Reading Skills 9-10

Skill # 9 > Select summary information Study each passage and choose the answer choices that express the most important ideas in the passage. Some sentences DO NOT belong in the summary because they express ideas that are not presented or are minor ideas in the passage.

Passage 1

Island Plant Life

Islands are geographical formations that are completely surrounded by water, yet many islands are covered with a rich assortment of plant life. It may seem surprising that so much plant life exists on many islands, yet there are surprisingly simple explanations as to how the vegetation has been able to establish itself there. Some islands were formerly attached to larger bodies of land, while others were created on their own. Islands that were created when flooding or rising water levels cut them off from their neighbors often still have the plant life that they had before they were cut off. In cases where islands formed out of the ocean, they may have plant life from neighboring lands even though they were never actually attached to the neighboring lands. Winds carry many seeds to islands; some plants produce extremely light seeds that can float thousands of feet above the Earth and then drift down to islands where they can sprout and develop. Birds also carry seeds to islands; as birds move over open stretches of water, they can serve as the transportation system to spread seeds from place to place.

This passage discusses the ways that plant life can develop on islands.

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- _____
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Answer Choices (choose 3 to complete the chart)

(1) Some seeds are able to float great distances in the air.

(2) Some plant life existed before islands were cut off from larger bodies of land.

(3) Some islands have many different varieties of plants.

(4) Birds sometimes carry seeds to islands.

(5) Some islands were created when rising water cut them off from larger bodies of land.

(6) Some plant seeds are carried to islands by the wind.

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LIVEWORKSHEETS

Passage 2

Paragraph	**Ben and Jerry**
1	All successful businesses are not established and run in the same way, with formal business plans, traditional organizational structures, and a strong focus on profits. Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield, the entrepreneurs responsible for the highly successful ice cream business that bears their names, were businessmen with a rather unconventional approach.
2	They were rather unconventional from the start, not choosing to begin their careers by attending one of the elite business schools but instead choosing to take a five-dollar correspondence course from Pennsylvania State University. They had little financial backing to start their business, so they had to cut corners wherever they could; the only location they could afford for the startup of their business was a gas station that they converted to ice cream production. Though this start-up was rather unconventional, they were strongly committed to creating the best ice cream possible, and this commitment to the quality of their product eventually led to considerable success.
3	Even though they became extremely successful, they did not convert to a more conventional style of doing business. In an era where companies were measured on every penny of profit that they managed to squeeze out, Ben and Jerry had a strong belief that business should give back to the community; thus, they donated 7.5 percent of their pretax profit to social causes that they believed in. They also lacked the emphasis on executive salary and benefits packages that so preoccupy other corporations, opting instead for a five-to-one policy in which the salary of the employee receiving the highest pay could never be more than five times the salary of the employee receiving the lowest pay.

This passage discusses ben and Jerry's unconventional company.

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- _____
- _____

Answer Choices (choose 3 to complete the chart)

(1) They each had a personal commitment to social causes.

(2) They began their business with little background and investment.

(3) They believed strongly in producing a very high-quality product.

(4) They had a salary structure that limits the salaries of high-level executives.

(5) They set aside a noteworthy portion of their profits for social causes.

(6) They borrowed several thousand dollars from friends to start their business.

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LIVEWORKSHEETS

Passage 3

Paragraph	The Bald Eagle
1	When the bald eagle became the national symbol of the United States in 1782, soon after the country was born, it is estimated that there were as many as 75,000 nesting pairs in North America. By the early 1960s, however, the number of nesting pairs had been reduced to only around 450.
2	The demise of the bald eagle is generally attributed to the effects of the pesticide DDT (dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane). This pesticide was used to kill insects harmful to agriculture, thereby increasing agricultural production. One unintended negative result of the use of DDT was that, while it did get rid of the undesirable insects, it also made its way along the food chain into fish, a favorite food source of the bald eagle.
3	The bald eagle is now protected by federal laws. It was originally protected by the Bald Eagle Act of 1940 and later by the Endangered Species Act of 1973. However, it is not just the laws directly related to endangered species that aided in the resurgence of the bald eagle; its resurgence has also been widely attributed to the banning of DDT in 1972. Today there are more than 5,000 pairs of bald eagles, a tenfold increase over the low point of 450, and the bird was removed from the list of endangered species in July, 1999.

This passage discusses radical shifts in population that the bald eagle has undergone.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Answer Choices (choose 4 to complete the chart)

(1) The numbers of bald eagles were greatly reduced, at least in part because of a pesticide

(2) The legislation has had a positive effect on the number of bald eagles.

(3) The bald eagle was named as the national symbol of the United States in the late 18th century.

(4) Early in the history of the U.S., there were huge numbers of bald eagles.

