

Question ID d297b42e

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: d297b42e

The following text is from Mick Herron’s 2023 novel *The Secret Hours*. The narrator is describing members of a government committee.

Finally, and adding much-needed gravitas, was Sir Winston Day, whose features seemed moulded to adorn a bust, or possibly a stamp, and whose forehead was so evidently bulging with grey matter that it would have been impertinent to inquire too closely into the actual achievements his half century of public service had produced. His recently published memoirs possibly cast light on this enigma, but given that such details were not provided until after the thirty-page mark, they might as well have remained state secrets.

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- Based on the text, which choice best describes Sir Winston Day?
- A. He has the appearance of a distinguished figure, but it is uncertain whether he has accomplished anything to earn distinction.
 - B. He looks like a person worthy of respect, but his memoirs reveal that some of his actions were dishonorable.
 - C. He would be a celebrated public figure if his achievements did not have to be kept secret.
 - D. He has maintained a modest profile even though he has served the public capably for many years.

ID: d297b42e Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer because it accurately describes Sir Winston Day as he is portrayed in the text. The text indicates that Sir Winston’s “features seemed moulded to adorn a bust, or possibly a stamp,” suggesting that he appeared distinguished. But the text also indicates that his “actual achievements” during his long public service constitute an “enigma,” or mystery, highlighting the point with a joke about Sir Winston’s uninteresting memoirs (any information about his achievements past the first thirty pages “might as well have remained state secrets” since, it’s implied, no one bothered to read that far). Thus, the text suggests that Sir Winston appears distinguished even though his known accomplishments, if any, are relatively few.

Choice B is incorrect because nothing in the text indicates that Sir Winston behaved dishonorably. Rather, the text indicates that his “actual achievements” during his long public service constitute an enigma, or mystery, suggesting that he may have done very little, not that what he has done was disreputable. Choice C is incorrect. Although the text says that Sir Winston’s achievements that appear “after the thirty-page mark” in his memoirs “might as well have remained state secrets,” this is a joke about the public’s lack of interest in the memoirs, not a sincere claim that secrecy was intended. Choice D is incorrect because the text does not associate Sir Winston with modesty, nor does it suggest that he was a capable public servant. Rather, by indicating that Sir Winston’s “features seemed moulded to adorn a bust, or possibly a stamp,” the text suggests that Sir Winston’s appearance communicated importance, not modesty. The text further indicates that his “actual achievements” during his long public service constitute an enigma, or mystery, suggesting that he may have done very little, not that he was particularly capable.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 2e493764

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 2e493764

Archaeologists have discovered a runestone in Norway that may contain the earliest example of written words in Scandinavia. Carbon dating at the discovery site revealed that the stone was likely carved between 1 and 250 CE. Runologist Kristel Zilmer believes the stone will be helpful in learning more about the use of runic alphabets in early Iron Age Scandinavia.

Which choice best states the main topic of the text?

- A. Battles of the Iron Age
- B. A runestone found in Norway
- C. A new method for dating rock samples
- D. The research interests of Kristel Zilmer

ID: 2e493764 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it most accurately states the main topic of the text. The text begins by stating that archaeologists in Norway have discovered what may be the oldest known runestone (a stone with an inscription in the runic alphabets used in the region in ancient times). According to the text, the object was created between 1 and 250 CE. The text then mentions a researcher who comments on the runestone’s significance to the study of runic alphabets. Thus, the main focus throughout the text is a runestone found in Norway.

Choice A is incorrect because the text mentions the Iron Age only to indicate the era when the runestone was created and when runic alphabets were in use; there’s no discussion of battles during this era. Choice C is incorrect because the text mentions the carbon dating method just once and does so only to indicate the age of the runestone; moreover, the text doesn’t suggest that this method is new. Choice D is incorrect. Although the text indicates that Zilmer is a runologist, or a scholar of runestones, it does so in a single sentence, so Zilmer’s scholarly interests are therefore not a primary focus of the text.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 5894816d

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 5894816d

The ancient writing system used in the Maya kingdoms of southern Mexico and Central America had a symbol for the number zero. The earliest known example of the symbol dates to more than 2,000 years ago. At that time, almost none of the writing systems elsewhere in the world possessed a zero symbol. And the use of zero in Mexico and Central America may be even more ancient. Some historians suggest that Maya mathematicians inherited it from the Olmec civilization, which flourished in the region 2,400–3,600 years ago.

According to the text, what do some historians suggest about Maya civilization?

- A. Maya civilization acquired the use of zero from the Olmec civilization.
- B. Maya civilization respected its historians more than it respected its mathematicians.
- C. Maya civilization was highly secretive about its intellectual achievements.
- D. Maya civilization tried to introduce its writing system to other civilizations.

ID: 5894816d Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer because it presents information about Maya civilization that is supported by the text. The text states that the writing system used in the Maya kingdoms had a symbol for the number zero. It goes on to say that at the time of the zero symbol’s earliest example, more than 2,000 years ago, almost no other writing systems in the world featured such a symbol. The text also points out that some historians suggest that Maya mathematicians inherited the use of zero from the Olmec civilization, which existed in the same area as the Maya civilization at an earlier date. Thus, according to the text, some historians suggest that the Maya civilization acquired the use of zero from the Olmec civilization.

Choice B is incorrect because although the text mentions present-day historians and Maya mathematicians, it does not say anything about how much the Maya civilization respected its historians and mathematicians. Choice C is incorrect because the text does not indicate that the Maya civilization treated its use of the zero symbol, or any other intellectual achievements, as secrets to be kept from other civilizations. Choice D is incorrect because although the text mentions historians who suggest that the writing system of the Maya civilization inherited some features from the earlier Olmec civilization, the text does not describe any attempts of Maya civilization to introduce its writing system to other civilizations.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 9b772a22

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 9b772a22

The following text is from Anton Chekhov’s 1898 short story “Ionitch” (translated by Marian Fell in 1915). The text is set in a Russian city referred to as the city of S.

If newcomers to the little provincial city of S. complained that life there was monotonous and dull, its inhabitants would answer that, on the contrary, S. was a very amusing place, indeed, that it had a library and a club, that balls were given there, and finally, that very pleasant families lived there with whom one might become acquainted. And they always pointed to the Turkins as the most accomplished and most enlightened family of all.

- What does the text suggest about the Turkins?
- A. They are relative newcomers to the city of S.
 - B. They have a unique status in the city of S.
 - C. They have long disliked living in the city of S.
 - D. They are amused by the other residents of the city of S.

ID: 9b772a22 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it presents a statement about the Turkins that is suggested by the text. The text explains that while many pleasant families live in the city of S., inhabitants of the city consider the Turkins to be "the most accomplished and most enlightened family of all." Thus, by indicating that they are seen as more accomplished and more enlightened than all the other families in the city of S., the text suggests that the Turkins have a unique status there.

Choice A is incorrect because the text doesn’t indicate that the Turkins have recently moved to the city of S.; it provides no information about when the Turkins arrived. Choice C is incorrect because the text explains how the Turkins are viewed by others in the city of S. but gives no indication of how the Turkins feel about living there. Choice D is incorrect because the text explains how the Turkins are viewed by other residents of the city of S. but gives no indication of how the Turkins view the other residents.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID b09073a6

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: b09073a6

Historians point to the rule of the Piast dynasty as crucial to the formation of the Polish state. However, some differentiate between members of the dynasty like Mieszko II Lambert, who ruled as king from 1025 to 1031 CE, and less well-documented figures like Siemomysł, who is said to have ruled in the 10th century but whose historical actuality is disputed. Siemomysł appears in the *Gesta principum Polonorum*, a chronicle of medieval Polish history written between 1112 and 1118. However, the chronicle’s documentation of Siemomysł relies on oral tradition, unlike its records of later rulers.

- According to the text, what is a difference between how historians view Siemomysł and how they view Mieszko II Lambert?
- A. Historians agree that Mieszko II Lambert existed, but disagree about whether Siemomysł existed.
 - B. Historians believe that the *Gesta principum Polonorum* provides more evidence for Siemomysł’s existence than it does for Mieszko II Lambert’s existence.
 - C. Historians agree that Siemomysł ruled Poland much later than Mieszko II Lambert.
 - D. Historians find the orally transmitted stories affirming the existence of Mieszko II Lambert to be more convincing than similar stories about Siemomysł.

ID: b09073a6 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer because it presents a statement about how historians view Siemomysł and Mieszko II Lambert that is supported by the text. The text states that the Piast dynasty had a number of different members. The text refers to two of the rulers in the Piast dynasty by name: Mieszko II Lambert, whose rule was known to have occurred from 1025 to 1031 CE, and Siemomysł ("whose historical actuality is disputed"), for whom less is known and who therefore is the subject of debate among historians. The text further casts doubt about Siemomysł by stating that he is "said to have ruled" during the 10th century, or the 900s, which suggests the possibility that he didn’t rule. The text also mentions that the chronicle’s documentation of Siemomysł relies on oral tradition, unlike its records of later rulers, including Mieszko II Lambert. This indicates that historians agree that Mieszko II Lambert was an actual historical figure, but they disagree about whether Siemomysł existed.

Choice B is incorrect because the text states that the *Gesta principum Polonorum*’s documentation of Siemomysł comes from oral tradition—spoken rather than written documentation—unlike its records of rulers who came after Siemomysł. This suggests that the chronicle provides less reliable evidence rather than more evidence for Siemomysł’s existence in the 900s (or the 10th century) than it does for later rulers like Mieszko II Lambert, who ruled from 1025 to 1031 CE. Choice C is incorrect because the text indicates the opposite: Siemomysł supposedly ruled earlier in the 10th century, while Mieszko II Lambert ruled from 1025 to 1031 CE. The 10th century spans the years from 901 to 1000 CE, so Siemomysł is believed to have ruled earlier than Mieszko II Lambert did, not later as this choice states. Choice D is incorrect. Although the text mentions that information in the written chronicle *Gesta principum Polonorum* draws its information about Siemomysł from the oral tradition, it doesn’t mention orally transmitted stories about Mieszko II Lambert. Instead, it states that the chronicle’s documentation of Siemomysł relies on oral

tradition unlike the records of later rulers do, which suggests that the documentation of later rulers such as Mieszko II Lambert did not rely on oral tradition. Thus, no comparison can be made about how convincing the orally transmitted stories of each ruler are to historians.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID c31ff09e

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: c31ff09e

Poetry in Classical Nahuatl, the language of the Aztec Empire, relies on *difrasismo*, or a parallel noun construction that conventionally operates as a single metaphor. For example, the common difrasismo *in cuauhtli in ocelotl* (literally, “the eagle, the jaguar”) signifies “warrior.” The device’s function is both formal—providing structure to lines of verse—and ritual: semantic relations among the two nouns and the concept they signify can be tenuous, as in the previous example, such that difrasismos are often only intelligible according to the conceptual associations observed in Aztec ceremonial culture.

Which statement about the difrasismo *in cuauhtli in ocelotl* is most strongly supported by the text?

- A. Its metaphorical significance derives from the semantic equivalence of the two nouns constituting the difrasismo.
- B. Its unintelligibility may cause its formal function within a line of verse to go unnoticed by present-day readers.
- C. Its apparent obscurity can be resolved when considered in the proper cultural context.
- D. Its frequency in Classical Nahuatl poetry confirms its intelligibility to the Aztec audience.

ID: c31ff09e Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer because it presents a statement about the difrasismo *in cuauhtli in ocelotl* that is directly supported by the text. The text begins by describing difrasismo, a device used in Classical Nahuatl poetry. The text then mentions the device’s two functions: a formal one (giving structure to lines of verse) and a ritualistic one. The text indicates that the relation between the words in a difrasismo may appear tenuous without the additional information supplied by Aztec ceremonial culture but that the meaning becomes intelligible in the context of that information. Therefore, the difrasismo’s apparent obscurity can be resolved when considered in the proper cultural context.

