Reading Comprehension
Sentence Structure
Figurative Language
Symbolism
Inferences
Vocabulary

Directions:

Please read each passage and choose the best selection for each question dealing with the passage.

You may write/circle all of your answers on the actual question sheet.

Each question is worth 5 points.

The Revelation

Jessica stood stiffly at the edge of the river and stared out into space, deliberately turning her back on the rest of the group. She hadn't wanted to come on this trip at all, but her mother had insisted that it would be good for her.

"You've got to be interested in something," her mother had sighed as she packed Jessica's clothes. "The only thing you seem to like these days is your music. Maybe going on this wilderness trip with other teenagers will be just what you need."

Before they had gotten in the van, Madeline Degas, the woman in charge of the group, had taken away Jessica's CD player and headphones and handed them to her mother. "Nothing electronic on the trip," she had reminded Jessica, smiling. "You'll be surprised by what you notice when you don't have things distracting you."

Jessica had glared at her, outraged by this invasion of her privacy, but it had done no good. Madeline had only grinned at her and walked over to speak with two other girls who had just arrived.

Now that they had reached their destination, Madeline and two other leaders were busily organizing the teenagers. Jessica, irked by their positive attitudes, ignored them. She had been forced to come, so she intended to remain indifferent throughout the entire trip; she would not show a single sign of interest.

While looking over her new surroundings, a faint movement in the brush beside her caught her attention. Walking quietly over, she peered through the greenery and realized that a pair of dark eyes was looking steadily back into her own. She was startled and drew back for a moment, but the creature did not stir, so she parted the greenery to get a better look.

It was a mallard duck. It was nestled low in the bush, and the dark green of its head blended with the leaves, but the band of white on its neck gave it away.

"Sorry, fellow," she murmured. She watched it for a minute, wondering why it had allowed her to come so close. Then she realized that it must be injured. Cautiously, she let the branches fall back where they had been so that she wouldn't startle the bird, which was still staring at her trustingly.

She had to help it, she decided. Trust should not be betrayed. It was something that she felt was missing from the world, based on her experience. Jessica watched Madeline as she bustled about among the other campers. She hated to have to depend on Madeline for help, but she had to ask someone.

"Ready to go, Jess?" Madeline asked cheerfully as she approached.

Jessica hated having her name abbreviated. She managed to shrug it off, however, and replied, "No, actually, I have a question."

"Yes?" Madeline inquired expectantly.

"Is there a rehabilitation center for wildlife anywhere around here?" Jessica asked.

"A rehab center for wildlife?" Madeline repeated a little blankly. "Well, yes, there is. Why do you ask, Jess?"

Gritting her teeth, Jessica answered patiently. "I found a mallard that's been hurt, and he needs someone to take care of him. I'd like to stay with him."

"Would you?" Madeline replied thoughtfully. "My assistant volunteers at the center. She could take you there and you two could catch up with us later."

Jessica nodded, certain that she could help the mallard. Smiling at the duck, she felt as though a great weight had been lifted from her heart. She had not known that helping another living creature could be so rewarding.

It was a revelation.

Directions: Read each selection. Carefully read each question/statement, go back to the selection and find the correct answer. Circle the correct answer.

1. Why does the author limit the readers to Jessica's point of view in this passage?
   a. so we can understand when and why her feelings change
   b. so we can know what her opinion of Madeline is
   c. so we can know why she doesn't want to come on the trip
   d. so we can understand why she likes her music so much

2. What causes Jessica to become irritated by Madeline?
   a. She calls her "Jess."
   b. She does not like animals.
   c. She makes Jessica go on the trip.
   d. She reminds Jessica of her mother.

3. What is the setting for this passage?
   a. a forest
   b. next to a waterfall
   c. a wildlife rehabilitation center
   d. at the edge of a river

4. Based on information in the passage, the reader can conclude that Jessica has been very
   a. unhappy
   b. studious
   c. busy
   d. tired

5. Why is "The Revelation" an appropriate title for this passage?
   a. because Jessica makes an important realization
   b. because Jessica discovers that she likes camping
   c. because Jessica finally understands that Madeline is a nice person
   d. because Jessica suddenly understands that she no longer needs her CD player

6. Read the following sentence from the passage:
   She had been forced to come, so she intended to remain indifferent throughout the entire trip; she would not show a single sign of interest.
   In this passage, the word *indifferent* means to be

   a. angry
   b. excited
   c. uncaring
   d. interested

The Johnson Five

"I can't believe that I'm actually doing this," moaned Vivian while sinking down on the sofa and closing her eyes.

"Doing what?" inquired her brother Adam cheerfully as he threw himself down next to her. "Consider me your confidential adviser and tell me all your problems."

In spite of her misery, Vivian grinned. Adam was the most amiable of her siblings, always prepared to offer her support whenever it was needed. And it was, she reflected, certainly needed now.

"I'm going to baby-sit for the Johnsons this Saturday," she explained, studiously avoiding his eyes.

"The Johnsons?" he demanded, clearly aghast at her announcement, his eyebrows arching into his hairline. "Do you mean that you're going to take care of The Johnson Five?"

Vivian nodded, still not looking at him.

The five Johnson children had earned the name after several horrifying episodes with babysitters. Each sitter had left the house declaring that he or she would never baby-sit again. Tim Johnson, eleven years of age and the eldest of the clan, was a natural comedian. Every mob, he had informed the last sitter, should have a name. They were The Johnson Five. The sitter had given him a glassy-eyed stare, walked to the telephone, called their mother, and informed her that he was leaving immediately.

It was not the name that unnerved him, but the fact that he had just discovered Mathilda and Eli, the two youngest Johnsons, in his new car. Mathilda had been pressing the accelerator while Eli, a very advanced five-year-old, was guiding the car down the middle of the street.

Watching his car disappear around the corner, Chris had suddenly realized that he must take action and sprinted after it, calling Eli's name at the top of his lungs. Fortunately, he caught up with them before any real damage could be done. They had narrowly missed a parked car and an innocent pedestrian.

Chris had staggered back into the house in time to discover two of the others energetically engaged in pulling everything out of the kitchen cabinets and making a giant stack in the middle of the floor. Canned goods were rolling wildly across the tiles while a white cascade of sugar came pouring down upon them.

"I'm a chef!" called Bonnie Johnson, catching the sitter's eye and returning his gaze defiantly. She had carefully broken one dozen eggs into a mixing bowl, and she was whipping them vigorously.

"So I see," murmured Chris helplessly, staring at her. "What are you making?"

Bonnie picked up a sieve and measured two cups of flour into a bowl. "I don't know yet," she announced proudly, "but I'm preheating the oven so I can bake it."

Horrified, Chris suddenly realized that the smell he had been vaguely aware of had grown stronger. Yanking open the oven door, he saw that the package of chips that had been placed in the oven for safekeeping was ablaze. Always resourceful, he snatched a canister of flour from the counter and smothered the fire with it.

"Perhaps," Vivian told her brother weakly as she remembered Chris's expression, "perhaps I'll call Mrs. Johnson back and cancel. I think I'm supposed to meet Ruby over at the observatory that day for our science project."

Directions: Read each selection. Carefully read each question/statement, go back to the selection and find the correct answer. Circle the correct answer.

1. Which of these is a FACT stated in this passage?
   a. Adam is an amiable person.
   b. There are five Johnson children.
   c. The Johnson children have a mob.
   d. Tim Johnson is a natural comedian.

2. At the end of the story, Vivian changes her mind about babysitting because
   a. she needs to buy a car first.
   b. she is afraid to babysit the Johnson children.
   c. she has to meet a friend at the observatory.
   d. she cannot talk her brother into helping her.

3. What causes Chris to leave the Johnson children?
   a. He is afraid of fires.
   b. They are rude to him.
   c. They are mischievous.
   d. He has homework to do.

4. What does Vivian's first statement in the story indicate?
   a. she is tired and must rest
   b. she likes her brother Adam
   c. she enjoys talking to her brother
   d. she thinks she has made a mistake

5. If the story were told from Chris' point of view, which title would be best?
   a. "Babysitting is for Girls"
   b. "The Joy of Babysitting"
   c. "Kids Shouldn't Drive Alone"
   d. "A Nightmare with the Johnsons"

6. Read the sentences below.

   Canned goods were rolling wildly across the tiles. A cascade of soda burst forth from bottles on the shelves.

