Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.

Aggression

Paragraph

1▶ Aggressive behavior is any behavior that is intended to cause injury, pain, suffering, damage, or destruction. While aggressive behavior is often thought of as purely physical, verbal attacks such as screaming and shouting or belittling and humiliating comments aimed at causing harm and suffering can also be a type of aggression. What is key to the definition of aggression is that whenever physical or verbal harm is inflicted, it is intentional.

2▶ Aggression was likely an early survival mechanism for humans, much in the same way it was for animals. Despite this, it is generally thought that aggressive behavior was not named as such before the seventeenth century, when the term was used to refer to an unprovoked physical attack. The term expanded beyond the description of purely physical aggression to include a psychological dimension in the early twentieth century, as psychiatrists put more emphasis on aggressive behavior and its potential motives.

3▶ Questions about the causes of aggression have long been of concern to both social and biological scientists. Theories about the causes of aggression cover a broad spectrum, ranging from those with biological or instinctive emphases to those that portray aggression as a learned behavior.

4▶ Numerous theories are based on the idea that aggression is an inherent and natural human instinct. 9A Aggression has been explained as an instinct that is directed externally toward others in a process called displacement, and it has been noted that aggressive impulses that are not channeled toward a specific person or group may be expressed indirectly through socially acceptable activities such as sports and competition in a process called catharsis. 9B Biological, or instinctive, theories of aggression have also been put forth by ethologists, who study the behavior of animals in their natural environments. 9C A number of ethologists have, based upon their observations of animals, supported the view that aggression is an innate instinct common to humans. 9D

5▶ Two different schools of thought exist among those who view aggression as instinct. One group holds the view that aggression can build up spontaneously, with or without outside provocation, and violent behavior will thus result, perhaps as a result of little or no provocation. Another suggests that aggression is indeed an instinctive response but that, rather than occurring spontaneously and without provocation, it is a direct response to provocation from an outside source.

6▶ In contrast to instinct theories, social learning theories view aggression as a learned behavior. This approach focuses on the effect that role models and reinforcement of behavior have on the acquisition of aggressive behavior. Research has shown that aggressive behavior can be learned through a combination of modeling and positive reinforcement of the aggressive behavior and that children are influenced by the combined forces of observing aggressive behavior in parents, peers, or fictional role models and of noting either positive reinforcement for the aggressive behavior or, minimally, a lack of negative reinforcement for the behavior. While research has provided evidence that the behavior of a live model is more influential than that of a fictional model, fictional models such as those seen in movies and on television, do still have an impact on behavior. 10A On-screen deaths or acts of violent behavior in certain television programs or movies can be counted in the tens, or hundreds, or even thousands; while some have argued that this sort of fictional violence does not in and of itself cause violence and may even have a beneficial cathartic[1] effect, studies have shown correlations between viewing of violence and incidences of aggressive behavior in both childhood and adolescence. 10B Studies have also shown that it is not just the modeling of aggressive behavior in either its real-life or fictional form that correlates with increased acts of violence in youths; a critical factor in increasing aggressive behaviors is the reinforcement of the behavior. 10C If the aggressive role model is rewarded rather than punished for violent behavior, that behavior is more likely to be seen as positive and is thus more likely to be imitated. 10D

GLOSSARY

1. *cathartic*—providing emotional release; therapeutic

1. Which of the following is NOT defined as aggressive behavior?
- (A) inflicting pain accidentally
- (B) making insulting remarks
- (C) destroying property
- (D) trying unsuccessfully to injure someone

2. The author mentions "belittling and humiliating comments" in paragraph 1 in order to
- (A) demonstrate how serious the problem of aggression is
- (B) clarify the difference between intentional and unintentional aggression
- (C) provide examples of verbal aggression
- (D) illustrate the nature of physical aggression

3. The word "intentional" in paragraph 1 is closest in meaning to
- (A) deliberate
- (B) estimated
- (C) forbidden
- (D) intermittent

4. According to paragraph 2, which of the following is true about aggression?
- (A) Aggression was not a typical behavior for humans before the seventeenth century.
- (B) There was probably no specific term to describe aggressive behavior until the seventeenth century.
- (C) Animals were much more likely to display aggressive behavior than humans, at least until recently.
- (D) The psychological definition of aggression has been around as long as the physical one has.

5. Which of the sentences below best expresses the essential information in the highlighted sentence in paragraph 3? *Incorrect* choices change the meaning in important ways or leave out essential information.
- (A) Biological theories of aggression emphasize its instinctive nature.
- (B) Theories that consider aggression biological are more accepted than those that consider it learned.
- (C) Various theories about aggression attribute it to either natural or learned causes.
- (D) Various theories try to compare the idea that aggression is biological with the idea that it is learned.

