

## READING COMPREHENSION

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### Passage 1

In 1999, Brian and Nerida Egan had to surrender their Darling Downs property in Queensland. They had run a mixed cattle farm for 12 years, but it hadn't rained a drop for the last three and they couldn't afford to continue. The couple walked away with nothing but their cattle dog, Stumpy. "It was soul-destroying to lose everything," says Brian. "There was this 'beast' inside me that had taken over my life. I had no hope and just could not see any future."

At age 55, Brian had twice attempted to take his own life and was diagnosed with severe clinical depression and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), as a result of disturbing experiences he witnessed while on naval service in Indonesia in his early 20s. Depression is one of the most significant human costs of the drought, with research showing higher suicide rates in rural communities, especially among men, due to social isolation and difficulty accessing help. The stigma of mental illness left Brian with only his mother, Hilda, and Nerida to

rely on. He recalls running and hiding in the wardrobe when people came to the front door. "I was just so ashamed of what I had become, I did not want anyone to see me."

Brian was sent to Greenslopes Private Hospital in Brisbane, where he would end up being admitted five times over the next two years. "I was catatonic. I couldn't eat. I couldn't talk or write. I didn't know who I was, or who anyone else was."

The doctors tried many different types of medication and treatment on Brian, but with limited benefits. Finally it was suggested to Brian by a psychologist that maybe the best thing for him to do was to go out and find someone worse off, and help them.

Q1. What was the couple left with after their cattle farm was sold off?

- a. Only their farmhouse.
- b. Only few animals and a hut.
- c. Only their cattle dog.
- d. None of the above.

Ans. c [. The couple walked away with nothing but their cattle dog, Stumpy. ]

Q2. Why according to research are suicide rates higher in rural communities.?

- a. Due to economic worries.
- b. Due to isolation and lack of availability of help.
- c. Due to a closed society and heavy psychological pressure.
- d. Due to the overbearing attitude of friends and family.

Ans. b [research showing higher suicide rates in rural communities, especially among men, due to social isolation and difficulty accessing help.]

Q3. What was the final suggestion given to Brian by a psychologist?

- a. To go out and fight for his livelihood.
- b. To focus on his strengths and love his family.
- c. To try to go into rehabilitation in a new place with new people.
- d. To go out and help people who are suffering more than him.

Ans. d [Finally it was suggested to Brian by a psychologist that maybe the best thing for him to do was to go out and find someone worse off, and help them]

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## **Passage 2**

The average person spends a third of their life asleep so investing in a good mattress and pillows makes sense.

A quality mattress should be replaced every 10 to 12 years, depending on how well it's cared for.

Tip - Sleeping on an old mattress can cause neck, back and postural problems and poses a hygiene risk.

Choosing the best fit

Identical or similar models are often sold under different names so the key to comparing them is knowing the difference between the types and taking time to test them.

To test, lie on the mattress for at least 10 minutes. It should be comfortable in a natural position. If too hard it puts pressure on shoulders and hips, too soft and it can lead to poor posture and pain.

Dr Chris Idzikowski of the Edinburgh Sleep Centre says the surface is the most important factor.

‘The more comfortable you feel the better the chance of a good sleep.’

Reputable stores offer up to six months’ trial period during which the mattress can be returned, but check details before buying.

### Inside a mattress

Innerspring systems have 300 to 800 coils. The construction quality of the coils, not just the number, determines the support and longevity.

Latex is a good choice for allergy sufferers as it inhibits bacteria and fungi and is resistant to dust mites.

Memory foam is high-density foam that reacts to body heat, moulding to the shape of the body.

### The surface material

Padding and ticking most influence price and perceived luxury. Ticking is the outer cover and cheaper mattresses often use flat cotton. Others

have quilted covers of linen, silk, cotton or wool fabric woven with patterns.

Q1. What kind of inner mattress material changes according to the shape of the body as it reacts to body heat?

- a. Sensory foam
- b. Memory foam.
- c. Springy foam.
- d. Brainy foam.

