ENGLISH READING PASSAGES TESTS

Short Advanced Reading Comprehension Test 37 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.)

The author E. L. Doctorow is best known for mixing fiction with historical fact, placing his stories within the framework of public events. In fact, he integrates the front-page news of 20th-century America with the lives of his characters. Doctorow gives readers the “feel” of an era by combining the unusual and the commonplace.

His latest novel, ‘World’s Fair’, shows how the events of the turbulent 1930s helped mould the sensibilities of his young protagonist.

1. **It is concluded in the passage that Doctorow's novel World's Fair _____.**
   A) describes the damaging effects of the turbulent 1930s on the sensitive young protagonist
   B) is actually a full historical account of the great changes that took place in the 1930s
   C) demonstrates his theories concerning the relationship between man and his society
   D) fails to give his readers a "feel" of the 1930s in America
   E) gives an account of how the thoughts and feelings of the main character are shaped by the period in which he lived

2. **From the passage, we infer that a blend of fiction and history _____.**
   A) has not always been Doctorow's primary concern
   B) is deliberately avoided by Doctorow in his most recent novel
   C) is a striking feature of Doctorow's writing
   D) is commonly used by contemporary American writers, including Doctorow himself
   E) is never to be found in the medieval novel

3. **We learn from the passage that Doctorow's purpose in bringing together in his novels the usual and the extraordinary _____.**
   A) is to build up a convincing picture of a period
   B) did not achieve the result he aimed for in World's Fair
   C) has been frequently criticized by his readers
   D) has not been properly appreciated in the case of World's Fair
   E) is to show how fiction differs from historical fact

4. Ever since Nobel prize-winner Linus Pauling first advocated vitamin C as a common cold war weapon more than 20 years ago, researchers have been busy trying to verify that claim. However, so far, they’ve found little proof that vitamin C prevents colds. In fact, there are more studies that say it doesn’t.

   There is evidence, though, that it can keep coughing and sneezing to a minimum, and that low levels of vitamin C in the body may be related to bronchitis.

   From the passage, we can learn that Dr Pauling's view as regards vitamin C _____.
   A) has greatly improved the treatment of bronchitis
   B) has caused a revolution in medical studies
   C) aroused very little interest among medical experts
   D) was based on the results of years of research
   E) has not been verified scientifically

5. **In accordance with the passage, coughing and sneezing _____.**
   A) should be taken seriously and treated accordingly
   B) are the early symptoms of bronchitis
   C) are now being effectively treated without vitamin C
   D) can be reduced with the help of vitamin C
   E) do not respond to any treatment whatsoever

6. **During the last two decades, there has been plenty of scientific effort made to _____.**
   A) convince the public of the dangers of vitamin C
   B) confirm that the common cold can be prevented by vitamin C
   C) establish a connection between coughing and bronchitis
   D) study the adverse effects of vitamin C
   E) demonstrate how the body reacts to low levels of vitamin C

Since early times, it has been assumed that the actions of animals are unconscious. Behaviour, in this view, stems almost exclusively from instinct. If animals behave in ways that seem pretty clever, they do so without thinking about it. The argument goes that animals may know things, but they don’t know that they know.

Current research reports suggest a startling depth of intelligence among animals. Although no one can yet prove the existence of animal consciousness, the data offered make a compelling case for at least considering it.

7. It is emphasized in the passage that traditionally, animals are believed to _____.
A) behave not instinctively but logically
B) have intelligence comparable with man's
C) imitate man in many ways
D) act on instinct
E) know exactly what they are doing

8. It is stressed in the passage that modern research forces one to consider _____.
A) why animals behave differently under different circumstances
B) the possibility of intelligence in animals
C) the means by which animal behaviour can be improved
D) how animals can be made to acquire new skills
E) animals to be the equal of man in intelligence

9. We can infer from the passage that, in the light of modern research, our traditional assumptions about animal behaviour _____.
A) have been totally disproved
B) have been confirmed
C) have to be reconsidered
D) were indeed based on scientific fact
E) should never have been questioned

The first universities developed in Europe in the 12th century. By 1600, Western Europe boasted 108 institutions of higher learning, many of which had obtained special privileges from existing regimes because of their close association with the Church.

In most European countries, universities were designed mainly for the sons of the nobility and gentry. Scholarly standards were low, and scholarship was irrelevant for most professions. Education for earning a livelihood in, say, medicine or law, could be acquired after college by serving as an apprentice.

10. As said in the passage, in the early years of the universities, _____.
A) most students wanted to train for a profession
B) the Church disapproved of much of their teaching
C) Western European governments were not at all interested in education
D) medicine was the most popular subject for study
E) the majority of students came from upper-class families

11. It is implied in the passage that since most of the early universities enjoyed the support of the Church, _____.
A) state authorities granted them various rights
B) the number of students they admitted increased rapidly
C) the academic level of the education they offered was extremely high
D) the academic level of the education they offered was extremely low
E) law naturally became one of the major subjects offered

12. As emphasized in the passage, real professional skills _____.
A) were taught during the university years
B) were normally acquired through a period of apprenticeship
C) gained importance in the universities only after 1600
D) were acquired by nearly all university students
E) were taught only to the children of nobility

13. The effects of sleep loss are subject to a number of popular misconceptions. The belief that everyone must sleep 8 hours a night is a myth. According to the results of a recent survey on the subject, adults average about 7 to 7.5 hours of sleep per night, and many individuals function effectively with 5 to 6 hours of sleep.

