ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS

Short Advanced Reading Comprehension Test 20 With MCQs and Answers

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Explanations

1. **Apartheid was _____.**
✓ A) the systematic racial discrimination between whites and blacks
The passage describes apartheid as an **elaborate system of discriminatory legislation** and a **frankly racist regime** set up by white South Africa, so it was **systematic racial discrimination** between whites and blacks. Not the **ban of interracial marriages**: that 1949 Act was only the first law, the **foundation** of the system, not the whole of it.

2. **What differentiated apartheid from other kinds of racial discrimination was _____.**
✓ C) its legal enforcement by the state
The passage says **racism alone** was not what made apartheid unique, because discrimination existed elsewhere. What was unique was that **only in South Africa was racism the law of the land**: the state enforced it by law. Not **its separation of blacks from whites**, because separation and prejudice also existed in other countries.

3. **By the 1980s, _____.**
✓ E) racism was condemned almost everywhere in the world
The passage states that **by the 1980s, racism was deplored almost everywhere**. **Deplore** means to strongly condemn. Other nations that still practised racism did so **in violation of their own laws**, so racism was condemned, though it had not disappeared. The other options contradict the passage or are not mentioned in it.

4. **The major reason why the Dutch possess the highest technology in hydro-engineering is _____.**
✓ C) both to gain land from the sea and to stop the sea taking in more and more land day by day
The passage says the Dutch **have not only protected their land but also reclaimed a lot of land from the sea**. Their skill serves both aims: gaining land and stopping erosion. Options that mention only one of the two aims, such as only reclaiming land or only preventing erosion, are incomplete.

5. **In case of a sudden sharp increase in the global temperature, particularly coastal countries _____.**
✓ E) would be flooded because of the ice at the poles melting away
The last two sentences say that if global warming continues, **the ice in the poles will gradually melt away** and the sea level would rise, **which would cause the earth to be flooded**. Low, flat coastal countries would be hit first. Climatic change and becoming tropical are not mentioned in the passage.

6. **The passage is mainly related to _____.**
✓ B) erosion by the sea in coastal countries and their efforts to conserve their land
The passage begins with land lost to **seawater eroding coastal land**. It then describes how coastal nations such as the Netherlands protect and reclaim land, and it ends with the danger of rising seas. Its main topic is therefore **erosion by the sea and efforts to conserve land**. Not the Dutch alone: they are only an example, and hydro-electric plants are never mentioned.

7. **Somebody is doing a sedentary job if they _____.**
✓ C) sit all day at a table with a computer on it
A **sedentary** job is one where you sit down most of the time and move very little, e.g. **office work**. Sitting all day at a table with a computer is the clearest example. Walking to work, factory work and labouring in fields all involve physical activity.

8. **In view of the possible benefits of exercise, some American firms have begun to encourage their employees to take as much exercise as possible because they are _____.**
✓ D) very eager to keep their workers healthy
In the passage, companies are **anxious to keep their workers as healthy and fit as possible**. Here **anxious to do something** means very keen or **eager** to do it, not worried. **Fearful**, **reluctant** and **unable** do not have this meaning, and **involuntary to** is not correct English.

9. **It is clear from the passage that _____.**
✓ E) those who take vigorous exercise are less likely to have heart attacks, and any attacks they do have are less likely to be fatal
The passage says people who do vigorous exercise **suffer fewer heart attacks** and that such attacks **would be less fatal**. Not the option about the resting pulse rate: long-term exercise **lowers** it, it does not raise it. The passage also says exercise must be **frequent**, and it mentions only **some** firms and no half shifts.

10. The passage points out that _____.
✓ A) air pollution is claimed to be mainly caused by hydrocarbon and carbon monoxide from automobiles
The passage says the air in big cities is full of dangerous **hydrocarbon and carbon monoxide**. All the proposed solutions aim at **limiting the use of automobiles**, which shows that cars are seen as the main source. The passage does not blame mass transport or factories, and it does not say the gases kill many people every day.

11. To reduce the amount of fatal substances, groups in favour of the environment have _____.
✓ C) proposed that some limitations be imposed on car owners driving into and out of the city centre each day
All the groups' proposals are **limitations** on drivers who come into and out of the city centre each day. Drivers would use public transport instead, be kept out of the centre on one or two days a week, and be banned from parking on certain streets. The passage never suggests a complete ban on driving into the city, new parking spaces or exhaust filters.

12. The author emphasizes that _____.
✓ C) commuters getting into and out of the city centre every day should be legally made to use forms of mass transportation
The passage proposes to **make daily commuters use mass transportation** and ends by saying that **if car drivers were controlled ... by legal steps**, people would be **forced** to use mass transportation. Not the option about a ban on weekdays: that is far too extreme. The passage speaks only of one or two days a week, not a total ban.

