

**The SAT**®

**ĐỀ 1:**

**ĐỀ THI CHÍNH THỨC NĂM 2022**

**PHẦN ĐÁP ÁN**

**Module I: Reading Test**

**Passage 1**

This passage is adapted from *Michael Ondaatje, The Cat’s Table*.

The novel’s narrator reflects on his journey as a young boy travelling by ship from the former British colony Ceylon—now Sri Lanka—to England during the 1950s. Ramadhin and Cassius are friends he made during the journey.

His name was Mr. Fonseka and he was travelling to England to be a teacher. I would visit him every few days. He knew passages from all kinds of books he could recite by heart, and he sat at his desk all day wondering about them, thinking what he could say about them. I knew scarcely a thing about the world of literature, but he welcomed me with unusual and interesting stories, stopping abruptly in mid-tale and saying that someday I should find out what happened after that. “You will like it, I think. Perhaps he will find the eagle.” Or, “They will escape the maze with the help of someone they are about to meet…” Often, during the night, while stalking the ship with Ramadhin and Cassius, I’d attempt to add to the bare bones of an adventure Mr. Fonseka had left unfinished.

He was gracious, with his quietness. When he spoke, he was tentative and languid. Even then I understood his rareness by the pace of his gestures. He stood up only when it was essential, as if he were a sick cat. He was not used to public effort, even though he was now going to be a part of a public world as a teacher of literature and history in England.

I tried to coax him up on deck a few times, but his porthole and what he could see through it seemed enough nature for him. With his books, some bottled Kelani River water, as well as a few family photographs, he had no need to leave his time capsule. I would visit that room if the day was dull, and he would at some point begin reading to me. It was the anonymity of the stories and the poems that went deepest into me. And the curl of a rhyme was something new. I had not thought to believe he was actually quoting something written with care, in some far country, centuries earlier. He had lived in Colombo all his life, and his manner and accent were a product of the island, but at the same time he had this wide-ranging knowledge of books. He’d sing a song from the Azores or recite lines from an Irish play.

I brought Cassius and Ramadhin to meet him. He had become curious about them, and he made me tell him of our adventures on the ship. He beguiled them as well, especially Ramadhin. Mr. Fonseka seemed to draw forth an assurance or a calming quality from the books he read. He’d gaze into an unimaginable distance (one could almost see the dates flying off the calendar) and quote lines written in stone or papyrus. I suppose he remembered these things to clarify his own opinions, like a man buttoning up his own sweater to give warmth just to himself. Mr. Fonseka would not be a wealthy man. And it would be a spare life he would be certain to lead as a schoolteacher. But he had a serenity that came with the choice of the life he wanted to live. And this serenity and certainty I have seen only among those who have the armour of books close by.

I am aware of the pathos and the irony that come with such a portrait. All those foxed Penguin editions of Orwell and Gissing and the translations of Lucretius with their purple borders that he was bringing with him. He must have believed it would be a humble but good life for an Asian living in England, where something like his Latin grammar could be a distinguishing sword.

I wonder what happened to him. Every few years, whenever I remember, I will look up any reference to Fonseka in a library. I do know that Ramadhin kept in touch with him during his early years in England. But I did not. Though I did realize that people like Mr. Fonseka before us like innocent knights in a more dangerous time, and on the very same path we ourselves were taking now, and at every step there were no doubt the same lessons, not poems, to learn brutally by heart.

I think about Mr. Fonseka at those English schools wearing his buttoned sweater to protect himself from English weather, and wonder how long he stayed there, and if he did really stay “forever.” Or whether in the end he could no longer survive it, even though for him it was “the centre of culture,” and instead returned home on an Air Lanka flight that took only two-thirds of a day, to begin again, teaching in a place like Nugegoda. London returned. Were all those memorized paragraphs and stanzas of the European canon he brought back the equivalent of a bottle of river water?

