Section 3
Reading Comprehension

This section contains five short reading passages. Each passage is followed by five questions based on its content. Answer the questions following each passage on the basis of what is stated or implied in that passage. You may write in your test booklet.
Questions 1–5

1 The Voyager spacecraft, launched from Earth in 1977, recently left the solar system and headed into interstellar space. As it did, the ship carried an unusual calling card, designed to introduce Earth to any alien being that the Voyager might pass. Traveling now billions of kilometers out in space are the voices and sounds of life on Earth. They are bolted to the side of Voyager 1 in the form of a gold-plated phonograph record.

2 Shortly after American astronauts returned from space in 1968, NASA released a photograph of the Earth rising from behind the Moon. According to Margaret Weitekamp, a curator at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum, that photo deeply touched the creators of the gold record project. She said, “Knowing that that picture was taken by a human being profoundly changed the thoughts of these people and really made them start thinking about ‘If we are this pale blue dot in this ocean of vastness, then how do we communicate something about who we are?’” It made them think carefully about how they might convey the greetings, the art and the talent of all humanity – not just the nation that sent the spacecraft up. “There is music on the record from Europe and the United States,” said Tim Ferris, who mixed the audio that went on the record. "But also from Africa, the South Pacific, South America, Georgia, Russia, China, and India."

3 The record contains greetings in 59 human languages. It has 118 pictures of life on earth, and 27 pieces of music exemplifying the diversity of human creation. According to Ferris, "The Voyager record represents a step along a long process of humans realizing that we are not at the center of the universe and that our story is probably far from being the only story."
1. The main purpose of this passage is to
(A) detail how a gold-plated phonograph record is manufactured.
(B) inform the reader about the gold record carried by the Voyager and examine why the creators included it onboard.
(C) analyze the pieces of music on the Voyager gold record and explain why they were included.
(D) compare life on Earth in 1977 to contemporary times.

2. In line 19, the word “profoundly” most nearly means
(A) jealously
(B) ignorantly
(C) partially
(D) deeply

3. The gold-plated record is intended to be
(A) the theme music of the Voyager launch when it is broadcast on television.
(B) a sentimental memento for the designers of the Voyager.
(C) a representation of life on Earth for any extraterrestrials who might find it.
(D) a part of the museum display that commemorates the Voyager spacecraft.

4. The passage provides enough information to answer which question?
(A) Who mixed the audio on the record?
(B) How long did it take to make the record?
(C) What forms of extraterrestrial life do the creators think the Voyager will confront?
(D) Which languages are not included on the gold-plated record?

5. The quote by Tim Ferris that concludes the passage suggests that
(A) technology has allowed us to represent the diversity of human life and creation.
(B) the record is important because it captures the spirit of America, and it will demonstrate to extraterrestrials America’s achievements.
(C) the story of the Earth is extremely important, so it is crucial that we have a means of communicating it to other life forms in the universe.
(D) human civilization is probably not the only civilization in the universe.
Questions 6–10

1 Wind tunnel testing of a feathered
dinosaur model has added evidence to the
time that modern day birds evolved from
ancient reptiles. Scientists at the University of
Southampton in England built a full-scale,
anatomically correct model of a Microraptor, a
five-winged creature that lived in the early
Cretaceous period about 130 million years ago.
The dinosaur is believed to be a precursor to
birds and the first two-footed dinosaur to have
feathers on its body, which could have
provided lift during brief gliding or flight.
The wind tunnel tests revealed that the
Microraptor was a good glider, but likely spent
most of its time foraging on the ground. Still,
the creature was probably able to climb high
enough to glide around 100 meters, the
scientists say.
Some scientists had wondered if the
position and orientation of the Microraptor's
legs and wing shape could have impeded
possible flight, but the testing revealed it not to
be a factor. According to the paper, published
in Nature Communications, "Microraptor did
not require a sophisticated, 'modern' wing
shape to undertake effective glides. Symmetric
feathers first evolved in dinosaurs for non-
aerodynamic functions, later being adapted to
form lifting surfaces."
6. The passage is primarily concerned with
   (A) scientific testing that supports the evolutionary link between dinosaurs and birds.
   (B) the lifespan and extinction of a dinosaur known as the Microraptor.
   (C) the importance of wind tunnel testing in modern day science.
   (D) a new museum exhibit that demonstrates how dinosaurs were able to fly.

