Historically, a cornerstone of classical empiricism has been the notion that every true generalization must be confirmable by specific observations. In classical empiricism, the truth of "All balls are red," for example, is assessed by inspecting balls; any observation of a non red ball refutes unequivocally the proposed generalization.

For W. V. O. Quine, however, this constitutes an overly "narrow" conception of empiricism. "All balls are red," he maintains, forms one strand within an entire web of statements (our knowledge); individual observations can be referred only to this web as a whole. As new observations are collected, he explains, they must be integrated into the web. Problems occur only if a contradiction develops between a new observation, say, "That ball is blue," and the preexisting statements. In that case, he argues, any statement or combination of statements (not merely the "offending" generalization, as in classical empiricism) can be altered to achieve the fundamental requirement, a system free of contradictions, even if, in some cases, the alteration consists of labeling the new observation a "hallucination."

1. The author of the passage is primarily concerned with presenting

(A) criticisms of Quine's views on the proper conceptualization of empiricism

(B) evidence to support Quine's claims about the problems inherent in classical empiricism

(C) an account of Quine's counterproposal to one of the traditional assumptions of classical empiricism

(D) an overview of classical empiricism and its contributions to Quine's alternate understanding of empiricism

(E) a history of classical empiricism and Quine's reservations about it

2. According to Quine's conception of empiricism, if a new observation were to contradict some statement already within our system of knowledge, which of the following would be true?

(A) The new observation would be rejected as untrue.

(B) Both the observation and the statement in our system that it contradicted would be discarded.

(C) New observations would be added to our web of statements in order to expand our system of knowledge.

(D) The observation or some part of our web of statements would need to be adjusted to resolve the contradiction.

(E) An entirely new field of knowledge would be created.

3. As described in the passage, Quine's specific argument against classical empiricism would be most strengthened if he did which of the following?

(A) Provided evidence that many observations are actually hallucinations.

(B) Explained why new observations often invalidate preexisting generalizations.

(C) Challenged the mechanism by which specific generalizations are derived from collections of particular observations.

(D) Mentioned other critics of classical empiricism and the substance of their approaches.

(E) Gave an example of a specific generalization that has not been invalidated despite a contrary observation.

For the following question consider each of the choices separately and select all that apply.

4. It can be inferred from the passage that Quine considers classical empiricism to be "overly 'narrow' " (line 5) for which of the following reasons?

(A) Classical empiricism requires that our system of generalizations be free of contradictions.

(B) Classical empiricism demands that in the case of a contradiction between an individual observation and a generalization, the generalization must be abandoned.

(C) Classical empiricism asserts that every observation will either confirm an existing generalization or initiate a new generalization.