

Name _____ Date _____ List # ____ - ____

I. DIRECTIONS: Read the passages, then choose the correct option.

Two Kinds of Iron

The human body needs iron to produce hemoglobin, a substance that helps red blood cells transport oxygen. Without enough iron, a person may feel tired and weak. Dietary sources of iron include plant sources, such as vegetables and beans, and animal foods, including poultry, red meat, and fish. However, plant and animal sources are not equal. The iron in plants, called nonheme iron, is not easily absorbed by the human digestive system. For example, a half cup of cooked spinach contains a healthy dose of over three milligrams of iron. Unfortunately, only five percent of that iron can be used by the body. On the other hand, the iron in animal foods, called heme iron, is better utilized. Heme iron is contained within a ring of protein, which helps the body to absorb it easily.

- ____ 1. **What is the main idea of the passage?**
- A. Plant and animal food sources both contain iron, but the iron in animal foods is more accessible to the body.
 - B. Heme iron, found in meat and fish, is easily absorbed by the human body.
 - C. Plant and animal food sources both contain iron, which helps red blood cells carry oxygen throughout the body.

Goodbye, Cod

The Atlantic cod was once the mainstay of the United States fishing industry. However, warming of the ocean along the shores of New England has caused the stock of cod to disappear almost completely. According to scientists at the Gulf of Maine Research Institute, the Gulf of Maine is heating up faster than a majority of the rest of the planet's oceans. As a result of warmer ocean waters, female cod produce fewer offspring, and these fish are less likely to survive to maturity. Even though recreational cod fishing was banned in 2014, and strict limitations were placed on the number of fish commercial fishermen could catch, these measures have not been enough to protect the cod.

- ____ 2. **What is the main idea of the passage?**
- A. Female cod are producing fewer offspring in the Gulf of Maine.
 - B. Because cod used to be abundant in the Atlantic, it was once the backbone of the U.S. fishing industry.
 - C. Because the Gulf of Maine is warming unusually quickly, Atlantic cod are disappearing.

Word Creators

William Shakespeare is widely credited with adding more than 1,700 new words to the English language in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Yet some scholars question that estimate, suggesting that some of the "new" words credited to Shakespeare may have already been in use when he incorporated them into his plays. So if Shakespeare didn't radically change the English language, then who did? According to some language experts, young women, rather than men, are actually responsible for inventing most new words. Two linguists at the University of Helsinki in Finland analyzed six thousand letters written between 1417 and 1681. They found that female letter writers changed the way they wrote more often than their male counterparts. One reason could be that women often have more social connections than men, and social connections allow people to introduce each other to new uses of words.

3. **What is the main idea of the passage?**

- A. Researchers at the University of Helsinki studied letters written between 1417 and 1681 to try to discover how new words enter the language.
- B. Shakespeare is often credited with adding many new words to the English language.
- C. Recent research suggests that the language changes that occurred in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries owed a great deal to female letter writers.

Student Designs Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Maya Lin was an architecture student at Yale University when she completed a special class assignment—a monument to veterans of the Vietnam War. The assignment was inspired by the October 1980 announcement of a national design competition for such a memorial to be built in Washington, D.C. Lin's professor gave her design only a B but encouraged her to enter it into the competition. More than 1,400 entries were submitted and judged anonymously. Most of the other entrants were trained architects, whereas Lin hadn't yet completed her degree in architecture. Yet Lin's design took first place, earning her \$20,000 in prize money. She later wrote, "From the very beginning I often wondered, if it had not been an anonymous entry . . . but rather an entry by Maya Lin, would I have been selected?"

4. **What is the main idea of the passage?**

- A. Maya Lin's design won first prize in a competition and went on to become the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.
- B. Maya Lin received a B for her design for a memorial to Vietnam veterans, but she was encouraged to enter it in a national competition.
- C. Maya Lin was just a student, but her design won a national competition for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

The Pony Express

In the Gold Rush of 1849, some one hundred thousand immigrants were lured to California by the promise of gold. Towns and businesses popped up to accommodate the growing population, but a problem remained: how to communicate across the vast reaches of the United States. Three businessmen thought they had an answer: faster mail delivery via the Pony Express, a relay system of horses and riders. The Pony Express made its first delivery on April 14, 1860. Mail from St. Joseph, Missouri, reached San Francisco in just eleven days, rather than a month or more, which was standard for mail delivery at the time. The Pony Express was a short-lived solution, however. After just eighteen months, it was replaced by a national telegraph wire.

