Skills Test in Reading

Directions: Read the following passages and answer the questions that follow.

Use the following passage to answer questions 1–3.

1. One of the most unusual creatures on Earth, the sloth of Central and South America is famous for its sluggish speed. In fact, its name is actually a form of a word frequently used to describe it: slow. However, don't mistake the sloth's lack of speed for simple laziness. The creature's languid motion developed out of a necessity to avoid predators. For example, by moving so slowly in the trees they call home, sloths have adapted a self-defense against harpy eagles who might be attracted to obvious movements. As seen from above or below a tree, a sloth can therefore easily be mistaken for vegetation. In fact, its fur is specialized to grow algae, thus adding to the creature's camouflage. Combined with its renowned languid pace, the sloth appears much more like hanging foliage than an appetizing snack.

1. Which inference can be made from the information provided within the passage?
   a. The sloth is the slowest creature on Earth.
   b. The sloth never leaves the protection of the trees.
   c. The algae that grow on the sloth's fur are dangerous to other animals.
   d. The eagle is a natural predator to the sloth.
   e. Deforestation of the Americas is endangering the sloth.

2. In the context of the passage, renowned (line 16) can be replaced with which word to incur the smallest alteration in meaning?
   a. lethargic
   b. incredibly
   c. dangerous
   d. hurried
   e. legendary

3. What was the author's purpose in describing the sloth's fur?
   a. to accentuate the effectiveness of the sloth's speed as a self-defense mechanism
   b. to describe the uniqueness of the sloth among all other animals
   c. to further describe the sloth's protective adaptations in self-defense
   d. to describe an appealing attribute to sloths' potential predators
   e. to describe its warming effect

Use the following passage to answer questions 4–6.

1. Wilma Rudolph, the crippled child who became an Olympic running champion, is an inspiration for us all. Born prematurely in 1940, Wilma spent her childhood battling illness, including measles, scarlet fever, chicken pox, pneumonia, and polio, a crippling disease which at that time had no cure. At the age of four, she was told she would never walk again. But Wilma and her family refused to give up. After years of special treatment and physical therapy, 12-year-old Wilma was able to walk normally again. But walking wasn't enough for Wilma, who was determined to be an athlete. Before long, her talent earned her a spot in the 1956 Olympics, where she earned a bronze medal. In the 1960 Olympics, the zenith of her career, she won three gold medals.
4. Which statement provides the best summary of the main idea of the reading selection?
   
a. Wilma Rudolph was very sick as a child.
b. Wilma Rudolph was an Olympic champion.
c. Wilma Rudolph is someone to admire.
d. With special treatment, anyone can overcome a handicap.
e. Polio was a crippling disease in the mid-twentieth century.

5. Which situation is most similar to the scenario provided in the passage?
   
a. After contracting what was believed to be polio at age 39, President Franklin Roosevelt was paralyzed from the waist down and had to spend much of the rest of his life in braces or a wheelchair.
c. Following his fall from a horse in 1995, actor Christopher Reeve was confined to a wheelchair until his death in 2004.
d. Nicknamed the "Iron Horse" for his durability, New York Yankee Lou Gehrig retired at age 36 due to advancement of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS).
e. Although he suffered from severe asthma as a child, Theodore Roosevelt became not only a U.S. president but also an avid outdoorsman and an expert hunter.

6. In the context of the passage, the word zenith (line 16) most nearly means
   
a. peak.
b. nadir.
c. conclusion.
d. epilogue.
e. midpoint.

7. Which of the following is presented as a fact in the ad?
   
a. Mercury Shoes can save you from the aches and pains that runners often suffer.
b. Running magazine has awarded Mercury Shoes its “High Quality” rating.
c. Mercury Shoes has developed a revolutionary sole construction.
d. Mountain Goats are superior trail-running shoes.
e. The construction of Mercury Shoes provides incredible comfort.
8. Which is the most likely reason that Mercury Shoes named one of its models the Cheetah?
   a. The shoes will make you run faster.
   b. The shoes are designed to look like cheetah skins.
   c. The shoes provide extra support.
   d. The shoes are for those who like to run wild.
   e. The shoes can help prevent injury.