   What does the word *cascade* mean?

   a. absence
   b. trickled
   c. bag
   d. flood

The Navajo Code Talkers

The Navajo Code Talkers were one of America's secret weapons in World War II. They helped the United States Marines send oral communications that the enemy could not translate. Usually the enemy could understand even messages sent in secret code. However, the Navajo Code was never broken. It remained a secret even at the end of the war.

The tradition of Native Americans helping with communication during wartime began in World War I. Soldiers from the Choctaw and Comanche tribes successfully used their own languages to send secret messages for the Americans. In World War II, the same technique was used again. This time the soldiers came from many tribes.

The contribution of the Navajo was unique, however. The Navajo have a particularly difficult language that few people outside the tribe could speak at the time. In 1942, 29 Navajo marines were asked to create a code based on their native language. This made the code even tougher to break. Also, this code was never to be written down. It was to be committed to memory.

When the U.S. Marines began work on the Navajo Code, they chose and memorized 26 words to stand for the letters of the English alphabet. Then they added a vocabulary list of 211 words, which later grew to 411 words as other Navajos joined the code team. They carefully designed a code that did not contain patterns. If the enemy could recognize patterns, they could eventually break the code and understand the messages.

The Navajos memorized their work, taught it to new participants, and practiced using it in many situations. Then they put their knowledge to work on the battlefields. These men were the senders and receivers of the messages -- the Code Talkers.

Approximately 420 Navajo marines served as Code Talkers in the South Pacific during World War II. Their excellent memories and powers of concentration made them very swift and accurate in translating the messages written in the Navajo Code. They deciphered them almost instantly, while a code machine could take as long as four hours. It was the only oral code never broken during the war.

The Code Talkers were amazingly cool under fire. For instance, Iwo Jima was a bloody, 36-day battle. However, even in the midst of the battle, the Code Talkers translated their messages calmly and clearly. Iwo Jima was the turning point of the fight in the South Pacific, and the Code Talkers played a vital part in winning it.

The government kept the Code Talkers as secret as possible. Even at the end of the war in 1945, their work remained a secret. The U.S. government feared that the Navajo Code might have to be used again. Not until 1969 did the government finally tell the public about the achievements of these men during World War II. Even today, not many Americans realize what a valuable contribution the Navajo Code Talkers made to winning the war.

Read the selection. Carefully read each question/statement, go back to the selection to find the correct answer and circle the correct answer.

1. What is the main purpose of the article?
   a. to update the reader about secret war weapons
   b. to explain the use of secret codes in World War II
   c. to convince the reader that secret codes are necessary
   d. to inform the reader about the Navajo Code Talkers

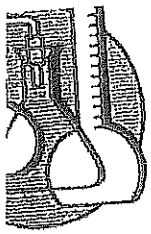
2. Why did the Navajo Code remain a secret at the end of World War II?
   a. because the Navajo marines went home, so they could not tell anyone
   b. because the government thought the code might be needed again
   c. because it was too difficult to use again
   d. because no one spoke Navajo any more

3. Which of the following statements does NOT show that the Code Talkers were one of the secret weapons of World War II?
   a. Their code was never broken during the war.
   b. They were very swift in decoding messages.
   c. All of the Code Talkers were Navajo.
   d. Their work remained secret, even at the end of the war.

4. Which of the following characteristics did a Code Talker NOT need?
   a. a good memory
   b. coolness under fire
   c. the ability to concentrate
   d. a sense of humor

5. The Navajo Code was difficult to break because
   a. it used recognizable patterns based on the English alphabet.
   b. Navajo is a common language but it is difficult to speak.
   c. the Navajo language was too complex to be written down, so it could not be translated.
   d. it was based on a complex language, used no patterns, and was never written down.

6. Read these sentences from the article: **Their excellent memories and powers of concentration made them very swift and accurate in translating the messages written in their own Navajo Code. They deciphered them almost instantly, while a code machine could take as long as four hours.**
   What does *deciphered* mean?
   a. Spoke
   b. Sifted
   c. Read
   d. Translated



Michael Faraday, Amateur Scientist

Michael Faraday was born in the English village of Newington in the year 1791. The son of a blacksmith, Michael attended the local village school until he was 14 years old. Unfortunately, he had to leave school that year to start working so he could help support his family. Since he did not want to be a blacksmith, Michael chose to become a bookbinder's assistant. He quickly learned the art of preparing the leather for book covers and made sure the pages of every book were bound correctly.

Michael was a good bookbinder, but the work did not interest him much. He soon discovered he did not want to be a bookbinder all his life. This prompted him to work quickly in order to have time to read some of the books he bound. He read about geology, physics, and chemistry, and rapidly developed a passion for science. While Michael worked at binding the books, he often thought about the various scientific things he had read. Michael decided to perform some simple chemistry experiments on his own and was delighted to find that what he had read in the books really was true.

One day, a friend invited Michael to go to the Royal Institution in London to hear a lecture by the famous chemist Humphrey Davy, who was director of the laboratory at the institution. Michael was excited at the chance to hear the great scientist. He took careful notes during Davy's lecture, which he later copied and added his own illustrations to. He then bound his work into a book and sent it to Davy. Enclosed with his book was a letter asking if he could work in Davy's laboratory as an assistant. Davy found young Michael's interest and ability so impressive that he promptly hired Michael as his new assistant.

The weeks passed, and Davy saw that his new assistant was becoming skillful in conducting experiments. Michael asked many questions about what the results of the experiments meant and was soon thinking up new experiments on his own. He also helped Davy perform experiments in the classes and lectures at the Royal Institution.

As Davy's lab assistant, Michael was happy and excited by his work. He was also curious about what other scientists were doing, especially in the new fields of electricity and magnetism. He would read about their work, then go to the lab and try the experiments they had done. Often, he found important things that others had missed. Over time, his work in electricity led to the invention of electric generators and motors. In chemistry, he discovered benzene and many other new chemical compounds.

Michael Faraday's hard work continued to pay off throughout his life. When Humphrey Davy retired from the Royal Institution in 1825, Michael was named director of the laboratory. In 1833, he also became a professor of chemistry. Michael continued to make important discoveries in electricity, magnetism, chemistry, and physics up until his death in 1867. Michael Faraday's accomplishments, which spanned a lifetime, were quite impressive for an amateur scientist from such humble beginnings.

Read the selection. Carefully read each question/statement, go back to the selection to find the correct answer and circle the correct answer.

1. What was the author's purpose in writing this passage?
   a. to inform readers about a famous scientist
   b. to describe the laboratory of Humphrey Davy
   c. to educate the reader on how to find a job in London
   d. to encourage readers to study electricity

2. Why was Michael Faraday such a good scientist?
   a. because he worked hard and read dozens of chemistry books
   b. because he was hired by the great scientist, Humphrey Davy
   c. because he was interested in so many areas of science
   d. because he made many experiments to test his theories

3. What job did Michael have BEFORE he became a scientist?
   a. School teacher
   b. Bookbinder
   c. Chemist
   d. Blacksmith

4. Based on information in the passage, the reader can conclude that Michael Faraday
   a. was a terrible blacksmith.
   b. wanted to be rich and famous.
   c. was a skilled and dedicated scientist.
   d. became a chemist to support his family.

5. Which phrase BEST describes the theme of this story?
   a. You can succeed in spite of your beginnings.
   b. Moving to London is a good way to get a job.
   c. If you work for a successful person, you will also become successful.
   d. Working hard will make you successful.

6. Read these sentences from the passage: **He was also curious about what other scientists were doing, especially in the new fields of electricity and magnetism. He would read about their work, then go to the lab and try the experiments they had done.**

   What is *magnetism*?
   a. The ability to hypnotize
   b. The study of magnets
   c. The ability to attract
   d. The study of magic

Teen Curfews

It was midnight in a small Indiana city. A group of teens were gathered at a parking lot outside a neighborhood mall. A police car pulled up, rounded up the young people, who ranged in age from thirteen to sixteen, and took them to the police station. Had they been picked up for drinking, fighting, or doing drugs? No. The teens were arrested because they were violating a state curfew law, which states that teens must not be in a public place after 11 p.m. Sunday through Thursday, or after 1 a.m. on Friday and Saturday.

On July 3, 2000, a U.S. District Court judge, who declared that it was unconstitutional, struck down the Indiana curfew law for teens. Although Indiana no longer has a state curfew law because of this ruling, curfew laws still exist in other communities. Should they exist? No. Curfew laws infringe upon the rights of both teens and their parents.

Since parents are responsible for the education and behavior of their children, they should be able to determine whether their teens need a curfew and, if so, what that curfew will be. The government should not make those decisions, nor should the police be the ones enforcing them. Those are decisions that parents should exercise if they deem it necessary.

Although many argue that curfew laws protect teens by helping to keep them safe and out of trouble, there is evidence to contradict this opinion. According to statistics released in 1997 at the U.S. Conference of Mayors, not all cities reported a marked decrease in juvenile crime after enacting curfew laws. In fact, at least six cities reported an increase after curfews were established.

Curfew laws do little to keep teens out of trouble because most juvenile crime occurs in the afternoon, not at night. The 1999 Justice Department records show that juveniles themselves are more likely to be victims of crimes in the hour after school than at any other time of the day. With these facts brought to light, curfews do not seem either to protect the young or stop them from committing a crime.

The most important argument against curfew laws is their effect on teens with no prior criminal record. Minors arrested for breaking curfew are subjected to police interrogation and drug testing. These unfair arrests also skew the statistics for juvenile crime. Including curfew arrests in the total number of young people arrested inaccurately raises the number of juvenile offenders. Teens, like all citizens, should be arrested for wrongdoing, not for being out late.

It is time to return decision-making rights to the parents of teens, who have the final responsibility for their children's actions. Parents are better suited than the government to determine the guidelines for their children. Teens guilty of real crimes will still be arrested; those who are merely out late will be treated as citizens with the same civil rights as other members of society.

Directions: Read the story carefully. Read each question/statement and all of the answer choices. Using the story and your own prior knowledge, select the best answer. Circle the letter that corresponds with the correct answer

1. What is the author's main purpose in writing this article?
   a. To explain the laws regarding teen curfew to the reader
   b. To inform the reader about the reasons for having teen curfews
   c. To convince the reader that there should be now teen curfews
   d. To persuade the reader to vote in favor of teen curfews

2. According to this article, what is the most important reason for not having curfews?
   a. The government has no right to make them
   b. The negative effect upon teens arrested for breaking curfew
   c. The increase in juvenile crime wherever there are curfews
   d. Six cities reported an increase in crime

3. Which of the following is an important point made in the final paragraph?
   a. Parents need to spend more time with their teens.
   b. Teens should be protected from arrest.
   c. Teens should have the same civil rights as other citizens.
   d. Teens should be subject to drug tests.

4. According to the article, if the number of teens arrested only for breaking curfew was included with arrests for other offenses,
   a. The statistics for juvenile crime would be inaccurate.
   b. The need for earlier curfews would be clear.
   c. The need for better enforcement of the curfew laws would be clear.
   d. Curfew laws would be declared unconstitutional

5. Which of the following sentences BEST states the article's main point?
   a. Curfew laws infringe upon the rights of both teens and their parents.
   b. Most juvenile crime occurs in the afternoon, not in the evening.
   c. Decision-making rights should be returned to the parents.
   d. Parents are responsible for the education and behavior of their children.

6. Read this sentence from the passage. **They were arrested because they were violating a state curfew law stating that teens must not be in a public place after 11 p.m. Sunday through Thursday, or after 1 a.m. Friday and Saturday.**
   What is a curfew?
   a. A regulation
   b. A taboo
   c. A lapse
   d. A hindrance

Escape at Bedtime

by Robert Louis Stevenson

The lights from the parlour and kitchen shone out
Through the blinds and the windows and bars;
And high overhead and all moving about,
There were thousands and thousands of stars.
There ne'er were such thousands of leaves on a tree,
Nor of people in church or the Park,
As the crowds of the stars that looked down upon me,
And that glittered and winked in the dark.
The Dog, and the Plough, and the Hunter, and all,
And the star of the sailor, and Mars,
These shone in the sky, and the pail by the wall
Would be half full of water and stars.
They saw me at last, and they chased me with cries,
And they soon had me packed into bed;
But the glory kept shining and bright in my eyes,
And the stars going round in my head.

**Since Stevenson wrote this poem and many others about his childhood, the child in the poem is referred to as "he" in the questions.*

Directions: Read the story carefully. Read each question/statement and all of the answer choices. Using the story and your own prior knowledge, select the best answer. Circle the letter that corresponds with the correct answer.

1. What does the first stanza of the poem do?
   a. It focuses the reader's attention on the light.
   b. It describes to the reader how dark and cloudy the night was.
   c. It causes the reader to feel nervous or afraid.
   d. It informs the reader that the poem's narrator is in bed early.

2. What happened as a result of the stars shining so brightly?
   a. The pail needed to be filled with more water.
   b. The leaves have fallen from all of the trees.
   c. The water in the pail reflected the stars' light.
   d. The leaves were falling into the pail of water.

3. What happened AFTER the narrator was seen by his caretakers?
   a. He was chased into bed.
   b. His bed was packed up for him.
   c. He was chased until he cried.
   d. He cried himself to sleep.

4. To what does the word "These" at the beginning of line 11 refer?
   a. The people who take care of the narrator.
   b. The constellations named in lines nine and ten
   c. All of the stars in the pail
   d. "the star of the sailor"

5. What is the main idea of the poem?
   a. The child narrating the poem wants to run away at bedtime.
   b. Going to bed is a frightening experience for the narrator
   c. The narrator thinks children love to count stars at night
   d. The narrator loves the beauty of the stars in the evening

6. Read the following sentence from the poem. **There ne'er were such thousands of leaves on a tree.** What does the word ne'er mean?
   a. Always
   b. Never
   c. Near
   d. Nightly

Women Spies of the Civil War

In wartime, not all of the heroes are on the battlefield. Espionage — the practice of spying — can make the difference between winning and losing. During the Civil War, three of the most clever and courageous spies were women.

Confederate spy Belle Boyd was only 17 when the war began, but she outwitted men more than twice her age. When she was arrested and questioned by Allan Pinkerton, the head of Union espionage, Belle was so charming that she convinced Pinkerton she was not a spy. Pinkerton let her go, and Belle promptly went back to spying for the South. Belle traveled back and forth between the North and the South, carrying information about troop movements and Union plans. Once she listened to secret battle plans through an air vent in a hotel room. She was captured several times, but she never revealed information about the South. Belle was offered her freedom if she would take an oath of allegiance to the Union. However, she refused and remained in prison.

Like Belle Boyd, Elizabeth Van Lew was a southern woman, but she was a spy for the Union. Her neighbors knew that she was a Union sympathizer, and they knew that every day Elizabeth brought food to Union soldiers in the nearby prison. What they did not know was that she also hid escaping Union soldiers, often as many as 20 or 30, in a secret room in her huge house. Elizabeth's neighbors were also unaware that she sent coded messages to the North through a network of people she had organized. When they finally grew suspicious, Elizabeth faked a nervous breakdown. They called her "Crazy Bet" and no longer took her seriously. When the Union army overtook her city, General Ulysses Grant sent a cavalry troop to protect her because he considered Elizabeth his most valuable agent.

Rose Greenhow was a wealthy southern widow who lived in Washington, D.C. She was a beautiful, charming woman with access to important information through her friends in Washington society. As a spy for the South, Rose delivered information that allowed the Confederate Army to win Bull Run, the first battle of the war. When she was finally arrested, the evidence found in her home revealed that Rose was the head of a ring of at least 50 spies, most of them women. Because of her popularity, she was released from prison and sent back to the South. She then sailed to Europe to try to raise support for the South in France and England. Rose sailed home with two-thousand dollars in gold and important letters, but a Union warship stopped the voyage. She took a small boat and tried to escape, but was drowned.

All three women believed ardently in their causes and were willing to die for them. Although they did not fight on a battlefield, these women used their wits and courage to make a difference in their world.

Directions: Read the story carefully. Read each question/statement and all of the answer choices. Using the story and your own prior knowledge, select the best answer. Circle the letter that corresponds with the correct answer.

1. What is the author's purpose in writing this article?
   a. To convince the reader that women make the best war spies
   b. To educate the reader about events of the Civil War
   c. To explain the dangers of spying to the readers
   d. To inform the reader about three spies of the Civil War

2. Elizabeth Van Lew faked a nervous breakdown because--
   a. She was not afraid to be called crazy
   b. Her city was taken by the Union army
   c. She was a very clever spy
   d. Her neighbors grew suspicious

3. According to this article, which two women used charm to help in their spying efforts?
   a. Belle Boyd and Rose Greenhow
   b. Rose Greenhow and Elizabeth Van Lew
   c. Elizabeth Van Lew and Belle Boyd
   d. Rose Greenhow and Crazy Bet

4. According to the article, General Grant valued which of the spies?
   a. Rose Greenhow
   b. Elizabeth Van Lew
   c. Belle Boyd
   d. Allan Pinkerton

5. Although two of the three women spies discussed in the article outwitted Allan Pinkerton during their careers, the article mentions only one doing so. Which spy is it?
   a. Belle Boyd
   b. Rose Greenhow
   c. Elizabeth Van Lew
   d. Crazy Bet

6. According to the article, in what ways were the women ALIKE?
   a. All three women were courageous southerners
   b. All three women were clever southerners
   c. All three women were clever and courageous
   d. All three women were clever, courageous southerners

7. What is the main idea of the passage?
   a. Spying is a very dangerous thing to do.
   b. Not all war heroes are on the battlefield.
   c. It was a woman's job to spy since women could not fight in the Civil War.
   d. Three of the most clever and courageous spies of the Civil War were woman.

8. Read the following sentence from the passage: **She was captured several times, but she never revealed information about the South.** What does revealed mean?
   a. Concealed
   b. Exposed
   c. Suppressed

Context clues are hints in the writing that help you figure out what a word means. Each example below has hints within the passage or sentence to help you figure out the meaning of the word. Read each question CAREFULLY and bubble in the correct answer on your scantron. The word you are defining may be in bold, underlined or both.

1.No matter where you go, the Internet is following you. Almost every portable device is being made with an Internet connection. Most new TVs and many other appliances come with Internet connections as well. The Internet is truly **ubiquitous**.

If something is ubiquitous, _____.

a. it is fuzzy and will bite you
b. it is everywhere
c. it costs too much money
d. it causes rashes

2. Speaking rudely to the judges was **rash** behavior. You really hurt your chances of winning!

In the above context, what does "rash" mean?

a. an itchy skin condition
b. funny
c. trying to hide or disguise a piece of cheese
d. with little thought or consideration

3. Some people are always **bashing** the president just like others bashed the one before him. Wouldn't you think that everyone could find something to praise him for, at least once in a while?

What does "bashing" mean in the above selection?

a. hitting hard with a heavy tool
b. going to too many expensive parties
c. speaking or writing harshly about
d. voting for a different candidate

4. Wherever he goes, the **esteemed** Dr. Sanchez is applauded for his life saving research.

What does "esteemed" mean?

a. held over boiling water
b. very old
c. unable to chew gum
d. greatly admired

5. I believe that if you lower taxes so that people can keep more of the money they earn, it will be an **incentive** for them to work harder.

What is the meaning of "incentive"? _____.

a. a reason to do something
b. a small amount of money
c. a tax
d. a good job

6. Most of America's Founding Fathers did not believe in women's **suffrage**. Only men could vote in the United states until 1920.

What is "suffrage" ?

a. something that causes physical pain
b. an early flag
c. skirts that did not cover ankles
d. the right to vote

7. Some people are sure that the new health care law will mean better care for everyone. Others argue that the law will mean less care and longer waiting lines for those who need to see doctors. It's a **controversy** that will not go away soon.

A *controversy* is something that people _____.

a. have strong disagreements over
b. blow their noses into
c. need to pay for a visit to a doctor
d. eat with sweet candy

8. Removing seeds from cotton plants was a slow job until Eli Whitney invented the **cotton gin.**

What is a cotton gin?

a. a drink
b. a book
c. a machine
d. a cloth

9. In the early 1600s, a dangerous trip across the Atlantic Ocean was a **daunting** idea. The Europeans, who would someday be known as the Pilgrims, must have been a very determined and brave group of settlers.

A *daunting* task is one that would _____ someone.

a. tickle
b. amuse
c. lose or misplace
d. frighten or intimidate

10. The **original** Pilgrims called themselves the "Saints" and referred to others who joined with them for the voyage as the "Strangers."

In this context, "original" means _____.

a. one of a kind
b. first
c. humorous
c. musical

11. The Saints and Strangers argued about how they would live in the New World. After much discussion, they came together and signed the Mayflower **Compact.**

The *Compact* was _____.

a. a container for makeup
b. a small item
c. a machine used for mashing corn
d. an agreement

12. When the Pilgrims landed in what is now Massachusetts, they were fearful that the Native Americans would attack them. However, the people that they **encountered**, the Wampanoag Indians, were a peaceful and generous tribe.

To *encounter*, is to _____.

a. meet
b. note how many
c. fight
d. exchange text messages

13. As the summer sun sent scattered rays through the maple and oak leaves overhead, the young deer stood **frozen**, making it almost impossible for the hikers to see her.

In the above passage, the word "frozen" means _____.

a. very cold
b. visible
c. not moving
d. not melted

14. Christmas is a time when Dad **reverts** to his childhood. I really think he looks forward to Santa's visit more than any other member of the family. Mom says that he'll always be a child during this season.

What does "reverts" mean in the above passage?

a. stands up straight
b. peeks at presents
c. drinks too much egg nog
d. goes back to being what he was

15. Fortunately, the explosion **diverted** the asteroid from a course that would have sent it hurdling into our planet.

To *divert* is to _____.

a. change the direction of
b. look for really high waves
c. jump into a dry river
d. look through a telescope

16. A wonderful 98 year old woman is working day and night to knit scarves to send as gifts for the troops. What a **selfless** person she is!

A *selfless* woman _____.

a. is selfish
b. has no name
c. likes to wear scarves
d. cares more about others than herself

The United States has a vast amount of newly discovered clean geothermal (natural heat from the Earth's crust) energy. Tapping into this energy source could provide at least 10 times the energy that can be obtained from the nation's known coal reserves.

17. What does "vast" mean?

a. a large amount
b. not enough
c. dangerous
d. having no known use

18. Which word in the above paragraph means supplies that are available to be used?

a. geothermal
b. tapping
c. continent
d. reserves

Using IQ tests and MRI brain scans, researchers have found that the measurable intelligence of teenagers can rise and fall over time. We used to believe that intelligence was static. But now, because of new studies, we know that teens and even fully mature adults can grow more brain cells when needed.

19. What does "static" mean in the above selection?

a. noise
b. not changing
c. moldy
d. unreal

20. What are researchers?

a. people who lose things
b. people who search for knowledge
c. creatures from Mars
d. students who don't study

21. Poor Farmer Chevez **labors** sixteen hours a day and never has time for a vacation. He deserves better! Everyone should have at least one day a week for rest and relaxation.

A. plays
B. eats
C. works
D. unions

22. It's not that I'm unfriendly, but sometimes I want to leave **society** behind and be alone for awhile.

A. people living as members of a group
B. homes with messy floors
C. the fastest runners
D. people who are afraid of Girl Scouts

23. Our new alarm system will wake up the entire neighborhood if an intruder gets in the house.
An intruder is someone who intrudes. To **intrude** is to _____.

A. paint or repair old buildings
B. wear ones shoes on the wrong feet
C. go where one is not wanted or doesn't belong
D. be very noisy

24. Those scientists want to hear what our professor thinks about their theory because he is the **foremost** expert in their field.

A. The first or main one
B. craziest
C. least informed
D. loudest

25.Your cousin claimed to be late because the doors of his house were frozen shut. Even though I have my doubts, his explanation is **plausible**. It got really cold last night. I'll just have to take his word for it.
If a statement is *plausible,* _____.

a. you must always believe it
b. you should never believe it
c. it's hard to understand because it makes no sense
d. it's believable enough to possibly be true

26. If you don't **curtail** your spending, you'll be broke in no time at all!
Which word is a synonym of "curtail"?

a. reduce
b. follow
c. behind
d. buy

27. No word must ever leak out about this military action! It has to be a **clandestine** operation in order to succeed.
Which word is a synonym of "clandestine"?

a. family
b. useful
c. dangerous
d. secret

28. Put this medicine on your arm and rub it into your skin until it's invisible. It will **inhibit** the infection's attempt to spread.
What does "inhibit" mean?

a. live in a certain place
b. block or slow down
c. itch or burn
d. help to do something important

29.Fortunately, the dizzy spell was **transient**. He was able to continue playing within seconds and had no trouble winning the match.

