
SAMPLE READING TEST

Read the following passages. Choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text.

READING PASSAGE 1

On any collecting trip, obtaining the animals is, as a rule, the simplest part of the job. As soon as the local people discover that you are willing to buy live wild creatures, the stuff comes pouring in; ninety per cent is, of course, the commoner types, but they do bring an occasional rarity. If you want the really rare stuff, you generally have to go out and find it yourself, but while you are devoting your time to this you can be sure that all the common local animals will be brought in to you. So one might also say that getting the animals is easy: the really hard part is keeping them once you have got them.

The chief difficulty you have when you have got a newly caught animal is not so much the shock it might be suffering, but the fact that being caught forces it to exist close to a creature it regards as an enemy of the worst possible sort: yourself. On many occasions an animal may take beautifully to being in a cage but getting used to the idea of living with people is another matter. This is the difficulty you can only deal with by patience and kindness. For month after month an animal may try to bite you every time you approach its cage, until you despair of ever making a favourable impression on it. Then, one day, sometimes without any preliminary warning, it will trot forward and take food from your hand, or allow you to tickle it behind the ears. At such moments you feel that all the waiting in the world was worthwhile.

Feeding, of course, is one of your main problems. Not only must you have a fairly extensive knowledge of what each animal eats in the wild state, but you have to work out something else when the natural food is unavailable, and then teach your animal to eat it. You also have to provide for their individual likes and dislikes, which vary enormously. I have known a rat which, refusing all normal rat food - fruit, bread, vegetables - lived for three days on an exclusive diet of spaghetti. I have had a group of five monkeys, of the same age and types, who displayed the oddest individual characteristics. Out of the five, two loved hard-boiled eggs, while the other three were frightened of the strange white shapes and would not touch them, actually screaming in fear if you put such a terrifying object as a hard-boiled egg into their cage. These five monkeys all adored oranges but, whereas four would carefully peel their fruit and throw away the skin, the fifth would peel his orange equally carefully and then throw away the orange and eat the peel. When you have a collection of several hundred creatures all displaying such curious characteristics, you are sometimes driven mad in your efforts to satisfy their desires, and so keep them healthy and happy.

But of all the irritating tasks that you have to undertake during a collecting trip, bringing the baby animals up by hand is undoubtedly the worst. To begin with, they are generally stupid over

taking a bottle and there is nothing quite so unattractive as struggling with a baby animal in a sea of warm milk. And then they have to be kept warm, especially at night, and this means (unless you take them to bed with you, which is often the answer) you have to get up several times during the night to refill hot-water bottles. After a hard day's work, to drag yourself out of bed at three in the morning to see to hot-water bottles is an occupation that soon loses its charm.

1. What does the writer say about getting hold of animals?

- A. The best solution is to collect most of them yourself.
- B. Dealing with local collectors takes a lot of time.
- C. Collecting large numbers of animals is usually no problem.
- D. Local people may not understand how rare some animals are.

2. What is the main problem with an animal that has just been caught?

- A. It is frightened to be near humans.
- B. It has been badly shocked by its experience.
- C. It does not like being with other animals.
- D. It will try to break out of its cage.

3. How does the writer treat new animals in his collection?

- A. He keeps away from those that bite.
- B. He tries to build up a relationship with them.
- C. He feeds them by hand every day.
- D. He keeps them separate for several months.

4. How does the writer make sure the animals have a good diet?

- A. He collects food for them from their natural home.
- B. He gives them a variety of fruit, bread and vegetables.
- C. He mixes food they dislike in with their favourites.
- D. He finds alternatives to their natural food if necessary.

5. What do we learn about the five monkeys?

- A. Some of them did not want eggs in their cage.
- B. One of them did not know how to peel an orange.
- C. Some of them were too frightened to eat anything.
- D. One of them threw his orange at the others.

6. The writer says that with a large collection of animal, it is _____.

- A. impossible to keep them all in cages.
- B. a problem to control their natural curiosity.
- C. crazy to expect them all to be healthy.
- D. hard work to give each one what it wants.

7. What problem does the writer have at night?

- A. He has to work with the baby animals until 3 a.m.
- B. He keeps the baby animals' cages in his bedroom.
- C. He has to keep getting up to look after the babies.
- D. The babies have to be given regular warm drinks.

