

READING TEST 2

PASSAGE 1 – Questions 1-10

The Decline of the English Cloth Trade

After 45 years of the queen's rule, James I succeeded Elizabeth I to the English throne in 1603, at which point the English economy was struggling. The population of England was welling, food production was insufficient, and prices were high. Despite its instability, a few industries brought reliable income to the English economy. In particular, many merchants relied on the export of cloth to continental Europe. For the first decade of James I's reign, the cloth trade prospered and was an important source of revenue for the English. However, the king was to make a serious mistake that would eventually lead to the fall of the English cloth trade.

In 1614, William Cockayne, an English merchant and politician, proposed that James I make a dramatic change to the way they English exported cloth. At the time, the English produced primarily unfinished cloth. This meant that they sold cloth that had not been dyed, bleached, or otherwise processed. Most often, companies in the Netherlands bought the plain cloth from England and finished it themselves. The Dutch were experts in the complex procedures and technologies required to finish cloth, and these processes added significant value to the unfinished cloth they had purchased from England. As a result, Dutch cloth companies could sell their goods at much higher prices than the English could. Hoping to transfer these profits to English companies, Cockayne proposed that the English finish the cloth themselves to increase the value of their cloth exports. He also asked James I to establish a company, which was to function under Cockayne's leadership, that would control and monopolize the export of finished cloth to continental Europe. The king was in need of money, and the prospect of increased revenue appealed to him. Thus, he agreed to Cockayne's plan and, per Cockayne's request, founded the King's Merchant Adventures, a company with a primary purpose of exporting finished cloth.

However, Cockayne's plan disrupted the previously steady English cloth trade and was ultimately ineffective for a number of reasons. First, James I's support of Cockayne's company created a rift between the king and many powerful English merchants, particularly the members of the unfinished cloth company called the Merchant Adventurers, which had been cast aside in favor of Cockayne's group. Furthermore, the Dutch, who had previously been Europe's main supplier of finished cloth, responded to English competition by refusing to purchase any English cloth products, and many other European nations did the same. In addition, merchants in other countries refused to ship English cloth or charged English businesspeople inflated fees for shipping. The resistance from abroad was particularly damaging to the King's Merchant Adventurers because it could not afford the ships that were necessary to transport its goods to European markets.

In addition to the difficulties caused by its widespread unpopularity, Cockayne's company was unable to produce quality goods. For one, Cockayne did not have the funds to acquire the machines needed to finish cloth. [A] Moreover, English cloth makers were not experts in the finishing process and could not match the high-quality finished cloth produced by their competitors in the Netherlands. [B] By 1617, just three years after the company was established, James I had dissolved the King's Merchant Adventurers.

[C] The failure of the King's Merchant Adventurers did more than bankrupt those who had supported its efforts. [D] The damage Cockayne's plan inflicted on the cloth trade had disastrous economic effects on other industries as well. Under the King's Merchant Adventurers, more than 500 families had begun producing finished cloth. However, because they could not sell it, their ventures failed. This caused unemployment to rise and even resulted in riots in London and elsewhere. Furthermore, formerly beneficial trade relationships had been destroyed, and sellers of unfinished cloth had to attempt to reestablish contacts with European buyers who were willing to purchase their goods. Though James I had returned power to the members of the Merchant Adventurers, the group resented the damage that had been done to its business. Business relations were strained both internationally and domestically as the English cloth trade made slow recovery from Cockayne's experiment.

