Reading Comprehension

Practice Test, Part A

TEXT 1: Cooking in the Classroom

Task: Read the text. Answer 5 multiple-choice questions (A–D). Only one answer is correct.

Wrong answers often use words from the text but change the meaning. The correct answer is usually a paraphrase.

Read the full text:

1

The workplace of professional chef Catherine Pressler is a former storage room at Hunters Woods Elementary School. Outside Room 9, a sign proclaims "Chef Pressler, Food FUNdamentals." This is where students come to take part in a cooking-based course which began several years ago, when Pressler was looking for a way to be active in her children's school. Her kids aren't in elementary school anymore, but Pressler has stayed. Named PTA Volunteer of the Year, she is the creator of a highly detailed and organised series of classes for kindergarten through sixth grade that adds to themes from daily course work.

2

How is cooking connected with math, science or history? Just look. Kindergartners whip up a recipe inspired by a popular children's tale "Stone Soup"; as they handle the ingredients, they learn about geometric shapes, sorting, identification of fruits and vegetables, and the five senses. Lessons become more complex for the older kids. Fourth-graders prepare a grand menu from Colonial Virginia to review the state's history, culture and natural resources.

3

Hunters Woods Principal Stephen Hockett says: "Everything she does is amazing. To have children use their thinking skills and make connections to the real world is incredible. When kids are having a good time is when they learn the most." Pressler spends up to 10 hours a week preparing lessons, buying supplies and teaching. She volunteers her time; the supply budget comes from student fees, the PTA and sometimes her own pocket. The programme has grown so large that Pressler is looking for grants and other sources of income.

4

You have to see Pressler in action to truly understand the scope of her programme and her dedication to the kids. On a spring afternoon in Room 9, third-grade students arrive to find gleaming stainless-steel pasta machines and other carefully organised supplies waiting on clean tabletops. Pressler isn't two minutes into the lesson before she gives the first hints that the programme is about a lot more than cooking.

5

Pressler manages to talk without stopping, but without losing her young audience. Their eyes follow her as she springs around the room, discussing history and geography, pulling down a world map here and pointing to an architectural poster there. Pulling out packages of pasta, she wows the kids with the variety of ingredients used to make different kinds of

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it, including soy, buckwheat, rice, corn and rye. Soon the class is shrieking with delight as they run dough through pasta machines and measure it for the longest-noodle contest.

6

Pressler is a role model with a diverse background. "I went to school in architecture and interior design. I'd always loved science, so then I went to graduate school in textile chemistry. Then I said, 'I'm going to chef school now, as a hobby.' And I found that's where my heart was. I worked as a pastry chef for a number of years and really loved that." She missed interacting with more people, however.

7

Pressler says she dreams of expanding the programme to reach more students at other schools, or taking her programme to television. Her recipe for success is to integrate learning with life, instill enthusiasm for learning in the children, and inspire them to achieve their heart's desire.

Questions

Question 1 (based on par.1)

"PTA Volunteer of the Year" — is this an award = public recognition? She created the course herself (not PTA's request). "Cooking-based course" ≠ "cooking meals". Her kids didn't give her the idea.

Which is TRUE of Pressler according to par.1?

- **A** Pressler used to cook meals for elementary school pupils.
- **B** Pressler started her food-based course at the PTA's request.
- **C** Pressler's work at school earned her public recognition.
- **D** Pressler's kids gave her the idea of "Food FUNdamentals."

Your answer: _____

Question 2 (based on par.2)

Kids "handle ingredients", "whip up a recipe" = hands-on, practical. Multiple age groups (kindergartners + fourth-graders). No mention of price in this paragraph.

What can be inferred from par.2?

- **A** It teaches children practical skills.
- **B** It requires quick thinking.
- **C** It is provided free of charge.
- **D** It is arranged for one age group.

Your answer: _____

Question 3 (based on par.3)

"She volunteers her time" = not paid. Money comes from fees, PTA, her own pocket. "Looking for grants" = she needs more FUNDING. Grant = money for a purpose.

What problems does Pressler face?

- **A** creating the menu for pupils
- **B** searching for additional financing
- **C** getting the necessary ingredients
- **D** clearing up the mess after classes

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Your answer: _____

Question 4 (based on par.4–5)

This question asks what is NOT TRUE — three options ARE true!
"Eyes follow her" = captures attention (TRUE). "Longest-noodle contest" = competition (TRUE). History + geography + cooking = interdisciplinary (TRUE). "Room 9", "tabletops" = indoors, NOT outdoors.

Which is NOT TRUE of her teaching techniques?

- **A** She captures students' attention.
- **B** She holds competitions in class.
- **C** She applies an interdisciplinary approach.
- **D** She conducts her lessons outdoors.

Your answer: _____

Question 5 (based on par.7)

"Dreams of expanding" = FUTURE plans. "More students + other schools + TV" = wider audience. No mention of bakery, studying, or developing recipes.

What are Pressler's plans for the future?

- **A** to open her own bakery
- **B** to continue her education
- **C** to widen her audience
- **D** to develop her own recipes

Your answer: _____

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