

TOEFL EXERCISE 9: Study each of the passages and choose the best answers to the questions that follow.

PASSAGE ONE (Questions 1–5)

Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo was a Portuguese-born explorer who is credited with the exploration of the coast of what is today the state of California. Sketchy military records from the period show that early in his career he served with the Spanish army from 1520 to 1524 in Spain's quest for subjugation of the people in what are today Cuba, Mexico, and Guatemala. Little is known of his activities over the next decades, but apparently he succeeded in rising up through the ranks of the military; in 1541, he was ordered by Antonio de Mendoza, the Spanish ruler of Mexico, to explore the western coast of North America. Cabrillo set out in June of 1542 in command of two ships, the *San Salvador* and the *Victoria*; he reached San Diego Bay on September 28, 1542, and claimed the terrain for Spain. The peninsula where he landed is today named (5) Cabrillo Point in his honor; the area has been established as a national monument and park, and local residents each year hold a celebration and reenactment of Cabrillo's landing.

From San Diego, Cabrillo continued northward for further exploration of the spectacular California coastline. By November 1542, he had reached as far north as San Francisco Bay, although he missed the entrance of the bay due to a huge storm. Soon after, with the approach of (10) winter, he veered south and turned back to Mexico. He made it as far south as the Channel Islands off the coast of what is today Santa Barbara. Cabrillo, who died on San Miguel Island in the Channel Islands, never made it back to Mexico.

1. The word "subjugation" in line 4 is closest in meaning to
 - (A) religion
 - (B) flag
 - (C) control
 - (D) agreement
2. Look at the word **decades** in paragraph 1. This word is closest in meaning to
 - months
 - centuries
 - long epoch
 - ten-year periods
3. In line 9, the word "terrain" is closest in meaning to
 - (A) land
 - (B) population
 - (C) minerals
 - (D) prosperity
4. Look at the word **spectacular** in paragraph 2. This word is closest in meaning to which of the following?
 - Ruggedly handsome
 - Visually exciting
 - Completely uneven
 - Unendingly boring
5. Look at the word **veered** in paragraph 2. Click on another word in paragraph 2 that is close in meaning to **veered**.

PASSAGE TWO (Questions 6–10)

Checks and balances are an important concept in the formation of the U.S. system of government as presented in the Constitution of the United States. Under this conception of government, each branch of government has built-in checks and limitations placed on it by one or more different branches of government in order to ensure that any one branch is not able to usurp total dominance over the government. Under the Constitution, the United States has a tripartite government, with power divided equally among the branches: the presidency, the legislature, and the judiciary. Each branch is given some authority over the other two branches to balance the power among the three branches. An example of these checks and balances is seen in the steps needed to pass a law. Congress can pass a law with a simple majority, but the president can veto such a law. Congress can then counteract the veto with a two-thirds majority. However, even if Congress passes a law with a simple majority or overrides a presidential veto, the Supreme Court can still declare the law unconstitutional if it finds that the law is contradictory to the guidelines presented in the Constitution.

6. The expression “dominance over” in line 5 is closest in meaning to
 - (A) understanding of
 - (B) dispute over
 - (C) authority over
 - (D) rejection of
7. Look at the word tripartite in the passage. This word suggests that something is
 - divided into three
 - totally democratic
 - powerfully constructed
 - evenly matched
8. The “judiciary” in line 7 is
 - (A) the electorate
 - (B) the authority
 - (C) the legal system
 - (D) the government
9. Look at the word counteract in the passage. This word is closest in meaning to
 - vote for
 - debate
 - surpass
 - work against
10. “Contradictory to” in line 12 is closest in meaning to which of the following expressions?
 - (A) In agreement with
 - (B) Opposite to
 - (C) Supported by
 - (D) Similar to