

Name _____
Date _____

• Reading Comprehension Assessment

Directions: Read the passage. Then answer the questions below.

The Incredible Machine

Everyone has a favorite attraction at an amusement park, and I am no different. However, unlike most people who seem to prefer rollercoasters, my favorite ride is a little more gentle. Every time I go to Coney Island, Navy Pier, or the Santa Monica Pier, I absolutely have to ride the Ferris wheel.

The Ferris wheel is simple and yet also quite complex. That is, riding it is easy, but how it works is complicated. A series of carts are attached to a wheel, which is attached to a rim. That rim rotates vertically around an axis, and gravity keeps the carts upright. As simple as the ride seems, only advanced engineers can make safe and fun Ferris wheels.



What It Lacks in Thrills...

While the Ferris wheel is not as thrilling as a rollercoaster, it is still very exciting. The fact of being high in the air makes it so much more entertaining than a lot of rides. I mean, how often do you hang from that high up in daily life?

Nevertheless, I have to admit, I don't seek Ferris wheels out because of their excitement. Rather, I find them very relaxing. At the top of the Ferris wheel, you get beautiful sights of the park. You also get a sense of calm that you don't get in the hustle and bustle of the park below.

Additionally, Ferris wheels are also gorgeous to look at when they are lit up at night. In fact, the original Ferris wheel was designed as much to be seen as to be ridden.

It Happened at the World's Fair

The first Ferris wheel was made by and named after George Washington Gale Ferris, Jr. He designed it for the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. It was the tallest attraction there, standing 264 feet high.

However, visitors to the fair were impressed by the size of the ride as well as the mechanics of it. In 1893, anything that was not turned by hand was considered a sight to see. And the wheel, which was a machine, was truly incredible to see. Further, as one visitor put it, the wheel was amazing because it seemed to be missing support. That is, it did not look like it could stand on its own. And yet it did and even rotated!

They Keep Reaching Higher and Higher

Ferris wheel technology has only improved since then. Most of today's Ferris wheels are much larger than that first one. The largest in the world is the "Singapore Flyer," which stands slightly taller than twice what Ferris's did!

Today, the Ferris wheel is the most common amusement park ride. But that does not mean you should take them for granted. Instead, be thankful for Ferris' invention. The next time you're at an amusement park, don't just look up at the impressive wheel in the sky on your way to a newer attraction. Take it for a spin!

- 1) As used in paragraph 1, the word **attraction** most nearly means
 - A. sense
 - B. park
 - C. ride
 - D. vision
 - 2) It can be understood that Coney Island, Navy Pier, and the Santa Monica Pier are all examples of
 - A. amusement parks
 - B. Ferris wheels
 - C. vacation spots
 - D. boat docks
 - 3) As used in paragraph 2, which is the best antonym for **complex**?
 - A. impressive
 - B. beautiful
 - C. exciting
 - D. simple
 - 4) What does the author like best about Ferris wheels?
 - A. the impressive engineering and beauty of them
 - B. the excitement and thrills they guarantee
 - C. the beautiful sights and relaxation they allow
 - D. the fact that most amusement parks have one
 - 5) According to the passage, the Ferris wheel was originally designed for
 - A. Coney Island
 - B. the world's fair
 - C. Disneyworld
 - D. Singapore
 - 6) This passage was most likely written to
 - A. describe the author's favorite amusement park rides
 - B. explain the original design of Ferris wheels and how they work today
 - C. describe the history of Ferris wheels and why they are so popular
 - D. explain the history of Ferris wheels and why the author likes them
 - 7) Using information in the passage, the reader can understand that the tallest Ferris wheel in the world is
 - A. under 250 feet tall
 - B. between 250 and 500 feet tall
 - C. between 500 and 750 feet tall
 - D. over 750 feet tall
 - 8) In paragraph 2, the narrator says, "As simple as the ride seems, only advanced engineers can make safe and fun Ferris wheels." Can you think of any other machines that seem simple but actually are not? List at least two and explain why they are not actually simple.
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- 9) In paragraph 3, the narrator says, " While the Ferris wheel is not as thrilling as a rollercoaster, it is still very exciting ." Can you think of any other machines that are not "thrilling" but still "exciting"?

- 10) In the final section of the passage, we learn how Ferris wheels "keep reaching higher and higher." This seems to be a common trend among the developers of modern technology. What makes us want to continually strive to create something bigger and better? Is this good? Discuss.

[illegible]

1) C

Question Type: Vocabulary
attraction (*noun*): a thing or place that draws visitors by providing something fun.

In the first paragraph, the author describes a person's "favorite attraction at an amusement park." He or she says that some "prefer rollercoasters" but that his or her "favorite ride" is the Ferris wheel. This suggests that an attraction is a type of ride, so choice (C) is correct. Though attraction can involve senses, the passage does not suggest that an attraction is a type of sense. One cannot really have a "favorite sense at an amusement park." Choice (A) is not correct because of this. The passage suggests that an amusement park has attractions. However, it does not suggest that an attraction is actually a park. After all, one cannot really have a "favorite park at an amusement park." Choice (B) is not correct because of this. Though attraction often involves vision, the passage does not suggest that an attraction is a form of vision. Choice (D) is not correct because of this.