- 1. In paragraph 1, the author describes insufficient food production as an indication of the**
 - A. need for the expansion of the English cloth trade.
 - B. consequences of heavily emphasizing the cloth trade.
 - C. poor state of the English economy in 1603.
 - D. king's mismanagement of the country.
- 2. Based on the information in paragraphs 1 and 2, what can be inferred about the English cloth trade prior to the establishment of the King's Merchant Adventurers?**
 - A. It was neglected in favor of the shipping and agriculture industries.
 - B. It was the only profitable sector of the English economy.
 - C. It was responsible for driving up prices for necessary items in England.
 - D. It consisted of multiple companies working with international partners.
- 3. According to paragraph 2, William Cockayne proposed all of the following changes to the English cloth trade EXCEPT:**
 - A. The establishment of a company that would exclusively handle the cloth trade
 - B. A focus on increasing the value of cloth created in England
 - C. The interruption of cloth supply to merchants in the Netherlands
 - D. A shift in the primary activities of the English cloth industry

4. Which of the following best expresses the essential information in the highlighted sentence in paragraph 2? Incorrect answer options change the meaning in important ways or leave out essential information.

- A. The procedures and technologies used to create finished cloth, which were often very complex, were primarily used by Dutch workers.
- B. Unfinished cloth from England was typically finished by the Dutch, who were experts in the complicated procedures that resulted in more value cloth.
- C. Finished cloth from England was often more valuable than Dutch cloth due to the complicated processes used to treat the cloth.
- D. Unfinished cloth from England lost its value because the Dutch were able to create finished cloth by using expert techniques.

5. Based on the information in paragraph 2, why did the king agree to Cockayne's proposals?

- A. He was desperate to improve the English economy quickly.
- B. He believed that the changes would allow England to expand the cloth industry.
- C. He worried about England's overreliance on trade partnerships with the Netherlands.
- D. He wanted to encourage technological advancement in English industries.

6. According to 3, what is true about the Merchant Adventurers?

- A. It continued to sell cloth to the Dutch after the execution of Cockayne's plan.
- B. Its members objected to the changes proposed by Cockayne.
- C. It was forced to focus primarily on shipping instead of the cloth trade.
- D. It became the top English trader due to the unpopularity of Cockayne's plan.

7. According to paragraph 4, which of the following was a factor in the King's Merchant Adventurer's inability to create quality goods?

- A. Its employees didn't have the necessary knowledge about finishing cloth.
- B. It couldn't afford to pay cloth-finishing experts.
- C. It did not have financial support from the king.
- D. It had an inadequate supply of unfinished cloth.

8. According to paragraph 5, people in London rioted in response to

- A. the restoration of the Merchant Adventurers.
- B. the high rate of joblessness.
- C. the unavailability of jobs in the cloth industry.
- D. the bankruptcy of the King's Merchant Adventurers.

9. Look at the part of the passage that is displayed above. The letters [A], [B], [C], and [D] indicate where the following sentence could be added.

He also reinstated the previous cloth export company, the Merchant Adventurers.

Where would the sentence best fit?

- A. Choice A
- B. Choice B
- C. Choice C
- D. Choice D

10. Which of the following is NOT an effect of the fall of the English Cloth Trade?

- A. People who supported the King's Merchant Adventurers lost a lot of money.
- B. Companies in other countries were unwilling to purchase goods from England.
- C. English makers of unfinished cloth had a strained relationship with the king.
- D. The king created the Merchant Adventurers and made William Cockayne responsible for managing it.

PASSAGE 2 – Questions 11-20

Capital Punishment

Proponents of capital punishment argue that it deters crime, but the deterrent argument fails. No statistical study has ever turned up any significant correlation between the absence of capital punishment is any more effective as a deterrent than long-term imprisonment.

With this in mind, supporters of capital punishment sometimes move from the argument that it deters, to the argument that it might deter. That is, even if we grant that there is no firm evidence to establish a deterrent effect, it must still be admitted that it could deter. We should gamble on this possibility, the argument goes, since it is a good tradeoff to execute murders on the chance that innocent lives will thereby be saved. There are two replies to this. First, the wager is not stated properly. By having capital punishment, we not only have the chance to save innocent lives, we also risk putting innocent people to death; therefore, it is not a “no lose” gamble. Second, capital punishment is not only a practice which puts the innocent at risk; it is also an enormously cruel one. Justification on the grounds of deterrence calls for certain and substantial benefits. It is not sufficient merely to hold out the possibility that some good may come of it.

