

# Critical Reading

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## WHAT IS CRITICAL READING?

The critical reading questions on the SAT assess your ability to understand what you read. In the past, the SAT contained only long passages on the arts and literature. On the new SAT, the passages range from 100 to 850 words long and are taken from a variety of fields, including not only the humanities but also social sciences, such as psychology and economics, and natural sciences, such as biology and chemistry. The passages can be presented individually or in pairs. The paired passages require you to compare and contrast information.

## TYPES OF CRITICAL READING QUESTIONS

There are three types of SAT critical reading questions.

1. *Vocabulary-in-context* questions ask you to define a specific word in the passage.
2. *Literal comprehension* questions require you to identify information directly stated in the passage.
3. *Extended reasoning* questions ask you to analyze, evaluate, and pull together information from the passage(s). These questions involve finding causes/effects, making inferences, analyzing, and using logical reasoning. Most of the critical reading questions involve extended reasoning.

Below are examples of each type of question.

*Questions 1–3 are based on the following passage.*

In the vast majority of cases a person will be happier if he has no rigid and arbitrary notions, for gardens are moody, particularly with the novice rather than the expert. If plants grow and thrive, he should be happy; and if the plants that thrive chance not to be the ones that he (5) planted, they are plants nevertheless, and nature is satisfied with them.

**Vocabulary-in-context question**

1. The word *novice* in the first sentence means
  - (A) adept
  - (B) mature
  - (C) beginner
  - (D) impatient
  - (E) austere

**Literal comprehension question**

2. According to the author of this passage, an intelligent person should approach the task of gardening
  - (A) with an easygoing, relaxed attitude
  - (B) with specific ideas about crops to plant and ways to make them flourish
  - (C) only after having completed extensive training
  - (D) determined to master nature
  - (E) as a career rather than a hobby, because gardening brings great rewards

**Extended reasoning question**

3. This passage was most likely written by
  - (A) someone whose garden failed miserably
  - (B) a gardener with specific ideas about plants, soil, and climate conditions
  - (C) a plant salesperson
  - (D) someone who breeds rare plants such as orchids
  - (E) an expert gardener seeking to reassure an amateur gardener

**Answers**

1. **The correct answer is (C).** Use the context clue “novice rather than the expert.”
2. **The correct answer is (A).** The answer is in the second sentence.
3. **The correct answer is (E).** You can infer this from the reader’s knowledgeable, self-assured tone.

## **Answering Vocabulary-in-Context Questions**

Some of these questions ask you to define difficult and unfamiliar words. Other questions test your ability to define familiar words that are used in uncommon ways. In either instance, use context clues and word parts (prefixes, roots, suffixes) to help you define the words. Follow these three steps:

1. Skim the passage and find the word that you need to define.
2. Use context clues and/or word parts to define the word. Restate the meaning in your own words.
3. Look for the answer choice that best matches your definition.

Read the following passage and answer the sample SAT questions that follow.

Think “bank robbery” and you think “stick ‘em up.” But that’s for amateurs, desperadoes, and the pages of history. This is, after all, the twenty-first century. In October 2001, the Kaiping Sub-branch (5) of the Bank of China in Guangdong province, People’s Republic of China, discovered that a local organized crime group had embezzled, stolen, and laundered at least \$500 million from its vaults through accounts in Hong Kong, Macau, Canada and the U.S.

1. As used in line 2, the word *desperadoes* most nearly means
  - (A) juvenile delinquents
  - (B) sophisticated, polished bank robbers
  - (C) youthful crooks
  - (D) historical lawbreaker
  - (E) bold, reckless criminals
2. Which word best captures the meaning of *embezzled* in line 5?
  - (A) misappropriated
  - (B) destroyed
  - (C) hid
  - (D) depleted
  - (E) turned into smaller currency
3. In line 6, *laundered* is used to mean
  - (A) got caught with the money
  - (B) marked the money with indelible dye
  - (C) disguised the source of the money
  - (D) spent all the money
  - (E) gave away all the money

**Answers**

1. **The correct answer is (E).** Use the context clues “bank robbery” and “stick ‘em up.”
2. **The correct answer is (A).** Use the context clue “stolen.”
3. **The correct answer is (C).** Infer the slang meaning from the everyday meaning of *laundered*, “to wash.”

***Answering Literal Comprehension Questions***

These questions require you to find information that is directly stated in the passage. Follow these three steps:

1. Skim the question stems—not the answers. Then read the passage all the way through.
2. Read the questions and answer choices.
3. Choose your answer. Return to the passage to find the relevant detail that confirms your choice.

Read the following passage and answer the sample SAT questions that follow.

For the past fifty years, whatever has been done for the cause of progress and good against absolute governments and hereditary aristocracies has been done in the name of the Rights of Man; in the name of liberty as the means, and of well-being as the object of existence. All the acts of the French Revolution and the revolutions (5) which followed and imitated it were consequences of the Declaration of the Rights of Man. All the revolutionary schools preached that man is born for happiness, that he has the right to seek it by all the means in his power, that no one has the right to impede him in (10) this search, and that he has the right of overthrowing all the obstacles which he may encounter on his path. When all barriers are torn down, man will be free.

And nevertheless, in these past fifty years, the sources of social wealth and the sum of material blessings have steadily increased. (15) Production has doubled. Commerce and continual crisis, inevitable in the utter lack of organization, have acquired a greater force of activity and a wider sphere for its operations. Communication has almost everywhere been made secure and rapid, and the price of commodities has fallen in consequence of the diminished cost of transport.

1. As stated in this passage, the Declaration of the Rights of Man had success in
  - (A) establishing absolute governments
  - (B) prompting the French Revolution
  - (C) stopping all revolutions after the French Revolution
  - (D) building up hereditary aristocracies
  - (E) preventing the cause of progress and good against absolute governments
2. According to the information in this passage, when people have achieved the right to seek happiness and to overthrow all obstacles in their path to happiness,
  - (A) poverty was abolished
  - (B) a utopia was achieved
  - (C) the aristocracy was overthrown
  - (D) liberty was achieved
  - (E) liberty, equality, and fraternity reigned
3. According to this passage, decreases in the cost of merchandise resulted from
  - (A) increases in the amount of available labor
  - (B) equal division in the consumption of material goods
  - (C) decreases in costs of movement of goods
  - (D) more laborers becoming merchants
  - (E) better rapport between capital and labor

### Answers

1. **The correct answer is (B).** The answer is directly stated in the first paragraph: “All the acts of the French Revolution and the revolutions which followed and imitated it were consequences of the Declaration of the Rights of Man.”
2. **The correct answer is (D).** The answer is directly stated in the first paragraph: “When all barriers are torn down, man will be free.”
3. **The correct answer is (C).** The answer is directly stated in the second paragraph: “...the price of commodities has fallen in consequence of the diminished cost of transport.”

## ***Answering Extended Reasoning Questions***

These questions require you to find information that is not directly stated in the passage. As a result, you will have to make inferences—“read between the lines”—and analyze what you read. To make an inference, combine story clues with what you already know to find unstated information. These questions may also ask you to compare and contrast information in two passages. Follow these three steps:

1. Read the passage(s) all the way through. As you read, restate the information in your own words. Think about the author’s attitude toward the material, the tone of the passage, and the author’s purpose or reason for writing. Ask yourself, “What is the author trying to express?”
2. Read the questions and answer choices. Choose your answer.
3. Use the process of elimination. Guess if you can eliminate even one choice.

Read the following passage and answer the sample SAT questions that follow.

It is remarkable, the character of the pleasure we derive from the best books. They impress us with the conviction that one nature wrote and the same reads. But for the evidence thence afforded to the philosophical doctrine of the identity of all minds, we should suppose (5) some preestablished harmony, some foresight of souls that were to be, and some preparation of stores for their future wants, like the fact observed in insects, who lay up food before death for the young grub they shall never see.

I would not be hurried by any love of system, by any exaggeration (10) of insects, to underrate the Book. We all know the human mind can be fed by any knowledge. And great and heroic men have existed who had almost no other information than by the printed page. I would only say that it needs a strong head to bear that diet. One must be an inventor to read well. As the proverb says, “He that would bring home the wealth of the Indies, must carry out the wealth of the (15) Indies.” There is then creative reading as well as creative writing. When the mind is braced by labor and invention, the page of whatever book we read becomes luminous with manifold allusion.

1. The author uses the images of insects (lines 6–8) to parallel his discussion of
  - (A) past writer storing knowledge for future readers
  - (B) authors working in grubby surroundings
  - (C) selfless parents toiling blindly for unknowing children
  - (D) the act of creating art
  - (E) the food chain
2. The proverb that the author cites in lines 14–16 is used to support his theory that
  - (A) the rich need more education than the poor
  - (B) a person must apply knowledge to extract knowledge
  - (C) all the wealth in the world will not make a person a genius
  - (D) books are expensive, but they are worth the money
  - (E) only a writer can be a good reader
3. A good title for this passage might be
  - (A) “Creative Thought”
  - (B) “Rating Books”
  - (C) “The Wealth of the Past”
  - (D) “Visions of the Future”
  - (E) “Creative Reading”

### Answers

1. **The correct answer is (A).** Just as insects store food the young they may never see, so do writers store knowledge for readers they may never know.
2. **The correct answer is (B).** The author believes that reading requires a certain amount of application if it is to be fruitful.
3. **The correct answer is (E).** All the details describe the creative reader.

## PRETEST

**Directions:** Answer each question based on what is directly stated or suggested in each passage.  
Mark the letter that appears before your answer.

Questions 1–2 are based on the following passage.

It was 1934, and the nation was reeling from the Great Depression: unemployment stood at 24.9% and the Dow-Jones average was sputtering from a low of 50 (5) to a high of 108. Since the ascent of Adolph Hitler to the position of Chancellor in Germany in January 1933, groups in America supporting his fascist ideology and Nazi vision had become more and (10) more vocal, claiming fascism could be the answer to American woes.

President Roosevelt was deeply concerned. It was already clear in Germany (15) that the Nazis, after coming to power, were removing democratic safeguards there, abrogating certain international treaties, and making noise about needing more “living space,” which soon translated into capturing neighboring lands.

1. As used in line 16, *abrogating* means
  - (A) validating
  - (B) enforcing
  - (C) setting aside
  - (D) endorsing
  - (E) legalizing
2. The mood of this passage is best described as
  - (A) reassuring
  - (B) fiery
  - (C) eerie
  - (D) foreboding
  - (E) blithe

Questions 3–5 are based on the following passage.

Phrenology is the name given by Thomas Ignatius Forster to the empirical system of psychology formulated by F. J. Gall, and developed by his followers. The principles upon which it is based are five: (1) (5) the brain is the organ of the mind; (2) the mental powers of man can be analyzed into a definite number of independent faculties; (3) these faculties are innate, and each has its seat in a definite region of the surface of the brain; (4) the size of each such region is the measure of the degree to which the faculty seated in it forms a constituent element in the character of the individual; (5) the correspondence between the outer surface of the skull and the contour of the brain-surface beneath is sufficiently close to enable the observer (10) to recognize the relative sizes of these several organs by the examination of the outer surface of the head. It professes primarily to be a system of psychology, but its second and more popular claim is that it affords a method whereby the disposition (15) and character of the subject may be ascertained.