Choice A is incorrect because the text doesn’t indicate that the two nouns used in a difrasismo are semantically equivalent; instead, the text indicates that the two nouns used in a difrasismo make up a single metaphor whose meaning is often intelligible only in the context of information supplied by Aztec ceremonial culture. Choice B is incorrect because the text doesn’t indicate that there’s a relationship between the formal function of the difrasismo and the difrasismo’s intelligibility. Additionally, the text suggests that present-day readers who are familiar with Aztec ceremonial culture wouldn’t find the difrasismo to be unintelligible. Choice D is incorrect because the text doesn’t indicate that the frequency of difrasismo’s use in Classical Nahuatl is a necessary feature of intelligibility: the text indicates that an infrequently used difrasismo would presumably also be intelligible to members of an Aztec audience who are sufficiently familiar with Aztec ceremonial culture.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 0885945a

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 0885945a

Eighteenth-century economist Adam Smith is famed for his metaphor of the invisible hand, which he putatively used to illustrate a robust model of how individuals produce aggregate benefits by pursuing their own economic interests. Note “putatively”: as Gavin Kennedy has shown, Smith deploys this metaphor only once in his economic writings—to make a narrow point about the then-dominant economic theory of mercantilism—and it was largely ignored until some twentieth-century economists eager to secure an intellectual pedigree for their views elevated it to a fully-fledged paradigm.

Which choice best states the main idea of the text?

- A. Although Smith is famed for his metaphor of the invisible hand, the metaphor was largely ignored until economists in the twentieth century came to realize that the metaphor was a robust model that anticipated their own views.
- B. Some twentieth-century economists gave Smith’s metaphor of the invisible hand a significance it does not have in Smith’s work, but it is nevertheless a useful model of how individuals produce aggregate benefits by pursuing their own economic interests.
- C. Smith’s metaphor of the invisible hand has been interpreted as a model of how individuals acting in their own interest produce aggregate benefits, but it was intended as a subtle critique of the economic theory of mercantilism.
- D. The reputation of Smith’s metaphor of the invisible hand is not due to the importance of the metaphor in Smith’s work but rather to the promotion of the metaphor by some later economists for their own ends.

ID: 0885945a Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer because it most accurately states the main idea of the text. The text explains that economist Adam Smith’s famous metaphor of the invisible hand was putatively (that is, widely assumed but not proven) intended to illustrate a robust model (a consistently accurate generalization) of how individuals pursuing their own economic interests can create broader benefits for the population. The text then emphasizes the lack of affirmative evidence for this idea by calling out the term “putatively,” and explaining that, according to Gavin Kennedy, Smith used the metaphor only once in his works, in reference to specific circumstances related to the now-outdated economic view known as mercantilism, and that the metaphor didn’t garner much attention until economists in the twentieth century held it up as a paradigm (a theoretical framework in the field) and thereby implied that Smith shared some of their views on economics. By emphasizing “putatively,” the text implies that there is no independent reason to believe that Smith would agree with the metaphor’s use outside of the specific context for which he wrote it and that, therefore, the twentieth-century economists who used it did so to support their own views without regard for the metaphor’s importance to Smith’s work.

Choice A is incorrect. Although the text indicates that Smith’s metaphor was largely ignored until some twentieth-century economists revived it and bolstered its status, the text suggests that the later economists used Smith’s metaphor to self-servingly boost their own work while ignoring the original context in which Smith wrote it. Moreover, the statement in this choice fails to

reflect the text's emphasis on Smith's limited use of the metaphor in his work. Choice B is incorrect. Although the text indicates that some twentieth-century economists altered the significance of Smith's metaphor, the text doesn't suggest that the metaphor is a "useful model" of how aggregate benefits arise from individuals' selfish actions, let alone that this usefulness is unaffected by taking the metaphor out of its original context. Choice C is incorrect. Although the text indicates that Smith's metaphor was intended as a model of how individuals acting in their own interest produce aggregate benefits and it was written within the context of the now-outdated economic theory of mercantilism, these points are subordinate to the primary idea in the text, which is that Smith's use of the metaphor was tightly constrained but twentieth-century economists ignored the original context so that they could use the metaphor to suggest, without support, that Smith would agree with their economic views.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 1d0ab3b7

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 1d0ab3b7

In a study by Mika R. Moran, Daniel A. Rodriguez, and colleagues, residents of Quito, Ecuador, and Lima, Peru, were surveyed about parks in their cities. Of the 618 respondents from Quito, 82.9% indicated that they use the city’s parks, and of the 663 respondents from Lima, 72.7% indicated using city parks. Given that the percentage of Quito respondents who reported living within a 10-minute walk of a park was much lower than that reported by Lima respondents, greater proximity alone can’t explain the difference in park use.

- The text makes which point about the difference between the proportions of Quito residents and Lima residents using parks?
- A. It was much larger than the researchers conducting the study expected.
 - B. It is caused by something other than the parks’ proximity to city residents.
 - C. It could be due to inaccuracies in the survey results.
 - D. It was calculated using sources that predate the survey.

ID: 1d0ab3b7 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it presents a statement about the difference between the proportions of Quito residents and Lima residents using parks that is supported by the text. The text states that 82.9% of surveyed Quito residents and 72.7% of surveyed Lima residents reported using their city’s parks. The text then notes that compared to Lima respondents, a much smaller percentage of Quito respondents said they live within a 10-minute walk of a park. The text concludes that because a greater proportion of Quito respondents used parks despite generally living farther from them than Lima respondents did, "greater proximity"—being closer to a park—"can’t explain the difference in park use." That is, the text makes the point that the difference between the proportions of Quito residents and Lima residents using parks is caused by something other than the distance of the parks from city residents.

Choice A is incorrect because the text doesn’t address whether the researchers had expected a particular result and doesn’t indicate that they were surprised by the difference in park usage between the two cities’ residents. The text simply presents the survey findings without stating the researchers’ expectations. Choice C is incorrect because the text gives no indication that there might be inaccuracies in the survey results; the text presents the findings as factual information and uses them as the basis for a conclusion that a certain factor doesn’t explain differences in park usage between Quito and Lima residents. Choice D is incorrect because the text doesn’t mention any sources that predate the survey or suggest that the difference in proportions was calculated using such sources. According to the text, the information about park usage came directly from the survey of residents in Quito and Lima.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 68119550

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 68119550

Paleontologist Lucas E. Fiorelli and colleagues have reported the discovery at a mine in Brazil of several egg clutches, partially preserved single eggs, and egg shells from the Late Cretaceous period. The researchers have concluded that the area was once a nesting and breeding site for titanosaurs, a group of sauropod dinosaurs. The finding is significant given the previous lack of known nesting sites in northern regions of South America, which led many paleontologists to assume that titanosaurs migrated south to lay eggs.

What does the text most strongly suggest about the site discovered by the researchers?

- A. It is the earliest known example of a titanosaur nesting and breeding site.
- B. It was very difficult to excavate given that it was discovered in a mine.
- C. It may have been occupied by other sauropods in addition to titanosaurs.
- D. It is farther north than any other nesting site discovered in South America.

ID: 68119550 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer because it presents a statement about the site discovered by the researchers that is supported by the text. The text discusses Fiorelli and colleagues’ discovery of egg clutches, single eggs, and eggshells in a Brazilian mine. According to the text, the presence of these eggs, which are from the Late Cretaceous period, led the researchers to conclude that the location was once a nesting and breeding site for titanosaurs. The text then explains that the finding is important because of the “previous lack of known nesting sites in northern regions of South America.” If there haven’t been any other discoveries of a nesting site in South America’s northern regions and the site in the Brazilian mine is the first, then the text strongly suggests that the site is farther north than other nesting sites that have been discovered in South America.

Choice A is incorrect because the text doesn’t suggest that the site discovered by Fiorelli and colleagues is the earliest titanosaur nesting and breeding site known to paleontologists but rather that it’s the first nesting site found in northern regions of South America. Moreover, the text doesn’t suggest how the timeline of the newly discovered site compares with that of other titanosaur nesting and breeding sites. Choice B is incorrect because there is no mention in the text about any difficulties that Fiorelli and colleagues faced when they were excavating the nesting and breeding site in the Brazilian mine. Choice C is incorrect because the text doesn’t support the idea that the nesting and breeding site in the Brazilian mine was occupied by sauropods other than titanosaurs. The text simply mentions that titanosaurs are sauropod dinosaurs and presents the researchers’ conclusion that the site they discovered was for titanosaurs.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID adcc7e63

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: adcc7e63

Utah is home to Pando, a colony of about 47,000 quaking aspen trees that all share a single root system. Pando is one of the largest single organisms by mass on Earth, but ecologists are worried that its growth is declining in part because of grazing by animals. The ecologists say that strong fences could prevent deer from eating young trees and help Pando start thriving again.

According to the text, why are ecologists worried about Pando?

- A. It isn't growing at the same rate it used to.
- B. It isn't producing young trees anymore.
- C. It can't grow into new areas because it is blocked by fences.
- D. Its root system can't support many more new trees.

ID: adcc7e63 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer because it presents an explanation that is directly stated in the text for why ecologists are worried about Pando. The text states that Pando is a colony of about 47,000 quaking aspen trees that represents one of the largest organisms on Earth. According to the text, ecologists are worried that Pando's growth is declining, partly because animals are feeding on the trees. In other words, the ecologists are worried that Pando isn't growing at the same rate it used to.

Choice B is incorrect. Rather than indicating that Pando isn't producing young trees anymore, the text reveals that Pando is indeed producing young trees, stating that those trees can be protected from grazing deer by strong fences. Choice C is incorrect because the text states that fences can be used to prevent deer from eating Pando's young trees, not that Pando itself can't grow in new areas because it's blocked by fences. Choice D is incorrect because the text offers no evidence that Pando's root system is incapable of supporting new trees or is otherwise a cause of worry for ecologists.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 6f16c217

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 6f16c217

Algae living within the tissues of corals play a critical role in keeping corals, and the marine ecosystems they are part of, thriving. Some coral species appear brown in color when healthy due to the algae colonies living in their tissues. In the event of an environmental stressor, the algae can die or be expelled, causing the corals to appear white. To recover the algae, the bleached corals then begin to produce bright colors, which block intense sunlight, encouraging the light-sensitive algae to recolonize the corals.

What does the text most strongly suggest about corals that produce bright colors?

- A. These corals have likely been subjected to stressful environmental conditions.
- B. These corals are likely more vulnerable to exposure from intense sunlight than white corals are.
- C. These corals have likely recovered from an environmental event without the assistance of algae colonies.
- D. These corals are more likely to survive without algae colonies than brown corals are.

ID: 6f16c217 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The text says that corals produce bright colors to block sunlight and encourage algae to recolonize after “an environmental stressor.” From this, we can infer that corals that produce bright colors have probably been subjected to an environmental stressor.

Choice B is incorrect. The text says that corals produce bright colors to block intense sunlight, which protects the light-sensitive algae that keep the coral healthy. In other words, bright colors make the coral’s health less vulnerable to intense sunlight. Choice C is incorrect. The text says that corals produce bright colors to encourage algae to recolonize, not that they have recovered without the assistance of algae colonies. Choice D is incorrect. The text never compares the likelihood of differently colored corals surviving without algae colonies.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 3a78185d

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ID: 3a78185d

Philadelphia’s Black Pearl Chamber Orchestra, founded by Jeri Lynne Johnson, performs classical music, from well-known compositions by Beethoven to contemporary works by Jessie Montgomery. For the orchestra’s iConduct! program, Johnson invites community members to learn some basic elements of conducting and then experience conducting the Black Pearl orchestra themselves.