**Question 1:** Over the course of the passage, the narrator’s focus shifts from

**A.** a description of the internal world of a character to an expression of sympathy for that character.

**B.** a recollection of interactions with a character to speculation about that character’s life.

**C.** the discussion of a character’s history to a recounting of an important turning point.

**D.** the narration of a childhood experience to that event’s impact on the narrator’s life.

**Explanation:**

**Choice B is the best answer** because the passage begins by recounting the narrator’s direct interactions and memories of Mr. Fonseka during the ship voyage—his mannerisms, stories, and influence—and then shifts to speculation about Mr. Fonseka’s later life, wondering what became of him in England and whether he returned home. This matches a movement from recollection to conjecture about the character’s future.

Choice A is incorrect because although the narrator does express sympathy for Mr. Fonseka, the passage does not primarily shift from describing the character’s internal world to sympathy; instead, the sympathy is present throughout and not the main structural change.

Choice C is incorrect because the passage does not focus on a chronological history followed by a single turning point. Rather, it moves from past memories to reflective speculation.

Choice D is incorrect because the passage does not mainly emphasize the impact of the childhood experience on the narrator’s own life; the focus remains on Mr. Fonseka and what may have happened to him.

**Correct Answer: B.**

**Question 2:** The narrator indicates that his acquaintance with Mr. Fonseka influenced him because Mr. Fonseka



**A.** inspired him to become a writer.

**B.** motivated him to pursue teaching.

**C.** taught him to memorize stories.

**D.** introduced him to literature.

**Explanation:**

**Choice D) is the best answer** because the passage clearly shows that Mr. Fonseka was the narrator’s first meaningful connection to books, stories, and poems. The narrator explicitly says, “I knew scarcely a thing about the world of literature,” and then describes how Mr. Fonseka read to him, recited passages, and left stories unfinished, which deeply affected him. This demonstrates that Mr. Fonseka introduced him to literature.

Choice A) is incorrect because the passage never states that the narrator was inspired to become a writer. While he imagines continuing stories, this reflects imagination, not a clear decision or influence toward becoming a writer.

Choice B) is incorrect because there is no indication that Mr. Fonseka motivated the narrator to pursue teaching. Teaching is mentioned only as Mr. Fonseka’s own future profession, not as a path the narrator considers.

Choice C) is incorrect because although Mr. Fonseka memorizes and recites passages, the focus is not on teaching the narrator to memorize stories, but on exposing him to the world of literature and ideas.

**Correct Answer: D.**

**Question 3:** The narrator’s use of “stalking” in line 12 has the main effect of

**A.** conveying a sense of fear shared by the narrator and his friends.

**B.** bringing a feeling of intrigue to an otherwise ordinary activity.

**C.** characterizing the friendship between the narrator and his friends.

**D.** portraying the narrator as overly dramatic.

**Explanation:**

**Choice B) is the best answer** because the word “stalking” adds a sense of mystery and excitement to what is essentially a normal activity—walking around the ship at night. By using a term often associated with secrecy or suspense, the narrator elevates the experience, making it feel adventurous and intriguing rather than routine.

**Choice A) is incorrect** because there is no evidence in the passage that the narrator or his friends feel afraid. The context suggests imagination and playfulness, not fear.

**Choice C) is incorrect** because while the narrator mentions Ramadhin and Cassius, the word “stalking” does not primarily define or explain their friendship; instead, it modifies the mood of the activity they share.

**Choice D) is incorrect** because the narrator’s language reflects youthful imagination rather than exaggeration meant to seem excessive or theatrical. The tone is reflective, not self-critical or mocking.

**Correct Answer: B.**

**Question 4:** The second paragraph (lines 15–20) mainly serves to

**A.** illustrate how certain traits in a character can undermine a character’s goals.

**B.** provide essential details about a character’s past that foreshadow the character’s future.

**C.** reveal personal information about a character that explains the character’s internal conflict.

**D.** demonstrate how a character’s external mannerisms reflect that character’s inner being.

**Explanation:**

**Choice D) is the best answer** because the second paragraph focuses on Mr. Fonseka’s quiet movements, tentative speech, and limited physical activity, using these external mannerisms to reflect his inward nature. Descriptions such as his languid gestures, minimal movement, and comparison to “a sick cat” emphasize his gentle, withdrawn, and contemplative personality, showing how his outward behavior mirrors his inner life.