3. The writer uses the word *organ* in line 6 to mean
  - (A) musical instrument
  - (B) pipe
  - (C) organism
  - (D) creature
  - (E) vital part

4. You can infer from the information in this passage that *phrenology* is
- (A) the oldest and most respectable subcategory of psychology
  - (B) a type of intelligence
  - (C) a pseudo-science based on “reading” the bumps on your head
  - (D) a system of thought endorsed by many followers all over the world
  - (E) a way to determine if someone is lying or telling the truth
5. This article most likely appeared in
- (A) an encyclopedia
  - (B) a popular magazine
  - (C) a standard medical textbook
  - (D) a commercial web page
  - (E) an advertisement for a self-help movement

*Questions 6–12 are based on the following passage.*

Sugar pine cones are cylindrical, slightly tapered at the end and rounded at the base. Found one today nearly twenty-four inches long and six in diameter, the scales being open. The average length of full-grown cones on trees favorably situated is nearly eighteen inches. The noble pine tree is an inexhaustible study and source of pleasure. I never weary of gazing at its (5) grand tassel cones, the fine purplish color of its bark, and its magnificent outsweeping, down-curving feathery arms forming a crown always bold and striking and exhilarating. In habit and general port it looks somewhat like a palm, but no palm (10) that I have yet seen displays such majesty of form and behavior either when poised silent and thoughtful in sunshine, or wide-awake waving in storm winds with every needle quivering. When young it is very straight and regular in form like most other conifers; but at the age of fifty to one hundred years it begins to acquire individuality, so that no two are alike in their prime (15) or old age. Every tree calls for special admiration. The diameter of the largest near the ground is about ten feet, though I've heard of some twelve feet thick or even fifteen. The diameter is held to a great height, the taper being almost imperceptibly gradual. Its companion, the yellow pine, is almost as large. The long silvery foliage of the younger specimens forms (20) magnificent cylindrical brushes on the top shoots and the ends of the upturned branches, and when the wind sways the needles all one way at a certain angle, every tree becomes a tower of white quivering sunfire. Well may this shining species (25) be called the silver pine. The needles are sometimes more than a foot long, almost as long as those of the long-leaf pine of Florida.

6. In this passage, the word *scales* (line 4) is used to mean
- (A) measures
  - (B) weights
  - (C) scrapings
  - (D) husks
  - (E) balance
7. By “favorably situated” (line 6), the author probably means
- (A) in an approved site
  - (B) positioned pleasantly
  - (C) newly planted
  - (D) far from the sea
  - (E) having sufficient sun and water
8. By “general port” (line 14), the author refers to
- (A) a place where ships dock
  - (B) the manner in which a person carried himself or herself
  - (C) placement on the left
  - (D) an opening for intake
  - (E) a hole for firing weapons
9. In comparing the pine to a palm tree, the author
- (A) finds neither tree especially impressive
  - (B) finds the pine less majestic
  - (C) thinks that he is more like a pine tree than a palm tree
  - (D) finds both trees equally majestic
  - (E) finds the palm less majestic and assigns the pine human characteristics
10. In his description of the sugar pine, the author includes
- (A) height and thickness
  - (B) various uses
  - (C) planting time
  - (D) height, thickness, and coloration
  - (E) taste
11. Which of the following would be the best title for this passage?
- (A) “Sugar from the Pine”
  - (B) “A Noble Tree”
  - (C) “The Tree of the Sierras”
  - (D) “Comparing Pines and Firs”
  - (E) “The Yellow Pine”
12. You can infer that the author’s attitude toward the pine tree is
- (A) deferential
  - (B) daunted
  - (C) imperious
  - (D) contrite
  - (E) charitable

Questions 13–14 are based on the following passage.

Economic considerations in Afghanistan have played second fiddle to political and military upheavals during more than two decades of war, including the nearly 10-year Soviet military occupation (which ended February 15, 1989). During that conflict, one third of the population fled the country, with Pakistan and Iran sheltering a combined peak of 4 to 6 million refugees. Gross domestic product has fallen substantially over the past 20 years because of the loss of labor and capital and the disruption of trade and transport; severe drought added to the nation's difficulties in 1998–2002. International efforts to rebuild Afghanistan were addressed at the Tokyo Donors Conference for Afghan Reconstruction in January 2002, when \$4.5 billion was pledged, \$1.7 billion for 2002. Priority areas for reconstruction include upgrading education, health, and sanitation facilities; providing income-generating opportunities; enhancing administrative and security arrangements, especially in regional areas; developing the agricultural sector; rebuilding transportation, energy, and telecommunication infrastructure; and reabsorbing 2 million returning refugees.

13. The author includes a summary of Afghanistan’s recent history in order to
- (A) create sympathy for the nations that are helping Afghanistan
  - (B) compare and contrast Afghanistan to other nations of similar population and gross national product
  - (C) drum up additional support for Afghanistan
  - (D) set the rebuilding effort in context
  - (E) relieve the burden that other nations are carrying

14. Which of the following statements would the author of this passage most likely endorse?
- (A) Afghanistan can be rebuilt quickly with outside aide because it has a strong infrastructure.
  - (B) It will take many years and a great deal of assistance to rebuild Afghanistan.
  - (C) Afghanistan can never be restored to its former glory.
  - (D) America must help rebuild Afghanistan because we need a strong, sympathetic ally in the region.
  - (E) The Tokyo Donors Conference was a dismal failure.

## Pretest

# Explanatory Answers

1. **The correct answer is C.** As used in line 16, *abrogating* means “setting aside.” You can infer this from the statement that the Nazis “were removing democratic safeguards” and would soon be capturing neighboring lands. They are disregarding the rules they had followed earlier.
2. **The correct answer is D.** The mood of this passage is best described as *foreboding*, an apprehension of misfortune to come. You can infer this from sentences such as “President Roosevelt was deeply concerned.”
3. **The correct answer is E.** The writer uses *organ* to mean “vital part.” You can infer this from the statement “the brain is the organ of the mind” and its placement first on the list.
4. **The correct answer is C.** By paraphrasing the last two lines, you can infer that *phrenology* is a fake or quack science based on reading the bumps on your head.
5. **The correct answer is A.** The factual tone, straightforward organization, and ample examples suggest that this article likely appeared in an encyclopedia.
6. **The correct answer is D.** The author is referring to the plates on a pine cone. Choice D, *husks*, is the closest synonym.
7. **The correct answer is E.** By “favorably situated,” the author probably means having sufficient sun and water. This would allow the pine cones to grow to their maximum size.
8. **The correct answer is B.** A person’s posture is the only meaning that works in context.
9. **The correct answer is E.** The first part of the answer is in these lines: “but no palm that I have yet seen displays such majesty of form and behavior either when poised silent and thoughtful in sunshine, or wide-awake waving in storm winds with every needle quivering.” The second part of the answer can be inferred from the words “behavior” and “wide-awake,” which show human qualities.
10. **The correct answer is D.** Thickness is found in line 25: “The diameter of the largest near the ground is about ten feet, though I’ve heard of some twelve feet thick or even fifteen.” Height is found in line 30: “The diameter is held to a great height...” and coloration is found in line 10: “the fine purplish color of its bark.”
11. **The correct answer is B.** “A Noble Tree” is the best title because it best reflects the subject.
12. **The correct answer is A.** You can infer that the author’s attitude toward the pine tree is deferential or respectful of the tree’s majesty.
13. **The correct answer is D.** The summary sets the rebuilding effort in context. Without this brief history, readers will not be able to grasp the enormity of the task that lies ahead in the country.
14. **The correct answer is B.** The author most likely endorses the idea that it will take many years and a great deal of assistance to rebuild Afghanistan. The details in the passage contradict choices A, C, and E. Choice D is not supported by information in the passage.

## LEVEL A CRITICAL READING EXERCISES

Each passage below is followed by a series of questions that require you to analyze, interpret, or evaluate the written work. Answer these questions on the basis of what each passage states or implies. Mark the letter that appears before your answer.

### Exercise 1

*Katherine Prescott Wormeley was born in England and moved with her family to the United States in the late 1840s. When the Civil War broke out, she joined the United States Sanitary Commission, a private organization designed to supplement the United States Army's medical division. She was in a place called Harrison's Landing when Abraham Lincoln came to meet General McClellan and discuss the fight for control of Richmond.*

- (5) For the last two hours I have been watching President Lincoln and General McClellan as they sat together in earnest conversation on the deck of a steamer close to us. I am thankful, I am happy, that the President has come—has sprung across that dreadful intervening Washington, and come to see and hear and judge for his own wise and noble self.
- (10) While we were at dinner someone said, chancing to look through a window: "Why, there's the President!" and he proved to be just arriving on the *Ariel*, at the end of the wharf close to which we are anchored. I stationed myself at once to watch for the coming of McClellan. The President stood on deck with a glass, with which, after a time, he inspected our boat, waving his handkerchief to us. My eyes and soul were in the direction of general headquarters, over where the great balloon was slowly descending. Presently a line of horsemen came over the brow of the hill through the trees, and first emerged a firm-set figure on a brown horse, and after him the staff and bodyguard. As soon as the General reached the head of the wharf he sprang from his horse, and in an
- (15)
- (20)
- (25)

(30) instant every man was afoot and motionless. McClellan walked quickly along the thousand-foot pier, a major general beside him, and six officers following. He was the shortest man, of course, by which I distinguished him as the little group stepped onto the pier. When he reached the *Ariel* he ran quickly up to the afterdeck, where the President met him and grasped his hand. I could not distinguish the play of his features, though my eyes still ache with the effort to do so. He is stouter than I expected.... He wore the ordinary blue coat and shoulder straps; the coat, fastened only at the throat, and blowing back as he walked, gave to sight a gray flannel shirt and a—suspender!

(35) They sat down together, apparently with a map between them, to which McClellan pointed from time to time with the end of his cigar. We watched the earnest conversation which went on, and which lasted until 6 P.M.; then they rose and walked side by side ashore—the President in a shiny black coat and stovepipe hat, a whole head and shoulders taller, as it seemed to me, than the General. Mr. Lincoln mounted a led horse of the General's, and together they rode off, the staff following, the dragoons presenting arms and then wheeling round to follow, their sabres gleaming in the sunlight. And so they have passed over the brow of the hill, and I have come to tell you about it. The cannon are firing salutes—a sound of strange peacefulness to us, after the angry, irregular boomings and the sharp scream of the shells to which we are accustomed....

(40)

(45)

(50)

(55)

(60)

(65)

1. What does the author mean by “that dreadful intervening Washington” (lines 7–8)?
  - (A) Politics are always interfering with the war.
  - (B) Lincoln’s office stands in the way of his leadership.
  - (C) Lincoln has crossed Washington to come to Harrison’s Landing.
  - (D) The fame of a previous President keeps Lincoln in the shadows.
  - (E) Washington is mediating between North and South.
2. How does the author feel toward Lincoln?
  - (A) She trusts his judgment.
  - (B) She suspects his motives.
  - (C) She regrets his arrival.
  - (D) She finds him undistinguished.
  - (E) She has no opinion.
3. The word “glass” is used in line 17 to refer to
  - (A) a goblet
  - (B) a mirror
  - (C) a window
  - (D) a telescope
  - (E) bifocals
4. The “great balloon slowly descending” (lines 21–22) is apparently
  - (A) the sun setting
  - (B) remnants of a firestorm over the Potomac
  - (C) the moon over the river
  - (D) a mirage
  - (E) McClellan’s transport arriving
5. Why do the author’s eyes ache?
  - (A) She has been sobbing for hours.
  - (B) She struggled to see Lincoln’s expression.
  - (C) The wind has blown smoke from the battle.
  - (D) She is writing in darkness.
  - (E) There was glare over the water.
6. The phrase “by which I distinguished him” (lines 33–34) might be rewritten
  - (A) “which made him seem elegant”
  - (B) “in that way I understood his speech”
  - (C) “it was easy to see”
  - (D) “I was more refined than he”
  - (E) “which is how I picked him out”
7. A synonym for “dragoons” (line 57) might be
  - (A) wagons
  - (B) troops
  - (C) horses
  - (D) haulers
  - (E) demons
8. Why does Wormeley refer to the cannon salutes as peaceful?
  - (A) They are far quieter than the scream of shells.
  - (B) A truce has been declared.
  - (C) She is contrasting them to the cannonfire of war.
  - (D) Both A and B
  - (E) Both B and C

## Exercise 2

Thomas Bulfinch (1796–1867) translated and popularized myths of the ancient Greeks, Romans, and other cultures. Here he describes the legends surrounding Orion, the hunter for whom a constellation is named.