When you describe an event as "transient," you are saying that _____.

a. it sounds like a train
b. it is quite harmful
c. it helps you win
d. it doesn't last long

30. Brea and Elizabeth are having a **dispute** over which radio station to play at work. It would be so much simpler if they both liked the same kind of music.

A dispute is a _____.

a. musical instrument
b. choice of music
c. discovery
d. disagreement

31. When they heard the good news about the court's decision, the angry crowd cheered and then began to **disperse**. "It looks like everyone is going home," one reporter stated.

Which would be the ***opposite*** of "disperse"?

a. come together
b. smile
c. fly like a bird
d. sing

32. It's a wonder to me how anyone can still be undecided about this election. These two candidates are certainly **distinct**. Each would lead our nation in opposite directions.

What does "distinct" mean?

a. needing a bath
b. dishonest
c. clearly different
d. about the same age

33. Mr. Huge was very proud of his auto superstore. "We have such an **extensive** selection of cars," he said, "so everyone should find a vehicle that he or she will love!"

The word "extensive" means _____.

a. costing a lot of money
b. large amount
c. having no color
d. not enough

34. Friendship is a **priceless** thing. If Chris put a price, or conditions, on her friendship, it's no longer priceless. In fact, it's not real friendship at all!

If something is priceless, _____.

a. it has a missing tag
b. it has no value
c. it has great value
d. it is made out of rice

35. The news story was based on a letter that was a **fabrication**. Now the reporter who wrote the story is in big trouble. Will anyone believe him again?

A fabrication is _____.

a. made of cloth
b. full of long words
c. funny
d. fake

36. The reporter insisted that the letter he used was **authentic**. He said that he had shown it to many experts before he used it in his story.

When something is authentic, it's _____.

a. genuine, or real
b. carefully written
c. full of tasty worms
d. very old

37. In 1975, Governor James promised to do something about the high taxes in our state. She didn't present a tax cut bill to lawmakers until 1985. It took her a **decade** to keep her promise, but better late than never.

How long is a decade?

a. 75 years
b. 85 years
c. a century
d. 10 years

38. Your plan looks good. I hope it will really work. It's time to **implement** it and see if it's as brilliant as you claim.

a. instrument
b. take apart
c. change
d. carry out

39. If your plan fails, we'll have to find someone who can **devise** a better one.

a. design
b. dislike
c. appliance
d. to use peanut butter as toothpaste

40. Of course, I'm not saying that your plan is no good. I tend to be **optimistic**, so I won't be surprised when you succeed.

a. expecting the best to happen
b. needing glasses to see
c. full of gas
d. unselfish

41. When your plan brings us great wealth, you will be rewarded for your **sagacity**.

a. good looks
b. mistakes
c. intelligence
d. huge appetite for herbs

42. No matter what happens, I **assure** you that I will not forget how hard you have worked on this project.

a. dare
b. promise
c. act like a donkey
d. forget

Marsha is really an introvert. When I took her to Jason's party, she sat in a corner without speaking to anyone. All she did was eat most of the snacks. The only reason she hangs out with me is because I never try to force her to be sociable. She would never forgive me if I introduced her to anyone.

43. An introvert is usually _____.

a. friendly
b. hungry
c. unclean
d. shy

44. Sunshine said, "Amber, why are you making such a big deal about Robert's hair? Yes, he did dye it purple. It is rather unusual for a guy to have purple hair. On the other hand, it's not exactly going to change the course of world history. It's really quite a trivial matter."

What does "trivial" mean?

a. strange
b. unimportant
c. disgusting
d. dangerous

45. Both sides in the election contest are throwing accusations at each other. The Gore supporters claim that Governor Bush is trying to **thwart** the will of the people. The Bush supporters say that Mr. Gore is trying to create votes or assign choices to people who did not really cast votes for president.

What does "thwart" mean?

a. help
b. figure out
c. block
d. tickle

46. There is a legal battle raging and the judges are concerned that time is running out. Lawyers are being asked to **expedite** the matter by getting their paperwork in early.

What does "expedite" mean?

a. quicken
b. agree on
c. sue
d. discuss

47. The Florida legislature believes that it has the power to choose the winner of the election if the courts haven't finished their work by December 12. Both houses are controlled by Republicans and they would surely **resolve** the matter in Bush's favor.

What does "resolve" mean?

a. cancel
b. consider
c. debate
d. settle

48. The election could actually end up being decided in the U.S. Congress. Al Gore's vice presidential running mate, Joe Lieberman, and perhaps Mr. Gore himself, would be able to vote on the matter. Some would argue that they should **recuse** themselves, but they would probably exercise their right to vote.

What does "recuse" mean?

a. step aside and not be involved
b. admit that you are wrong
c. leave the country
d. insist on being heard

49. If you count all the votes in an area that heavily supports candidate A, and only some of the votes in an area that heavily supports candidate B, you'll **skew** the results in favor of candidate A.

What does "skew" mean?

a. roast
b. ignore
c. slant
d. ask

50. The home team made sure that the officials were on their side. They won a close game and the championship with many questionable decisions from the officials. However, no one from any other town would accept the winners as **legitimate** champions.

What does "legitimate" mean?

a. real
b. talented
c. sneaky
d. good looking

51. Some people believe that lawyers are always working to see that justice is done. On the other hand, some believe that lawyers only want to **manipulate** the legal system to get what they want. Could both sides be right?

What does "manipulate" mean?

a. control in a dishonest way
b. give help
c. teach about or explain
d. disagree with

52. We walked slowly down the trail with great **trepidation**. No one who had gone this way had ever been heard from again. Had they simply found a better place to settle on this dark planet? We doubted that.

Which word is a synonym of "trepidation"?

a. movement
b. worry
c. enjoyment
d. laughter

53. Only an hour or so had passed before a tremendous roar shook the ground. At that very moment, a strange grey creature **materialized** before our eyes. It resembled a lizard in shape. It was about ten feet high at the shoulders and at least fifty feet long. What did the creature do?

a. It whipped its tail back and forth.
b. It stamped its feet.
c. It showed its sharp teeth.
d. It appeared.

54. Kathy was looking for a strong but light material to use for making her water jugs. Unfortunately, she chose noodelite. It proved to too **porous** to hold jelly.

A porous material _____.

a. is good for holding things that you pour
b. protects you in pouring rain
c. allows liquids to flow through it
d. is necessary for making bowling balls

55. We have rather **lofty** expectations for you, son. You will attend college. You will become rich and famous. You will be elected president of the United States before you turn forty.

Which word is a synonym of "lofty"?

a. high
b. shaky
c. small
d. lowly

56. Ashlee was not happy with her friend Samantha. "I've been waiting here for an hour!" she growled into her cell phone. "You'd better **hie** yourself over here," she continued, "or we'll leave without you.

a. hurry, or hasten
b. stroll, or walk slowly
c. float above the trees
d. greet in an unfriendly manner

57. When Beth and Donna were fighting over a boy who didn't like either one of them, Shana stepped in as a **mediator**. She sat them both in a corner and kept them talking to each other. Finally, Shana's efforts resulted in her two friends making up.

a. troublemaker
b. peacemaker
c. witness
d. competitor

58. No one suspected that Jerry was a spy. On the surface he behaved like any normal citizen. When his **covert** activity was discovered and announced to the world, we were all shocked.

a. friendly
b. helpful
c. loud
d. hidden

59. The workers stood in front of the factory and wondered what to do next. The doors were locked and the windows were boarded up. They doubted that they would even collect their final pay checks now that the company was **insolvent**.

a. broke, or out of money
b. hiring new workers
c. changing a name
d. making too much money

60. Kim was a very good substitute teacher. She liked working with third and fourth graders most of all. She especially liked discussing important current events issues with the kids. She had expected them to be **indifferent** to such grown-up topics as taxes and social security. She was pleasantly surprised to discover that they were really interested in those issues and wanted to learn more about them.

a. similar
b. very unusual
c. not caring
d. gross

61. Mr. Burke stood before his employees. They had never seen him in such a serious mood. "I would be **remiss** if I didn't tell you that your future with this company depends on how hard you work," he stated firmly.

a. a girl again
b. honest and trustworthy
c. important
d. not responsible

62. "I am going to **rescind** the permission I gave you to use my toys!" T. J. announced angrily. "I thought you would take good care of them, but I was wrong!"

a. repeat
b. celebrate
c. continue
d. cancel

63. I am working very hard for the same candidate that you support. You are doing it for pay. I'm not doing this for money. I'm doing it out of **conviction**.

a. being found guilty
b. strong belief
c. anger
d. a desire to eat prunes

64. It was a sad and haunting **strain** that met our ears as we entered the old theater. There was a beauty in the voice that we'd never forget. This would be a special concert.