Which choice best states the main idea of the text?

- A. The Black Pearl orchestra performs music from all over the world but mostly performs music composed by Philadelphians.
- B. Johnson founded the Black Pearl orchestra to perform classical music by contemporary artist Jessie Montgomery.
- C. The Black Pearl orchestra gives community members the chance to both listen to and participate in classical music performance.
- D. Johnson has community members conduct an orchestra to demonstrate how difficult the task is.

ID: 3a78185d Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer because it most accurately states the main idea of the text. The text begins by stating that the Black Pearl orchestra performs classical music, and then goes on to explain that the orchestra offers an iConduct! program. According to the text, this program offers community members the opportunity to learn some basics about conducting and then apply what they learn by conducting the orchestra themselves. Thus, the main idea of the text is that community members can both listen to and participate in a classical music performance.

Choice A is incorrect. Although the text states that the Black Pearl orchestra is based in Philadelphia, it doesn’t indicate that most of the music it plays was composed by Philadelphians. Choice B is incorrect. Although the text does state that Johnson founded the Black Pearl orchestra, this is just a detail and not the main focus of the text. Moreover, while the text does say that the orchestra sometimes plays music by Montgomery, it doesn’t assert that the orchestra was founded solely for the purpose of performing Montgomery’s work. Choice D is incorrect. Although the text explains that community members are invited to conduct the Black Pearl orchestra after participating in the iConduct! program, the text doesn’t indicate that Johnson allows community members to do this for the specific purpose of showing how difficult the task is.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID d0bc361d

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
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ID: d0bc361d

Some animal-behavior studies involve observing wild animals in their natural habitat, and some involve capturing wild animals and observing them in a laboratory. Each approach has advantages over the other. In wild studies, researchers can more easily presume that the animals are behaving normally, and in lab studies, researchers can more easily control factors that might affect the results. But if, for example, the results from a wild study and a lab study of Western scrub-jays (*Aphelocoma californica*) contradict each other, one or both of the studies must have failed to account for some factor that was relevant to the birds' behavior.

Which choice best states the main idea of the text?

- A. When the results of a natural-habitat study and those from a lab study of a wild animal such as the Western scrub-jay conflict, the study in the natural habitat is more likely than the lab study to have accurate results.
- B. Studying wild animals such as the Western scrub-jay in both their natural habitat and lab settings is likely to yield conflicting results that researchers cannot fully resolve.
- C. Wild animals such as the Western scrub-jay can be effectively studied in their natural habitat and in the lab, but each approach has drawbacks that could affect the accuracy of the findings.
- D. Differing results between natural-habitat and lab studies of wild animals such as the Western scrub-jay are a strong indication that both of the studies had design flaws that affected the accuracy of their results.

ID: d0bc361d Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer because it most accurately states the main idea of the text. The text begins by explaining that wild animals can be studied in their natural habitat or in a laboratory setting, with each setting offering unique advantages to researchers. The text then highlights an instance in which Western scrub-jays were studied in both settings but with conflicting results, indicating that one or both studies may have failed to account for the disadvantages of its research setting. Thus, the main idea of the text is that while wild animals can be effectively studied in natural or lab settings, there are drawbacks to each that need to be considered to ensure accurate results.

Choice A is incorrect because the text does not position one study setting (natural or lab) as superior to the other; rather, the text states that each one has advantages over the other. Choice B is incorrect. The text provides a hypothetical example of two studies in different environments with conflicting results, but this single example cannot be extrapolated to a general claim about the likelihood that results of studies in different environments will conflict. Additionally, the text does not assert anything about how researchers can or cannot resolve conflicting study results. Choice D is incorrect because the text does not state that discrepancies between natural-habitat and lab-based animal behavior studies are due to both of the designs being flawed. Rather, the text states that the conflict in results can be the consequence of one or both of the studies having failed to account for some factor.

Question ID cef8f768

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: cef8f768

For many years, the only existing fossil evidence of mixopterid eurypterids—an extinct family of large aquatic arthropods known as sea scorpions and related to modern arachnids and horseshoe crabs—came from four species living on the paleocontinent of Laurussia. In a discovery that expands our understanding of the geographical distribution of mixopterids, paleontologist Bo Wang and others have identified fossilized remains of a new mixopterid species, *Terropterus xiushanensis*, that lived over 400 million years ago on the paleocontinent of Gondwana.

- According to the text, why was Wang and his team’s discovery of the *Terropterus xiushanensis* fossil significant?
- A. The fossil constitutes the first evidence found by scientists that mixopterids lived more than 400 million years ago.
 - B. The fossil helps establish that mixopterids are more closely related to modern arachnids and horseshoe crabs than previously thought.
 - C. The fossil helps establish a more accurate timeline of the evolution of mixopterids on the paleocontinents of Laurussia and Gondwana.
 - D. The fossil constitutes the first evidence found by scientists that mixopterids existed outside the paleocontinent of Laurussia.

ID: cef8f768 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer because it states why Wang and his team’s discovery of the *Terropterus xiushanensis* fossil was significant. The text explains that up until Wang and his team’s discovery, the only fossil evidence of mixopterids came from the paleocontinent of Laurussia. Wang and his team, however, identified fossil remains of a mixopterid species from the paleocontinent Gondwana. Therefore, the team’s discovery was significant because the fossil remains of a mixopterid species were outside of the paleocontinent Laurussia.

Choice A is incorrect. Although the text states that Wang and his team identified fossilized remains of a mixopterid species that lived more than 400 million years ago, it doesn’t indicate that mixopterid fossils previously found by scientists dated to a more recent period than that. Choice B is incorrect. Although the text states that mixopterids are related to modern arachnids and horseshoe crabs, it doesn’t suggest that the fossil discovered by Wang and his team confirmed that this relationship is closer than scientists had previously thought. Choice C is incorrect because the team’s fossil established the presence of mixopterids on Gondwana, not on Laurussia. Moreover, the text only discusses the fossil in relation to the geographical distribution of mixopterids, not in relation to their evolution.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 4e5d5c4f

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 4e5d5c4f

Biologists have predicted that birds’ feather structures vary with habitat temperature, but this hadn’t been tested in mountain environments. Ornithologist Sahas Barve studied feathers from 249 songbird species inhabiting different elevations—and thus experiencing different temperatures—in the Himalayan Mountains. He found that feathers of high-elevation species not only have a greater proportion of warming downy sections to flat and smooth sections than do feathers of low-elevation species, but high-elevation species’ feathers also tend to be longer, providing a thicker layer of insulation.

Which choice best states the main idea of the text?

- A.

Barve’s investigation shows that some species of Himalayan songbirds have evolved feathers that better regulate body temperature than do the feathers of other species, contradicting previous predictions.
- B.

Barve found an association between habitat temperature and feather structure among Himalayan songbirds, lending new support to a general prediction.
- C.

Barve discovered that songbirds have adapted to their environment by growing feathers without flat and smooth sections, complicating an earlier hypothesis.
- D.

The results of Barve’s study suggest that the ability of birds to withstand cold temperatures is determined more strongly by feather length than feather structure, challenging an established belief.

ID: 4e5d5c4f Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it most accurately states the main idea of the text. The first sentence of the text introduces the prediction that the structures of birds’ feathers vary with habitat temperature and notes that this prediction hadn’t been tested in mountain environments. The rest of the text focuses on a study by Barve, an ornithologist. The text indicates that Barve studied feathers of 249 songbird species in habitats at different elevations—and, therefore, different temperatures (as the text establishes that elevation affects temperature)—in the Himalayan Mountains. The text then explains that Barve found that compared to feathers of low-elevation species, feathers of high-elevation species have a greater proportion of warming sections and are of a length that provides more insulation—in other words, feather structure varies with elevation-driven temperature differences. Thus, the main idea of the text is that Barve found an association between habitat temperature and feather structure among Himalayan songbirds and that this finding supports a general prediction that hadn’t previously been tested in mountain environments.

Choice A is incorrect because the text specifically focuses on Barve’s finding of a relationship between feather structure and elevation—which corresponds to temperature differences—and not on the broader claim that some birds have feathers better suited to regulating body temperature than others, without reference to a consistent pattern. Moreover, Barve’s finding supports the prediction presented in the text (that feather structures vary with habitat temperature), and there’s no indication that it contradicts any other predictions. Choice C is incorrect because the text doesn’t indicate that Barve found that songbird species have adapted to their environment by growing feathers without flat and smooth sections; his finding of different proportions of

such sections in feathers depending on elevation suggests that they do have flat and smooth sections. Moreover, Barve's finding supports the prediction presented in the text (that feather structures vary with habitat temperature), and there's no indication that it complicates any other earlier hypothesis. Choice D is incorrect because the text doesn't mention a comparison of the effects of feather structure and feather length; in fact, the text suggests that length is part of feather structure, since Barve's finding concerning structure addresses proportions of warming downy sections and insulation-providing length. Moreover, the text doesn't refer to an established belief, presenting instead a prediction that hadn't been tested in mountain environments before Barve conducted his study.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 8bab41ce

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 8bab41ce

The following text is adapted from María Cristina Mena’s 1914 short story “The Vine-Leaf.”

It is a saying in the capital of Mexico that Dr. Malsufrido carries more family secrets under his hat than any archbishop. The doctor’s hat is, appropriately enough, uncommonly capacious, rising very high, and sinking so low that it seems to be supported by his ears and eyebrows, and it has a furry look, as if it had been brushed the wrong way, which is perhaps what happens to it if it is ever brushed at all. When the doctor takes it off, the family secrets do not fly out like a flock of parrots, but remain nicely bottled up beneath a dome of old and highly polished ivory.

Based on the text, how do people in the capital of Mexico most likely regard Dr. Malsufrido?

- A. Many have come to tolerate him despite his disheveled appearance.
- B. Few feel concerned that he will divulge their confidences.
- C. Some dislike how freely he discusses his own family.
- D. Most would be unimpressed by him were it not for his professional expertise.

ID: 8bab41ce Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The text describes a saying in the capital that Malsufrido keeps more secrets than an archbishop. It also says that when he takes off his hat, “the family secrets do not fly out... but remain nicely bottled up,” suggesting that he will not betray his confidences.

Choice A is incorrect. This choice doesn’t reflect the text. While his hat is large and appears to have been brushed in the wrong direction, Dr. Malsufrido does not seem to be regarded as ill-dressed or disheveled. Choice C is incorrect. This choice is the opposite of what the text says. The secrets of families (his and others’) remain “bottled up” in his head. Choice D is incorrect. This choice isn’t supported by the text. His professional expertise is not discussed in the passage.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID ea9a8d8e

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: ea9a8d8e

At over a thousand pages across two volumes, *The Fifty-Year Mission*, compiled by Edward Gross and Mark A. Altman, is presented as the “complete, uncensored, unauthorized oral history” as told by the people behind the media franchise *Star Trek*. The work aspires to be comprehensive by, for example, including accounts from cast and crew members of every *Star Trek* television series and film to date. But while *The Fifty-Year Mission* is clearly a unique and valuable resource, it has a shortcoming common among oral histories: it lacks a clear authorial point of view that could otherwise unite the various accounts into a cohesive whole.

Which choice best states the main idea of the text?

- A. The compilers of *The Fifty-Year Mission* had lofty goals for their oral history of the *Star Trek* franchise, but the published work lacks information about many key events in the franchise’s history.
- B. *The Fifty-Year Mission* includes more accounts from people involved with *Star Trek* television shows than it does from people involved with *Star Trek* films.
- C. The large amount of material compiled into *The Fifty-Year Mission* is surprising given that many of the people involved in the *Star Trek* franchise did not participate in the oral history project.
- D. *The Fifty-Year Mission* represents a worthwhile attempt to thoroughly recount the history of the *Star Trek* franchise, but its approach has an important limitation.