Orion was the son of Neptune. He was a handsome giant and a mighty hunter. His father gave him the power of wading through the depths of the sea, or, as others say, of walking on its surface. (5)

Orion loved Merope, the daughter of Enopion, king of Chios, and sought her in marriage. He cleared the island of wild beasts, and brought the spoils of the chase as presents to his beloved; but as Enopion constantly deferred his consent, Orion attempted to gain possession of the maiden by violence. Her father, incensed at this conduct, having made Orion drunk, deprived him of his sight and cast him out on the seashore. The blinded hero followed the sound of a Cyclops' hammer till he reached Lemnos, and came to the forge of Vulcan, who, taking pity on him, gave him Kedalion, one of his men, to be his guide to the abode of the sun. Placing Kedalion on his shoulders, Orion proceeded to the east, and there meeting the sun-god, was restored to sight by his beam. (10)

After this he dwelt as a hunter with Diana, with whom he was a favourite, and it is even said she was about to marry him. Her brother was highly displeased and often chid her, but to no purpose. One day, observing Orion wading through the sea with his head just above the water, Apollo pointed it out to his sister and maintained that she could not hit that black thing on the sea. The archer-goddess discharged a shaft with fatal aim. The waves rolled the dead body of Orion to the land, and bewailing her fatal error with many tears, Diana placed him among the stars, where he appears as a giant, with a girdle, sword, lion's skin, and club. Sirius, his dog, follows him, and the Pleiads fly before him. (15)

(20)

(25)

(30)

(35)

(40)

The Pleiads were daughters of Atlas, and nymphs of Diana's train. One day Orion saw them and became enamoured and pursued them. In their distress they prayed to the gods to change their form, and Jupiter in pity turned them into pigeons, and then made them a constellation in the sky. Though their number was seven, only six stars are visible, for Electra, one of them, is said left her place that she might not behold the ruin of Troy, for that city was founded by her son Dardanus. The sight had such an effect on her sisters that they have looked pale ever since. (45)

1. When Bulfinch says “as others say” in lines 4–5, he probably is referring to
  - (A) the meaning of “wade” in other languages
  - (B) Orion’s powers as described by the gods themselves
  - (C) other translations or interpretations of the myth
  - (D) a Christian explanation of the myth
  - (E) the fact that Orion could perform both feats
2. The word “spoils” (line 9) means
  - (A) leftovers
  - (B) stains
  - (C) joys
  - (D) damage
  - (E) booty
3. The word “chid” (line 29) means
  - (A) remarked
  - (B) lost
  - (C) embraced
  - (D) irked
  - (E) scolded
4. The “black thing on the sea” (line 33) is
  - (A) a seal
  - (B) a boat containing Diana’s beloved
  - (C) Orion’s head
  - (D) Diana’s reflection
  - (E) impossible to determine from the information given

5. The word “discharged” (line 34) is used to mean
  - (A) performed
  - (B) shot
  - (C) executed
  - (D) emptied
  - (E) dismissed
6. The word “train” (line 43) is used to mean
  - (A) locomotive
  - (B) gown
  - (C) veil
  - (D) series
  - (E) entourage
7. Unlike the first three paragraphs, the last
  - (A) deals with a constellation other than Orion
  - (B) explains Orion’s death
  - (C) connects myth to the world of nature
  - (D) Both A and B
  - (E) Both B and C
8. The purpose of this myth seems to be to
  - (A) teach a lesson about responsibility
  - (B) review the powers of the Greek gods
  - (C) explain certain astronomical phenomena
  - (D) Both A and B
  - (E) Both C and D

### Exercise 3

Sigmund Freud lived most of his life in Vienna, Austria. He trained in medicine and established The International Psychoanalytic Association in 1910. This excerpt is from a translation of a 1923 work, *The Ego and the Id*.

There are certain people who behave in a quite peculiar fashion during the work of analysis. When one speaks hopefully to them or expresses satisfaction with the progress of the treatment, they show signs of discontent and their condition invariably becomes worse. One begins by regarding this as defiance and as an attempt to prove their superiority to the physician, (5) but later one comes to take a deeper and juster view. One becomes convinced, not only that such people cannot endure any praise or appreciation, but that they react inversely to the progress of the treatment. (10) Every partial solution that ought to result, and in other people does result, in an improvement or a temporary suspension of symptoms produces in them for the time being an exacerbation of their illness; they (15) get worse during the treatment instead of getting better. They exhibit what is known as a ‘negative therapeutic reaction.’

There is no doubt that there is something in these people that sets itself against their recovery, and its approach is dreaded as though it were a danger. We are accustomed to say that the need for illness has got the upper hand in them over the desire for recovery. If we analyse this resistance in the usual way—then, even after allowance has been made for an attitude of defiance towards the physician and for fixation to the various forms of gain from illness, the greater part of it is still left over; (20) and this reveals itself as the most powerful of all obstacles to recovery, more powerful than the familiar ones of narcissistic inaccessibility, a negative attitude towards the physician and clinging to the gain from illness.

(25)

(30)

(35)

(40)

In the end we come to see that we are dealing with what may be called a ‘moral’ factor, a sense of guilt, which is finding satisfaction in the illness and refuses to give up the punishment of suffering. We shall be right in regarding this disheartening explanation as final. But as far as the patient is concerned this sense of guilt is dumb; it does not tell him he is guilty; he does not feel guilty, he feels ill. This sense of guilt expresses itself only as a resistance to recovery which is extremely difficult to overcome. It is also particularly difficult to convince the patient that this motive lies behind his continuing to be ill; he holds fast to the more obvious explanation that treatment by analysis is not the right remedy for his case.

1. How does Freud feel about the syndrome he describes?
  - (A) He feels it is curious.
  - (B) He feels it is routine.
  - (C) He feels it is unmanageable.
  - (D) He feels it is predictable.
  - (E) He feels it is ridiculous.
2. The word “defiance” (line 8) is used to mean
  - (A) boldness
  - (B) respect
  - (C) scorn
  - (D) recalcitrance
  - (E) contempt
3. The word “juster” (line 11) means
  - (A) more honest
  - (B) more lawful
  - (C) fairer
  - (D) clearer
  - (E) more precise

4. By “reacting inversely” (lines 14–15), Freud means that these patients
  - (A) act contrary to a physician’s expectations
  - (B) get worse when they should get better
  - (C) get better when they should get worse
  - (D) Both A and B
  - (E) Both B and C
5. The word “exacerbation” (line 19) means
  - (A) intensification
  - (B) discharge
  - (C) enforcement
  - (D) hatred
  - (E) inference
6. The “approaching danger” Freud refers to in lines 25–26 is
  - (A) the need to feel sick
  - (B) negative attitudes
  - (C) despair
  - (D) recovery from illness
  - (E) a sense of guilt
7. Freud’s study of this syndrome leads him to think that
  - (A) most patients respond badly to praise
  - (B) patients’ guilt may keep them from getting well
  - (C) patients need to trust their physicians
  - (D) Both A and B
  - (E) Both B and C
8. The word “dumb” (line 49) is used to mean
  - (A) slow
  - (B) dull
  - (C) dense
  - (D) stupid
  - (E) silent
9. Does Freud feel that analysis is not right for the patients he describes?
  - (A) Yes, he feels they are in love with their illness.
  - (B) Yes, he feels that they are too ill to recover.
  - (C) Yes, he senses that they need another remedy.
  - (D) No, but the patients often feel that way.
  - (E) No, but analysis may harm such patients.
10. A good title for this passage might be
  - (A) “Doctors and Patients”
  - (B) “Guilt and Suffering”
  - (C) “An Inverse Reaction to Progress”
  - (D) “The Need for Analysis”
  - (E) “Narcissism”

## Exercise 4

*Edwin Markham was primarily a poet. He was associated with the “muckraking movement” of the early twentieth century. Muckrakers were a loosely allied set of novelists, essayists, and magazine editors whose goal was the raising of society’s consciousness and the exposure of social ills. This excerpt is from a 1906 essay Markham wrote for the muckraking magazine Cosmopolitan.*

In the North..., for every one thousand workers over sixteen years of age there are eighty-three workers under sixteen...; while in the South, for every one thousand workers in the mills over sixteen years of age there are three hundred and fifty-three under sixteen. Some of these are eight and nine years old, and some are only five and six. For a day or a night at a stretch these little children do some one monotonous thing—abusing their eyes in watching the rushing threads; dwarfing their muscles in an eternity of petty movements; befouling their lungs by breathing flecks of flying cotton; bestowing ceaseless, anxious attention for hours, where science says that “a twenty-minute strain is long enough for a growing mind.” And these are not the children of recent immigrants, hardened by the effete conditions of foreign servitude. Nor are they Negro children who have shifted their shackles from field to mill. They are white children of old and pure colonial stock. Think of it! Here is a people that has outlived the bondage of England, that has seen the rise and fall of slavery—a people that must now fling their children into the clutches of capital, into the maw of the blind machine...  
Fifty thousand children, mostly girls, are in the textile mills of the South. Six times as many children are working now as were working twenty years ago. Unless the conscience of the nation can be awakened, it will not be long before one hundred thousand children will be hobbling in hopeless lock-step to these Bastilles of labor....

(40) Think of the deadly drudgery in these cotton mills. Children rise at half-past four, commanded by the ogre scream of the factory whistle; they hurry, ill fed, unkempt, unwashed, half dressed, to the walls which shut out the day and which confine them amid the din and dust and merciless maze of the machines. Here, penned in little narrow lanes, they look and leap and reach and tie among acres and acres of looms. Always the snow of lint in their faces, always the thunder of the machines in their ears. A scant half hour at noon breaks the twelve-hour vigil, for it is nightfall when the long hours end and the children may return to the barracks they call “home,” often too tried to wait for the cheerless meal which the mother, also working in the factory, must cook, after her factory day is over. Frequently at noon and at night they fall asleep with the food unswallowed in the mouth. Frequently they snatch only a bite and curl up undressed on the bed, to gather strength for the same dull round tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow.

1. The words “abusing,” “dwarfing,” and “befouling” (lines 11–13) are used by Markham to show
  - (A) the health hazards for children of life in the mills
  - (B) the quality of the workers in the mills
  - (C) how little respect for life millworkers have
  - (D) how adults fare no better than children
  - (E) the varying jobs available for children
2. Markham quotes “science” (line 16) to support his point that
  - (A) young muscles are built by hard labor
  - (B) mill work is dangerous
  - (C) children should not work long hours
  - (D) Both A and B
  - (E) Both B and C

3. The word “effete” (line 20) means
  - (A) decent
  - (B) flourishing
  - (C) childless
  - (D) barren
  - (E) unwholesome
4. By “shifted their shackles from field to mill” (lines 22–23), Markham means
  - (A) taken their slaves from country to city
  - (B) changed from field slaves to slaves of the mills
  - (C) moved their money indoors
  - (D) slipped the bonds of slavery to work in the mills
  - (E) left a life of servitude for a better life
5. By “the maw of the blind machine” (line 29), Markham compares mill labor to
  - (A) a senseless device
  - (B) a matriarchal society
  - (C) a cruel, unfeeling mother
  - (D) a Cyclops-like ogre
  - (E) a tool that blinds workers
6. What does Markham mean by “Bastilles of labor” (line 37)?
  - (A) America needs a revolution.
  - (B) The mills are prisons.
  - (C) Children work for freedom.
  - (D) Work is the drug of the masses.
  - (E) We are no better than Europeans.
7. Paragraph 3 continues Markham’s metaphor of
  - (A) prisons
  - (B) monsters
  - (C) flight
  - (D) Both A and B
  - (E) Both B and C
8. The word “penned” (line 45) is used to compare the children to
  - (A) writers
  - (B) animals
  - (C) wrestlers
  - (D) pigs
  - (E) ranchhands
9. The word “barracks” (line 53) is used to refer to the fact that the children’s home is
  - (A) in a camp
  - (B) manned by armed guards
  - (C) dreary and uniform
  - (D) militarily clean
  - (E) old and run-down
10. Markham repeats the word “tomorrow” (line 62) to
  - (A) remind us that the future is here
  - (B) imply endless repetitiveness
  - (C) suggest that it is not too late to change
  - (D) arouse us to the fact that these children will grow up
  - (E) contrast the past with the present

## Exercise 5

Ralph Waldo Emerson is one of America's best-known essayists. In 1837 he was called on to give the Phi Beta Kappa address to Harvard students and their guests. He spoke on "The American Scholar."

