

Reading Comprehension

In an ACCUPLACER placement test, there are 20 questions of two primary types in Reading Comprehension.

- The first type of question consists of a reading passage followed by a question based on the text. Both short and long passages are provided. The reading passages can also be classified according to the kind of information processing required, including explicit statements related to the main idea, explicit statements related to a secondary idea, application, and inference.
- The second type of question, sentence relationships, presents two sentences followed by a question about the relationship between these two sentences. The question may ask, for example, if the statement in the second sentence supports that in the first, if it contradicts it, or if it repeats the same information.

Reading Comprehension Sample Questions

Directions for questions 1–9

Read the statement or passage and then choose the best answer to the question. Answer the question based on what is stated or implied in the statement or passage.

1. In the words of Thomas De Quincey, "It is notorious that the memory strengthens as you lay burdens upon it." If, like most people, you have trouble recalling the names of those you have just met, try this: The next time you are introduced, plan to remember the names. Say to yourself, "I'll listen carefully; I'll repeat each person's name to be sure I've got it, and I will remember." You'll discover how effective this technique is and probably recall those names for the rest of your life.

The quotation from De Quincey indicates that the memory

- A. always operates at peak efficiency
- B. breaks down under great strain
- C. improves if it is used often
- D. becomes unreliable if it tires

2. Unemployment was the overriding fact of life when Franklin D. Roosevelt became president of the United States on March 4, 1933. At the time, the government did not systematically collect statistics of joblessness; actually it did not start doing so until 1940. The Bureau of Labor Statistics later estimated that 12,830,000 persons were out of work in 1933, about one-fourth of a civilian labor force of more than 51 million.

Roosevelt signed the Federal Emergency Relief Act on May 12, 1933. The president selected Harry L. Hopkins, who headed the New York relief program, to run FERA. A gifted administrator, Hopkins quickly put the program into high gear. He gathered a small staff in Washington and brought the state relief organizations into the FERA system. While the agency tried to provide all the necessities, food came first. City dwellers usually got an allowance for fuel, and rent for one month was provided in case of eviction.

This passage is primarily about

- A. methods of estimating unemployment rates in the 1930s
 - B. the effect of unemployment on United States families
 - C. President Franklin D. Roosevelt's presidency
 - D. the creation of President Roosevelt's FERA program
3. With varying success, many women around the world today struggle for equal rights. Historically, women have achieved greater equality with men during periods of social adversity. The following factors initiated the greatest number of improvements for women: violent revolution, world war, and the rigors of pioneering in an undeveloped land. In all three cases, the essential element that improved the status of women was a shortage of men, which required women to perform many of society's vital tasks.

We can conclude from the information in this passage that

- A. women today are highly successful in winning equal rights
 - B. only pioneer women have been considered equal to men
 - C. historically, women have only achieved equality through force
 - D. historically, the principle of equality alone has not been enough to secure women equal rights
4. All water molecules form six-sided structures as they freeze and become snow crystals. The shape of a snow crystal is determined by temperature, vapor, and wind conditions in the upper atmosphere. A snow crystal is always symmetrical because these conditions affect all six of its sides simultaneously.

The purpose of the passage is to present

- A. a personal observation
- B. a solution to a problem
- C. factual information
- D. opposing scientific theories

5. In the words of Thomas De Quincey, "It is notorious that the memory strengthens as you lay burdens upon it." If, like most people, you have trouble recalling the names of those you have just met, try this: The next time you are introduced, plan to remember the names. Say to yourself, "I'll listen carefully; I'll repeat each person's name to be sure I have it, and I will remember." You'll discover how effective this technique is and probably recall those names for the rest of your life.

The passage suggests that people remember names best when they

- A. meet new people
 - B. are intelligent
 - C. decide to do so
 - D. are interested in people
6. Many people have owned, or have heard of, traditional "piggy banks," coin banks shaped like pigs. A logical theory about how this tradition started might be that because pigs often symbolize greed, the object is to "fatten" one's piggy bank with as much money as possible.

However, while this idea makes sense, it is not the correct origin of the term. The genesis of the piggy bank is the old English word "pygg," which was a common kind of clay hundreds of years ago in England. People used pots and jars made out of this red "pygg" clay for many different purposes in their homes. Sometimes they kept their money in one of the pots, and this was known as a pygg bank. Over the years, because "pygg" and "pig" sounded the same, glaziers began making novelty banks out of pottery in the shape of a pig as a kind of joke. These banks were given as gifts and exported to countries where people spoke other languages and where no one had ever heard of pygg clay. The tradition caught on all over the world, and today piggy banks come in all colors and are made of all kinds of materials, including plastic.

This passage is mainly about how

- A. people in different countries save their money
 - B. people in England made pottery centuries ago
 - C. a common term originated in a surprising way
 - D. an unusual custom got started
7. The wheel is considered one of the most important mechanical inventions of all time. Many technologies since the invention of the wheel have been based on its principles, and since the industrial revolution, the wheel has been a basic element of nearly every machine constructed by humankind. No one knows the exact time and place of the invention of the wheel, but its beginnings can be seen across many ancient civilizations.

