Skills Test in Reading

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

Use the following passage to answer questions 1–7.

Gray wolves once roamed the Yellowstone area of the United States, but they were gradually displaced by human development and hunted by farmers and ranchers for preying on livestock. By the 1920s, wolves had practically disappeared from the Yellowstone area. They migrated north into the deep forests of Canada, where there was less contact with humans. The disappearance of the wolves had many consequences. Deer and elk populations—major food sources for the wolf—grew rapidly without their usual predator. These animals consumed large amounts of vegetation, which reduced plant diversity in the park. In the absence of wolves, coyote populations also grew quickly. The coyotes killed a large percentage of the park’s red foxes and completely eliminated the park’s beavers.

By 1966, biologists asked the government to consider reintroducing wolves to Yellowstone Park. They hoped that wolves would be able to control the population of the elk and coyote. Many ranchers and farmers opposed the plan because they feared that wolves would kill their livestock or pets. Other people feared that the wolves would not be well protected in Yellowstone anymore.

The government spent nearly 30 years coming up with a plan to reintroduce the wolves. Although the wolves are technically an endangered species, Yellowstone’s wolves were classified as an “experimental” population. This allowed the government more control over the wolf packs. To counteract any potential resistance, the government also pledged to pay ranchers for livestock killed by wolves. Today, the debate continues over how well the gray wolf is fitting in at Yellowstone. Elk, deer, and coyote populations are down, while beavers and red foxes have made a comeback. The Yellowstone wolf project has been a valuable experiment to help biologists decide whether to reintroduce wolves to other parts of the country as well.

1. What is the main idea of the first paragraph of the passage?
   a. Gray wolves were unfairly treated by the ranchers and farmers.
   b. Canada provided a better habitat for gray wolves than Yellowstone.
   c. Gray wolves were displaced from their original homes by humans.
   d. Gray wolves were a threat to ranchers.
   e. It was important to reintroduce the gray wolves to Yellowstone.

2. According to the passage, why did biologists ask the government to reintroduce wolves in Yellowstone?
   a. to control the elk and coyote populations
   b. to restore the park’s plant diversity
   c. to control the local livestock
   d. to protect the wolves from extinction
   e. to increase tourism revenue

3. In the sentence in lines 30–32, why does the writer include the word technically?
   a. to emphasize the legal definition of endangered
   b. to show that the government controls the wolves’ status
   c. to explain why the wolves are endangered
   d. to highlight that the Yellowstone wolves are a special population
   e. to accentuate the scientific usage of the reintroduction
4. What is the most important organizing principle of the second paragraph of the passage?
   a. compare and contrast
   b. cause and effect
   c. chronological order
   d. order of importance
   e. classification

5. What is the implied main idea of the article?
   a. Yellowstone's wolf program was a mistake.
   b. The government is responsible for reintroducing wolves.
   c. Wolves are an important part of our national parks.
   d. Yellowstone's wolf program has been beneficial for the wolves and the park.
   e. It is important not to disrupt the delicate balance of life in nature.

6. Which statement, if it were true, would most significantly weaken the author's main argument?
   a. The government continues to monitor the populations of gray wolves, elks, and coyotes.
   b. The introduction of the gray wolf has increased the population diversity of the Yellowstone area.
   c. Yellowstone has been a protected area since its founding as a national park in 1872.
   d. The introduction of the gray wolf allowed scientists to consider reintroducing beavers to Yellowstone.
   e. The introduction of the gray wolf has resulted in the species suffering from a reduced genetic variability.

7. Which species endured the most similar experience to that of the gray wolves in Yellowstone?
   a. the polar bear, whose northern habitat is threatened by warming air temperatures and the resulting reduction of sea ice
   b. the possum, which was introduced in nonnative New Zealand in an effort to create a fur industry but ended up overpopulating the land
   c. the muskox, which was hunted to extinction in Alaska by about 1900 but brought back to repopulate the land in the 1930s
   d. the moa, a series of large New Zealand birds that were hunted to extinction by about A.D. 1400.
   e. the housecat, whose introduction to Australia has resulted in the extinction in dozens of other species

Use the following triple bar graph to answer question 8.

