the names. Say to yourself, “I’ll listen carefully; I’ll repeat each person’s name to be sure I’ve got it, and I will remember.” You’ll discover how effective this technique is and probably recall those names for the rest of your life.

The main idea of the paragraph maintains that the memory

- A. always operates at peak efficiency.
- B. breaks down under great strain.
- C. improves if it is used often.
- D. becomes unreliable if it tires.

2. Unemployment was the overriding fact of life when Franklin D. Roosevelt became president of the United States on March 4,

1933. An anomaly of the time was that the government did not systematically collect statistics of joblessness; actually it did not start doing so until 1940. The Bureau of Labor Statistics later estimated that 12,830,000 persons were out of work in 1933, about one-fourth of a civilian labor force of more than 51 million.

Roosevelt signed the Federal Emergency Relief Act on May 12, 1933. The president selected Harry L. Hopkins, who headed the New York relief program, to run FERA. A gifted administrator, Hopkins quickly put the program into high gear. He gathered a small staff in Washington and brought the state relief organizations into the FERA system. While the agency tried to provide all the necessities, food came first. City dwellers usually got an allowance for fuel, and rent for one month was provided in case of eviction.

This passage is primarily about

- A. unemployment in the 1930s.
- B. the effect of unemployment on United States families.
- C. President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s presidency.
- D. President Roosevelt’s FERA program.

3. It is said that a smile is universally understood. And nothing triggers a smile more universally than a taste of sugar. Nearly everyone loves sugar. Infant studies indicate that humans are born with an innate love of sweets. Based on statistics, a lot of people in Great Britain must be smiling because on average, every man, woman, and child in that country consumes 95 pounds of sugar each year.

From this passage it seems safe to conclude that the English

- A. do not know that too much sugar is unhealthy.
- B. eat desserts at every meal.
- C. are fonder of sweets than most people.
- D. have more cavities than any other people.

4. In 1848, Charles Burton of New York City made the first baby carriage, but people strongly objected to the vehicles because they said the carriage operators hit too many pedestrians. Still convinced that he had a good idea, Burton opened a factory in England. He obtained orders for the baby carriages from Queen Isabella II of Spain, Queen Victoria of England, and the Pasha of Egypt. The United States had to wait another 10 years before it got a carriage factory, and only 75 carriages were sold in the first year.

Even after the success of baby carriages in England,

- A. Charles Burton was a poor man.
- B. Americans were still reluctant to buy baby carriages.
- C. Americans purchased thousands of baby carriages.
- D. the United States bought more carriages than any other country.

Directions for questions 6–13: For the questions that follow, two underlined sentences are followed by a question or statement. Read the sentences, and then choose the best answer to the question or the best completion of the statement.

5. The Midwest is experiencing its worst drought in 15 years.
Corn and soybean prices are expected to be very high this year.

What does the second sentence do?

- A. It restates the idea found in the first.
- B. It states an effect.
- C. It gives an example.
- D. It analyzes the statement made in the first.

6. Social studies classes focus on the complexity of our social environment.
The subject combines the study of history and the social sciences and promotes skills in citizenship.

What does the second sentence do?

- A. It expands on the first sentence.
- B. It makes a contrast.
- C. It proposes a solution.
- D. It states an effect.

7. Knowledge of another language fosters greater awareness of cultural diversity among the peoples of the world.
Individuals who have foreign language skills can appreciate more readily other peoples' values and ways of life.

How are the two sentences related?

- A. They contradict each other.
- B. They present problems and solutions.

- C. They establish a contrast.
- D. They repeat the same idea.

8. People have different ways of learning. Some are better at making mental pictures of new ideas. Others are more comfortable with writing lists of things to memorize. Certain people can learn best when listening to music, while others need silence to concentrate.

Which of the following is the main idea of the passage?

- A. Mental pictures help many to learn.
- B. Some people prefer lists to making mental pictures.
- C. To learn well you need to be comfortable.
- D. Different individuals have different ways of acquiring information.

9. Before giving first aid to an accident victim, you should obtain his or her consent. Asking for consent takes a simple question. Say to the victim, "I know first aid, and I can help you until an ambulance arrives. Is that okay?"

