READING COMPREHENSION

(Independent Practice of Identifying the Main Idea of a Passage)

Name :

Student's Number :

Directions: In this section, you will read 5 passages and answer comprehension questions about each passage. Each one is followed by a number of questions about it. Choose **one** best answer, (A), (B), (C), or (D), to each question.

Question 1

Hay fever is a seasonal allergy to pollens; the term "hay fever," however, is a less than adequate description since an attack of this allergy does not incur fever and since such an attack can be brought on by sources other than hay-producing grasses. Hay fever is generally caused by air-borne pollens, particularly ragweed pollen. The amount of pollen in the air is largely dependent on geographical location, weather, and season. In the eastern section of the United States, for example, there are generally three periods when pollen from various sources can cause intense hay fever suffering: in the springtime months of March and April when pollen from trees is prevalent, in the summer months of June and July when grass pollen fills the air, and at the end of August when ragweed pollen is at its most concentrated levels.

1. Which of the following would be the best title for the passage?

   A. The Relationship between Season and Allergies

   B. Misconceptions and Facts about Hay Fever

   C. Hay Fever in the Eastern United States

   D. How Ragweed Causes Hay Fever

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Question 2

Lincoln's now famous Gettysburg Address was not, on the occasion of its delivery, recognized as the masterpiece that it is today. Lincoln was not even the primary speaker at the ceremonies, held at the height of the Civil War in **1863,** to dedicate the battlefield at Gettysburg. The main speaker was orator Edward Everett, whose two-hour speech was followed by Lincoln's shorter remarks. Lincoln began his small portion of the program with the words that today are immediately recognized by most Americans: "Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." At the time of the speech, little notice was given to what Lincoln had said, and Lincoln considered his appearance at the ceremonies rather unsuccessful. After his speech appeared in print, appreciation for his words began to grow, and today it is recognized as one of the all-time greatest speeches.

2. The main idea of this passage is that

   A. the Gettysburg Address has always been regarded as a masterpiece.

   B. at the time of its delivery the Gettysburg Address was truly appreciated as a masterpiece.

   C. it was not until after 1863 that Lincoln's speech at Gettysburg took its place in history.

   D. Lincoln is better recognized today than he was at the time of his presidency.

Question 3

Manic depression is another psychiatric illness that mainly affects mood. A patient suffering from this disease will alternate between periods of manic excitement and extreme depression, with or without relatively normal periods in between. The changes in mood suffered by a manic-depressive patient go far beyond the day-to-day mood changes experienced by the general population. In the period of manic excitement, the mood elevation can become so intense that it can result in extended insomnia, extreme irritability, and heightened aggressiveness. In the period of depression, which may last for several weeks or months, a patient experiences feelings of general fatigue, uselessness, and hopelessness and, in serious cases, may contemplate suicide.

3. The topic of this passage is

   A. various psychiatric illnesses

   B. how depression affects the mood

   C. the intense period of manic excitement

   D. the mood changes of manic depression

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Question 4

Unlike earlier campaigns, the 1960 presidential campaign featured the politically innovative and highly influential series of televised debates in the contest between the Republicans and the Democrats. Senator John Kennedy established an early lead among the Democratic hopefuls and was nominated on the first ballot at the Los Angeles convention to be the representative of the Democratic party in the presidential elections. Richard Nixon, then serving as vice president of the United States under Eisenhower, received the nomination of the Republican party. Both Nixon and Kennedy campaigned vigorously throughout the country and then took the unprecedented step of appearing in face-to-face debates on television. Political experts contend that the debates were a pivotal force in the elections. In front of a viewership of more than 100 million citizens, Kennedy masterfully overcame Nixon's advantage as the better-known and more experienced candidate and reversed the public perception of him as too inexperienced and immature for the presidency.

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

   A. Kennedy defeated Nixon in the 1960 presidential election.

   B. Television debates were instrumental in the outcome of the 1960 presidential election.

   C. Television debates have long been a part of campaigning.

   D. Kennedy was the leading Democratic candidate in the 1960 presidential election.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Question 5

Bigfoot is a humanlike creature reportedly living in the Pacific Northwest. Bigfoot sightings have been noted most often in the mountainous areas of northern California, Oregon, and Washington in the United States. The creature has also been spotted numerous times in British Columbia in Canada, where it is known as *Sasquatch*.

The creature described by witnesses is tall by human standards, measuring 7 to 10 feet (2 to 3 meters) in height. It resembles an ape with its thick, powerful, fur-covered arms and short, strong neck; however, its manner of walking erect is more like that of *Homo sapiens*.

Although there have been hundreds of reported sightings of Bigfoot, most experts have not seen enough evidence to be convinced of its existence. The fact that some purported evidence has been proven fake may have served to discredit other more credible information.

5. Which of the following best states the topic of the passage?

A. Differences between Bigfoot and Sasquatch

B. A description of Bigfoot

C. Where Bigfoot, or Sasquatch, can be found

D. The creature Bigfoot and its questionable existence

LIVEWORKSHEETS