7. In line 21, the word “impeded” most nearly means
   (A) supported
   (B) confused
   (C) revealed
   (D) disrupted

8. Wind tunnel tests show that the Microraptor
   (A) could fly for hours at a time at extremely high altitudes.
   (B) survived on a diet similar to modern-day birds.
   (C) probably could glide for about 100 meters.
   (D) had wings identical to those of modern-day birds.

9. The quotation in the last paragraph supports the claim that
   (A) the Microraptor’s wing shape did not prevent it from gliding successfully.
   (B) the Microraptor’s wings – unlike the modern-day bird – were completely featherless.
   (C) designers of contemporary aircraft should imitate the wing shape of the Microraptor because it is very effective for flight.
   (D) the feathers on the Microraptor’s wings served no purpose other than decoration.

10. According to the passage, wind tunnel testing utilized
    (A) a full-scale model of the Microraptor.
    (B) samples of DNA from the Microraptor.
    (C) the entire biology department at the University of Southampton.
    (D) an accurate anatomical sketch of the Microraptor drawn by a team of scientists.
Questions 11–15

When I was ten years old, my family and I drove to the New Jersey shore on an exceptionally hot and sunny day during the peak of summer. My father packed a huge suitcase filled with towels, goggles, sunscreen, extra bathing suits, and a mountain of beach toys. From the size of the suitcase, one might have surmised that we were making a permanent move to the shore, but in fact, we were only going for the afternoon.

Despite the hour of bickering that filled the car ride, we were really all very excited to spend the day on the beach. The instant my father parked the car and shut off the engine, my brother, sister, and I scrambled out of the car towards the ocean. I inhaled the crisp and salty ocean air, and I immediately set my eyes on the sand. My parents yelled at my siblings and me, demanding that we slow down, but we were too busy fighting over the beach toys and racing to the beach to even notice. My father eventually caught up to us and halted our frenzied rush to the ocean.

Finally, order was restored, and after we had laid down the towels on the warm, soft sand and my mother had finished carefully applying our sunscreen, we were free to jump in the ocean. I ran to the deep blue waves, which danced along the shoreline, with boundless enthusiasm and vigor, until my father hollered to me in a deep baritone, "Sandra, what are you doing? You don't know how to swim! You'll drown!" Suddenly, the graceful twirls and ripples of the dancing waves transformed into monstrous tidal waves, thunderous crashes, and vicious roars. Without saying a word, I turned around and immediately ran back to the safety of the dry sand and into the arms of my mother.
11. The primary purpose of the passage is to
(A) recount of the author’s memory of a
day at the beach with her family
when she was younger.
(B) warn the reader about safety
precautions that should be taken
when visiting the shore.
(C) advertise the New Jersey shore and
describe the many attractions of this
tourist destination.
(D) discuss the importance of family
bonding through shared experiences,
such as traveling together.

12. What can be inferred from the last three
sentences?
(A) The narrator wanted to swim in the
water, but she was afraid that her
father would punish her if she did.
(B) The narrator decided that it would be
more fun to make a sandcastle
because the ocean water was too
cold.
(C) The narrator’s father was teasing her,
because he knew that she is an
excellent swimmer.
(D) The narrator forgot that she could not
swim until her father reminded her.

13. In line 8, “surmised” most nearly means,
(A) testified
(B) inferred
(C) complimented
(D) scolded

14. Based on the information in the passage,
which of the following statements is true?
(A) The author’s sister and brother are
excellent swimmers.
(B) Her family plans on moving to the
shore sometime in the future.
(C) This was the first time the author
ever went to the beach.
(D) The author and her siblings did not
behave well on the car ride to the
beach.

15. When the author describes the
transformation of the waves in lines 33-
36, she is suggesting that
(A) the tide changed drastically in that
moment, and the waves suddenly
became much harsher.
(B) her fear of the waves made them
seem much more violent and
threatening.
(C) she was dreaming, and in her dream,
the waves were dancing and twirling.
(D) she put on her glasses and noticed
that the waves were very strong.
Questions 16–20

Whether for escape, enlightenment, or pure joy, books allow us to connect to other places and times. Fortunately for the millions of Americans who have impaired vision or a physical disability, there are braille and talking books from NLS.

