

Passage 1

Although vastly popular during its time, much nineteenth-century women's fiction in the United States went unread by the twentieth-century educated elites, who were taught to ignore it as didactic. However, American literature has a tradition of didacticism going back to its Puritan roots, shifting over time from sermons and poetic transcripts into novels, which proved to be perfect vehicles for **conveying** social values. **In the nineteenth century, critics reviled Poe for neglecting to conclude his stories with pithy moral tags, while Longfellow was canonized for his didactic verse.** Although rhetorical changes favoring the anti-didactic can be detected as nineteenth-century America transformed itself into a secular society, it was twentieth-century criticism, which placed aesthetic value above everything else, that had no place in its doctrine for the didacticism of others.

1. Which of the following best describes the function of the highlighted sentence?
 - A. It explains why the fiction mentioned in the first sentence was not popular in the twentieth century.
 - B. It assists in drawing a contrast between nineteenth-century and twentieth-century critics.
 - C. It provides an example of how twentieth-century readers were taught to ignore certain literature.
 - D. It questions the usefulness of a particular distinction between Poe and Longfellow made by critics.
 - E. It explains why Poe's stories were more popular than Longfellow's verse during the nineteenth century.
2. In the context in which it appears, "conveying" most nearly means
 - A. carrying
 - B. transferring
 - C. granting
 - D. imparting
 - E. projecting

Passage 2

1800 Thomas Dilworth's *New Guide to the English Dialogue* was being widely used to teach reading in the United States. Dilworth's primer, unlike earlier ones, stressed the importance of children's understanding what they read. While it is in fact unlikely that children would have recognized all the vocabulary Dilworth used, that was at least his stated goal. Dilworth recognized that primers should enable children to decode words from print with the form of language they already knew: speech. In contrast, many earlier authors assumed that, just as introductory Latin texts taught children an unknown language, introductory English texts should teach English as if it, too, were an unknown language—such their esoteric choice of vocabulary, it in effect became unknown.

1. According to the passage, the "earlier authors" adopted a model for English instruction that
 - A. mirrored the practice used in Latin instruction.
 - B. was originally formulated by Dilworth.

- C. was less esoteric than that adopted by Dilworth.
- D. stressed familiarity with the peculiarities of English spelling.
- E. emphasized the importance of fluent and articulate speech.

2. The author of the passage would probably agree with which of the following criticisms of English primers predating Dilworth's?

- A. Their Latinate grammatical terms poorly described the structures of English.
- B. They failed to make effective use of the knowledge of language a child already possessed.
- C. Their texts typically focused on subject matter that held little intrinsic interest for their readers.
- D. They neglected to teach the language in a sufficiently systematic way.
- E. They required a pedagogical method that few American teachers of the era possessed.

Passage 3

Carla L. Peterson's *Doers of the Word* (1997), a study of African American women speakers and writers from 1830-1880, is an important addition to scholarship on nineteenth-century African American women. Its scope resembles that of Frances Smith Foster's 1993 study, but its approach is quite different. For Foster, the Black women who came to literary voice in nineteenth-century America were claiming their rights as United States citizens, denying that anything should disqualify them from full membership in an enlightened national polity. Peterson sees these same women as having been fundamentally estranged from the nation by a dominant culture unsympathetic to Black women, and by a Black intelligentsia whose male view of race concerns left little room for Black female intellect.

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

1. The passage indicates that Peterson identifies which of the following as obstacles faced by the women included in her study?

- A. The attitudes of Black male intellectuals toward female intellectual work.
- ☒ B. The discriminatory attitudes faced by Black women in nineteenth-century America as a whole.
- ☒ C. Disagreements among Black women speakers and writers themselves about the impact of the Black intelligentsia.

2. It can be inferred that Peterson's study and Foster's study are similar with respect to which of the following?

- ☒ A. The writers that each takes up for examination.
- B. The degree to which each has influenced other scholars.
- C. The assumptions that each brings to nineteenth-century African American literature.
- D. Their analysis of the nineteenth-century Black intelligentsia.
- E. Their interpretation of nineteenth-century America's dominant culture.

