

SAT Reading & Writing

Text, Structure, and Purpose 1

Question # ID

1.1 c966ad55

The following text is from Srimati Svarna Kumari Devi's 1894 novel *The Fatal Garland* (translated by A. Christina Albers in 1910). Shakti is walking near a riverbank that she visited frequently during her childhood.

She crossed the woods she knew so well. The trees seemed to extend their branches like welcoming arms. They greeted her as an old friend. Soon she reached the river-side.

Which choice best describes the function of the underlined portion in the text as a whole?

- A. It suggests that Shakti feels uncomfortable near the river.
- B. It indicates that Shakti has lost her sense of direction in the woods.
- C. It emphasizes Shakti's sense of belonging in the landscape.
- D. It conveys Shakti's appreciation for her long-term friendships.

1.2 066a3295

Researchers have found a nearly 164,000-year-old molar from a member of the archaic human species known as Denisovans in a cave in Laos, suggesting that Denisovans lived in a wider range of environments than indicated by earlier evidence. Before the discovery, Denisovans were thought to have lived only at high altitudes in relatively cold climates in what are now Russia and China, but the discovery of the tooth in Laos suggests that they may have lived at low altitudes in relatively warm climates in Southeast Asia as well.

Which choice best states the function of the underlined portion in the text as a whole?

- A. It dismisses as untrue the research presented in the previous sentence.
- B. It defines a term used in the description that follows in the rest of the sentence.
- C. It emphasizes the main goal of the research introduced in the previous sentence.
- D. It provides context that clarifies the significance of the information that follows in the rest of the sentence.

1.3 e13171c4

Historians Tiya Miles and Roy E. Finkenbine have both documented the assistance Indigenous peoples gave to Black freedom seekers leaving the South before the US Civil War. Much of the historical evidence of this help comes from Indigenous oral traditions and from autobiographies written by the freedom seekers. One such narrative is Jermain Loguen's autobiography, which tells about how Neshnabé (Potawatomi) villagers offered him food, lodging, and directions during his 1835 journey from Tennessee to Canada.

Which choice best describes the function of the underlined sentence?

- A. It provides an example of an autobiography that describes help given by an Indigenous people to a Black freedom seeker.
- B. It shows why Loguen decided to write in great detail about his experiences traveling from Tennessee to Canada in his autobiography.
- C. It argues that autobiographies are particularly important sources of information about geography in the United States before the Civil War.
- D. It suggests that most historians believe that Neshnabé villagers were more successful in assisting freedom seekers than other people were.

1.4 e929fe98

Composer Florence Price won first place for her score *Symphony in E Minor* at the 1932 Wanamaker Foundation Awards. The piece was performed the following year by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, a significant recognition of its quality. Price continued to compose many musical pieces throughout her career, blending traditional Black spirituals with classical European Romantic musical traditions. In recent years, Price's concertos and symphonies have been performed and recorded by several major orchestras, further preserving her work for others to enjoy.

Which choice best states the main purpose of the text?

- A. To provide examples of Price's importance as a composer
- B. To argue that more major orchestras should perform Price's compositions
- C. To describe the musical styles that inspired many of Price's symphonies
- D. To compare Price's scores with those of classical European composers

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1.5 ea971260

The following text is adapted from Louisa May Alcott's 1869 novel *An Old-Fashioned Girl*. Polly, a teenager, is visiting her friend Fanny.

Fanny's friends did not interest Polly much; she was rather afraid of them [because] they seemed so much older and wiser than herself, even those younger in years. They talked about things of which she knew nothing and when Fanny tried to explain, she didn't find them interesting; indeed, some of them rather shocked and puzzled her.

Which choice best states the main purpose of the text?

- A. To portray Polly's reaction to Fanny's friends
- B. To identify the topics Polly talks about with Fanny's friends
- C. To explain how Fanny met some of her friends
- D. To illustrate how Fanny's friends feel about Polly

1.6 c8603ed7

San Francisco is known for the colorful murals painted on many of its buildings. The densest collection of murals is found on Balmy Alley in the Mission District neighborhood. In the 1970s, Latina artists painted vivid scenes of community life on walls along this block. As the original murals have faded, later generations of artists have painted new ones over them. As a result, Balmy Alley has become a living showcase of San Francisco's artistic spirit, with its murals reflecting changes in the cultural life of the city.

Which choice best states the main purpose of the text?

- A. To compare the Balmy Alley murals to other murals in San Francisco
- B. To offer an overview of the history and importance of the Balmy Alley murals
- C. To urge people to protect the murals of San Francisco from decay
- D. To describe the rise of mural painting in San Francisco beginning in the 1970s

1.7 a68239ed

The following text is adapted from Oscar Wilde's 1897 nonfiction work *De Profundis*.

