

Section 1 Reading Comprehension Skills

Name_____

DIRECTIONS: Read each passage carefully and then answer the questions about it. For each question, decide on the basis of the passage which one of the choices best answers the question.

Ever wonder why we have wisdom teeth? If you're like most people, you'll have your wisdom teeth removed before they even start to surface. How can we just throw away teeth without their absence having some impact on the state of our mouths? The science of dentistry studies questions like this.

Although it dates back to 3700 B.C. in Egypt, dentistry as we know it did not emerge until the 19th century, when people began to study systematically the mouth, gums, jaw, and teeth. Modern dentistry is an intrinsic part of our lives. Nowadays, we cannot go a day without hearing something about teeth care, if only through our television sets. If we have gingivitis, we can use mouthwash. If we have cavities, we can get fillings in a variety of colors and material types. If we have yellow teeth, we can make them white again in seven short days.

And, if we have crooked teeth, we can get braces. In fact, people routinely get braces, so much so that we consider it an oddity if someone goes through their entire childhood without the experience of going to the orthodontist every month. Chances are that if someone does not get braces, they lack money or time, not interest in having work done.

The evolution of dentistry shows how medical science is changing the human being. Because of increasingly good dental care, we don't lose our teeth and rely on our wisdom teeth coming in to give us a new set. To answer the question with which we began: We simply don't need those teeth anymore. Indeed, nowadays we have to pay to get our redundant teeth taken out.

1. The article says that we pull our wisdom teeth because _____.
(A) we have gingivitis
(B) they cause crooked teeth
(C) we don't need them anymore
(D) we listen carefully to information about teeth care daily on the TV
(E) they make our teeth yellow
2. Which of the following statements is true based on the reading?
(A) Braces are a common solution to yellowing teeth.
(B) Egyptian dentists conducted dentistry much as we do today.
(C) If we have gingivitis, we can treat it with fillings.
(D) We don't expect to lose our teeth because we have been taught how to care for them.
(E) Braces are a rare experience while growing up.
3. When did dentists pull the first tooth out?
(A) 3700 B.C.
(B) 17th century
(C) 18th century
(D) 19th century
(E) The article does not say.

4. The writer's main purpose is apparently _____.
(A) to answer frequently asked questions about teeth
(B) to talk a little about the history of dentistry
(C) to explain dreams about teeth
(D) to write the section on dentistry for a medical school text
(E) to encourage people to cut down on sweets
5. All but which of the following problems, according to the article, can dentists fix?
(A) bad breath
(B) yellowing teeth
(C) crooked teeth
(D) root canals
(E) cavities

The Galapagos Islands are in the Pacific Ocean, off the western coast of South America. They are a rocky, lonely spot, but they are also one of the most unusual places in the world. One reason is that they are the home of some of the last giant tortoises left on earth.

Weighing hundreds of pounds, these tortoises, or land turtles, wander slowly around the rocks and sand of the islands. Strangely, each of these islands has its own particular kinds of tortoises. There are seven different kinds of tortoises on the eight islands, each kind being slightly different from the other.

Hundreds of years ago, thousands of tortoises wandered around these islands. However, all that changed when people started landing there. When people first arrived in 1535, their ships had no refrigerators. This meant that fresh food was always a problem for the sailors on board. The giant tortoises provided a solution to this problem.

Ships would anchor off the islands, and crews would row ashore and seize as many tortoises as they could. Once the animals were aboard the ship, the sailors would roll the tortoises onto their backs. The tortoises were completely helpless once on their backs, so they could only lie there until used for soups and stews. Almost 100,000 tortoises were carried off in this way. The tortoises faced other problems, too. Soon after the first ships, settlers arrived bringing pigs, goats, donkeys, dogs and cats. All of these animals ruined life for the tortoises. Donkey and goats ate all the plants that the tortoises usually fed on. Dogs and cats consumed thousands of baby tortoises each year. Within a few years, it was hard to find any tortoise eggs-or even any baby tortoises.

By the early 1900s, people began to worry that the last of the tortoises would soon die out. No one, however, seemed to care enough to do anything about the problem. More and more tortoises disappeared, even though sailors no longer needed them for food. For another fifty years, this situation continued. Finally, in the 1950s, scientist decided that something must be done.

