

ESL Reading Skills

The ESL Reading Skills test measures your ability to read English. Specifically, it assesses your comprehension of short passages. It contains brief passages of 50 words or less and moderate length passages of 50 to 90 words. Half of this test contains straightforward comprehension items (paraphrase, locating information, vocabulary on a phrase level, and pronoun reference). The other half assesses inference skills (main idea, fact versus opinion, cause/effect logic, identifying irrelevant information, author's point of view and applying the author's logic to another situation).

ESL Reading Skills Sample Questions

Read the information below, then choose the best answer.

1. Television has been introduced to almost every country in the world, reaching a large number of viewers on every continent. About 600 million people saw the first person walk on the moon, and a billion people watched the twentieth Olympic Games. Television has in many ways promoted understanding and cooperation among people. It does this by showing educational and cultural programs.

From this passage, a reader can most reasonably conclude that the author believes that

- A. people spend too much time watching television
 - B. not every country needs to have television
 - C. television can unify people from around the world
 - D. television is as important as schools
2. People have different ways of learning. Some are better at making mental pictures of new ideas. Others are more comfortable with writing lists of things to memorize. Certain people can learn best when listening to music, while others need silence to concentrate.

Which of the following is the main idea of the passage?

- A. Mental pictures help many to learn.
- B. Some people prefer lists to making mental pictures.
- C. To learn well you need to be comfortable.
- D. Different individuals have different ways of acquiring information.

3. If you hold a piece of copper wire over the flame of a wooden match, heat will be conducted by the copper wire to your fingers, and you will be forced to drop the wire. You will, however, still be able to hold the match because wood is a poor conductor of heat.

Which of the following is implied in the passage above?

- A. Copper is a good conductor of heat.
 - B. Wood and copper conduct heat equally.
 - C. Wood is an excellent conductor of heat.
 - D. Matches should be made of copper.
4. Many people own different pets. Dogs, cats, birds, and fish are common household pets. Others pets are considered to be exotic animals. These include snakes, lizards, and hedgehogs.

According to the passage, snakes are

- A. uncommon pets
 - B. likely to be found in a household with dogs
 - C. found only in zoos
 - D. not allowed in people's homes
5. Cesar Chavez was an influential leader for farmworkers. He fought for their rights and better working conditions. Chavez led many strikes that angered farm owners. Eventually he succeeded in getting increased wages and better living situations for farmworkers.

The passage indicates that Chavez changed lives by

- A. helping to end the farmworkers' strikes
 - B. fighting for the rights of farm owners
 - C. working on the farms every day
 - D. improving the conditions for farmworkers
6. When cartoonist Charles M. Schulz was a boy in elementary school, other boys teased him for being small and not very good at sports, and his art teacher told him he had no talent for drawing. He had few friends and was too shy to talk to a red-haired girl he admired. Later in life, Schulz used his childhood experiences in his comic strip *Peanuts*: the strip's main character, the sad and lonely Charlie Brown, represents Schulz as a little boy. *Peanuts* was unique at the time because it contained no adult characters. Readers fell in love with Charlie Brown, and *Peanuts* eventually became one of the most popular comic strips of all time.

What is the main idea of the passage?

- A. *Peanuts* was the world's most widely read comic strip.
- B. Schulz was a very famous cartoonist.
- C. Schulz turned the pain of his youth into success as an adult.
- D. The comic strip *Peanuts* featured children as its only characters.

7. Money has been used for thousands of years in nearly every culture as a means of exchange. However, today, the use of cash is becoming less and less common in modern societies all over the world. Every year, a higher percentage of purchases are made online, and even in stores customers are now using credit cards more often than cash. Many people today do all of their banking on the Internet rather than going to the bank in person.

The author of the passage probably assumes that

- A. cash will become virtually obsolete in the near future
 - B. using cash will become popular again
 - C. paying with credit cards all the time is dangerous
 - D. societies that do business online will struggle
8. Before giving first aid to an accident victim, you should obtain his or her consent. Asking for consent takes a simple question. Say to the victim, "I know first aid, and I can help until an ambulance arrives. Is that okay?"

According to the passage, it is wrong to

- A. use first aid on an accident victim without medical training
 - B. attempt to help an accident victim without permission
 - C. help a victim before an ambulance arrives
 - D. call for an ambulance instead of helping the victim
9. Dr. Ellen Ochoa is an inventor and is also the first female Hispanic astronaut. Her inventions include technology to help robots inspect equipment in space to maintain safety and quality control on spacecraft. Before retiring, she logged more than 1,000 hours in space across several space missions.

According to the passage, Dr. Ochoa is the first

- A. Hispanic person to travel into space
 - B. inventor to travel into space
 - C. woman to travel into space
 - D. Hispanic woman to travel into space
10. Dogs and cats make very different types of pets. Before deciding whether to buy or adopt a dog or a cat, prospective owners need to carefully consider their own lifestyles and personalities. Dogs may make more affectionate companions, but they require more care and attention. They must be taken out several times a day and should not be left alone for more than a few hours. Larger dogs require significant exercise to remain fit and healthy. Cats are usually more independent in nature and interact less with their owners. Also, a cat can be left on its own all day, or even for several days, as long as it has food and clean water to drink.

From this passage a reader can conclude that

- A. owning a cat requires less work than owning a dog
- B. people who are away from home during the day should not own a cat
- C. people who like to play with their pets should own a cat
- D. owning a cat is more responsibility than owning a dog

Answer Key

ESL READING SKILLS	
QUESTION NUMBER	CORRECT ANSWER
1	C
2	D
3	A
4	A
5	D
6	C
7	A
8	B
9	D
10	A