9. Why does the author of the passage most likely mention the heritage of the two children's book authors?
   a. to show that the best children's authors always come from Germany
   b. to explain the ways in which Eric Carle created his illustrations
   c. to demonstrate the importance of a strong family life
   d. to show another way in which the two writers were alike
   e. to illustrate the degree of talent that originated from a geographic area

10. According to the passage, which supporting detail is NOT given about both Eric Carle and Dr. Seuss to compare their lives and careers?
    a. They both wrote and illustrated children's books.
    b. They both were born in the United States.
    c. They both drew the illustrations for their books by hand.
    d. They both inspired millions of children with their books.
    e. They both had their publications translated into other languages.

11. The author most likely mentions the collage process of Eric Carle in order to
    a. show students an easy and fun way to create beautiful artwork.
    b. give an example of Eric Carle's level of brilliance as an artist.
    c. compare the similar styles of comparable artists.
    d. show the reasons for the wild success of The Very Hungry Caterpillar.
    e. demonstrate the difference between the illustrating styles of Carle and Seuss.
12. Which best describes the organization of the passage?
   a. The accomplishments of one artist are listed, and then the accomplishments of another are provided.
   b. A comparison of two artists is given, and then a difference of the artists is provided.
   c. The story of two artists is told in chronological order through their careers.
   d. Two authors are described in detail, and then the features of two illustrators are explained.
   e. A series of children's book authors is provided, and then the readers' responses are given.

13. In the context of the passage, the word *storied* (line 6) most nearly means
   a. fictional.
   b. celebrated.
   c. infamous.
   d. elaborative.
   e. imaginative.

14. Which summary best describes the main idea of the passage?
   a. Eric Carle and Dr. Seuss are nearly identical children's book authors.
   b. To create his collages, Eric Carle cuts brightly painted paper and uses the pieces to form recognizable shapes.
   c. Children's book authors can use different styles to inspire their readers.
   d. Both Eric Carle and Dr. Seuss are known for authoring and illustrating a variety of children's books.
   e. Eric Carle and Dr. Seuss may use different processes, but they are both successful and inspiring artists.

15. Which word or term from the passage best serves to create a distinction between the two authors?
   a. on the other hand
   b. as well
   c. regardless
   d. such as
   e. as a result

16. Use the following bar graph to answer question 16.

![Bar Graph: Precipitation in Springfield Winter Months]

   - **Rainfall**
   - **Snowfall**

   Use the following bar graph to answer question 16.

   a. The only months during the year in which there was any snowfall was December, January, February, and March.
   b. There was more combined precipitation, in inches, in February than there was in March.
   c. Each winter month featured a decreasing amount of rainfall, in inches.
   d. There was less snowfall, in inches, in December and January combined than there was in February.
   e. The only winter month in which there was a greater amount of rain than snow, in inches, was December.
Use the following passage to answer questions 17–22.

1. In A.D. 79, the volcano Mount Vesuvius erupted, showering the nearby city of Pompeii with ash for hours until the once-thriving town—and hundreds of its cosmopolitan inhabitants—were completely buried. So much ash fell on the city that it remained completely hidden until the 18th century. Unfortunately for the residents who live in the Bay of Naples, Italy, in the shadows of Mount Vesuvius, the eruption was not a one-time event. In fact, the volcano has erupted at least thirty times since the deadly 1st-century eruption that obliterated Pompeii. The only active volcano on mainland Europe, Mount Vesuvius has been atypically dormant since its last eruption in 1944. Citizens have mistaken this relative peace as an invitation to live near to Mount Vesuvius again; more than half a million people live within 4.3 miles of the volcano’s mouth. It is for this reason that the Italian government is stepping in to improve the safety of its residents. In 1995, government officials declared the uppermost part of the volcano a national park, thus preventing further construction near the danger zone.

