

SECTION 4
Verbal Reasoning
Time—35 minutes
25 Questions

For questions 1 to 8, select one entry for each blank from the corresponding column of choices. Fill all blanks in the way that best completes the text.

1. The unexplained digressions into the finer points of quantum electrodynamics are so _____ that even readers with a physics degree would be wise to keep a textbook handy to make sense of them.

(A) uninteresting
(B) controversial
(C) unsophisticated
(D) frustrating
(E) humorless

2. The belief that politicians might become _____ after their election to office led to the appointment of ethics officers at various levels of government.

(A) scrupulous
(B) entrenched
(C) venal
(D) puzzled
(E) artificial

3. Even the charisma and technical prowess of two fine actors are not _____ the task of fully invigorating a gray domestic drama with a tired tale to tell.

(A) required for
(B) interested in
(C) preferred for
(D) adequate to
(E) inferior to

4. There may be a threshold below which blood pressure reductions become _____ given that a long-running study showed no decreased heart risk for drops in blood pressure below a certain point.

(A) worthwhile
(B) indiscernible
(C) arduous
(D) significant
(E) superfluous

5. Unlike the problems in recent financial scandals, issues raised by the regulators in this case appear largely to pertain to unwieldy accounting rules that are open to widely divergent interpretations—not to (i) _____ transactions designed to (ii) _____ corporate malfeasance.

Blank (i)

(A) sham
(B) unpremeditated
(C) justifiable

Blank (ii)

(D) cloak
(E) ameliorate
(F) illuminate

6. Everyone has routines that govern their work. The myth is that artists are somehow different, that they reject (i) _____, but of course that's not true: most artists work as the rest of us do, (ii) _____, day by day, according to their own customs.

Blank (i)

(A) latitude
(B) habit
(C) materialism

Blank (ii)

(D) impetuously
(E) ploddingly
(F) sporadically

7. Repression of painful memories is sometimes called “willed forgetting.” Yet true forgetting is (i) _____ than the phenomenon of repressed memory. In spite of the effort that it (ii) _____, repressing unwanted memories is less (iii) _____ than truly forgetting them, for repressed memories are prone to come back.

Blank (i)

(A) less controlled
(B) different in its effect
(C) far more common

Blank (ii)

(D) eases
(E) conveys
(F) entails

Blank (iii)

(G) permanent
(H) arduous
(I) immediate

8. Rather than viewing the Massachusetts Bay Colony's antinomian controversy as the inevitable (i) _____ of the intransigent opposing forces of radical and (ii) _____ beliefs, male and female piety, (iii) _____ and secular power, and the like, as other critics have, Winship argues that the crisis was not “fixed and structural.”

Blank (i)

(A) dissolution
(B) melding
(C) collision

Blank (ii)

(D) revolutionary
(E) orthodox
(F) questionable

Blank (iii)

(G) clerical
(H) civil
(I) cerebral

For each of questions 9 to 14, select one answer choice unless otherwise instructed.

Questions 9 to 12 are based on the following reading passage.

Until recently, many anthropologists assumed that the environment of what is now the southwestern United States shaped the social history and culture of the region's indigenous peoples. Building on this assumption, archaeologists asserted that adverse environmental conditions and droughts were responsible for the disappearances and migrations of southwestern populations from many sites they once inhabited.

However, such deterministic arguments fail to acknowledge that local environmental variability in the Southwest makes generalizing about that environment difficult. To examine the relationship between environmental variation and sociocultural change in the Western Pueblo region of central Arizona, which indigenous tribes have occupied continuously for at least 800 years, a research team recently reconstructed the climatic, vegetational, and erosional cycles of past centuries. The researchers found it impossible to provide a single, generally applicable characterization of environmental conditions for the region. Rather, they found that local areas experienced different patterns of rainfall, wind, and erosion, and that such conditions had prevailed in the Southwest for the last 1,400 years. Rainfall, for example, varied within and between local valley systems, so that even adjacent agricultural fields can produce significantly different yields.