The passage suggests that the wheel is an important invention because it

- A. is one of the world's oldest inventions
- B. forms the basis of so many later inventions
- C. can be traced to many ancient cultures
- D. is one the world's most famous inventions

8. Samuel Morse, best known today as the inventor of Morse Code and one of the inventors of the telegraph, was originally a prominent painter. While he was always interested in technology and studied electrical engineering in college, Morse went to Paris to learn from famous artists of his day and later painted many pictures that now hang in museums, including a portrait of former President John Adams. In 1825, Morse was in Washington, D.C., painting a portrait of the Marquis de Lafayette when a messenger arrived on horseback to tell him that his wife was gravely ill back at his home in Connecticut. The message had taken several days to reach him because of the distance. Morse rushed to his home as fast as he could, but his wife had already passed away by the time he arrived. Grief-stricken, he gave up painting and devoted the rest of his life to finding ways to transmit messages over long distances faster.

Morse left the art world and helped to invent the telegraph because he

- A. was tired of painting
 - B. wanted to communicate with people far away
 - C. experienced a personal tragedy in his life
 - D. was fascinated by science
9. Leonardo da Vinci is not only one of the most famous artists in history, but he was also a botanist, a writer, and an inventor. Even though most of his inventions were not actually built in his lifetime, many of today's modern machines can be traced back to some of his original designs. The parachute, the military tank, the bicycle, and even the airplane were foretold in the imaginative drawings that can still be seen in the fragments of da Vinci's notebooks. Over 500 years ago, this man conceived ideas that were far ahead of his time.

The author of this passage is praising da Vinci primarily for his

- A. artistic talent
- B. intelligence
- C. foresight
- D. fame

Directions for questions 10–18

For the questions that follow, two underlined sentences are followed by a question or statement. Read the sentences, then choose the best answer to the question or the best completion of the statement.

10. The Midwest is experiencing its worst drought in 15 years.

Corn and soybean prices are expected to be very high this year.

What does the second sentence do?

- A. It restates the idea found in the first.
- B. It states an effect.
- C. It gives an example.
- D. It analyzes the statement made in the first.

11. Social studies classes focus on the complexity of our social environment.

The subject combines the study of history and the social sciences and promotes skills in citizenship.

What does the second sentence do?

- A. It expands on the first sentence.
- B. It makes a contrast.
- C. It proposes a solution.
- D. It states an effect.

12. Knowledge of another language fosters greater awareness of cultural diversity among the peoples of the world.

Individuals who have foreign language skills can appreciate more readily other peoples' values and ways of life.

How are the two sentences related?

- A. They contradict each other.
- B. They present problems and solutions.
- C. They establish a contrast.
- D. They repeat the same idea.

13. While most people think of dogs as pets, some dogs are bred and trained specifically for certain types of work.

The bloodhound's acute sense of smell and willing personality make it ideal for tracking lost objects or people.

What does the second sentence do?

- A. It makes a contrast.
- B. It restates an idea found in the first.
- C. It states an effect.
- D. It gives an example.

14. Paris, France, is a city that has long been known as a center of artistic and cultural expression.

In the 1920s, Paris was home to many famous artists and writers from around the world, such as Picasso and Hemingway.

What does the second sentence do?

- A. It reinforces the first.
- B. It states an effect.
- C. It draws a conclusion.
- D. It provides a contrast.

15. Studies show that the prevalence of fast-food restaurants corresponds with the rates of obesity in both children and adults.

Obesity is now on the rise in countries where fast-food restaurants are becoming more common.

How do the two sentences relate?

- A. They express roughly the same idea.
- B. They contradict each other.
- C. They present problems and solutions.
- D. They establish a contrast.

16. Compared with the rest of the country, North Dakota has a thriving economy, making it a place where more people want to live.

With temperatures in January ranging from 2 to 17 degrees Fahrenheit, winters in North Dakota are viewed by some prospective residents as inhospitable.

What does the second sentence do?

- A. It reinforces the first.
- B. It explains what is stated in the first.
- C. It contradicts the first.
- D. It analyzes a statement made in the first.

17. Some stores are testing a new checkout system that allows shoppers to use their mobile phones to scan items as they walk through stores and pay at self-service kiosks, skipping the cashiers' lines.

The new mobile checkout system reduces long lines and customer wait times in stores.

What does the second sentence do?

- A. It expands on the first.
- B. It states an effect.
- C. It contrasts with the first.
- D. It gives an example.

18. According to the American Sleep Disorders Association, the average teenager needs around 9.5 hours of sleep per night, possibly because critical growth hormones are released during sleep.

The average adult requires between six and eight hours of sleep per night for optimal health and productivity.

How do the two sentences relate?

- A. They establish a contrast.
- B. They contradict each other.
- C. They reinforce each other.
- D. They provide a problem and solution.

Answer Key

READING COMPREHENSION	
QUESTION NUMBER	CORRECT ANSWER
1	C
2	D
3	D
4	C
5	C
6	C
7	B
8	C
9	C
10	B
11	A
12	D
13	D
14	A
15	A
16	C
17	B
18	A