READING PASSAGE 2

The French Quarter

The French Quarter, also known as the *Vieux Carre* and *Barrio Frances*, is the oldest neighborhood in the city of New Orleans. The influences from a number of different cultures can be **spotted** in it.

The city of New Orleans was first colonized by the French. After New Orleans was founded in 1718 by Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville, the city developed around a walled town, which is today called the French Quarter. The plan of the French Quarter was created by the French in the eighteenth century. It shows the formal organization that was popular in France at the time. Though very few buildings that are purely French in design remain, the overall design of the area is completely French.

Spain took possession of New Orleans from France in 1762. During the period that Spain was in control of New Orleans, there were Spanish influences in the architecture of the French Quarter. Spanish-style courtyards, which were full of plants and flowers, were added to houses, and wrought iron was used to decorate the houses in the Spanish style of the time.

Another influence on the architecture of New Orleans came from the West Indies. Wealthy planters from the West Indies began opening houses in the French Quarter of New Orleans in the latter part of the eighteenth century. **The weather in the West Indies is very hot**, and houses in the West Indies were built in ways that would help keep **them** cool. Planters who came to the French Quarter from the West Indies influenced the architecture of the French Quarter by making their houses there more able to keep the people living in them cool. Two ways that planters from the West Indies influenced houses in the French Quarter to make them cooler in the heat was to build ground floors out of stone and to add wide **verandas**, or covered porches, on second stories.

As with other parts of the city developed before the late 19th century, and on higher land predating New Orleans' levee systems, the French Quarter remained substantially dry following Hurricane Katrina. **[A]** Its elevation is five feet (1.5 m) above sea level. **[B]** Some streets had minor flooding, and several buildings suffered significant wind damage. **[C]** In addition, the Quarter largely escaped the looting and violence that occurred after the storm; nearly all of the antique shops and art galleries in the French Quarter, for example, were untouched. **[D]** The district as a whole has been designated as a National Historic Landmark, with numerous contributing buildings that are separately deemed significant. It is a prime tourist destination in the city, as well as attracting local residents.

1. It can be inferred from paragraph 1 that the French Quarter _____.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| A. is located outside of New Orleans | B. is not built in a single style |
| C. was built only recently | D. has a single strong culture |

2. The word "spotted" in paragraph 1 can best be replaced by _____.

- A. seen B. circled C. taken D. interested

3. According to paragraph 2, it is NOT true that _____.

- A. New Orleans was first colonized in the eighteenth century
B. the French planned the area called the French Quarter
C. the French Quarter was originally a walled town
D. many buildings in the French Quarter today are French in design

4. It is stated in paragraph 3 that Spain _____.

- A. gave New Orleans to France in 1762
B. took possession of France in the eighteenth century
C. gave France to New Orleans in 1762
D. got New Orleans from France in the eighteenth century

5. A home in Spain in the late eighteenth century would most likely _____.

- A. have French-style architecture B. be located in a courtyard
C. be made of wrought iron D. have a courtyard full of flowers

6. Why does the author say that "The weather in the West Indies is very hot" in paragraph 4?

- A. Because most of the people living in the French Quarter had to move to the West Indies
B. Because the style of houses built for the weather of the West Indies was used in the French Quarter
C. Because the weather in the West Indies is very different from the weather in the French Quarter
D. Because the French Quarter is located in the West Indies

7. The word "them" in paragraph 4 refers to _____.

- A. planters B. West Indies C. houses D. people

8. Why does the author mention the West Indies in paragraph 4?

- A. To suggest that the weather in New Orleans is similar to that in West Indies
B. To indicate that New Orleans was founded by West Indies planters
C. To explain how they influenced the architecture of the French Quarter
D. To argue that the Spanish influence on the French Quarter is not as strong as that of the West Indies

9. The word "verandas" in paragraph 4 most nearly means _____.

- A. floors B. stones C. porches D. stories

10. In which space (marked [A], [B], [C] and [D] in the passage) will the following sentence fit?

Most of the major landmarks suffered only minor damage.

