

Section 3

Reading Comprehension

36 Questions

Time: 35 minutes

This section contains six short reading passages. Each passage is followed by six questions based on its content. Answer the questions following each passage on the basis of what is stated or implied in that passage. You may write in your test booklet.

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Questions 1–6

1 Many people have asked me what, all
2 things considered, is the most valuable quality
3 a wilderness traveler can possess. I have
4 always replied unhesitatingly; for, no matter
5 how useful or desirable attributes such as
6 patience, courage, strength, endurance, good
7 nature, and ingenuity may prove to be,
8 undoubtedly a person with them, but without a
9 sense of direction, is practically helpless in the
10 wilds. Therefore, I should name a sense of
11 direction as the prime requisite for those who
12 would become true foresters, those who would
13 depend on themselves rather than on guides.
14 The faculty is largely developed, of course, by
15 practice, but it must be inborn. Some people
16 possess it; others do not—just as some people

17 are naturally musical while others have no ear
18 for music at all. It is a sort of extra, having
19 nothing to do with criteria of intelligence or
20 mental development: like the repeater
21 movement in a watch. A highly educated or
22 cultured person may lack it, while the roughest
23 may possess it. Some who have never been in
24 the woods or mountains acquire a fair facility
25 at picking a way in the space of a vacation, but I
26 have met a few who have spent their lives on
27 the prospect trail, and who are still, and always
28 will be, as helpless as the newest city dweller. It
29 is a gift, a talent. If you have its germ, you can
30 become a traveler of the wide and lonely
31 places. If not, you may as well resign yourself to
32 guides.

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1. The primary purpose of the passage is to
 - (A) describe traveling in the wild
 - (B) compare those who travel with guides to those who travel without
 - (C) discuss the importance of a sense of direction for travelers
 - (D) provide a history of wildlife exploration

2. Lines 3-10 (“I...wilds”) imply that the author believes all the following EXCEPT
 - (A) talented foresters have many good qualities.
 - (B) the most successful foresters have a honed sense of direction.
 - (C) patience is a helpful quality for a forester to have.
 - (D) all people are helpless in the wild.

3. As used in line 24, the word “facility” most nearly means
 - (A) disposition
 - (B) practice
 - (C) artifice
 - (D) aptitude

4. It can be inferred from the passage that a person who doesn’t need a guide in the wilderness
 - (A) must be courageous and patient.
 - (B) must be from the city.
 - (C) probably has a good sense of direction.
 - (D) has a good chance of getting lost.

5. According to the passage, having a sense of direction is
 - (A) impossible without a good understanding of music.
 - (B) entirely innate, and does not improve with practice.
 - (C) similar to having a natural talent for music.
 - (D) not as important as many other traits.

6. Which of the following best describes the tone of the article?
 - (A) mournful
 - (B) disinterested
 - (C) assertive
 - (D) ecstatic

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Questions 7–12

1 Many of the things that we think of as
2 vegetables are, in strict botanical terms,
3 actually fruits. Most of us know that the
4 tomato, for example, is a botanical fruit—and
5 when we commit the grave error of referring to
6 a tomato as a vegetable there is often some
7 wise soul nearby willing to correct us. The
8 pumpkin is also a botanical fruit. The same
9 goes for cucumbers, squash, avocados, and
10 even corn— because, in botanical terms, a fruit
11 is defined as “any edible part of a plant derived
12 from its ovary.”

13 An admirably precise definition, as one
14 might well expect from the scientific
15 community! And yet for some reason this
16 abundantly clear distinction has done little to
17 change which plants members of the general
18 public tend to refer to as fruits and which ones
19 they tend to refer to as vegetables. The

20 scientific definition of these terms thus
21 remains at odds with the popular
22 understanding.

23 But it is not only the general public who
24 have defied scientific authority: a body no less
25 august than the U.S. Supreme Court once had to
26 rule on whether the tomato could be legally
27 defined as a vegetable, and it too bucked the
28 scientific definition. In a case in which the
29 Supreme Court had to rule on whether
30 tomatoes should be taxed as fruits or as
31 vegetables, the Court devised its own rules for
32 how such matters should be decided. According
33 to the Supreme Court, a vegetable is any part of
34 a plant that is generally served with the main
35 part of the meal, whereas a fruit is a plant that
36 would generally be eaten with or as a dessert—
37 although, as far as I know, they took no
38 position on appetizers.