The retributive justification for capital punishment is backward-looking: It seeks to justify the **practice** by pointing to some past action of the prisoner. Retributivists argue that the fact that a person who has killed another morally entitles us to kill that person. This argument presupposes that people are deserving beings, and that, in turn, presupposes a particular view of human beings. Specifically, it presupposes that they are capable of determining their destiny by free choices. This view can be challenged, as it was with conspicuous success by Clarence Darrow. He took the determinist view that all our actions are the inevitable consequence of our genetics and environment, and hence we are not agents but objects, pushed and pulled through the world by forces out of our control. If this view is correct, the retributive argument clearly must be rejected, for it would then be fallacious to claim that anyone ever deserves anything. We can still punish people to reform them, or to deter others, or to protect society. But we cannot do so because they deserve it.

The protection argument is based on the premise that some murderers are truly dangerous characters, who can never again be trusted around others. Since long-term, isolated incarceration is both cruel to the prisoner and costly to society, capital punishment is the preferable solution. The problem with the protection view is that it cannot apply only to murderers. There are all kinds of non-murderers who are highly dangerous. If we extend capital punishment to all dangerous criminals, the executioner will have very full days, and the civil nature of our society will be seriously called into question.

11. According to the passage, which argument presupposes that fear of capital punishment will prevent some people from committing murder?

- A. The deterrent argument
- B. The retributive argument
- C. The protection argument
- D. All of the above

12. It can be inferred that the author believes

- A. that people determine their own destinies by their choices
- B. that capital punishment is only justified in rare cases
- C. that Clarence Darrow's argument was fallacious
- D. that the determinist view is probably correct

13. According to the author, why does the deterrent argument fail?

- A. Because there is no statistical evidence that capital punishment deters murder
- B. Because it wrongly presupposes that people are capable of free choices
- C. Because execution is less effective than long-term imprisonment
- D. Because it presupposes that there is no risk of putting innocent people to death

14. The word “wager” in paragraph 2 is closest in meaning to
- A. gamble
 - B. practice
 - C. possibility
 - D. argument
15. According to the author, what is the problem with the protection argument?
- A. Long-term incarceration is very expensive.
 - B. It is based on the premise that some murderers are too dangerous to be around other people.
 - C. It does not make sense to apply it only to murders.
 - D. None of the above.
16. The word “conspicuous” in paragraph 3 could best be replaced by
- A. questionable
 - B. unknown
 - C. notable
 - D. surprising
17. The phrase “do so” in paragraph 3 refers to
- A. protect society
 - B. reform them
 - C. punish people
 - D. claim that anyone ever deserves anything
18. Why does the author use the phrase “cruel to the prisoner and costly to society” in paragraph 4?
- A. To point out why long-term imprisonment is preferable to execution
 - B. To summarize the arguments of those who oppose long-term imprisonment
 - C. To argue that execution is preferable to long-term imprisonment
 - D. To emphasize the disadvantages of capital punishment.
19. Which of the following does NOT contain the most important information in the passage?
- A. The deterrent argument wrongly assumes that despite the lack of evidence for its effectiveness, capital punishment might deter some murders.
 - B. The determinist view of human behavior implies that people do not control their actions, so the determinist argument must be rejected.
 - C. The protection argument must be rejected because it cannot be applied consistently to all dangerous criminals.
 - D. Arguments for based on deterrence fail because there is no evidence that capital punishment deters murder, and because the risks outweigh the possible benefits.