(5) Two different pieces of legislation that affected the bald eagle were enacted 33 years apart.

(6) The federal government enacted legislation specifically designed to protect the bald eagle as well as to outlaw the pesticide DDT.

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Passage 4

Paragraph

Modernism in Art

1 A proliferation of varying styles characterized the world of American art and architecture in the period between 1880 and the outbreak of World War II in 1939. In spite of the fact that these various styles often had little in common with each other, they are traditionally clustered under the label of **modernism**. It is thus rather difficult to give a precise definition of modernism, one that encompasses all the characteristics of the artists and architects who are commonly grouped under this label. What modernists do have in common is that their work contains at least one of two characteristics of modernism.

2 One fundamental characteristic of modernism is a demonstration of progressive innovation. In general, a modernist is someone who tries to develop an individual style by adding to or improving upon the style of immediate predecessors. The modernist belief was in starting with the ideas of the mainstream movement and then innovating from the mainstream to improve upon the ideas of predecessors rather than in breaking away from the mainstream to create something entirely new. However, because there were varying ideas on what constituted the mainstream and because the potential innovations emanating from the mainstream were infinite, modernism under this definition could take a myriad of directions.

3 A second fundamental characteristic of modernism was the belief that art could and should reflect the reality of modern life and would not, for example, focus on the lives of society's most privileged members or on otherworld entities such as angels and sprites. Though there was agreement among modernists as to the need for art to reflect modern life, there was far less agreement on what actually constituted modern life. Thus, modern artists and architects reflect very different aspects of modern life in their works.

Though modernism in art shares certain characteristics, these characteristics can be difficult to define precisely

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Answer Choices (choose 4 to complete the chart)

(1) A reflection of the reality of modern life is one aspect of modernism.

(2) There is no universal agreement as to exactly what makes up modern life.

(3) Modernism is a highly individualistic style of art.

(4) Modernism in art must improve upon the style of the mainstream.

(5) There were many different styles of American art in the early 20th century.

(6) It can be difficult to define what the mainstream is.

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LIVEWORKSHEETS

Skill # 10 > Complete schematic tables. Study each passage and match the answer choice to its appropriate position in the table. Some answer choices DO NOT belong in the table because they express ideas that are not presented or are minor ideas in the passage.

Passage 1

Paragraph	**Sand Dunes**
1	Sandy deserts contain enormous volumes of sand eroded from mountains and carried to the deserts by wind or water. The huge quantities of sand that make up sandy deserts are blown about into dunes of various shapes.
2	Ridge dunes form where there are large amounts of sand, generally in the interiors of deserts, and winds blow in one direction. Under these conditions, parallel ridges of sand, known as transverse dunes, form at right angles to the wind.
3	When the direction of the wind changes so that it comes from different directions, star-shaped dunes form from the massive amounts of sand in desert interiors. Star-shaped dunes are relatively stable dunes that reach incredible heights, up to 80 meters high in some deserts, and are quite common in massive deserts such as the Sahara.
4	Crescent dunes form on the edges of deserts where there is less sand and where the winds blow mainly in one direction. These dunes, which are also known as barchan dunes are less stable than star-shaped dunes and can shift as much as 20 meters per year as winds blow over the outer curves of the crescent in the direction of the pointed ends.

Amount of Sand

- _____
- _____

Direction of the wind

- _____
- _____

Answer Choices (choose 4 to complete the chart)

(1) Ridge and crescent dunes form where the winds blow from one direction.

(2) Crescent dunes are also known as barchan dunes.

(3) Star-shaped dunes form where the winds blow from different directions.

(4) Transverse dunes are created parallel to the wind.

(5) Ridge and star dunes form where there is a lot of sand.

(6) Star-shaped dunes are more stable than crescent dunes.

(7) Crescent dunes form where there is less sand.

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Passage 2

Paragraph	A Surprising Connection
1	It can be quite surprising to understand that the words *buckaroo* and *vaccine* are actually derived from the same source inasmuch as a buckaroo is a casual way of identifying a cowboy and a vaccine is a substance that can be used to prevent disease.
2	The word *buckaroo* might not be easily recognizable at first as a borrowing into English of the Spanish word *vaquero,* which in Spanish refers to a cowboy. The initial letter *v* in Spanish is pronounced with two lips rather than the pronunciation with the upper front teeth and lower lip of an English *v* and can sound more like the letter *b* than the letter *v* to an English speaker; thus, the English variation of the Spanish word begins with a *b* rather than a *v.* The English word also begins with the syllable *buck,* which is somewhat similar in sound to the first syllable of the Spanish word and is also an easily identifiable word itself in English.
3	The Spanish word *vaquero* comes from *vacca,* the Latin word for "cow." Another word from the same Latin source is *vaccine.* In the late eighteenth century, the English physician Edward Jenner discovered that inoculation with a form of cowpox was effective in preventing the dreaded disease smallpox. French chemist Louis Pasteur, who was himself experimenting with a number of varieties of inoculation, used the word *vaccination* for preventative inoculation in general and the word *vaccine* for the substance inoculated in honor of Jenner's earlier contribution to the development of vaccines.