People whose desire is solely for self-realisation never know where they are going. They can't know. In one sense of the word it is of course necessary to know oneself: that is the first achievement of knowledge. But to recognise that the soul of a man is unknowable, is the ultimate achievement of wisdom. The final mystery is oneself. When one has weighed the sun in the balance, and measured the steps of the moon, and mapped out the seven heavens star by star, there still remains oneself. Who can calculate the orbit of his own soul?

Which choice best describes the function of the underlined question in the text as a whole?

- A. It reinforces the text's skepticism about the possibility of truly achieving self-knowledge.
- B. It speculates that some readers will share the doubts expressed in the text about the value of self-knowledge.
- C. It cautions readers that the text's directions for how to achieve self-knowledge are hard to follow.
- D. It concedes that the definition of self-knowledge advanced in the text is unpopular.

1.8 a2dd51c1

In most building demolitions, the building materials are destroyed and sent to landfills. City officials in Portland, Oregon, wanted to reduce this waste. The officials passed a law requiring demolition companies to deconstruct some buildings instead. Deconstruction involves carefully taking buildings apart piece by piece. Damage to the materials is avoided so that they can be reused in new constructions. A 2019 study found that 27 percent of materials from deconstructions in Portland were able to be reused. The remaining materials were processed for recycling instead of going to a landfill.

Which choice best states the main purpose of the text?

- A. To explain an effort made by the city of Portland to reduce demolition waste and some results of that effort
- B. To show that popular support for measures that reduce demolition waste has increased since 2019
- C. To argue that building deconstruction is not as effective as other measures at reducing demolition waste
- D. To discuss laws aimed to reduce demolition waste in Portland and compare them to similar laws in other cities

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1.9 48e4021d

The following text is from Holly Goldberg Sloan's 2017 novel *Short*.

More than two years ago my parents bought a piano from some people who were moving to Utah. Mom and Dad gave it to my brothers and me for Christmas. I had to act really happy because it was such a big present, but I pretty much hated the thing from the second it was carried into the hallway upstairs, which is right next to my bedroom. The piano glared at me. It was like a songbird in a cage. It wanted to be set free.

©2017 by Holly Goldberg Sloan

Which choice best states the main purpose of the text?

- A. It explains why the narrator always wanted a piano close to her bedroom.
- B. It establishes how the narrator feels about the piano.
- C. It suggests that the narrator's brothers are talented piano players.
- D. It describes the event that led the narrator's parents to buy a piano.

1.10 0ed94d4c

Jackie Ormes's *Torchy Brown in Dixie to Harlem* (1937–38) was the first comic strip by a Black woman to appear in a widely read newspaper. The strip tells the story of Torchy, a young woman who leaves Mississippi to become a performer in New York City. Torchy's story reflects the experience of the Great Migration (1910–1970), when millions of Black Americans left the South in search of opportunities in other parts of the United States. *Torchy Brown* thus shows how Ormes used comics to comment humorously on issues affecting Black Americans, which she continued to do throughout her career.

Which choice best states the main purpose of the text?

- A. To show how Ormes's *Torchy Brown* inspired other Black women to write comic strips in the 1930s
- B. To illustrate how the subjects Ormes addressed in her comic strips changed over the course of her career
- C. To give an example of how Ormes presented the experiences of Black Americans in her comic strips
- D. To claim that several characters in *Torchy Brown* were based on people that Ormes knew personally

1.11 fcc328c6

Streams and rivers carry soil and rocks from one location to another. But there is another way for these geological materials to move. Scientists call this process "aeolian transport." In aeolian transport, winds move small particles of soil or rock over potentially great distances. Geologist Melisa Diaz and her team studied dust in Antarctica to find out if it was moved by aeolian transport. They discovered that the dust matched geological material in Australia. Aeolian transport had carried it from one continent to another, across thousands of miles of open ocean.

Which choice best describes the function of the underlined portion in the text as a whole?

- A. It presents Melisa Diaz's remarks about difficulties that her team encountered.
- B. It introduces a scientific term that is used in the discussion that follows.
- C. It emphasizes the surprising nature of the findings that are presented.
- D. It explains the difference between two kinds of geological material.

1.12 5e732e67

Many films from the early 1900s have been lost. These losses include several films by the first wave of Black women filmmakers. We know about these lost movies only from small pieces of evidence. For example, an advertisement for Jennie Louise Touissant Welcome's documentary *Doing Their Bit* still exists. There's a reference in a magazine to Tressie Souders's film *A Woman's Error*. And Maria P. Williams's *The Flames of Wrath* is mentioned in a letter and a newspaper article, and one image from the movie was discovered in the 1990s.