Ans. c [Memory foam is high-density foam that reacts to body heat, moulding to the shape of the body.]

Q2. What is the preference of people who suffer from allergies?

- a. Latex.
- b. Cotton.
- c. Fibre.
- d. Spring.

Ans. a [Latex is a good choice for allergy sufferers as it inhibits bacteria and fungi and is resistant to dust mites.]

Q3.What is the average life for a general good quality mattress ?

- a.2 decades.
- b.10-12 years.
- c.20-30 years.
- d.5-10 years.

Ans. b [

A quality mattress should be replaced every 10 to 12 years, depending on how well it's cared for.]

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### **Passage 3**

Many personal insect repellents contain DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-tolu-amide), which is a mosquito repellent but also a skin irritant as well as a neurotoxin. If you have to use a repellent containing DEET, choose one with minimal levels of the chemical, preferably less than 10 per cent, and use it only when you really need to, for example where mosquito-borne diseases, such as malaria, are prevalent. Avoid repeated use and applying the repellent to broken skin. Be particularly cautious with children.

Look for DEET-free repellents containing herbal essential oils, such as citronella, lavender, lemon grass, pennyroyal and peppermint.You will need to apply these more often and they may not be

as effective as DEET- based types, but they are safer for long-term use.

Many mosquito repellents contain allethrin, a synthetic pyrethroid that is a central nervous system stimulant. Prolonged use should be avoided, especially by children.

Use allethrin-based products only outdoors. Safer alternatives are to burn a citronella candle outdoors and use screens and nets indoors

Q1. Allethrin's prolonged usage is especially damaging to ?

- a. Animals and pets.
- b. Children.
- c. Adults and teenagers.
- d. Old people.

Ans. b [allethrin, a synthetic pyrethroid that is a central nervous system stimulant. Prolonged use should be avoided, especially by children.]

Q2. Which is a better alternative to DEET ?

- a. Sandal wood oil.
- b. Aloe vera oil.



c. Citronella oil .

d. Salmonella oil.

Ans . c [ mentioned in the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph of the passage.]

Q3. Why is the prolonged usage of allethrin in the insect repellents harmful?

a. Because it contains harmful substances.

b. Because it stimulates the central nervous system.

c. Because it causes heart attacks.

d. Because it causes lead poisoning.

Ans. b [

Many mosquito repellents contain allethrin, a synthetic pyrethroid that is a central nervous system stimulant. Prolonged use should be avoided, especially by children.]

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### **Passage 4.**

. Nick, my partner, and Todd went way back. In their early 20s, they'd bonded over a mutual love of outdoor sport, riding mountain bikes, ripping into wild ocean swims, and pushing through

exhausting triathlon courses, finishing drained but exuberant.

Now, a few years shy of 40, Nick was more accustomed to the comfort of a couch than a bike saddle. His running shoes were covered in mould. And his taste for competition had softened into appreciation for family life.

By contrast, Todd's life had continued along the same athletic course. He took corporations all over the globe to trek mountains, ride across exotic countryside, and run marathons around the world.

During their reunion, Nick and Todd's talks intensified and Nick's eyes started flickering with ambition. On the way home he announced, "I'm going to run a marathon."

He had drawn key details from Todd about what to expect. A marathon pushes the human body to such extremes that the heart rate is elevated to maximum for up to five hours. The average runner finishes 2cm shorter than they were when they began the race, as muscles deteriorate. Even Olympians suffer.

In order to complete a 42.2km course he needed "kilometres under his legs". There is no shortcut to achieving this: he would have to train, train and train some more. Nick knew he was 10kg

(OK, maybe 15) above fighting weight. And because Todd had not sugar-coated the reality – freely admitting to use of anti-inflammatories just to finish – he knew that a marathon hurt like hell.

Q1. What at the age of 40 was Nick more used to now?

- a. Running marathons.
- b. Sitting on the couch.
- c. Racing with people.
- d. Swimming in oceans.

Ans. b [ mentioned in the 1<sup>st</sup> line of the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph.]

Q2. What is the supposed to be the approximate reduction in height after a full fledged marathaon?