The first part of their plan was to get rid of as many cats, dogs and other animals as they could. Next, they tried to make sure that more baby tortoises would be born. To do this, they started looking for

wild tortoise eggs. They gathered the eggs and put them in safe containers. When the eggs hatched, the scientists raised the tortoises in special pens. Both the eggs and tortoises were numbered so that the scientists knew exactly which kinds of tortoises they had-and which island they came from. Once the tortoises were old enough and big enough to take care of themselves, the scientists took them back to their islands and set them loose. This slow, hard work continues today, and, thanks to it, the number of tortoises is now increasing every year. Perhaps these wonderful animals will not disappear after all.

6. What happened first?

- (A) Sailors took tortoises aboard ships.
- (B) The tortoise meat was used for soups and stews.
- (C) Tortoises were put onto their backs.
- (D) Settlers brought other animals to the islands.
- (E) Pigs had been all the sailors had to eat.

7. What happened soon after people brought animals to the islands?

- (A) Tortoise eggs were kept in safe containers.
- (B) Scientists took away as many animals as they could.
- (C) The animals ate the tortoises' food and eggs.
- (D) The tortoises fought with the other animals.
- (E) The tortoises continued to wander freely.

8. When did people start to do something to save the tortoises?

- (A) in the 1500s
- (B) in the 1950s
- (C) in the early 1900s
- (D) in the 1960s
- (E) in the 1400s

9. What happens right after the tortoise eggs hatch?

- (A) The scientists take the tortoises back to their islands.
- (B) The scientists get rid of cats, dogs, and other animals.
- (C) The sailors use the tortoises for food.
- (D) The scientist raised the tortoises in special pens.
- (E) The scientist encouraged the villagers to help.

10. What happened last?

- (A) The tortoises began to disappear.
- (B) The number of tortoises began to grow.
- (C) Scientists took away other animals.
- (D) Tortoises were taken back to their home islands.
- (E) The number of tortoises began to decrease.

Charles A. Lindbergh is remembered as the first person to make a nonstop solo flight across the Atlantic, in 1927. This feat, when Lindbergh was only twenty-five years old, assured him a lifetime of fame and public attention.

Charles Augustus Lindbergh was more interested in flying airplanes than he was in studying. He dropped out of the University of Wisconsin after two years to earn a living performing daredevil airplane stunts at country fairs. Two years later, he joined the United States Army so that he could go to the Army Air Service flight-training school. After completing his training, he was hired to fly mail between St. Louis and Chicago.

Then came the historic flight across the Atlantic. In 1919, a New York City hotel owner offered a prize of \$25,000 to the first pilot to fly nonstop from New York to Paris. Nine St. Louis business leaders helped pay for the plane Lindbergh designed especially for the flight. Lindbergh tested the plane by flying it from San Diego to New York, with an overnight stop in St. Louis. The flight took only 20 hours and 21 minutes, a transcontinental record.

Nine days later, on May 20, 1927, Lindbergh took off from Long Island, New York, at 7:52 A. M. He landed at Paris on May 21 at 10:21 P. M. He had flown more than 3,600 miles in less than thirty four hours. His flight made news around the world. He was given awards and parades everywhere he went. He was presented with the U. S. Congressional Medal of Honor and the first Distinguished Flying Cross. For a long time, Lindbergh toured the world as a U. S. goodwill ambassador. He met his future wife, Anne Morrow, in Mexico, where her father was the United States ambassador.

During the 1930s, Charles and Anne Lindbergh worked for various airline companies, charting new commercial air routes. In 1931, for a major airline, they charted a new route from the east coast of the United States to the Orient. The shortest, most efficient route was a great curve across Canada, over Alaska, and down to China and Japan. Most pilots familiar with the Arctic did not believe that such a route was possible. The Lindberghs took on the task of proving that it was. They arranged for fuel and supplies to be set out along the route. On July 29, they took off from Long Island in a specially equipped small seaplane. They flew by day and each night landed on a lake or a river and camped. Near Nome, Alaska, they had their first serious emergency. Out of daylight and nearly out of fuel, they were forced down in a small ocean inlet. In the next morning's light, they discovered they had landed on barely three feet of water. On September 19, after two more emergency landings and numerous close calls, they landed in China with the maps for a safe airline passenger route.