- (5) It is remarkable, the character of the pleasure we derive from the best books. They impress us with the conviction that one nature wrote and the same reads. We read the  
(10) verses of one of the great English poets, of Chaucer, of Marvell, of Dryden, with the most modern joy,—with a pleasure, I mean, which is in great part caused by the abstraction of all *time* from their verses.  
(15) There is some awe mixed with the joy of our surprise, when this poet, who lived in some past world, two or three hundred years ago, says that which lies close to my own soul, that which I also had well-nigh thought and said. But for the evidence thence afforded to the philosophical doctrine of the identity of all minds, we should suppose some preestablished harmony, some foresight of souls that were  
(20) to be, and some preparation of stores for their future wants, like the fact observed in insects, who lay up food before death for the young grub they shall never see.  
(25) I would not be hurried by any love of system, by any exaggeration of instincts, to underrate the Book. We all know, that as the human body can be nourished on any food, though it were boiled grass and the broth of shoes, so the human mind can be fed by any knowledge. And great and heroic men have existed who had almost no other information than by the printed page. I would only say that it needs a strong head to bear that diet. One must be an  
(30) inventor to read well. As the proverb says, "He that would bring home the wealth of the Indies, must carry out the wealth of the Indies." There is then creative reading as well as creative writing. When the mind is braced by labor and invention, the page  
(35) of whatever book we read becomes lumi-  
(40)

(45) nous with manifold allusion. Every sentence is doubly significant, and the sense of our author is as broad as the world. We then see, what is always true, that as the seer's hour of vision is short and rare among heavy days and months, so is its record, perchance, the least part of his volume. The discerning will read, in his Plato or Shakespeare, only that least part,—only the authentic utterances of the oracle;—all the rest he rejects, were it never so many times Plato's and Shakespeare's.

(50) (55) Of course there is a portion of reading quite indispensable to a wise man. History and exact science he must learn by laborious reading. Colleges, in like manner, have their indispensable office,—to teach elements. But they can only highly serve us when they aim not to drill, but to create; when they gather from far every ray of various genius to their hospitable halls, and by the concentrated fires, set the hearts of their youth on flame.

1. By "one nature wrote and the same reads" (lines 3–4), Emerson means that
  - (A) the author is rereading his own work
  - (B) nature writing is read by the same people
  - (C) author and reader live in the same era
  - (D) author and reader are in accord
  - (E) the reader does not remember his own writing
2. The word "abstraction" (line 9) is used to mean
  - (A) conception
  - (B) notion
  - (C) preoccupation
  - (D) elimination
  - (E) inattention

3. Emerson uses the image of insects (line 22) to parallel his discussion of
  - (A) past writers storing knowledge for future readers
  - (B) authors working in grubby surroundings
  - (C) soulless parents toiling blindly for unknowing children
  - (D) the act of creating art
  - (E) the food chain
4. A good title for paragraph 2 might be
  - (A) “Creative Writing”
  - (B) “Creative Reading”
  - (C) “Rating Books”
  - (D) “The Wealth of the Indies”
  - (E) “Visions of the Past”
5. The proverb Emerson cites (lines 36–38) is used to support his theory that
  - (A) one must apply knowledge to extract knowledge
  - (B) the rich need more education than the poor
  - (C) all the wealth in the world will not make a man a genius
  - (D) the wealth of the present is found in the past
  - (E) only a writer can be a good reader
6. The word “braced” (line 40) is used to mean
  - (A) upset
  - (B) beamed
  - (C) paired
  - (D) clamped
  - (E) bolstered
7. By “manifold allusion” (line 42), Emerson means
  - (A) diverse references
  - (B) numerous mentions
  - (C) mechanical fantasies
  - (D) multiple delusions
  - (E) many-sided remarks
8. The word “oracle” (line 51) means
  - (A) wonder
  - (B) seer
  - (C) composer
  - (D) naturalist
  - (E) reader
9. The word “office” (line 58) is used to mean
  - (A) site
  - (B) employment
  - (C) department
  - (D) duty
  - (E) study
10. Emerson calls for an educational system that
  - (A) includes works of the masters
  - (B) teaches students to write brilliantly
  - (C) inspires creativity in scholars
  - (D) Both A and B
  - (E) Both B and C

## LEVEL B CRITICAL READING EXERCISES

Each passage below is followed by a series of questions that require you to analyze, interpret, or evaluate the written work. Answer these questions on the basis of what each passage states or implies. Mark the letter that appears before your answer.

### Exercise 1

*Jean Toomer was one of the most interesting writers of the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s. He wrote experimental plays, poetry, and the novel Cane, from which this excerpt is taken.*

For a long while she was nothing more to me than one of those skirted beings whom boys at a certain age disdain to play with. Just how I came to love her, timidly, and with secret blushes, I do not know. But that I did was brought home to me one night, the first night that Ned wore his long pants. Us fellers were seated on the curb before an apartment house where she had gone in. The young trees had not outgrown their boxes then. V Street was lined with them. When our legs grew cramped and stiff from the cold of the stone, we'd stand around a box and whittle it. I like to think now that there was a hidden purpose in the way we hacked them with our knives. I like to feel that something deep in me responded to the trees, the young trees that whinnied like colts impatient to be let free... On the particular night I have in mind, we were waiting for the top-floor to go out. We wanted to see Avey leave the flat. This night she stayed longer than usual and gave us a chance to complete our plans of how we were going to stone and beat that feller on the top floor out of town. Ned especially had it in for him. He was about to throw a brick up at the window when at last the room went dark. Some minutes passed. Then Avey, as unconcerned as if she had been paying an old-maid aunt a visit, came out.... I just stood there like the others, and something like a fuse burned up inside of me. She never noticed us, but swung

(35) along lazy and easy as anything.... Some one said she'd marry that feller on the top floor. Ned called that a lie because Avey was going to marry nobody but him. We had our doubts about that, but we did agree that she'd soon leave school and marry some one. The gang broke up, and I went home, picturing myself as married. Nothing I did seemed able to change Avey's indifference to me. I played basketball, and when I'd make a long clean shot she'd clap with the others, louder than they, I thought. I'd meet her on the street, and there'd be no difference in the way she said hello. She never took the trouble to call me by my name.... It was on a summer excursion down to Riverview that she first seemed to take me into account. The day had been spent riding merry-go-rounds, scenic-railways, and shoot-the-chutes. We had been in swimming, and we had danced. I was a crack swimmer then. She didn't know how. I held her up and showed her how to kick her legs and draw her arms. Of course she didn't learn in one day, but she thanked me for bothering with her. I was also somewhat of a dancer. And I had already noticed that love can start on a dance floor. We danced. But though I held her tightly in my arms, she was way away. That college feller who lived on the top floor was somewhere making money for the next year. I imagined that she was thinking, wishing for him. Ned was along. He treated her until his money gave out. She went with another feller. Ned got sore. One by one the boys' money gave out. She left them. And they got sore. Every one of them but me got sore....

1. The word “disdain” (line 3) means
  - (A) dislike
  - (B) contend
  - (C) regard
  - (D) offend
  - (E) unnerve
2. “The first night that Ned wore his long pants” (lines 6–7) is used to reveal
  - (A) that the events took place long ago
  - (B) that the boys involved were fairly young
  - (C) that Ned was younger than the narrator
  - (D) Both A and B
  - (E) Both B and C
3. The word “whittle” (line 14) means
  - (A) cut
  - (B) signal
  - (C) knock
  - (D) dull
  - (E) play
4. Toomer’s narrator compares himself to a tree in terms of his
  - (A) sturdiness
  - (B) youth
  - (C) desire to break free
  - (D) Both A and B
  - (E) Both B and C
5. The word “flat” (line 22) is used to refer to a
  - (A) remark
  - (B) soda
  - (C) joke
  - (D) lodging
  - (E) tire
6. By “take me into account” (lines 52–53), the narrator means
  - (A) “employ me”
  - (B) “forgive me”
  - (C) “notice me”
  - (D) “interest me”
  - (E) “chastise me”
7. The word “sore” (line 71) is used to mean
  - (A) pained
  - (B) angry
  - (C) tender
  - (D) bruised
  - (E) wounded
8. The passage tells a tale of
  - (A) wounded pride
  - (B) envy and regret
  - (C) unrequited love
  - (D) sorrow and guilt
  - (E) unfounded fears

## Exercise 2

*Best known as the author of Robinson Crusoe, Daniel Defoe was a prolific writer. His Journal of the Plague Year, published in 1722, is the convincing “journal” of a man identified only as “H.F.” It tells of a real plague that decimated the Continent the year Defoe was five.*

(5) It was now the beginning of August, and the plague grew very violent and terrible in the place where I lived, and Dr. Heath coming to visit me, and finding that I ventured so often out in the streets, earnestly persuaded me to lock myself up, and my family, and not to suffer any of us to go out of doors; to keep all our windows fast, shutters and curtains close, and never to open them; but first, to make a very strong smoke in the room where the window or door was to be opened, with rosin and pitch, brimstone or gunpowder, and the like; and we did this for some time; but as (10) I had not laid in a store of provision for such a retreat, it was impossible that we could keep within doors entirely. However, I attempted, though it was so very late, to do something towards it; and first, as I had convenience both for brewing and baking, I went and bought two sacks of meal, and for several weeks, having an oven, we baked all our own bread; also I bought malt, and brewed as much beer as all the casks I had would hold, and which seemed (15) enough to serve my house for five or six weeks; also I laid in a quantity of salt butter and Cheshire cheese; but I had no flesh meat, and the plague raged so violently among the butchers and slaughterhouses on the other side of our street, where they are known to dwell in great numbers, that it was not advisable so much as to go over the street among them.

(35) And here I must observe again that this necessity of going out of our houses to buy provisions was in a great measure the ruin of the whole City, for the people caught the distemper on these occasions one of another, and even the provisions themselves were often tainted; at least I have great reason to believe so; and therefore I cannot say with satisfaction what I know is repeated with great assurance, that the market people and such as brought provisions to town were never infected. I am certain the butchers of Whitechapel, where the greatest part of the flesh meat was killed, were dreadfully visited, and that at (40) last to such a degree that few of their shops were kept open, and those that remained of them killed their meat at Mile End and that way, and brought it to market upon horses.

(45) However, the poor people could not lay up provisions, and there was a necessity that they must go to market to buy, and others to send servants or their children; and as this was a necessity which renewed itself daily, it brought abundance of unsound people to the markets, and a great many that went thither sound brought death home with them.

(50) (55) It is true people used all possible precaution; when anyone bought a joint of meat in the market they would not take it off the butcher's hand, but took it off the hooks themselves. On the other hand, the butcher would not touch the money, but have it put into a pot full of vinegar, which he kept for that purpose. The buyer carried always small money to make up any odd sum, that they might take no change. They carried bottles of scents and perfumes in their hands, and all the means that could be used were used, but then the poor could not do even these things; and they went at all hazards.