ID: ea9a8d8e Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer because it most accurately states the main idea of the text. According to the text, Gross and Altman’s book is a “valuable resource” because it’s a “complete, uncensored, unauthorized oral history” that features accounts from people involved with “every *Star Trek* television series and film” made. However, the text also points out an inherent shortcoming of the oral history approach used by the book’s creators: the lack of an authorial voice that could unify the many accounts into a coherent narrative. Thus, the text’s main idea is that while the book’s attempt at presenting a comprehensive oral history of the *Star Trek* franchise is a worthwhile one, the approach the creators selected has an important limitation.

Choice A is incorrect. While the goal of the book’s creators (providing a comprehensive history of the *Star Trek* franchise) could be described as lofty, the text’s criticism of the book is focused on the shortcomings of the oral history form, not on events in the *Star Trek* franchise that were not reflected in the book. Choice B is incorrect because the text doesn’t suggest that the book includes more accounts from people involved with television shows than with films. In fact, the text explicitly states that the book includes accounts from people involved with “every *Star Trek* television series and film” ever made. Choice C is incorrect because the text doesn’t indicate that many people involved with the *Star Trek* franchise failed to participate in the book’s oral history project. The only mention of the scope of participation states that the book includes accounts “from cast and crew members of

every *Star Trek* television series and film to date." This information implies a high level of participation from relevant individuals, not a lack of participation.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID d4445ff1

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: d4445ff1

In West Africa, jalis have traditionally been keepers of information about family histories and records of important events. They have often served as teachers and advisers, too. New technologies may have changed some aspects of the role today, but jalis continue to be valued for knowing and protecting their peoples’ stories.

Which choice best states the main idea of the text?

- A. Even though there have been some changes in their role, jalis continue to preserve their communities’ histories.
- B. Although jalis have many roles, many of them like teaching best.
- C. Jalis have been entertaining the people within their communities for centuries.
- D. Technology can now do some of the things jalis used to be responsible for.

ID: d4445ff1 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer because it best states the main idea of the text. According to the text, jalis’ traditional role has been to maintain information about families’ histories and significant events. The text goes on to say that although technological changes have altered jalis’ role somewhat, jalis are still valued for preserving the histories of their communities.

Choice B is incorrect because the text says nothing about jalis’ views of the various tasks they perform. There is no information to support the idea that many jalis prefer teaching to other tasks. Choice C is incorrect because the text doesn’t describe jalis as being sources of entertainment. Rather, jalis are presented as valued sources of knowledge. Additionally, the text gives no indication of how long jalis have been serving their communities. Choice D is incorrect because the main focus of the text is on jalis’ role and their continued value despite the effects of technology, not on what technology can now do. Although the text indicates that jalis’ role has changed as a result of technological changes, the text doesn’t present any specific information about technology performing tasks that jalis once performed.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID aefad9ba

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: aefad9ba

In 2019, 20 previously unknown moons were confirmed to be orbiting Saturn. Three of the moons have prograde orbits (orbiting in the direction the planet spins), and the other 17 have retrograde orbits (orbiting in the opposite direction of the planet’s spin). All but one of the 20 moons are thought to be remnants of bodies that orbited Saturn until they broke apart in collisions. Although the one exceptional moon orbits in the same direction as the planet’s spin, its orbit is highly eccentric compared to the rest, which may suggest that it has a different origin than the other 19 moons.

Based on the text, which choice best describes the moon with the eccentric orbit?

- A. It doesn’t have a retrograde orbit, but it likely has the same origin as the moons with retrograde orbits.
- B. Its orbit is so tilted with respect to the other moons’ orbits that it’s neither prograde nor retrograde.
- C. It has a prograde orbit that is likely the result of having collided with another body orbiting Saturn.
- D. It has a prograde orbit and may not be a remnant of an earlier body that orbited Saturn.

ID: aefad9ba Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer because it most accurately describes the moon with the eccentric orbit. The text indicates that three of the 20 newly discovered moons have prograde orbits, meaning that they orbit Saturn in the same direction as the planet’s spin, while the other 17 moons have retrograde orbits, meaning that they orbit Saturn in the opposite direction of the planet’s spin. The text then states that 19 of the 20 moons appear to be the remains of earlier bodies that orbited Saturn but were broken apart in collisions. The one exception is a moon that orbits Saturn in the same direction as the planet’s spin, meaning that the exceptional moon’s orbit is prograde. The text goes on to state that the exceptional moon’s orbit is so eccentric that the moon may have formed through a different process than the other 19 moons. The moon with the eccentric orbit, therefore, has a prograde orbit and may not be a remnant of an earlier body that orbited Saturn.

Choice A is incorrect because nothing in the text supports the idea that the moon with the eccentric orbit likely has the same origin as the moons with retrograde orbits. Although it’s true that the moon has a prograde orbit (and thus doesn’t have a retrograde orbit), the only information the text provides about the moon’s origin is that it may be different than the origin of the other 19 moons. Choice B is incorrect because the text states that the moon in question orbits Saturn in the same direction as the planet’s spin, meaning that the moon’s orbit is prograde, not that its orbit is neither prograde nor retrograde. Choice C is incorrect because the text merely notes that the moon in question has a prograde orbit without giving any indication of what likely caused that orbit.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 5f70e1cd

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 5f70e1cd

The following text is adapted from Lewis Carroll’s 1889 satirical novel *Sylvie and Bruno*. A crowd has gathered outside a room belonging to the Warden, an official who reports to the Lord Chancellor.

One man, who was more excited than the rest, flung his hat high into the air, and shouted (as well as I could make out) “Who roar for the Sub-Warden?” Everybody roared, but whether it was for the Sub-Warden, or not, did not clearly appear: some were shouting “Bread!” and some “Taxes!”, but no one seemed to know what it was they really wanted.

All this I saw from the open window of the Warden’s breakfast-saloon, looking across the shoulder of the Lord Chancellor. “What can it all mean?” he kept repeating to himself. “I never heard such shouting before—and at this time of the morning, too! And with such unanimity!”

Based on the text, how does the Lord Chancellor respond to the crowd?

- A. He asks about the meaning of the crowd’s shouting, even though he claims to know what the crowd wants.
- B. He indicates a desire to speak to the crowd, even though the crowd has asked to speak to the Sub-Warden.
- C. He expresses sympathy for the crowd’s demands, even though the crowd’s shouting annoys him.
- D. He describes the crowd as being united, even though the crowd clearly appears otherwise.

ID: 5f70e1cd Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer because it presents a statement about how the Lord Chancellor responds to the crowd that is supported by the text. The text indicates that the people in the crowd are roaring and shouting “Bread!” or “Taxes!” and presents them as not knowing what they really want. The Lord Chancellor’s response is to ask what their shouting means but also to observe that they’re shouting with “unanimity,” or total agreement. Clearly, this isn’t the case, which supports the statement that the Lord Chancellor describes the crowd as being united even though it’s not.

Choice A is incorrect because it isn’t supported by the text. Although the text indicates that the Lord Chancellor asks about the meaning of the crowd’s shouting, it doesn’t suggest that he knows what the crowd really wants. Choice B is incorrect because the text doesn’t suggest that the Lord Chancellor wants to speak to the crowd. Furthermore, the text doesn’t indicate that the crowd wants to hear from the Sub-Warden. Although the crowd roars when asked “Who roar for the Sub-Warden?” it’s unclear what the roaring means. Choice C is incorrect because the text doesn’t suggest that the Lord Chancellor knows of or sympathizes with the crowd’s demands. In addition, the text doesn’t indicate that the crowd’s shouting annoys the Lord Chancellor, just that it causes him to keep repeating “What can it all mean?”

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID bcbb780a

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: bcbb780a

Disco remains one of the most ridiculed popular music genres of the late twentieth century. But as scholars have argued, the genre is far less superficial than many people believe. Take the case of disco icon Donna Summer: she may have been associated with popular songs about love and heartbreak (subjects hardly unique to disco, by the way), but like many Black women singers before her, much of her music also reflects concerns about community and identity. These concerns are present in many of the genre’s greatest songs, and they generally don’t require much digging to reveal.

- What does the text most strongly suggest about the disco genre?
- A. It has been unjustly ignored by most scholars despite the importance of the themes addressed by many of the genre’s songs.
 - B. It evolved over time from a superficial genre focused on romance to a genre focused on more serious concerns.
 - C. It has been unfairly dismissed for the inclusion of subject matter that is also found in other musical genres.
 - D. It gave rise to a Black women’s musical tradition that has endured even though the genre itself faded in the late twentieth century.

ID: bcbb780a Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The text argues that disco is "far less superficial" than its popular perception might indicate, and that love and heartbreak are "subjects hardly unique to disco."

Choice A is incorrect. This choice conflicts with the text, which says that scholars argue that disco "is far less superficial than many people believe." Choice B is incorrect. This choice says the opposite of what the text suggests. The writer argues that the genre is not as superficial as commonly believed, but that it always reflected "concerns about community and identity." Choice D is incorrect. The text doesn’t support this choice. There’s nothing in the text about disco giving rise to an enduring Black women’s musical tradition.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID ec7f8dfb

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: ec7f8dfb

The following text is adapted from Christina Rossetti’s 1881 poem “Monna Innominata 2.”

I wish I could remember that first day,
First hour, first moment of your meeting me,
If bright or dim the season, it might be
Summer or Winter for [all] I can say;
So unrecorded did it slip away,
So blind was I to see and to foresee,
So dull to mark the budding of my tree
That would not blossom yet for many a May.

Which choice best states the main idea of the text?

- A. The speaker celebrates how the passage of time has strengthened a relationship that once seemed unimportant.
- B. Because the speaker did not anticipate how important a relationship would become, she cannot recall how the relationship began, which she regrets.
- C. As the anniversary of the beginning of an important relationship approaches, the speaker feels conflicted about how best to commemorate it.
- D. After years of neglecting a once valuable relationship, the speaker worries it may be too late for her to salvage the relationship.

ID: ec7f8dfb Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The speaker says that they wish they could remember when they first met someone, but they can’t remember the meeting at all, because they didn’t know at the time that the relationship would “blossom” later on.

Choice A is incorrect. The speaker does say that the relationship has “blossomed” over time, but only briefly at the end—and they don’t really “celebrate” that fact. Rather, the text has a more regretful tone: it’s about how the speaker can’t remember first meeting this person, and they wish they could. Choice C is incorrect. The speaker doesn’t mention an anniversary—in fact, the speaker can’t remember when they met the person they’re talking about. Choice D is incorrect. The speaker doesn’t say that they neglected the relationship. In fact, the speaker suggests that the relationship has become very important to them—that’s why the speaker wishes that they could remember their first meeting.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 414cfbe8

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 414cfbe8

The painter María Izquierdo played an important role in the development of twentieth-century Mexican art, but her work has never been well-known in the United States except among art historians. One reason for Izquierdo’s relative obscurity is the enormous popularity of some of her peers. In particular, the painters Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera have so captivated the interest of US audiences that Izquierdo and other Mexican artists from the period often get overlooked, despite the high quality of their work.

Which choice best states the main idea of the text?

- A. Izquierdo’s work is not as well-known in the United States as it should be because Kahlo and Rivera draw so much of the public’s attention.
- B. During Izquierdo’s lifetime, her paintings were displayed in galleries in the United States much more frequently than paintings by Kahlo and Rivera were.
- C. Izquierdo painted some of the same subjects that Kahlo and Rivera painted but used different techniques than they used.
- D. Few of Izquierdo’s works are in galleries today because she produced only a small number of paintings.