"Asking for consent" means asking for

- A. permission to help the victim.
- B. thanks from the victim.
- C. help from onlookers.
- D. information about the victim's injuries.

10. Krupa and Divya are busy for 15 hours a day, 5 days a week going to college and working in a restaurant. They go to sleep at 11 p.m. every day, but on Sunday they take part in dance lessons.

According to the passage, Krupa and Divya spend most of their time

- A. at home.
- B. going to college and working.
- C. taking part in dance lessons.
- D. sleeping.

11. If you hold a piece of copper wire over the flame of a match, heat will be conducted by the copper wire to your fingers, and you will be forced to drop the wire. You will, however, still be able to hold the match because the match is a poor conductor of heat. Anyone, child or adult, can try this simple experiment.

Which of the following is implied in the passage above?

- A. Copper is a good conductor of heat.
- B. A match and copper conduct heat equally.
- C. A match is an excellent conductor of heat.
- D. Matches should be kept out of the reach of small children.

12. Many people own different pets. Dogs, cats, birds, and fish are common household pets. Others pets are considered to be exotic animals. These include snakes, lizards, and hedgehogs.

Snakes are

- A. uncommon pets.
- B. likely to be found in a household with dogs.
- C. found only in zoos.
- D. not allowed in people's homes.

Directions: Read the passages and answer the questions that follow:

First introduced in 1927, The Hardy Boys Mystery Stories are a series of books about the adventures of brothers Frank and Joe Hardy, teenaged detectives who solve one baffling mystery after another. The Hardy Boys were so popular among young boys that in 1930 a similar series was created for girls featuring a sixteen-year-old detective named Nancy Drew. The cover of each volume of The Hardy Boys states that the author of the series is Franklin W. Dixon; the Nancy Drew Mystery Stories are supposedly written by Carolyn Keene. Over the years, though, many fans of both series have been surprised to find out that Franklin W. Dixon and Carolyn Keene are not real people. If Franklin W. Dixon and Carolyn Keene never existed, then who wrote The Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew mysteries?

The Hardy Boys and the Nancy Drew books were written through a process called ghostwriting. A ghostwriter writes a book according to a specific formula. While ghostwriters are paid for writing the books, their authorship is not acknowledged, and their names do not appear on the published books. Ghostwriters can write books for children or adults, the content of which is unspecific. Sometimes they work on book series with a lot of individual titles, such as The Hardy Boys and the Nancy Drew series.

The initial idea for both The Hardy Boys and the Nancy Drew series was developed by a man named Edward Stratemeyer, who owned a publishing company that specialized in children's books. Stratemeyer noticed the increasing popularity of mysteries among adults, and surmised that children would enjoy reading mysteries about younger detectives with whom they could identify. Stratemeyer first developed each book with an outline describing the plot and setting. Once he completed the outline, Stratemeyer then hired a ghostwriter to convert it into a book of slightly over 200 pages. After the ghostwriter had written a draft of a book, he or she would send it back to Stratemeyer, who would make a list of corrections and mail it back to the ghostwriter. The ghostwriter would revise the book according to Stratemeyer's instructions and then return it to him. Once Stratemeyer approved the book, it was ready for publication.

Because each series ran for so many years, Nancy Drew and The Hardy Boys both had a number of different ghostwriters producing books; however, the first ghostwriter for each series proved to be the most influential. The initial ghostwriter for The Hardy Boys was a Canadian journalist named Leslie McFarlane. A few years later, Mildred A. Wirt, a young writer from Iowa, began writing the Nancy Drew books. Although they were using prepared outlines as guides, both McFarlane and Wirt developed the characters themselves. The personalities of Frank and Joe Hardy and Nancy Drew arose directly from McFarlane's and Wirt's imaginations. For example, Mildred Wirt had been a star college athlete and gave Nancy similar athletic abilities. The ghostwriters were also responsible for numerous plot and setting details. Leslie McFarlane used elements of his small Canadian town to create Bayport, the Hardy Boys' fictional hometown.

Although The Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew books were very popular with children, not everyone approved of them. Critics thought their plots were unrealistic and even far-fetched, since most teenagers did not experience the adventures Frank and Joe Hardy or Nancy Drew did. The way the books were written also attracted criticism. Many teachers and librarians objected to the ghostwriting process, claiming it was designed to produce books quickly rather than create quality literature. Some libraries—including the New York Public Library—even refused to include the books in their children's collections. Ironically, this decision actually helped sales of the books, because children simply purchased them when they were unavailable in local libraries.

