READING COMPREHENSION:

The Rio Grande

Although not the longest river in America, the Rio Grande is one

of the most important. But, unlike other significant rivers, it is not used

for shipping. In fact, oceangoing ships cannot navigate the waters. No,

what makes the Rio Grande so important is its location. Since 1846, it

has been the official border of Texas and Mexico.

Rio Grande Geography

The Rio Grande is either the fourth or fifth longest river system

in North America. It all depends on how it is measured. Because the

river twists so much, it occasionally changes course. And these course shifts can cause it to be longer or

shorter. At its last official measure, the Rio Grande clocked in at 1,896 miles. The river starts in Colorado

and extends downward to the Gulf of Mexico.

Downward is the best way of describing it too. Not only does the river extend south, but it also

starts in the mountains and gets lower and lower in elevation as it extends to the Gulf.

Its name is Spanish for the “Big River,” but the Rio Grande is actually known as Rio Bravo in

Mexico. “Bravo” translates as “furious,” so the name makes sense. Because of its twists and turns, it

certainly does seem to be angrier than most rivers!

The Rio Grande Today

The Rio Grande today is mostly used as a source of drinking water. Sadly, much of the water has

been drained from the river. Parts of the river are almost dry! This is because people use more water from

the river than the river can get back from rain and other sources. Experts are working to correct this,

though, with hopes of restoring the river to its past strength.

Today, the river is important as a source of water for Texans and Mexicans. More important, it is

a symbol of cooperation between two nations. Though borders like the Rio Grande separate nations, they

are also shared spaces. The Rio Grande is therefore a symbol of friendship and peace between two

peoples.

1. What makes the Rio Grande so important?

A. Its ability to support oceangoing ships

B. Its location as the border of Texas and Mexico

C. Its status as the longest river in North America

D. Its use as a major shipping route

2. Why can the length of the Rio Grande vary?

A. Its measurement methods change frequently

B. It flows into different bodies of water at times

C. Its course shifts due to twists and turns

D. Its elevation changes dramatically over time

3. What is the meaning of the Rio Grande’s name in Spanish?

A. Big River

B. Angry River

C. Furious River

D. Long River

4. Why is the Rio Grande known as "Rio Bravo" in Mexico?

A. It flows faster in Mexico

B. The name reflects its twists and turns

C. It’s shorter in Mexico than in Texas

D. The name refers to its importance as a water source

E. None of these

5. What is the Rio Grande primarily used for today?

A. Shipping and trade

B. Generating hydroelectric power

C. Providing drinking water

D. Agricultural irrigation

6. What problem has the Rio Grande been facing recently?

A. Pollution from nearby cities

B. Reduced water levels due to overuse

C. Increased flooding in certain areas

D. Loss of its status as a border river

7. What does the Rio Grande symbolize today?

A. A source of economic rivalry between two nations

B. A natural divide that separates communities

C. Friendship and cooperation between two countries

D. An endangered ecosystem that cannot be restored

The Incredible Machine

Everyone has a favorite attraction at an amusement park, and I am no different. However, unlike most people who seem to prefer rollercoasters, my favorite ride is a little more gentle. Every time I go to Coney Island, Navy Pier, or the Santa Monica Pier, I absolutely have to ride the Ferris wheel.

The Ferris wheel is simple and yet also quite complex. That is, riding it is easy, but how it works is complicated. A series of carts are attached to a wheel, which is attached to a rim. That rim rotates vertically around an axis, and gravity keeps the carts upright. As simple as the ride seems, only advanced engineers can make safe and fun Ferris wheels.

What It Lacks in Thrills…

While the Ferris wheel is not as thrilling as a rollercoaster, it is still very exciting. The fact of being high in the air makes it so much more entertaining than a lot of rides. I mean, how often do you hang from that high up in daily life?

Nevertheless, I have to admit, I don’t seek Ferris wheels out because of their excitement. Rather, I find them very relaxing. At the top of the Ferris wheel, you get beautiful sights of the park. You also get a sense of calm that you don’t get in the hustle and bustle of the park below.

