

Read the passage - 'Life Lessons through Art' - and answer the question below:

### Life Lessons through Art

Read the passage and answer the following question(s).

#### Life Lessons through Art

- 1 As Eva cleaned her artist's brushes, she listened to the typical evening sounds in her family's busy California home. Her fifteen-year-old brother, Arturo, home from baseball practice, thumped a ball in a glove. Her mother had the afternoon off from teaching biology at the university, so the sounds of sizzling food and pots and pans accompanied the smell of Peruvian **tacu tacu**. Her father, also a leading scientist at the city university, napped after a long flight from his business trip in Peru. Tonight the whole family would go to the spring art show at her school, and Eva's paintings would be on display in the section for 7th- and 8th-grade artwork.
- 2 "If only Papá would notice how much painting means to me," she thought as she cleaned the paint from her hands.
- 3 Eva met her mother in the kitchen and helped by setting the table. "**Gracias, hija,**" her mother said and patted Eva's shoulder. "**Ahora saca los huevos de la refrigeradora.**" She gave more directions in Spanish and then lapsed into English and said, "I'll wake your father."
- 4 Because her mother was Peruvian, and the family had lived in Peru for Eva's first five years of life, they all spoke Spanish. Her father, who was of Japanese-Peruvian descent, spoke both Japanese and Spanish. All four had learned English before moving to the United States, so at any given moment, a visitor could hear Japanese, Spanish, or English uttered in the Muto household.
- 5 When the four sat down to eat, Eva's father spoke about his work in Peru, specifically, the cloud forests in the Andes Mountains. "I will need to write a comprehensive report of our findings about how increased temperatures are affecting vegetation in the Peruvian cloud forest," he said. "I could use your help, Evita."
- 6 Arturo was a baseball star and math whiz. He never got asked to work on a report that scientists at the university would do. Eva's stomach tightened. She knew she excelled at science, but it wasn't her entire life. Why couldn't her parents see that?
- 7 "Eva had near perfect marks in science this term, and her teachers want her to enter the science fair," her mother said.
- 8 "This is excellent news," her father added quietly, studying Eva's face.
- 9 Eva wanted to talk about her paintings, the hours she worked on the sketches and the process of mixing color from pigment and linseed oil. Instead, her parents went on to discuss what kind of scientist she could become.
- 10 "We will always need good scientists working on climate change," Father said.
- 11 "I'm going to change clothes," Arturo said and took his plate to the sink. "Can't wait to

see your paintings at the show, Vi-Vi." Eva didn't care for the nickname her brother used for her, but she really appreciated his attempt to talk about her artwork.

- 12 The rest of the events leading up to viewing her paintings blurred like colors on a palette. It felt like cotton was stuffed in her mouth and throat as the family stepped in front of her paintings; no words came out.
- 13 Her family moved between her three canvasses, which depicted themes from the natural world. One was a serene mountain landscape in the Japanese tradition, using black, grays, whites, and pinks. The second had shimmering, iridescent colors and used a folk-art style to depict different birds from the cloud forests in Peru. The third painting was an abstract mix of the two traditions that included Spanish and English words, as well as Japanese characters.
- 14 "Evita," Father said in his quiet, reserved way, "these are beautiful. Yes, you do have some talent."
- 15 "Evita, **querida**, I had no idea you could paint like this!" Mother said.
- 16 "She works very hard, too, you know," Arturo added.
- 17 Eva swelled with pride. Though it never seemed right to bring up her thoughts on science and art, she knew now was the perfect time.
- 18 "Art is my passion," she said. "I like science. I'm good at it." She looked at her paintings and an idea started, like a small flame sputtering. "See in my art, how I mix the traditions of my background . . . ?" As she spoke the little flame burned brighter. "Just like that, I . . . I want to mix my passions for art and science. I want to do both." There, she'd said it.
- 19 Her father hugged her. Both parents nodded their heads, and their eyes showed they understood her thoughts.
- 20 "Good idea, Eva," Father said. "This world needs all kinds of creators."
- 21 Eva couldn't agree more.

#### GLOSSARY

**tacu tacu:** Peruvian rice and bean dish that can be served with fried eggs or steak

**gracias, hija:** Thanks, my daughter

**ahora saca los huevos de la refrigeradora:** Now take the eggs out of the refrigerator

**querida:** dear

1. Look at this dictionary entry.

**reserved** *adj.* 1. set aside for future use  
2. delayed (such as an action) until a future time or place 3. kept for a particular purpose 4. slow to reveal emotions or opinions

Now read these sentences from paragraph 14.

