

TOEFL EXERCISE 1: Study each of the passages, and choose the best answers to the questions that follow. In this exercise, each paragraph is followed by *two* main idea, topic, or title questions so that you can practice this type of question. On the TOEFL test, one passage would probably not have two such questions because they are so similar.

PASSAGE ONE (Questions 1–2)

Most of the ice on the Earth, close to 90 percent of it, is covering the surface of the continent Antarctica. It does not snow very much in Antarctica, but whatever snow does fall remains and grows deeper and deeper. In some areas of Antarctica, the ice has perhaps been around for as much as a million years and now is more than two miles deep.

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| 1. The main idea of the passage is that | 2. The best title for the passage is |
| (A) the Earth is a cold planet | (A) Snowfall in Antarctica |
| (B) most of the Earth's ice is found in Antarctica | (B) The Icy Earth |
| (C) it snows more in Antarctica than in any other place on Earth | (C) The Cold, Cold Snow |
| (D) Antarctica is only two miles wide but is 90 percent ice | (D) The Causes of Antarctica's Ice Pack |

PASSAGE TWO (Questions 3–4)

Line The extremely hot and humid weather that occurs in the United States in July and
(5) August is commonly called the “dog days” of summer. This name comes from the star Sirius, which is known as the Dog Star. Sirius is the brightest visible star, and in the hot summer months it rises in the east at approximately the same time as the Sun. As ancient people saw this star rising with the Sun when the weather was at its hottest, they believed that Sirius was the cause of the additional heat; they believed that this bright star added its heat to the heat of the Sun, and these two together made summer weather so unbearably hot.

3. The topic of this passage is

- (A) how dogs like to play during the summer
- (B) the causes of hot and humid weather
- (C) why the hot summer days are known as the “dog days”
- (D) the days that dogs prefer

4. The main idea of this passage is that

- (A) the name for the summer days came from Sirius, the Dog Star
- (B) dogs generally prefer hot summer days
- (C) the hottest days occur in the summer because of the movements of the Sun and stars
- (D) Sirius rises at almost the same time as the Sun during the summer months

PASSAGE THREE (Questions 5–6)

Line The term “primitive art” has been used in a variety of ways to describe works and
(5) styles of art. One way that this term has been used is to describe the early period within
the development of a certain style of art. Another way that this term has been used is to
describe artists who have received little professional training and who demonstrate a
nontraditional naivete in their work.

(10) A wonderful example of this second type of primitive artist is Grandma Moses, who
spent all her life living on a farm and working at tasks normally associated with farm
life. She did not begin painting until she reached the age of seventy-six, when she
switched to painting from embroidery because the arthritis in her hands made
embroidery too difficult. Totally without formal education in art, she began creating
panoramic images of everyday life on the farm that have achieved international fame.

5. The subject of this passage is

- (A) an example of one of the types of primitive art
- (B) Grandma Moses’s life on the farm
- (C) how primitive art differs from formal art
- (D) Grandma Moses’s primitive lifestyle

6. Which of the following best expresses the main idea of the passage?

- (A) Grandma Moses spent her life on a farm.
- (B) Art critics cannot come to any agreement on a definition of primitive art.
- (C) Grandma Moses is one type of primitive artist because of her lack of formal training.
- (D) Many artists receive little professional training.