Even while actively engaged as a pioneering flier, Lindbergh was also working as an engineer. In 1935, he and Dr. Alexis Carrel were given a patent for an artificial heart. During World War I in the 1940s, Lindbergh served as a civilian technical advisor in aviation. Although he was a civilian, he flew over fifty combat missions in the Pacific. In the 1950s, Lindbergh helped design the famous 747 jet airliner. In the late 1960s, he spoke widely on conservation issues. He died August 1974, having lived through aviation history from the time of the first powered flight to the first steps on the moon and having influenced a big part of that history himself.

11. What did Lindbergh do before he crossed the Atlantic?

- (A) He charted a route to China.
- (B) He graduated from flight-training school.
- (C) He married Anne Morrow.
- (D) He acted as a technical advisor during World War II.
- (E) He was responsible for the fuel supply for planes.

12. What happened immediately after Lindbergh crossed the Atlantic?

- (A) He flew the mail between St. Louis and Chicago.
- (B) He left college.
- (C) He attended the Army flight-training school.
- (D) He was given the Congressional Medal of Honor.
- (E) He married Anne Morrow.

13. When did Charles meet Anne Morrow?

- (A) before he took off from Long Island
- (B) after he worked for an airline
- (C) before he was forced down in an ocean inlet
- (D) after he received the first Distinguished Flying Cross
- (E) when visiting his parents

14. When did the Lindberghs map an air route to China?

- (A) before they worked for an airline
- (B) before Charles worked with Dr. Carrel
- (C) after World War II
- (D) while designing the 747
- (E) when he was thirty

15. What event happened last?

- (A) Lindbergh patented an artificial heart.
- (B) The Lindberghs mapped a route to the Orient.
- (C) Lindbergh helped design the 747 airline.
- (D) Lindbergh flew fifty combat missions.
- (E) Charles finally was given an honorary degree from college.

Always read the meter dials from the right to the left. This procedure is much easier, especially if any of the dial hands are near the zero mark. If the meter has two dials, and one is smaller than the other, it is not imperative to read the smaller dial since it only registers a small amount. Read the dial at the right first. As the dial turns clockwise, always record the figure the pointer has just passed. Read the next dial to the left and record the figure it has just passed. Continue recording the figures on the dials from right to left. When finished, mark off the number of units recorded. Dials on water and gas meters usually indicate the amount each dial records.

16. These instructions show you how to _____.

- (A) read a meter

- (B) turn the dials of a meter
- (C) install a gas meter
- (D) repair a water meter
- (E) be prepared for outside employment

17. Always read the meter dials _____.

- (A) from top to bottom
- (B) from right to left
- (C) from left to right
- (D) from the small to the large dial
- (E) from the large dial to the small dial

18. As you read the first dial, record the figures _____.

- (A) on the smaller dial
- (B) the pointer is approaching
- (C) the pointer has just passed
- (D) at the top
- (E) at the bottom

19. When you have finished reading the meter, mark off _____.

- (A) the number of units recorded
- (B) the figures on the small dial
- (C) the total figures
- (D) all the zero marks
- (E) the last reading of the month

20. Which word can replace the word “usually” without changing the meaning of the sentence?

- (A) occasionally
- (B) sometimes
- (C) typically
- (D) rarely
- (E) substantially

The village of Vestmannaeyjar, in the far northern country of Iceland, is as bright and clean and up-to-date as any American or Canadian suburb. It is located on the island of Heimaey, just off the mainland. One January night in 1973, however, householders were shocked from their sleep. In some backyards red-hot liquid was spurting from the ground. Flaming “skyrockets” shot up and over the houses. The island's volcano, Helgafell, silent for seven thousand years, was violently erupting!

Luckily, the island's fishing fleet was in port, and within twenty-four hours almost everyone was ferried to the mainland. But then the agony of the island began in earnest. As in a nightmare, fountains of burning lava spurted three hundred feet high. Black, baseball-size cinders rained down. An evil-smelling, eye-burning, throat-searing cloud of smoke and gas erupted into the air, and a river of lava flowed down the mountain. The constant shriek of escaping steam was punctuated by ear-splitting explosions.

