



# SAT LONG READING 5



## 1 Reading passage

1 Tribal communities in North America believe that  
2 their traditional languages are valuable resources that  
3 must be maintained. However, these traditional lan-  
4 guages can fall into disuse when some of the effects of  
5 the majority culture on tribal life serve as barriers be-  
6 tween a community and its traditional forms of social,  
7 economic, or spiritual interaction. In some communi-  
8 ties the barrier has been overcome because people have  
9 recognized that language loss is serious and have taken  
10 action to prevent it, primarily through community self-  
11 teaching.

12 Before any community can systemically and for-  
13 mally teach a traditional language to its younger mem-  
14 bers, it must first document the language's grammar;  
15 for example, a group of Northern Utes spent two years  
16 conducting a thorough analysis and classification of  
17 Northern Ute linguistic structures. The grammatical  
18 information is then arranged in sequence from the sim-  
19 pler to the more complex types of usage, and methods  
20 are devised to present the sequence in ways that will  
21 be most useful and appropriate to the culture.

22 Certain obstacles can stand in the way of devel-  
23 oping these teaching methods. One is the difficulty a  
24 community may encounter when it attempts to write  
25 down elements (particularly the spellings of words) of a  
26 language that has been primarily oral for centuries, as  
27 is often the case with traditional languages. Sometimes  
28 this difficulty can simply be a matter of the lack of ac-  
29 ceptable written equivalents for certain sounds in the

30 traditional language: problems arise because of an in-  
31 sistence that every sound in the language have a unique  
32 written equivalent—a desirable but ultimately frustrat-  
33 ing condition that no written language has ever fully  
34 satisfied.

35 Another obstacle is dialect. There may be many  
36 language traditions in a particular community; which  
37 one is to be written down and taught? The Northern  
38 Utes decided not to standardize their language, agree-  
39 ing that various phonetic spellings of words would be  
40 accepted as long as their meanings were clear. Al-  
41 though this troubled some community members who  
42 favored Western notions of standard language writing  
43 or whose training in Western-style linguistics was es-  
44 pecially rigid, the lack of standard orthography made  
45 sense in the context of the community's needs. Within  
46 a year after the adoption of instruction in the Northern  
47 Ute language, even elementary school children could  
48 write and speak it effectively.

49 It has been argued that the attempt to write down  
50 traditional languages is misguided and unnecessary; af-  
51 ter all, in many cases these languages have been trans-  
52 mitted in their oral form since their origins. Defenders  
53 of the practice counter that they are writing down their  
54 languages precisely because of a general decline in oral  
55 traditions, but they concede that languages could be  
56 preserved in their oral form if a community made ev-  
57 ery effort to eschew aspects of the majority culture that  
58 make this preservation difficult.

## 2 Question

1. Which one of the following most accurately states the main idea of the passage?

- (A) In the face of the pervasive influences of the majority culture, some tribes are having difficulty teaching their traditional languages to younger tribe members.

- (B) If tribes are to continue to hold on to their cultures in the face of majority culture influences, it is necessary for them to first teach their traditional languages to younger tribe members.
- (C) Responding to doubts about the value of preserving oral forms of culture, some tribes, using techniques of Western-style linguistics, have taught their traditional languages to younger tribe members.
- (D) Recognizing the value of their traditional languages, some tribes, despite the difficulties involved, have developed programs to teach their traditional languages to younger tribe members.
- (E) Sidestepping the inherent contradiction of preserving oral forms of culture in writing, some tribes are attempting, eschewing the influences of the majority culture, to teach their traditional languages to younger tribe members.
2. According to the passage, the first step in preparing to formally teach a traditional language is to
- (A) analyze and classify its linguistic structures
- (B) develop a hierarchy of its grammatical information
- (C) determine appropriate methods for its presentation
- (D) search for written equivalents for each of its sounds
- (E) decide whether its syntax and spelling will be standardized
3. Based on the passage, those who hold the view described in lines 49–52 would be most likely to agree with which one of the following statements?
- (A) Even if left exclusively in oral form, traditional languages are likely to survive.
- (B) There has been a decline in communication among tribal members in general.
- (C) Some oral customs do not need to be preserved orally.
- (D) External influences have little effect on tribal customs.
- (E) Tribes must focus on establishing a written tradition.
4. Which one of the following scenarios is **LEAST** compatible with aspects of traditional-language preservation discussed in the passage?
- (A) A community decides that the best way to maintain its traditional language is to rejuvenate its oral culture.
- (B) A community arranges the grammatical structures of its traditional language sequentially according to the degree of their complexity.
- (C) A community agrees to incorporate words from the majority culture in its traditional language to make it easier to teach.
- (D) A community determines the most appropriate methods for presenting its traditional language to students.
- (E) A community deliberates about which dialect of its traditional language should be taught to students.
5. Which one of the following most accurately describes the organization of the passage?
- (A) A problem is identified, followed by a list of obstacles to its solution; examples of the obstacles are discussed; a solution is proposed; methods of implementing the solution are described; an alternative to the solution is introduced and endorsed.
- (B) A problem is identified, followed by solutions to the problem; methods of implementing the solutions are discussed; obstacles to implementing the solutions are described; an alternative method of implementing one of the solutions is proposed.
- (C) A problem is identified, followed by a solution to the problem; a method of implementing the solution is discussed; obstacles to implementing the solution are described; a challenge to the solution is introduced and countered.
- (D) A problem is identified, followed by examples of the problem; a solution is proposed; a method for implementing the solution is described; examples of successful implementation are discussed; the solution is applied to other similar problems.

- (E) A problem is identified, followed by a proposal for solving the problem; benefits and drawbacks of the proposal are discussed; examples of the benefits and drawbacks are described; a challenge to the proposal is introduced and the proposal is rejected.
6. Based on the passage, the group of Northern Utes mentioned in lines 37–40 would be likely to believe each of the following statements **EXCEPT**:
- (A) Standardizing traditional languages requires arbitrary choices and is sometimes unnecessary.
- (B) Written languages should reflect one standard dialect rather than several dialects.
- (C) Traditional languages can be taught even if they are not rigorously standardized.
- (D) Variant spellings of words are acceptable in a language if their meanings are clear.
- (E) The extent to which a language should be standardized depends upon a community’s needs.
7. Which one of the following most accurately describes the author’s attitude toward the goal of having a written language exactly match its oral equivalent?
- (A) conviction that an exact match is all but impossible to achieve
- (B) doubt that an exact match is worthy of consideration even in principle
- (C) faith that an exact match is attainable if certain obstacles are eliminated
- (D) confidence that an exact match can easily be accomplished in most languages
- (E) suspicion that the motives behind the attempts to achieve the goal are not entirely benevolent
8. Based on the passage, which one of the following appears to be a principle guiding the actions of those attempting to preserve their traditional languages?
- (A) In writing down an oral language, one should always be concerned primarily with the degree of correspondence between spoken sounds and written symbols.
- (B) In deciding whether and how to standardize and teach a primarily oral language, one should always keep the needs of the community and the culture foremost.
- (C) In determining whether to preserve a language orally or preserve it in writing, one should always strive to ignore the influences of the majority culture and focus on which method is most effective.
- (D) In considering how to present the grammar of a primarily oral language to students, one should always employ a sequence that tackles more difficult concepts first.
- (E) In adjudicating among variant spellings of words from different language traditions, one should always favor the spelling preferred by the majority of the community.

3    **Answer**

Question	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Answer	D	A	A	C	C	B	A	B