Regardless of the debates about their literary merit, each series of books has exerted an undeniable influence on American and even global culture. Most Americans have never heard of Edward Stratemeyer, Leslie McFarlane, or Mildred Wirt, but people throughout the world are familiar with Nancy Drew and Frank and Joe Hardy.

Questions

- 1) According to the passage, the Nancy Drew mystery series was introduced in
A. 1925 B. 1927 C. 1929 D. 1930
- 2) Which of the following would be the best title for this passage?
A. Ghostwriting: A Way of Life C. The Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew: Ghostwriting a Series
B. Who Were Leslie McFarlane and Mildred A. Wirt? D. The Dubious yet Profitable Practice of Ghostwriting
- 3) According to the passage, which of the following people was a real writer?
A. Carolyn Keene C. Leslie McFarlane
B. Franklin W. Dixon D. Tom Hardy
- 4) According to the passage, a ghostwriter is someone who
I. writes about mysterious or strange events
II. does not receive credit as the author
III. bases his or her books on predetermined guidelines
A. I only B. I and II only
C. II and III only D. I, II, and III

- 5) As used in paragraph 3, which is the best definition for surmised?
 A. guessed B. questioned
 C. knew D. proved
- 6) According to the passage, The Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew books were created based on the idea that
 I. mystery books for adults are popular
 II. children enjoy reading about characters they can relate to
 III. girls and boys are not interested in the same things
 A. I only B. I and II only
 C. II and III only D. I, II, and III
- 7) Based on information in the passage, it can be inferred that Leslie McFarlane and Mildred Wirt
 A. disliked writing according to a specific formula B. respected the art of ghostwriting
 C. were unsuccessful in their previous occupations D. found it helpful to write from personal experience
- 8) According to the passage, some teachers and librarians objected to ghostwritten books such as The Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew Mystery Stories because they
 A. disapproved of mystery stories B. believed the books were not quality literature
 C. thought the books were too expensive D. disliked Edward Stratemeyer's questionable business practices
- 9) Which of the following best describes the author's attitude toward The Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew book series?
 A. balanced and respectful B. doubtful and critical
 C. hostile but forgiving D. overwhelmingly praising
- 10) Which of the following best describes the structure of this passage?
 A. introduction, explanation, history, controversy, conclusion
 B. introduction, history, controversy, explanation, conclusion
 C. history, explanation, summary, conclusion, controversy
 D. history, controversy, explanation, summary, conclusion

Given the sharp decline in the Dow Jones Industrial Average with mega-cap corporations leading the way, it seems the likelihood of hitting levels indicative of a double dip recession is probable, if not imminent, in the upcoming months. Our analysts recommend that investors closely observe industry ratings, take caution in their attempts to capitalize on yearly lows, and remain vigilant of the aforementioned sell-off predictions. While it may be tempting to "stab" the market when it is down, be wary; today's lows are often tomorrow's highs.

- 1) The author's primary purpose is to
 A. warn investors attempting to take advantage of market lows
 B. outline the dangers involved in investing during a recession
 C. advise investors to take caution in a volatile market
 D. recommend that investors retreat from the market in the long term
 E. reprimand investors interested in capitalizing on fragile market conditions
- 2) As used in the passage, which is the best synonym for imminent?
 A. possible
 B. feasible
 C. plausible
 D. impending
 E. diminishing
- 3) As used in the passage, which is the best antonym for wary?
 A. confident
 B. unconscious
 C. strong
 D. ready
 E. reckless
- 4) This passage would most likely serve as
 A. the introduction to an essay
 B. the conclusion to a report
 C. the supporting evidence in a report
 D. a quick summary presented to eager investors
 E. an advisory notice posted in places of business
- 5) The author apparently believes that
 A. the market will decline in the short term
 B. now is definitely not a good time to invest
 C. although the market is currently down, tomorrow prices will likely hit a record high
 D. most investors are incapable of making good decisions, with current market conditions
 E. it is certain that the economy will see another recession in upcoming months

Name: _____ Dept.: _____

TOTAL MARKS: