

UNIT VI

READING COMPREHENSION

Reading comprehension is the process of understanding the meaning from a text written. Vocabulary and text together make up the process of reading comprehension. To understand the text written in the passage the reader must understand the vocabulary first. The reader can use their prior understanding of vocabulary, but they also have to learn new words.

There are two types of questions asked in reading comprehension:

Referential

In this type of comprehension, the understanding of information like the meaning of words, the context of writing, the sequence of events, characters in the story, and factual data are clearly stated. Readers can easily find the information and ideas which are explicitly stated in the text. If the answer to the question is directly spotted in the passage then it is a referential question.

Example

Autumn is the season that falls between summer and winter. There are many changes that occur at the beginning of the season. Days become shorter, leaves turn red, yellow, and orange. Sunlight is very essential for trees to keep their leaves green. Animals start storing their food to last through the long winter months.

Question

Autumn occurs between summer and which another season? Here, the answer is directly given in the passage.

Inferential

In this type of comprehension, the reader has to determine the actual meaning of the text written. In inferential comprehension, readers require to combine ideas, interpret and evaluate information, identify tone and voice, and draw conclusions. If the answer is not directly spotted in the passage then it is an inferential question.

Example

Autumn is the season that falls between summer and winter. There are many changes that occur at the beginning of the season. Days become shorter, leaves turn red, yellow, and orange. Sunlight is very essential for trees to keep their leaves green. Animals start storing their food to last through the long winter months.

Question

What is the main purpose of the passage? Here, the reader has to draw a conclusion according to his understanding.

There are some repeated questions asked in almost every reading comprehension passage such as:

- What is the author's purpose for writing the passage?
- Summarize the main idea of the passage.
- Draw a conclusion

Therefore, readers should develop a habit of understanding these repeated questions thoroughly which will help them in understanding the entire passage quickly.

Tips and tricks to solve Reading Comprehension

What is WPM (Word per Minute)

It is a measure of words processed per minute, commonly used to measure typing speed and reading speed. Average adult readers read around 200 – 300 wpm. This is the most crucial factor while solving reading comprehension.

How to increase WPM

When the reader looks at a word or several words while reading a passage, it is called a “fixation”. When the reader moves his/her eyes to read the next word or group of words, it is called a “saccade”. Fixation is a point between two saccades. It is repeated once or twice, to comprehend the phrase. When all these fixations and saccades and comprehension pauses are added together one ends up reading between 200 and 300 words per minute.

- **Role of Eye Span using eye span for quick reading**

“Eye-span” is the number of letters or symbols the reader can read in a single fixation. The easiest way to widen your eye span is to stop looking at a single word at a time instead of look at chunks of words. Reading more words during a single fixation or pause increases the reading ability of the reader and allows readers to finish the reading material faster.

- **Side Effects of Lip Reading**

Lip reading means reading something with only lip movement and not make a sound while reading. Lip reading limits the speed of reading as your eye span is limited to the word you are reading. Good readers also twitch their lips subconsciously while reading which slows their speed of reading.

- **Side Effects of Underlining/ Using Fingers**

Underlining or using fingers while reading can get in the way of reading. Using fingers while reading draws false illusions that the reader is reading fast, but in reality, they are limiting their speed. It is because the reader’s eyes only see the word that the reader’s finger is pointing to and it may hamper the process of making connections and finding conclusions.

- **Sign Post Words**

At school students were taught to pay special attention to text features such as the importance of titles, character's names, and the opening lines. There are additional text features, sometimes referred to as "signposts," that can help students read literary texts with a more profound understanding. Words like "but" and "and" are called signposts, and these words set the direction in which the sentence should progress. These signposts act as an alarm for readers to pay attention to what they are reading and understand the significance of the alarm.

- **Segmenting with Sub-Headings (like – intro, background, causes, conclusion)**

The reader should identify the components of reading comprehension to understand the basic structure and organization of the passage. Almost every passage follows the same principle. Therefore, it is important to understand the structure, tone, and main idea behind the passage. Quickly identifying these basic components will help you answer the passage questions quickly.

Tips according to the length of the paragraph

Tips for Very Long Passages

- The reader should develop a habit of reading different types of articles which will help them to understand the tone, attitude, and style of writing of several writers.
- Use the "bottom-up" approach which means, read the questions first, so that the reader has an idea of what to look for, in the passage. It will save the reader's time.
- While reading the long passage make sure not to read the complete passage, try reading only the part that is related to the questions that are asked.
- While reading the passage don't try to memorize every part of the passage instead understanding the essence of the point being conveyed by the author.
- Increase the reading speed by solving different exam papers or online mock tests.
- Try to engage with the passage from the starting, do not read the passage similar to reading an article in the newspaper because, by the time the reader reaches the end of the passage, she/he has forgotten what was at the beginning of the passage. Therefore, try and actively engage with the contents of the passage.

Tips for Short Passages

The short reading comprehension passages are either one or two paragraphs long. Therefore, they can be read easily and quickly. The readers are advised to read the passage slowly but simultaneously look for the important details. Then, from the questions, retrace the lines that correspond to the questions.

Tips for Medium Length Passages

The tips given for long passages are also applicable for medium passages. The reader should first try to read two to three lines of each paragraph given. It will allow the reader to find the conclusion and essence of the paragraph quickly. Along with reading try to memorize some information given in the passage by recollecting the important words. Further, eliminating the words, phrases, and sentences from the passage that is not useful will help in answering questions which have almost similar options. Along with all these tips the reader should also improve vocabulary, read and solve comprehensions from different fields of knowledge, like Science, Arts, Literature, Politics, Economics, and Current Affairs, etc.

Example

Read the passage and answer the questions on the basis of the same:

A fact that draws our attention is that, according to his position in life, an extravagant man is either admired or loathed. A successful business man does nothing to increase his popularity by being prudent with his money. A person who is wealthy is expected to lead a luxurious life and to be lavish with his hospitality. If he is not so, he is considered mean, and his reputation in business may even suffer in consequence. The paradox remains that he had not been careful with his money in the first place; he would never have achieved his present wealth.

Among the low income group, a different set of values exists. The young clerk, who makes his wife a present of a new dress when he has not paid his house rent, is condemned as extravagant. Carefulness with money to the point of meanness is applauded as a virtue. Nothing in his life is considered more worthy than paying his bills. The ideal wife for such a man separates her housekeeping money into joyless little piles – so much for rent, for food, for the children's shoes, she is able to face the milkman with equanimity every month satisfied

with her economizing ways, and never knows the guilt of buying something she can't really afford.

As for myself, I fall neither of these categories. If I have money to spare I can be extravagant, but when, as is usually the case, I am hard up and then I am the meanest man imaginable.

Question 1:

Choose an appropriate title for the above passage:

1. Profligacy plays its part in the lives of both rich and poor
2. Miserable lives of the poor
3. Profligacy – A cause for poverty
4. Profligacy is appreciated

Correct Choice: A

Explanation:

It is the most appropriate title as the passage highlights the life of both rich and lower class people in the first and second paragraphs respectively.

Question 2:

As per the text, "A wealthy and successful businessman..."

1. Has been into profligacy
2. Is popular by wasting time
3. Shall not worry about popularity
4. Is likely to have a lavish standard of living

Correct choice: D

Explanation:

The fourth line of the 1st paragraph gives us a hint about the same.

Question 3:

"Lavish with hospitality" – what is the meaning of this

The phrase in the context of the above passage:

1. Precise in spending merely on strangers as well as guests
2. Can't serve relatives and friends
3. Miserliness in dealing with relatives
4. A sense of profligacy in treating guests

Correct Answer: D

Explanation:

“Hospitality” in this phrase means to serve or treat guests or receive them with a warm and generous gesture and “lavish” denotes extravagance. The only match with the meaning is D.

Question 4.

“Equanimity” word in the concluding paragraph means:

1. Embarrassment
2. Composure
3. Ambiguous
4. Doubtful

Correct Answer: B

Explanation:

The meaning of the word itself is composure and stability when someone is stressed. As the sentence suggests, the milkman has to face equanimity every month.

EXERCISE 1

Exercise 1

Passage-1

Genealogy is fun. Just as a piece of furniture or a picture takes on much more interest if you know its history, so does an individual become more real once the ancestral elements that shaped him are known. An in-depth family history is a tapestry of all those to whom we owe our existence.

Which statement best conveys the theme of this paragraph?

- A: Finding out about our ancestors is more interesting than researching the history of objects.
- B: Genealogy is a study of people and their belongings in the past.
- C: Genealogy is a study of family history.
- D: Genealogical research can bring meaning and life to a family's history
- E. Most genealogies are a waste of effort.

Passage-2

Read the given facts/passage and answer the question that follows:

People are always less happy to accept scientific data they feel contradicts their preconceived beliefs. No surprise here; no human likes to be wrong. But science isn't supposed to care about preconceived notions. Science, at least good science, tells us about the world as it is, and not as some wish it to be. Sometimes what science finds is consistent with a particular religion's wishes. But usually it is not.

Question: What can be inferred about good science? Select from the given options.

1. A good science is well received by the educated people.
2. A good science is based on concrete results obtained through testing the hypothesis.
3. A good science and religion are same.
4. A good science will always prove the general populace wrong.

Passage-3

Directions (1-5): Read the following passage carefully and answer

Once upon a time, there was a Kingdom. The king there only had one leg and one eye, but he was very intelligent and kind. Everyone in his kingdom lived a happy and a healthy life because of their king. One day the king was walking through the palace hallway and saw the portraits of his ancestors. He thought that one day his children will walk in the same hallway and remember all the ancestors through these portraits.

But, the king did not have his portrait painted. Due to his physical disabilities, **he wasn't sure how his painting would turn out to be.** So he invited many famous painters from his and other kingdoms to the court. The king then announced that he wants a beautiful portrait made of himself to be placed in the palace. Any painter who can carry out this should come forward. He will be rewarded based on how the painting turns up.

All of the painters began to think that the king only has one leg and one eye. How can his picture be made very beautiful? It is not possible and if the picture does not turn out to look beautiful then the king will get angry and punish them. So one by one, all started to make excuses and politely declined to make a painting of the king.

But suddenly one painter raised his hand and said that I will make a very beautiful portrait of you which you will surely like. The king became happy hearing that and other painters got curious. The king gave him the permission and the painter started drawing the portrait. He then filled the drawing with paints. Finally, after taking a long time, he said that the portrait was ready!

All of the courtiers, other painters were curious and nervous thinking, "How can the painter make the king's portrait beautiful because the king is physically disabled? What if the king didn't like the painting and gets angry?" But when the painter presented the portrait, everyone in the court, including the king, was left stunned.

The painter made a portrait in which the king was sitting on the horse, on the one-leg side, holding his bow and aiming the arrow with his one eye closed. The king was very pleased to see that the painter has made a beautiful portrait by cleverly hiding the king's disabilities. The King gave him a great reward.

Q1. Why did the painters start making excuses and politely declining the offer to make a portrait of the King?

- (a) The painters were not happy with the reward offered by the King.
- (b) The painters knew that the King was one legged and one eyed and making a beautiful portrait would mean compromising on their art.
- (c) They were scared of the consequences in case the King did not like the portrait made by them.

- (d) They all believed making a beautiful portrait of a disabled person required a lot of time and thinking which was not given by the King.
- (e) None of these

Q2. Why were all the courtiers and other painters curious and nervous?

- (a) They all were desperate to see how the beautiful portrait of a disabled person looked.
- (b) They all wanted to see how the King punishes the painter who made his portrait..
- (c) They all were amazed at the masterful portrait made by the painter.
- (d) They all wanted to see what has the painter made and how would the King react if he doesn't like it.

Q3. According to the passage what is meant by the line given in BOLD in the above passage?

- (a) The King did not have a portrait of his in the hallway because he knew his portrait would not look good.
- (b) The King did not know how he would look in the portrait
- (c) The portraits of King's ancestors were very good and the King thought that his portrait will not be as good.
- (d) The King was too shy to pose for a portrait to be made by a painter.
- (e) None of these

Q4. Which of the following could be the most appropriate title for the above passage?

- (a) World is how we look at it
- (b) A beautiful portrait
- (c) A wonderful Painter
- (d) A disabled King
- (e) A disabled but clever King

Q5. Which of the following is incorrect in the context of the above passage?

- (a) No one was willing to make the portrait as they were worried about the punishment but then a novice painter raised his hand.
- (b) The painter made a stunning portrait of the King and everyone was amazed to see it.
- (c) The King invited many famous painters from his and other kingdoms to the court.
- (d) Everyone in the King's kingdom was a prosperous and healthy life because he was an intelligent King.
- (e) All of the above are true

Passage-4

Refer to the following passage and answer the questions.

First, be sure to keep the broken ends quiet. Keep the adjacent joints still. Should these joints bend, the muscles will act against the fractured bone and cause motion. Give the victim first aid for shock. Apply a sterile dressing to the fracture if it is compound. Do not try to push back

a protruding bone. When you are splinting the fractured area, the end will slip back when the limb is straightened. An ice bag should be used with all fractures, sprains, and dislocations. A simple method of preventing motion of the fragments is to place the limb on pillows. Splints may also be used to keep the limb from moving. Breaks of the ribs or skull bone need no splints as they are held fast by other bones and tissue.

1. This article will help you to...

- a. Make a splint.
- b. Care for broken bones.
- c. Care for bad burns.
- d. Make a sterile dressing.
- e. Inform you of the doctor's duties.

2. The first thing to do for a fracture is...

- a. Keep the broken ends quiet.
- b. Use an ice bag.
- c. Push back the protruding bone.
- d. Make a splint.
- e. Clean the area.

3. If the fracture is compound...

- a) Keep the broken ends quiet.
- b) Use an ice bag.
- c) Push back the protruding bone.
- d) Make a splint.
- e) Apply a sterile dressing.

4. A break which needs no splint is one in the...

- a) Arm.
- b) Foot.
- c) Leg.
- d) Ribs.
- e) Neck.

EXERCISE 2

Intermediate Level

Passage -1

The issue of road rage requires serious attention. Day by day, it is becoming a great concern. Call it the negligence of the government or the rashness of the drivers, the underlying fact is that at the end of the day, the common man is the one who suffers the most. The commoner driving a two-wheeler who is hit by a speeding SUV, even though the former was following the traffic rules, has nowhere to go in order to seek redressal for his grievances or his injury. A recent case in point is the accident caused by the speeding luxury car owned by Hema Malini. A family of four driving a modest Alto was hit by the over speeding car driven by the actress's driver. It resulted in the death of the youngest child of the family and several injuries to the other family members. To add insult to injury, Malini posted negative comments on a famous social networking website.

Part of the problem lies with the attitude and mentality of the driver behind the steering wheel. The car is a personal vehicle and one possesses the freedom to drive it independently and at one's own will. But one must understand that the road on which one drives is open to the public. This blurring of the dichotomy between the public and the private leads to reckless behaviour on the roads. Respect for the elderly and pedestrians, so common in countries abroad, is a thing of rarity to be found in our land. A little consideration to road rules and adoption of simple safety measures such as fastening of the seat belt, can go a long way in reducing this menace.

Questions:

Q 1 Suggest a suitable title to the passage.

Q 2 Why does the common man suffer grievously in instances of road rage?

Q 3 What should the driver understand?

Q 4 What is the solution to this problem of road rage?

Passage - 2

The art of academic writing is not easy to master. It is a formal skill, which requires precision and accuracy, and is perfected by continuous and dedicated practice. Academic writing is the skilful exposition and explanation of an argument, which the writer has carefully researched and developed over a sustained period of time. It is a time-consuming activity and demands patience and perseverance. But the joy of reading and sharing with others, one's succinctly composed piece of argument, is incomparable.

Before beginning to write, the writer must ask himself a few questions – Why am I writing?

- What is it that I intend to share with others? What purpose will my writing serve? Have I read enough about the topic or theme about which I am going to write? If one is hesitant to answer even one of the aforementioned questions, one better not write at all!

Because academic writing is a serious activity – it makes one part of a shared community of readers and writers who wish to disseminate and learn from well-argued pieces of writing.

The structure of an argumentative essay should take the form of – Introduction (which should be around ten percent of the entire essay), Body (it should constitute eighty percent of the piece) and the Conclusion (again, ten per cent of the essay). The introduction should function as the hook which draws the reader in and holds his attention, the body should include cogent and coherently linked paragraphs and the conclusion should re-state the argument and offer a substantial ending to the piece.

Questions:

Q 1 What is academic writing?

Q 2 Why is reading an important part of writing?

Q 3 Why should one ask oneself the questions mentioned in the second passage?

Q 4 What are the components of the structure of an argumentative essay?

Passage – 3

Today's world can truly be called a "society of the spectacle", a phrase that the French sociologist and thinker Guy de Bord used decades earlier. Every act of lived experience has today become a spectacle. It would be a little incorrect to say that this craze for spectacle-izing everything that occurs around us is a recent phenomenon. If one had watched The Pirates of The Caribbean movies, one would realise that even in the late eighteenth century, executions were public events - a large portion of the populace would gather around the site of the hanging in the city square in order to see justice being meted out in front of their very own eyes. It was also a form of popular entertainment. It was a sort of a collective public blood-letting.

The spectacle that the contemporary society has become is an overwhelming experience. One enters into a restaurant, orders an exotic dish – but the proof of having eaten it doesn't exist until tons of photographs are clicked from varied angles and shared on social networking sites, one goes for a holiday to a calm and serene location, but is all the while busy telling the world about it. It as if one has to document every moment of one's existence. When does one live that moment then? Perhaps it is in the documentation that one survives these days!

Questions:

Q 1 What is the "Society of the spectacle"?

Q 2 Is it a recent occurrence?

Q 3 Do we really 'live' moments now?

Q 4 Besides documentation, what is the other function of the spectacle?

Passage – 4

Surveillance has increased manifold since the 9/11 terror attacks on the World Trade Centre

in the U.S. This increase in surveillance today shapes the relationship between the state and the individual. The state keeps an eye on its citizens, thereby positing each and every citizen as a potential wrong-doer. For instance, the proliferation of the CCTV cameras in streets, restaurants and in every imaginable public space. Infact, the camera need not even be functional in order to make the citizens behave themselves – its mere presence is enough to scare the citizens into submission. Such is the power of the mere potential of surveillance.

Surveillance studies have shown that these techniques might not be too effective at all times, citizens might feign decent behaviour in order to avoid themselves from getting into a tussle with the law of the land. But it does not assure the state of the reformation in the attitude of the citizens. It is a mere eye-wash. It works only when the citizen truly desires to transform his or her attitude and adopt decency in all walks of life.

The act of constant surveillance makes the state a voyeur – a person who derives pleasure from watching events unfold in a secretive manner. A recent case in point would be the raid on a hotel in the so-called cosmopolitan city of Mumbai where young couples were consensually residing. The state has today entered the bed-room. And this is an unhealthy proposition!

Questions:

Q 1 What is the effect of the state's surveillance on the individual?

Q 2 Does the CCTV need to be functional all the time?

Q 3 Why is surveillance not effective always?

Q 4 When is surveillance really effective?

Passage – 5

India is a secular, democratic nation. This implies that every religion is treated equally and at par with every other religion. No religion is accorded any preferential treatment of any kind. All citizens are also free to practice, preach or profess any religion of their choosing. The state does not have a unified or homogeneous religious following. This unique characteristic of India ensures its unity in diversity. India has been the birthplace of several religions and is the land where all these religions - such as Hinduism, Christianity, Buddhism, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism, Jainism and so on exist simultaneously, peacefully and harmoniously.

But, some anti-social elements have interpreted the sanctity of religions in a twisted way. No religion preaches violence or rioting. All the religions are but various ways to reach the Supreme Being, they are paths which lead to the ultimate truth and salvation, though we refer to the destination by various names such as Jesus, Krishna, Buddha. Allah and so on. It is important to realize that in order to ensure a peaceful mosaic of cultural distinctness, the path of non-violence or ahimsa, as given by the Father of the nation, must be followed unwaveringly.

God created man in his own image. Hence, it follows naturally that there is some divinity within all human beings.

Thus, to kill and murder in the name of religion is blasphemy. Only once the religious fanatics understand this, will there be perpetual peace in the land.

Questions

- Q 1 What is meant by the term "Secular"?
- Q 2 What is special about India's association with religion?
- Q 3 Why are human beings divine?
- Q 4 How can all religions co-exist peacefully?

EXERCISE 3

Practice Exercise

Read the following paragraphs and carefully determine what the main idea is for each. The best way to approach these questions is to first read the paragraph and then, in your own words, restate what you think the author is trying to say. From the five choices, select the one statement that best supports the author's point.

Critical reading is a demanding process. To read critically, you must slow down your reading and, with pencil in hand, perform specific operations on the text. Mark up the text with your reactions, conclusions, and questions. When you read, become an active participant.

1. This paragraph best supports the statement that

- a. critical reading is a slow, dull, but essential process.
- b. the best critical reading happens at critical times in a person's life.
- c. readers should get in the habit of questioning the truth of what they read.
- d. critical reading requires thoughtful and careful attention.
- e. critical reading should take place at the same time each day.

Mathematics allows us to expand our consciousness. Mathematics tells us about economic trends, patterns of disease, and the growth of populations. Math is good at exposing the truth, but it can also perpetuate misunderstandings and untruths. Figures have the power to mislead people.

2. This paragraph best supports the statement that

- a. the study of mathematics is dangerous.
- b. words are more truthful than figures.
- c. the study of mathematics is more important than other disciplines.
- d. the power of numbers is that they cannot lie.
- e. figures are sometimes used to deceive people.

If you're a fitness walker, there is no need for a commute to a health club. Your neighbourhood can be your health club. You don't need a lot of fancy equipment to get a good workout either. All you need is a well-designed pair of athletic shoes.

3. This paragraph best supports the statement that

- a. fitness walking is a better form of exercise than weight lifting.
- b. a membership in a health club is a poor investment.
- c. walking outdoors provides a better workout than walking indoors.
- d. fitness walking is a convenient and valuable form of exercise.
- e. poorly designed athletic shoes can cause major foot injuries.

There are no effective boundaries when it comes to pollutants. Studies have shown that toxic insecticides that have been banned in many countries are riding the wind from countries where they remain legal. Compounds such as DDT and toxaphene have been found in remote places like the Yukon and other Arctic regions.

4. This paragraph best supports the statement that

- a. toxic insecticides such as DDT have not been banned throughout the world.
- b. more pollutants find their way into polar climates than they do into warmer areas.

Human technology developed from the first stone tools about two and a half million years ago. In the beginning, the rate of development was slow. Hundreds of thousands of years passed without much change. Today, new technologies are reported daily on television and in newspapers.

5. This paragraph best supports the statement that

- a. stone tools were not really technology.
- b. stone tools were in use for two and a half million years.
- c. there is no way to know when stone tools first came into use.
- d. In today's world, new technologies are constantly being developed.
- e. none of the latest technologies are as significant as the development of stone tools.

Keeping busy at important tasks is much more motivating than having too little to do. Today's employees are not afraid of responsibility. Most people are willing to take on extra responsibility in order to have more variety in their positions. In addition, along with that responsibility should come more authority to independently carry out some important tasks.

6. The main idea of the paragraph is that

- a. variety and independence on the job increase employee motivation.
- b. to avoid boredom, many people do more work than their jobs require of them.
- c. today's employees are demanding more independence than ever before.
- d. office jobs in the past have carried less responsibility.

Whether you can accomplish a specific goal or meet a specific deadline depends first on how much time you need to get the job done. What should you do when the demands of the job exceed the time you have available? The best approach is to divide the project into smaller pieces. Different goals will have to be divided in different ways, but one seemingly unrealistic goal can often be accomplished by working on several smaller, more reasonable goals.

7. The main idea of the passage is that

- a. jobs often remain only partially completed because of lack of time.
- b. the best way to complete projects is to make sure your goals are achievable.
- c. the best way to tackle a large project is to separate it into smaller parts.
- d. the best approach to a demanding job is to delegate responsibility

Knitting has made a major comeback. People are knitting on college campuses, in coffee shops, and in small knitting groups throughout the United States. New knitting stores, many with cafes, are popping up all over, and there are more knitting books and magazines being published than ever before. And not all of these knitters are women: As knitting continues to surge in popularity, men are picking up knitting needles in record numbers.

8. The paragraph best supports the statement that

- a. joining a knitting group is a great way to make new friends.
- b. some people knit because it helps them relax and release stress.
- c. today's knitter is not the stereotypical grandmother in a rocking chair.
- d. as is the case with all fads, this new obsession with knitting will fade quickly.

Health clubs have undergone a major transformation that can be described in three words: mind, body, and spirit. Loud, fast, heart-thumping aerobics has been replaced by the hushed tones of yoga and the controlled movements of Pilates. The clubs are responding to the needs of their customers who are increasingly looking for a retreat from their hectic lifestyles and a way to find a healthy balance in their lives by nurturing their whole selves.

9. The main idea of the paragraph is that

- a. exercise is less important now than it once was.
- b. health clubs are much less popular now than they were ten years ago.
- c. many health clubs will go out of business because of the decline in traditional exercise.
- d. people's desire to nurture all aspects of themselves has contributed to big changes for health clubs.

Native American art often incorporates a language of abstract visual symbols. The artist gives a poetic message to the viewer, communicating the beauty of an idea, either by using religious symbols or a design from nature such as rain on leaves or sunshine on water. The idea communicated may even be purely whimsical, in which case the artist might start out with symbols developed from a bird's tracks or a child's toy.

10. The main idea of the passage is that Native American art

- a. is purely poetic and dreamlike.
- b. is usually abstract, although it can also be poetic and beautiful.
- c. communicates the beauty of ideas through the use of symbols.
- d. is sometimes purely whimsical.

Before you begin to compose a business letter, sit down and think about your purpose in writing the letter. Do you want to request information, order a product, register a complaint, or apply for something? Do some brainstorming and gather information before you begin writing. Always keep your objective in mind.

11. The main idea of the passage is that

- a. planning is an important part of writing a business letter.
- b. business letters are frequently complaint letters.
- c. brainstorming and writing take approximately equal amounts of time.
- d. many people fail to plan ahead when they are writing a business letter.

Ratatouille is a dish that has grown in popularity over the last few years. It features eggplant, zucchini, tomatoes, peppers, and garlic; chopped, mixed, sautéed, and finally, cooked slowly over low heat. As the vegetables cook slowly, they make their own broth, which may be extended with a little tomato paste. The name ratatouille comes from the French word *touiller*, meaning to stir or mix together.

12. Which of the following is the correct order of steps for making ratatouille?

- a. chop vegetables, add tomato paste, stir or mix together
- b. mix the vegetables together, sauté them, and add tomato paste
- c. cook the vegetables slowly, mix them together, add tomato paste
- d. add tomato paste to extend the broth and cook slowly over low heat

13. Ratatouille can best be described as a

- a. French pastry.
- b. sauce to put over vegetables.
- c. pasta dish extended with tomato paste.
- d. vegetable stew.

Daffodil bulbs require well-drained soil and a sunny planting location. They should be planted in holes that are 3–6 inches deep and there should be 2–4 inches between bulbs. The bulb should be placed in the hole, pointed side up, root side down. Once the bulb is planted, water the area thoroughly.

14. According to the above directions, when planting daffodil bulbs, which of the following conditions is not necessary?

- a. a sunny location
- b. well-drained soil
- c. proper placement of bulbs in soil
- d. proper fertilization

15. According to the above directions, which of the following is true?

- a. Daffodils do best in sandy soil.
- b. Daffodil bulbs should be planted in autumn for spring blooming.
- c. It is possible to plant daffodil bulbs upside down.
- d. Daffodil bulbs require daily watering.

For the following three questions, choose the topic sentence that best fits the paragraph.

16. Gary is a distinguished looking man with a touch of gray at the temples. Even in his early 50s, he still turns heads. He enjoys spending most of his time admiring his profile in the mirror. In fact, he considers his good looks to be his second-most important asset. The first, however, is money. He is lucky in this area, too,

having been born into a wealthy family. _____. He loves the power his wealth has given him. He could buy whatever he desires, whether that be people, places, or things. Gary checks that mirror often and feels great delight with what he sees.

- a. Gary's grey hair is his worst characteristic.
- b. Conceit is the beginning and the end of Gary's character; conceit of person and situation.
- c. Gary feels blessed to be wealthy and the joy consumes his every thought.
- d. The only objects of Gary's respect are others who hold positions in society above him.

17. The term spices is a pleasant one, whether it connotes fine French cuisine or a down-home, cinnamon-flavoured apple pie. _____. In the past, individuals travelled the world seeking exotic spices for profit and, in searching, have changed the course of history. Indeed, to gain control of lands harbouring new spices, nations have actually gone to war.

- a. The taste and aroma of spices are the main elements that make food such a source of fascination and pleasure.
- b. The term might equally bring to mind Indian curry made thousands of miles away and those delicious barbecued ribs sold on the corner.
- c. It is exciting to find a good cookbook and experiment with spices from other lands—indeed, it is one way to travel around the globe!
- d. The history of spices, however, is another matter altogether, and at times, it can be filled with danger and intrigue.

For the following questions, a topic sentence is given. Try choosing the sentence that best develops or supports it.

18. Cosmetic plastic surgery is one of the fastest growing segments of U.S. medicine.

- a. Cosmetic plastic surgery can have dangerous side effects, some of which can be fatal.
- b. Americans are eager to make their bodies as perfect as possible and to minimize the visible signs of aging.
- c. The price of cosmetic plastic surgery is also on the rise.
- d. This increase in cosmetic plastic surgery says something quite disturbing about our culture.

19. Life on Earth is ancient and, even at its first appearance, unimaginably complex.

- a. Scientists place its beginnings at some three billion years ago, when they hypothesize that the first molecule floated up out of the ooze with the unique ability to replicate itself.
- b. The most complex life form is, of course, the mammal—and the most complex mammal is humankind.
- c. It is unknown exactly where life started, where the first molecule was “born” that had the ability to replicate itself.
- d. Darwin's theory of evolution was one attempt to explain what essentially remains a great mystery.

20. More and more people are eating organically grown fruits and vegetables.

- a. Organic food is usually more expensive than non-organic food.

- b. A wide variety of organic chocolate products are now available in stores.
- c. Raw foods are enjoying increasing popularity, now that people are discovering how a raw-foods diet leaves you feeling and looking great.
- d. Fresh organic produce contains more vitamins, minerals, and enzymes than nonorganic produce.

21. Parents play an important role in their children's academic success.

- a. Video games have a negative impact on children's academic success.
- b. Studies show that children of parents who regularly assist with homework and show an active interest in their child's studies bring home better grades.
- c. Studies show that watching less television and spending less time playing video games help children get better grades.
- d. Children who are avid readers get much better grades than their peers.

22. In Oklahoma, a girl is forbidden to take a bite from her date's hamburger.

- a. It's illegal for teenagers to take a bath during the winter in Clinton, Indiana.
- b. Youngsters may not spin Yo-Yos on Sunday in Memphis, Tennessee.
- c. It may be hard to believe, but these types of strange laws are still on the books!
- d. It is illegal to parade an elephant down Main Street in Austin, Texas.

23. In special cases, needy people who have nowhere else to go are permitted to enter the United States as refugees.

- a. Other people, however, enter the United States illegally.
- b. The total number of newcomers was over one million.
- c. United States immigration laws put limits on the number of people permitted to enter the United States.
- d. As many as 12 million people may be living in the United States illegally.

For the following two questions, choose the sentence that does NOT support the given topic sentence.

24. In ancient Greece, honor was not just the domain of the warrior.

- a. A great orator [speaker], who could sway the public with his logic and wit, was greatly respected.
- b. A revered poet's name lived on long after he died.
- c. Great wealth was characteristic of the truly great kings.
- d. A warrior's quest for the esteem of his peers would bring him great prizes, which would secure a long-lasting reputation.

25. In Moby Dick, Herman Melville wrote that the whale men were "enveloped in whale lines," that each man relied on the others during moments of danger.

- a. The small boats that pursued the whales left the whaling ship far behind; each man in a boat had to depend on the others to stay alive.
- b. Once the whale was harpooned, the whale line unravelled so fast that water had to be poured on it to keep it from smoking.
- c. The whale line was the rope, dozens of yards long, that attached to the harpoon; it was unravelled under the seats of all the men metaphorically connecting each man to the next.

d. One wrong move and the line would snap a man right out of the boat; thus, his life depended on whether the crew would cut the whale loose to save him, or leave him in the ocean during the heat of the hunt.

Some of the questions following the passages ask you to make inferences from the passages. To infer means to arrive at a conclusion by reasoning from evidence. Synonyms for infer are deduce, judge, or conclude. If you are told to infer something from a passage, you are basically being asked what conclusions can be drawn from the content of the story.