[Graph showing purchases of three students in July with categories for food and snacks, movies and games, and clothing, with data indicating Amy spent more on food and snacks than the others, Dan spent more on movies and games, and Toby spent more on clothing.]
8. Which inference could be made from the information shown in the preceding graph?
   a. Toby will spend more on clothing in August than Amy or Dan.
   b. Dan is saving money to buy a large purchase at the end of the summer.
   c. Amy spent the same on clothing as she did on everything else in July.
   d. Dan’s parents cook his meals and prepare snacks for him.
   e. Toby spent more on movies and games in July than either Amy or Dan.

9. In the context of the passage, *dearth* (line 15) can be replaced with which word to incur the smallest alteration in meaning?
   a. death
   b. scarcity
   c. importance
   d. abundance
   e. usefulness

10. According to the information in the reading selection, which inference can be made?
    a. A total of twelve men have walked on Earth’s only natural satellite.
    b. The United States is planning a manned return to the moon.
    c. An astronaut cannot safely spend more than a week on the moon.
    d. There is no additional scientific knowledge to be gained from a return to the moon.
    e. A manned trip to Mars will be equally as hard as a manned trip to the moon.

11. Which sentence from the passage contains an opinion from the author?
    a. “In July 1969 . . . the moon.”
    b. “Over the next . . . Earth’s satellite.”
    c. “However, after geologist . . . not returned.”
    d. “The financial costs . . . $100 billion.”
    e. “If men will . . . another planet.”
12. Which statement, if it were true, would most significantly strengthen the author’s main argument?
   a. The exploration of deeper space, including our outer solar system, is much more efficient if initiated from a space station instead of a satellite.
   b. The lack of an atmosphere on the moon means that astronauts would need to carry or manufacture their own oxygen.
   c. Since NASA sent its last astronaut to the moon in 1972, no other country has attempted a manned moon landing.
   d. Helium-3, an incredibly rare and valuable resource on Earth which can be used as a fuel, is found in high quantities on the moon.
   e. The government-run agency NASA retired its successful space shuttle program in 2011.

13. For which reason does the author most likely refer to the moon as a big rock (line 20)?
   a. to downplay the importance of returning to the moon
   b. to accentuate the massive size of Earth’s only satellite
   c. to provide an additional incentive for man to return to the moon
   d. to describe the geological composition of the satellite
   e. to use a simile to describe the attributes of the moon

14. Which word best describes the author’s attitude toward a potential manned mission to the moon?
   a. wasteful
   b. scientific
   c. dangerous
   d. essential
   e. timely

15. Which supporting detail best supports the author’s main idea?
   a. After Neil Armstrong, only eleven more men walked on Earth’s satellite.
   b. The financial costs of returning to the moon are excessive.
   c. The moon has no atmosphere with which to shield astronauts from radiation.
   d. Harrison Schmitt was the last man to walk on the moon in 1972.
   e. A return to the moon is vital if mankind is ever going to venture to Mars.

Use the following graph to answer question 16.

![Graph of Wolf Population in Idaho and Wyoming, 2004–2009](image)

16. Which inference can be supported by the information in the graph?
   a. The minimum wolf population in Idaho in 2002 was greater than 200.
   b. The combined wolf population in Idaho and Wyoming in 2007 was greater than 1,000.
   c. By 2010, there were more than 1,000 wolves in Idaho.
   d. The wolf population decline in Wyoming was a result of poor weather.
   e. In 2004 there were fewer than 500 wolves in Idaho and Wyoming combined.
Use the following passage to answer questions 17–19.

Arguably the most famous feature on the most famous mountain on Earth, the Hillary Step is a narrow, nearly vertical 40-foot rock wall near the peak of Mt. Everest. Covered in snow and ice at 28,750 feet, the Hillary Step presents the last great danger for climbers trying to reach the summit. Once conquered, it is only a few hundred feet of moderate climbing to the mountain's top at 29,028 feet—the planet's highest point. Named for Edmund Hillary, one of the two climbers to first ascend it, the step now features a fixed rope for modern-day climbers to use; such an advantage was unavailable during Hillary's initial 1953 ascent, making his achievement all the more venerable.

