GRADE 12- READING- MAIN IDEA QUESTION



Example 1:

Although "lie detectors" are being used by governments, police departments, and businesses that all want guaranteed ways of detecting the truth, the results are not always accurate. Lie detectors are properly called emotion detectors, for their aim is to measure bodily changes that contradict what a person says. The polygraph machine records changes in heart rate, breathing, blood pressure, and the electrical activity of the skin (galvanic skin response, or GSR). In the first part of the polygraph test, you are electronically connected to the machine and asked a few neutral questions ("What is your name?" "Where do you live?"). Your physical reactions serve as the standard (baseline) for evaluating what comes next. Then you are asked a few critical questions among the neutral ones ("When did you rob the bank?"). The assumption is that if you are guilty, your body will reveal the truth, even if you try to deny it. Your heart rate, respiration, and GSR will change abruptly as you respond to the incriminating questions.

That is the theory, but psychologists have found that lie detectors are simply not reliable. Since most physical changes are the same across the emotions, machines cannot tell whether you are feeling guilty, angry, nervous, thrilled, or revved up from an exciting day. Innocent people may be tense and nervous about the whole procedure. They may react physiologically to a certain word ("bank") not because they robbed it, but because they recently bounced a check. In either case the machine will record a "lie." The reverse mistake is also common. Some practiced liars can lie without flinching, and others learn to beat the machine by tensing muscles or thinking about an exciting experience during neutral questions.

Question: *What is the main idea of the passage?*

A. Physical reactions reveal guilt

B. How lie detectors are used and their reliability

C. Lie detectors distinguish different emotions

D. Lie detectors make innocent people nervous

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Passage 2

The story of the motel business from 1920 to the start of World War II in 1941 is one of uninterrupted growth. Motels (the term comes from a combination of the words motor and hotels) spread from the West and the Midwest all the way to Maine and Florida. They clustered along transcontinental highways, such as U.S. Routes 40 and 66, and along the north-south routes running up and down both the East and West Coasts. There were 16,000 motels by 1930 and 24,000 by 1940. The motel industry was one of the few industries that was not hurt by the Depression of the 1930s. Their cheap rates attracted travelers who had very little money.

Question. What does the passage mainly discuss?

A. How the Depression hurt U.S. motels

B. The origin of the word motels

C. Two decades of growth for the motel industry

Passage 3

Alternative history is in general classified as a type of science fiction, but it also bears some relation to historical fiction. This type of writing describes an imaginary world that is identical to ours up to a certain point in history, but at that point, the two worlds diverge; some important historical event takes place in one world but not in the other, and they go in different directions. Alternative histories might describe worlds in which the Roman Empire had never fallen, in which the Spanish Armada had been victorious, or in which the South had won the Civil War. Or, they may suppose that some technology had been introduced earlier in the world's history than actually happened. For example: What if computers had been invented in Victorian times? Many readers find these stories interesting because of the way they stimulate the imagination and get them thinking about the phenomenon of cause and effect in history.

Question. What is the main idea of this passage?

A. Alternative histories describe worlds in which history has taken another course.

B. Alternative histories are a type of historical novel.

C. Science fiction writers have accurately predicted certain actual scientific developments.

LIVEWORKSHEETS