A Unicorn IN THE WATER

STAGE 3

Read these statements before you read the passage. Think about them while you read. Circle T (true) or F (false).

According to the passage:

1 the unicorn was the only mythical beast in the Middle Ages.	T	F
2 there is a narwahl on the English coat of arms.	T	F
3 very few horned beasts have a single horn.	T	F
4 walruses have a single curved horn, or tusk.	T	F
5 the passage mentions only one animal with a single horn.	T	F
6 man discovered the narwahl about 1,000 years ago.	T	F
7 the narwahl tusk was used for health reasons.	T	F
8 people outside Europe continued to revere the narwahl tusk after the 18th century.	T	F



Europe in the Middle Ages was full of stories of strange and mythical beasts, one of the most famous of which was the unicorn. Even the royal coat of arms of England contains a unicorn! Because it was mythical, the unicorn was pictured in different ways, though usually as a deer-like or horse-like animal and always, as its name implies, with a single horn coming out of his head.

In nature, a single horn is very unusual and a straight horn is even rarer. Horns and tusks in general are, of course, quite common, but they are usually in pairs – elephants, antelopes and walruses are obvious examples – and they are nearly always curved. This is true, moreover, in the cases of single horns, such as some types of rhinoceros.

Myths, however, usually have some basis in the real world. As a result, it is not completely surprising that an animal does exist which has a long, straight horn, or tusk. Nevertheless, it certainly does not look anything like our picture of a unicorn. It is, in fact, a whale!

Perhaps it seems surprising to connect this whale – the narwahl – with a unicorn, but the narwahl was discovered around Greenland by Scandinavian sailors around the year 1000 and, therefore, early enough to be the basis for some unicorn myths. We know that after its discovery, the facts about the narwahl were kept secret. Furthermore, we know that narwahl tusks (between two and three meters long) were sold as unicorn horns in Europe for hundreds of years.

People attributed extraordinary properties to these "unicorn" horns (especially as protection against heart disease) and naturally it was easier for people to believe that the horn had magical qualities if they could believe it came from a magic beast. If people had realized that the expensive horn came from a whale, they would probably not have paid so much, and, consequently, the fishermen and merchants kept the source of their "unicorn" horns secret.

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Eventually, the secret was revealed, and by the late 17th century belief in the unicorn's magic was practically a thing of the past in Europe. In spite of this, its fame and reputation continued in Russia, the Middle East and the Orient, and in Japan, narwahl ivory was still used to make the wonder drug "ikkaku" as recently as the 1950s.

Thus, the "unicorn" acquired some of the magical properties it was supposed to offer to those who bought its horn: it became very famous, it made many people rich and it was sought after for hundreds of years. 30

STRATEGY: Cohesion IV (linking words, continued)

1 In the space beside each statement, write A, B, or C according to whether the word in turquoise means and/also (A), but (B) or so (C).

☐ 1 Both São Paulo and Buenos Aires are enormous metropolises, though their populations are smaller than that of Mexico City.

☐ 2 Soybeans have many nutritional advantages and, moreover, they are very economical to grow.

☐ 3 The Wright Brothers are generally considered to be the first aviators. Nevertheless, this opinion is not universal and claims are made for other aviators, including the Brazilian Santos Dumont.

☐ 4 The "San Andreas Fault" earthquake zone runs through California. As a result, people in the States are concerned about tremors.

☐ 5 Elephants, rhinos and hippos are all enormous mammals. However, a marine mammal, the blue whale, is as big as twenty elephants!

☐ 6 Michael Jordan is probably the greatest professional ever to play basketball. Furthermore, he is probably the richest.

☐ 7 Disney World, in Orlando, is the world's most popular tourist attraction. Consequently, it exerts an enormous effect on the economy of central Florida.

☐ 8 Milk is an excellent source of vitamins and minerals. In spite of this, whole milk may cause problems because of its fat content.

☐ 9 Brazil won the World Cup in 1994 and thus became the first team to win for a fourth time.

☐ 10 Air travel has become relatively cheaper, and, therefore, more popular in most parts of the world.

2 Now list the turquoise words (from sentences 1-10 above) under the following headings:

But	And/also	So
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

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3 Look at the following words in *A Unicorn in the Water* and mark them A, B or C according to whether they are equivalent to and/also (A), but (B) or so (C).

1 though	line 4	☐
2 moreover	line 10	☐
3 however	line 12	☐
4 as a result	line 12	☐
5 nevertheless	line 14	☐
6 therefore	line 17	☐
7 furthermore	line 19	☐
8 consequently	line 24	☐
9 in spite of this	line 27	☐
10 thus	line 30	☐

4 Complete the following using the words in the boxes.

1 Most people do not believe in unicorns today _____ many people certainly did believe in them in the 14th century. _____ they believed in a series of other magical beasts and _____ it was not difficult for merchants to play tricks on them.

- consequently
- moreover
- though

2 People no longer believe in the magic properties of unicorn horns. _____, the narwahl's tusks are still valuable today because of their ivory and _____ Eskimos continue to hunt narwahls.

- nevertheless
- therefore

3 Too many narwahls are being killed and, _____, conservation measures are being introduced. _____, these measures are difficult to enforce because the narwahl's habitat is the isolated ocean between Baffin Bay and Greenland.

- as a result
- however

4 In the Middle Ages many people thought unicorns existed. _____, they thought that they knew what a unicorn looked like. _____, no one ever saw a horse with one straight horn. In fact, the unicorn was a whale and not a horse and _____ it was not surprising that unicorn hunters never found them in the mountains or deserts of North Africa!

- thus
- in spite of this
- furthermore

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