

READING EXERCISE (SKILLS 3–4): Read the passage and choose the best answers to the questions that follow.

Paragraph

Theodore Dreiser

- 1▶ **1A** Theodore Dreiser, the American author best known for the novel *Sister Carrie* (1912), introduced a powerful style of writing that had a profound influence on the writers that followed him, from Steinbeck to Fitzgerald and Hemingway. **1B** *Sister Carrie* challenged the conventional writings of the period, which focused on a higher moral ground. **1C** It was here that Theodore Dreiser created the fictional account that laid bare the harsh reality of life in the big city, which established him as the architect of a new genre. **1D**
- 2▶ Dreiser was born in 1871 into a large family whose fortunes had in the recent past taken a dramatic turn for the worse. Before Theodore's birth, his father had built up a successful factory business, only to lose it to a fire. **4A** The family was rather abruptly thrust into poverty, and Theodore spent his youth moving from place to place in the Midwest as the family tried desperately to reestablish itself financially. **4B** He left home at the age of 16. **4C** After earning some money, he spent a year at Indiana University but left school and returned to Chicago, yearning for the glamour and excitement that it offered. **4D** At the age of 22, he began work as a reporter for a small newspaper in Chicago, the *Daily Globe*, and later worked on newspapers in Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Saint Louis, and New York City. In his work as a reporter, he was witness to the seamier side of life and was responsible for recording events that befell the less fortunate in the city, the beggars, the alcoholics, the prostitutes, and the working poor.
- 3▶ **5A** Dreiser first tried his hand at fiction by writing short stories rather than novels, and the first four short stories that he wrote were published. **5B** Based on this, he was encouraged to write a novel that would accurately depict the harsh life of the city, and the novel *Sister Carrie* was the result of his effort. **5C** This novel chronicles the life of Carrie Meeber, a small-town girl who goes to Chicago in a quest for fame and fortune. **5D** As Carrie progresses from factory worker to Broadway star by manipulating anyone in her path, Dreiser sends a clear message about the tragedy of life that is devoted purely to the quest for money.

4► *Sister Carrie*, unfortunately for Dreiser, did not achieve immediate success. **7A** The novel was accepted for publication by Doubleday, but Dreiser was immediately asked to make major revisions to the novel. **7B** When Dreiser refused to make the revisions, Doubleday published only a limited number of copies of the book and refused to promote or advertise it. **7C** Published in limited release and without the backing of the company, the novel was a dismal failure, selling fewer than 500 copies. **7D**

5► After the failure of the novel that was so meaningful to him, Dreiser suffered a nervous breakdown; he was depressed, stricken with severe headaches, and unable to sleep for days on end. Having sunk to a point where he was considering suicide, he was sent by his brother to a sanatorium in White Plains, New York, where he eventually recovered.

10A After leaving the sanatorium, he took a position as an editor for Butterick's. **10B** He was successful in this position, and was eventually able to purchase a one-third interest in a new publishing company, B.W. Dodge, which republished Dreiser's novel *Sister Carrie*. **10C** This new release of the novel proved considerably more successful than the first release had been. **10D** In its first year, the reissued version of *Sister Carrie* sold 4,500 copies, with strong reviews, and the next year it sold more than 10,000 copies. The recognition that accompanied the success of the novel was based not only on the power of the description of the perils of urban life but also on the new trend in literature that Dreiser was credited with establishing.

1. Look at the four squares [■] that indicate where the following sentence could be added to paragraph 1.

This forceful first novel set a new path for American novels at the end of the nineteenth century.

Where would the sentence best fit? Click on a square [■] to add the sentence to the passage.

2. Which of the sentences below best expresses the essential information in the first highlighted sentence in paragraph 2? *Incorrect* choices change the meaning in important ways or leave out essential information.

- (A) Dreiser's family had formerly been rich before it had become poor.
- (B) Dreiser was, unfortunately, born into an overly dramatic family.
- (C) The fortunes of Dreiser's family had recently increased.
- (D) Members of Dreiser's family suffered from the serious effects of a disease.

3. Which of the sentences below best expresses the essential information in the second highlighted sentence in paragraph 2? *Incorrect* choices change the meaning in important ways or leave out essential information.

- (A) Dreiser served as a witness in a number of trials that involved beggars, alcoholics, and prostitutes.
- (B) Dreiser observed and wrote about the underprivileged as part of his newspaper job.

- (C) In New York City, during Dreiser's time, there were many people who were less fortunate than Dreiser.

- (D) Dreiser's work involved working with beggars, alcoholics, and prostitutes.

4. Look at the four squares [■] that indicate where the following sentence could be added to paragraph 2.

At this young age, he moved alone to Chicago and supported himself by taking odd jobs.

Where would the sentence best fit? Click on a square [■] to add the sentence to the passage.

5. Look at the four squares [■] that indicate where the following sentence could be added to paragraph 3.

It was rather unusual for a novice writer to achieve so much so quickly.

Where would the sentence best fit? Click on a square [■] to add the sentence to the passage.

6. Which of the sentences below best expresses the essential information in the highlighted sentence in paragraph 3? *Incorrect* choices change the meaning in important ways or leave out essential information.

- (A) Dreiser devoted his life primarily to trying to become rich.
- (B) In Dreiser's novel, *Carrie* succeeds by moving from a low-level job to stardom.
- (C) Dreiser used one of his characters to demonstrate the negative aspects of lust for money.
- (D) Dreiser tried to warn *Carrie* that she was taking the wrong path in life.

7. Look at the four squares [■] that indicate where the following sentence could be added to paragraph 4.

These changes were intended to tone down some of the starker and more scandalous descriptions.

Where would the sentence best fit? Click on a square [■] to add the sentence to the passage.

8. Which of the sentences below best expresses the essential information in the first highlighted sentence in paragraph 5? *Incorrect* choices change the meaning in important ways or leave out essential information.

- (A) Dreiser recovered from an attempted suicide at a sanatorium.
- (B) Dreiser's brother went to a sanatorium after attempting suicide.
- (C) After being sent to a sanatorium, Dreiser considered committing suicide.
- (D) Dreiser's brother stepped in to help Dreiser after Dreiser became depressed.

9. Which of the sentences below best expresses the essential information in the second highlighted sentence in paragraph 5? *Incorrect* choices change the meaning in important ways or leave out essential information.

- (A) In Dreiser's novels, he recognized the power of urban life and new trends that existed in it.
- (B) The success of Dreiser's novel went unrecognized because it represented such a new trend in literature.
- (C) Dreiser credited his urban upbringing and literary background for the success that his novel achieved.
- (D) Dreiser achieved acclaim because his writing was so powerful and because he established a new trend.

10. Look at the four squares [■] that indicate where the following sentence could be added to paragraph 5.

This company was one that published magazines to promote sewing and the sale of clothing patterns.

Where would the sentence best fit? Click on a square [■] to add the sentence to the passage.