- a. 1 inch.
- b. 2 inches.
- c. 2 cms.
- d. 2 mm.

Ans. c [The average runner finishes 2cm shorter than they were when they began the race]

Q3. 'His running shoes were covered in mould'...what does this line from the passage signify?

- a. That he had bad quality shoes.
- b. That he had not taken care of this shoes.
- c. That his shoes were kept in a dirty place.
- d. That his shoes were not being used regularly.

Ans. d [this sentence clearly shows lack of use of the shoes...as he was not leading a sporty lifestyle.]

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### **Passage 5**

. It was before dawn in California, and the always-restless Rick Warren was at work on his home computer, exchanging e-mails with some of the 250,000 pastors in his vast network around the world. Suddenly a message from a minister in Colombo, Sri Lanka, flashed up on his screen. "Rick, please pray for us," he wrote on that December day in 2004. "We had a huge earthquake two minutes ago, and I'm sure a tidal wave is coming."

Warren, founder of Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, California, did more than pray. He immediately had his staff contact church leaders in Thailand, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and India with a directive: "Head for high ground. There is a

disaster.” The e-mails arrived before the tsunami hit.

The following Sunday, he stood up at Saddleback and said, “Folks, we need to help these people who have gone through this tidal wave. Please give a little extra.” The donations that morning totalled US\$1.6 million (\$2.3 million), about US\$1 million more than the usual Sunday offering. Warren sent it to the churches in the stricken region; it paid for everything from fishing nets to boat repairs. When Hurricane Katrina drowned New Orleans nine months later, Warren raised \$2.5 million.

Saddleback, a mega-church in the hills of affluent Orange County, is one of the few in the world with the members and the means to manage such generosity. But then, Warren is used to big numbers.

Some 83,000 people worship at Saddleback, choosing from 28 church services on four campuses each week. Warren’s first book – The Purpose Driven Church, published in 1995 and aimed at pastors – has sold a million copies. In 2002 he released The Purpose Driven Life, which sold 30 million, making it one of the best-selling books of all time. He and his wife, Kay, give away 90% of their income to charity, much of it anonymously; in 2004, the last year the figures

were made public, they donated nearly \$20 million.

Q1. Who sent Rick a message in december 2004?

- a.A close friend.
- b.A distant relative.
- c.A minister in Colombo.
- d.A pastor in Orange County.

Ans. c [Suddenly a message from a minister in Colombo, Sri Lanka, flashed up on his screen. "Rick, please pray for us," he wrote on that December day in 2004.]

Q2. What was the name of Warren's first book?

- a.The Purpose Driven Life.
- b.The purpose Driven Church.
- c.The Power of the Church.
- d.The Power of Prayer.

Ans. b[ mentioned in the passage in the last paragraph.]

Q3. Why was Warren used to big numbers?

- a.He was a powerful and rich landlord.
- b.He was a very famous personality.

c. His church is very affluent and he raises big donations from its members; and he himself is an author of best selling books.

d. He is always getting a lot of money because he has made sound investments as he is very smart in the management of his assets.

Ans. c [ mentioned in the last 2 paragraphs of the passage.]

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## **Passage 6**

. "What's wrong?" asked my customer as I covered one eye, then the other, and stared at her in disbelief. "Your head is missing," I said anxiously. I slumped on the stool behind the counter of my fashion boutique and placed my palm over my left eye. Sure enough, there was a large black area at the top of my vision in my right eye.

A phone call to an ophthalmologist's office started the ball rolling and a dye test to look at the retina was performed that afternoon. That night I couldn't sleep with worry, petrified that I might go blind. The eye specialist confirmed that there was damage to the retina and he wasn't sure exactly what the cause was – a virus, perhaps? He stressed that it could happen again

and cautioned me to keep my immune system strong. I was given a dose of antibiotics and told to rest.