20. Which of the following is an argument both for and against capital punishment.

- A. Cruelty
- B. Just punishment for past action
- C. Prevention of murder
- D. Protection of innocent life

PASSAGE 3 – Questions 21-30

The Controversy of a Hoax: the Lost Colony of Roanoke

Settled by English colonists in the late sixteenth century, Roanoke Island lies off the coast of what is now the state of North Carolina. It is best known as the home of “the Lost Colony.” In 1587, the explorer Sir Walter Raleigh dispatched a ship bound for the New World, carrying a group of approximately 117 people – including their new governor, John White. The captain was supposed to take them farther north, to Chesapeake Bay near Massachusetts, but instead dropped the passengers at Roanoke Island – the site of the first, unsuccessful English colony. Governor White realized that supplies were low and sailed back to England to acquire more food, promising to return in three months. However, the war between England and Spain prevented White from voyaging back to the island for three years. When White finally returned to Roanoke in 1590, he found that the settlers had disappeared. The entire site had been abandoned without a trace of the colonists having been there. The only clue that White found was the word “CROATION” carved into a fence post, and the letters CRO etched into a tree trunk. There was nothing else to indicate where the colonists had gone or the manner in which they had left.

This centuries-old case of the Lost Colony has long puzzled scholars who have tried to reconstruct the events that led to the colonists’ vanishing act. Both historians and archeologists have been unable to piece together exactly what happened to the colonists. The most popular theory holds that they simply abandoned the area. It has long been believed that they went to Croatoan Island – known today as Hatteras. Scholars speculated that the colonists may have gone to live with the Croatoans – a tribe of Native Americans with whom they had had very friendly relations.

However, any scholarly inquiries regarding this 350-year-old mystery nearly came to a halt in 1940 when the Saturday Evening Post newspaper published a story claiming that it was “solved.” The story upheld the angle that a few of the colonists had survived – among them, Governor John White’s daughter Eleanor Dare, her husband Ananias, and their infant daughter Virginia. Eleanor had allegedly inscribed her story on a series of 48 stones so that her father would know what had happened

to them. The article included photographs of some of the stones that the reporter said had been found in swamps and various other places in North and South Carolina, as well as Georgia, all within a 400-mile radius of each other. The stones were given to Dr. Haywood Pearce, a professor of American History at the University of Atlanta, who examined them and took his story to the media. The text on the stones was simple, but written in what appeared to be sixteenth-century Roman letters. Pearce thought that the stones were authentic and the Post printed the story.

In 1941, an investigative reporter named Boyden Sparkes published a follow-up story declaring the Dare stones to be a hoax. He systematically proved, with supporting evidence from experts, that the words written on the rocks in an Elizabeth-era Roman script had been fabricated, and the dates on the rocks could not be scientifically proven. After Sparkes's exposé on the hoax, Professor Pearce's academic integrity was compromised in the fraud, and he subsequently dropped out of sight.

Fifty years later, Robert W. White's book *A Witness for Eleanor Dare* revisited the story of the Dare stones. White raised the question of the stone's authenticity by stating that Sparkes had created the controversy in order to get publicity about the mystery of the Lost Colony, but moreover, to seek monetary gain for himself. White's examination of the evidence reintroduced the possibility that the stones were not fake. However, historians and archeologists alike have still not reached an agreement about this potential physical evidence of the Lost Colony. Despite the controversy, one of the infamous Dare stones is now on exhibit at the Lost Colony Center for Science and Research in Williamston, North Carolina.

Questions about the colonists' fate still exist: Did they assimilate with the Croatoan Indians? Did they attempt to sail back to England and were lost at sea? Did they all succumb to disease or harsh weather? These questions and the authenticity of the Dare stones continue to be one of the most enduring unsolved mysteries of early American history.

21. According to paragraph 1, the "Lost Colony" is

- A. the island of Roanoke.
- B. a group of English settlers.
- C. the state of North Carolina.
- D. an area of Chesapeake Bay.

22. According to paragraph 1, the author implies that the colonists

- A. were governed by Sir Walter Raleigh.
- B. forced John White to return to England.
- C. had planned to land on Roanoke Island.
- D. had originally intended to settle in Chesapeake Bay.

23. The word "etched" in paragraph 1 is closest in meaning to

- A. cut into.
- B. drawn.
- C. printed.
- D. erased.