Passage 4

David Belasco's 1912 Broadway production of *The Governor's Lady* created a sensation with a scene set in a Child's cafeteria, a chain restaurant that was an innovator in food standardization and emblematic of modern everyday life. While Belasco's meticulously detailed reproduction of an

immediately recognizable setting impressed the public, it was derided by progressive theater critics who championed the New Stagecraft theories of European artists like Max Reinhardt. The New Stagecraft rejected theatrical literalism; it drew inspiration from the subjectivity and minimalism of modern painters, advocating simplified sets designed to express a dramatic text's central ideas. Such critics considered Belasco a craftsman who merely captured surface realities: a true artist eliminated the inessential to create more meaningful, expressive stage images.

1. The author of the passage implies which of the following about Belasco's production of *The Governor's Lady*?

- A. It was dismissed by certain theater critics who misunderstood Belasco's conception of modernity.
- B. It was intended to marshal elements of the New Stagecraft to serve Belasco's predilection for realistic staging.
- C. It demonstrated that theatrical literalism could be used effectively to express a dramatic text's central ideas.
- D. It elicited responses that reflected a discrepancy between popular tastes in entertainment and the tastes of progressive theater critics.
- E. It relied on the appeal of an impressively realistic stage set to compensate for weaknesses in other aspects of the production.

2. It can be inferred that the theater critics would be most likely to agree with which of the following statements about the theatrical productions?

- A. Theatrical productions that seek to eliminate the inessential also often eliminate theatrical elements that enhance the expressiveness of a play.
- B. Theatrical productions that faithfully recreate the visual details of everyday life are unlikely to do justice to a good play's central ideas.
- C. Theatrical productions that employ the minimalism characteristic of modern paintings may have greater appeal to modern audiences than productions that rely on theatrical literalism.
- D. Theatrical productions that aim to represent truths about modern life should not attempt to employ elements of the New Stagecraft.
- E. Theatrical productions that attempt to produce authentic-looking scenes of everyday reality are likely to fail in that goal because of the theater's inherent limitations.

Passage 5

African American drama has, until recently, been rooted in the mimetic tradition of modern American naturalism. The most distinctive attribute of this tradition is the mechanistic, materialistic conception of humanity. Naturalism sees each individual as inextricably bound to the environment and depicts each person as someone controlled by, instead of controlling, concrete reality. As long as African American drama maintained naturalism as its dominant mode, it could only express the "plight of African American people." Its heroes might declare the madness of reality, but reality inevitably triumphed over them.

The surrealist plays of Adrienne Kennedy mark one of the first departures from naturalism by an African American dramatist. The overall goal of her work has been to depict the world of the soul and the spirit, not to mirror concrete reality. Within this framework, Kennedy has been able to

portray African American minds and souls liberated from their connections to the external environment.

1. Which of the following best states the central idea of the passage?

- A. African American drama has been primarily influenced by naturalism's emphasis on the materialistic.
- B. African American drama has traditionally acknowledged the relationship between the individual and the environment.
- C. African American drama, traditionally naturalistic, has been little influenced by dramatist Kennedy's spiritual and psychological approach to drama.
- D. The work of Kennedy suggests a shift away from a commitment to strict naturalism in African American drama.
- E. The work of Kennedy best exemplifies the current interest of African American artists in the spiritual and psychological worlds.

2. According to the passage, Kennedy is concerned with depicting the

- A. internal rather than the external life of her characters.
- B. madness of reality rather than the effects of reality.
- C. effects of materialism on African American minds and souls.
- D. relationship between naturalism and the human spirit.
- E. effects that her characters have on the environment.

3. Which of the following statements, if true, would most strengthen the author's assertion that Kennedy's work marks a serious departure from the tradition described in the first paragraph?

- A. Kennedy places the action in a real-life setting that is nevertheless unfamiliar to the average viewer or reader.
- B. Kennedy movingly portrays the lives and struggles of prominent African Americans in the United States.
- C. Kennedy uses characters found only in ancient African legends and mythology.
- D. Kennedy provides insights into American mimetic tradition and dramatic convention.
- E. Kennedy depicts the events in a style reminiscent of a television documentary.

Answers

Passage 1: B D

Passage 2: A B

Passage 3: AB A

Passage 4: D B

Passage 5: D A C