That was in 1986. I was 36 years old, married with three children and working full time. While it didn't take long for me to grow accustomed to my vision impairment, the shock of partially losing my sight made me rethink my life, and I left my marriage of 19 years. Moving to northern New South Wales in 1990 gave me the chance to experience living in a small community. Perhaps it was the pressure of a new job, a new relationship, and raising a family that took their toll, but by 1993 the vision in my right eye had become more cloudy and blurry. The specialist asked me if I'd ever been to the Wheat Belt in America, as the scars in my retina were similar to a disease from that area. I hadn't, and so we remained in the dark about what was causing my loss of vision. But I did notice that I was often tired and found it an effort to keep my head upright. I wanted to sleep all the time.

Q1. Why did the author say.. "Your head is missing," I said anxiously'...?

- a. She was confused.
- b. She was not able to see .
- c. She was dreaming.
- d. She was hallucinating.



Ans. b[ mentions in the 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph.]

Q2. What reason did the specialist give for the vision problem that the author had ?

- a. He suspected injury.
- b. He suspected a virus.
- c. He suspected heredity.
- d. He suspected leading a stressful lifestyle.

Ans. b [The eye specialist confirmed that there was damage to the retina and he wasn't sure exactly what the cause was – a virus, perhaps?].

Q3. Why does the author mention that she was petrified?

- a. She was scared of darkness.
- b. She feared that she will become blind.
- c. She was afraid that her family will leave her.
- d. She was not happy with her life and was scared of dying.

Ans. b [That night I couldn't sleep with worry, petrified that I might go blind.]

## **Passage 7**

Let's look at it from the point of view of the onion.

An onion is perfectly polite to us until we start hacking at it with a knife. Alas, the act of cutting enlivens a gas, propanethiol S-oxide, which works in tandem with the enzymes in the onion to unleash a passive sulphur compound found within the onion.

The result: as you cut, the gas moves upwards and, combined with the water in your eyes, creates sulphuric acid.

Your eyes aren't happy, even if you are, and react in the only way they know how when irritated by a foreign substance - they start tearing. Rubbing your eyes with your hands is about the worst way to alleviate the problem, since your hands are likely full of the tear-inducing agent too.

We've heard all kinds of folk remedies for onion tears, ranging from rubbing the onion with lemon to wearing gloves as you cut to donning scuba diving masks while performing surgery. But we're of the old school: no pain, no gain.

Q1. What happens after an onion is cut?

- a. It becomes impolite and angry.
- b. It unleashes a passive sulphur compound.
- c. It emits sulphuric acid.
- d. It hits your eye and makes you cry.

Ans. b [Alas, the act of cutting enlivens a gas, propanethiol S-oxide, which works in tandem with the enzymes in the onion to unleash a passive sulphur compound found within the onion. ]

Q2. What is supposedly a remedy for onion induced crying ?

- a. Wearing gloves while cutting it.
- b. Rubbing the onion with lemon.
- c. Donning a mask while cutting onions.
- d. All of the above.

Ans. d [all the points are mentioned in the last paragraph.]

Q3. What increases the problem if the person is already crying due to the onion ?

- a. Putting eye drops in the eyes.
- b. Rubbing the eyes with your hands.
- c. Wiping the eyes with a handkerchief.

d. Stop cutting onions forever.

Ans. b [. Rubbing your eyes with your hands is about the worst way to alleviate the problem, since your hands are likely full of the tear-inducing agent too.]

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### **Passage 8**

But every once in a while, Moylan reports to a special lab where the air is pressurised and filtered to eliminate any outside odours. There she uses a very different set of tools: her own nose and tongue.

She is not alone. Men and women around the world are using their unusually heightened senses to detect smells, tastes, sounds and images that many ordinary humans don't even know are there. There are not many of these extraordinary people about, but they have senses significantly more acute, discerning or powerful than the norm. They are the supersensors.

Whether due to nature or nurture, supersensors are able to smell scents, taste flavours, hear

sounds, feel sensations and see details that elude the rest of us. Moylan, for example, has a naturally acute sense of taste and smell that she has enhanced through extensive training.