Additionally, Ferris wheels are also gorgeous to look at when they are lit up at night. In fact, the original Ferris wheel was designed as much to be seen as to be ridden.

It Happened at the World’s Fair

The first Ferris wheel was made by and named after George Washington Gale Ferris, Jr. He designed it for the Chicago World’s Fair in 1893. It was the tallest attraction there, standing 264 feet high.

Visitors to the fair were impressed by the size of the ride as well as the mechanics of it. In 1893, anything that was not turned by hand was considered a sight to see. And the wheel, which was a machine, was truly incredible to see. Further, as one visitor put it, the wheel was amazing because it seemed to be missing support. That is, it did not look like it could stand on its own. And yet it did and even rotated!

They Keep Reaching Higher and Higher

Ferris wheel technology has only improved since then. Most of today’s Ferris wheels are much larger than that first one. The largest in the world is the Singapore Flyer, which stands slightly taller than twice what Ferris’s did!

Today, the Ferris wheel is the most common amusement park ride. But that does not mean you should take them for granted. Instead, be thankful for Ferris’ invention. The next time you’re at an amusement park, don’t just look up at the impressive wheel in the sky on your way to a newer attraction. Take it for a spin!

Questions

8. As used in paragraph 1, the word attraction most nearly means:

A. sense

B. park

C. ride

D. vision

9. It can be understood that Coney Island, Navy Pier, and the Santa Monica Pier are all examples of:

A. amusement parks

B. Ferris wheels

C. vacation spots

D. boat docks

10. As used in paragraph 2, which is the best antonym for complex?

A. impressive

B. beautiful

C. exciting

D. simple

11. What does the author like best about Ferris wheels?

A. the impressive engineering and beauty of them

B. the excitement and thrills they guarantee

C. the beautiful sights and relaxation they allow

D. the fact that most amusement parks have one

12. According to the passage, the Ferris wheel was originally designed for:

A. Coney Island

B. the world’s fair

C. Disneyworld

D. Singapore

13. This passage was most likely written to:

A. describe the author’s favorite amusement park rides

B. explain the original design of Ferris wheels and how they work today

C. describe the history of Ferris wheels and why they are so popular

D. explain the history of Ferris wheels and why the author likes them

14. Using information in the passage, the reader can understand that the tallest Ferris wheel in the world is:

A. under 250 feet tall

B. between 250 and 500 feet tall

C. between 500 and 750 feet tall

D. over 750 feet tall

Tools of Persuasion

Persuasion is the art of convincing someone to agree with your point of view. According to the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle, there are three basic tools of persuasion: ethos, pathos, and logos.

Ethos is a speaker’s way of convincing the audience that she is a credible source. An audience will consider a speaker credible if she seems trustworthy, reliable, and sincere. This can be done in many ways. For example, a speaker can develop ethos by explaining how much experience or education she has in the field. After all, you would be more likely to listen to advice about how to take care of your teeth from a dentist than a firefighter. A speaker can also create ethos by convincing the audience that she is a good person who has their best interests at heart. If an audience cannot trust you, you will not be able to persuade them.

Pathos is a speaker’s way of connecting with an audience’s emotions. For example, a speaker who is trying to convince an audience to vote for him might say that he alone can save the country from a terrible war. These words are intended to fill the audience with fear, thus making them want to vote for him. Similarly, a charity organization that helps animals might show an audience pictures of injured dogs and cats. These images are intended to fill the viewers with pity. If the audience feels bad for the animals, they will be more likely to donate money.

Logos is the use of facts, information, statistics, or other evidence to make your argument more convincing. An audience will be more likely to believe you if you have data to back up your claims. For example, a commercial for soap might tell you that laboratory tests have shown that their soap kills all 7,000,000 of the bacteria living on your hands right now. This piece of information might make you more likely to buy their brand of soap. Presenting this evidence is much more convincing than simply saying “our soap is the best!” Use of logos can also increase a speaker’s ethos; the more facts a speaker includes in his argument, the more likely you are to think that he is educated and trustworthy.