**Choice A) is incorrect** because the paragraph does not suggest that Mr. Fonseka’s traits undermine his goals. Although he is quiet and unaccustomed to public effort, there is no indication that these qualities prevent him from becoming a teacher.

**Choice B) is incorrect** because the paragraph does not provide details about Mr. Fonseka’s past or clearly foreshadow his future; instead, it focuses on his present demeanor.

**Choice C) is incorrect** because the paragraph does not reveal an internal conflict. Rather than showing struggle or tension, it presents a calm and consistent alignment between Mr. Fonseka’s personality and behavior.

**Correct Answer: D.**

**Question 5:** The narrator indicates that he visited Mr. Fonseka’s cabin on the ship when the narrator

**A.** felt there was nothing else more interesting to do.

**B.** had concerns about Mr. Fonseka’s reclusive habits.

**C.** wanted to borrow some of Mr. Fonseka’s books.

**D.** had not remembered the ending to a story he enjoyed.

**Explanation:**

**Choice A) is the best answer** because the narrator explicitly states, “I would visit that room **if the day was dull**,” indicating that he went to Mr. Fonseka’s cabin when he had nothing particularly interesting to do. This directly supports the idea that the visits occurred out of boredom or a lack of other activities.

**Choice B) is incorrect** because although Mr. Fonseka is described as quiet and reclusive, the narrator does not express concern about these habits or suggest that they motivate his visits.

**Choice C) is incorrect** because the passage never indicates that the narrator went to borrow books. Instead, Mr. Fonseka reads aloud to him.

**Choice D) is incorrect** because while Mr. Fonseka leaves stories unfinished, the narrator does not say he visited the cabin specifically to learn their endings.

**Correct Answer: A.**

**Question 6:** In the passage, the narrator finds it a significant contradiction in Mr. Fonseka’s character that he

**A.** recites works about the outdoors but rarely leaves his room.

**B.** enjoys sharing stories but does not finish telling them.

**C.** has read extensively about the world but has experienced very little of it.

**D.** has chosen to pursue a career as a teacher but has shown small interest in it.

**Explanation:**

**Choice C) is the best answer** because the narrator repeatedly emphasizes the contrast between Mr. Fonseka’s vast literary knowledge and his limited direct experience of the world. Although Mr. Fonseka has “wide-ranging knowledge of books,” can quote works from many cultures, and sees England as “the centre of culture,” he lives a physically constrained, inward life, rarely leaving his room and carrying only symbolic connections to places (such as bottled river water). This contrast is presented as ironic and significant in the narrator’s reflection.

**Choice A) is incorrect** because while Mr. Fonseka does stay in his room and reads widely, the passage does not focus on works specifically about the outdoors, nor does it frame this as a central contradiction.

**Choice B) is incorrect** because Mr. Fonseka’s habit of leaving stories unfinished is portrayed as playful and inspirational, not as a contradiction in his character.

**Choice D) is incorrect** because there is no indication that Mr. Fonseka lacks interest in teaching; in fact, he appears deeply committed to literature and accepts the life he has chosen with serenity.

**Correct Answer: C.**

**Question 7:** Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?

**A.** lines 5–9 (“I knew . . . that”)

**B.** lines 18–20 (“He was . . . England”)

**C.** lines 21–23 (“I tried . . . for him”)

**D.** lines 31–33 (“He had . . . books”)

**Explanation:**

**Choice D) is the best answer** because lines 31–33 (“He had a serenity that came with the choice of the life he wanted to live. And this serenity and certainty I have seen only among those who have the armour of books close by.”) directly support the idea that Mr. Fonseka relies on books as his primary source of strength and understanding. This reinforces the contradiction identified in the previous question: although Mr. Fonseka has extensive knowledge of the world through literature, his confidence and sense of certainty come almost entirely from books rather than lived experience.