Tip: If you replace the word infer with conclude in a question, it may make more sense to you. The use of desktop computer equipment and software to create high-quality documents such as newsletters, business cards, letterhead, and brochures is called Desktop Publishing, or DTP. The most important part of any DTP project is planning. Before you begin, you should know your intended audience, the message you want to communicate, and what form your message will take.

26. The paragraph best supports the statement that

- a. Desktop Publishing is one way to become acquainted with a new business audience.
 - b. computer software is continually being refined to produce high-quality printing.
 - c. the first stage of any proposed DTP project should be organization and design.
 - d. the planning stage of any DTP project should include talking with the intended audience.
- One of the missions of the Peace Corps is to help the people of interested countries meet their need for trained men and women. People who work for the Peace Corps do so because they want to, but to keep the agency dynamic with fresh ideas, no staff member can work for the agency for more than five years.

27. The paragraph best supports the statement that Peace Corps employees

- a. are highly intelligent people.
- b. must train for about five years.
- c. are hired for a limited term of employment.
- d. have both academic and work experience.

Litigation is not always the only or best way to resolve conflicts. Mediation offers an alternative approach and it is one that can be quite efficient and successful. Mediation can be faster, less expensive, and can lead to creative solutions not always possible in a court of law. Additionally, mediation focuses on mutually acceptable solutions, rather than on winning or losing.

28. This paragraph best supports the idea that

- a. there is too much reliance on litigation in our society.
- b. litigation is expensive, slow, and limited by its reliance on following the letter of the law.
- c. mediation is the best way to resolve a crisis.
- d. mediation can be an effective way to resolve conflicts.

Many cities have distributed standardized recycling containers to all households with directions that read: "We would prefer that you use this new container as your primary recycling container as this will expedite pick-up of recyclables. Additional recycling containers may be purchased from the City."

29. According to the directions, each household

- a. may only use one recycling container.
- b. must use the new recycling container.
- c. should use the new recycling container.
- d. must buy a new recycling container.

The competitive civil-service system is designed to give candidates fair and equal treatment and to ensure that federal applicants are hired based on objective criteria. Hiring has to be based solely on a candidate's knowledge, skills, and abilities (which you'll sometimes see abbreviated as ksa), and not on external factors such as race, religion, sex, and so on. Whereas employers in the private sector can hire employees for subjective reasons, federal employers must be able to justify their decision with objective evidence that the candidate is qualified.

30. The paragraph best supports the statement that

- a. hiring in the private sector is inherently unfair.
- b. ksa is not as important as test scores to federal employers.
- c. federal hiring practices are simpler than those employed by the private sector.
- d. the civil service strives to hire on the basis of a candidate's abilities.

31. The federal government's practice of hiring on the basis of ksa frequently results in the hiring of employees

- a. based on race, religion, sex, and so forth.
- b. who are unqualified for the job.
- c. who are qualified for the job.
- d. on the basis of subjective judgment.

Everyone is sensitive to extreme weather conditions. But with age, the body may become less able to respond to long exposure to very hot or very cold temperatures. Some older people might develop hypothermia when exposed to cold weather. Hypothermia is a drop in internal body temperature, which can be fatal if not detected and treated.

32. The paragraph best supports the statement that

- a. cold weather is more dangerous for older people than warm weather.
- b. hypothermia is a condition that only affects older people.
- c. older people who live in warm climates are healthier than older people who live in cold climates.
- d. an older person is more susceptible to hypothermia than a younger person.

It is well known that the world urgently needs adequate distribution of food, so that everyone gets enough. Adequate distribution of medicine is just as urgent. Medical expertise and medical supplies need to be redistributed throughout the world so that people in emerging nations will have proper medical care.

33. This paragraph best supports the statement that

- a. the majority of the people in the world have no medical care.
- b. medical resources in emerging nations have diminished in the past few years.
- c. not enough doctors give time and money to those in need of medical care.
- d. many people who live in emerging nations are not receiving proper medical care.

Use of electronic mail (e-mail) has been widespread for more than a decade. E-mail simplifies the flow of ideas, connects people from distant offices, eliminates the need for meetings, and often boosts productivity. However, e-mail should be carefully managed to avoid unclear and inappropriate communication. E-mail messages should be concise and limited to one topic. When complex issues need to be addressed, phone calls are still best.

34. The main idea of the paragraph is that e-mail

- a. is not always the easiest way to connect people from distant offices.
- b. has changed considerably since it first began a decade ago.
- c. causes people to be unproductive when it is used incorrectly.
- d. is effective for certain kinds of messages but only if managed wisely.

35. Which of the following would be the most appropriate title for the passage?

- a. Appropriate Use of E-Mail
- b. E-Mail's Popularity
- c. E-Mail: The Ideal Form of Communication
- d. Why Phone Calls Are Better Than E-Mail