ID: 414cfbe8 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer because it most accurately states the main idea of the text. The text begins by stating that María Izquierdo was an important figure in the history of twentieth-century Mexican art, but despite her importance, her work hasn’t received widespread recognition in the United States. According to the text, one reason for this is that Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera are so famous in the US that they overshadow other important Mexican artists, including Izquierdo. Thus, the main idea of the text is that Izquierdo’s work is less well known in the US than it should be because Kahlo and Rivera draw most of the public’s attention.

Choice B is incorrect because the text doesn’t discuss the appearance of Izquierdo’s paintings in galleries in the US during her lifetime, nor does it suggest that her paintings were displayed more frequently than paintings by Kahlo or Rivera were. Instead, the text focuses on the fact that Izquierdo has been overlooked in the US because of Kahlo’s and Rivera’s greater popularity. Choice C is incorrect because the text doesn’t discuss either the subject matter of Izquierdo’s paintings or the techniques she used, nor does it compare these aspects of her paintings with those of Kahlo’s and Rivera’s paintings. Choice D is incorrect because the text doesn’t mention how many of Izquierdo’s paintings appear in galleries today, nor does it state that she produced only a small number of paintings.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 97d4f5b7

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 97d4f5b7

The ice melted on a Norwegian mountain during a particularly warm summer in 2019, revealing a 1,700-year-old sandal to a mountaineer looking for artifacts. The sandal would normally have degraded quickly, but it was instead well preserved for centuries by the surrounding ice. According to archaeologist Espen Finstad and his team, the sandal, like those worn by imperial Romans, wouldn't have offered any protection from the cold in the mountains, so some kind of insulation, like fabric or animal skin, would have needed to be worn on the feet with the sandal.

What does the text indicate about the discovery of the sandal?

- A. Temperatures contributed to both protecting and revealing the sandal.
- B. The discovery revealed that the Roman Empire had more influence on Norway than archaeologists previously assumed.
- C. Archaeologists would have found the sandal eventually without help from the general public.
- D. The sandal would have degraded if it hadn't been removed from the ice.

ID: 97d4f5b7 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. A "particularly warm summer" revealed the sandal, and centuries of ice kept it "well preserved." Choice B is incorrect. This choice doesn't reflect the information in the text. The sandal is similar to Roman sandals, but there is no indication that it was a result of Roman influence. Choice C is incorrect. The text doesn't support this choice. We don't have enough information to know whether or not archaeologists would have found the sandal without people like the treasure-hunting mountaineer. Choice D is incorrect. The text says the opposite of this choice. The sandal was preserved by the ice for centuries.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID b6e78548

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: b6e78548

The following text is from Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar’s 1961 novel *The Time Regulation Institute* (translated from the Turkish in 2014 by Maureen Freely and Alexander Dawe). The narrator was once involved with the Time Regulation Institute, a fictional bureaucracy that regulates the time of Turkey’s clocks.

I may be the most humble and absurd man in the world and, as my wife says, the most slovenly creature you may ever meet—that is, before the founding of our institute—but I did come to know a truly great man who possessed a natural genius for invention. I spent years at his side. I watched the way he worked. I witnessed how an idea would suddenly catch fire in his mind and take shape, like a tree sprouting shoots and branches, before coming into being.

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Which choice best states the main idea of the text?

- A. A person was fortunate enough to have found love despite his obvious shortcomings.
- B. An exceptionally talented person professes humility to avoid intimidating others.
- C. A person appreciates the extensive time he passed in the company of someone he deeply admired.
- D. A truly brilliant person lets ideas mature in his mind before expressing them aloud.

ID: b6e78548 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer because it most accurately describes the main idea of the text: a person appreciates the extensive time he passed in the company of a man he deeply admired. The speaker says that he spent "years" (a long period of time) in the company of a "truly great man" with "a natural genius for invention." These phrases indicate the speaker’s feelings of admiration.

Choice A is incorrect because though the text indicates that the speaker feels professional admiration for the "truly great man," the text does not indicate that the speaker feels love for him; nor does the text indicate that the speaker’s humility, absurdity, and slovenly nature proved to be an obstacle to this professional relationship. Choice B is incorrect because though the speaker describes himself as humble, the text does not indicate that he is exceptionally talented; nor does the text indicate that the "truly great man" professes humility or is concerned with whether he intimidates others. Choice D is incorrect because the text does not indicate how either the speaker or the "truly great man" express their ideas.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 4e969314

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 4e969314

To dye wool, Navajo (Diné) weaver Lillie Taylor uses plants and vegetables from Arizona, where she lives. For example, she achieved the deep reds and browns featured in her 2003 rug *In the Path of the Four Seasons* by using Arizona dock roots, drying and grinding them before mixing the powder with water to create a dye bath. To intensify the appearance of certain colors, Taylor also sometimes mixes in clay obtained from nearby soil.

Which choice best states the main idea of the text?

- A. Reds and browns are not commonly featured in most of Taylor’s rugs.
- B. Taylor draws on local resources in the approach she uses to dye wool.
- C. Taylor finds it difficult to locate Arizona dock root in the desert.
- D. *In the Path of the Four Seasons* is widely acclaimed for its many colors and innovative weaving techniques.

ID: 4e969314 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. It best states the main idea of the text. The text opens with the statement that Taylor uses local plants and vegetables to dye wool. The rest of the text describes how she does this.

Choice A is incorrect. This doesn’t state the main idea of the text. The text only mentions one rug: *In the Path of the Four Seasons*, in which reds and browns *are* featured. It never mentions whether or not these colors are featured in her other rugs. Choice C is incorrect. This doesn’t state the main idea of the text. The text never says that Taylor finds it difficult to locate Arizona dock roots. Choice D is incorrect. This doesn’t state the main idea of the text. The text never says that *In the Path of the Four Seasons* is widely acclaimed. Rather, it discusses the rug to illustrate the point made earlier in the passage: that Taylor uses local plants and vegetables to dye wool.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 227f7f9c

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 227f7f9c

The following text is Vita Sackville-West’s circa 1920 poem “Evening.” Spars are ships’ masts, moorings are ropes that hold docked ships in place, and a riding-light is a light that a ship shines when it is anchored.

When little lights in little ports come out,
Quivering down through water with the stars,
And all the fishing fleet of slender spars
Range at their moorings, veer with tide about;

When race of wind is stilled and sails are furled,
And underneath our single riding-light
The curve of black-ribbed deck gleams palely white,
And slumbrous waters pool a slumbrous world;

—Then, and then only, have I thought how sweet
Old age might sink upon a windy youth,
Quiet beneath the riding-light of truth,
Weathered through storms, and gracious in retreat.

- Which choice best states the main idea of the text?
- A. The tranquility of a port in the evening can incline a person to appreciate the stillness of old age.
 - B. The difficulty of bringing a ship into port is apt training for dealing with the types of struggles encountered in old age.
 - C. A person who leads a long life that is varied and active may find it difficult to stay in a calm place.
 - D. The contrast between the peacefulness of a port at night and its activity during the day reflects the contrast between the calm of old age and the vibrancy of youth.

ID: 227f7f9c Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer because it best states the main idea of the text. The speaker describes an evening scene observed from a boat: "little lights in little ports come out" and are reflected in the water’s surface "with the stars," fishing boats are moored, "sails are furled" (rolled up), and the riding-light is shining. The speaker emphasizes the calmness of the scene, noting that the "race of wind is stilled" and the atmosphere is sleepy ("slumbrous waters pool a slumbrous world"), and then indicates that the calmness prompts thoughts of how old age might be "sweet" and "quiet" and "gracious in retreat" after "a windy youth" with "storms." Thus, the main idea is that the tranquility of a port in the evening can lead a person to appreciate the potential stillness of old age.

Choice B is incorrect because the speaker isn't discussing the difficulty of bringing a ship into port but describing the calmness of the port at night. And rather than suggesting that old age involves struggles, the speaker suggests that after "a windy youth" with "storms" to be weathered, old age will be "sweet," "quiet," and "gracious"—that is, old age will be tranquil like a port at night. Choice C is incorrect because the speaker isn't suggesting that a person who has lived a varied and active life might find it difficult to stay in a calm place in old age. On the contrary, the speaker suggests that after a "windy youth" with "storms," old age can be welcomed as something "sweet," "quiet," and "gracious," just like a calm port at night. Choice D is incorrect. Although the speaker does touch on the idea of a "windy youth" followed by "sweet old age," the speaker doesn't tie that idea to a contrast between daytime activity and nighttime peacefulness at a port. The speaker doesn't address any activity during the day at a port, only briefly mentioning that the "race of wind is stilled" at the end of the day, and instead focuses on the tranquility of the port at night and how it prompts thoughts of "quiet" and "gracious" old age.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 3def2cfa

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 3def2cfa

Modern dog breeds are largely the result of 160 years of owners crossbreeding certain dogs in order to select for particular physical appearances. Owners often say that some breeds are also more likely than others to have particular personality traits—basset hounds are affectionate; boxers are easy to train—but Kathleen Morrill and colleagues found through a combination of owner surveys and DNA sequencing of 2,000 dogs that while physical traits are predictably heritable among purebred dogs, behavior varies widely among dogs of the same breed.

Which choice best states the main idea of the text?

- A. Dog breeds would not exist without many years of human intervention in dogs’ reproduction.
- B. Research fails to confirm a commonly held belief about dog breeds and behavior.
- C. The dog breeds most popular among owners have often changed over the past 160 years.
- D. A study of dog breeds is notable for its usage of both opinion surveys and DNA sequencing.

ID: 3def2cfa Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it most accurately states the main idea of the text. The text indicates that dog owners typically claim that some dog breeds are “more likely than others to have particular personality traits.” In other words, the text points out that a commonly held belief about dog breeds is that their personality traits are heritable. The text then states that Kathleen Morrill and colleagues undertook research about dog trait heritability and found that “behavior varies widely among dogs of the same breed.” Because Morrill and colleagues found evidence for variability rather than consistency in the behavior of dogs of the same breed, the statement that research fails to uphold a commonly held belief about dog breeds and behavior accurately reflects the main idea of the text.

Choice A is incorrect. Although the text mentions that humans have long intervened in dogs’ reproduction by intentionally crossbreeding certain dogs, it doesn’t argue that such intervention is essential to the existence of dog breeds. Choice C is incorrect because the text doesn’t discuss the popularity of any dog breeds; breeds are mentioned as having certain traits, but the text says nothing about the popularity of these breeds or traits. Choice D is incorrect. Although the text briefly mentions that Morrill and colleagues conducted a study about dog traits using both surveys and DNA sequencing, this is not the main focus of the text. The text concerns the study’s results about the heritability of dog traits, not the particular methodology used by Morrill and colleagues.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 6390fc17

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 6390fc17

Using the Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy (SOFIA), a team of astronomers mapped out the magnetic field of G47, one of the Milky Way’s galactic bones (dense clouds of gas and dust that run through the middle of the arm of a spiral galaxy). Surprisingly, the map revealed a magnetic field with no clear pattern or direction. The researchers had expected the magnetic field to be similar to the more uniform fields seen in galactic bones in other arms of the Milky Way.

According to the text, what was surprising about the researchers’ mapping of the magnetic field of galactic bone G47?

- A. It showed a weaker magnetic field than expected.
- B. It implied that previous mappings of the magnetic field were inaccurate.
- C. It produced magnetic field measurements similar to those for other galactic bones.
- D. It revealed a magnetic field that wasn’t uniform.

ID: 6390fc17 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer because it presents the point about the magnetic field mapping that the text describes as surprising. The text indicates that a team of astronomers mapped the magnetic field of G47, a galactic bone in the Milky Way, and that the mapping "surprisingly" revealed "no clear pattern or direction" in the magnetic field. The text then adds that the researchers had thought the magnetic field would be as uniform as the magnetic fields of other galactic bones in the Milky Way are. In other words, the researchers were surprised that the mapping revealed a magnetic field that wasn’t uniform.