“Evita,” Father said in his quiet, reserved way, “these are beautiful. Yes, you do have some talent.”

Which dictionary definition BEST matches the meaning of reserved as the word is used in paragraph 14?

- A. definition 1
- B. definition 2
- C. definition 3
- D. definition 4

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2. Which TWO sentences show how Eva is affected by her parents' careers?

Pick up to 6 answers.

- A. She wants to learn all the languages that her parents use in their work.
- B. She prefers a job where she can travel on business like her parents do.
- C. She hopes to please her parents with better grades in science class.
- D. She fears her scientific parents will be disappointed if she pursues art.
- E. She feels pressured to seek a job in science like her parents have done.
- F. She feels forced to help her father with his scientific research reports.

3. Which sentence from the text shows that Eva's brother teases and supports her at the same time?
- A. Her fifteen-year-old brother, Arturo, home from baseball practice, thumped a ball in a glove.
  - B. He never got asked to work on a report that scientists at the university would do.
  - C. "Can't wait to see your paintings at the show, Vi-Vi."
  - D. "She works very hard, too, you know," Arturo added.
- 

Read the passage - 'Life Lessons through Art' - and answer the question below:

4. Read the sentence from paragraph 12.

It felt like cotton was stuffed in her mouth and throat as the family stepped in front of her paintings; no words came out.

Which is the BEST definition for the phrase cotton was stuffed in her mouth and throat as it is used in the sentence?

- A. unable to speak
  - B. unable to understand
  - C. having a sore throat
  - D. forming words slowly
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Read the passage - 'Life Lessons through Art' - and answer the question below:

5. Which statement contrasts Arturo's point of view with that of the parents?
- A. Arturo is interested in Eva's art, whereas the parents are only interested in Eva's achievements in science.
  - B. Arturo thinks that Eva should work harder at art, but the parents think that academic grades should come first.
  - C. Arturo doesn't value work in science, while the parents are only interested in different ways of self-expression.
  - D. Arturo does not believe that Eva should study science, but the parents would be happy with that choice.

6. Why is the art show important to the development of the plot of the story?
- A. It allows her parents to see how talented Eva is.
  - B. It establishes that Eva likes both art and science.
  - C. It provides a setting to express her multicultural background.
  - D. It shows that Arturo is supportive of Eva's art.

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Read the passage - 'Life Lessons through Art' - and answer the question below:

7. Which sentence BEST describes a MAIN theme of the text?
- A. Family traditions need to be upheld.
  - B. One's career should reflect passion.
  - C. Children's plans should please parents.
  - D. Science is most important to the world.

### **Vanishing Habitats**

Recent census polling has determined that the United States is now home to over 310 million people. Moreover, advances in medicine have increased the life expectancy for aging populations. Added to that is the fact that about 11,000 new babies are born daily. Clearly, America is growing bigger by the minute!

#### **Crowded Out**

This is bad news for animals living in the wild. More people means that more homes are needed. Rather than building homes in already crowded cities, many people opt to live on the outskirts of cities in areas called suburbs. Before it became developed, however, the land was habitat for countless species of animals. Wild animals have a few essential requirements: a determined amount of space to hunt and gather food, some form of shelter, and a water source.

When developers purchase land for suburbs, they rarely consider the devastating effects development has on animal habitats. Heavy equipment levels the land, fells trees, and redirects any water source so that flooding will not occur in areas where people live.

Where do the animals go when this happens to their habitat? Many do not survive. Some live in sparse numbers on undeveloped areas nearby, while others learn to adapt and develop a tenuous coexistence with humans.

### **Survivors**

One such example is the wily coyote. Once the icon of the West, the coyote is now learning to survive on the periphery, or even in the midst of American cities. However, some people are unwilling to share their spaces with this scrappy fellow. Because the coyote is a highly intelligent and adaptable creature, he will find food wherever it is available. That may mean scavenging food from trashcans and compost heaps, finding fruit fallen from trees, and eating pet food left outside. If desperate, the coyote will even eat small pets! Understandably, many people regard the coyote as a nuisance rather than a fellow cohabiter. Often, they report problems to city officials and have the coyote captured and destroyed.