17. For which reason is the Hillary Step most likely the most famous feature on Mount Everest?
   a. The Hillary Step was named after the great climber Edmund Hillary.
   b. The Hillary Step acts as the final significant obstacle to the mountain's summit.
   c. The Hillary Step is one of the most difficult technical climbs in mountain climbing.
   d. Until 1953, the Hillary Step had not been successfully ascended.
   e. The highest point of the world is at the end of the Hillary Step.

18. In the passage, the word venerable most nearly means
   a. hazardous.
   b. technical.
   c. advantageous.
   d. victorious.
   e. admirable.

19. According to the information in the passage, it can be inferred that the Hillary Step
   a. is much easier to ascend now than it used to be.
   b. is responsible for countless casualties on the mountain.
   c. requires several hours of climbing to pass.
   d. is at the highest point on planet Earth.
   e. has only been ascended by two climbers in its history.

Use the following passage to answer questions 20–22.

In recent years, the local minor league baseball team, the Dowshire Ducks, has become standard weekend entertainment for hundreds of families. On summer afternoons, the bleachers in Hulldown Stadium are teeming with cheering fans. But it wasn't always so. Even ten years ago, ticket sales were limited, and the team was largely ignored. The Ducks rarely won games or placed well in regional tournaments. The arrival of manager Duncan Brin in 2004, however, started a new era of success and fame for the Ducks.

20. Which sentence best summarizes the main idea of the article?
   a. The Dowshire Ducks used to be an unsuccessful baseball team.
   b. Duncan Brin is the manager of the Dowshire Ducks.
   c. The Dowshire Ducks play in Hulldown Stadium.
   d. Manager Duncan Brin improved the status of the Dowshire Ducks.
   e. Going to see a Dowshire Ducks game is popular family entertainment.
21. Which organization best describes the structure of the passage?
   a. Details are provided through a series of contrasts, and then a main idea is provided.
   b. A main idea is provided, and then a series of supporting details is listed.
   c. A handful of comparisons are given, and then several dissimilarities are given.
   d. Definitions are given for several unknown terms, and then a main idea is given.
   e. A problem is posed, and then a series of potential solutions is discussed.

22. The word *teeming* in line 5 could be replaced with which of the following words to result in the least change in meaning of the sentence?
   a. crowded
   b. rooting
   c. energized
   d. vacant
   e. teaming

Use the following passage to answer questions 23–26.

1. A cursory glance at a globe will reveal a fascinating observation: the continents of South America and Africa, separated by thousands of kilometers of open ocean, seem to fit together like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. The western edge of central South America, part of modern-day Brazil, juts out into the Atlantic Ocean at about the same latitude where the coast of northern Africa shrivels toward the east. The reason for this geological phenomenon is not pure happenstance. Both massive land masses were once connected in a supercontinent called Gondwana, which also contained most of the land found today in India, Australia, and Antarctica, about 200 million years ago. The process responsible for Gondwana splitting into the two separate continents in their current positions is called "continental drift."

23. Which is the author’s most likely purpose in describing the continents of South America and Africa as *pieces of a jigsaw puzzle* (line 5)?
   a. to contrast the significant difference between the land masses
   b. to describe the mystery of the continental shapes as a puzzle
   c. to minimize the geological importance of the continents
   d. to reinforce the corresponding physical relationship of the continents
   e. to illustrate the problems scientists faced in determining the causes of continental drift

24. The word *cursory* in line 1 could be replaced with which of the following words to result in the least change in meaning of the sentence?
   a. investigative
   b. superficial
   c. internal
   d. offensive
   e. cursive
25. Which statement, if it were true, would most significantly strengthen the author’s main argument?
   a. Gondwana was once part of a much larger supercontinent called Pangaea.
   b. Fossils of the same type of plant have been found in parts of western Brazil and eastern Africa.
   c. The African island of Madagascar was once part of the supercontinent Gondwana.
   d. There are countless species of animals that exist in only South America or Africa but not in both continents.
   e. Ancient land bridges, now sunken, once connected the continents across the enormous oceans.

