

## reading 3

**Instructions:** Read. Then answer the questions. Use reasons and examples from the text to support your answers.

### The Rickshaws of Kolkata

Rickshaws are two-wheeled carts that carry one or two passengers and are pulled by a person. They first appeared in Kolkata, India a century ago. These days, rickshaws are still an important form of transportation in this city of nearly 15 million people because they are cheap and convenient. Many residents rely on rickshaws to move through narrow lanes in central areas of the city where buses do not go. Some families pay a rickshaw puller to take their children to and from school.

Rickshaws also provide delivery service for hotels, shops, and homes around the city. Some people even use a rickshaw instead of an **ambulance!** Despite their usefulness, rickshaw pullers usually live in extreme poverty. Most of them are homeless. They work for more than 12 hours at a time, earning about 100 rupees (\$2.50 USD) a day.

About 6,000 rickshaws roll through the streets of Kolkata today, but for the last ten years, the government has been trying to get rid of them. City authorities say they want to modernize the city's image. They also want to reduce traffic congestion. "We must be fair to the cars and buses that are crawling because of the rickshaws," one city official said.

What does the future hold for rickshaw pullers? Most are 40 to 60 years old and have no other job skills. Local authorities have talked about programs to retrain the pullers. However, nothing has been done to start these programs, and rickshaw pullers are understandably very worried about the future.

1. What is the main idea of the text?

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2. What is one reason rickshaws are important?

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3. Why does the writer mention an *ambulance*?

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4. What is one problem faced by rickshaw pullers?

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5. Why do city authorities want to get rid of rickshaws?

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6. What is the future for rickshaw pullers?

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**Instructions:** Read. Then write True or False for each statement. Correct the false statements.

### In Sports, Red is the Winning Color

You may think that in sports, winning is always about strength, speed, and other athletic abilities. But could there be other factors? Two researchers from England studied whether the color that athletes wear can affect performance.

The researchers were first interested in how animals respond to the color red. In some birds, monkeys, and fish, stronger, more successful males have more red on their bodies. The researchers asked: Is it possible that humans also respond to red? They looked at Olympic competitions in sports like boxing, wrestling, and tae kwon do. In each event, the two athletes were randomly given either red or blue protective **gear**.

Sometimes there was a big points difference between the winner and the loser. When **this** happened, it was probably because one athlete was much more skilled than the other. In these cases, the color of the winner's clothes did not matter. But when the two athletes had similar skills and the score was very close, the results were different. Surprisingly, when players are equally matched, the athlete dressed in red is more likely to win.

Why is this research important? In the Olympic matches that were studied, it is possible that some medal winners may have had an unfair advantage if they wore red. If this is true, athletes and sports teams should no longer be allowed to wear red.

7. The text is about how to make Olympic sports safer.

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8. According to Paragraph 2, it is true that red can be a sign of power and success.

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9. The word *gear* means "competition."

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10. The word *this* refers to differing levels of ability.

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11. The study discovered that red might be important in close contests.

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12. The main purpose of the final paragraph is to provide an explanation.

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**Instructions:** *Read. Then choose the correct answers.*

### Food Tasters

Would you like to have a job eating the same delicious food as a king or a queen? This sounds like a dream—but be careful what you wish for. In fact, tasting the food of important people could be a very dangerous job.

In the past, kings and queens used food tasters to protect themselves against poison. A taster's job was to taste all the food and make sure it was safe to eat. If the food taster did not get sick, that meant that the food was not poisoned.

Most food tasters were **anonymous** slaves or soldiers whose names were not recorded. But there are some food tasters whose names we know. For example, Mathura Prasad was a food taster for the lord of Castle Mandawa in India. He tasted food before it went to the lord's table. This position was passed down in Prasad's family for many generations. It is clear that Prasad respected the lord he served, but this wasn't true for all food tasters. The Roman historian Pliny writes that a food taster named Halotus participated in a plot to murder the emperor Claudius by serving him poisoned mushrooms. It is easy to see that for better or for worse, food tasters had an important job.

Food tasters did not only exist in ancient times. Many famous leaders of the 20th century had people taste their food for them. Even today, it is reported that presidents of the United States and other world leaders sometimes employ food tasters. And it's not just humans who act as food tasters. During the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, athletes' food was tested on white mice to ensure that the athletes did not get food poisoning. It seems that even ancient traditions will never change.

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13. In Paragraph 1, what does the writer mean by “be careful what you wish for?”

- Being a food taster is a good job.
- It is hard to become a food taster.
- Food tasting could be very risky.

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14. The word *anonymous* probably means “\_\_\_\_\_.”

- unknown

- b. mistaken
- c. unlucky

15. What does the author imply about Mathura Prasad?

- a. He was not very good at his job.
- b. The lord of Castle Mandawa ate a lot of food.
- c. One of his children had the same job as him.

16. What is the main idea of Paragraph 4?

- a. Food was often bad in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- b. Food tasters will not disappear soon.
- c. There is no need for food tasters anymore.

**Instructions:** Read. Then answer the questions. Use reasons and examples from the text to support your answers.

### Which Animals Are Really Dangerous?

In today's world, people do not run into wild animals as much as in the past. But animals still cause many deaths every year, usually in warmer parts of the world. Which animals are the most dangerous?

Size does not matter. Mosquitoes kill nearly a million people around the world every year. This is because they carry many dangerous diseases. The most dangerous disease spread by mosquitoes is malaria, which causes about 600,000 deaths. Another insect, the tsetse fly, is not as deadly as the mosquito, but it still causes around 10,000 deaths per year. In contrast, elephants are reported to kill 125 people per year, mostly in Africa and Asia. Much more dangerous than an elephant is the hippopotamus. They may look cute, but hippos are very aggressive animals.

Many people worry about poisonous animals. Many spiders are poisonous, but their bites rarely kill. Snakes, however, kill more than 50,000 people every year. One of the deadliest is the saw-scaled viper, which kills about 5,000 people per year. The snake with the deadliest poison is the Australian inland taipan. Eighty percent of people who are bitten by this snake die.

Dangerous animals don't just exist on land. The water can also be a dangerous place. Most people imagine that sharks are the most dangerous animal in the water. In fact, since the year 1530, around 1,900 people have been killed by sharks—about five per year. In contrast, crocodiles kill about one thousand people per year.

17. According to the text, where are the most dangerous animals usually found?

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18. How many deaths are mosquitoes responsible for every year?

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19. According to the text, which animal is more dangerous than it looks?

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20. What percentage of people usually die from the bite of the Australian inland taipan?

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