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7. The passage focuses mainly on
- (A) a comparison of fruits, vegetables, and nuts.
 - (B) whether tomatoes should be eaten as a dessert or as a main course.
 - (C) describing various kinds of fruits that people assume are vegetables.
 - (D) discussing the different definitions of common terms.
8. The word “august” (line 24) most nearly means
- (A) distinguished
 - (B) rebellious
 - (C) hidden
 - (D) agreeable
9. All of the following can be answered by the passage EXCEPT:
- (A) Is an avocado a botanical fruit or vegetable?
 - (B) Do people often correct each other about whether or not certain “vegetables” are really fruits?
 - (C) According to the U.S. Supreme Court, is a tomato legally a fruit or a vegetable?
 - (D) How did the scientific community react to the U.S. Supreme Court’s ruling regarding the definition of fruits and vegetables?
10. According to the passage, the scientific definition of a botanical fruit
- (A) is basically the same as the definition of a vegetable.
 - (B) is well respected by the U.S. Supreme Court.
 - (C) does not have much of an impact on how people use the word “fruit.”
 - (D) applies only to a small number of fruits, such as the pumpkin.
11. When the author says that it is a “grave error” to call a tomato a vegetable (line 5), his tone could best be described as
- (A) respectful
 - (B) aloof
 - (C) sarcastic
 - (D) puzzled
12. According to the passage, when the Supreme Court needed to determine whether a tomato was a fruit or a vegetable, the Court
- (A) came up with its own method for distinguishing between fruits and vegetables.
 - (B) used the botanical definition to determine how to classify a tomato.
 - (C) took a poll and relied on public opinion to make its decision.
 - (D) used the opposite of the botanical definition.

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Questions 13–18

1 How could life possibly have gotten
2 started on Earth? How could so many and such
3 a stunning number and variety of organisms
4 have come into existence? Few questions have
5 puzzled so many, for so long. Philosophers,
6 authors, and scientists have pondered,
7 discussed, and explored the issue for decades,
8 and numerous hypotheses have been proposed
9 over time: maybe the first organic molecules
10 were formed in the deep ocean, from chemicals
11 spewed out by volcanic vents. Maybe the
12 earliest life was actually made of simple
13 molecules, and these simple organisms created
14 the molecules used by complex living
15 organisms today. Maybe life came to Earth
16 from outer space. But in 1952, in a laboratory
17 in Chicago, one hypothesis was about to be put
18 to the test.

19 For decades, Alexander Oparin and J.B.S.
20 Haldane had proposed that conditions on the
21 early Earth favored chemical reactions that
22 could produce organic compounds—the
23 building blocks of life— from inorganic
24 precursors. At the University of Chicago,
25 Stanley Miller and Harold Urey had devised an
26 experiment to test the idea. The team filled a

27 network of glass flasks and tubes with water, to
28 simulate the early ocean, and with the same
29 gases believed to be present in the early
30 atmosphere. They applied heat, causing some
31 of the water to evaporate and begin to circulate
32 through the tubes as vapor. They then created
33 electrical sparks inside the apparatus to
34 simulate lightning. As the experiment
35 proceeded, the mixture began to change color.
36 After a few days, when the contents were
37 analyzed, the scientists found what they were
38 looking for: the very same organic compounds
39 that are the building blocks of all life on Earth.
40 While the Miller-Urey experiment did not
41 finally answer the question of life's origins, it
42 provided support for the hypothesis that
43 conditions on the early Earth could generate
44 the necessary components of life, and showed
45 that natural chemical processes could well
46 have been all that was required to strike the
47 spark of life. One of the most meaningful steps
48 in the quest for an answer to the question of
49 life, the Miller-Urey experiment, over the
50 course of a few days, revolutionized a
51 conversation which has been taking place for
52 thousands of years.

