International School of Monterrey

Junior High School **__th Grade**
Trimester ___ **Literature**

Name _____ **Date** _____ **List #____- ____**

I. DIRECTIONS: Read each passage then, in the space provided, write THE LETTER of the correct option.

The Evolving Human Skeleton

Our early ancestors were hunter-gatherers who obtained food by hunting and by searching for edible wild plants. They needed strong bones, including large, strong jaws that enabled them to eat tough, uncooked foods. When our ancestors developed agriculture, however, their diet changed. They began growing plants, such as grains and beans, and raising animals for food; they also started cooking their foods, making them softer and easier to chew. Consequently, the human skeleton underwent radical changes. Over time, the human jaw became smaller and changed shape. Other bones also evolved, becoming lighter, especially in the joints, as a result of both dietary changes and a less active lifestyle.

_____1. What is the main idea of the passage?

A. As early humans developed agriculture, their bones changed significantly.
B. Early humans ate uncooked meats and vegetables, so they needed strong jaws for chewing.

Blooms in Death Valley

In March 2016, Death Valley National Park in California experienced a rare occurrence: thousands of yellow wildflowers covered the region in a "super bloom." Why was this unusual? Death Valley is the hottest and driest place in North America. The area's average yearly precipitation is just two inches, making it a challenging place for flowers to grow. However, in October 2015, the valley had received more than three inches of rain in some areas. As a result of the unusually wet season, wildflower seeds that had been lying dormant underground suddenly began to grow, producing an abundance of golden blooms.

_____2. What is the main idea of the passage?

A. Because of an unusual amount of rain, thousands of wildflowers grew in Death Valley in 2016.
B. Because of the hot, dry conditions in Death Valley, it is difficult for flowers to grow there.

Eat Carrots, See Better?

Carrots contain high amounts of vitamin A and are good for general eye health. However, carrots will not improve night vision. That myth goes back to British propaganda during World War II. In 1940, the German *Luftwaffe*, or air force, began bombing Britain at night. In response, the British government ordered people to turn off their lights; the government

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wanted to make it difficult for German pilots to hit their targets. A new technology, radar, allowed the British air force to track and shoot down the German planes without light. To keep the technology secret, the government told the media that their pilots could see the German planes because they consumed so many carrots. Consequently, people began to believe that eating carrots would help them see better in the dark.

_____3. What is the main idea of the passage?

A. Because of a British media campaign, people thought that eating carrots would improve their night vision.
B. During World War II, the British government told the media that their pilots ate a lot of carrots.

To Stand or Not to Stand?

In 2016, Vallecito Elementary School in San Rafael, California, became the first U.S. school to replace all of its ordinary desks with raised desks that students stand at. Speaking to a reporter from TIME for Kids magazine, one student at the school gave the standing desks high praise. "You feel happier, you're less tired, and you're more active," she said. According to several studies, children working at standing desks burn more calories and are more focused on tasks. However, some teachers and parents are opposed to the change. They are concerned that standing for long periods of time could cause fatigue, strain on the legs and feet, or posture problems. In addition, standing desks are more expensive than seated desks. Only time will tell whether standing desks will prove to be the next big trend or a failed experiment.

_____4. What is the main idea of the passage?

A. Some people say that standing desks promote good study habits, but others are wary about the new desks.
B. Studies have shown that standing desks help students focus on their schoolwork while being more active.

The First "Newspaper" War

The Crimean War was fought in the 1850s between Russia on one side and Britain, France, and Turkey on the other. Although it was a major conflict, it is perhaps best remembered as the first war in which journalists were present on the battlefield. News dispatches from William Howard Russell, a reporter for the *Times* of London, exposed military blunders and revealed the filthy conditions that existed in military hospitals and camps. Photographers such as James Robertson and Roger Fenton made hundreds of photographs of soldiers on the battlefield. These news reports and photographs provided an uncensored look at life on the frontlines. The Crimean War marked the first time in history that people back home were exposed to the horrors of war.

_____5. What is the main idea of the passage?

A. The Crimean War was the first war to be documented for civilians.
B. The Crimean War was fought between the Russians and the British, French, and Turkish.