This is unfortunate. The coyote helps maintain a healthy ecosystem. The coyote regulates populations of raccoons, skunks, foxes, and feral cats. Community awareness programs have helped. Some have succeeded in teaching people how to coexist peacefully with the coyote. This education effort is limited to only a few cities, however.

## **The Less Fortunate**

While the coyote has learned to adapt, vast numbers of other animals are in danger of extinction. According to a prominent nonprofit wildlife organization, about one-third of America's native species are in danger. As development encroaches into more wild areas, animals' habitats become increasingly fragmented. Roads and interstate highways divide their natural roaming regions.

As a result, some animals become landlocked in small spaces. Others meet their end crossing roads to find food or a suitable mate. As human communities and "progress" increase, wild animal numbers quickly dwindle.

## **Rays of Hope**

Some city planners are beginning to recognize that progressive communities need to respect the animals that share our planet. One idea that is beginning to gain popularity is to include "green corridors" when planning for future growth.

Corridors are narrow strips of land that connect green spaces so that animals can roam a wider range without having to cross busy roads. Additionally, more cities are using educational programs, such as the ones used with the coyotes, to help inform communities about wild animals. With these programs, people gain a broader understanding of native animals in their area and can make some adjustments. Ultimately, they learn to live alongside wild animals more harmoniously. In addition, people with yards or even small patio areas are learning some simple ways to transform their outdoor areas into "backyard habitats" for native or migrating animals.

## **Why We Need Wildlife**

Wild animals help balance an ecosystem, which allows native plants and other wild animals to thrive. Many plants within these ecosystems have medicinal qualities that have cured human diseases. Perhaps it is time to recognize that the survival of wildlife is fundamental for our own survival.

As we see our lands disappear to make way for neighborhoods and shopping centers, we may begin to recognize what is being lost by our gains. Hopefully, we can make changes before it is too late. Otherwise, we may find ourselves asking the same question posed by poet Henry David Thoreau: "What is the good of having a nice house without a decent planet to put it on?"

8. Which section of the article would be most useful to someone interested in learning more about reasons that some animal homes are vanishing?
- A. Survivors
  - B. Crowded Out
  - C. The Less Fortunate
  - D. Why We Need Wildlife

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Read the passage - 'Vanishing Habitats#9DFD2726B9E246818FD456816DFCFBEE' - and answer the question below:

9. In the article, what is the *strongest* evidence supporting the conclusion that measures are being taken to respect the animals that share our planet?
- A. Some people are learning to live more simply and respectfully.
  - B. Some people are turning their backyards into homes for animals.
  - C. In some places, education programs teach the public about coyotes.
  - D. In some cities, green corridors are included in plans for future growth.
10. Which sentence from the article best describes an important role that wild animals play?
- A. "Wild animals have a few essential requirements: a determined amount of space to hunt and gather food, some form of shelter, and a water source."
  - B. "Understandably, many people regard coyotes as a nuisance rather than a fellow cohabiter."
  - C. "Wild animals help balance an ecosystem, which allows native plants and other wild animals to thrive."
  - D. "As we see our lands disappear to make way for neighborhoods and shopping centers, we may begin to recognize what is being lost by our gains."

Read the passage - 'Vanishing Habitats#9DFD2726B9E246818FD456816DFCFBEE' - and answer the question below:

11. Which of the following is a central idea expressed throughout the passage?
- A. Wild animals are important to an ecosystem.
  - B. Some communities have learned to peacefully coexist with wild animals.
  - C. Coyotes have learned to adapt to changing environments.
  - D. Green communities provide additional protection for wild animals.
12. Read this sentence from paragraph 2.

When developers purchase land for suburbs, they rarely consider the *devastating* effects development has on animal habitats.

What does *devastating* mean as used in the sentence?

- A. harmful
  - B. peculiar
  - C. temporary
  - D. subtle
13. Based on the passage, what can readers infer about a fear people may have regarding the coyote?
- A. As neighborhoods extend into natural habitats, there may be more coyotes to deal with.
  - B. If a coyote would attack a small pet in desperation, the coyote might also attack small children or infants.
  - C. A decrease in coyote population will mean dealing with other animals like rats, skunks, and foxes.
  - D. Reporting increasing numbers of coyote problems to city officials will increase taxes in communities with large coyote populations.