Choice A is incorrect because the text doesn’t indicate that the mapping surprisingly showed a weaker magnetic field than the researchers had expected. The text makes no mention of the magnetic field’s strength, only its lack of a clear pattern or direction. Choice B is incorrect because the text doesn’t indicate that the magnetic field mapping suggested to researchers that previous mappings were inaccurate. Although the text states that the mapping didn’t show what researchers had expected based on their knowledge of other magnetic fields, there’s no indication that G47’s magnetic field had ever been mapped before. Choice C is incorrect because the text indicates that the researchers were surprised that the magnetic field was different from, not similar to, the magnetic fields of other galactic bones; the text states that because other galactic bones in the Milky Way are more uniform, the researchers had expected the magnetic field of G47 to be more uniform than it turned out to be.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID fae3b9fa

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: fae3b9fa

Many literary theorists distinguish between *fabula*, a narrative’s content, and *syuzhet*, a narrative’s arrangement and presentation of events. In the film *The Godfather Part II*, the *fabula* is the story of the Corleone family, and the *syuzhet* is the presentation of the story as it alternates between two timelines in 1901 and 1958. But literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin maintained that *fabula* and *syuzhet* are insufficient to completely describe a narrative—he held that systematic categorizations of artistic phenomena discount the subtle way in which meaning is created by interactions between the artist, the work, and the audience.

Which choice best states the main idea of the text?

- A. Literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin argued that there are important characteristics of narratives that are not fully encompassed by two concepts that other theorists have used to analyze narratives.
- B. Literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin claimed that meaning is not inherent in a narrative but is created when an audience encounters a narrative so that narratives are interpreted differently by different people.
- C. The storytelling methods used in *The Godfather Part II* may seem unusually complicated, but they can be easily understood when two concepts from literary theory are utilized.
- D. Narratives that are told out of chronological order are more difficult for audiences to understand than are narratives presented chronologically.

ID: fae3b9fa Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer because it most accurately states the main idea of the text. The text begins by explaining that many literary theorists rely on the concepts of *fabula* (a narrative’s content) and *syuzhet* (a narrative’s arrangement and presentation of events) and illustrates these concepts by explaining how they can be applied to the film *The Godfather Part II*. The text then discusses how Mikhail Bakhtin, a literary theorist, argued that *fabula* and *syuzhet* can’t fully describe a narrative, since systematic categorizations such as these fail to account for all the ways in which interactions between the artist, the work, and the audience produce meaning. Thus, the main idea is that Bakhtin argued that there are important characteristics of narratives that are not fully encompassed by two concepts that other theorists have used to analyze narratives.

Choice B is incorrect because according to the text, Mikhail Bakhtin believed that meaning was created through the interactions of the artist, narrative, and audience, not simply through the interaction between the audience and narrative; moreover, the text doesn’t address whether Bakhtin focused on the ways in which different people interpret narratives differently. Choice C is incorrect. Although the text implies that the storytelling methods used in *The Godfather Part II* are complicated, it discusses the film only to illustrate how the concepts of *fabula* and *syuzhet* may be applied to a narrative. The film’s storytelling methods aren’t the primary focus of the text. Choice D is incorrect. The text discusses *The Godfather Part II*, whose narrative doesn’t adhere to a single chronological order, only to illustrate the concepts of *fabula* (a narrative’s content) and *syuzhet* (a narrative’s arrangement and presentation of events). The primary focus of this text isn’t the structure of this film or of other narratives that are told out of

chronological order; moreover, the text doesn't consider whether such structures make it harder for audiences to understand narratives.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 8d57135d

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 8d57135d

Jürgen Kocka and other historians of capitalism rarely discuss domestic capitalism in Africa before the period of European colonization, implicitly presenting capitalism as external to and imposed on Africa. Crislayne Alfagali and other Africanist scholars have shown, however, that in parts of Africa, returns-focused investment, the establishment of open markets for wage labor, and other features of capitalism predated colonization. One reason for this discrepancy is that historians of capitalism tend to focus on longitudinal economic data drawn from archival records, which do not exist for much of precolonial Africa.

Which statement about Alfagali and other Africanist scholars is best supported by information in the text?

- A. They likely make use of different types of evidence than historians of capitalism typically rely on.
- B. They likely differ from historians of capitalism in the methods they use to derive longitudinal economic data from archival records.
- C. They likely have a different view about which activities should be considered capitalist in nature than historians of capitalism do.
- D. They likely view capitalism as having been more beneficial for Africa than historians of capitalism do.

ID: 8d57135d Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer because it presents a statement about Alfagali and other Africanist scholars that is supported by the text. The last sentence of the text explains that historians of capitalism generally rely on a type of data that requires "archival records, which do not exist for much of precolonial Africa." Nevertheless, Alfagali and other Africanist scholars have demonstrated that features of capitalism including "returns-focused investment,...open markets for wage labor, and other features of capitalism" existed in parts of Africa before colonization. Because archival records typically used by historians of capitalism aren't available for precolonial Africa, Alfagali and other Africanist scholars of precolonial capitalism in Africa likely used atypical sources for their studies.

Choice B is incorrect because the text states that archival records containing longitudinal economic data "do not exist for much of precolonial Africa." If these records don't exist for precolonial Africa, then Alfagali and other Africanist scholars couldn't derive data from them by any method. Choice C is incorrect because the text doesn't suggest that Alfagali and other Africanist scholars define capitalism differently than other historians of capitalism do. On the contrary, the text simply asserts that specific features they found, such as "returns-focused investment [and] open markets for wage labor," are "features of capitalism," which implies scholarly agreement that these activities are capitalist in nature. Choice D is incorrect because the text doesn't indicate any effects of capitalism in Africa, positive or negative. Rather, the text explains why precolonial Africa has been omitted from mainstream histories of capitalism and presents work by Alfagali and other Africanist scholars that challenges and corrects the historical record of precolonial capitalism.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 9844f071

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 9844f071

Readers sometimes divide the works of twentieth-century English author Evelyn Waugh into two periods: one consisting of his early satirical novels and the other consisting of his later, more serious—even ponderous—books. Critic Seamus Perry, however, challenges that strict division. Perry argues that Waugh’s writing didn’t change over time as much as some readers have suggested. For instance, Perry contends that some of Waugh’s earliest works, notably his biography of artist Dante Gabriel Rossetti, exhibit the earnest romanticism that would characterize Waugh’s later fiction.

Based on the text, which statement about Waugh’s works would Perry most likely agree with?

- A. Waugh’s works can appropriately be separated into two periods by their subject matter and tone.
- B. Regardless of when they were written, Waugh’s works have important similarities that transcend their differences.
- C. The earliest of Waugh’s works exhibit a satirical tone, even if that tone is more apparent in Waugh’s later works.
- D. Over time, Waugh’s works became less humorous and more focused on weightier topics.

ID: 9844f071 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it presents a statement that is consistent with Perry’s position as described in the text. The text explains that although Waugh’s works are sometimes divided into an early period typified by satirical novels and a later period consisting of “more serious” works, Perry “challenges that strict division” and argues that Waugh’s writing “didn’t change over time as much as some readers have suggested.” As evidence, Perry notes that Waugh’s biography of Dante Gabriel Rossetti and other early works show the “earnest romanticism” associated with Waugh’s later fiction, suggesting continuity across the two periods and also across genres. It is therefore likely that Perry would agree that Waugh’s works have important similarities that transcend their differences, regardless of when they were written.

Choice A is incorrect because the text states that Perry challenges the “strict division” of Waugh’s works into two periods typified by their subject matter and tone. Perry therefore would likely disagree that such separation is appropriate; instead, he argues that Waugh’s writing shows more continuity across time than this division suggests. Choice C is incorrect because it mischaracterizes the similarity that Perry notes in Waugh’s earlier and later works. Perry contends that Waugh’s early works exhibit the “earnest romanticism” of his later fiction, not that the early works’ satirical tone appears more prominently later. Although the text mentions that Waugh’s earlier works are often satirical, Perry’s argument doesn’t emphasize this trait or trace its development over time. Choice D is incorrect because it reflects the periodization of Waugh’s works that Perry is challenging. The text indicates that Perry argues against the idea that Waugh’s writing changed dramatically over the course of his career, and Perry specifically emphasizes a point of similarity between Waugh’s earlier and later works. Given this stance, it’s unlikely that Perry would agree that Waugh’s works became less humorous and more serious over time.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 0bc414ca

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 0bc414ca

Online surveys are a common tool researchers use to collect information. These surveys are usually designed for use on personal computers (PCs), but more people are using smartphones to complete them than they are PCs. This shift in device usage may change how participants interact with online surveys. When researchers Jean Philippe Décieux and Philipp E. Sischka investigated, they found that PC users were more likely to multitask while taking surveys than smartphone users were, but PC users were also more likely to complete the surveys.

Which choice best states the main idea of the text?

- A. People are choosing to take online surveys on smartphones more often than they are on PCs because smartphones are convenient.
- B. Researchers are investigating why survey completion rates are higher on PCs than they are on smartphones, despite increased multitasking on PCs.
- C. Researchers prefer online surveys to other ways of collecting information because they think online survey results are more reliable.
- D. A study shows that the type of device people use to complete online surveys affects how they interact with these surveys.

ID: 0bc414ca Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer because it most accurately states the main idea of the text. The text opens by noting that online surveys are usually designed for PCs but that more people now use smartphones to take them—a shift, the text proposes, that may affect how participants interact with the surveys. The text then describes study findings—PC users were more likely to multitask but also more likely to complete surveys than smartphone users were—as evidence to illustrate the overall point that device type does indeed change how participants behave when responding to surveys. Thus, the text as a whole conveys the idea that according to a study, the type of device people use to complete online surveys affects how they interact with these surveys.

Choice A is incorrect. Although the text notes that more people are using smartphones than PCs for surveys, it doesn't indicate why people are making this choice, much less suggest that convenience is a factor in this shift. The text focuses on the consequences of the shift in device usage, not on its causes. Choice B is incorrect. Although the text reports that PC users were more likely to complete surveys than smartphone users were despite also being more likely to multitask while taking the surveys, it doesn't frame the study as an inquiry into the reasons for these differences in completion rates. Instead, the text presents these findings to illustrate how device type affects survey participants' interactions with online surveys. Choice C is incorrect. Although the text states that online surveys are commonly used in research, the text doesn't discuss whether researchers prefer online surveys over other data collection methods, nor does it indicate that online surveys are more reliable than alternative methods. Rather, the text focuses on how different devices affect the way participants interact with online surveys.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID a34de1df

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: a34de1df

In present-day Chiapas, Mexico, archaeologist Robert Rosenswig, remote-sensing specialist Ricardo López-Torrijos, and colleagues have located 41 smaller settlements surrounding the ancient Mesoamerican city of Izapa. The researchers have concluded that these settlements were culturally linked to Izapa because each of the settlements is the same age and configured in the same manner as Izapa, with a pyramid to the north and a plaza to the south. Their shared structural orientation suggests that residents of the settlements likely performed some of the same cultural ceremonies as residents in Izapa did.

Which choice best states the main idea of the text?

- A. Researchers have determined that the arrangement of Izapa’s structures was based on those of other nearby settlements.
- B. Cultural ceremonies in Izapa seem to have played a more important role for its residents than those in smaller, surrounding settlements did.
- C. Although archaeologists have learned much about Izapa over years of research, they have only recently found the smaller settlements that surrounded it.
- D. Researchers have inferred that Izapa was related to the smaller settlements that surrounded it based in part on the similarity of their construction.