24. In paragraph 2, why does the author mention the theory about the colonists' disappearance?

- A. to connect the word "CROATOAN" with the possible whereabouts of the colonists
- B. to contrast the different opinions of the historians and archeologists.
- C. to offer more speculation about where they might have gone
- D. to support the work done by scholars to solve the mystery

25. The word "allegedly" in paragraph 3 is closest in meaning to

- A. irrefutably
- B. illegally.
- C. unbelievably.
- D. supposedly.

26. In paragraph 4, what does the author say about the script on the stones?

- A. It was from the Elizabeth era.
- B. It was not easy for experts to read.
- C. No one could prove it was from the sixteenth century.
- D. Scientists could not sequence the stones by their dates.

27. According to paragraph 4, what does the author imply about Professor Pearce after Boyden Sparkes published his hoax story?

- A. He tried to reach an agreement with Sparkes.
- B. He left his position at university.
- C. He was fired from his job.
- D. He lost his sight.

28. Why does the author mention White's examination of the evidence in paragraph 5?

- A. to make people aware of the unsolved mystery
- B. to show that the Lost Colony was not completely forgotten
- C. so that readers will reconsider the authenticity of the Dare stones
- D. to exemplify how Sparkes's desire for money might have harmed history

29. The word “infamous” in paragraph 5 is closest in meaning to

- A. unknown.
- B. notorious
- C. memorable.
- D. disreputable.

30. In paragraph 6, the author raises several questions on theories about the colonists’ fate EXCEPT

- A. they could have settled with a Native American tribes on the island.
- B. they may all have died from a fatal illness.
- C. they attempted to return to England.
- D. they moved south to warmer climates.

PASSAGE 4 – Questions 31-40

Desert Formation

The deserts, which already occupy approximately a fourth of the Earth’s land surface, have in recent decades been increasing at an alarming pace. The expansion of desert-like conditions into areas where they did not previously exist is called desertification. It has been estimated that an additional one-fourth of the Earth’s land surface is threatened by this process.

Desertification is accomplished primarily through the loss of stabilizing natural vegetation and the subsequent accelerated erosion of the soil by wind and water. In some cases the loose soil is

blown completely away, leaving a stony surface. In other cases, the finer particles may be removed, while the sand-sized particles are accumulated to form mobile hills or ridges of land.

Even in the areas that retain a soil cover, the reduction of vegetation typically results in the loss of the soil's ability to absorb substantial quantities of water. The impact of raindrops on the loose soil tends to transfer fine clay particles into the tiniest soil spaces, sealing them and producing a surface that allows very little water penetration. Water absorption is greatly reduced, consequently runoff is increased, resulting in accelerated erosion rates. The gradual drying of the soil caused by its diminished ability to absorb water results in the further loss of vegetation, so that a cycle of progressive surface deterioration is established.

In some regions, the increase in desert areas is occurring largely as the result of a trend toward drier climatic conditions. Continued gradual global warming has produced an increase in aridity for some areas over the past few thousand years. The process may be accelerated in subsequent decades if global warming resulting from air pollution seriously increases.

There is little doubt, however, that desertification in most areas results primarily from human activities rather than natural processes. The semiarid lands bordering the deserts exist in a delicate ecological balance and are limited in their potential to adjust to increased environmental pressures. Expanding populations are subjecting the land to increasing pressures to provide them with food and fuel. In wet periods, the land may be able to respond to these stresses. During the dry periods that are common phenomena along the desert margins, though, the pressure on the land is often far in excess of its diminished capacity, and desertification results.

Four specific activities have been identified as major contributors to the desertification processes: overcultivation, overgrazing, firewood gathering, and overirrigation. The cultivation of crops has expanded into progressively drier regions as population densities have grown. These regions are especially likely to have periods of severe dryness, so that crop failures are common. Since the raising of most crops necessitates the prior removal of the natural vegetation, crop failures leave extensive tracts of land devoid of a plant cover and susceptible to wind and water erosion.