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13. This passage is primarily concerned with
- (A) discussing famous scientists and their careers in science.
 - (B) describing how to design and execute a scientific experiment.
 - (C) speculating about what sort of living things existed on the early earth.
 - (D) telling the story of a famous scientific experiment.
14. By the statement “Few questions have puzzled so many” (lines 4-5), the author probably means that
- (A) this question is unanswerable.
 - (B) many people have tried to find a solution to this question.
 - (C) experiments are needed to answer this question.
 - (D) the question seems much more complex than it really is.
15. The passage suggests that
- (A) Oparin and Haldane’s theory is the only explanation left for how life could have begun.
 - (B) although it was interesting, the Miller-Urey experiment was ultimately a failure.
 - (C) there’s no evidence one way or another for how life really began.
 - (D) we may need to learn more before we can finally determine how life began.
16. According to the passage, philosophers, authors, and scientists have all
- (A) conducted experiments to test theories of how life may have started.
 - (B) pondered the beginnings of life in their own ways.
 - (C) generally agreed on the best theories to explain life’s origins.
 - (D) successfully answered the question of life’s origins in different ways.
17. In line 24, “precursors” most nearly means
- (A) forerunners
 - (B) compounds
 - (C) descendants
 - (D) organisms
18. All of the following are true about Miller and Urey EXCEPT
- (A) their experiment was based on the ideas of Oparin and Haldane.
 - (B) they attempted to simulate the conditions of early earth.
 - (C) they used sparks to simulate lightning.
 - (D) they used some organic compounds to start the experiment.

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Questions 19–24

1 The mid-nineteenth century was a period
2 of great unrest and change in America. It was
3 the era of the Civil War, of the ratification of the
4 14th and 15th amendments, which granted
5 voting rights to all male citizens in America. It
6 was a time when abolitionists, slaves, and
7 politicians banded together to struggle for the
8 equality of all men. However, in looking back
9 on this era, many forget that a parallel fight
10 was raging through the American landscape:
11 the fight for the equality of women.

12 It was in 1848 that the first Women’s
13 Rights Convention was held in Seneca Falls,
14 New York. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, future
15 president of the National American Woman
16 Suffrage Association, proposed a “Declaration
17 of Sentiments” at this convention, which
18 included twelve resolutions. Eleven easily
19 passed; however, one declared that the right to
20 vote was “the first right of every citizen” and
21 that it ought not to be withheld from women.
22 Even among those assembled with the purpose
23 of advancing women’s rights and improving
24 their position in society, this was a radical

25 proposal. While the endorsement of equal
26 suffrage was hotly debated, ultimately the
27 “Declaration of Sentiments” was endorsed by
28 the convention in full.

29 This was a pivotal moment in the
30 struggle for women’s suffrage. Women’s Rights
31 conventions were held throughout the 1850s,
32 but in an effort to aid others during the Civil
33 War these conventions were stopped in the
34 mid-1860s. In 1867, after the war had ended,
35 Susan B. Anthony, another prominent advocate
36 for women’s rights, formed the Equal Rights
37 Association, and the long struggle continued.
38 Though they were rejected and turned aside by
39 politicians in many states, she and her fellow
40 suffragettes did not give up on the fight for
41 women’s suffrage. It was not until the 1920s,
42 the better part of a century after the
43 Declaration of Sentiments was endorsed by the
44 convention at Seneca Falls, that these women’s
45 efforts bore fruit. On August 26, 1920, the 19th
46 Amendment to the Constitution was ratified,
47 granting women the ability to finally exercise
48 their “first right” as American citizens.

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19. What is the primary focus of the passage?
- (A) America in the mid nineteenth century
 - (B) the growth of the women's suffrage movement
 - (C) the ratification of the 19th amendment
 - (D) Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B Anthony's work as suffragettes
20. According to the passage, what was the role of the Civil War in the struggle for women's suffrage?
- (A) The Civil War dealt a blow to the Women's Rights movement from which it never fully recovered.
 - (B) Victory for abolitionists in the Civil War inspired the Women's Rights movement.
 - (C) The role that women played in the Civil War prompted the government to recognize their rights as citizens.
 - (D) The eruption of the Civil War temporarily interrupted the Women's Rights movement.
21. Which best expresses the author's view of the 19th amendment?
- (A) The 19th Amendment was little more than a symbolic victory for Women's Rights, but would ultimately prove to be worth the struggle.
 - (B) The 19th Amendment was probably a major cause of the Civil War, but still a necessary step in forming a strong democracy.
 - (C) The 19th amendment was a long-awaited recognition of basic rights, which was only possible after a long struggle.
 - (D) The 19th Amendment unfairly restricted the right to vote, and abolishing it was an important step towards a more equal democracy.
22. What does the author mean by a "parallel fight was raging through the American landscape" (lines 9-10)?
- (A) The suffragettes were traveling all over America to advocate for women's rights.
 - (B) Fights were common throughout the Americas at this time, and the suffragettes were only fighting about as much as everyone else.
 - (C) The Civil War mirrored the fight for women's suffrage.
 - (D) The struggles of the suffragettes and of African-American men were similar in their goals of equality and full citizenship.