ID: a34de1df Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer because it most accurately states the main idea of the text. The text indicates that Rosenswig, López-Torrijos, and colleagues concluded that there is a cultural link between the city of Izapa and the 41 smaller settlements they located around the city. According to the text, the researchers reached this conclusion because Izapa and the settlements are of the same age and configuration in that all have a pyramid to the north and a plaza to the south. Thus, the main idea of the text is that researchers have inferred that Izapa was related to the smaller settlements that surrounded it based in part on the similarity of their construction.

Choice A is incorrect. Although the text discusses a similarity between how structures in Izapa and nearby settlements are arranged, the text doesn’t indicate that the arrangement in Izapa is based on those of the nearby settlements. Choice B is incorrect. Although the text mentions that residents of Izapa and its surrounding settlements may have performed the same cultural ceremonies, the text doesn’t discuss the ceremonies’ importance for the residents. Choice C is incorrect. Although the text describes findings about Izapa, it doesn’t specify how much archaeologists have learned about Izapa over the years. Additionally, while the text indicates that the discovery of the 41 smaller settlements surrounding Izapa was made in present-day Chiapas and thus may be of recent date, this is a detail in the text, not its main idea.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID d10ac377

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: d10ac377

During the World War II era, some Mexican American women adopted a striking new look called *pachuca* style. They wore altered men’s jackets or zoot suits (wide-legged, long-coated suits) and dramatic makeup, and they combed their hair into high, rounded shapes. Some people criticized *pachuca* style, saying it was dangerous and women should dress traditionally. But historians see things differently. They see *pachuca* style as a form of rebellion against the era’s rigid social expectations for women. They say that it showed a desire for self-expression and freedom on the part of women who adopted the style.

According to the text, how do historians view *pachuca* style?

- A. They think that *pachuca* style was such a popular trend that it continues to influence fashion in the United States to the present day.
- B. They think that *pachuca* style was a way for some Mexican American women to express themselves and resist strict social expectations.
- C. They think that *pachuca* style was celebrated because it enabled some Mexican American women to show their support for the United States during World War II.
- D. They think that *pachuca* style was similar to other fashion trends that different groups of women adopted in the same period.

ID: d10ac377 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it presents a statement about how historians view *pachuca* style that is supported by the text. The text first describes the distinctive *pachuca* style of dress adopted by some Mexican American women during World War II, saying that some criticized it and asserted that women should dress traditionally. The text then goes on to contrast this position with that of historians, who "see things differently": according to these historians, the *pachuca* style showed a wish for freedom and self-expression, and it acted as a kind of rebellion against what society expected of women at the time. Therefore, according to the text, historians think that the *pachuca* style was a way for Mexican women to express themselves and resist strict social expectations.

Choice A is incorrect because the text explicitly describes the *pachuca* style as a distinctive look adopted during the World War II era. It does not indicate that the *pachuca* style influences fashion in the United States in the present day. Choice C is incorrect because the text does not indicate that Mexican American women wore the *pachuca* style to show support for the United States during World War II; rather, the style was a means of self-expression and rebellion against social expectations. Choice D is incorrect because the text does not compare the *pachuca* style to other fashion trends: the *pachuca* style is the only style mentioned.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 3d07a252

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 3d07a252

A contraction of “you all,” the pronoun “y’all” has long been used as a plural version of “you” in the South and in Black communities around the US. In recent decades, most other English-speaking communities in the US have begun to use “y’all.” What explains its rise in popularity? Many varieties of English have no pronoun that specifically addresses more than one person and instead must use “you” to address both one person and more than one. But “y’all” always refers to two or more people. As a result, it conveys the speaker’s meaning more precisely than “you” can.

Which question does the text most directly attempt to answer?

- A. How many other plural versions of the pronoun “you” are there in English, besides “y’all”?
- B. Why has the pronoun “y’all” become more widely used in the US?
- C. When was the first recorded use of the pronoun “y’all” in the English language?
- D. Is “y’all” commonly used in English-speaking regions of the world besides the US?

ID: 3d07a252 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it presents a question that the text is attempting to answer: why has the pronoun "y'all" become more widely used in the US? The text begins by explaining where and how the plural pronoun "y'all" originated and then goes on to state that its use has been rising in popularity, even in areas outside of its place of origin. The text then attributes this rise in popularity to the fact that many varieties of English do not have a pronoun to address more than one person, and thus "you" must function as both a singular and plural pronoun.

Choice A is incorrect because while the text states that "y'all" is used as a plural of "you" in English, it does not discuss other plural forms of the word. Choice C is incorrect because while the text discusses the general origins of the pronoun "y'all," it does not state when the use of the pronoun was first recorded in the English language. Choice D is incorrect because though the text addresses the use of the pronoun "y'all" within English-speaking communities in the US, it does not address its use outside of that geographic area.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 8a3275db

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 8a3275db

Elizabeth Asiedu has identified a negative correlation between the share of developing countries’ economies derived from natural-resource extraction and those countries’ receipts of foreign investment. This may appear counterintuitive—resource extraction requires initial investments (in extractive technology, for instance) at scales best met by multinational corporations—but Asiedu notes that natural-resource industries’ boom-bust cycle can destabilize local currencies and increase developing countries’ vulnerability to external shocks, creating levels of uncertainty to which foreign investors are typically averse.

Which choice best states the main idea of the text?

- A. Although it may seem surprising that foreign investment declines in developing countries as natural-resource extraction makes up a larger share of those countries’ economies, that decline happens because resource extraction requires initial investments too large for foreign investors to supply.
- B. Although developing countries tend to become less dependent on foreign investment as natural-resource industries make up a larger share of their economies, this change may not occur if the boom-bust cycle of those industries destabilizes local currencies or increases countries’ vulnerability to external shocks.
- C. Although one might expect that foreign investment would increase as natural-resource extraction makes up a larger share of developing countries’ economies, the opposite happens because heavy reliance on natural resources can lead to unattractive conditions for investors.
- D. Although foreign investors tend to avoid initial investments in natural-resource industries in developing countries, foreign investment may increase significantly as those industries stabilize and the risks associated with them decline.

ID: 8a3275db Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer because it accurately states the main idea of the text. According to the text, contrary to what some might expect, foreign investment is typically lower in developing countries whose economies are more dependent on natural-resource extraction. The text explains that high reliance on natural-resource extraction can subject a developing country to economic shocks that can destabilize the local currency and introduce economic uncertainty that tends to keep investors away. In other words, although we may think otherwise, foreign investors are less willing to invest in projects in developing countries whose economies are heavily dependent on natural-resource extraction because those economies tend to exhibit instability that investors want to avoid.

Choice A is incorrect. The text does indicate that foreign investment is typically lower in developing countries whose economies are more dependent on natural-resource extraction; the text further indicates that natural-resource extraction requires substantial initial investments (to acquire things like required technologies) for which there are fewer investors willing to participate at this stage than one might think. But the text does not implicate the cost of these initial investments as a reason why foreign investment is less widely available than some might think. Choice B is incorrect. The text indicates that greater dependence on

natural-resource extraction makes a developing country less appealing to foreign investors because of associated economic instability. Rather than arguing that the goal of developing countries is to become less dependent on foreign investment, as the phrasing of choice B suggests, the text focuses only on why foreign investors become less involved with such countries, which suggests that more investment would be preferable. Choice D is incorrect. Although the text indicates that natural-resource extraction requires substantial initial investments (to acquire things like required technologies) and that there are fewer likely investors willing to participate at this stage than one might think, the text does not address what investors are likely to do over time as the industry stabilizes itself.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID ee29c9d6

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: ee29c9d6

Recently, scientists looked at data collected by NASA's InSight lander to learn more about seismic activity on Mars, known as marsquakes. The data show that the marsquakes all started from the same location on the planet. This discovery was surprising to scientists, as they expected that the marsquakes would originate from all over the planet because of the cooling of the planet's surface. Now, scientists believe that there could be areas of active magma flows deep beneath the planet's surface that trigger the marsquakes.

According to the text, what was surprising to scientists studying the seismic activity data from NASA's InSight lander?

- A. The surface temperature of Mars has been rising.
- B. There were different types of seismic waves causing marsquakes.
- C. NASA's InSight lander collected less data than scientists had expected.
- D. All the marsquakes started from the same location on the planet.

ID: ee29c9d6 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer because it presents a statement about what surprised the scientists that is supported by the text. The text states that the marsquakes described in the data from NASA's InSight lander originated from the same location on Mars. The text goes on to say that because they had expected the opposite (that marsquakes would originate from all over the planet) this discovery surprised the scientists.

Choice A is incorrect because the text doesn't say that the data from NASA's InSight lander revealed any surprising information about the planet's surface temperature. Instead, the text mentions the cooling of Mars's surface as a reason the scientists expected that marsquakes had multiple origins. In addition, cooling would indicate that the temperature has been falling rather than rising. Choice B is incorrect. Although the text indicates that by studying seismic activity scientists found a possible explanation for what causes marsquakes, the text doesn't say that they discovered that marsquakes are caused by different types of seismic waves. Rather, the text states that based on the data from NASA's InSight lander, scientists now believe that this seismic activity happens because of areas of active magma that flow below the planet's surface. Choice C is incorrect because the text doesn't discuss the amount of data NASA's InSight lander collected or whether scientists who studied the data found the amount to be as expected. Instead, the text focuses on what the data revealed about where on Mars the marsquakes originated.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 5dd9a927

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 5dd9a927

Businesses selling clothing and other fashion items face obstacles in trying to forecast how much product to order: tastes and styles change quickly, while manufacturing clothing takes a significant amount of time. Researchers Youran Fu and Marshall Fisher have found that combining sellers’ own data with information gathered from social media can dramatically improve the accuracy of such forecasts—by 24 to 57 percent in the cases they directly studied. Better predictions mean demand is easier to meet without retailers becoming overstocked.

- Which choice best states the main idea of the text?
- A. Using multiple data sources can enhance the ability of sellers in the fashion industry to anticipate demand.
 - B. Social media is revolutionizing how both sellers and researchers view the fashion industry.
 - C. Becoming overstocked is the main preoccupation of sellers trying to forecast demand for fashion items.
 - D. Retailers can use their own data to accurately predict how tastes and styles are evolving.

ID: 5dd9a927 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer because it most accurately states the main idea of the text. The text explains that fashion retailers face challenges in forecasting product demand due to rapidly changing tastes and lengthy manufacturing times. It then presents research by Fu and Fisher showing that combining retailers’ own data with social media information significantly improves forecast accuracy. The text concludes by noting that better predictions help retailers meet demand without becoming overstocked. Thus, the main idea is that using multiple data sources (retailers’ own data combined with social media information) can enhance fashion retailers’ ability to anticipate demand.

Choice B is incorrect because the text doesn’t claim that social media is revolutionizing, or fundamentally changing, how sellers and researchers view the fashion industry. The text never addresses the way the fashion industry is viewed; rather, it discusses a practical approach sellers in the industry can take to better match production with demand. Choice C is incorrect. Although avoiding overstocking is mentioned as a benefit of an approach that can help fashion sellers better predict demand, the text doesn’t focus on overstocking or characterize it as the main concern of sellers. Rather, the text is focused on discussing the approach itself. Choice D is incorrect because the text suggests that fashion sellers encounter obstacles when using their own data to try to forecast demand as tastes and styles change; the text focuses on the idea that instead of using their own data alone, retailers should combine their own data with social media information to more accurately forecast demand.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 31f15c17

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 31f15c17

The following text is from Thomas Mann’s 1924 novel *The Magic Mountain*, translated by John E. Woods in 1995.