_____ **5. What is the main idea of the passage?**

- A.** The Pony Express allowed for faster communication in the rapidly growing United States.
- B.** The Pony Express was a chain of horses and riders across the country used to deliver mail.
- C.** On April 14, 1860, the Pony Express delivered mail from Missouri to California in just eleven days.

Unusual Bird Parenting

Birds have a reputation as excellent parents. They expend a great deal of effort in building nests in which to lay their eggs. They patiently incubate the eggs, keeping them warm and safe until they hatch. Birds also bring food to their newly hatched offspring until the baby birds are independent. However, some unusual birds, known as brood parasites, don't provide any parental care for their young. Perhaps the most famous brood parasite is the cuckoo. Instead of building a nest, the cuckoo lays her eggs in the nest of another species with similar-looking eggs. The female cuckoo simply removes an egg laid by the host female, lays her own egg, and then leaves, expecting the host bird to care for the imposter.

_____ **6. What is the main idea of the passage?**

- A.** Unlike most species of birds, brood parasites such as the cuckoo don't provide any parental care.
- B.** Most birds build nests for their young, incubate the eggs, and are generally devoted parents.
- C.** Unlike most species of birds, brood parasites such as the cuckoo don't build nests.

Cooperative Trees

We often think of trees as simple objects that provide us with things we need, such as lumber, shade, or fruit. Yet trees are far more complex—and social—than we recognize. An underground network of fungi, which some have called the "wood-wide web," connects the roots of numerous trees in a forest. Using the network, trees can communicate with and support one another. They may share water, carbon, nutrients, and protective compounds with one another. Scientists believe that one explanation for this

phenomenon may be a "source-sink model." According to this theory, trees growing in excellent conditions with many resources transfer these resources to trees growing in less favorable conditions. In this way, trees in a forest ensure the health of the entire community by working cooperatively.

7. **What is the main idea of the passage?**

- A. The wood-wide web is an underground fungal network of connections between trees.
- B. Trees in a forest work to support one another by using an underground fungal network.
- C. Different parts of a forest may provide different conditions for trees, some more and some less favorable for growth.

Saving the Rhinos

Poachers in Africa are killing large numbers of rhinos for their horns. Rhinoceros horns, valued for use in traditional medicines in Vietnam and China, can fetch as much as thirty-six thousand dollars a pound. Officials have tried to protect the rhinos: they have created fenced areas for the animals, patrolled their habitats, and even tried removing their horns. Despite these efforts, the number of rhinos in Africa has been dwindling. One creative solution to the poaching problem is to remove the rhinos from Africa altogether. Ray Dearlove, the founder of the Australian Rhino Project, came up with a plan to relocate eighty rhinos to a safari park outside Adelaide, Australia, where a breeding herd can be established.

8. **What is the main idea of the passage?**

- A. Because other attempts to protect African rhinos from poachers have failed, the Australian Rhino Project is relocating the rhinos to Australia.
- B. Officials have tried to protect African rhinos from poachers by guarding their habitats and removing their horns, but their efforts have been largely unsuccessful.

Finding Bombs in Germany

During World War II, American and British forces dropped millions of tons of bombs on German cities. Nearly ten percent of the bombs never exploded. The war ended in 1945, but more than two thousand tons of unexploded bombs are still found in Germany each year. Before any construction project is undertaken, the site must be checked for unexploded bombs. Buried bombs are often discovered. For this reason, Germany has a special force of firefighters and police officers, called the KMBD, to defuse and remove these bombs. Even though the war has been over for seven decades, the KMBD is one of the busiest bomb squads on the planet.

9. **What is the main idea of the passage?**

- A. Because there are so many unexploded bombs in Germany, the country has a special force trained to defuse them.
- B. Because there is so much construction in Germany, the country has a special force trained to defuse bombs.

- C. Almost ten percent of the bombs dropped on Germany during World War II never exploded.

Abolitionists Speak Out

Frederick Douglass was born into slavery in Maryland in approximately 1818. After several unsuccessful attempts, Douglass escaped from slavery and eventually settled in Massachusetts. In 1845, he wrote his first autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, which had a profound influence on the movement to abolish slavery. Harriet Jacobs was born in North Carolina in 1813. Like Douglass, Jacobs was born into slavery. She eventually escaped and settled in New York. Also like Douglass, she wrote an autobiography, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, which revealed the horrors of life under slavery. Both Douglass and Jacobs went on to become vocal supporters of the antislavery movement.

_____ **10. What is the main idea of the passage?**

- A. Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs both escaped from slavery in the 1800s.
- B. The antislavery movement wouldn't have existed without autobiographies like Frederick Douglass's and Harriet Jacobs's.
- C. Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs both wrote important autobiographies about their experiences of slavery.