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23. The author implies that the birth of the women's suffrage movement
- (A) occurred at the first Women's Right Convention.
 - (B) only took place due to Elizabeth Cady Stanton's efforts.
 - (C) did not begin until the 1900s.
 - (D) had been ongoing even before 1848.
24. The author's attitude towards the suffragettes could best be described as one of
- (A) scorn
 - (B) liberation
 - (C) admiration
 - (D) intrigue

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Questions 25–30

1 In the late Stone Age, the median life
2 expectancy of humans was only around 33
3 years; today, the median for people in wealthy
4 nations is around 80 years, and the global
5 average is around 67 years. From these
6 figures, some people conclude that in the Stone
7 Age most people died around 33 and today
8 most people die around 67. However, that is
9 not what these figures mean. The median age
10 of death is the age by which half of people have
11 died: it doesn't matter how long after 33 the
12 older half survives, or how long before 33 the
13 younger half died.

14 In fact, for a child born in the Stone Age,
15 the most dangerous part of his life would have
16 been his very early childhood, between birth
17 and five years of age. If he was able to survive
18 as long as the median, then there was a very
19 good chance that he would live into his fifties,
20 or even his sixties or seventies. Ironically,
21 although his life expectancy was 33, his thirties
22 would have been nearly the safest time in his
23 life!

24 Modern life expectancy is more than
25 twice as long as life expectancy in the Stone
26 Age. But that does not necessarily mean that
27 an individual today is likely to live exactly
28 twice as long as an individual from the Stone
29 Age. The main reason that modern humans
30 have a higher life expectancy is that almost all
31 of us survive into adulthood. If we only
32 compare modern people with Stone Age people
33 who actually survived to adulthood, there are
34 still improvements in our expected lifespan,
35 but they are more modest.

36 Some imagine that this detail of life
37 expectancies reveals something unfortunate:
38 that childhood deaths have been reduced, but
39 adults can't really expect to live twice as long.
40 However, in my view this detail makes the
41 numbers seem better, not worse. I will gladly
42 take a world in which children are safe over a
43 world in which I get 20 or 30 more years of old
44 age.

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25. This passage is primarily concerned with
- (A) criticizing people who want to live into their hundreds.
 - (B) persuading people that the way humans lived in the Stone Age was healthier than the way they live now.
 - (C) describing two different methods of averaging numbers.
 - (D) explaining why median life expectancy is so much higher today than in the past.
26. According to the passage, the median life expectancy is
- (A) the age that half of all people will live to, or will live beyond.
 - (B) the maximum age to which a person can expect to live.
 - (C) about how long a child can expect to survive.
 - (D) the age at which people are most likely to die.
27. Information from the passage supports which of the following statements?
- (A) It is now possible to accurately predict how long an individual will live.
 - (B) The global average lifespan will probably double again in coming years.
 - (C) Only a very small percentage of people from the Stone Age are still alive.
 - (D) Modern life expectancy is shorter in countries that are not very wealthy.
28. Based on information in the passage, we can conclude that people who reach adulthood today
- (A) will probably live somewhat longer than people who reached adulthood in the Stone Age.
 - (B) shouldn't expect to live quite as long as people did in the past.
 - (C) will not live as long on average as their parents.
 - (D) will live twice as long as people who reached adulthood in the Stone Age.
29. Based on information in the passage, we can conclude that a Stone Age man in his thirties would most likely
- (A) continue to live for many more years.
 - (B) die before reaching adulthood.
 - (C) live twice as long as a person born in modern times.
 - (D) live only for one or two more years.
30. With which of the following statements would the author most likely agree?
- (A) It would have been much more exciting to live in the Stone Age than today.
 - (B) We're all much better off in the modern world, where children can safely grow up.
 - (C) Adults today are not really any better off than they were in the Stone Age.
 - (D) The world would be a better place if fewer people lived into their hundreds.

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Questions 31–36

In the passage below, businessman and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie describes an interaction with business partners, which would influence their future relationship.