What does "strain" mean in the context of the selection?

a. effort
b. injury
c. melody
d. filter

65. I want you to **weigh** his words carefully. He seems sincere and presents his arguments well. There is, however, something that doesn't quite ring true about the candidate.

What does "weigh" mean in the context of the selection?

a. to measure the mass
b. to put pressure on a scale
c. to think about
d. to be important

66. Michael is an **ardent** supporter of his presidential candidate. That became obvious to me when I found out how much time he's donated to the campaign. Perhaps Michael knows what he's doing.

What does "ardent" mean in the context of the selection?

a. old
b. intelligent
c. foolish
d. very strong

67. Mary, of course you're overweight. You eat too much junk food. Even worse, you exercise **infrequently**.

What does "infrequently" mean?

a. with a frown on one's face
b. at a gym
c. while wearing heavy clothes
d. not often

68. Your uncle wouldn't even part with a dime to help the kids pay for their trip. That's just one more example of his **penurious** ways. In contrast, many people who have much less money have donated a great deal to the cause.

What does "penurious" mean?

a. very old
b. very wealthy
c. very humorous
d. very stingy

69. There is a very interesting article about solar storms in the February 14, 2000 issue of Time magazine. It tells about how these disturbances not only affect spacecraft, but can also disrupt **terrestrial** life. For example, they have even caused automatic garage doors to open in one town.

What does "terrestrial" mean?

a. of or on the planet Earth
b. protective of automotive equipment
c. solar
d. in or near a pond

70. "Michelle, I'm very upset about what you said," Rosie stated firmly. "You didn't come right out and accuse me of eating all your candy. On the other hand, your remarks about my love of chocolate were made for a reason. You are **insinuating** that I'm the candy thief!"

What does "insinuate" mean?

a. to keep something hot or cold
b. to suggest without clearly saying
c. to do something evil
d. to protect from disease

71. I think it would help our basketball team, if we allowed girls to play. I've seen how Patty has a **knack** for making the tough shots when they're needed most. She wants to play on our team and we'd win more games with her help.

What does "knack" mean?

a. to throw or toss
b. a hard punch
c. a kind of sports bag
d. an ability

72. Connie is never happy when everyone is getting along. She always instigates fights and then acts like little Miss Innocent.

When you **instigate** something, you _____.

a. check it out
b. protect it
c. get it started
d. ignore it

73. I like that store. All the employees strive to make the customers feel right at home.

Which word is a synonym of **"strive"**?

a. complain
b. try
c. fail
d. clean

74. This is a clandestine operation. It is extremely important that no one discovers what you're doing!

A **clandestine** operation is supposed to be _____.

a. dangerous
b. harmful
c. exciting
d. secret

75. If you don't recover quickly from your condition, it could become chronic. Then you might have to take medicine for the rest of your life.

If something is **chronic**, it _____.

a. is very painful
b. won't go away
c. makes you smell bad
d. isn't real

76. David hoped that nobody would know that he was in the building. Didn't he realize that parking his new car in the driveway made his presence rather conspicuous?

If something is **conspicuous**, it is _____.

a. important
b. expensive
c. unfortunate
d. noticeable

77. Prunella and Paula are sisters, but they're very different. Just look at how they dress. Prunella doesn't care what she wears. Paula, on the other hand, is quite **chic** [sheek].

a. intelligent
b. stylish
c. full of feathers
d. dressed in old clothes

78. I looked at the plans for your new house. This is earthquake country. You need to **fortify** the frame or you'll have a disaster with the first tremor.

a. shake
b. build
c. strengthen
d. destroy

79. Helen's attitude toward dealing with criminals has changed over the years. She used to believe that everyone can change and deserves a second chance. She now believes that some crimes are so **heinous** that those responsible should be shown no mercy.

a. guilty
b. terrible
c. accidental
d. unimportant

80. There may be some parts of my plan to arrest the thieves that should be changed. But I feel very strongly that renting the apartment over their headquarters is the **linchpin** of the scheme. We must do that immediately!

a. part that everything else depends on
b. piece of metal used to connect things
c. place where people live
d. a computer designed for police work

81. Amy was feeling low. Every business she tried lost money or made only pennies a day. Her newest idea was selling chocolate covered baby shoes. She was convinced that it would be a **lucrative** business. Her friends tried to warn her that it was not a certain road to riches.

a. tasting great with vanilla ice cream
b. helping young feet to grow correctly
c. showing no careful thought
d. bringing in a lot of money, or profit

82. The signal from the cable is too strong for our television. We'll have to use a filter to attenuate it.
When you attenuate something, you _____.

a. watch it carefully
b. take good care of it
c. make it be less
d. get past it

83. "If you knew the **gravity** of the situation, you wouldn't be laughing," Mr. Farmer said quietly. He didn't have to say more to get everyone's attention.
What does "gravity" mean in this context?

a. a force that draws different objects toward each other
b. seriousness
c. humor
d. enjoyable, or comfortable

84. Her **cardinal** rule is this: Be kind to others! She believes that everything else in life will fall properly into place if one follows that rule.
What does "cardinal" mean in this context?

a. main, or most important
b. red
c. like a bird
d. not worth remembering

85. The owner of the restaurant wouldn't allow Samantha to walk through the door. "I'm sorry," she said, "but you started a food fight the last time you were here. You may not have **ingress** to my restaurant!"
What does "ingress" mean in this selection?

a. a kind of bird that lives by the sea
b. any food that can be thrown
c. a good price for a meal
d. the right to enter

86. Murphy Mole is the **protagonist** in the new novel by Trent Troll. Murphy must stop Oscar Rat and Shrimpy Shark from enslaving the inhabitants of Lazy Woods Park. He risks his life in a series of events that lead to a final battle between good and evil.

What is a protagonist?

a. the main character of a story
b. an animal that lives underground
c. someone whose first and last names start with the same letter
d. someone with bad body odor

87. I just can't beat Paula when we play chess! Every time I make a move that should lead me to victory, she makes a better move that thwarts my plan.

If you thwart a robbery, you _____.

a. commit a crime
b. stop a crime from happening
c. imagine a theft
d. give warts to a thief

88. Don't feel stupid. Yes, you thought this worthless replica was a valuable work of art. But it even fooled a lot of experts. It certainly looked like the real thing!

A replica is _____.

a. a dishonest act
b. something ugly
c. anything that has no value
d. a copy

89. Your poster is very good. The drawing really lets people know what our club is all about. I do think that you could enhance it by adding some more color. That will tend to grab everyone's attention.

When you enhance something, you _____.

a. draw it
b. throw it out
c. ruin it
d. make it better

Inferencing is when you "read between the lines" and use your experience and knowledge of people to understand what is happening even if the author does not tell you directly. Read the passages below and answer the question below each one using inferences to figure our your answer.

Turner almost wished that he hadn't listened to the radio. He went to the closet and grabbed his umbrella. He would feel silly carrying it to the bus stop on such a sunny morning.

90. Which probably happened?

a. Turner realized that he had an unnatural fear of falling radio parts.
b. Turner had promised himself to do something silly that morning.
c. Turner had heard a weather forecast that predicted rain.
d. Turner planned to trade his umbrella for a bus ride.