buckaroo and vaquero

- _____
- _____

buckaroo and vaccine

- _____
- _____

vacca and vaccine

- _____
- _____

Answer Choices (choose 6 to complete the chart)

(1) are from different languages

(2) have the same meaning

(3) are both Spanish words

(4) refer to different things

(5) are found in the same language

(6) have meanings referring to medicine

(7) are used in different languages

(8) have different meanings

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Passage 3

Paragraph	Carnivorous Plants
1	Unlike the majority of plants that create their nourishment from sunlight, such as the flowering hyacinth or the leafy choleus or the garden-variety dandelion, a limited number of plants are able to enhance their diet by fortifying it with insects and other small animals to supplement the food that they have produced from sunlight. These carnivorous plants can be categorized as those without moving traps that lure their intended victims and then trap them on a sticky surface or drown them in a pool of fluid and those with active traps—moving parts that ensnare prey.
2	Butterworts are harmless-looking plants with circles of flat and sticky leaves. If an insect is unfortunate enough to land on one of the seemingly inviting leaves, it sticks to the surface of the leaf and eventually dies and is digested by the plant.
3	The pitcher plant is a plant that is shaped like a pitcher and has fluid at the bottom. Insects are attracted to the pitcher plant by a nectar around the rim of the pitcher opening; when an insect lands on the rim, it cannot maintain its balance on the slippery surface of the rim and falls into the opening and drowns in the fluid.
4	Bladderworts are water plants with traps on their leaves that resemble tiny bubbles. A small animal may swim by the plant, totally oblivious to the danger posed by the harmless-looking bladderwort. If the small animal comes too close to the plant, the bubbles open without warning and the animal is pulled inside the plant and digested.
5	Probably the best known of the carnivorous plants is the Venus flytrap. This plant features unusual leaf tips that look like an inviting place for an insect to rest and offers the enticement of promised food. If an unwary ladybug or dragonfly settles on the leaves of the Venus flytrap, the two leaves suddenly snap shut, trapping the insect and creating a delicious meal for the plant.

Those with active traps

- _____
- _____

Those with inactive traps

- _____
- _____

Answer Choices (choose 4 to complete the chart)

(1) Butterworts

(2) Bladderworts

(3) Dragonflies

(4) Pitcher plants

(5) Venus flytraps

(6) Dandelions

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Passage 4

Paragraph	William Faulkner
1	Author William Faulkner is today recognized as one of America's greatest writers on the basis of a body of novels that so convincingly portray the culture of the South in the years following the Civil War, with its citizens overcome by grief and defeat and trying to cling to old values while struggling to take their place in a changing world. The acclaim that today is Faulkner's, however, was slow in coming.
2	Though Faulkner was praised by some critics and reviewers during the first part of his career, his novels did not sell well and he was considered a fairly marginal author. For the first few decades of his career, he made his living writing magazine articles and working as a screenwriter rather than as a novelist. Throughout this period, he continued to write, though his novels, sometimes noted for the stirring portrait that they presented of life in the post-Civil War South, were generally relegated to the category of strictly regional writing and were not widely appreciated.
3	Beginning in 1946, Faulkner's career took an unexpected and dramatic turn as Faulkner came to be recognized as considerably more than a regional writer. *The Portable Faulkner* was published in that year by Viking Press; two years later he was elected to the prestigious National Academy of Arts and Letters; he was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1949. Over the next decade, his work was recognized in various ways, including a National Book Award and two Pulitzer Prizes, and he became a novelist in residence at the University of Virginia. His success led to a degree of affluence that enabled him to take up the life of a southern gentleman, including horseback riding and fox hunting. Ironically, he died as a result of an accident related to these gentlemanly pursuits, succumbing as a result of injuries suffered during a fall from a horse.

Faulkner in the first phase of his career

- _____
- _____
- _____

Faulkner in the second phase of his career

- _____
- _____

Answer Choices (choose 5 to complete the chart)

(1) was considered one of the greatest writers.

(2) received a small amount of critical acclaim.

(3) died in a horseback-riding incident.

(4) received numerous awards and acclaim.

(5) was considered merely a regional writer.

(6) wrote novels about American regions.

(7) made his living as a novelist.

(8) made his living writing other than novels.

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