26. According to the passage, which inference can be made?
   a. Alfred Wegener developed the theory of plate tectonics.
   b. There was a time on planet Earth with no oceans.
   c. South America and Africa are roughly the same size.
   d. There is scant evidence that supports the “continental drift” theory.
   e. South America and Africa reside on different plates.

Use the following passage to answer question 27.

A sea spider, unlike the land animal that shares part of its name, does not spin a web to catch its food. Some sea spiders living thousands of feet underwater have developed an interesting technique to get their nourishment. Most sea spiders have eight legs—like land spiders—which they use to catch their food. The long legs have feathers that trap random pieces of food that fall down to the depths of the ocean. Then the sea spider runs its legs across its mouth for a tasty meal.

27. What is the primary purpose of the reading selection?
   a. to tell about the similarities between land spiders and sea spiders
   b. to describe the unique eating habits of a type of sea spider
   c. to warn people to stay away from dangerous sea spiders
   d. to explain how a land spider uses a web to catch its food
   e. to describe the appendages of the sea spider

Use the following passage to answer questions 28–32.

One of Benjamin Franklin’s most useful and important inventions was a stove called, appropriately, the Franklin stove. This invention improved the lives of countless homeowners in the eighteenth century and beyond. Compared to the stoves that were used at the time of his invention, Franklin’s stove made keeping a fire inside a home much less dangerous. His stove could burn less wood and generate more heat than previous designs. This feature saved its users considerable amounts of money that would have been needed to buy wood.

As its inventor, Benjamin Franklin was offered the right to patent his stove. That would have meant that only Franklin could have made and sold the useful stoves, making Franklin one of the richest men in the country. However, Franklin turned down the opportunity for the patent, believing instead that the stove should be allowed to be used by anyone who wanted to use the safer and more efficient technology. In his autobiography, he wrote, “As we enjoy great advantages from the inventions of others, we should be glad of an opportunity to serve others by any invention of ours; and this we should do freely and generously.”
28. The primary purpose of the first paragraph of the passage is to
   a. tell about one particularly useful invention of Benjamin Franklin.
   b. point out that Benjamin Franklin was responsible for many great inventions.
   c. explain the physical process of how a stove works.
   d. tell all the ways that Benjamin Franklin made money from his stoves.
   e. compare a variety of stoves from early American history.

29. Which function best describes the function of the word however as it appears in line 17?
   a. to provide important physical descriptions of a critical development
   b. to provide several additional benefits for a life-saving invention
   c. to contrast the advantages of an invention with its potential drawbacks
   d. to compare the apparent usefulness of an invention with its extreme costs
   e. to contrast an inventor’s altruistic motives from the potential for great wealth

30. The meaning of the word right in line 14, in context of the passage, most likely means
   a. correct.
   b. good health.
   c. turn.
   d. legal claim.
   e. exact.

31. According to the passage, it can be concluded that Benjamin Franklin was
   a. afraid of making a fire inside his home.
   b. interested primarily in inventing things that would make him money.
   c. one of the richest people in America.
   d. less concerned with making money than with helping his fellow humans.
   e. a greater inventor than he was a politician or scientist.

32. It can be inferred from the passage that the Franklin stove was
   a. expensive.
   b. dangerous.
   c. efficient.
   d. small.
   e. stylish.

Use the following passage to answer questions 33–35.

Most species on the planet exist solely within a relatively specific temperate zone on the planet. Polar bears live only within the most northern latitudes; iguanas are found only in tropical locales; kangaroos are endemic only to the Australian continent. Human beings, known taxonomically as Homo sapiens, however, have been remarkably adept at populating the farthest corners of the planet—even those with extreme environments. Alert, a Canadian community home to several permanent residents, is only about 500 miles from the North Pole; the Ethiopian community of Dallol has an average temperature of 94°F; La Rinconada, a Peruvian city in the Andes Mountains, is nearly 17,000 feet above sea level. The ability of human beings to acclimate to their surroundings, no matter how unforgiving, is all the more impressive considering how few physical features of the species allow it such adaptability.
33. Which detail from the passage most directly supports the author’s main argument?
   a. Polar bears live only within the most northern latitudes.
   b. Human beings are known taxonomically as *Homo sapiens*.
   c. Kangaroos are endemic to the Australian continent.
   d. A Canadian community is about 500 miles from the North Pole.
   e. Iguanas are found only in tropical locales.