1. When the doctor says “not to suffer any of us to go out of doors” (lines 7–8), he means
  - (A) going outdoors will cause suffering
  - (B) the narrator should not allow his family to go out
  - (C) they should go outdoors to avoid the suffering inside
  - (D) going outdoors will prevent suffering
  - (E) the narrator should not prevent his family from going out
2. The word “fast” (line 8) is used to mean
  - (A) fleet
  - (B) steadfast
  - (C) swift
  - (D) fastened
  - (E) permanent
3. By “laid in a store of provision” (line 15), the narrator refers to
  - (A) putting up a supply of food
  - (B) telling a story of salvation
  - (C) preserving the past
  - (D) lying in a bed of flour sacks
  - (E) sleeping in his place of business
4. The word “retreat” (line 16) is used to mean
  - (A) departure
  - (B) evacuation
  - (C) flight
  - (D) escape
  - (E) refuge
5. The “distemper” (line 39) refers to
  - (A) the plague
  - (B) bad feelings
  - (C) anger
  - (D) fear
  - (E) a disease common to dogs
6. How does the narrator feel about the meat available in the city?
  - (A) Only flesh meat is available.
  - (B) It comes from within the city.
  - (C) It is inedible.
  - (D) It seems it is never infected.
  - (E) It is tainted.
7. The word “sound” (line 62) is used to mean
  - (A) severe
  - (B) solid
  - (C) clamorous
  - (D) drifting
  - (E) healthy
8. The last paragraph mainly discusses
  - (A) the inability of the poor to protect themselves
  - (B) the effects of the plague on business
  - (C) symptoms of the plague
  - (D) safeguards against getting the plague
  - (E) doctors’ advice and warnings
9. In general, the narrator believes that the plague was worsened by people’s need to
  - (A) socialize
  - (B) self-medicate
  - (C) shop
  - (D) travel abroad
  - (E) fight
10. The narrator implies that the people worst hit were
  - (A) city-dwellers
  - (B) doctors
  - (C) children
  - (D) servants
  - (E) the poor

### Exercise 3

*Sarah Orne Jewett was born in Maine in 1849. At the age of twenty, she published her first story, and she went on to write stories and novels about the Mainers she knew. This excerpt is from “The Hiltons’ Holiday,” first published in 1896.*

An hour later the best wagon was ready, and the great expedition set forth. The little dog sat apart, and barked as if it fell entirely upon him to voice the general excitement. Both seats were in the wagon, but the empty place testified to Mrs. Hilton’s unyielding disposition. She had wondered why one broad seat would not do, but John Hilton meekly suggested that the wagon looked better with both. The little girls sat on the back seat dressed alike in their Sunday hats of straw with blue ribbons, and their little plaid shawls pinned neatly about their small shoulders. They wore gray thread gloves, and sat very straight. Susan Ellen was half a head the taller, but otherwise, from behind, they looked much alike. As for their father, he was in his Sunday best—a plain black coat, and a winter hat of felt, which was heavy and rusty-looking for that warm early summer day. He had it in mind to buy a new straw hat at Topham, so that this with the turnip seed and the hoe made three important reasons for going.

“Remember an’ lay off your shawls when you get there, an’ carry them over your arms,” said the mother, clucking like an excited hen to her chickens. “They’ll do to keep the dust off your new dresses goin’ an’ comin’. An’ when you eat your dinners don’t get spots on you, an’ don’t point at folks as you ride by, an’ stare, or they’ll know you come from the country. An’ John, you call into Cousin Ad’line Marlow’s an’ see how they all be, an’ tell her I expect her over certain to stop awhile before hayin’. It always eases her phthisic

(40) to git up here on the highland, an’ I’ve got a new notion about doin’ over her best-room carpet sense I see her that’ll save rippin’ one breadth. An’ don’t come home all wore out; an’, John, don’t you go an’ buy me no kick-shaws to fetch home. I ain’t a child, an’ you ain’t got no money to waste.

(45) I expect you’ll go, like’s not, an’ buy you some kind of a foolish boy’s hat; do look an’ see if it’s reasonable good straw, an’ won’t splinter all off round the edge. An’ you mind, John”—

(50) “Yes, yes, hold on!” cried John impatiently; then he cast a last affectionate, reassuring look at her face, flushed with the hurry and responsibility of starting them off in proper shape. “I wish you was goin’ too,” he said, smiling. “I do so!” Then the old horse started, and they went out at the bars, and began the careful long descent of the hill. The young dog, tethered to the lilac bush, was frantic with piteous appeals; the little girls piped their eager goodbys again and again, and their father turned many times to look back and wave his hand. As for their mother, she stood alone and watched them out of sight.

(55) There was one place far out on the high-road where she could catch a last glimpse of the wagon, and she waited what seemed a very long time until it appeared and then was lost to sight again behind a low hill. “They’re nothin’ but a pack o’ child’n together,” she said aloud; and then felt lonelier than she expected. She even stooped and patted the unresigned little dog as she passed him, going into the house.

1. The words “great expedition” are used by the author
  - (A) literally
  - (B) ironically
  - (C) snidely
  - (D) cruelly
  - (E) matter-of-factly

2. The word “voice” (line 4) is used to mean
  - (A) sing
  - (B) vote
  - (C) desire
  - (D) call
  - (E) express
3. The author’s description of John’s apparel
  - (A) reveals his relative poverty
  - (B) shows his stylishness
  - (C) explains his behavior
  - (D) contrasts his appearance with his character
  - (E) is mean-spirited
4. The mother is compared to a hen in terms of her
  - (A) brooding nature
  - (B) coloration
  - (C) eating habits
  - (D) lazy good temper
  - (E) concern over her children
5. The mother is worried that her children might
  - (A) misbehave in their cousin’s home
  - (B) eat more than they should
  - (C) be considered unsophisticated
  - (D) Both A and B
  - (E) Both B and C
6. The word “kick-shaws” (line 44) apparently refers to
  - (A) money
  - (B) something to eat
  - (C) a kind of hat
  - (D) odds and ends
  - (E) parasols
7. The author’s feeling toward her characters can be summed up as
  - (A) unyielding
  - (B) affectionate
  - (C) uncaring
  - (D) troubled
  - (E) mystified
8. The tone of the final paragraph emphasizes
  - (A) gratitude
  - (B) remorse
  - (C) dreariness
  - (D) impulsiveness
  - (E) isolation

## Exercise 4

*Patrice Lumumba (1925–1961) was president of the Congolese National Movement and the first Prime Minister of the Congo after it achieved independence from Belgium. Amidst the unrest that followed independence, he was deposed and assassinated. This speech was given in 1959 to an audience in Brussels, Belgium.*

We have capable men who are just waiting for a chance to get to work. I visited Guinea recently: there are eleven ministers in the government, and seven state secretaries who have ministerial status. Only three of these eighteen ministers have studied at a university; the others have finished high school, held jobs, and acquired a certain amount of experience, (5) and the government of Guinea has brought in French technicians to help it in the field of law, economics, agronomy, and every other area of activity. So I think it is possible today to set up a Congolese government.

We have chosen January 1961 as our deadline. We thus have two years in which to prepare ourselves, and we are convinced that two years from now we will be in a (10) position to take over the responsibilities of running our country, with the Belgians working side by side with us to help us and guide our footsteps. If Belgium understands us, if Belgium takes this fervent desire—the desire of the Congolese people—into consideration, she will be entitled to our friendship. The people will see for themselves that when the proper moment came and we decided we were (15) capable of self-rule, the Belgians did not stand in our way. On the contrary: they will have helped and guided us. The question of future relations between Belgium and the Congo will resolve itself automatically.

(20) There will be no difficulty whatsoever. We are the ones to say: look, we still need Belgium in this field of endeavor, we still need European technicians. But if the Bel-

(40) gian people, the Belgian government, refuse to take our demands into consideration, what will happen as a result? The government perpetuates bitterness and fosters a climate of continual discontent, and whatever the Belgians may say, whatever their wishes in the matter may be, we (45) are going to gain our independence, come what may. In the end the Congolese people are liable to say: “Belgium has always been opposed to our emancipation. We’ve had enough of that now; we’re going our own separate way....” And that is precisely the problem. Everyone—the financiers, the colonialists—keeps asking for guarantees. But such guarantees depend entirely on them, because winning our (50) independence does not mean that we are going to seize property belonging to Belgians; we are not thieves, we respect other people’s property. It is a matter of a gentleman’s agreement with the status of an international right; when any citizen finds himself in another country, his property and his person must be protected. This (55) is the problem as we see it.

(55) So today we want our country to be independent. We want to run our country now so that we may draw up agreements between an independent Congo and an independent Belgium on an equal footing, and thus foster friendship between these (60) two peoples. I am very happy to meet young Belgians here who share our ideas, progressive young Belgians who agree with us, who will help press for Congolese independence tomorrow and are joining forces with us. This is encouraging. (65) It proves that they are dissatisfied, that they disapprove of the attitude of certain Belgians in the Congo today. I do not want to make any sort of sweeping general statement: there are Belgians in the Congo—certain civil servants, certain colonists, certain doctors, certain missionaries—who (70) have always treated Africans in a dignified way. But they are no more than a minority.

(75)

(80)

(85)

- Why are the majority opposed? Belgians in the Congo believe that when the blacks get their independence tomorrow, they are going to seize everything Belgians own.
- (90) This is still the usual reaction among typical Europeans, even after the new policy, even after the declaration on January 13. They keep saying, “These are the blacks who are going to take our places tomorrow, and where will that put *us*? Where will we go?”
1. Lumumba brings in the example of Guinea to demonstrate that
- (A) colonial power can hold a country together
  - (B) those who would govern need a background in law
  - (C) liberation from the French is possible
  - (D) ministers need not be educated
  - (E) an independent African government can exist
2. The word “fervent” (line 24) means
- (A) impassioned
  - (B) maniacal
  - (C) hotheaded
  - (D) dispassionate
  - (E) torpid
3. How does Lumumba feel about friendship with Belgium?
- (A) It is unlikely to come about for many years.
  - (B) It is possible if Belgium helps the Congo.
  - (C) It is not possible if Belgium opposes the Congolese.
  - (D) Both A and B
  - (E) Both B and C
4. Paragraph 2 moves back and forth between
- (A) humor and bitterness
  - (B) pleasantries and deference
  - (C) warnings and recommendations
  - (D) raillery and lightheartedness
  - (E) profanity and charity
5. The words “gentleman’s agreement” (line 60) refer to
- (A) a deal without benefit for either side
  - (B) a bargain sealed in blood
  - (C) a written contract
  - (D) an unspoken understanding
  - (E) an oath of allegiance
6. Paragraph 3 is primarily
- (A) about young Belgians
  - (B) used to contrast with paragraph 2
  - (C) a specious argument
  - (D) an analysis of Belgian resistance
  - (E) a summation of Lumumba’s main points
7. The word “press” (line 74) is used to mean
- (A) publish
  - (B) constrict
  - (C) push
  - (D) crush
  - (E) iron
8. According to Lumumba, why are Belgians afraid?
- (A) They are racist.
  - (B) They think a Congolese government will imprison them.
  - (C) They think the Congolese will take what they have.
  - (D) Both A and B
  - (E) Both B and C

## Exercise 5

*In 1865 the naturalist Louis Agassiz, accompanied by his wife and a party of scientists and volunteers, embarked on a journey to Brazil to record information about fish and other wildlife in the rivers of that nation. Aboard ship, Agassiz talked to his assistants about the proper study of nature. As usual, his discussion was recorded by his wife.*

(5) When less was known of animals and plants the discovery of new species was the great object. This has been carried too far, and is now almost the lowest kind of scientific work. The discovery of a new species as such does not change a feature in the science of natural history, any more than the discovery of a new asteroid changes the character of the problems to be investigated by astronomers. It is merely adding to the enumeration of objects.

