ENGLISH READING PASSAGES TESTS

Short Advanced Reading Comprehension Test 14 With MCQs and Answers

24 questions · Choose the correct answer. Online test and answer key with explanations:
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Name: _____ Date: _____ Score: _____ / 24

(Please note: The following questions are related to a specific reading passage, available solely before the first question. Remember, referring back to the reading text while answering the questions may be helpful to ensure accuracy.)

Twenty thousand years ago, the Earth was held in thrall by relentlessly probing fingers of ice that drew power from frigid strongholds in the north and crept southwestward to bury forests, fields, and mountains. Landscapes that were violated by the slowly moving glaciers would carry the scars of this advance far into the future. Temperatures plummeted, and land surfaces in many parts of the world were depressed by the unrelenting weight of the thrusting ice. At the same time, so much water was drawn from the oceans to form these gargantuan glaciers that sea levels around the world fell by three hundred and fifty feet, and large areas of the continental shelf became dry land. This period of the Earth's history has come to be called the Ice Age. In all, about eleven million square miles of land were covered with ice. The Ice Age terminated about fourteen thousand years ago when the ice sheets began to retreat. It took about seven thousand years for the ice to retreat to its present level.

1. **Which of the following would be the best title for the passage?**
   A) The Frigid Strongholds of the North
   B) The Effects of the Ice Age
   C) How Glaciers Move
   D) Is a New Ice Age Coming?
   E) Return of the Prehistoric Ages

2. **In the passage, the glaciers are compared to _____.**
   A) a storm
   B) a kingdom
   C) a machine
   D) a hand
   E) a sophisticated device

3. **According to the passage, before the Ice Age, the continental shelf was _____.**
   A) submerged in water
   B) deeply scarred
   C) higher until depressed by the ice
   D) an area of forests, fields, and mountains
   E) in the bark of the earth

In an attempt to produce the largest and most luxurious ship afloat, the British built the Virginia. It was so superior to anything else on the seas that it was dubbed "unsinkable". So sure of this were the owners that they provided lifeboats for only 950 of its possible 3,500 passengers. Many passengers were aboard the night it rammed an iceberg, only two days at sea and more than halfway between England and the New York destination. Because the luxury liner was travelling so fast, it was impossible to avoid the ghostly-looking iceberg. An unextinguished fire also contributed to the ship's submersion. Panic increased the number of casualties as people jumped into the icy water or fought to be among the few to board the lifeboats. Four hours after the mishap, another ship, the Carpathia, rescued the survivors – less than a third of those originally aboard. The infamous Virginia enjoyed only two days of sailing on its maiden voyage in 1912 before plunging into 12,000 feet of water near the coast of Newfoundland, where it lies today.

4. **Which of the following is not true?**
   A) Only a third of those aboard perished.
   B) The Carpathia rescued the survivors.
   C) The Virginia sank near Newfoundland.
   D) The Virginia was travelling very fast when it hit the iceberg.
   E) The Virginia was described as "unsinkable".

5. **Which of the following did not contribute to the large death toll?**
   A) Panic **B)** Fire
   C) Speed **D)** Carpathia
   E) Lack of lifeboats

6. **For how many days was the Virginia at sea before sinking?**
   A) 2 **B)** 4 **C)** 6 **D)** 12
   E) 15

Magnesium is another mineral we now obtain by collecting huge volumes of ocean water and treating it with chemicals, although originally it was derived only from brines or from the treatment of magnesium-containing rocks such as dolomite, of which whole mountain ranges are composed. In a cubic mile of seawater, there are about four million tons of magnesium. Since the direct extraction method was developed around 1941, production has increased enormously. It was magnesium from the sea that made possible the wartime growth of the aviation industry, for every airplane made in the United Kingdom (and in most other countries as well) contains about half a ton of magnesium metal. And it has innumerable uses in other industries where a lightweight metal is desired, besides its longstanding utility as an insulating material, and its use in printing inks, medicines, and toothpastes.

7. What is the main topic of this passage?
A) Uses of seawater
B) Treatment of seawater
C) Chemical properties of magnesium
D) Derivation and uses of magnesium
E) Chemical bonds

8. According to the passage, magnesium was first obtained from _____.
A) rocks found on land
B) great amounts of ocean water
C) the seafloor
D) major industrial sites
E) coal

9. According to the passage, which of the following was a direct consequence of the new methods of obtaining magnesium?
A) The development of insulation materials.
B) Increased airplane production.
C) Improved medical facilities.
D) The development of cheap inks for printing.
E) The vaporization of magnesium from coal.

10. When echo sounding was developed to allow ships while underway to record the depth of the bottom, probably no one suspected that it would also provide a means of learning something about deep life. But operators of the new instruments soon discovered that the sound waves, directed downward from the ship like a beam of light, were reflected back from any solid object they met. Answering echoes were returned from intermediate depths, presumably from schools of fish, whales, or submarines; then a second echo was received from the bottom.

