

Read the passages and do the exercises that follow them:

• **Passage 1:**

Most of the women in the orchestra wore conventional black skirts and white shirts during concerts and had their hair neatly pulled back. Robin, with her brightly colored clothing and unusual hairstyles, was considered quite eccentric.

What is the meaning of the underlined word *eccentric* as it is used in the sentence?

a. unconventional b. joyful c. unreliable d. proud

• **Passage 2:**

In prolonged space flight, besides the obvious hazards of meteors, rocky debris, and radiation, astronauts will have to deal with muscle atrophy brought on by weightlessness; therefore, when they return to Earth, they face a protracted period of weight training to rebuild their strength.

What is the most likely meaning of the underlined word *debris* as it is used in this passage?

a. fragments b. decay c. bacteria d. alien life

The underlined word *atrophy*, as used in the paragraph, most nearly means

a. pain b. wasting c. weakening d. cramping

• **Passage 3:**

Donna's memo caused much contention around the office last week. She may have meant well, but her usually caustic tone offended almost everybody. She has become a consistent nuisance at work, and probably should be fired.

The underlined word *caustic*, as used in this passage, most nearly means

a. cause and effect b. reoccurring c. biting d. unclear

What is the meaning of the underlined word *contention* as it is used in this passage?

a. theorizing b. discord c. gossip d. calm