

THE BEST SAT PREP COURSE EVER
READING SKILLS SECTION:
Paired History Reading Passages

Directions: Take these passages on your own (pacing is approximately 13 minutes for the passages and all questions). Then, review our videos on Evidence Based Reading Skills and we'll discuss all the strategies to use in order to crack these questions and others like them.

These passages are adapted from the 1882 national debate on Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. Passage 1 is a Congressional Debate by Senator John Miller of California. Passage 2 is from a letter by Wong Ar Chong, a Chinese American Immigrant, in response to Senator James Blaine of Maine's opinion on the Act. The Chinese Exclusion Act prohibited the immigration of Chinese laborers.

Passage 1

Line

The defeat of this measure now is a shout of welcome across the Pacific Ocean to a myriad host of these strange people to come and occupy the land, and it is a rebuke to the American citizens, who have so long stood guard upon the western shore of this continent, and who, seeing the danger, have with a fortitude and forbearance most admirable, raised and maintained the only barrier against a stealthy, strategic, but peaceful invasion as destructive in its results and more potent for evil than an invasion by an army with banners...

The attempt to merge these two great and diverse civilizations must result, as both reason and experience teaches, in the displacement of one or the other. Like the mixing of oil and water, neither will absorb the other. The Chinese have been established on the Pacific coast for more than a quarter of a century, and have displayed every phase and characteristic of their ancient civilization, all this time under the pressure of American laws and the example of American methods, brought into direct contact with western civilization and subjected to the powerful influence of modern thought and Christian teaching; and they have remained as fixed in their habits, methods, and modes of life as if they had all this time lived in the Mountains of the Moon.

It is a fact of history that wherever the Chinese have gone they have always taken their habits, methods, and civilization with them. They remain Chinese always and everywhere; changeless, fixed and unalterable. The men of every other race or nation who go abroad, sooner or later, adopt the civilization of the people by whom they are surrounded, and assimilate with or are absorbed in the mass of humanity with which they come in constant contact...

Forty centuries of Chinese life has made the Chinaman what he is. An eternity of years cannot make him such a man as the Anglo-Saxon...

Passage 2

In your Declaration of Independence it is asserted that all men are born free and equal, and it is understood by the civilized world that the United States of America is a free country, but I fear there is a backward step being taken by the government.

The able Senator from Maine, in aping that selfish stump speaker, Dennis Kearney, says the Chinese must go, and gives his reasons. Many things he says I agree to, a great many more I do not. I think he takes a wrong way to rectify the difficulty. I claim for my countrymen the right to come to this country as long as other foreigners do. If they make themselves a nuisance, establish proper health laws and enforce them, and if they don't like them let them go back home again, but they must conform to American ideas of law and order if they wish to stay...

My idea is that if the Chinese are allowed to come to this country and enjoy the same privileges as the people from any other foreign land, they will educate themselves and conform to your laws and manners, and become as good citizens as any other race...

If you do not allow it you go against the principles of George Washington, the father of his country, and contrary to the principles of your government.

You go against the principles of George Washington, you go against the American flag, and you act in conflict with Christian charity and principle...

I don't know who are opposed to the Chinese, whether they are Americans or foreigners, but I think they are as much foreigners as the Chinese themselves. I think so because I have traveled in America, North, South, East, and West, and have never found native Americans as much opposed to Chinese as foreigners are.

1. In the first paragraph, the main purpose of Miller's discussion of The Chinese Exclusion Act is to
 - A) Suggest that defeating the measure would promote hospitality.
 - B) Characterize legislative inaction on immigration as distressing
 - C) Account for the image of Chinese immigrants as underhanded and dangerous
 - D) Provide context for Miller's defense of segregation in American society
2. Which choice provides the best description of a technique that Miller uses throughout the passage to advance his main point?
 - A) He criticizes his opponents by refuting their lines of reasoning
 - B) He emphasizes the reasonableness of his viewpoint by presenting it as if it is universally held
 - C) He illustrates his ideas with comparisons, analogies, and metaphors
 - D) He argues for the inevitability of a particular law by discussing its natural motivations
3. In context, what is the main effect of Miller's use of the word "peaceful" in line 9?
 - A) It acknowledges one positive quality of Chinese immigration
 - B) It emphasizes his ambivalence toward immigrant workers
 - C) It evokes a sense of irony because he believes the invasion is actually threatening
 - D) It highlights an inconsistency in the logic of those who oppose the Exclusion Act
4. Based on Passage 2, Chong would most likely characterize the position taken in Miller's final claim in Passage 1 ("Forty...Anglo-Saxon") as
 - A) Less unflattering toward the Chinese than it might initially seem
 - B) Inaccurate, as many Americans feel their country is in jeopardy
 - C) Inconsistent with the ideals of equality forwarded by America's founding fathers
 - D) Somewhat persuasive but irrelevant to the issue of immigration
5. Which choice identifies a central tension between the two passages?
 - A) Miller proposes changes to Federal law on immigration, but Chong argues that such changes enjoy little popular support.
 - B) Miller expresses concern about the effects of segregation laws while Chong dismisses those concerns as unfounded.
 - C) Miller contends that the various races are not by nature equal while Chong asserts that equality is fundamental to a peaceful existence.
 - D) Miller denounces the possibility of Chinese assimilation, while Chong proposes conformity as a requisite condition for Chinese inclusion.
6. Based on Passage 2, Chong would be most likely to agree with which claim about the controversy over Chinese immigration?
 - A) Further legislative action could help ameliorate local conflicts
 - B) It can be ended only if Chinese are fully educated in America
 - C) It is fueled by persons living outside the United States
 - D) It is best solved by increasing the number of Chinese immigrants.

7. Which choice provides the best evidence for the previous question?
- A) Lines 48-50 (“I claim...do”).
 - B) Lines 50-52 (“If they...them”).
 - C) Lines 58-61 (“they...race”).
 - D) Lines 69-75 (“I don’t...are”).
8. As used in line 21, “direct” most nearly means
- A) straightforward
 - B) regular
 - C) absolute
 - D) unwavering
9. The main purpose of each passage is to
- A) stake a claim and convince the audience of a viewpoint.
 - B) undermine the claims made by the opposing argument.
 - C) prove why Chinese people do not belong in America.
 - D) defend Chinese immigrants from the harmful repercussions of the Chinese Exclusion Act.
10. Both passages discuss the issue of Chinese Exclusion in relationship to
- A) religious tolerance.
 - B) provisions set forth by America’s founding fathers.
 - C) the integration of other immigrant groups.
 - D) international diplomacy.
11. Lines 62-68 of Passage 2 and lines 4-11 of Passage 1 primarily function to help each speaker
- A) question the facts of the opposing viewpoint.
 - B) highlight the inability of his opponent to think reasonably.
 - C) undermine the opposing argument.
 - D) express skepticism of the opposition’s motives.

Answer Key:

1. B
2. C
3. C
4. C
5. D
6. A
7. B
8. B
9. A
10. C
11. C