13. Nowadays it is alleged to be technologically very easy _____.
✓ C) to split an embryo
The first sentence says splitting an embryo **may seem like a great technological leap** but is really only **a baby step**. In other words, it is easy compared with what can already be done. Not identifying healthy embryos: the passage calls this **the current challenge**, so it is still difficult.

14. Due to technological and cultural barriers, _____.
✓ E) it is not likely for scientists to prenatally change the traits of babies
The last sentences say **don't expect scientists to begin building new traits into babies any time soon** because **the technical obstacles are formidable, and so are the cultural ones**. So changing babies' traits before birth is unlikely for now. The passage says identifying healthy embryos is already making progress, so that option is wrong.

15. Today it is possible _____.
✓ C) to identify some diseases before the baby is born
The passage says doctors **can now screen embryonic cells for hereditary diseases** like cystic fibrosis. So some diseases can already be identified before birth. Not predicting obesity and depression: the passage says this may happen only **in the not-too-distant future**, so it is not possible yet.

16. As it is pointed out in the passage, the ingredients of bread _____.
✓ B) are few and simple, but there is a wide variety of bread products
The passage says **the beauty of bread is its simplicity**: flour, liquid, yeast and sometimes salt. Yet bread **comes in a wide variety of shapes, textures, and flavours**. Not the option that the ingredients vary greatly around the world: it is the types of bread that vary, while the basic ingredients stay the same.

17. The passage stresses that bread is a useful item in our diet _____.
✓ D) on account of both its flavour and the nourishment it provides
Bread is described as **a nourishing and tasty food** that provides carbohydrates, proteins and B vitamins. So the passage values it for both its **flavour** and its **nourishment**. Not the option about eating it with protein and carbohydrates: the passage says bread itself already contains these.

18. According to the passage, the present-day trend in favour of brown bread _____.
✓ A) is understandable and to be encouraged
The writer says people **rightly prefer** brown bread because it **contains far more vitamins and is also much tastier**. The word **rightly** shows the writer approves of the trend. The other options contradict this view.

19. Many of us enjoy a visit to a zoo and for those seeing lions for the first time, it is surely a most thrilling experience. But how many people stop to wonder how the animals are feeling in their frequently unsuitable surroundings? Most zoos cannot afford to provide all the separate species with the right environment. The animals in zoos may be well-fed, but a hunting animal wants to hunt for its own food.

It is pointed out in the passage that coming close to such wild animals as jaguars and lions _____.
✓ B) gives some people a strong sense of excitement
The passage says that for people **seeing lions for the first time, it is surely a most thrilling experience**. **Thrilling** means very exciting, so seeing such animals gives people **a strong sense of excitement**. Nothing is said about large zoos, aggressive animals or children.

20. The writer feels that few people _____.
✓ D) are sufficiently sensitive to the conditions of animals kept in zoos
The question **But how many people stop to wonder how the animals are feeling?** is rhetorical. It means few people do. The writer therefore feels that few visitors are **sufficiently sensitive** to the conditions of zoo animals. The other options misread the passage: it says visiting zoos is enjoyable and seeing lions is thrilling.

21. It is emphasized in the passage that the living conditions of most animals in zoos _____.
✓ E) are very different from those of their natural environment
The passage describes zoo animals' **frequently unsuitable surroundings** and says most zoos **cannot afford to provide ... the right environment**. It adds that hunting animals cannot hunt for their own food. So zoo conditions are **very different from** their natural environment. Not **could easily be improved at little cost**: the passage says zoos cannot afford it.

22. As the passage points out, the pop music singer Phil Collins _____.
✓ B) was introduced early in his life to the world of entertainment
His mother **managed a theatre school** and **all three of her children had parts in films**. So Phil was introduced to the world of entertainment very early. Not **was the first in his family to go on stage**, because his brothers and sisters also acted. He also **left school** when he got a part in "Oliver", so he did not continue his schooling.

23. In accordance with the passage, although Phil Collins began his career in the theatre, _____.
✓ A) his real interest lay in music
While acting, Phil was **already playing the drums** and writing songs, **secretly hoping that one day this would be his full-time job**. This shows that his real interest was music. The passage does not say he wanted a business career like his father or that he acted unwillingly.

24. The passage tells us that the year 1970 _____.
✓ C) was a turning point in Phil Collins's life
The passage says **in 1970, something happened that changed his life**: he became the drummer of Genesis. An event that changes your life is a **turning point**. The passage says he joined Genesis that year, not that he left the band or ended his career.

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