6. According to paragraph 4, "displacement" is
- (A) internally directed aggression
- (B) a modeled type of aggression
- (C) aggression that is unintentional
- (D) aggression that is directed outward

7. It can be inferred from paragraph 4 that "catharsis"
- (A) is a positive process
- (B) involves channeling aggression internally
- (C) is studied by ethologists
- (D) should be negatively reinforced

8. An ethologist would be most likely to study
- (A) learned catharsis in a certain species of monkey
- (B) the evolution of a certain type of fish
- (C) the bone structure of a certain type of dinosaur
- (D) how a certain male lion fights other male lions

9. Look at the four squares [■] that indicate where the following sentence could be added to paragraph 4.

One may, for example, release aggression by joining a football team or a debate team or even a cooking competition.

Where would the sentence best fit? Click on a square [■] to add the sentence to the passage.

10. The phrase "schools of thought" in paragraph 5 is closest in meaning to
- (A) institutions of higher learning
- (B) lessons to improve behavior
- (C) methods of instruction
- (D) sets of shared beliefs

11. It is NOT mentioned in paragraph 5 that some believe that instinctive aggression may occur
- (A) without being provoked
- (B) in order to cause provocation
- (C) in response to minor provocation
- (D) in response to clear provocation

12. The word "it" in paragraph 5 refers to
- (A) aggression
- (B) an instinctive response
- (C) provocation
- (D) a direct response

13. The author begins paragraph 6 with the expression "In contrast to instinct theories" in order to
- (A) introduce the instinct theories that will be presented in paragraph 6
- (B) indicate that paragraph 6 will present two contrasting theories
- (C) contrast instinctive theories of aggression with biological theories of aggression
- (D) provide a transition to the idea that will be presented in paragraph 6

14. It is NOT mentioned in paragraph 6 that aggression can be learned by observing
- (A) others of the same age
- (B) violent programs on TV
- (C) one's mother or father
- (D) professional football games

15. The word "that" in paragraph 6 refers to
- (A) research
- (B) evidence
- (C) the behavior
- (D) a live model

16. What is stated in paragraph 6 about the modeling of aggressive behavior?
- (A) Fictional models are as likely to cause aggressive behavior as are live models.
- (B) Little correlation has been found between viewing of aggressive behavior on television and acting aggressively.
- (C) Aggression in works of fiction may cause aggressive behavior.
- (D) Aggression in society has an effect on the type of violence in movies and on television.

17. The phrase "in and of itself" in paragraph 6 is closest in meaning to
- (A) internally
- (B) single-handedly
- (C) genuinely
- (D) semi-privately

18. The word "critical" in paragraph 6 could best be replaced by
- (A) negative
- (B) considerate
- (C) crucial
- (D) studied

19. Look at the four squares [■] that indicate where the following sentence could be added to paragraph 6.

Thus, it is more common for a youth to imitate aggressors who have been rewarded than those who have been punished.

Where would the sentence best fit? Click on a square [■] to add the sentence to the passage.

20. The word "imitated" in paragraph 6 is closest in meaning to
- (A) repeated
- (B) copied
- (C) exhibited
- (D) initiated

21. Which situation would most likely result in increased aggressive behavior in children?
- (A) witnessing TV shows in which the aggressor gets away without being punished
- (B) watching two friends compete in a wrestling match
- (C) viewing a verbal argument between parents
- (D) viewing TV shows in which the hero defeats the agressor

22. **Directions:** An introductory sentence for a brief summary of the passage is provided below. Complete the summary by selecting the THREE answer choices that express the most important ideas in the passage. Some sentences do not belong in the summary because they express ideas that are not presented in the passage or are minor ideas in the passage. **This question is worth 2 points** (2 points for 3 correct answers, 1 point for 2 correct answers, and 0 points for 1 or 0 correct answers).

Aggression, which causes harm to those affected by it, has been accounted for by numerous theories.
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Answer Choices (choose 3 to complete the chart):

(1) Various theories indicate that learned aggression occurs as a result of observation of this type of behavior and reward for it.
(2) Various theories indicate aggression is neither instinctive nor learned.
(3) Various theories indicate that instinctively caused aggression is always cathartic.
(4) Various theories indicate that instinctively caused aggression may occur with or without provocation.
(5) Various theories indicate that aggression may be instinctive or learned.
(6) Various theories indicate that learned aggression results from displacement of anger.

LIVEWORKSHEETS