Recently, the government has even offered to pay thousands of families living on the slopes of Mount Vesuvius to move to safer areas, thus improving the ease of the evacuation and limiting casualties when the next major eruption occurs.

17. Which statement could be concluded from the information in the passage?
   a. Mount Vesuvius is expected to erupt at some point in the next 20 years.
   b. Few families took advantage of the government’s offer to pay for them to move away from Mount Vesuvius.
   c. None of the Mount Vesuvius eruptions following A.D. 79 resulted in fatalities.
   d. The eruption of Mount Vesuvius in A.D. 79 was the world’s most catastrophic volcano event.
   e. Mount Etna, an active volcano in Europe, resides off the European mainland.

18. In the context of the passage, dormant (line 15) can be replaced with which word to incur the smallest alteration in meaning?
   a. dangerous
   b. inactive
   c. threatening
   d. overdeveloped
   e. explosive

19. For which reason does the author most likely describe the events of the A.D. 79 eruption of Mount Vesuvius?
   a. to illustrate the raw power of mother nature
   b. to demonstrate the measures that the government is taking to increase safety
   c. to emphasize the hazards of living near the volcano
   d. to provide a historical description of ancient Italy
   e. to accentuate the frequency of the volcano’s major eruptions
20. Which best describes the general organization of the passage?
   a. A historical anecdote is provided, and then its modern implications are considered.
   b. The dangers of an area are described, and then several safety measures are presented.
   c. The history of a geological formation is described in a chronological sequence.
   d. A geological formation is defined, and then its causes and effects are detailed.
   e. A warning is presented, and then the justifications for the warning are described.

22. Which specific detail from the passage supports the primary purpose of the selection the least?
   a. A Mount Vesuvius eruption nearly 2,000 years ago buried an entire city with ash.
   b. There has not been an eruption at Mount Vesuvius since 1944.
   c. Mount Vesuvius has erupted at least thirty times since AD 79.
   d. Mount Vesuvius is the only active volcano in mainland Europe.
   e. The area near the mouth of Mount Vesuvius is densely populated.

Use the following passage to answer questions 23 and 24.

For many students juggling a heavy scholarly workload and numerous extracurricular activities, school is tough enough without having to worry about what to wear and how to look cool every day. Much of what students choose to wear to school on their own accord, such as oversized jeans or revealing shirts, can be a distraction within the classroom's walls. Furthermore, allowing students the freedom to select their own attire presents an outward inequality; students who have the ability to show off designer-labeled clothes will frequently do so, revealing the students' financial disparity.

23. Which adjective best describes the author's attitude toward an enforced student dress code?
   a. resistant
   b. cautious
   c. ambivalent
   d. concerned
   e. sympathetic
24. Which statement, if it were true, would most significantly weaken the author’s main argument?
   a. An education study recently demonstrated that a dress code increases students’ ability to learn.
   b. A school that employs a stringent dress code is a safer educational environment.
   c. Restricting students’ ability to choose their clothes limits their independence and creativity.
   d. Tolerance across ethnic and social groups is improved with the use of a formal dress code.
   e. Different schools frequently differ on the style and color of a mandatory school uniform.

Use the following passage to answer questions 25–30.

At the age of six, Goran Kropp climbed his first mountain. Twenty-three years later, he tackled the highest mountain in the world, Mount Everest. His journey to the top shows just how independent, persistent, and determined this remarkable man is. While most people arrive at the foothills of Mount Everest using modern vehicles, Kropp bicycled 7,000 miles from his home in Sweden. Traveling that kind of distance by bike is not easy. Bumpy, rough roads caused mechanical problems for Kropp, and he stopped many times to repair his bike. In addition, he was chased by dogs, stung by hornets, and drenched by rain many times before he arrived at the base of the mountain. Kropp chose to climb Mount Everest the same way he traveled to the mountain: without the help of others and without modern conveniences.