2) A

Question Type: Inference

In the first paragraph, the author describes rides at amusement parks. He or she writes that his or her "favorite ride is a little more gentle." Then, the author says that he or she has to ride the Ferris wheel whenever he or she goes to Coney Island, Navy Pier, or the Santa Monica Pier. This suggests that each of these places is an amusement park that contains a Ferris wheel. Because of this, choice (A) is correct. Coney Island is an amusement park in Brooklyn, NY; Navy Pier is located in Chicago, IL; and the Santa Monica Pier is an amusement park near Los Angeles, CA. The author suggests that he or she has to ride the Ferris wheel at Coney Island, Navy Pier, and the Santa Monica Pier. This does not mean that those places are actually Ferris wheels. Instead, it means that they have Ferris wheels. Because of this, choice (B) is not correct. The author suggests that Coney Island, Navy Pier, and the Santa Monica Pier are places he or she visits. That does not mean they are places everyone goes on vacation though. The passage does not suggest that they are vacation spots then. Instead, it only suggests they are places that have Ferris wheels. Because of this, choice (C) is not correct. Though an island and piers could possibly dock boats, the author does not suggest that any of the places mentioned in the question actually do so. Instead, he or she suggests that they are places containing Ferris wheels. Because of this, choice (D) is not correct.

3) D

Question Type: Vocabulary
complex (*adjective*): involving many different and confusing parts.

An antonym is a word that has the opposite meaning of another word. This question asks for the antonym of complex. The author says Ferris wheels are both "simple and yet also quite complex." The use of "yet" suggests that the terms being used are opposites. Because of this, choice (D) is correct. Simple, which means not complicated or complex, is the antonym for complex. The author describes Ferris wheels as impressive, but he or she does not suggest that being impressive is the opposite of being complex. In fact, the author describes Ferris wheels as impressive in a different part of the passage. The opposite of impressive is actually ordinary. Because of this, choice (A) is not correct. The author describes Ferris wheels as beautiful, but he or she does not suggest that being beautiful is the opposite of being complex. In fact, the author describes Ferris wheels as beautiful in a different part of the passage. The opposite of beautiful is actually ugly. Because of this, choice (B) is not correct. The author describes Ferris wheels as not being that exciting, but he or she does not suggest that being exciting is the opposite of being complex. The opposite of exciting is actually dull. Because of this, choice (C) is not correct.

4) C

Question Type: Detail

The author explains what he or she likes best about Ferris wheels in the fourth paragraph. He or she writes, "I find them very relaxing" because of the "beautiful sights of the park" one gets at the top of the ride. The thing he or she likes best about Ferris wheels, then, is the beautiful sights and relaxation they allow. Because of this, choice (C) is correct. The author does describe the impressive engineering and beauty of Ferris wheels. However, he or she does not say those are his favorite things about the rides. Instead, in paragraph 4, the author explains the reason he or she seeks Ferris wheels out: because he or she finds them "very relaxing." Because of this, choice (A) is not correct. In fact, the author suggests that Ferris wheels are not that exciting. He or she writes that a Ferris wheel is "not as thrilling as a roller coaster." Instead, in paragraph 4, the author explains the reason he or she seeks Ferris wheels out: because he or she finds them "very relaxing." Because of this, choice (B) is not correct. Though the author ends the passage by saying that most amusement parks have a Ferris wheel, he or she does not say that he likes Ferris wheels because of this. Instead, in paragraph 4, the author explains the reason he or she seeks Ferris wheels out: because he or she finds them "very relaxing." Because of this, choice (D) is not correct.

5) B

Question Type: Detail

In the sixth paragraph (below the caption It Happened at the World's Fair), the author writes about the first Ferris wheel. He or she states that George Washington Gale Ferris, Jr. "designed it for the Chicago World's Fair in 1893." The correct answer is (B), then. Though the author suggests that Coney Island has a Ferris wheel, he or she does not suggest that the first one was built there. Because of this, choice (A) is not correct. The passage never mentions Disneyland. It does, however, mention the first Ferris wheel. Because of this, choice (C) is not correct. The author writes that the largest Ferris wheel in the world is in Singapore. He or she does not suggest that that Ferris wheel was the first one built, though. Because of this, choice (D) is not correct.

6) D

Question Type: Global

The passage describes the fact that the author's favorite amusement park ride is the Ferris wheel. From there, he or she describes what they are and why he or she likes them. Toward the end of the passage, the author traces their history into the present. It follows that the purpose of the passage was most likely to do all of these things. Because of this, choice (D) is correct. The author wrote the passage to explain the history of Ferris wheels and why the author likes them. The passage does describe the author's favorite amusement park ride, the Ferris wheel, but it does not describe any of his or her other favorite rides. This means that the

passage was probably not written to describe his or her favorite rides so much as his or her favorite ride overall. Because of this, choice (A) is not correct. The author does partially explain how Ferris wheels work and the history of the ride. However, he or she does not explain the original design in any detail. Additionally, he or she seems more focused on explaining why he or she likes Ferris wheels so much. Because of this, choice (B) is not correct. The author does describe the history of Ferris wheels. However, he or she only explains why he or she likes Ferris wheels personally, not why others do or do not like them. Because of this, choice (C) is not correct.

7) C

Question Type: Inference

The author writes in the second-to-last paragraph that the tallest Ferris wheel in the world "is the 'Singapore Flyer,' which stands slightly taller than twice what Ferris's did!" Ferris's wheel stood 264 feet tall, according to the sixth paragraph. Twice 264 is 528 feet. (This could be found by rounding too: 264 is just a little over 250, and twice 250 is 500.) Because of this, choice (C) is correct: 500 (or slightly more) feet is between 500 and 750 feet tall. The tallest Ferris wheel is "just under twice as tall as Ferris's." Since Ferris's was 264 feet tall, the tallest one would have to be more than 250 feet tall, as Ferris's was too. Because of this, choice (A) is not correct. Ferris's wheel was 264 feet tall, making it between 250 and 500 feet tall. However, the tallest Ferris wheel in the world "actually stands just under twice as tall as Ferris's did." This means that the tallest one must be taller than 500 feet. Because of this, choice (B) is not correct. To be over 750 feet tall, the tallest Ferris wheel would have to be three times as high as Ferris's wheel, not twice as tall. Because of this, choice (D) is not correct.