Name_____
Date_____

• Passage 1 Level 6

Passage

When we are young, we learn that tigers and sharks are dangerous animals. We might be scared of them because they are big and powerful. As we get older, however, we learn that sometimes the most dangerous animals are also the smallest animals. In fact, the animal that kills the most people every year is one that you have probably killed yourself many times: the mosquito.

While it may seem that all mosquitoes are biters, this is not actually the case. Male mosquitoes eat plant nectar. On the other hand, female mosquitoes feed on animal blood. They need this blood to live and produce eggs. When a female mosquito bites a human being, it transmits a small amount of saliva into the blood. This saliva may or may not contain a deadly disease. The result of the bite can be as minor as an itchy bump or as serious as death.

Because a mosquito can bite many people in the course of its life, it can carry diseases from one person to another very easily. Two of the most deadly diseases carried by mosquitoes are malaria and yellow fever. More than 700 million people become sick from these diseases every year. At least 2 million of these people will die from these diseases.

Many scientists are working on safer and better ways to kill mosquitoes, but so far, there is no sure way to protect everyone in the world from their deadly bites. Mosquito nets can be placed over beds to protect people against being bitten. These nets help people stay safe at night, but they do not kill any mosquitoes. Mosquitoes have many natural enemies like bats, birds, dragonflies, and certain kinds of fish. Bringing more of these animals into places where mosquitoes live might help to cut down the amount of mosquitoes in that area. This is a natural solution, but it does not always work very well. Mosquitoes can also be killed with poisons or sprays. Even though these sprays kill mosquitoes, they may also harm other plants or animals.

Although mosquitoes may not seem as scary as larger, more powerful animals, they are far more dangerous to human beings. But things are changing. It is highly likely that one day scientists will find a way to keep everyone safe from mosquitoes and the diseases they carry.

Questions

1) According to the author, some people are more afraid of tigers and sharks than mosquitoes because tigers and sharks

   A. kill more people than mosquitoes
   B. are big and powerful
   C. are found all over the world
   D. have no natural enemies

2) Based on the information in paragraph 2, we can understand that

   I. male mosquitoes and female mosquitoes have different eating habits
   II. male mosquitoes are harmless to humans
   III. female mosquitoes are responsible for transmitting diseases to humans

A. I only
B. I and II only
C. II and III only
D. I, II, and III

3) In paragraph 2 the author writes, "This saliva may or may not contain a deadly disease." The purpose of this statement is to

A. oppose a previous argument
B. question an upcoming conclusion
C. confirm a hypothesis
D. support a later statement

4) As used in paragraph 2, **minor** most nearly means

A. insignificant
B. deadly
C. frustrating
D. dangerous

5) Based on information in paragraph 3, it can be understood that if you get sick with malaria or yellow fever, your chances of survival are

A. terrible
B. mediocre
C. good
D. excellent

6) It can be understood that the introduction of dragonflies might reduce the number of flies in a given area because dragonflies

A. work together with mosquitoes
B. kill mosquitoes
C. cannot be killed by poisons or sprays
D. attract bats

7) Which of the following best summarizes the information in paragraph 4?

A. Mosquito nets provide adequate protection from deadly mosquitoes.
B. Poisons and sprays provide adequate protection from deadly mosquitoes.
C. The introduction of the mosquito's natural enemies provides adequate protection from deadly mosquitoes.
D. There is no perfect solution to the mosquito problem.

8) Which of the following words best describes the author's overall attitude towards the prospect of solving the mosquito problem?

A. *despondent*, meaning hopeless or dejected
B. *exasperated*, meaning extremely irritated or annoyed
C. *equivocal*, meaning doubtful or uncertain
D. *optimistic*, meaning hopeful or taking a favorable view

Answers and Explanations

1) **B**
In the first paragraph the author says, "We might be scared of them because they are big and powerful." In the last paragraph, the author says that we might be more afraid of tigers and sharks than we are of mosquitoes because tigers and sharks are "larger, and more powerful." This lets us know that **(B)** is correct. In paragraph 1, the author tells us that of all animals, the mosquito "kills the most people every year." This eliminates **(A)**. The passage does not contain information to support choices **(C)** and **(D)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