Unlike most others, Kropp climbed Everest without a guide or helper. He did not bring bottled oxygen to help him breathe at high altitudes, and he carried all his gear himself in a pack that weighed about 140 pounds. It took Kropp two tries to reach the summit. The first time, he had to turn back only 350 feet from the top because the weather was too dangerous. Just a few days earlier, at that same level, eight climbers died when a sudden snowstorm hit the mountain. Kropp waited out the storm, rested, and tried again a few days later. This time, he was successful. After he descended the mountain, Kropp got back on his bike and rode the 7,000 miles back home.

25. Which sentence summarizes the information from the passage?
   a. Goran Kropp climbed his first mountain at age six, then later climbed Mount Everest.
   b. Goran Kropp is able to ride a bicycle for incredibly long distances.
   c. Goran Kropp did not bring oxygen to his ascent of Mount Everest.
   d. Goran Kropp is a reckless and thoughtless adventurer.
   e. Goran Kropp is an independent and determined adventurer.

26. What purpose does the phrase *In addition* serve in lines 12 and 13 of the passage?
   a. to provide additional ways that Goran Kropp was an accomplished climber
   b. to emphasize Goran Kropp’s unwillingness to work in a team
   c. to describe additional ways that Goran Kropp was a cautious adventurer
   d. to illustrate further hardships that Goran Kropp had to endure on his journey
   e. to provide additional occurrences where Goran Kropp needlessly risked his life
27. Goran Kropp's unique Everest adventure is most similar to which other adventurer's exploit?
   a. John Fairfax, a British rower who in 1969 became the first person to row across an ocean by himself
   b. Sir Edmund Hillary, a New Zealand mountaineer who first climbed Mount Everest in 1953, with the help of Sherpa Tenzing Norgay
   c. Neil Armstrong, an American aviator who, along with Buzz Aldrin in 1969, guided Eagle to the first manned landing on the Moon
   d. George Washington, a general during the Revolutionary War and the first President of the United States
   e. Amelia Earhart, a pioneering American pilot whose plane disappeared over the Pacific Ocean in 1937

28. Which sentence contains a statement of opinion rather than fact?
   a. At the age of six, Goran Kropp climbed his first mountain.
   b. While most people arrive at the foothills of Mount Everest using modern vehicles, Kropp bicycled 7,000 miles from his home in Sweden.
   c. Traveling that kind of distance by bike is not easy.
   d. It took Kropp two tries to reach the summit.
   e. After he descended the mountain, Kropp got back on his bike and rode the 7,000 miles back home.

29. For which reason does the author most likely mention that Goran Kropp had to turn back only 350 feet from the top on his initial attempt to reach the summit of Mount Everest?
   a. to paint a picture of Kropp as a resolute but careful adventurer
   b. to further enhance Kropp's daredevil attitude
   c. to demonstrate the difficulties of mountain climbing
   d. to show that climbers must be aware of changing weather patterns
   e. to support the idea that climbing Mount Everest is the world's greatest challenge

30. Which structure best describes the general organization of the entire passage?
   a. compare and contrast
   b. problem and solution
   c. order of importance
   d. cause and effect
   e. chronological order

Use the following passage to answer questions 31 and 32.

The official end of the school days should be extended until 4:00 p.m. As it is now, the majority of students go home after school to an empty house. These "latchkey children" are often alone for hours until their parents come home from work. A recent survey in a school district found that more than 60% of middle-school students are home alone for two or more hours a day. Of those students, furthermore, more than half watch television while waiting for their parents to come home.
31. Which sentence from the passage contains an opinion rather than a fact?
   a. The official end of the school days should be extended until 4:00 P.M.
   b. As it is now, the majority of students go home after school to an empty house.
   c. These “latchkey children” are often alone for hours until their parents come home from work.
   d. A recent survey in a school district found that more than 60% of middle-school students are home alone for two or more hours a day.
   e. Of those students, more than half watch television while waiting for their parents to come home.

