

TEST 03 - READING 02

NAME:.....

Reading Passage 2

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 14–27, which are based on Reading Passage 2 below.

1 Left- or right-handed bath water? This seems a silly question, but it was the subject of a serious scientific investigation sponsored by the Daily Mail in 1965. The investigation showed that the direction water swirls down the plug-hole vortex depends on which side of the Equator you are.

2 As for homo sapiens, between 5 and 30% of the population are estimated to be left-handed, with more males than females, although in one test, 95% of foetuses were found to suck their right thumb in the womb. The general consensus of opinion is that left-handedness is determined by a dominant right cerebral hemisphere controlling the left side of the body, and vice versa. Hereditary factors have been ruled out. So too have earlier theories concerning the need for soldiers to shield their hearts, and the desirability of learning to use Stone Age tools and implements with the hand they were designed for, as well as Plato's idea that it all boiled down to which arm a baby was cradled with. However, the almost universal human preference for dextrality, or right-handedness, remains a mystery.

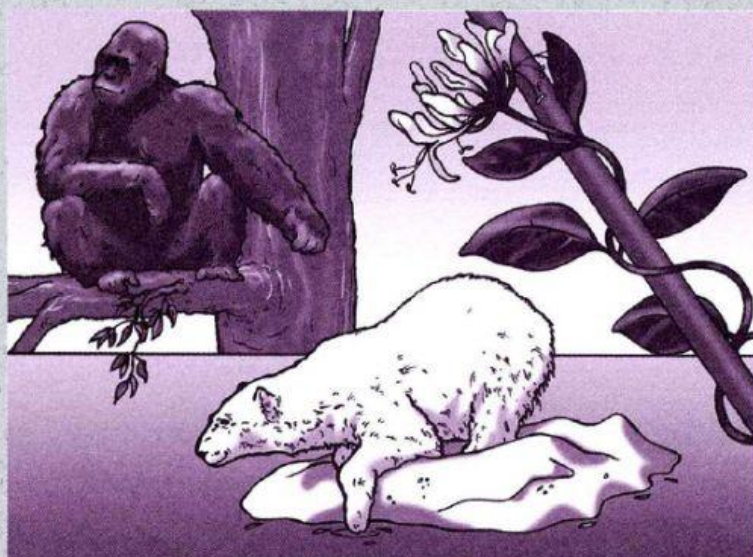
3 Prejudice against the left hand dates back to ancient times and is so entwined with religious beliefs and

superstitions that it still exists today in everyday speech. *Sinister*, the Latin for *left hand*, means 'suggestive of evil' in English, while the French *gauche* is awkward, or clumsy. *Left* itself derives from Anglo Saxon *lef* (weak and fragile). The non-judgmental term *southpaw*, by contrast, originates from the Chicago baseball stadium where pitchers faced west, so the pitching arm of a left-hander is to the South.

4 Other negative terms include *pen pushers*, while a *left-handed compliment* is actually an insult. Thomas Carlyle, who described right-handedness as *the oldest institution in the world*, introduced the political concept of 'left' in his work on the French Revolution – in the 1789 Paris Assembly the nobles sat on the right, opposite the radicals.

5 Associations with luck also go back to early history. The ancient Greek and Roman augurs foretold the future from bird-flight. While the former faced North, with the propitious sunrise side to their right, the latter, before changing later, when *sinister* took on its ominous meaning, looked southward, so the left was for good omens.

6 Superstitions world-wide reflect this bias. In Morocco, as in many countries, an itchy left palm means losing money, and a twitching left eyelid denotes the death of a relative or sorrow, whereas the right side has felicitous indications. We throw salt over our left shoulder to thwart the demons creeping up on us, but bless with the right hand. One pours wine with this hand and passes it round the table clockwise, the direction of the sun.



- 7 Our relatives, the primates, appear to be ambidextrous, or able to use both hands, although gorillas have heavier left arms seemingly due to greater utilization. Aristotle observed that crabs and lobsters had larger right claws. Rats are 80% dextral, yet polar bears are believed to be left-pawed. Flat fish provide interesting data: in northern seas plaice and sole have their eyes and colour on the right side, but tropical halibut are the other way round. If this is to do with light and sun rotation, it may explain why Indian Ocean sole are reversed, but not why northern halibut are just as sinistral as their southern cousins. In the plant kingdom, honeysuckle is a rare example of a left-handed climber that twines anti-clockwise, or widdershins!
- 8 Although we live in a more tolerant age, not so long ago in the UK youngsters were forced to use their right hand, 'to learn the value of conformity' (A. N. Palmer), often resulting in the stuttering speech defects common in 'switched sinistrals' like George VI. In the 1950s the American psychiatrist Abram Blau accused left-handed children of infantile perversity and a stubborn refusal to accept dextrality.
- 9 Not all experts were so anti-sinistral, however. The 17th century Norfolk scholar Sir Thomas Browne wrote of the prejudices against left-handedness, but accepted that a small proportion of people would always be so and saw no reason to prevent them. Apart from being considered difficult, anti-social troublemakers, left-handers have also been thought to be artistic, creative and gifted.
- 10 Famous lefties include Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Benjamin Franklin, Bill Clinton, Joan of Arc, Lewis Carroll, Paul McCartney, Jimi Hendrix, Jean Genet, Beethoven and many others.
- 11 Finally, in defence of all sinistrals, if the left side of the body is really controlled by the right hemisphere of the brain, then left-handers are the only people in their right minds!

