TOEFL EXERCISE 10: Study each of the passages and choose the best answers to the questions that follow.

PASSAGE ONE (Questions 1–4)

The black widow is the most dangerous spider living in the United States. It is most common in the southern parts of the country, but it can be found throughout the country. The black widow got its name because the female has been known to kill the male after mating and, as a result, becomes a widow.

The black widow is rather distinctive in appearance; it has a shiny globular body, the size and shape of a pea, and is marked on its underbelly with a red or yellow spot. The female is considerably more ample than the male, roughly four times larger on the average.

If a human is bitten by a black widow, the spider's poison can cause severe illness and pain. Black widow bites have occasionally resulted in death, but it is certainly not the norm for black widow bites to be mortal.

1. In line 2, the word "widow" means
   (A) a type of poison
   (B) the dead male spider
   (C) the human victim of the spider
   (D) a female whose mate has died

2. Which of the following is closest in meaning to the word "globular" in line 5?
   (A) Earthen
   (B) Luminescent
   (C) Green in color
   (D) Round

3. The word "ample" in line 7 indicates that the spider is
   (A) feminine
   (B) large in size
   (C) dotted with colors
   (D) normal

4. Which of the following has the same meaning as the word "mortal" in line 10?
   (A) Deadly
   (B) Painful
   (C) Poisonous
   (D) Sickening

PASSAGE TWO (Questions 5–8)

Tornadoes occur throughout the world, but for reasons that scientists are not fully able to discern, the great majority occur in the United States. Approximately 700 tornadoes a year occur within the United States, and this comprises three-quarters of the worldwide total. Most of the U.S. tornadoes take place in the Midwest and in the southern states that border the Gulf of Mexico.

In general a tornado cuts a path of a few hundred yards and lasts less than an hour; an average tornado might propel itself at a speed of 15 or 20 miles per hour and therefore cover a distance of 20 or so miles. Tornadoes, however, can be much worse than average. The most devastating tornado on record occurred on March 18, 1925, in the states of Missouri, Illinois, and Indiana. The path of this tornado was more than 200 miles long and a mile wide. Traveling at an average speed of 60 miles per hour, the winds at the center of the storm swirled around at considerably more than 200 miles per hour. A total of 689 people died, and countless more were injured at the hands of this killer storm.

5. The word "discern" in line 2 is closest in meaning to which of the following?
   (A) Present
   (B) Understand
   (C) Cause
   (D) Misrepresent

6. The word "propel" in line 6 could best be replaced by
   (A) move
   (B) develop
   (C) destroy
   (D) inhibit

7. Which of the following is closest in meaning to the word "devastating" in line 7?
   (A) Described
   (B) Delicate
   (C) Destructive
   (D) Determined

8. The word "swirled" in line 10 is closest in meaning to
   (A) decreased
   (B) rose
   (C) settled
   (D) circled

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