"Larry, as your boss, I must say it's been very interesting working with you," Miss Valdez said. "However, it seems that our company's needs and your performance style are not well matched. Therefore, it makes me very sad to have to ask you to resign your position effective today."

91. What was Miss Valdez telling Larry?

a. She would feel really bad if he decided to quit.
b. He was being fired.
c. He was getting a raise in pay.
d. She really enjoyed having him in the office.

No, Honey, I don't want you to spend a lot of money on my birthday present. Just having you for a husband is the only gift I need. In fact, I'll just drive my old rusty bucket of bolts down to the mall and buy myself a little present. And if the poor old car doesn't break down, I'll be back soon.

92. What is the message?
    a. I don't want a gift.
    b. Buy me a new car.
    c. The mall is fun.
    d. I'll carry a bucket for you.

Bill and Jessica were almost done taking turns choosing the players for their teams. It was Jessica's turn to choose, and only Kurt was left.
Jessica said, "Kurt."

93. We can infer that _____
    a. Kurt is not a very good player.
    b. Jessica was pleased to have Kurt on her team.
    c. Kurt was the best player on either team.
    d. Jessica was inconsiderate of Kurt's feelings.

On Your Own!

Read this passage. Answer the questions that follow it.

Dawn mounted the stage slowly. As she stepped in front of the podium, her legs were trembling. She took out the index cards containing her speech. "Good morning," she said—or rather, squeaked. Wincing at the poor first impression she had made, she cleared her throat. Her family gazed up at her with identical worried expressions. Dawn looked back down at her index cards to begin, but her voice froze in her throat.

When Mr. Brown had asked her to give the keynote speech for Martin Luther King, Jr., Day, Dawn had felt honored. She was a talented speaker, and she greatly admired Dr. King. She had eagerly jumped at the chance to make a speech about the Nobel Prize winner to her fellow students and their families.

But now she was scared and anxious to stand in front of 500 people. She looked up again to see her brother grin and wink. Suddenly, she relaxed. She had no reason to be apprehensive; she had practiced her speech many times and would do a good job. With a quick look at the top card, Dawn started to speak.

1. Which of the following is a simple sentence?

   A. Dawn mounted the stage slowly.

   B. As she stepped in front of the podium, her legs were trembling.

   C. She was a talented speaker, and she greatly admired Dr. King.

   D. When she looked up again, her brother grinned and winked.

2. Read this sentence from the passage.

   She was a talented speaker, and she greatly admired Dr. King.

   What kind of sentence is this?

   A. subject

   B. simple

   C. compound

   D. complex

3. Read this sentence from the passage.

> Dawn looked back down at her index cards to begin, but her voice froze in her throat.

Which word is a conjunction?

A. at
B. her
C. but
D. in

4. Which of the following is a complex sentence?

A. She looked up again to see her brother grin and wink.
B. Wincing at the poor first impression she made, she cleared her throat.
C. But now she was scared and anxious to stand in front of 500 people.
D. Her family gazed up at her with identical worried expressions.

5. Read this sentence from the passage.

> With a quick look at the top card, Dawn started to speak.

Which phrase is dependent clause?

A. With a quick look at the top card
B. With a quick look
C. Dawn started to speak
D. to speak

6. Read this sentence from the passage.

> She had no reason to be apprehensive; she had practiced her speech many times and would do a good job.

Which statement **best** describes this sentence?

A. It has one dependent clause and one independent clause.
B. It has one independent clause and no dependent clauses.
C. It has two dependent clauses.
D. It has two independent clauses.

Write It Out Use the passage to help you write a brief answer to the question below.

7. What complex sentence could you write to add to the story about Dawn?

On Your Own!

Read this passage. Answer the questions that follow it.

Ming laced up her running shoes. They were dirty and nearly worn out, but to her, the tattered shoes represented hard work.

Coach Bernstein called for attention and announced the 50-meter dash. Ming gulped. The 50 meter was her event. Quickly, she pulled her hair back with the same hairband she'd been wearing when she'd won last year's field day race. As she lined up with the other runners, she glanced toward the sidelines. Her sister Jia stood there, waving a stuffed elephant. Ming grinned. Jia had brought "Lucky," a stuffed animal they shared as children.

Coach Bernstein blew her whistle and the runners were off. Ming ran as swiftly as she could. When she crossed the finish line, she slowed to a halt and waited, panting. The results were then announced. She had come in second place!

Coach Bernstein announced that the top three runners had made the team.

"Congratulations!" Coach said. "Go pick up your uniforms."

Ming received her uniform from the assistant coach and dashed toward Jia, waving the shirt like a flag. "I'm on the team!" she shouted.

1. For Ming, the tattered running shoes symbolize

   A. success
   B. poverty
   C. hard work
   D. love of running

2. What did the hairband represent for Ming?

   A. victory
   B. freedom
   C. fashion
   D. defeat

3. Read these sentences from the passage.

> Her sister Jia stood there, waving a stuffed elephant. Ming grinned. Jia had brought "Lucky," a stuffed animal they shared as children.

What does the elephant symbolize?

A. childhood experiences
B. love for each other
C. good fortune
D. bad luck

4. What do uniforms for school sports teams usually represent?

A. the athlete
B. the mascot
C. the coach
D. the school

5. For Ming, the team uniform also symbolizes

A. her dislike of running
B. her love of running
C. her failure
D. her achievement

6. Jia brought the stuffed elephant to the track try-outs because she

A. wished to show her support for Ming
B. did not want Ming to make the track team
C. wanted to remind Ming of their childhood
D. wanted to make Ming smile and laugh

Write It Out Use the passage to help you write a brief answer to the question below.

7. What do the symbols in this passage have in common? Explain your answer.

On Your Own

Read this passage. Answer the questions that follow it.

It was a hot day. In the sky above, the sun laughed at the pitiful efforts of humans to stay cool. Most humans stayed inside their air-conditioned dwellings.

In one yard, however, a human was resolutely ignoring the sun. Mr. Merriweather had decided to dig a garden, and nothing was going to stop him—until he hit a rock.

The rock was large and gray. It was positioned just under the earth. Undaunted, Mr. Merriweather reached down and tried to lift it from the ground. He couldn't move it an inch, though. Next, Mr. Merriweather got a crowbar and tried to pry the boulder from the ground. The rock refused to budge. Clearly, the rock had decided it would not leave its home in the dirt no matter what Mr. Merriweather tried to do.

Mr. Merriweather scratched his head. The rock was directly in the center of his future garden; it simply had to go. Then he had an idea. Taking his shovel, he dug his garden in circles around the stubborn rock. Later that summer, colorful flowers danced exuberantly around the gray boulder at their center. As for the rock, it sat happily in the middle, pleased to be the center of attention.

1. Which phrase is an example of personification?

   A. "In the sky above"
   B. "the sun laughed"
   C. "Most humans stayed inside"
   D. "their air-conditioned dwellings"

2. Which sentence about the rock uses personification?

   A. "The rock was large and gray."
   B. "It was positioned just under the earth."
   C. "He couldn't move it an inch, though."
   D. "The rock refused to budge."

3. Read this sentence from the passage.

> Clearly, the rock had decided it would not leave its home in the dirt no matter what Mr. Merriweather tried to do.

In this sentence, the rock acts like a human by

A. making a decision
B. staying in the dirt
C. making a new friend
D. moving to a new house

4. By calling the rock "stubborn," the author means that it

A. is unkind
B. speaks angrily
C. does not move
D. is unhappy

5. The author compares the flowers to

A. a strong wind
B. human dancers
C. swaying trees
D. the garden rock

6. Read this sentence from the passage.

> As for the rock, it sat happily in the middle, pleased to be the center of attention.

This description helps the reader to

A. imagine which flowers are in the new garden
B. contrast the flowers in the garden with the rock
C. understand how the rock changes in the story
D. visualize how the rock looks in the garden

Write It Out Use the passage to help you write a brief response to the prompt below.

7. Write a short description of Mr. Merriweather's garden, using two new examples of personification.

On Your Own!

Read this passage. Answer the questions that follow it.

The cowboy rode into town, as bold as brass. He tipped his hat to the ladies, with a special smile for his favorite. "Why, hello, Miss Callie. You're looking pretty as a picture today!"

Callie smiled back. "Get along with you now. That tongue of yours is as smooth as silk. I know better than to believe your nonsense."