The researchers characterized episodes of variation in southwestern environments by frequency: low-frequency environmental processes occur in cycles longer than one human generation, which generally is considered to last about 25 years, and high-frequency processes have shorter cycles. The researchers pointed out that low-frequency processes, such as fluctuations in stream flow and groundwater levels, would not usually be apparent to human populations. In contrast, high-frequency fluctuations such as seasonal temperature variations are observable and somewhat predictable, so that groups could have adapted their behaviors accordingly. When the researchers compared sequences of sociocultural change in the Western Pueblo region with episodes of low- and high-frequency environmental variation, however, they found no simple correlation between environmental process and sociocultural change or persistence.

Although early Pueblo peoples did protect themselves against environmental risk and uncertainty, they responded variously on different occasions to similar patterns of high-frequency climatic and environmental change. The researchers identified seven major adaptive responses, including increased mobility, relocation of permanent settlements, changes in subsistence foods, and reliance on trade with other groups. These findings suggest that groups' adaptive choices depended on cultural and social as well as environmental factors and were flexible strategies rather than uncomplicated reactions to environmental change. Environmental conditions mattered, but they were rarely, if ever, sufficient to account for sociocultural persistence and change. Group size and composition, culture, contact with other groups, and individual choices and actions were—barring catastrophes such as floods or earthquakes—more significant for a population's survival than were climate and environment.

9. The passage is primarily concerned with
- (A) explaining why certain research findings have created controversy
 - (B) pointing out the flaws in a research methodology and suggesting a different approach
 - (C) presenting evidence to challenge an explanation and offering an alternative explanation
 - (D) elucidating the means by which certain groups have adapted to their environment
 - (E) defending a long-held interpretation by presenting new research findings
10. Which of the following findings would most strongly support the assertion made by the archaeologists mentioned in line 3?
- (A) A population remained in a certain region at least a century after erosion wore away much of the topsoil that sustained grass for their grazing animals.
 - (B) The range of a certain group's agricultural activity increased over a century of gradual decrease in annual rainfall.
 - (C) As winters grew increasingly mild in a certain region, the nomadic residents of the region continued to move between their summer and winter encampments.
 - (D) An agricultural population began to trade for supplies of a grain instead of producing the grain in its own fields as it had in the past.
 - (E) A half century of drought and falling groundwater levels caused a certain population to abandon their settlements along a riverbank.
11. The fact that "adjacent agricultural fields can produce significantly different yields" (lines 16–17) is offered as evidence of the
- (A) unpredictability of the climate and environment of the southwestern United States
 - (B) difficulty of producing a consistent food supply for a large population in the Western Pueblo region
 - (C) lack of water and land suitable for cultivation in central Arizona
 - (D) local climatic variation in the environment of the southwestern United States
 - (E) high-frequency environmental processes at work in the southwestern United States

12. It can be inferred from the passage that which of the following activities is NOT an example of a population responding to high-frequency environmental processes?
- (A) Developing watertight jars in which to collect and store water during the rainy season
 - (B) Building multistory dwellings in low-lying areas to avoid the flash flooding that occurs each summer
 - (C) Moving a village because groundwater levels have changed over the last generation
 - (D) Trading with other groups for furs from which to make winter clothes
 - (E) Moving one's herds of grazing animals each year between summer and winter pastures

Questions 13 and 14 are based on the following reading passage.

Arctic sea ice comes in two varieties. Seasonal ice forms in winter and then melts in summer, while perennial ice persists year-round. To the untrained eye, all sea ice looks similar, but by licking it, one can estimate how long a particular piece has been floating around. When ice begins to form in seawater, it forces out salt, which has no place in the crystal structure. As the ice gets thicker, the rejected salt collects in tiny pockets of brine too highly concentrated to freeze. A piece of first-year ice will taste salty. Eventually, if the ice survives, these pockets of brine drain out through fine, veinlike channels, and the ice becomes fresher; multiyear ice can even be melted and drunk.