Which choice best describes the overall structure of the text?

- A. The text identifies a complex problem, then presents examples of unsuccessful attempts to solve that problem.
- B. The text summarizes a debate among researchers, then gives reasons for supporting one side in that debate.
- C. The text describes a general situation, then illustrates that situation with specific examples.
- D. The text discusses several notable individuals, then explains commonly overlooked differences between those individuals.

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1.13 56ec23a0

Hiroshi Senju is known worldwide for his paintings of waterfalls. These paintings are large and tend not to show the entire waterfall. Instead, Senju focuses on just the point where the falling water reaches the pool below, keeping the top of the waterfall out of view. While Senju's paintings are rooted in art movements originating in the United States, the artist uses traditional Japanese techniques and materials that make his work instantly recognizable.

Which choice best describes the overall structure of the text?

- A. It introduces an artist and then explains some common characteristics of well-known paintings by that artist.
- B. It explains a specific painting technique and then provides examples of artists who use the technique.
- C. It describes a famous painting and then compares it to a lesser-known painting from the same time period.
- D. It gives an opinion on an artist and then suggests multiple reasons why the artist's work has been largely overlooked.

1.14 1c6b1fa0

In 1801, a Blackfoot chief named Ac Ko Mok Ki drew a finely detailed map of the Upper Missouri region. This work demonstrates a vast amount of topographic knowledge, as the map features specific names of mountains and rivers, as well as the first-known sketch of the drainage network of the Missouri River. The map is especially notable because Ac Ko Mok Ki also included details about the numerous tribes that lived in the area.

Which choice best describes the function of the underlined sentence in the text as a whole?

- A. It emphasizes Ac Ko Mok Ki's desire to represent other tribes on the map.
- B. It explains how Ac Ko Mok Ki developed an interest in mapmaking.
- C. It identifies some reasons why the map is impressive.
- D. It details how the map was used for hunting and trading purposes.

1.15 1782cdd7

In many agricultural environments, the banks of streams are kept forested to protect water quality, but it's been unclear what effects these forests may have on stream biodiversity. To investigate the issue, biologist Xingli Giam and colleagues studied an Indonesian oil palm plantation, comparing the species richness of forested streams with that of nonforested streams. Giam and colleagues found that species richness was significantly higher in forested streams, a finding the researchers attribute to the role leaf litter plays in sheltering fish from predators and providing food resources.

Which choice best states the main purpose of the text?

- A. It discusses research intended to settle a debate about how agricultural yields can be increased without negative effects on water quality.
- B. It explains the differences between stream-protection strategies used in oil palm plantations and stream-protection strategies used in other kinds of agricultural environments.
- C. It describes findings that challenge a previously held view about how fish that inhabit streams in agricultural environments attempt to avoid predators.
- D. It presents a study that addresses an unresolved question about the presence of forests along streams in agricultural environments.

1.16 02e49a0c

Genetic studies have led researchers to suggest that turtles are most closely related to the group that includes modern crocodiles. But studies of fossils have suggested instead that turtles are most closely related to other groups, such as the one that contains modern snakes. However, many of the fossil studies have relied on incomplete data sets. For a 2022 investigation, biologist Tiago R. Simões and colleagues examined more than 1,000 reptile fossils collected worldwide. From this large data set, they found clear agreement with the results of the genetic studies.

Which choice best describes the function of the underlined sentence?

- A. It offers an overview of the tools scientists use to examine fossils.
- B. It describes a limitation of some studies about the origin of turtles.
- C. It summarizes previous research on the evolution of crocodiles.
- D. It criticizes a widely held belief about genetic studies of reptiles.

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1.17 1d9a09c0

The following text is adapted from Jason Reynolds's 2016 novel *Ghost*. The narrator, who is in middle school, is at a bus stop.

I just go there [to the bus stop] to look at the people working out. See, the gym across the street has this big window—like the whole wall is a window—and they have those machines that make you feel like you walking up steps and so everybody just be facing the bus stop, looking all crazy like they're about to pass out. And trust me, there ain't nothing funnier than that. So I check that out for a little while like it's some kind of movie: *The About to Pass Out Show*, starring stair-stepper person one through ten.

©2016 by Jason Reynolds

Which choice best states the main purpose of the text?