As time went on, the once pleasant village of Vestmannaeyjar took on a weird aspect. Its street lamps still burning against the long Arctic night, the town lay under a thick blanket of cinders. All that could be seen above the ten-foot black drifts were the tips of street signs. Some houses had collapsed under the weight of cinders; others had burst into flames as the heat ignited their oil storage tanks. Lighting the whole lurid scene, fire continued to shoot from the mouth of the looming volcano.

The eruption continued for six months. Scientists and reporters arrived from around the world to observe the awesome natural event. But the town did not die that easily. In July, when the eruption ceased, the people of Heimaey Island returned to assess the chances of rebuilding their homes and lives. They found tons of ash covering the ground. The Icelanders are a tough people, however, accustomed to the strange and violent nature of their Arctic land. They dug out their homes. They even used the cinders to build new roads and airport runways. Now the new homes of Heimaey are warmed from water pipes heated by molten lava.

21. The village is located on the island of _____.

- (A) Vestmannaeyjar
- (B) Hebrides
- (C) Heimaey
- (D) Helgafell
- (E) Heimma

22. The color of the hot liquid was _____.

- (A) orange
- (B) black
- (C) yellow
- (D) red
- (E) gray

23. This liquid was coming from the _____.

- (A) mountains
- (B) ground
- (C) sea
- (D) sky
- (E) ocean

24. The island's volcano had been inactive for _____.

- (A) seventy years
- (B) seven thousand years
- (C) seven thousand months
- (D) seven hundred years
- (E) seventy decades

25. Black cinders fell that were the size of _____.

- (A) baseballs

- (B) pebbles
- (C) golf balls
- (D) footballs
- (E) hail-stones

26. Despite the eruption, _____.

- (A) buses kept running
- (B) the radio kept broadcasting
- (C) the police kept working
- (D) street lamps kept burning
- (E) the television kept broadcasting

27. This volcanic eruption lasted for six ____.

- (A) weeks
- (B) hours
- (C) months
- (D) days
- (E) years

When you want to hang the American flag over the middle of a street, suspend it vertically with the blue field to the north and east-west street. When the flag is displayed with another banner from crossed staffs, the American flag is on the right. Place the staff of the American flag in front of the other staff. Raise the flag quickly and lower it slowly and respectfully. When flying the flag at half-mast, hoist it to the top of the pole for a moment before lowering it to mid-pole. When flying the American flag with banners from states or cities, raise the nation's banner first and lower it last. Never allow the flag to touch the ground.

28. What is the main idea of this passage?

- (A) The American flag is the symbol of American freedom.
- (B) The American flag has fifty stars.
- (C) Placing the American flag inappropriately will draw government intervention.
- (D) American flag should be flown differently in certain situations.
- (E) The flag should be lowered quickly and respectfully.

29. What does the word *hoist* mean?

- (A) to fly
- (B) to drop
- (C) to replace
- (D) to carry
- (E) to raise

30. What will come next in this discussion?

- (A) nothing; the author has finished the article
- (B) a discussion of the different types of flags around the world

- (C) an account of important American flag ceremonies
- (D) a list of appropriate moments to raise the flag
- (E) the history behind the American flag and the ceremonies involved

It's easy, nowadays, to blame others for bad things that happen to us. We complain that we don't have enough money because the government takes our taxes. We blame carbohydrates for our fat count. We blame society for our embarrassingly low educational scores.

Well, I disagree. I say we could save money by skipping McDonald's and buying the non-name-brand food items at the grocery. I say we're fat because we don't exercise. I say we're stupid because we watch too much TV and never read anything more difficult than sixth grade reading material.

I say that it's in our own hands if we are operating at less than our potential. So, sometime, when you're at a loss for something to do, change your life for the better. Crack open the dictionary at a random page and see what's inside.

Seriously.

Chances are you'll find something interesting you didn't know before. Reading the dictionary is like reading a thousand mininovels, for each word has a story.