(10) (15) We should look rather for the fundamental relations among animals; the number of species we may find is of importance only so far as they explain the distribution and limitation of different genera and families, their relations to each other and to the physical conditions under which they live. Out of such investigations there looms up a deeper question for scientific men, the solution of which is to be the most important result of their work in coming generations. The origin of life is the great question of the day. How did the organic world come to be as it is? It must be our aim to throw some light on this subject by our present journey. How did Brazil come to be inhabited by the animals and plants now living there? Who were its inhabitants in past times? What reason is there to believe that the present condition of things in this country is in any sense derived from the past? The first step in this investigation must be to ascertain the geographical distribution of the present animals and plants. Suppose we first examine the Rio San Francisco. The basin of this river is en-

(40) tirely isolated. Are its inhabitants, like its waters, completely distinct from those of other basins? Are its species peculiar to itself, and not repeated in any other river of the continent? Extraordinary as this result would seem, I nevertheless expect to find it so. The next water-basin we shall have to examine will be that of the Amazons, which connects through the Rio Negro with the Orinoco. It has been frequently repeated that the same species of fish exist in the waters of the San Francisco and in those of Guiana and of the Amazons. At all events, our works on fishes constantly indicate Brazil and Guiana as the common home of many species; but this observation has never been made with sufficient accuracy to merit confidence. Fifty years ago the exact locality from which any animal came seemed an unimportant fact in its scientific history, for the bearing of this question on that of origin was not then perceived. To say that any specimen came from South America was quite enough; to specify that it came from Brazil, from the Amazons, the San Francisco, or the La Plata, seemed a marvellous accuracy in the observers. In the museum at Paris, for instance, there are many specimens entered as coming from New York or from Pará; but all that is absolutely known about them is that they were shipped from those sea-ports. Nobody knows exactly where they were collected. So there are specimens entered as coming from the Rio San Francisco, but it is by no means sure that they came exclusively from that water-basin. All this kind of investigation is far too loose for our present object. Our work must be done with much more precision; it must tell something positive of the geographical distribution of animals in Brazil.

(45) (50) (55) (60) (65) (70) (75) (80) (85) Therefore, my young friends who come with me on this expedition, let us be careful that every specimen has a label, recording locality and date, so secured that it will

reach Cambridge safely. It would be still better to attach two labels to each specimen, so that, if any mischance happens to one, our record may not be lost. We must (90) try not to mix the fishes of different rivers, even though they flow into each other, but to keep our collections perfectly distinct. You will easily see the vast importance of thus ascertaining the limitation of species, and the bearing of the result on the (95) great question of origin.

1. How does Agassiz feel about the discovery of new species?
  - (A) It is taking place less and less.
  - (B) All species have now been cataloged.
  - (C) It cannot take the place of true science.
  - (D) It is the great goal of science.
  - (E) It is no longer particularly important.
2. Agassiz wants to focus upon
  - (A) the enumeration of animals and plants
  - (B) the interrelationships of species
  - (C) a scientific study of man
  - (D) Both A and B
  - (E) Both B and C
3. The word “genera” (line 17) refers to
  - (A) classifications
  - (B) brain power
  - (C) plants
  - (D) habits
  - (E) people
4. Agassiz sees his future work as answering the question
  - (A) “Can we learn from history?”
  - (B) “Is there a God?”
  - (C) “How many species are there?”
  - (D) “Where did man come from?”
  - (E) “How did life originate?”
5. The word “distribution” (line 35) is used to mean
  - (A) shipping
  - (B) dispersion
  - (C) donation
  - (D) offering
  - (E) quality
6. How might you paraphrase the sentence “Are its inhabitants … from those of other basins” (lines 39–41)?
  - (A) Do the animals here resemble the water?
  - (B) Do the inhabitants of this basin ever visit other basins?
  - (C) Can we distinguish the animals of these waters from each other?
  - (D) Since these waters differ from others, are the animals found here different as well?
  - (E) Can we tell the difference between this basin and another?
7. The word “common” (line 54) is used to mean
  - (A) familiar
  - (B) collective
  - (C) provincial
  - (D) typical
  - (E) unremarkable
8. Agassiz uses the phrase “a marvellous accuracy” (line 66) to
  - (A) show how unlikely it was for observers to be so specific
  - (B) give his opinion about the current generation of scientists
  - (C) make a heartfelt plea for understanding
  - (D) Both A and B
  - (E) Both B and C
9. Agassiz urges his young colleagues to be
  - (A) prudent
  - (B) daring
  - (C) meticulous
  - (D) curious
  - (E) adventurous
10. By “perfectly distinct” (line 92) Agassiz means that the collections should be
  - (A) wholly dissimilar
  - (B) flawlessly obvious
  - (C) completely lucid
  - (D) absolutely separate
  - (E) quite clear

## LEVEL C CRITICAL READING EXERCISES

Each pair of passages below is followed by a series of questions that require you to analyze, interpret, evaluate, compare, and contrast the written works. Answer these questions on the basis of what each passage states or implies. Mark the letter that appears before your answer.

### Exercise 1

*The emancipation of African-Americans and the emancipation of women were two entwined issues of the mid-nineteenth century. These excerpts from an autobiographical letter by a former slave and from a speech by a leader in the fight for women's rights show that they shared a common foe.*

#### Passage A—James L. Bradley, former slave (1835)

I will begin as far back as I can remember. I think I was between two and three years old when the soul-destroyers tore me from my mother's arms, somewhere in Africa, far back from the sea. They carried me a long distance to a ship; all the way I looked back, and cried. The ship was full of men and women loaded with chains; but I was so small, they let me run about on deck.  
(5)  
After many long days, they brought us into Charleston, South Carolina. A slaveholder bought me, and took me up into Pendleton County. I suppose that I staid with him about six months. He sold me to a Mr. Bradley, by whose name I have ever since been called. This man was considered a wonderfully kind master; and it is true that I was treated better than most (10) of the slaves I knew. I never suffered for food, and never was flogged with the whip; but oh, my soul! I was tormented with kicks and knocks more than I can tell. My master often knocked me down, when  
(15) I was young. Once, when I was a boy, about nine years old, he struck me so hard that I fell down and lost my senses. I remained thus some time, and when I came to myself, he told me he thought he had killed me. At another time, he struck me  
(20)  
(25)  
(30)

with a currycomb, and sunk the knob into my head....

I used to work very hard. I was always obliged to be in the field by sunrise, and I labored till dark, stopping only at noon long enough to eat dinner. When I was about fifteen years old, I took what was called the cold plague, in consequence of being over-worked, and I was sick a long time. My master came to me one day, and hearing me groan with pain, he said, "This fellow will never be of any more use to me—I would as soon knock him in the head, as if he were an opossum." ... My master had kept me ignorant of everything he could. I was never told anything about God, or my own soul. Yet from the time I was fourteen years old, I used to think a great deal about freedom. It was my heart's desire; I could not keep it out of my mind. Many a sleepless night I have spent in tears, because I was a slave. I looked back on all I had suffered—and when I looked ahead, all was dark and hopeless bondage. My heart ached to feel within me the life of liberty.  
(35)  
(40)  
(45)  
(50)  
(55)

#### Passage B—Elizabeth Cady Stanton, from "Address to the Legislature of New York on Women's Rights" (1854)

Look at the position of woman as mother. There is no human love so strong and steadfast as that of the mother for her child; yet behold how ruthless are your laws touching this most sacred relation. Nature has clearly made the mother the guardian of the child; but man, in his inordinate love of power, does continually set nature and nature's laws at open defiance. The father may apprentice his child, bind him out to  
(60)  
(65)

a trade, without the mother's consent—yea, in direct opposition to her most earnest entreaties, prayers and tears....

- (70) Again, as the condition of the child always follows that of the mother, and as by the sanction of your laws the father may beat the mother, so may he the child. What mother can not bear me witness to untold sufferings which cruel, vindictive fathers have visited upon their helpless children? Who ever saw a human being that would not abuse unlimited power? Base and ignoble must that man be who, let the provocation be what it may, would strike a woman; but he who would lacerate a trembling child is unworthy the name of man. A mother's love can be no protection to a child; she can not appeal to you to save it from a father's cruelty, for the laws take no cognizance of the mother's most grievous wrongs. Neither at home nor abroad can a mother protect her son. Look at the temptations that surround the paths of our youth at every step; look at the gambling and drinking saloons, the clubrooms, the dens of infamy and abomination that infest all our villages and cities—slowly but surely sapping the very foundations of all virtue and strength.

By your laws, all these abominable resorts are permitted. It is folly to talk of a mother moulding the character of her son, when all mankind, backed up by law and public sentiment, conspire to destroy her influence. But when women's moral power shall speak through the ballot-box, then shall her influence be seen and felt....

1. By "soul-destroyers" (Passage A, line 3), Bradley apparently refers to
- (A) religious zealots
  - (B) white women
  - (C) slaves
  - (D) Africans
  - (E) slave traders

2. How does Bradley feel about his master, Mr. Bradley?
- (A) He was a wonderfully kind master.
  - (B) He treated Bradley well.
  - (C) He was not as kind as people thought.
  - (D) He was no better than a slave.
  - (E) He got along with him well.
3. Why did Bradley's "heart ache" (line 55)?
- (A) He was homesick.
  - (B) He wanted a friend.
  - (C) He was dreadfully ill.
  - (D) He was treated badly.
  - (E) He longed for freedom.
4. In Passage B, what does "steadfast" mean (line 58)?
- (A) Rapid
  - (B) True
  - (C) Habitual
  - (D) Frequent
  - (E) Vacillating
5. The word "sanction" (Passage B, line 72) means
- (A) permission
  - (B) devoutness
  - (C) lucidity
  - (D) rank
  - (E) eloquence
6. Stanton uses the word "infest" (line 36) to imply that
- (A) our country is overrun with domineering men
  - (B) power is slowly changing hands
  - (C) drinking causes disease
  - (D) immorality is a kind of creeping plague
  - (E) the atmosphere of cities is festive

7. Bradley would probably agree with Stanton that
- (A) a man who strikes a child is unworthy
  - (B) gambling and drinking sap one's strength
  - (C) moral power can speak through the ballot-box
  - (D) Both A and B
  - (E) Both B and C
8. Stanton's main point seems to be that
- (A) laws pit mother against child
  - (B) sons will always follow their fathers' paths
  - (C) laws remove a mother's right to protect her child
  - (D) a mother's influence on her sons is unimportant
  - (E) few can argue with laws that protect children
9. A quotation from Passage B that might apply to Passage A is
- (A) "Who ever saw a human being that would not abuse unlimited power?"
  - (B) "Neither at home nor abroad can a mother protect her son."
  - (C) "Look at the temptations that surround the paths of our youth at every step...."
  - (D) Both A and B
  - (E) Both B and C
10. As Bradley's master kept him ignorant of God, so
- (A) might a father apprentice his child to a master
  - (B) does a mother remain ignorant of her child's welfare
  - (C) is a mother witness to sufferings of her child
  - (D) can parents keep their children home from school
  - (E) can a father keep his son ignorant of morality

**Exercise 2**

*All cultures teach an element of respect for the elderly and sick, and nearly all cultures present moralistic tales to stress this lesson. Here are two very different tales, one from the Indians of the Northeast and one from the Hispanic Southwest.*

**Passage A—“An Unwelcome Visitor,” a legend of the Iroquois**

When the frosts were unlocked from the hillsides there came into one of the villages of the red men a mild and quiet old man whom none of them had ever seen before.

(5) He stood beside the field where the young men played at their games, and when some of the fathers approached to bid him welcome to their village and wigwams they saw that his body was covered with sores,

(10) and they made excuses to turn aside that they might not meet him. When none went to him and called him brother, he turned to the village and walked slowly from door to door of the wigwams. The women saw him and as he approached their doors they covered their children's faces that they might not see his features, and wished in their hearts that he would not enter. When the little man read their thoughts, with saddened eyes and heavy steps he would turn away and seek another habitation, where he would again see that he was not welcome and turn his weary footsteps from the door. When he had visited all the wigwams in the village without finding a welcome in any, he went suddenly to the forest and they saw him no more....

(30) Finally there remained but two more villages to visit and he feared that he should find none who would bid him enter their homes that they might minister to his wants. At last, however, as he approached a humble cabin his eyes brightened, for he read in the heart of the woman who saw him coming that she had taken pity on his forlorn condition and that her hospitality would overcome the dread his appearance caused. Said the woman: “Thou art welcome, my brother, for thou art a stranger.”

(40) Then said the strange man: ... “Listen, my sister: Thou of all thy race hast had in thy heart pity and love for a suffering and friendless creature that have led thee to give him shelter in thy house. Know then, my sister, that thy name shall henceforth be great. Many wonders shall be taught thee, and thy sons will be made chiefs and thy daughters princesses. I am Quarara, and bear messages from the Great Spirit.” Then Quarara described to the woman a plant which she went forth into the forest and procured. She returned to the hut and prepared it as he bade her, and when it was administered to him he recovered from his sickness and the sores left him. Quarara remained at the woman's wigwam many moons and brought upon himself all manner of fevers, plagues and diseases, and for each one he described the medicine root or herb that would perform its cure....