**Choice A) is incorrect** because lines 5–9 focus on the narrator’s introduction to literature, not on a contradiction within Mr. Fonseka’s character.

**Choice B) is incorrect** because lines 18–20 describe Mr. Fonseka’s physical mannerisms and discomfort with public effort, not the contrast between knowledge and experience.

**Choice C) is incorrect** because lines 21–23 show that Mr. Fonseka prefers staying in his room, but they do not emphasize the role of books as the “armour” that replaces real-world experience, which is central to the contradiction.

**Correct Answer: D.**

**Question 8:** In the passage, the narrator speculates that Mr. Fonseka likely believed that his knowledge of literary classics would

**A.** enable him to better understand English people.

**B.** earn him respect in his new country.

**C.** bring him great financial success.

**D.** be a gateway to many possible professions.

**Explanation:**

**Choice B) is the best answer** because the narrator suggests that Mr. Fonseka believed his mastery of the European literary canon would give him distinction and status in England. The phrase “something like his Latin grammar could be a **distinguishing sword**” implies that Mr. Fonseka saw his literary knowledge as a means of earning recognition or respect in a society where he might otherwise be marginalized.

**Choice A) is incorrect** because the passage does not suggest that Mr. Fonseka expected literature to help him personally understand English people; instead, it emphasizes how literature might set him apart in England.

**Choice C) is incorrect** because the narrator explicitly notes that Mr. Fonseka “would not be a wealthy man” and anticipated a “spare life,” ruling out financial success as a motivation.

**Choice D) is incorrect** because Mr. Fonseka’s path is clearly defined—he intends to be a schoolteacher—and there is no suggestion that literature would open multiple professional opportunities.

**Correct Answer: B.**

**Question 9:** Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?

**A.** Lines 43–47 (“I suppose . . . schoolteacher”)

**B.** Lines 47–50 (“But he . . . close by”)

**C.** Lines 54–57 (“He must . . . sword”)

**D.** Lines 75–77 (“Were . . . water”)

**Explanation:**

**Choice C) is the best answer** because lines 54–57 (“He must have believed it would be a humble but good life for an Asian living in England, where something like his Latin grammar could be a distinguishing sword”) directly support the idea that Mr. Fonseka believed his knowledge of literary classics would earn him respect in England. The phrase “distinguishing sword” clearly suggests that he saw his learning as a way to stand out and gain recognition in his new country.

**Choice A) is incorrect** because lines 43–47 focus on Mr. Fonseka’s financial prospects and the simplicity of his life, not on how others might view or respect him.

**Choice B) is incorrect** because lines 47–50 emphasize his inner serenity and reliance on books, rather than his belief that literary knowledge would earn him status in England.

**Choice D) is incorrect** because lines 75–77 reflect the narrator’s later questioning and symbolism, not Mr. Fonseka’s original belief about the value of his literary knowledge.

**Correct Answer: C. Lines 54–57 (“He must . . . sword”)**

**Question 10:** When the narrator refers to “the equivalent of a bottle of river water” in line 75, he is suggesting that the literature Mr. Fonseka memorized will be a

**A.** memento of a place left behind.

**B.** necessary item for personal use.

**C.** charm bringing good luck.

**D.** reminder of past enjoyments.

**Explanation:**

**Choice A) is the best answer** because the narrator compares the memorized European literature to the “bottled Kelani River water,” which earlier in the passage clearly represents a symbolic keepsake from home. By asking whether the memorized canon would be “the equivalent of a bottle of river water,” the narrator suggests that these literary passages would function as a **memento of a place and culture left behind**, carried for emotional or symbolic value rather than practical use.

**Choice B) is incorrect** because the comparison is symbolic, not literal; the literature is not described as something required for daily survival.

**Choice C) is incorrect** because there is no indication that the memorized literature is meant to bring luck or ward off misfortune.

**Choice D) is incorrect** because the phrase refers to cultural memory and identity rather than simple enjoyment or pleasure from the past.

**Correct Answer: A. memento of a place left behind.**