READING PASSAGE 3

Take me out to the Ballpark

Baseball, hot dogs, apple pie... you just can't get more American than that! Frank Bell gives us a look at baseball, no longer just America's favourite sport!

Baseball is sometimes called a national pastime in America because it is a much loved national sport. Of course, baseball is not limited to the USA. It has played for many years in the countries of South America and is very popular in Japan. Europe is another matter, not many baseball teams exist in Europe today. That, however, is slowly changing. Since baseball is an Olympic sport, more and more countries are putting together teams and joining the game! **[A]**

Going to baseball games is a way of life for many fans. They sit in the stands on hot and sunny spring and summer days, eat hot dogs or popcorn, sip cola or lemonade and enjoy the game. Adults and children alike attend games, and it's a sport that everyone seems to love. Baseball is such a part of American life that nearly everyone's favourite childhood memory includes a day at the ballpark. When and where did the game of baseball start? Well, people have been playing games with a stick and a ball for hundreds of years! Modern baseball, however, about 150 years ago in New York, USA and has been a popular sport ever since. It has changed a little bit over the years but the basic game remains the same.

Baseball is played with a bat, which a stick about 100 cm long is made of metal or wood, and a small hard ball. Each player also wears one heavy leather glove to catch the ball. Baseball gear usually consists of a lightweight shirt and trousers that come down just past the knees. **[B]**

Baseball is played on a special outdoor field which has two parts, the infield and the outfield. In the infield is an area shaped like a diamond that indicates the boundaries of the playing area. On the diamond, there are also the three bases that the players must run over to score. The outfield is an open grassy area where players wait to catch balls that are hit by other players.

The game of baseball is divided into nine parts, called innings. During an inning, each of the two teams takes its turn to bat, which means trying to hit the ball that is thrown to them by the pitcher of the other team. After the ball is hit, the player tries to run and touch three different bases before running to home base. The team not batting tries to catch the balls that are hit and stop the runners before they score. The team that scores the most runs by the end of the ninth inning wins. It's a game that can go very slowly for a while then suddenly have a series of fast and exciting moves! **[C]**

Fans love baseball games! The stands are usually filled for the games. People enjoy a day at the ballpark cheering on their favourite team and relaxing in the summer sun. So what are you waiting for? Put on your baseball cap and give it a try! **[D]**

1. The writer says that baseball

- A. is played only in America. B. is not popular in countries like Japan.
C. started in South America. D. is becoming more popular all over the world.

2. According to the text, baseball is played in more and more countries because ...

- A. it is an exciting game. B. it is included in the Olympic Games.
C. many American people live there. D. it is easy to play.

3. Which sentence isn't true about baseball?

- A. It was first played during the 1850s. B. It is an Olympic sport.
C. The rules have changed quite a lot over the years. D. It started in New York.

4. Which piece of equipment is not mentioned in the text?

- A. bat B. ball C. glove D. mask

5. In which space (marked [A], [B], [C] and [D] in the passage) will the following sentence fit?

Players wear shoes with spikes to help them run, just as football players do, and a baseball cap, which is something everyone is familiar with!

6. What is the baseball field like?

- A. It has an infield, an outfield and a middle field.
B. There are three diamonds on the ground.
C. There are three bases on the diamond.
D. It is usually in an indoor stadium.

7. The game is divided into ...

- A. two halves. B. nine innings. C. three bases. D. an infield and an outfield.

8. The object of the game is to ...

- A. catch as many balls as you can. B. hit the ball the farthest.
C. score the most runs. D. bat as often as you can.

9. What is true about a baseball match?

- A. It's slow.
B. It often takes place on hot summer days.
C. Spectators are not allowed to bring foods to the ballpark.
D. The speed of the match may change suddenly.

10. According to the text, most American people have ...

- A. childhood memory at a ballpark.
B. a baseball gear.
C. experience of participating in at least a baseball inning.
D. all of them

VSTEP B1 - Reading handout 5

KEY

Part 1

1. C 2. A 3. B 4. D 5. A 6. D 7. D

Part 2

1. B 2. A 3. D 4. D 5. D 6. B 7. C 8. C 9. C 10. C

Part 3.

1. D 2. B 3. C 4. D 5. B 6. C 7. B 8. C 9. D 10. A