The raising of livestock is a major economic activity in semiarid lands, where grasses are generally the dominant type of natural vegetation. The consequences of an excessive number of livestock grazing in an area are the reduction of the vegetation cover and the trampling and pulverization of the soil. This is usually followed by the drying of the soil and accelerated erosion.

Firewood is the chief fuel used for cooking and heating in many countries. The increased pressures of expanding populations have led to the removal of woody plants so that many cities and towns are surrounded by large areas completely lacking in trees and shrubs. The increasing use of dried animal waste as a substitute fuel has also hurt the soil because this valuable soil conditioner and source of plant nutrients is no longer being returned to the land.

The final major human cause of desertification is soil salinization resulting from overirrigation. Excess water from irrigation sinks down into the water table. If no drainage system exists, the water table rises, bringing dissolved salts to the surface. The water evaporates and the salts are left behind, creating a white crustal layer that prevents air and water from reaching the underlying soil.

The extreme seriousness of desertification results from the vast areas of land and the tremendous numbers of people affected, as well as from the great difficulty of reversing or even slowing the process. Once the soil has been removed by erosion, only the passage of centuries or millennia will enable new soil to form. In areas where considerable soil still remains, though, a rigorously enforced program of land protection and cover-crop planning may make it possible to reverse the present deterioration of the surface.

31. According to paragraph 3, the loss of natural vegetation has which of the following consequences for soil?

- A. increased stony content
- B. reduced water absorption
- C. increased numbers of spaces in the soil
- D. reduce water runoff

32. The word “delicate” in the passage is closest in meaning to

- A. fragile
- B. predictable
- C. complex
- D. valuable

33. According to paragraph 5, in dry periods, border areas have difficulty

- A. adjusting to stresses created by settlement
- B. retaining their fertility after desertification
- C. providing water for irrigating crops
- D. attracting populations in search of food and fuel

34. According to paragraph 6, which of the following is often associated with raising crops?

- A. Lack of proper irrigation techniques.
- B. Failure to plant crops suited to the particular area.
- C. Removal of the original vegetation.
- D. Excessive use of dried animal waste.

35. The phrase “devoid of” in the passage is closest in meaning to

- A. consisting of
- B. hidden by
- C. except for
- D. lacking in

36. According to paragraph 9, the ground’s absorption of excess water is a factor in desertification because it can

- A. interfere with the irrigation of land
- B. require more absorption of air by the soil
- C. limit the evaporation of water
- D. bring salts to the surface

37. All of the following are mentioned in the passage as contributing to desertification EXCEPT

- A. soil erosion
- B. global warming
- C. insufficient irrigation
- D. the raising of livestock

38. Which of the sentences below best expresses the essential information in the highlighted sentence in the passage? Incorrect choices change the meaning in important ways or leave out essential information.

- A. Desertification is a significant problem because it is so hard to reverse and affects large areas of land and great numbers of people.
- B. Slowing down the process of desertification is difficult because of population growth that has spread over large areas of land.
- C. The spread of deserts is considered a very serious problem that can be solved only if large numbers of people in various countries are involved in the effort.
- D. Desertification is extremely hard to reverse unless the population is reduced in the vast areas affected.

39. It can be inferred from the passage that the author most likely believes which of the following about the future of desertification?

- A. Governments will act quickly to control further desertification.
- B. The factors influencing desertification occur in cycles and will change in the future.
- C. Desertification will continue to increase.
- D. Desertification will soon occur in all areas of the world.

40. Which of the following does not express the most important ideas in the passage.

- A. Growing human populations and the agricultural demands that come with such growth have upset the ecological balance in some areas and led to the spread of deserts.
- B. Excessive numbers of cattle and the need for firewood for fuel have reduced grasses and trees, leaving the land unprotected and vulnerable.
- C. Extensive irrigation with poor drainage brings salt to the surface of the soil, a process that reduces water and air absorption.
- D. As periods of severe dryness have become more common, failures of a number of different crops have increased.