1 The sale of the bonds had not gone very
2 far when the panic of 1873 was upon us. One of
3 the sources of revenue which I then had was
4 Mr. Pierpont Morgan. He said to me one day:

5 "My father has cabled to ask whether you
6 wish to sell out your interest in that idea you
7 gave him."

8 I said: "Yes, I do. In these days I will sell
9 anything for money."

10 "Well," he said, "what would you take?"

11 I said I believed that a statement recently
12 rendered to me showed that there were
13 already fifty thousand dollars to my credit, and
14 I would take sixty thousand. Next morning
15 when I called Mr. Morgan handed me checks
16 for seventy thousand dollars.

17 "Mr. Carnegie," he said, "you were
18 mistaken. You sold out for ten thousand dollars
19 less than the statement showed to your credit.
20 It now shows not fifty but sixty thousand to

21 your credit, and the additional ten makes
22 seventy."

23 The payments were in two checks, one
24 for sixty thousand dollars and the other for the
25 additional ten thousand. I handed him back the
26 ten-thousand-dollar check, saying:

27 "Well, that is something worthy of you.
28 Will you please accept these ten thousand with
29 my best wishes?"

30 "No, thank you," he said, "I cannot do
31 that."

32 Such acts, showing a nice sense of
33 honorable understanding as against mere legal
34 rights, are not so uncommon in business as the
35 uninitiated might believe. And, after that, it is
36 not to be wondered at if I determined that so
37 far as lay in my power neither Morgan, father
38 or son, nor their house, should suffer through
39 me. They had in me henceforth a firm friend.

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31. The main purpose of the passage is to
- (A) describe the business of investing to the uninitiated.
 - (B) relate a story about the integrity of a business partner.
 - (C) tell a story about a bad investment decision.
 - (D) show how the narrator became a successful businessman.
32. The passage suggests that a person who is not involved in business
- (A) would have a very hard time making money on the stock market.
 - (B) should always be sure to check the value of his assets before making a deal.
 - (C) might be surprised to learn about the honorableness of some businessmen.
 - (D) could easily be taken advantage of by a dishonest businessman.
33. Which best explains why Mr. Carnegie said to Mr. Pierpont Morgan "In these days I will sell anything for money" (lines 8-9)?
- (A) Mr. Morgan had always dealt honorably with Mr. Carnegie in the past, so he knew that he would get a good deal.
 - (B) Mr. Carnegie was eager to make whatever money he could during the financial panic.
 - (C) Mr. Carnegie was very new to business at that time, and eager to make any deal that he could.
 - (D) Mr. Pierpont Morgan was Mr. Carnegie's main source of revenue, so he wanted to keep him happy.
34. Why did Mr. Morgan give Mr. Carnegie an extra check for ten thousand dollars?
- (A) Mr. Carnegie had clearly forgotten what his property was worth, and Mr. Morgan didn't want to take advantage of his mistake.
 - (B) Mr. Morgan thought that Mr. Carnegie could get a much better price if he bargained, so he overpaid to avoid haggling.
 - (C) Mr. Pierpont Morgan had accidentally given bad information to his father about how much Mr. Carnegie was asking for, but by the time the mistake was discovered it was too late to correct it.
 - (D) Mr. Morgan knew that if he overpaid on their first deal, it would impress Mr. Carnegie and he would be sure to get better deals in the future.
35. What does the passage suggest about Mr. Carnegie's legal rights?
- (A) Mr. Carnegie was entitled not only to the amount originally agreed upon, but also to the extra ten thousand dollars.
 - (B) Mr. Carnegie's legal rights weren't Mr. Morgan's only consideration when he decided to pay an extra ten thousand dollars.
 - (C) He could legally have sued Mr. Morgan for much more than just the ten thousand dollars, but that would have been viewed as dishonorable.
 - (D) His legal rights were more important to him than his honor, and so he gave up the profits to which he wasn't entitled.

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36. We can conclude from the information in the article that, in their later business dealings, the narrator probably
- (A) dealt with the Morgans on good terms, and kept their interests in mind.
 - (B) continued to undercharge the Morgans as a gesture of friendship.
 - (C) tried to be more careful when calculating what he was owed, to avoid losing another large sum of money.
 - (D) took advantage of the Morgans' generosity by charging them more than things were worth.

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