### Special Powers

Whatever their origin, heightened senses can enrich experiences, boost careers and even help save lives. But amplified senses can also be distracting, overwhelming and painful, leaving the supersenser longing for a respite from sensory overload. To the rest of us who don't have such gifts, supersensers' abilities can be confusing and even downright eerie.

Q1. Why are the supersenser's ability confusing to normal people ?

- a.They cannot understand their special ability and hence find these people strange.
- b.They dislike such people to the point of loathing them.
- c.They are opposed to the idea of the existence of such people.
- d.They like such people and want to be friend them.

Ans. a [ the last line of the passage gives the answer.]

Q2. Who are the supersensers ?

- a. People who are very emotional and supersensitive also having a high level of sympathy for others.
- b. They have senses significantly more acute, discerning or powerful than the norm.
- c. They have strong cranial impulses which makes them highly volatile to the extent of being mad.
- d. They are an eerie breed of people and normal humans do not like them.

Ans. b [ There are not many of these extraordinary people about, but they have senses significantly more acute, discerning or powerful than the norm. They are the supersensors.]

Q3. What kind of problems do the supersensors face?

- a. They always have a sensory overload.
- b. People find them to be eerie or strange.
- c. It is sometimes a pain for them to have such heightened ability for sensing.
- d. All of the above.

Ans. d [ mentioned in the last paragraph.]

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## **Passage 9**

**Don't** use passwords or user IDs that include personal information such as your birth date.

**Don't** use your mother's maiden name as a security question. Pick something more obscure, such as your childhood pet's name.

**Don't** leave passwords in plain view – on your monitor, for example.

**Don't** use the same password for multiple sites. If crooks crack your Twitter account, they can access your bank account, too.

**Do** create passwords that are at least eight to 16 characters long, with a mix of capital letters, numbers and symbols. They're harder to crack.

**Do** use random pattern codes to create passwords. For example, pick two computer keys – say, 4 and 7. Type straight down the keyboard from 4 until you reach the bottom (the letter V), then type one character to the left. Then do the same for 7, this time using all caps. You now have a meaningless password that reads 4rfvc7UJMN, but all you have to remember is 47. Or use the first letter of each word in a line from a favourite song or poem.

**Do** change passwords often, about once a month.

**Do** hold your cursor over an unknown link before clicking on it, and look at the bottom of your web browser. It will show where the link is actually taking you to.

**Do** note the wording before the .com, .com.au, .org.au (or similar) part of the URL. It's what counts. So while paypal.com is legitimate, paypal.1234.com is fake.

**Do** look out for links with the @ symbol. Browsers ignore everything to the left of it, so paypal@1234.com is not a PayPal site.

**Do** watch for deliberate misspellings – such as paypol.com – designed to trick you into clicking.

Q1. What kind of a code is harder to crack?

- a. One that is a name of some family member.
- b. One that is a mixture of capital, small alphabets and also of numbers and symbols.
- c. One that is the name of your mother.
- d. One that contains your bank account number and your vehicle number.



Ans. b [**Do** create passwords that are at least eight to 16 characters long, with a mix of capital letters, numbers and symbols. They're harder to crack.]

Q2. What kind of link could be an illegitimate site?

- a. **Do** note the wording before the .com, .com.au, .org.au (or similar) part of the URL. It's what counts. So while paypal.com is legitimate, paypal.1234.com is fake.
- b. **Do** look out for links with the @ symbol. Browsers ignore everything to the left of it, so paypal@1234.com is not a PayPal site.
- c. **Do** watch for deliberate misspellings – such as paypol.com – designed to trick you into clicking.
- d. All of the above.

Ans. d [ all the options are mentioned in the passage.

Q3. Using the first letter of each word in a line from a favourite song or poem, in a password makes it :

- a. Very easy.
- b. Moderately difficult.

- c. Quite difficult.
- d. Very much hackable.

Ans. c [ it is mentioned in the passage as one of the ways to make the password difficult.]

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## **Passage 10**

### **Marilyn Monroe**

For a scene she was shooting for *Some Like it Hot* in 1959, Marilyn Monroe was supposed to enter a room, walk to a dressing table, rummage through the drawers, find a bottle of bourbon and ask for a drink. She messed up the line no fewer than 47 times in a row – still far from the famously forgetful movie star's record of 82 takes.