The cowboy grinned and rode on. When he reached the jail, he swung off his horse and shouted for the sheriff. The sheriff emerged from the building as fast as a flash to see what the commotion was about.

With eyes like steel, the cowboy glared at the sheriff. "Where's my brother?" he demanded, his face suddenly hard.

Behind him, the townspeople who had gathered twittered like birds, both nervous and excited at the drama being enacted before their very eyes.

"Now, settle down," the sheriff drawled, as cool as a cucumber. "Your brother will be released later today, after he pays for busting that fence. And in the future, tell your brother that if he wants to impress the ladies, galloping his horse up Main Street with his eyes blindfolded is *not* the way to do it."

1. The author chose the simile "as bold as brass" to
   - A. show that the cowboy is tough and daring
   - B. describe the setting of the story
   - C. suggest that the cowboy is not human
   - D. describe the cowboy's horse

2. Which of the following sentences contains a simile?
   - A. "He tipped his hat to the ladies, with a special smile for his favorite."
   - B. "...he swung off his horse and shouted for the sheriff."
   - C. "I know better than to believe your nonsense."
   - D. "The sheriff emerged from the building as fast as a flash..."

3. Read this sentence from the passage.

> Behind him, the townspeople who had gathered twittered like birds, both nervous and excited at the drama being enacted before their very eyes.

What is the simile in this sentence?

A. "townspeople who had gathered"
B. "twittered like birds"
C. "both nervous and excited"
D. "before their very eyes"

4. What does the cowboy mean when he says Callie is "looking pretty as a picture"?

A. Callie is looking at a pretty picture.
B. Callie is taking a pretty picture.
C. Callie is not very pretty.
D. Callie is very pretty.

5. What does Callie mean when she says that the cowboy's tongue is "as smooth as silk"?

A. He dresses well.
B. He is charming.
C. He has good manners.
D. He eats quickly.

6. The simile "as cool as a cucumber" means that the sheriff is

A. too cold
B. unfriendly
C. hungry
D. very calm

Write It Out Use the passage to help you write a brief answer to the question below.

7. Read this sentence from the passage.

> With eyes like steel, the cowboy glared at the sheriff.

What is being compared in this sentence? Explain why the author chose to make this comparison.

Reading Comprehension

On Your Own

Read this poem. Answer the questions that follow it.

Peace

by Sara Teasdale

Peace flows into me
As the tide to the pool by the shore;
It is mine forevermore,
It ebbs not back like the sea.

I am the pool of blue
That worships the vivid sky;
My hopes were heaven-high,
They are all fulfilled in you.

I am the pool of gold
When sunset burns and dies,—
You are my deepening skies,
Give me your stars to hold.

1. The speaker compares herself to a
   - A. tide
   - B. shore
   - C. pool
   - D. sunset

2. Read this line from the poem.

   It is mine forevermore,

   In this line, the speaker is referring to
   - A. peace
   - B. hope
   - C. the sea
   - D. worship

Reproduction Prohibited

3. According to the poem, what does the speaker worship?

   A. a pool of gold
   B. the vivid sky
   C. the burning sunset
   D. the tide of the sea

4. Which of the following lines from the poem contains a metaphor?

   A. "It is mine forevermore,"
   B. "My hopes were heaven-high,"
   C. "When sunset burns and dies,—"
   D. "You are my deepening skies,"

5. Read this line from the poem.

   Give me your stars to hold.

   What does this line most likely mean?

   A. The speaker wants to hold actual stars.
   B. The speaker is hoping for a present.
   C. The speaker thinks she is a star.
   D. The speaker wants to be trusted.

6. In this poem, the speaker's relationship with the subject of the poem is compared to the relationship between

   A. peace and worship
   B. the colors gold and blue
   C. the water and the sky
   D. the sunset and the stars

Write It Out Use the poem to help you write a brief answer to the question below.

7. What else could be used as a metaphor for the speaker and her love? Explain your choice.

On Your Own!

Read this poem. Answer the questions that follow it.

On the Grasshopper and Cricket

by John Keats

The poetry of earth is never dead:
When all the birds are faint with the hot sun,
And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run
From hedge to hedge about the new-mown mead;
That is the grasshopper's—he takes the lead
In summer luxury—he has never done
With his delights, for when tired out with fun,
He rests at ease beneath some pleasant weed.
The poetry of earth is ceasing never:
On a lone winter evening, when the frost
Has wrought a silence, from the stove there shrills
The cricket's song, in warmth increasing ever,
And seems to one in drowsiness half lost,
The grasshopper's among the grassy hills.

1. The first lines of the poem suggest that it is about

   A. nature
   B. poems
   C. death
   D. soil

2. Lines 1 through 8 are **mostly** about

   A. how the birds have fainted in the heat of the sun
   B. why the birds have decided to hide in the trees
   C. a grasshopper that hides in the trees with the birds
   D. a grasshopper that moves around, despite the heat

3. Read this line from the poem.

> He rests at ease beneath some pleasant weed.

This line creates a feeling of

A. peacefulness
B. unhappiness
C. tension
D. boredom

4. Which phrase from the poem **best** shows how the speaker feels about the cricket's song?

A. "a lone winter evening"
B. "from the stove there shrills"
C. "to one in drowsiness"
D. "in warmth increasing ever"

5. What is the theme of the poem?

A. It is important to respect all kinds of wildlife.
B. There is always beauty to be found in nature.
C. We can always rely on the changing of seasons.
D. Death may be sad, but it is a natural part of life.

6. Which line from the poem **best** supports this theme?

A. "When all the birds are faint with the hot sun,"
B. "From hedge to hedge about the new-mown mead;"
C. "The poetry of earth is ceasing never:"
D. "The grasshopper's among the grassy hills."

Write It Out Use the poem to help you write a brief answer to the question below.

7. How do the cricket and the grasshopper demonstrate the theme of the poem? Use examples from the poem to support your answer.

Persuasive Writing

Please Choose one of the topics to write about. After you have chosen your topic, write a persuasive letter or essay about how you would convince the person(s) who is going to read your response to agree with your position.

Your response must include:

An introduction- Your main idea or thesis; your position on the topic at hand.

Supporting paragraphs- The paragraphs with information you will use in order to support your position.

Concluding paragraph- Final paragraph that sums everything up.

You should have five paragraphs (where you should have 3 supporting paragraphs displaying detailed information about why you have taken this specific position).

Please write in either black or blue ink and use college ruled loose leaf paper. No other ink color will be accepted!

This assignment is worth 20 points.

Middle School Persuasive Prompts

1. NEW A wealthy donor plans to build a new facility that will benefit young people in your area. It could be a swimming pool, a theater, a skateboard park, an art school, or any other facility that would provide young people with constructive ways to spend their time. The donor is not sure what kind of facility would be most useful. Write a letter to the donor in which you identify the type of facility you would like to have built, and persuade her that it is the best choice. Be sure to support your opinion with convincing reasons and evidence.

2. Your principal wants to invite a celebrity speaker to your school. Think about the celebrity you would choose to have speak; then, write a letter to persuade your principal to invite this person. Be sure to include convincing reasons and details to support your choice.

3. Girls and boys often enjoy playing the same sport. Some people believe that girls and boys should be able to play on the same team. What is your opinion on this issue? Write an essay stating your opinion and supporting it with convincing reasons. Be sure to explain your reasons in detail.

4. It has been said that television has little real educational value. What is your opinion on this issue? Write an essay stating your opinion and supporting it with convincing reasons. Be sure to explain your reasons in detail.

5. The principal of your school is considering conducting random locker searches several times a year without letting students know in advance. What is your position concerning this issue? Write a letter to the principal stating your position and supporting it with convincing reasons. Be sure to explain your reasons in detail.

6. Suppose Congress wants to make a new national holiday honoring an important person or event. Choose a person or event you would like to honor. Write an essay to convince members of Congress to accept your choice.

7. Your principal has asked students to suggest a school rule that should be changed. Think of one rule that you would like to have changed. Write a letter convincing your principal that this rule should be changed. Be sure to support your opinion with convincing reasons and evidence.

8. Your school principal is considering a new policy that will require all students to wear uniforms. What is your position concerning this issue? Write a letter to your principal stating your position and supporting it with convincing reasons. Be sure to explain your reasons in detail.