(45) Then said the strange man, Quarara, to her: “Thou, Oh! sister, knowest now what the Great Spirit would have thee teach his children freely. Thou hast been patient and kind and thy heart is filled with gentleness. Thy family shall be called Sagawahs, the healers, and thou and thy family shall be remembered throughout

(50) (55) (60)

(65) (70)

**Passage B—“The Boy and His Grandfather,” a tale of the Southwest**

In the old days it was not unusual to find several generations living together in one home. Usually, everyone lived in peace and harmony, but this situation caused (75) problems for one man whose household included, besides his wife and small son, his elderly father.

It so happened that the daughter-in-law took a dislike to the old man. He was always in the way, she said, and she insisted (80) he be removed to a small room apart from the house.

Because the old man was out of sight, he was often neglected. Sometimes he (85) even went hungry. They took poor care of him, and in winter the old man often suffered from the cold. One day the little grandson visited his grandfather.

“My little one,” the grandfather said, (90) “go and find a blanket and cover me. It is cold and I am freezing.”

The small boy ran to the barn to look for a blanket, and there he found a rug.

“Father, please cut this rug in half,” he (95) asked his father.

“Why? What are you going to do with it?”

“I’m going to take it to my grandfather because he is cold.”

“Well, take the entire rug,” replied his (100) father.

“No,” his son answered, “I cannot take it all. I want you to cut it in half so I can save the other half for you when you are as old as my grandfather. Then I will have it (105) for you so you will not be cold.”

His son’s response was enough to make the man realize how poorly he had treated his own father. The man then brought his (110) father back into his home and ordered that a warm room be prepared. From that time on he took care of his father’s needs and visited him frequently every day.

1. What is it that keeps the villagers from greeting the old man in Passage A?
  - (A) He is a stranger.
  - (B) He is old.
  - (C) He is covered with sores.
  - (D) They are unfriendly.
  - (E) They fear attack.
2. The word “minister” (Passage A, line 32) is used to mean
  - (A) mind
  - (B) tend
  - (C) assemble
  - (D) preach
  - (E) negotiate
3. The word “great” (line 47) is used to mean
  - (A) excellent
  - (B) prodigious
  - (C) weighty
  - (D) exalted
  - (E) spacious
4. The word “procured” (line 53) means
  - (A) obtained
  - (B) captured
  - (C) dried
  - (D) restored
  - (E) healed
5. The words “many moons” (lines 57–58) refer to
  - (A) people’s faces
  - (B) the name of a place
  - (C) a measure of size
  - (D) a length of time
  - (E) a strange natural occurrence
6. The last paragraph of Passage A could be called a(n)
  - (A) repetition
  - (B) fantasy
  - (C) oath
  - (D) summary
  - (E) blessing

7. Quarara turns the woman and her children into  
(A) toads  
(B) chiefs  
(C) a new race  
(D) medicine men and women  
(E) ministers
8. By “several generations” (Passage B, line 72), the author means  
(A) many years  
(B) separate lifetimes  
(C) children, parents, and grandparents  
(D) several breeding periods  
(E) more than one beginning
9. One difference between Passage A and Passage B is that  
(A) Passage A takes place in the past  
(B) people in Passage B ignore an old man  
(C) people in Passage A ignore an old man  
(D) Passage A deals with illness as well as age  
(E) Passage B has no moral
10. The woman in Passage A and the man in Passage B learn that  
(A) illness is not a crime  
(B) respecting one’s elders can be beneficial  
(C) children may understand more than adults  
(D) Both A and B  
(E) Both B and C

## LEVEL D CRITICAL READING EXERCISES

Each passage or pair of passages below is followed by a series of questions that require you to analyze, interpret, evaluate, compare, and contrast the written works. Answer these questions on the basis of what each passage states or implies. Mark the letter that appears before your answer.

### Exercise 1

*In 1869, naturalist John Muir spent the summer in the Sierra Mountains. Muir, who would become the foremost conservationist in the country, had just moved to California, and this was the first of hundreds of trips he would take to the Sierra. He recorded his sights and impressions in a diary, from which this passage is excerpted.*

Sugar pine cones are cylindrical, slightly tapered at the end and rounded at the base. Found one today nearly twenty-four inches long and six in diameter, the scales being open. Another specimen nineteen inches long; the average length of full-grown cones on trees favorably situated is nearly eighteen inches. On the lower edge of the belt at a height of about twenty-five hundred feet above the sea they are smaller, say a foot to fifteen inches long, and at a height of seven thousand feet or more near the upper limits of its growth in the Yosemite region they are about the same size. This noble tree is an inexhaustible study and source of pleasure. I never weary of gazing at its grand tassel cones, its perfectly round bole one hundred feet or more without a limb, the fine purplish color of its bark, and its magnificent outsweeping, down-curving feathery arms forming a crown always bold and striking and exhilarating. In habit and general port it looks somewhat like a palm, but no palm that I have seen yet displays such majesty of form and behavior either when poised silent and thoughtful in sunshine, or wide-awake waving in storm winds with every needle quivering. When young it is very straight and regular in form like most other conifers; but at the age of fifty to one hun-

dred years it begins to acquire individuality, so that no two are alike in their prime or old age. Every tree calls for special admiration. I have been making many sketches, and regret that I cannot draw every needle. It is said to reach a height of three hundred feet, though the tallest I have measured falls short of this stature sixty feet or more. The diameter of the largest near the ground is about ten feet, though I've heard of some twelve feet thick or even fifteen. The diameter is held to a great height, the taper being almost imperceptibly gradual. Its companion, the yellow pine, is almost as large. The long silvery foliage of the younger specimens forms magnificent cylindrical brushes on the top shoots and the ends of the upturned branches, and when the wind sways the needles all one way at a certain angle every tree becomes a tower of white quivering sun-fire. Well may this shining species be called the silver pine. The needles are sometimes more than a foot long, almost as long as those of the long-leaf pine of Florida.

1. The word “scales” (line 4) is used to mean
  - (A) measures
  - (B) weights
  - (C) scrapings
  - (D) husks
  - (E) balances
2. By “favorably situated” (line 7), Muir probably means
  - (A) in an approved site
  - (B) positioned pleasantly
  - (C) newly planted
  - (D) far from the sea
  - (E) having suitable sun and water

3. The word “bole” (line 18) means
  - (A) trunk
  - (B) top
  - (C) tree
  - (D) leaf
  - (E) branch
4. By “general port” (line 23), Muir means
  - (A) a place where ships dock
  - (B) the manner in which one bears oneself
  - (C) placement to the left
  - (D) an opening for intake
  - (E) a hole for firing weapons
5. In comparing the pine to a palm, Muir
  - (A) finds the pine less majestic
  - (B) finds the palm less majestic
  - (C) assigns the pine human characteristics
  - (D) Both A and B
  - (E) Both B and C
6. In his description, Muir includes the pine’s
  - (A) height and thickness
  - (B) coloration
  - (C) planting time
  - (D) Both A and B
  - (E) Both B and C
7. Which of the following would be a good title for this passage?
  - (A) “Sugar from the Pine”
  - (B) “A Noble Tree”
  - (C) “The Trees of the Sierra”
  - (D) “Comparing Pines and Firs”
  - (E) “The Yellow Pine”
8. Muir’s attitude toward the pine might almost be called
  - (A) deferential
  - (B) daunted
  - (C) imperious
  - (D) contrite
  - (E) charitable

## Exercise 2

*In many cultures, the wealthy hired servants or kept slaves to take care of their children. These two narratives, one the true story of an ex-slave and one a work of fiction by a Nobel Prize-winning Indian writer, tell of children's occasional inexplicable cruelty toward the class that raised them.*

### Passage A—from the Narrative of James Curry, former slave (1840)

My mother was a cook in the house for about twenty-two years. She cooked for from twenty-five to thirty-five, taking the family and the slaves together. The slaves (5) ate in the kitchen. After my mistress's death, my mother was the only woman kept in the house. She took care of my master's children, some of whom were then quite small, and brought them up. (10) One of the most trying scenes I ever passed through, when I would have laid down my life to protect her if I had dared, was this: after she had raised my master's children, one of his daughters, a young girl, came (15) into the kitchen one day, and for some trifles about the dinner, she struck my mother, who pushed her away, and she fell on the floor. Her father was not at home. When he came, which was while the slaves (20) were eating in the kitchen, she told him about it. He came down, called my mother out, and, with a hickory rod, he beat her fifteen or twenty strokes, and then called his daughter and told her to take her satisfaction of her, and she did beat her until she (25) was satisfied. Oh! it was dreadful, to see the girl whom my poor mother had taken care of from her childhood, thus beating her, and I must stand there, and did not dare to crook my finger in her defence.

### Passage B—from “My Lord, the Baby” by Rabindranath Tagore (1916)

Raicharan was twelve years old when he came as a servant to his master's house. He belonged to the same caste as his master, and was given his master's little son to nurse. As time went on the boy left Raicharan's arms to go to school. From school he went on to college, and after college he entered the judicial service. Always, until he married, Raicharan was his sole attendant.

(40) But, when a mistress came into the house, Raicharan found two masters instead of one. All his former influence passed to the new mistress. This was compensated for by a fresh arrival. Anukul had a son born to him, and Raicharan by his unsparing attentions soon got a complete hold over the child. He used to toss him up in his arms, call to him in absurd baby language, put his face close to the baby's and draw it away again with a grin.

(45) Presently the baby was able to crawl and cross the doorway. When Raicharan went to catch him, he would scream with mischievous laughter and make for safety. Raicharan was amazed at the profound skill and exact judgment the baby showed when pursued. He would say to his mistress with a look of awe and mystery: “Your son will be a judge someday.”

(50) New wonders came in their turn. When the baby began to toddle, that was to Raicharan an epoch in human history. When he called his father Ba-ba and his mother Ma-ma and Raicharan Chan-na, then Raicharan's ecstasy knew no bounds. He went out to tell the news to all the world....

