READING REVISION 7

Task 1. Each paragraph is followed by four statements. Select the statement that best expresses the main idea.

1. People often refer to taxes in terms of their being much too high. In reality, they are probably even higher than you think, because in addition to the federal income tax we are now studying, there are many other Federal, State, and local taxes, including sales taxes, inheritance taxes, state income taxes, personal property taxes, real estate taxes, and others. These are just some of the most obvious ones.

a. Taxes are much too high.

b. We pay more taxes than we may realize.

c. Inheritance taxes and real estate taxes are unfair.

d. Some taxes are hidden.

2. The fact that electronic computers are now used for data processing has led the general public to believe that it is a mysterious, complicated science and that the computers are giant brains. Both of these ideas are false. A computer is basically just a high-speed adding machine that performs the functions it is told to. If the input data are varied even a little, the computer is unable to operate until it is programmed to accept the variations. The business operations it performs are impressive only because of the extremely high speed of manipulation, but most of these operations have been used for decades. Unlike man, the computer performs repetitive calculations without getting tired or bored.

a. A computer is a high-speed adding machine.

b. A computer is a mysterious giant brain.

c. A computer is impressive because of its high speed.

d. A computer is superior to man in many ways.

3. The Louisiana Purchase proved to be one of the shrewdest business pacts in the entire history of the United States. The purchase doubled in the area of the country and provided territory from which fourteen new states were created either wholly or in part. It also gave us control over the mouth of the Mississippi River and opened up the way to foreign trade. Prior to the purchase, the

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waterway had been blocked by the Spanish, probably with the approval of Napoleon. The land that was bought was rich in timber, minerals, and natural resources of many kinds. Finally, the cost of the transaction was unbelievably low; the total of $15 million amounted to about four cents an acre.

a. The Louisiana Purchase was a very good business deal for the U.S.

b. The land bought by the Louisiana Purchase was rich in minerals.

c. The land bought by the Louisiana Purchase was very cheap.

d. Most Americans were very pleased with the purchase.

4. There is a common belief that while the dog is man's best friend, the coyote is his worst enemy. The bad reputation of the coyote traces back to his fondness for small animals; he hunts at night and is particularly destructive to sheep, young pigs, and poultry. Yet it is sometimes wise to encourage coyotes. Provided valuable farm animals are protected, the coyote will often free the property of other animals, like rabbits, which are ruinous to crops and certain trees. He is especially beneficial in keeping down the rodent population. Where coyotes have been allowed to do their work without molestation, ranchers and fruit growers have found them so valuable that they would no more shoot them than they would shoot their dogs.

a. Under certain conditions the coyote is helpful to man.

b. The coyote is feared because of his fondness for small animals

c. Modern ranchers would no sooner shoot coyotes than they would shoot dogs.

d. The coyote usually prefers rabbits and other rodents to sheep and poultry.

5. In earlier days those who had overseas business which they believed should be discussed personally, took ship and set out across the briny deep. Once aboard they transacted their affairs, engaging in commercial and social matters or conducting government business. Today ships and passengers continue to sail the seven seas, and airplanes soar overhead. But above them all, words speed through the sky – telephone conversations quickly bring together in the most personal fashion people who are separated by thousands of miles.

a. Overseas telephone service today is ruling out all need for overseas travel.

b. Nothing can take the place of person-to-person conversation in settling business,

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social, and government problems.

c. Many conversations which once required overseas travel can now be conducted by telephone.

d. Even with modern overseas telephone service people continue to travel abroad by ship or by plane.

6. The attitudes of Americans toward gambling are amazingly contradictory. You may find, for example, that horse racing is legal in your state, but that you cannot legally play poker for money on your front porch; bookies may be prosecuted by state law, but they are supposed to purchase a federal license nonetheless; one church condemns gambling, while another raises money by sponsoring Bingo games. Gambling laws are inconsistent from state to state or even from town to town and are very difficult to enforce.

a. Americans have negative attitudes toward gambling.

b. Gambling laws are difficult to enforce

c. Gambling laws are inconsistent from community to community.

d. Churches do not have uniform ideas about gambling.

Task 2. Summarise the main ideas of these paragraphs in 1-2 sentences.

