

## TOEFL Reading Practice

Answer inference questions:

### Passage 1

Pigeons have been taught to recognize human facial expressions, upsetting long-held beliefs that only humans have evolved the sophisticated nervous systems needed to perform such a feat. In recent experiments at the University of Iowa, eight trained pigeons were shown photographs of people displaying emotions of happiness, anger, surprise, and disgust. The birds learned to distinguish between these expressions. Not only that, but they were able to correctly identify the same expressions on photographs of unfamiliar faces. Their achievement does not suggest, of course, that the pigeons had any idea what the human expressions meant.

Some psychologists had theorized that, because facial expression is vital to human communication, humans have developed special nervous systems capable of recognizing subtle differences between expressions. Now the pigeons have cast doubt on that idea.

In fact, the ability to recognize facial expressions of emotion is not necessarily innate even in human babies, but may have to be learned in much the same way that pigeons learn. In experiments conducted several years ago at the University of Iowa, it was found that pigeons organize images of things into many of the same logical categories that humans do.

None of these results would come as any surprise to Charles Darwin, who long ago wrote about the continuity of mental development from animals to humans.

1. From the information in paragraph 1, it can be inferred that pigeons
  - show more emotions than people thought they could
  - can understand the human emotions of happiness, anger, surprise, and disgust
  - can identify only the expressions of people that they are familiar with
  - have more sophisticated nervous systems than was once thought
2. The author probably believes that the psychologists mentioned in paragraph 2
  - will need to revise their theory
  - no longer believe that expressions are important in human communication
  - have conducted their own experiments with pigeons
  - no longer think that the pigeons have cast doubt on their theories
3. In paragraph 3, the author suggests that, at birth, human babies
  - have nervous systems capable of recognizing subtle expressions
  - can learn from pigeons
  - are not able to recognize familiar faces
  - may not be able to identify basic emotions through facial expressions

4. What can be inferred about the experiments that were conducted several years ago at the University of Iowa?
  - They were completely contradicted by more recent experiments.
  - They supported the idea that pigeons and humans share certain mental abilities.
  - They were conducted by scientists on human babies.
  - They proved that animals other than pigeons could recognize human expressions.
5. If Charles Darwin could have seen the results of this experiment, his most probable reaction would have been one of
  - rejection
  - surprise
  - agreement
  - amusement