Questions 14–18

Choose the correct letter A, B, C or D.

Write your answers in boxes 14–18 on your answer sheet.

- 14 The direction of water going down the plug-hole
- A is not related to where you are.
 - B is independent of the side of the Equator you are on.
 - C is linked to the side of the Equator you are on.
 - D was first discovered by the Daily Mail in the 1950s.
- 15 In determining left-handedness, hereditary factors are generally considered
- A as important.
 - B as having no impact.
 - C as being a major influence.
 - D as being the prime cause.
- 16 The reason why
- A almost everyone is right-handed is unknown.
 - B some people are right-handed is ambiguous.
 - C Plato worked out the mystery of left-handedness is not known.
 - D many people are right-handed is now clear.
- 17 The word 'southpaw' is
- A an Anglo-Saxon term.
 - B not a negative term.
 - C suggestive of evil.
 - D a negative term.
- 18 The left was connected with
- A being unclean by the Greeks.
 - B goodness by the French.
 - C fortune and bird-flight by many cultures.
 - D good fortune in ancient Greece and Rome.

Questions 19–22

Answer the questions below.

Choose **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the passage for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 19–22 on your answer sheet.

- 19 Who was the originator of the political concept of left?
- 20 What did the ancient Romans use to predict the future?
- 21 What does an itchy palm in the left hand mean?
- 22 In which direction is wine passed round the table?

Questions 23–26

Complete each sentence with the correct ending A–G.

Write your answers in boxes 23–26 on your answer sheet.

- 23 Gorillas, unlike other primates,
- 24 Fish colour and eye position
- 25 Most plant climbers
- 26 In the past some experts

- A appear to have been against left-handedness.

B are usually the same in both hemispheres.

C are apparently not always dependent on hemisphere.

D seem to have difficulty using both hands.

E looked on left-handedness with indifference.

F tend to grow clockwise rather than anti-clockwise.

G seem to use their left-hand more.

Question 27

Choose the correct letter A, B, C, D or E.

Write your answer in box 27 on your answer sheet.

Which of the following is the most suitable title for Reading Passage 2?

- A Left-handedness and primates
- B A defence of right-handedness
- C A defence of left-handedness
- D Left-handedness and good luck
- E Left-handedness and bad luck

Before you check your answers to Reading Passage 2, go on to page 82.

Further practice for Reading Passage 2

To match sentence beginnings and endings, find the stem and put a box around the key words. Then try to match key words or synonyms from the endings with the stem.

Look at Questions 23–26 and answer the following questions.

Question 23

Look at paragraph 7.

- 1 Can gorillas use both hands, i.e. are they ambidextrous?
.....
- 2 Do gorillas seem to utilize their left arms more and make them more muscular?
.....
- 3 If the left arms are muscular, are they likely to be heavier?
.....
- 4 Is the ending D true about primates and therefore gorillas?
.....

Question 24

Look at paragraph 7.

- 1 Does the passage compare fish colour and eye position in some way?
.....
- 2 Is the comparison between fish in different seas, northern and southern?
.....
- 3 Does the passage mention that the northern halibut is an exception?
.....
- 4 Does the ending C show that there is possibly an exception to a rule?
.....

Question 25

Look at paragraph 7.

- 1 Does the honeysuckle grow anti-clockwise as it climbs?
.....
- 2 Is the honeysuckle a common example of a plant climbing anti-clockwise?
.....
- 3 Do most climbers climb clockwise?
.....
- 4 Does the honeysuckle coil as it grows?
.....

Question 26

Look at paragraphs 8 and 9.

- 1 Does paragraph 8 give examples of experts being against left-handedness?
.....
- 2 Does paragraph 9 state the same?
.....
- 3 Does this mean that not all experts were against left-handedness?
.....
- 4 Does the ending A mention being in favour of left-handedness?
.....

Now check your answers to these exercises. When you have done so, decide whether you wish to change any of your answers to Reading Passage 2. Then check your answers to Reading Passage 2.