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These days, many people like to run or jog. Others ride their bikes. Still others play sports on teams or with their friends. All of these activities are forms of exercise. When you exercise, you move your body in ways that make it stronger. How does exercise help you? For one thing, it makes your muscles grow. Your muscles help you to lift, pull, and push things. The bigger your muscles, the more easily you can do these things.

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Exercise also makes your bones stronger. Your bones are what hold you up. The more you exercise, the straighter you can stand. You are also less likely to break a bone if you fall. Believe it or not, exercise can also help you to think more clearly and to feel happier. Scientists have found that children who exercise often do better in school. They can feel more relaxed, too.

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Task 3. Summarise the main ideas of these paragraphs in 1-2 sentences.

Gorillas in Crisis

By Kathleen Donovan-Snavely

What will you have for supper tonight? Hotdogs? Pizza? Gorilla? It may surprise you to know that these "gentle creatures of the jungle" regularly appear as the featured entrée as a meal served near the African rainforest. That isn't the only problem that haunts gorillas lately. The combined threats posed by hunters, loggers, and disease are eliminating large numbers of gorillas in central and West Africa. The future of gorillas in the wild is at risk.

1. .....

Gorilla meat is a dietary staple for nearly 12 million people who live near the rainforests of central and West Africa. Some Africans prefer bush meat, such as gorilla, because it provides an economical source of daily protein. Poor families without the means to purchase food at the market travel a short distance to the rainforest to get bush meat. Their only expense is the cost of ammunition and the fee to rent a gun. Some of these same families raise chickens and goats, but do not eat them. Instead, they sell the animals for the cash they need for buying supplies. Africa's population is increasing rapidly, along with its demand for bush meat. If nothing changes, primatologists fear that gorillas may become extinct in the next thirty years.

2. .....

Moving away from one's childhood home sometimes leaves us longing for familiar places and traditions. Naturally, the African families who move away from their original rainforest homes struggle with these feelings of sadness and displacement. Now living in villages and cities, they eat bush meat to feel closer to the past and to their old way of life. For them, gorilla feeds the body and the soul as well. This custom brings little comfort to endangered gorillas, whose females produce only one offspring every five to seven years. It is easy to see why gorillas are being killed faster than they can reproduce.

3. .....

While Africans plunder the gorilla population, they are not the only ones. Over the years, their European neighbors have developed a taste for exotic bush meat as a status symbol. Trophy hunters value gorillas for their collectable heads and hands. Finally, some hunters persist in the decades-long practice of trapping young gorillas to sell to zoos and private citizens across the world. When

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mature members of the gorilla troop try to defend an infant, hunters shoot to preserve their prize. Entire troops of gorillas have perished this way. The international gorilla trade continues even though it is illegal, since the laws are nearly impossible to enforce. Gorilla populations continue to decline.

4. .....

You have heard the slogan, "Save the rainforest," with good reason. Conservationists know that if the forest is cut down, the habitat needed to sustain countless tropical plants and animals will no longer exist. Already the loggers who harvest tropical trees have eliminated some of the bush where gorillas live, causing crowding that leads to the spread of disease. Furthermore, logging has depleted the vegetation on which gorillas depend for their daily food. Up to 70 pounds of plants and leaves are required daily for a mature gorilla's diet. Finally, the logging roads that facilitate removal of harvested trees also enable poachers efficiently to remove freshly killed gorillas from the bush to the market for sale. Loggers are endangering the rainforest, along with its inhabitants.

5. .....

Most recently, a disease called Ebola fever has joined forces with hunters and loggers to further threaten the existence of gorillas. Biologists suspect that the virus was first spread across species with the help of tropical insects. Whatever its origins, we do know that the virus is now carried from gorillas to humans in a deadly cycle. Hunters contract the headache and fever when they kill and eat infected bush meat. As the disease runs its course, internal bleeding leads to death. Meanwhile, an unsuspecting hunter who seems only a bit "under the weather" may return to the bush, effectively sickening an entire troop of gorillas. Ninety percent of all gorillas that get Ebola fever die. Healthy gorillas that come into contact with diseased bodies in the bush get the disease as well.

Scientists are currently researching treatments for Ebola. Since human and gorilla DNA are so similar, it is possible that a vaccine for humans will eventually help gorillas as well. Meanwhile, Ebola continues to thrive.

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