- A. To give a reason why the narrator is excited to start middle school
- B. To describe an activity that the narrator finds amusing
- C. To explain a problem that the narrator has overcome
- D. To discuss a movie that the narrator saw in a theater

1.18 1b5d4e3e

Were penguins always flightless? Theresa Cole and her team argue that penguins could fly at some point, but that they lost that ability more than 60 million years ago as they adapted to marine life. After examining various penguin fossils and genetic information, the researchers concluded that over time penguins developed underwater vision, blood oxygenation, and bone density better suited for swimming than flying. Thus, environmental conditions might have driven penguins to change from flyers to swimmers.

Which choice best describes the function of the underlined sentence in the text as a whole?

- A. It defines a scientific term used in the sentence that follows.
- B. It contradicts a description in the sentence that follows.
- C. It provides an answer to the question in the previous sentence.
- D. It notes that the question in the previous sentence has not been researched.

1.19 40270820

Catherine L. Cardelús is a researcher who studies canopy soil. Canopy soil is formed in a tree's branches (its canopy) when dead leaves and other falling things collect. This material breaks down, becoming canopy soil. Canopy soil helps preserve a healthy water cycle (how water moves through the environment) in rainforests. This benefit is one reason Cardelús is interested in the canopy soils in large choibá trees in rainforests in Costa Rica.

Which choice best describes the text's overall structure?

- A. It explains a disagreement between researchers and how it was resolved.
- B. It presents an idea and mentions a researcher who disagrees with that idea.
- C. It compares the sizes of two types of trees over several years.
- D. It introduces a researcher and gives information about what she researches.

1.20 764331f8

The following text is from Louise Erdrich's 1986 novel *The Beet Queen*. The narrator discusses her relationship with her young niece, Dot. Celestine, the narrator's sister-in-law, is Dot's mother.

Dot was as impatient with babyhood as I. She tried at once to grow out of it. Celestine never saw that, because she, and only she, took pleasure in Dot's helpless softness. Only Celestine was saddened by her daughter's fierce progress. Day by day, Dot grew stronger. In her shopping-cart stroller she exercised to exhaustion, bouncing for hours to develop her leg muscles.

©1986 by Louise Erdrich

Which choice best describes the function of the underlined sentence in the text as a whole?

- A. It offers a detail that shows how Dot is growing stronger.
- B. It expresses hope that Celestine will mature psychologically.
- C. It explores some of the narrator's psychological characteristics.
- D. It indicates how sad Celestine is by describing a behavior she engages in.

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1.21 ac5bf490

The following text is from Reyna Grande's 2012 memoir *The Distance Between Us*. In the text, Grande reflects on a time when she and her older sister Mago were children. A Barbie is a type of doll.

I begged Mago to come play with me. She wasn't as interested in my Barbie as she had been just two months before, which made me sad because that was the only thing Mago had envied me for. Usually, it was me doing the envying. After I pestered her relentlessly, she finally put her notebook down and came over to me.

©2012 by Reyna Grande

Which choice best describes the function of the underlined portion in the text?

- A. It indicates Grande's unhappiness over Mago's disinterest in Grande's doll.
- B. It expresses Grande's anger over Mago's refusal to spend time with her.
- C. It presents an example of how Mago and Grande generally played together as children.
- D. It provides a reason for why Mago is unwilling to play with Grande.

1.22 47904792

Animals use many objects as tools to achieve goals more easily. Such goals include grooming, finding food, and protecting themselves. For a long time, people thought tool use was unique to primates. Dolphins and other animals, though, have busted the myth that tool use requires hands. Inventively, dolphins use sponges to protect their noses from scratches when foraging on the seafloor. Palm cockatoos also get creative. They use leaves to pad their beaks when opening nuts.

Which choice best states the main purpose of the text?

- A. To question the belief that birds are intelligent
- B. To compare tool use in humans with tool use in palm cockatoos
- C. To establish that tool use doesn't indicate intelligence
- D. To argue that a variety of animals use tools

1.23 809addda

The following text is from Ameen Rihani's 1921 poem "The Wanderer."

I wander among the hills of alien lands
Where Nature her prerogative resigns
To Man; where Comfort in her shack reclines
And all the arts and sciences commands.
But in my soul
The eastern billows roll—
I hear the voices of my native strands.

Which choice best describes the function of the underlined lines in the text as a whole?

- A. It establishes that the speaker's enthusiasm about current travels conflicts with the growing urge to return home.
- B. It illustrates the speaker's uncertainty about maintaining strong links with relatives in distant places.
- C. It conveys the speaker's sense of feeling a pull toward home while traveling in an unfamiliar place.
- D. It reveals that upon returning after an extended absence, the speaker longs for the way a location once felt.