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April Fools' Days Around the World

April Fools' Day is celebrated around the world, although it varies somewhat from country to country. In the United States, for example, it's a day to play practical jokes. In France, where the holiday is known as *Poisson d'Avril*, or April Fish, people secretly tape paper fish on their friends' backs. A common April Fools' prank in Portugal is to throw flour on someone; in Scotland, the most popular trick involves sending someone on a useless errand. Denmark celebrates April Fools' Day on April 1, but some people there celebrate again in May. *Maj-kat*, on May 1, is yet another day for jokes and pranks in the spring.

_____6. What is the main idea of the passage?

A. Though there are variations in how different countries observe April Fools' Day, the celebrations all involve playing pranks.
B. On Poisson d'Avril, France's version of what Americans call April Fools' Day, pranksters tape paper fish to people's backs.

AC vs. DC

In the 1880s, the War of the Currents began. Thomas Edison developed direct current, or DC, a type of electricity that flows in one direction. By 1887, DC was in use around the United States. It had some drawbacks, though. Converting it to lower or higher voltages was difficult; that is, the current's force couldn't be changed easily. Transmitted at the low voltage needed for use in homes and businesses, it lost power after traveling only a mile. Meanwhile, Nikola Tesla was working with alternating current, or AC. AC reverses direction many times per second and can be changed to different voltages. At high voltage, it can be transmitted efficiently, traveling hundreds of miles with little energy loss. Because of its advantages, AC triumphed by the end of the nineteenth century.

_____7. What is the main idea of the passage?

A. AC reverses direction and can be converted to lower or higher voltage.
B. AC has distinct advantages over DC, so AC won the War of the Currents.

Publishing Doctor Zhivago

Boris Pasternak's 1956 novel *Doctor Zhivago* tells the story of a Russian doctor living at the time of the 1917 Russian Revolution, which led to the establishment of the Soviet Union. Because the book dealt with hardships people faced after the revolution, publishers in the Soviet Union refused to release it, calling it anti-Soviet. Pasternak's solution was to have the book smuggled out of the Soviet Union and published in Europe. Though Soviet authorities tried to prevent it, the book was published in Italy in 1957 and was immediately well received. In 1958, it was translated into English and went on to become one of the most popular novels of the 1950s.

_____8. What is the main idea of the passage?

A. Boris Pasternak couldn't get his book *Doctor Zhivago* published in the Soviet Union, so he had the book smuggled out of the country.
B. Doctor Zhivago showed the problems that Russians faced following the Russian Revolution, so it was considered anti-Soviet.

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The Importance of Japan's Cherry Blossoms

In the northeastern United States, autumn is particularly colorful. Leaves change from green to red and orange, and many Americans take scenic fall foliage trips. In Japan, a similar phenomenon takes place in the spring. Cherry trees erupt in a shower of pink, and the entire country celebrates the arrival of *sakura*, or cherry blossoms. Though autumn leaves are admired in the United States, they are seen as just a pretty seasonal display. In Japan, on the other hand, cherry blossoms have much greater significance; the flowers are deeply rooted in Japan's culture and philosophy. Since as far back as the eighth century, *sakura* have symbolized change and beauty, new beginnings, and the circle of life. The blossoms have been celebrated in Japanese paintings, poems, and tea ceremonies for centuries.

_____9. What is the main idea of the passage?

A. Japan's spring cherry blossoms often serve as symbols of change or new beginnings in works of Japanese art or literature.
B. Americans appreciate the colorful leaves of fall, but the Japanese view the cherry blossoms of spring as part of their culture.

Making Towers Bird-Friendly

The lights on tall communication towers warn pilots to avoid the towers when flying at night. Unfortunately, the steady red lights often used on towers have the opposite effect on birds: the bright beams attract and confuse them. Instead of avoiding the lights, the birds fly directly toward them, crashing into the towers or becoming entangled in power lines. Millions of birds have died this way. However, there is a solution. Unlike steady lights, flashing or blinking lights don't attract birds. In response to demands from conservation groups, the Federal Aviation Administration in 2016 began requiring communication towers in the U.S. to use blinking lights instead of steady ones.

_____10. What is the main idea of the passage?

A. Birds are attracted to the steady red lights on communication towers.
B. To save birds, communication towers have begun using blinking lights.

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