Although ethos, pathos, and logos all have their strengths, they are often most effective when they are used together. Indeed, most speakers use a combination of ethos, pathos, and logos to persuade their audiences. The next time you listen to a speech, watch a commercial, or listen to a friend try to convince you to lend him some money, be on the lookout for these ancient Greek tools of persuasion.

Questions

15. As used in paragraph 2, what is the best antonym for credible?

A. unintelligent

B. boring

C. dishonest

D. amazing

16. Amy is trying to convince her mother to buy her a pair of $200 shoes. She says: “Mom, the shoes I have are really old and ugly. If I don’t get these new shoes, everyone at school is going to laugh at me. I will be so embarrassed that I will want to die.” What form of persuasion is Amy using here?

A. pathos

B. ethos

C. logos

D. a combination of ethos, pathos, and logos

17. According to the passage, logos can build ethos because:

A. an audience is more easily convinced by facts and information than simple appeals to emotions like pity or fear

B. an audience is more likely to trust a speaker who uses evidence to support his argument

C. a speaker who overuses pathos might make an audience too emotional; audiences who are too frightened or too sad are unlikely to be persuaded

D. a speaker can use misleading or false information to make his argument seem more convincing

18. Gareth is running for mayor. He tells his audience: “Under our current mayor, there have been 15,000 new cases of unemployment. If he stays in office, who knows how many more people will lose their jobs? The number could go up even higher. When I was the CEO of Magnatech, I helped to create over 1,000 new jobs. I can do the same thing for this city if you vote for me.” Which form of persuasion is Gareth using here?

I. pathos

II. logos

III. ethos

A. I only

B. I and II only

C. II and III only

D. I, II, and III

19. According to the passage, the most effective tool of persuasion is:

A. ethos, because you cannot persuade an audience that does not trust you

B. logos, because it can also be used to build ethos

C. a combination of ethos, pathos, and logos

D. pathos, because human beings are most easily persuaded by emotion

20. Which of the following is the main reason why speakers use a combination of ethos, pathos, and logos in their arguments?

A. To make their arguments more emotional and persuasive

B. To increase their chances of being trusted by the audience

C. To appeal to both the audience’s logic and emotions at the same time

D. To confuse the audience into agreeing with them

MATH QUESTIONS:

Easy Questions

21

Question: If you have 5 pencils and you buy 3 more, how many pencils do you have in total?

A. 7

B. 8

C. 9

D. 10

22

Question: You have 10 apples. If you give 3 apples to your friend, how many apples do you have left?

A. 5

B. 6

C. 7

D. 8

23

Question: A box contains 15 marbles. If you take out 5 marbles, how many marbles are left in the box?

A. 5

B. 10

C. 15

D. 20

24

Question: A book costs $8. How much will 3 books cost?

A. $20

B. $24

C. $26

D. $28

25

Question: You are given 4 coins, each worth 25 cents. How much money do you have in total?

A. $0.50

B. $0.75

C. $1.00

D. $1.25

Somewhat Harder Questions

26

Question: A rectangular garden has a length of 12 meters and a width of 6 meters. What is the area of the garden?

A. 72 m²

B. 18 m²

C. 72 m

D. 18 m

27

Question: You have 80 candies. You want to divide them equally among 8 friends. How many candies will each friend get?

A. 8

B. 10

C. 12

D. 15

28

Question: If a car travels 60 miles per hour, how long will it take to travel 240 miles?

A. 3 hours

B. 4 hours

C. 5 hours

D. 6 hours

29

Question: A train moves at 45 kilometers per hour. How far will the train travel in 5 hours?

A. 200 km

B. 225 km

C. 250 km

D. 275 km

30

Question: A box weighs 30 pounds. If you want to divide the weight of the box equally into 5 smaller boxes, how much will each smaller box weigh?

A. 4 pounds

B. 5 pounds

C. 6 pounds

D. 7 pounds