For example, we often hear someone referred to as a "spinster." Most of us know that we use this term to describe an old, unmarried woman, but few of us know that the name originally had more meaning. The reason that "spinster" came to refer to all old, unmarried woman is because in earlier times old, unmarried women had to spin to earn their livings; old, unmarried women who could not spin nevertheless got lumped in with the rest. Consider, also, the word "whirling dervish." We know that this word is used to refer to dancers or tornadoes. Originally, however, the word referred to Muslim priests who wandered the land as beggars; in addition to whirling dervishes, there existed also howling and dancing dervishes, too.

So, take five minutes and read the dictionary next time you're bored.
Seriously.

31. What is the best title for this passage?

- (A) Unexpected Discoveries
- (B) Through the Eye of a Needle
- (C) A Thousand and One Words
- (D) Boring Facts and Trivia
- (E) On the Origin of the Word "Dervish"

32. How would you describe the author's tone in this piece?

- (A) humorous and trivial
- (B) adamant and angry
- (C) friendly yet tired
- (D) amusing yet serious
- (E) sulky and sullen

33. Who does the author say is responsible for the state of our lives?

- (A) the government
- (B) McDonald's
- (C) television
- (D) educators
- (E) We, ourselves

34. Why does the author give the word *seriously* in line 12 its own paragraph?

- (A) The author thinks the reader will take his/her advice seriously; therefore s/he uses *seriously* to indicate s/he has made a joke.
- (B) The author must include nine paragraphs in the article and is cheating.
- (C) The author wishes the reader to look up the word *seriously* in a dictionary.
- (D) The author anticipates that the reader will scoff at the author's advice; the author wishes to convey serious intent of his/her advice.
- (E) The author desires to confuse the reader at all costs.

35. Which of the following words best defines the phrase *lumped in*?

- (A) left out
- (B) copied
- (C) combined with
- (D) evolved
- (E) destroyed

Existentialism is a philosophy that focuses only on the actions that we humans make in the physical world that surrounds us. Because it admits no afterlife of any sort, Existentialism takes the world very seriously; every decision forces the Existentialist to ponder deeply the consequences. She only gets one shot at life, so everything depends on her getting it right the first time. According to its tenets, life is absurd and filled with actions that seem pointless, futile, and ceaselessly endless.

Camus illustrates Existentialism using the example of Sisyphus from Greek mythology. Sisyphus vastly enjoyed life but held little respect for the gods. Upon his deathbed, Sisyphus instructed his wife to leave his body unburied as a gesture of anger and resentment at dying. She agreed to do as he said, but when he died, she reneged on her word. Upon waking in Hades, Sisyphus knew immediately that his wife had betrayed him, and he asked permission from King Hades to go revenge himself upon her. Hades agreed on condition that Sisyphus return to the underworld immediately after getting his revenge. However, as soon as Sisyphus reached the earth's surface, he chose to give up his revenge and refused to return to the underworld. Only after great efforts did King Hades recapture his prisoner.

As punishment for his hubris or conceitedness, King Hades created a special task for Sisyphus. He now spends eternity rolling an enormous rock up a great hill, only to have it come crashing down immediately upon reaching the hill's summit. Sisyphus' task illustrates clearly the tenets of Existentialism outlined here. Let's see how.

36. According to the article, the story of Sisyphus comes from _____.

- (A) old wives' tales
- (B) Japanese tradition
- (C) Indian lore

- (D) Roman history
- (E) Greek myth

37. What does Sisyphus initially want to do when he returns to earth? (A) Stay alive.

- (B) Get revenge on his brother. (C) Punish his wife
- (D) See his family.
- (E) Negotiate a treaty.

38. Which of the following most nearly means *tenets* as used in line 5? (A) beliefs

- (B) rules
- (C) portable buildings
- (D) woven strands of rope to catch fish
- (E) numbers

39. What will probably come after paragraph three? (A) background information about Camus

- (B) more information about Sisyphus' escapades
- (C) nothing; the author has made his/her point
- (D) a discussion of how Sisyphus' story illustrates the tenets of Existentialism
- (E) an opinion from a philosophy professor at the University of Kentucky

40. Which of the following words best represents an antonym for *hubris*? (A) daring

- (B) fearful
- (C) piety
- (D) miserable
- (E) perturbed