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

13. The passage mentions which of the following as being a characteristic of seasonal ice?
- (A) It is similar in appearance to perennial ice.
 - (B) It is typically filled with fine, veinlike channels.
 - (C) It tastes saltier than perennial ice.
14. In the context in which it appears, "fine" (line 7) most nearly means
- (A) acceptable
 - (B) elegant
 - (C) precise
 - (D) pure
 - (E) small

For questions 15 to 18, select the two answer choices that, when used to complete the sentence, fit the meaning of the sentence as a whole and produce completed sentences that are alike in meaning.

15. It would have been disingenuous of the candidate to appear _____ when her opponent won the election, but she congratulated the victor nonetheless.
- ☐ A gracious
 - ☐ B ecstatic
 - ☐ C crestfallen
 - ☐ D indifferent
 - ☐ E euphoric
 - ☐ F disgruntled
16. As market forces penetrate firms and bid up the value of attributes of labor that are more measurable than is the knowledge born of experience, it can be expected that trends in wages will not _____ those whose main value lies in such experiential knowledge.
- ☐ A favor
 - ☐ B aid
 - ☐ C affect
 - ☐ D forsake
 - ☐ E betray
 - ☐ F differentiate
17. The point we might still take from the First World War is the old one that wars are always, as one historian aptly put it, _____: they produce unforeseeable results.
- ☐ A unsurprising
 - ☐ B astounding
 - ☐ C conventional
 - ☐ D ruinous
 - ☐ E stunning
 - ☐ F devastating
18. This is the kind of movie—stuffed with intimations of faraway strife and people in suits talking frantically on cell phones and walkie-talkies—that is conventionally described as a political thriller, but the film is as apolitical as it is _____.
- ☐ A intense
 - ☐ B unprecedented
 - ☐ C subtle
 - ☐ D humdrum
 - ☐ E refined
 - ☐ F dull

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For each of questions 19 to 25, select one answer choice unless otherwise instructed.

Questions 19 and 20 are based on the following reading passage.

Historians credit repeated locust invasions in the nineteenth century with reshaping United States agriculture west of the Mississippi River. Admonished by government entomologists, farmers began to diversify. Wheat had come to nearly monopolize the region, but it was particularly vulnerable to the locusts. In 1873, just before the locusts' most withering offensive, nearly two-thirds of Minnesota farmland was producing wheat; by the invasions' last year, that fraction had dropped to less than one-sixth. Farmers learned that peas and beans were far less vulnerable to the insects, and corn was a more robust grain than wheat. In addition to planting alternative crops, many farmers turned to dairy and beef production. Although pastures were often damaged by the locusts, these lands were almost always left in better shape than the crops were.

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

19. According to the passage, before the recommendations by the government entomologists, which of the following was true about farming west of the Mississippi River?
- ☐ A Farmers focused primarily on growing wheat.
 - ☐ B Peas and beans had not yet been planted in the region.
 - ☐ C A relatively small portion of farmland was devoted to crops other than wheat.
20. In the context in which it appears, "robust" (line 8) most nearly means
- ☐ A crude
 - ☐ B demanding
 - ☐ C productive
 - ☐ D vigorous
 - ☐ E rich

Question 21 is based on the following reading passage.

In 1998 the United States Department of Transportation received nearly 10,000 consumer complaints about airlines; in 1999 it received over 20,000. Moreover, the number of complaints per 100,000 passengers also more than doubled. In both years the vast majority of complaints concerned flight delays, cancellations, mishandled baggage, and customer service. Clearly, therefore, despite the United States airline industry's serious efforts to improve performance in these areas, passenger dissatisfaction with airline service increased significantly in 1999.