In fact, 20 per cent of the population (slightly more in men) sleep less than 6 hours per night. Another important fact is that sleep time decreases with age.

In accordance with the passage, the popular assumption that eight hours of sleep per night is essential _____.
A) is only true for the elderly
B) has been supported by scientific evidence
C) is actually a fallacy
D) is only true for 20 per cent of the population
E) is very rarely disputed

14. The survey referred to in the passage signifies that as people get older and older _____.
A) they sleep less and less
B) they require more sleep than formerly
C) their sleep time varies between 7 and 8 hours
D) they rarely sleep less than 7 hours
E) sleep loss ceases to be a problem

15. It is implied in the passage that a sleep time under 8 hours _____.
A) is not recommended in the survey
B) invariably leads to noticeable inefficiency
C) does not necessarily reduce a person's efficiency
D) causes a number of complications in old people
E) is common among women but not among men

Until recently, many archaeologists held the view that civilized communities first arose in Egypt, though only a very short time before a similar development in Mesopotamia. A more recent opinion suggests that the earliest advances may have taken place in Mesopotamia.

Whichever view is followed, it is necessary to bear in mind that geographical conditions in both regions were not identical. In fact, it can be stated that in Mesopotamia, environmental factors were not as wholly favourable as in the Valley of the Nile.

16. In accordance with a more recent view, the beginnings of the development of civilization _____.

A) have only recently been a major preoccupation among archaeologists
B) were wrongly assumed to be in Mesopotamia
C) were apparently not affected by geographical conditions
D) in Egypt were greatly hampered by unfavourable environmental factors
E) seem to have occurred in Mesopotamia rather than, as once thought, in Egypt

17. It is indicated in the passage that the Nile valley and Mesopotamia _____.

A) have never attracted the attention of historians
B) were equally suitable for the rise of civilization
C) could not have been the home of our earliest civilizations
D) do not share the same geographical conditions
E) are no longer as fertile as they used to be in early times

18. From the passage, we can learn that _____.

A) our opinions of early history may sometimes need to be revised
B) archaeologists have never regarded either Egypt or Mesopotamia as the cradles of civilization
C) geographical conditions play an important role in the decline of civilizations
D) the early civilizations in Egypt and Mesopotamia were not similar at all
E) archaeology has not, until recently, been concerned with this part of the world

Dates and periods are necessary to the study and discussion of history, for all historical phenomena are conditioned by time and are produced by the sequence of events. Periods, especially, are retrospective conceptions that we form about past events. They are useful to focus discussion, but frequently they lead historical thought astray.

Thus, while it is certainly useful to speak of the Middle Ages and of the Victorian Age, those two abstract ideas have deluded many scholars and millions of newspaper readers. They suppose that during certain decades called the Middle Ages, and again during certain decades called the Age of Victoria, everyone thought or acted more or less in the same way until Victoria died or the Middle Ages came to an end. But in fact, there was no such sameness.

19. The writer argues that, contrary to common assumption, the behaviour of people _____.

A) was more uniform in the Middle Ages than in the Victorian Age
B) was not at all uniform in any given period
C) is a subject that should also be studied by historians
D) in any given period is always the same
E) is unrelated to the age they live in

20. The division of history into periods _____.

A) is both useful and deceptive
B) is prevented by modern historians
C) was rejected in the Victorian Age
D) has been in use since the Middle Ages
E) serves no useful purpose at all

21. In accordance with the passage, the study of history _____.

A) began in the Middle Ages and reached its height in the Victorian Age
B) has changed greatly in our time
C) requires knowledge of dates and periods
D) includes a great variety of interrelated subjects
E) should concentrate on the reconstruction of past events

A number of books have been written on computers, computer programming, and computer programming languages, particularly FORTRAN. To produce another book on FORTRAN, even the newest FORTRAN IV, probably seems unreasonable to most. It is with mild trepidation that I, the author, embark on this project. However, several good reasons can be stated for doing just that.

Most computer professionals will agree that the field of computer and information science has quickly become a valid discipline for academia, and that rapid changes are occurring in computer programming languages. Both of these facts demand that a new direction be taken in presenting the subject.

22. From this passage, we learn that the writer is somewhat apprehensive in case _____.

A) computer sales should drop sharply
B) developments in computer programming will become more and more costly
C) his book will be felt, by many people, to be superfluous
D) computer programming should be taken over by professionals
E) programming languages should become far more complicated

23. In accordance with the passage, publications on computer technology _____.

A) are only concerned with FORTRAN computer programming
B) have already reached a very high number
C) are brought out by academia for academia
D) invariably cause a great deal of public reaction
E) are largely repetitive and very costly

24. The writer of this passage points out that his new book on FORTRAN is justified because _____.

A) computer science is a new science with little relevant literature

B) computer professionals have not as yet recognized the changes taking place in computer science

C) it will boost the sale of computers throughout the world

D) it introduces a new approach to computer programming languages

E) it will change the concept of computer science among academia

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