34. Which fact would the author most likely use to further strengthen his or her main argument?
   a. The Mariana Trench, the deepest known point on Earth, lies more than 36,000 feet below the surface of the ocean.
   b. The port city of Arica, Chile, receives an average annual rainfall of 0.03 inches.
   c. Penguins are found throughout the southern hemisphere, from the equator to the pole.
   d. The surface temperature on Venus is believed to exceed 700°F.
   e. Only about 30 percent of Earth’s surface is covered by land.

35. Which role does the habitat of the kangaroo most significantly play in the context of the reading selection?
   a. to contrast with the habitat of the polar bear
   b. to demonstrate humanity’s encroachment on animal territory
   c. to supply an additional extreme environment
   d. to illustrate mankind’s limited reach in Australia
   e. to provide a contrast to humanity’s spread

Use the following passage to answer questions 36–38.

In the long history of soccer, no single player has changed the game as much as Pelé. Born Edison Arantes do Nascimento in Brazil in 1940, Pelé played professional soccer for 20 years, including in four World Cups for his native Brazil. Toward the end of his career, he also played for a North American soccer league. Though he was well past his prime, Pelé helped to significantly increase American interest in soccer. Counting his time in the American league, Pelé scored a total of 1,281 goals—the most goals scored by any professional soccer player. In fact, Pelé’s athletic skills were so impressive that he was awarded the title “Athlete of the Century” by the International Olympic Committee. By the time he retired, no one had helped increase the popularity of soccer more.

36. Which sentence from the passage presents an example of an opinion rather than a fact?
   a. “In the long . . . as Pelé.”
   b. “Born Edison Arantes . . . native Brazil.”
   c. “Toward the end . . . soccer league.”
   d. “Counting his time . . . soccer player.”
   e. “In fact, Pelé’s . . . Olympic Committee.”

37. Which detail from the passage supports the main idea the least?
   a. Pelé was born Edison Arantes do Nascimento in Brazil in 1940.
   b. Pelé played professional soccer for 20 years, including in four World Cups.
   c. Pelé helped significantly to increase American interest in soccer.
   d. Pelé scored a total of 1,281 goals.
   e. Pelé earned the title “Athlete of the Century.”
38. Which athlete is most similar to Pelé, based on the given information about him in the passage?
   a. Cristiano Ronaldo, a Portuguese soccer player who is the highest-paid soccer player in history
   b. Dilma Rousseff, the 36th president of Brazil and the first woman to hold the country’s highest office
   c. Babe Ruth, who helped make baseball the most popular sport in America by breaking home run records
   d. Charles Haley, who was a member of five Super Bowl–winning football teams from 1986 through 1999
   e. Landon Donovan, who scored multiple goals in the 2010 World Cup for the American soccer team

39. Which best describes the author’s attitude toward the current numbering system of the U.S. presidents?
   a. humorous
   b. illogical
   c. reverential
   d. presidential
   e. rational

40. Which word has the closest meaning to anomaly as it appears in the passage?
   a. data
   b. irregularity
   c. representation
   d. conclusion
   e. indiscretion

Skills Test in Mathematics

1. Boyd keeps track of the length of each fish that he catches. The following are the lengths in inches of the fish that he caught one day: 12, 13, 9, 14, 10, 8, 9, 17. What is the median fish length that Boyd caught that day?
   a. 8 inches
   b. 10 inches
   c. 11 inches
   d. 12 inches
   e. 9 inches

2. If \( w \) is divisible by both 24 and 6, which of the following statements is NOT true?
   a. \( w \) must be divisible by 12
   b. \( w \) must be divisible by 4
   c. \( w \) must be divisible by 3
   d. \( w \) must be divisible by 18
   e. \( w \) must be divisible by 8