What did the operators send down into the water?
A) Beams of light **B)** Small, solid objects
C) New instruments **D)** Sound waves
E) Laser beams

11. Which of the following enterprises would most likely be interested in using the instruments mentioned?
A) Sports equipment stores
B) Commercial fishing businesses
C) Sound recording studios
D) Shipbuilding yards
E) Shipwrecks

12. For what purpose was the instrument originally designed?
A) Recording ocean depths
B) Communicating with divers
C) Locating deep-sea life
D) Detecting submarines
E) Detecting enemy vehicles

Long ago some North African people, called the Moors, built a fortress in Granada, Spain. They also built a palace behind the red brick walls of the fortress. They called the fortress and palace "Alhambra," an Arabic word that means "the red." In 1492, the same year that Columbus sailed for America, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain ordered their armies to attack the Moors. The Spanish Army marched to the Alhambra at the foot of the Mulhacén, the highest mountain in mainland Spain. The Moors lost the battle and the Alhambra, which was their last stronghold in Spain. Through the years, the Alhambra began to crumble. No one did much to preserve it until after the American writer Washington Irving went to live in Spain for a while. Irving wrote a book called The Alhambra. His book stirred people to save the Alhambra from becoming a ruin. Today, you can walk through the gardens of the Alhambra and look up at the steep mountains.

13. We infer from the passage that _____.
A) the Moors were living in Granada, Spain when Columbus sailed for America
B) the Moors had conquered the whole of Spain by 1492
C) Alhambra used to be the leader of the Moors
D) after the Spanish conquest, the Alhambra was restored
E) Washington Irving designed the gardens of the Alhambra and wrote about them

14. The Moors built the Alhambra _____.
A) as a castle for King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella
B) as a tomb for their king Alhambra
C) as a palace near the capital of Spain
D) as a palace at the foot of Mulhacén
E) from white marble

15. The author states that _____.
A) the Alhambra has never been restored since the Moors built it
B) the Alhambra would be a ruin now if Irving hadn't written his book
C) the Alhambra was moved to the hills of Mulhacén by the Spanish
D) the Alhambra's gardens were designed by the Spanish in 1492
E) the Moors were defeated by the Spanish army while they were building the fortress and the palace

If you go shopping in Bangkok, Thailand, you don't have to shop in a store; you can shop on a boat. The boats are called sampans, and they float on the Chao Phraya River, which flows through the city of Bangkok. The merchants sell salt, rice, charcoal, medicines, coconuts, clothing, and souvenirs. These floating markets of Bangkok do double duty. After a merchant sells his goods, you might see him using his sampan to deliver mail to homes or to take children to school. Floating markets got started in Bangkok because long ago there were only a few roads. People had to travel by boat. Even though Bangkok now has roads, many people in Thailand still shop at floating markets.

16. The author portrays _____.
A) Thai people as nomads living in boats on the Chao Phraya River
B) floating markets as a tradition in Bangkok
C) the merchants on the floating markets as stockbrokers as well
D) the floating markets as places selling food only
E) Thai people as good bargainers

17. This passage most likely appeared in _____.
A) a travel magazine
B) a chapter of a book on western cultures
C) a history book
D) the preamble of an anthropology book
E) a banner

18. According to the passage, _____.
A) floating markets were needed because they didn't have enough space for markets
B) the merchants do not only sell goods but also serve as teaching and medical staff
C) Thai people needed floating markets because they didn't have enough roads
D) the people living in Bangkok no longer use floating markets
E) the schools used to be built on boats in Taiwan

a) Radburn layout: In town planning and urban studies, a planned urban layout developed by Clarence Stein and applied in Radburn, New Jersey, USA, in 1928, which separates pedestrians from cars and trucks by arranging "superblocks" of housing, shops, offices, schools, etc., around a central green. Each superblock has its outer roads, off which come service cul-de-sacs. The central green or pedestrian space has pedestrian access only, either by underground passages or surface walks.

b) Radburn layout: A style of residential layout pioneered at Radburn, New Jersey (USA) between 1928 and 1933 and later widely adopted in the planning of post-war housing areas in Britain, particularly in new towns and expanded towns. Its main features include the separation of pedestrian and car traffic, housing facing onto open space and gardens and car access to the rear, loop roads, and cul-de-sacs. In the British post-war new towns, the Radburn principles were clearly evident in the detailed plans of neighbourhood units.

19. Based on the two passages, the most important feature of the Radburn layout is the _____.
A) use of underground passages
B) separation of car and pedestrian traffic
C) building of houses so that they face the street
D) use of cul-de-sacs for pedestrians
E) use of weapons during a possible war

20. Which information appears in both definitions?
A) The plan was developed by Clarence Stein.
B) The plan was widely used in Britain.
C) The plan made use of cul-de-sacs.
D) The plan included underground passages.
E) British towns.

21. As it is used in the first definition, the word "surface" means _____.
A) the part of something that you can see
B) a smooth area, like a tabletop
C) outward appearance
D) at the level of the ground
E) top of a hill

Spend ten romantic days enjoying the lush countryside of southern England. The counties of Devon, Dorset, Hampshire, and Essex invite you to enjoy their castles and coastline, their charming bed and breakfast inns, their museums and their cathedrals. Spend lazy days watching the clouds drift by or spend active days hiking the glorious hills. These fields were home to Thomas Hardy, and the ports launched ships that shaped world history. Bed and breakfasts abound, ranging from quiet farmhouses to lofty castles. Our tour begins on August 15. Call or fax us today for more information at 1-800-322-2398645. Enrolment is limited, so please call soon.

22. Which of the following counties is not included in the tour?
A) Devon
B) Cornwall
C) Essex
D) Hampshire
E) Villages of Essex

23. How many people can go on this tour?
A) 10
B) an unlimited number
C) 2-8
D) a limited number
E) more than 25

24. What can we infer about this area of southern England?
A) The region has lots of vegetation.
B) The coast often has harsh weather.
C) The sun is hot and the air is dry.
D) The land is flat.
E) The land is arid.