NLS is the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, part of the Library of Congress. Established in 1931, the organization’s mission is to enrich the lives of its patrons by offering them books, magazines, music scores, and other materials in audio and braille at no charge. Unlike traditional audiobooks that are provided at public libraries or sold at retail bookstores, audiobooks offered by NLS are unabridged, extensive and diverse, and are designed specifically for people who are unable to read regular print.

NLS provides its services to any U.S. resident or U.S. citizen living abroad who is blind, has low vision, or has a physical disability that makes it difficult to hold a book. Thousands of bestsellers, classics, biographies, nonfiction works, and more can be downloaded from the Internet or ordered for home delivery through a nationwide network of cooperating libraries.

Those with cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, loss of the use of their arms or hands, or prolonged weakness can access the NLS collection. So, too, can people with temporary limitations resulting from strokes or accidents. Now avid readers like San Francisco resident Ivana Kirola, 38, who suffers from cerebral palsy, can continue to satisfy their interests, which for Kirola range from politics, to travel, to music. “I really appreciate the services from NLS,” Kirola says. “They help me in my daily life, in understanding people and keeping up to date with the news. My favorite part of NLS is the widened horizons that reading audiobooks gives to me.”
16. The main purpose of the passage is to
(A) inform the reader about a service that offers braille and talking books to the blind and physically handicapped.
(B) explain why reading should be a part of every person’s life, regardless of disabilities.
(C) argue that the rise of television has caused people to read less than they should.
(D) compare traditional audiobooks with the audiobooks provided by NLS.

17. Which of the following questions can be answered with information from the passage?
(A) What is Ivana Kirola’s favorite book?
(B) What type of book offered by NLS is most popular?
(C) When was the NLS established?
(D) Who was the founder of NLS?

18. The quotation by Ivana Kirola suggests that she finds the NLS audiobooks
(A) frustrating
(B) worthless
(C) hilarious
(D) enriching

19. According to the information in the passage, what is the alternative to audiobooks for those who have impaired vision or are physically disabled?
(A) They can find someone to read to them.
(B) They can listen to the radio.
(C) They can have braille books delivered to their homes.
(D) There is no alternative.

20. In line 11, “patrons” most nearly means
(A) users
(B) enemies
(C) strangers
(D) sponsors

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Benjamin Franklin – a renowned inventor, politician, and publisher and one of the Founding Fathers of the United States – was also known as the publisher of Poor Richard's Almanac. He published the almanac annually from 1732 to 1758 under the pseudonym "Poor Richard" or "Richard Saunders." Franklin's almanac was very popular in the American colonies, and its sales reached 10,000 per year, which was an impressive amount at the time. The almanac contained diverse content, including weather forecasts, puzzles, and proverbs. It offered both practical insight and entertainment. Most of the content in Poor Richard's Almanac was not original, and its material came from a wide range of sources. In the 1746 publication of Poor Richard, Franklin wrote, "I know as well as thee, that I am no poet born; and it is a trade I never learnt, nor indeed could learn. Why then should I give my readers bad lines of my own, when good ones of other people's are so plenty?" Franklin's proverbs generally promoted hard work, frugality, and virtue, and some of these proverbs are still famous today. For example, you might have heard the saying, "Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise." Centuries later, his advice remains relevant and useful. While the popularity of most almanacs from that era was transient, the legacy of Poor Richard's Almanac is enduring.
21. The main purpose of this passage is to
(A) compare Poor Richard's Almanac to other almanacs popular in the American colonies.
(B) analyze the greatest accomplishments of Benjamin Franklin's life.
(C) inform the reader about Poor Richard's Almanac.
(D) prove that Benjamin Franklin is the most important Founding Father of the United States.

22. As it is used in line 32, “transient” most nearly means
(A) short-lived
(B) permanent
(C) intense
(D) unusual

23. According to the information in the passage, Benjamin Franklin
(A) considered himself to be an excellent poet.
(B) stole the content from his childhood friend named Richard.
(C) did not write most of the content in his almanac.
(D) advised his readers to procrastinate and to live extravagantly.

24. Benjamin Franklin published his almanac under the name
(A) George Washington
(B) Founding Father
(C) King Franklin
(D) Richard Saunders

25. According to the passage, which of the following was NOT contained in the almanac?
(A) Proverbs
(B) Weather forecasts
(C) Puzzles
(D) Political speeches