"On the 46th take," recalled director Billy Wilder, "I told her we had put the line on pieces of paper and they were in a drawer she would open." Unfortunately, "she went to the wrong piece of furniture."

## **Sir John Gielgud**

The distinguished British actor Sir John Gielgud was dining in a restaurant with a playwright when Gielgud spied someone he thought he recognised.

"Did you see that man just coming in?" he asked his companion. "He's the biggest bore in London, second only to Edward Knoblock."

At that moment he remembered that Edward Knoblock was in fact the man sitting across from him. "Not you, of course," Gielgud quickly added. "I mean the other Edward Knoblock."

## **Alan Devlin**

Irish actor Alan Devlin was known for his habit of leaving the stage in a fit of pique in mid-performance. On one such occasion, while appearing in HMS Pinafore at the Dublin Gaiety Theatre in 1987, he looked out at the audience and shouted, "I'm going home! Finish it yourself!"

Q1. What is the passage most likely to be?

- a. a collection of short stories.
- b. A collection of facts.
- c. A collection of diaries.
- d. A collection of most famous goof ups.

Ans. d[ all the stories mentioned have included some funny mistakes committed by people ]

Q2. What idiosyncrasy did Alan Devlin have?

- a. Start doing strange dances on the stage.
- b. Start shouting profanities and being abusive on stage.
- c. Leaving the stage in the middle of a performance.
- d. Singing and mimicking some famous people on stage.

Ans. c [Irish actor Alan Devlin was known for his habit of leaving the stage in a fit of pique in mid-performance.]

Q3. What was the record number of takes which Marilyn Monroe had taken.

- a. 106 takes.
- b. 47 takes.
- c. 88 takes.
- d. 82 takes.

Ans. d [ mentioned in the 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph.]

## **Passage 11**

When Oliver was born, he was such a little thing. He grew into a 45kg dog, and despite his size, didn't have a mean bone in his body. He looked strong and fierce to outsiders, but was gentle, clumsy and lovable with us.

When Oliver's partner-in-crime, Tessa, passed away, he was downcast for a long time. So we decided to buy another dog and got Albert, a little Maltese-cross-Bichon Frise. I was very protective of Albert. As Oliver was so big, I worried he might sit on Albert and squash him.

Eventually we moved to the country, where Oliver and Albert had more freedom. They became the best of friends; I no longer worried about Oliver hurting Albert because he was so gentle and understanding. When we went out, Albert was allowed to come along. This confused Oliver, who couldn't understand why he wasn't allowed to sit in the car, too. Albert was allowed in the house, but because of his size, Oliver was not. He sat on the doorstep and watched from there.

One day we arrived home with Albert sitting in the front seat of the car. I opened the door and in jumped Oliver, who squashed on top of us. We

all had a great laugh, and I'm sure Oliver was embarrassed.

Q1. Why must have Oliver been embarrassed?

- a. He had fallen and everyone was laughing.
- b. Nobody was taking him in the car.
- c. He was a big dog and people made fun of him.
- d. He had jumped inside the car and had squashed everyone sitting inside, due to which they started laughing.

Ans. d [I opened the door and in jumped Oliver, who squashed on top of us. We all had a great laugh, and I'm sure Oliver was embarrassed.]

Q2. Who was Oliver's original partner?

- a. His own siblings.
- b. Tessa.
- c. Albert.
- d. His master.

Ans. b. [ Tessa was his first partner]

Q3. What confused Oliver sometimes?

- a. That Albert was allowed to go in the car and he was not allowed.
- b. That Albert was such a tiny dog, while he himself was a big dog.
- c. That where was Tessa and why did his master get Albert.
- d. That why was he so huge, because of which everyone thought that he was ferocious.

Ans. a. [ When we went out, Albert was allowed to come along. This confused Oliver, who couldn't understand why he wasn't allowed to sit in the car, too. ]