2) **D**
In paragraph 2 the author writes, "Male mosquitoes eat plant nectar. On the other hand, female mosquitoes feed on animal blood." Using this information, we can understand that male mosquitoes and female mosquitoes have different eating habits. This supports **option (I)**. In paragraph 2 the author writes, "Male mosquitoes eat plant nectar. On the other hand, female mosquitoes feed on animal blood. They need this blood to live and produce eggs. When a female mosquito bites a human being, it transmits a small amount of saliva into the blood. This saliva may or may not contain a deadly disease." Since male mosquitoes eat plant nectar (and not animal blood), and it is the bite that causes the transmission of diseases, we can understand that male mosquitoes do not bite humans. Therefore they are harmless to humans. This supports **option (II)**. In paragraph 2 the author writes, "Male mosquitoes eat plant nectar. On the other hand, female mosquitoes feed on animal blood. They need this blood to live and produce eggs. When a female mosquito bites a human being, it transmits a small amount of saliva into the blood. This saliva may or may not contain a deadly disease." Since male mosquitoes eat plant nectar (and not animal blood), and it is the bite that causes the transmission of diseases, we can understand that female mosquitoes are responsible for transmitting diseases to humans. This supports **option (III)**. Therefore **(D)** is correct.

3) **D**
To answer this question correctly, it helps to use context. At the end of paragraph 2 the author writes, "This saliva may or may not contain a deadly disease." In the next sentence the author writes, "The result of the bite can be as minor as an itchy bump or as serious as death." Using this information, we can understand that the reason why the result of the bite can be as minor as an itchy bump or as serious as death is because the mosquito's saliva may or may not contain a deadly disease. This lets us know that the purpose of the statement in question is to support a later statement, which, in this case, is the next sentence. Choice **(D)** is correct. The passage does not provide information to support choices **(A)**, **(B)**. and **(C)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

4) **A**
minor *(adjective):* relatively small in size, quantity, or degree.
In paragraph 2, the author says that when a mosquito bites a person, “The result of the bite can be as minor as an itchy bump or as serious as death.” Here, the author contrasts an itchy bump with death. An itchy bump is not very serious when compared to death. An itchy bump is a small, *insignificant* problem, while death is aptly described as "serious." This makes **(A)** the correct choice. Although itchy bumps can be *frustrating*, this is not as good a contrast for "serious" as insignificant. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect. **(B)** and **(D)** are incorrect because the author contrasts the itchy bumps with deadly ones. The author means to show that an itchy bump is harmless, not *deadly* or *dangerous*.

5) **D**

At the end of paragraph 3 the author writes, "More than 700 million people become sick from these diseases every year. At least 2 million of these people will die from these diseases." This lets us know that of the 700 million people who become sick, only around 2 million do not survive. Because 2 million is an extremely small percentage of 700 million (2/700 or .002%), we can understand that if you get sick with malaria or yellow fever, your chances of survival are excellent. This means **(D)** is correct. The passage does not provide information to support choices **(A)**, **(B)**. and **(C)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

6) **B**
In paragraph 4, the author says that, “Mosquitoes have many natural enemies like bats, birds, dragonflies, and certain kinds of fish. Bringing more of these animals into places where mosquitoes live might help to cut down the amount of mosquitoes in that area.” **(B)** is the only choice that uses information supported by the passage to provide a reason why dragonflies would reduce (or make less) the number of mosquitoes in a given area. Therefore it is correct. The passage does not provide information to support choices **(A)**, **(C)**, and **(D)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

7) **D**
In paragraph 4, the author writes, "Many scientists are working on safer and better ways to kill mosquitoes, but so far, there is no sure way to protect everyone in the world from their deadly bites." The author continues to discuss possible solutions and their respective drawbacks. This lets us know there is not perfect solution to the mosquito problem. Choice **(D)** is correct. The passage does not provide information to support choices **(A)**, **(B)**, and **(C)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

8) **D**
In the final paragraph the author concludes the passage by saying, "But things are changing. It is highly likely that one day scientists will find a way to keep everyone safe from mosquitoes and the diseases they carry." This lets us know that although the problem may look grim now, there is a good chance that scientists will be able to solve it in the future. Thus, the author's attitude towards the prospect of solving the mosquito problem can best be described as *optimistic*. Therefore **(D)** is correct. *Despondent* and *exasperated* are too negative to accurately describe the author's attitude. Therefore choices **(A)** and **(B)** are incorrect. The author does not express uncertainty about the prospect of solving the mosquito problem. Therefore the author is not *equivocal*. Choice **(C)** is incorrect.