21. Which of the following, if true, most seriously weakens the argument?

- (A) Although the percentage of flights that arrived on time dropped slightly overall, from 77 percent in 1998 to 76 percent in 1999, some United States airlines' 1999 on-time rate was actually better than their 1998 on-time rate.
- (B) The number of passengers flying on United States airlines was significantly higher in 1999 than in 1998.
- (C) Fewer bags per 1,000 passengers flying on United States airlines were lost or delayed in 1999 than in 1998.
- (D) The appearance in 1999 of many new Internet sites that relay complaints directly to the Department of Transportation has made filing a complaint about airlines much easier for consumers than ever before.
- (E) Although the number of consumer complaints increased for every major United States airline in 1999, for some airlines the extent of the increase was substantial, whereas for others it was extremely small.

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Questions 22 to 24 are based on the following reading passage.

Nineteenth-century architect Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc contended that Paris's Notre-Dame cathedral, built primarily in the late twelfth century, was supported from the very beginning by a system of flying buttresses—a series of exterior arches (flyers) and their supports (buttresses)—which permitted the construction of taller vaulted buildings with slimmer walls and interior supports than had been possible previously. Other commentators insist, however, that Notre-Dame did not have flying buttresses until the thirteenth or fourteenth century, when they were added to update the building aesthetically and correct its structural flaws. Although post-twelfth-century modifications and renovations complicate efforts to resolve this controversy—all pre-fifteenth-century flyers have been replaced, and the buttresses have been rebuilt and/or resurfaced—it is nevertheless possible to tell that both the nave and the choir, the church's two major parts, have always had flying buttresses. It is clear, now that nineteenth-century paint and plaster have been removed, that the nave's lower buttresses date from the twelfth century. Moreover, the choir's lower flyers have chevron (zigzag) decoration. Chevron decoration, which was characteristic of the second half of the twelfth century and was out of favor by the fourteenth century, is entirely absent from modifications to the building that can be dated with confidence to the thirteenth century.

22. The passage is primarily concerned with
- (A) tracing the development of a controversy
 - (B) discussing obstacles to resolving a controversy
 - (C) arguing in support of one side in a controversy
 - (D) analyzing the assumptions underlying the claims made in a controversy
 - (E) explaining why evidence relevant to a controversy has been overlooked
23. The claim of the "other commentators" (line 6) suggests that they believe which of the following about Notre-Dame?
- (A) It was the inspiration for many vaulted cathedrals built in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.
 - (B) Its design flaws were not apparent until flying buttresses were added in the thirteenth or fourteenth century.
 - (C) Its flying buttresses are embellished with decoration characteristic of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.
 - (D) It had been modified in some respects before flying buttresses were added in the thirteenth or fourteenth century.
 - (E) It was originally constructed in an architectural style that was considered outmoded by the thirteenth or fourteenth century.

24. The author's argument concerning Notre-Dame's flying buttresses depends on which of the following assumptions about the choir's lower flyers?
- (A) They accurately reproduce the decoration on the choir's original lower flyers.
 - (B) They have a type of decoration used exclusively for exterior surfaces.
 - (C) They were the models for the choir's original upper flyers.
 - (D) They were the models for the nave's original lower flyers.
 - (E) They were constructed after the nave's flyers were constructed.

Question 25 is based on the following reading passage.

The average temperature of the lobster-rich waters off the coast of Foerkland has been increasing for some years. In warmer water, lobsters grow faster. In particular, lobster larvae take less time to reach the size at which they are no longer vulnerable to predation by young cod, the chief threat to their survival. Consequently, the survival rate of lobster larvae must be going up, and the lobster population in Foerkland's coastal waters is bound to increase.

25. Which of the following, if true, most seriously weakens the argument?
- (A) There are indications that in recent years the fishing fleet operating off the coast of Foerkland has been taking cod at an unsustainably high rate.
 - (B) The increase in water temperatures off Foerkland has not been as pronounced as the increase in average soil temperatures in Foerkland.
 - (C) Because of their speeded-up growth, lobsters now get large enough to be legal catch before they reach reproductive maturity.
 - (D) Even though lobsters grow faster in warmer waters, warmer waters have no effect on the maximum size to which a lobster can eventually grow.
 - (E) Cod are a cold-water species, and the increasing water temperatures have caused a northward shift in Foerkland's cod population.

STOP. This is the end of Section 4.