32. Which implication is most supported by the information in the passage?
   a. Students should be involved in more after-school activities.
   b. Working parents do not generally get home until after 6:00 P.M.
   c. It is not safe for students to be at home by themselves.
   d. Students should be given additional homework from the classes.
   e. Television is not an effective use of a student’s time.

33. The primary concern of the passage is
   a. describing the myriad discoveries of a noted scientist.
   b. relating how the speed of light, mass, and energy are all related.
   c. analyzing the potentially harmful effects of a groundbreaking discovery.
   d. balancing the potential benefits and drawbacks of a scientific innovation.
   e. discussing a particular discovery that altered an entire branch of science.

34. Which key transition word or phrase from the reading selection most helps focus the content on Einstein’s most important discovery from general information about him?
   a. one of
   b. but despite
   c. deceptively simple
   d. by relating
   e. as a result

35. Which word shares the closest meaning to the word *multifarious* (line 4) as it appears in the passage?
   a. multitalented
   b. varied
   c. nefarious
   d. groundbreaking
   e. unique

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Use the following passage to answer questions 33–35.

One of the greatest scientific minds in human history, Albert Einstein advanced the world of physics through his numerous achievements in the field. But despite a multifarious array of significant discoveries, it is perhaps his theory of special relativity that earned him the greatest celebrity and reverence. Einstein’s theory described the structure of spacetime using a deceptively simple equation, \( E = mc^2 \), which revolutionized physics by relating speed (the

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Use the following passage to answer questions 36–38.

The Cambrian Period was a period on Earth when life diversified from mostly single-cell organisms to more complex animal groups, some of which still exist today. Ranging from
about 488 to 542 million years ago, the period represented an explosion of innovative life-forms. In fact, the term Cambrian explosion is often used to describe the rapid diversification of species on our planet. Although scientists are enthralled by this evolutionary epoch, they don't agree on the reasons for the immense increase of life.

36. The most likely reason that the author included the first sentence of the passage was to

a. provide readers with a comparison of similar life forms.
b. describe the evolution of life on Earth through the present.
c. contrast different periods in Earth's history.
d. provide the definition of a scientific term.
e. explain the origin of life on Earth.

37. Which conclusion could be made from the material in the reading selection?

a. The Jurassic Period, which featured the dominance of large reptiles including dinosaurs, came after the Cambrian Period.
b. A variety of shark species originated at some point during the Cambrian Period.
c. There was a greater variety of life on planet Earth during the Cambrian Period than during any other period.
d. The lack of available fossils from the ancient Cambrian Period is the reason for the unknown cause of the increase of life.
e. The length of the Cambrian Period, in years, was the longest period in Earth's history.

38. The role of the final sentence in the reading selection is to

a. explain a scientific phenomenon.
b. mention an unexplained aspect of a period.
c. provide additional information about a time period.
d. disprove a common claim about a scientific theory.
e. present an introduction to the following time period.

Use the following passage to answer questions 39 and 40.

1. The United States is one of the most culturally diverse nations on Earth. It is one of the most climatically diverse nations as well. The climate of the United States ranges from the frigid to torrid. Some areas of Alaska rarely get warm enough to melt an ice cube. The weather in Hawaii is perfect all year long. A temperature once recorded in northern Alaska was –79.8°F, while Hawaii has never recorded a sub-zero temperature.

39. Which of the following sentences from the passage is an example of an opinion?

a. “The United States . . . nations on Earth.”
b. “The climate of . . . to the torrid.”
c. “Some areas of . . . an ice cube.”
d. “The weather in . . . all year long.”
e. “A temperature once . . . sub-zero temperature.”

40. In the context of the passage, torrid (line 5) can be replaced with which word to incur the smallest alteration in meaning?

a. sweltering
b. dissimilar
c. glacial
d. lukewarm
e. uncomfortable