(55) (60) One afternoon the rain cleared. It was cloudy, but cool and bright. Raicharan's little despot did not want to stay in on such a fine afternoon. His lordship climbed into the go-cart. Raicharan, between the shafts, dragged him slowly along till he reached

- (75) the rice-fields on the banks of the river. There was no one in the fields, and no boat on the stream. Across the water, on the farther side, the clouds were rifted in the west. The silent ceremonial of the setting sun was revealed in all its glowing splendor. In the midst of that stillness the child, all of a sudden, pointed with his finger in front of him and cried: “Chan-na! Pitty fow.”
- (85) Close by on a mud-flat stood a large *Kadamba* tree in full flower. My lord, the baby, looked at it with greedy eyes, and Raicharan knew his meaning.... But Raicharan had no wish that evening to go
- (90) splashing knee-deep through the mud to reach the flowers. So he quickly pointed his finger in the opposite direction, calling out: “Oh, look, baby, look! Look at the bird.” And with all sorts of curious noises
- (95) he pushed the go-cart rapidly away from the tree. But a child, destined to be a judge, cannot be put off so easily.... The little Master’s mind was made up, and Raicharan was at his wits’ end. “Very well,
- (100) baby,” he said at last, “you sit still in the cart, and I’ll go and get you the pretty flower. Only mind you don’t go near the water.”
- As he said this, he made his legs bare to
- (105) the knee, and waded through the oozing mud toward the tree.
1. The numbers “twenty-five to thirty-five” (Passage A, line 3) refer to
    - (A) the age Curry’s mother was when she was cook
    - (B) the number of people Curry’s mother cooked for
    - (C) the years during which Curry’s mother cooked
    - (D) a system of measurement now obsolete
    - (E) the number of consecutive hours Curry’s mother worked without a break
  2. The word “trying” (line 10) means
    - (A) daring
    - (B) troublesome
    - (C) secure
    - (D) binding
    - (E) elementary
  3. The word “trifle” (line 16) means
    - (A) knickknack
    - (B) jest
    - (C) unimportant thing
    - (D) trace
    - (E) toy
  4. By “take her satisfaction of her” (lines 24–25), Curry means
    - (A) please her
    - (B) punish her until content
    - (C) give her trinkets
    - (D) show her the correct way
    - (E) pacify her
  5. The best description of Curry’s feelings at this scene might be
    - (A) apathy
    - (B) helplessness
    - (C) horror
    - (D) Both A and B
    - (E) Both B and C
  6. In Passage B, the word “caste” (line 33) means
    - (A) job
    - (B) performance
    - (C) company
    - (D) post
    - (E) class
  7. The tone of paragraph 4, Passage B, is
    - (A) ironic
    - (B) dark
    - (C) foreshadowing
    - (D) Both A and B
    - (E) Both B and C
  8. The word “despot” (line 71) means
    - (A) terminal
    - (B) arsenal
    - (C) repository
    - (D) outrage
    - (E) slave driver

9. In paragraph 5, it becomes clear that the author thinks the child is
- (A) tyrannical and spoiled
  - (B) sweet and innocent
  - (C) loud and witless
  - (D) loving but foolish
  - (E) amusingly gregarious
10. The word “mind” (line 102) is used to mean
- (A) consider
  - (B) reason
  - (C) take care
  - (D) follow
  - (E) sense
11. Like Passage A, Passage B tells of
- (A) a cook who becomes a child’s nurse
  - (B) a man living as a house servant
  - (C) the early life of a slave
  - (D) inhuman conditions under colonialism
  - (E) a child’s cruelty to a caretaker
12. Unlike the main character in Passage A, the one in Passage B
- (A) seems to enjoy his job
  - (B) takes care of girls and boys
  - (C) does not earn a salary
  - (D) Both A and B
  - (E) Both B and C

**Exercise 3**

William Hazlitt (1778–1830) was an essayist and literary critic known for his studies of the romantic poets and Elizabethan playwrights. This passage is from an essay entitled “On Familiar Style,” first published in 1821.

It is not easy to write a familiar style. Many people mistake a familiar for a vulgar style, and suppose that to write without affectation is to write at random. On the contrary, there is nothing that requires more precision, and, if I may so say, purity of expression, than the style I am speaking of. It utterly rejects not only all unmeaning pomp, but all low, cant phrases, and loose, unconnected, *slipshod* allusions. It is not to take the first word that offers, but the best word in common use; it is not to throw words together in any combinations we please, but to follow and avail ourselves of the true idiom of the language. To write a genuine familiar or truly English style, is to write as any one would speak in common conversation, who had a thorough command and choice of words, or who could discourse with ease, force, and perspicuity, setting aside all pedantic and oratorical flourishes. Or to give another illustration, to write naturally is the same thing in regard to common conversation, as to read naturally is in regard to common speech. It does not follow that it is an easy thing to give the true accent and inflection to the words you utter, because you do not attempt to rise above the level of ordinary life and colloquial speaking. You do not assume indeed the solemnity of the pulpit, or the tone of stage-declamation: neither are you at liberty to gabble on at a venture, without emphasis or discretion, or to resort to vulgar dialect or clownish pronunciation. You must steer a middle course. You are tied down to a given and appropriate articulation, which is determined by the habitual associations between sense and sound, and which you can only hit by entering into the author’s

meaning, as you must find the proper words and style to express yourself by fixing your thoughts on the subject you have to write about. Any one may mouth out a passage with a theatrical cadence, or get upon stilts to tell his thoughts: but to write or speak with propriety and simplicity is a more difficult task. Thus it is easy to affect a pompous style, to use a word twice as big as the thing you wish to express: it is not so easy to pitch upon the very word that exactly fits it. Out of eight or ten words equally common, equally intelligible, with nearly equal pretensions, it is a matter of some nicety and discrimination to pick out the very one, the preferableness of which is scarcely perceptible, but decisive.

1. By “familiar” (line 1), Hazlitt means
  - public
  - accepted
  - informal
  - well-known
  - famous
2. By “purity of expression” (line 7), Hazlitt means
  - sweet face
  - religious speech
  - innocent statements
  - pious manner
  - clear wording
3. The word “cant” (line 9) means
  - tilted
  - inclined
  - sung
  - jargonistic
  - negative
4. Hazlitt compares writing a familiar style to
  - ascending a pulpit
  - wearing an old shoe
  - writing a letter
  - writing in a journal
  - speaking naturally

5. The word “perspicuity” (line 21) means
- (A) clarity
  - (B) stuffiness
  - (C) pedantry
  - (D) insensitivity
  - (E) sweat
6. The word “colloquial” (line 30) means
- (A) oratorical
  - (B) pleasant
  - (C) worldly
  - (D) religious
  - (E) everyday
7. Hazlitt believes that a writer must “steer a middle course” (line 37) between
- (A) familiar and unfamiliar
  - (B) theatics and bombast
  - (C) clowning and sobriety
  - (D) vulgarity and pomposity
  - (E) discrimination and judgment
8. The general tone of this passage is
- (A) disdainful
  - (B) reverent
  - (C) scholarly
  - (D) witty
  - (E) pompous
9. How might you paraphrase Hazlitt’s final sentence?
- (A) Common, everyday words may be pretentious, but it is nice to choose the correct one.
  - (B) Common language is often discriminated against, but a writer should be decisive when choosing it.
  - (C) It hardly matters which word you choose when all your choices have similar meanings and usages.
  - (D) Judgment will help you decide whether to use a common word or one with more pretensions.
  - (E) Choosing the word with the precise shade of meaning you desire is difficult but indispensable.
10. Hazlitt’s main idea seems to be that
- (A) writing in a familiar style is harder than it looks
  - (B) it is easier to write familiarly than vulgarly
  - (C) the common touch should be used only with commoners
  - (D) familiar language is only appropriate on certain occasions
  - (E) an author must be consistent in style and tone

## Exercise 4

*Throughout history, people have found themselves at the mercy of unyielding rulers to whom they have had to beg for mercy. The letters below were written perhaps 1800 years apart, yet each is a heartfelt plea to a man in a position of power.*

### Passage A—from Agrippina to her son, the emperor Nero, responding to charges of treason

Don't you know, my son, the affection all mothers naturally bear their children? Our love is unbounded, incessantly fed by that tenderness unknown to all but ourselves.

- (5) Nothing should be more dear to us than what we have bought with the risk of our lives; nothing more precious than what we have endured such grief and pain to procure. These are so acute and unbearable  
 (10) that if it were not for the vision of a successful birth, which makes us forget our agonies, generation would soon cease.

Do you forget that nine full months I carried you in my womb and nourished you with my blood? How likely is it, then, that I would destroy the dear child who cost me so much anguish to bring into the world? It may be that the just gods were angry at my excessive love of you, and used this way to punish me.

- (15) Unhappy Agrippina! You are suspected of a crime of which nobody could really think you guilty.... What does the title of empress mean to me, if I am accused of a crime that even the basest of women would abhor? Unhappy are those who breathe the air of the court. The wisest of people are not secure from storms in that harbor. There even a calm is dangerous. But why  
 (20) blame the court? Can that be the cause of my being suspected of parricide?...

Tell me, why should I plot against your life? To plunge myself into a worse fate? That's not likely. What hopes could induce me to build upon your downfall? I know that the lust for empire often corrupts the

laws of nature; that justice has no sword to punish those who offend in this way; and that ambition disregards wrong so long as it succeeds in its aim.... Nay, to what deity could I turn for absolution after I had committed so black a deed?...

What difficulties have I not surmounted to crown your brow with laurels? But I insult your gratitude by reminding you of my services. My innocence ought not to defend itself but to rely wholly on your justice.

Farewell

### Passage B—from Elizabeth Barrett Browning to Napoleon III, pleading for mercy for a fellow artist

- (50) Sire,  
 I am only a woman and have no claim on your Majesty's attention except that of the weakest on the strongest. Probably my very name as the wife of an English poet and as named itself a little among English poets, is unknown to your Majesty. I never approached my own sovereign with a petition, nor am skilled in the way of addressing kings. Yet having, through a studious and thoughtful life, grown used to great men (among the Dead at least) I cannot feel entirely at a loss in speaking to the Emperor Napoleon.

And I beseech you to have patience with me while I supplicate you. It is not for myself nor for mine.

- I have been reading with wet eyes and a swelling heart (as many who love and some who hate your Majesty have lately done) a book called the 'Contemplations' of a man who has sinned deeply against you in certain of his political writings, and who expiates rash phrases and unjustifiable statements in exile in Jersey. I have no personal knowledge of this man; I never saw his face; and certainly I do not come now to make his apology. It is indeed pre-

(80) cisely because he cannot be excused, that, I think, he might worthily be forgiven. For this man, whatever else he is not, is a great poet of France, and the Emperor who is the guardian of her other glories should remember him and not leave him out.

(85) Ah sire, what was written on “Napoleon le petit” does not touch your Majesty; but what touches you is, that no historian of the age should have to write hereafter, “While Napoleon the Third reigned Victor Hugo lived in exile.” What touches you is that when your people count gratefully the men of commerce, arms and science secured by you to France, no voice shall murmur, “But where is our poet?” ... What touches you is, that when your own beloved young prince shall come to read these poems (and when you wish him a princely nature, you wish, sire, that such things should move him) he may exult to recall that his imperial father was great enough to overcome this great poet with magnanimity....

(90) I am driven by an irresistible impulse to your Majesty’s feet to ask this grace. It is a woman’s voice, Sire, which dares to utter what many yearn for in silence. I have believed in Napoleon the Third. Passionately loving the democracy, I have understood from the beginning that it was to be served throughout Europe in you and by (95) you. I have trusted you for doing greatly. I will trust you besides for pardoning nobly. You will be Napoleon in this also.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

1. Agrippina’s first two paragraphs (Passage A) appeal to Nero’s
  - (A) remembrance of his youth
  - (B) power as a leader
  - (C) love of women
  - (D) belief in the gods
  - (E) filial feelings

2. “Storms in that harbor” (Passage A, line 28) is a metaphor referring to
  - (A) tempests in teapots
  - (B) political upheavals at court
  - (C) adventurers in government
  - (D) pirates at sea
  - (E) Nero’s early life as a sailor
3. When she says that “ambition disregards wrong” (line 39), Agrippina means that
  - (A) it is right to grasp power
  - (B) excessive ambition is wrong
  - (C) ambitious people commit crimes
  - (D) wickedness comes with rank
  - (E) few kings are kind
4. Agrippina’s final paragraph hints at her
  - (A) desire for the crown
  - (B) dislike of the present queen
  - (C) gratitude toward Nero
  - (D) trust in the gods
  - (E) manipulation of Nero’s career
5. When Browning claims to be “used to great men” (Passage B, lines 60–61), she means that she
  - (A) has studied heroic lives
  - (B) knows a great many kings
  - (C) has been ill-used by her sovereign
  - (D) grew up in a famous house
  - (E) has a famous husband
6. The word “supplicate” (line 65) means
  - (A) astound
  - (B) consume
  - (C) petition
  - (D) render
  - (E) depose
7. Browning suggests the Emperor should forgive Hugo because
  - (A) his crime is not great
  - (B) she knows him personally
  - (C) no one deserves exile
  - (D) he is a great French poet
  - (E) his deed is excusable

8. The word “touch” as it is used throughout paragraph 4, Passage B, means
- (A) caress
  - (B) meet
  - (C) affect
  - (D) move
  - (E) feel
9. Unlike Browning, Agrippina is pleading
- (A) for mercy
  - (B) for her own life
  - (C) for a greater cause
  - (D) Both A and B
  - (E) Both B and C
10. Unlike Agrippina, Browning
- (A) admits her own weakness
  - (B) apologizes
  - (C) denies the crime
  - (D) Both A and B
  - (E) Both B and C