The story of Hans Castorp that we intend to tell here—not for his sake (for the reader will come to know him as a perfectly ordinary, if engaging young man), but for the sake of the story itself, which seems to us to be very much worth telling (although in Hans Castorp’s favor it should be noted that it is *his* story, and that not every story happens to everybody)—is a story that took place long ago, and is, so to speak, covered with the patina of history and must necessarily be told with verbs whose tense is that of the deepest past.

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What does the text most strongly suggest about the story of Hans Castorp?

- A. Though it is true that stories of even the most uninteresting people are themselves interesting because all people are unique, the reason this story is interesting is nonetheless difficult to understand because of the passage of time.
- B. Even though it is a story of a person of no particular importance, its age and the manner in which it therefore must be told are both indicators that the story itself is important.
- C. Like all stories about the lives of inconsequential people, this story must necessarily be related in a particular way if the reason the story is consequential is to be made evident to the audience.
- D. It is a remarkable story that happened to an unremarkable person, though one could plausibly argue that because the story is valuable, some of its value accrues to the person at its center.

ID: 31f15c17 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer because it presents a statement about Hans Castorp’s story that is suggested by the text. The narrator of the text indicates that the story about Hans Castorp will be told not because there is something particularly notable about him, since he is pleasant but "perfectly ordinary," but because the story itself is remarkable ("very much worth telling"). The narrator then notes that there is a benefit in being at the heart of the story—that it is "in Hans Castorp’s favor" that the story is his, and maybe uniquely so ("not every story happens to everybody"). Thus, the text suggests both that the story that will be told is a remarkable one that happened to an unremarkable person and that it is reasonable to argue that the person at the center of a valuable story takes on some of the story’s value.

Choice A is incorrect. Although the narrator of the text makes the point that "not every story happens to everybody," the narrator doesn’t state that stories are interesting simply because the people they are about are unique. Rather, the narrator suggests that one particular story is "very much worth telling" on its own and that Hans Castorp benefits from the fact that the story is remarkable and may be unique to him. Further, the narrator never suggests that the story will be hard to understand even though it is old. Choice B is incorrect. Although the narrator of the text suggests that Hans Castorp is of no particular importance, since he is a "perfectly ordinary" person, the narrator never reveals what makes the story of Castorp important, just that "the story itself" is

"very much worth telling." The narrator states that the story "took place long ago," is "covered with the patina of history," and can be told only "with verbs whose tense is that of the deepest past," but the story's age and the way it must be told aren't presented as reasons the story is important; the narrator is simply providing details about how the story will be told. Choice C is incorrect because the narrator of the text doesn't suggest that all stories about people who are "perfectly ordinary" (like Hans Castorp) must be told in particular ways to make it clear why those stories are consequential. Further, the narrator suggests that Hans Castorp's story must be told "with verbs whose tense is that of the deepest past" because it took place so long ago, not because telling it that way will convey the story's importance.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 5cf669ce

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 5cf669ce

Artificial leaves are a developing renewable energy technology that mimics the process of photosynthesis in plants. These devices are silicon-based solar cells coated in chemical catalysts that activate reactions that split water molecules into hydrogen and oxygen gas. The technology, while generating lots of interest, is not yet commercially viable as a large-scale energy source. To meet this challenge, scientists from many fields are researching ways to store, transport, and distribute the energy the devices produce while other scientists are working to improve the cost and efficiency of the devices.

Which choice best states the main idea of the text?

- A. Continued research and development in artificial-leaf technology is needed before the devices can be widely used as an energy source.
- B. The recent increase in the commercial use of artificial leaves as an energy source has encouraged many scientists to research ways to improve the technology.
- C. Artificial leaves split water molecules into oxygen and hydrogen gas using catalysts more efficiently than plants do using the process of photosynthesis.
- D. Artificial leaves were developed to mimic the natural process of photosynthesis in plants in order to store energy for long-term commercial use.

ID: 5cf669ce Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer because it most accurately states the main idea of the text. According to the text, artificial leaves are a renewable energy technology that’s in development and generating interest. The text goes on to state that artificial-leaf technology "is not yet commercially viable as a large-scale energy source" and that scientists from several fields are doing additional research to refine the technology. Thus, the main idea is that continued research and development in artificial-leaf technology is needed before the devices can be widely used as an energy source.

Choice B is incorrect. While the text does state that scientists from many fields are researching artificial leaves, they’re doing so to address the fact that the leaves are not yet commercially viable, rather than in response to an increase in commercial use. Choice C is incorrect. Although the text does explain that artificial leaves help split water molecules into oxygen and hydrogen gas using catalysts, it doesn’t argue that this process is more efficient than photosynthesis. This is merely a detail of the text and not the main idea, which is about the additional research needed to improve the cost and efficiency of these artificial leaves. Choice D is incorrect. Although the text indicates that artificial leaves mimic photosynthesis in plants, this is an incidental detail in support of the main idea that additional research is needed to make artificial leaves commercially viable.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 70e105da

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 70e105da

A subject of much speculation, distinctive sets of parallel ridges mark the icy crust of Europa, Jupiter’s smallest moon. Researchers now claim that the ridges’ formation mechanism mirrors that of a strikingly similar pair on Greenland’s ice sheet. There, surface water seeped through fissures in the sheet and formed a water pocket that subsequently disrupted the overlying ice, forcing fragments of it upward and outward into peaks, as the pocket froze and expanded. Although Europa lacks liquid surface water, the same process could be driven by the moon’s subsurface ocean.

Which choice best states the main idea of the text?

- A. Researchers think that the ridges on Europa and the ridges in Greenland may have been formed by the same process even though Europa, unlike Greenland, doesn’t have liquid water on its surface.
- B. The primary difference between the ridges on Europa and the ridges in Greenland is that unlike the Europa ridges, the Greenland ridges are parallel.
- C. The pair of ridges found on Greenland’s ice sheet appear to have formed long before the recently discovered sets of ridges on Europa formed.
- D. Researchers don’t understand why Europa is marked by so many sets of ridges when the moon doesn’t have any liquid water on its surface that could have collected and expanded under the icy crust.

ID: 70e105da Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer because it accurately states the main idea of the text. The text focuses on formations of parallel ice ridges on Jupiter’s moon Europa that are said to be formed by the same mechanism that formed a parallel set of ridges on Greenland’s ice sheet. The text indicates that in Greenland, water on the surface seeps to the lower portion of the ice sheet, resulting in uplift that creates the ridges, and it states that although Europa lacks liquid water on its surface, the same process could be driven by an ocean below Europa’s surface. In other words, the main idea of the text is that parallel ridges in the ice on Europa and Greenland are likely caused by similar processes even though in Greenland the process begins with liquid water on the surface while Europa lacks liquid water on the surface.

Choice B is incorrect because the text states outright that the ridges on Europa are parallel and furthermore refers to Greenland’s ridges as "strikingly similar" to those on Europa. Choice C is incorrect because the text makes no mention of when any of the ice ridges formed, either separately or relative to one another. Choice D is incorrect because the text does not indicate any uncertainty about the reason for the ice ridges on Europa and, in fact, clearly states that researchers now claim to know the mechanism that created the ridges.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 23121ffa

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 23121ffa

Electronic music pioneer Wendy Carlos is credited with the music for three feature films: *A Clockwork Orange* (1971), *The Shining* (1980), and *Tron* (1982). However, her musical score for *A Clockwork Orange* is mostly made up of her arrangements of Ludwig van Beethoven’s work. Also, almost all the music that she and Rachel Elkind composed for *The Shining* was unused by director Stanley Kubrick. It did not appear in the film. Of the three films, *Tron* is the one in which audiences can hear the most of Carlos’s original compositions.

Which choice best states the main idea of the text?

- A. Of the three films for which Carlos is credited, *Tron* features the most original music from her.
- B. The director of *The Shining* used most of the music that Carlos composed for it.
- C. Beethoven is widely considered to be a more important composer than Carlos.
- D. Carlos is a notable innovator among film composers in the 1970s and 1980s.

ID: 23121ffa Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer because it best states the main idea of the text. The text indicates that Wendy Carlos scored three feature films: *A Clockwork Orange*, *The Shining*, and *Tron*. It also indicates that Carlos’s work on *A Clockwork Orange* consisted primarily of electronic arrangements of Beethoven compositions and that very little of what she and Rachel Elkind composed for *The Shining* was used in the film. But the soundtrack for *Tron* consists largely of music composed by Carlos, so it contains more of her original music than do the soundtracks for the other two films. Thus, the main idea of the text is that of the three films for which Carlos is credited, *Tron* features the most original music from her.

Choice B is incorrect because it directly contradicts the text’s claim that "very little of what she and Rachel Elkind composed for *The Shining* was used in the film." Choice C is incorrect because the text doesn’t address the perceived quality of different composers, instead, it discusses how much of Carlos’s original work was used in each of the three films she scored. Choice D is incorrect because it doesn’t relate to any of the major themes of the text: the work Wendy Carlos did for three feature films, how much of that work was composed by Carlos, and how much of her original work was ultimately used in the film.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 3765041a

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 3765041a

Choctaw/Cherokee artist Jeffrey Gibson turns punching bags used by boxers into art by decorating them with beadwork and elements of Native dressmaking. These elements include leather fringe and jingles, the metal cones that cover the dresses worn in the jingle dance, a women’s dance of the Ojibwe people. Thus, Gibson combines an object commonly associated with masculinity (a punching bag) with art forms traditionally practiced by women in most Native communities (beadwork and dressmaking). In this way, he rejects the division of male and female gender roles.

Which choice best describes Gibson’s approach to art, as presented in the text?

- A. He draws from traditional Native art forms to create his original works.
- B. He has been influenced by Native and non-Native artists equally.
- C. He finds inspiration from boxing in designing the dresses he makes.
- D. He rejects expectations about color and pattern when incorporating beadwork.

ID: 3765041a Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer because it most accurately describes Gibson’s approach to art. As the text explains, Gibson, who is Cherokee and Choctaw, transforms punching bags into art pieces by applying (or attaching) to them beadwork and elements of Native dressmaking, including leather fringe and the jingles of the jingle dress. The text goes on to say that in most Native communities, the art forms of beadwork and dressmaking are traditionally practiced by women. Therefore, Gibson’s approach to art consists of creating original works by drawing from traditional Native art forms.

Choice B is incorrect. Because Gibson incorporates Native art forms into his own original artwork, it can be inferred that he has been influenced by other Native artists, but the text never suggests that non-Native artists have influenced him. Choice C is incorrect because the text doesn’t indicate that Gibson designs dresses influenced by boxing but instead that he turns punching bags, which are used in boxing, into works of art by applying elements of Native dressmaking to them. Choice D is incorrect. Although Gibson does incorporate beadwork into his art, the text never mentions the colors or patterns that he uses or suggests that his art defies the expectations that people might have about color and pattern in beadwork.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 5a36e9e0

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 5a36e9e0

NASA’s Aspera mission, led by Carlos Vargas, will investigate the circumgalactic medium (CGM), the huge swaths of low-density gas that fill and surround galaxies. Specifically, the team will focus on portions of the gas that exist in a “warm-hot” phase: these portions haven’t previously been observable but are thought to fuel new star formation and hold most of the mass that makes up a galaxy. Using a telescope capable of revealing these parts of the CGM, the Aspera mission should help answer long-standing questions about how galaxies emerge, change, and even interact.

- Which choice best states the main idea of the text?
- A. As the leader of NASA’s Aspera mission, Vargas will be the first person to investigate the makeup of the CGM.
 - B. Although galaxies that are surrounded by the CGM have been studied, researchers have been unable to directly observe low-density gas in the CGM in the “warm-hot” phase.
 - C. Researchers don’t yet have a complete understanding of the process of galaxy evolution but have raised the possibility that galaxies interact with each other at times.
 - D. The Aspera mission is expected to produce the first direct observations of CGM gas in the “warm-hot” phase, which likely has an important role in the evolution of galaxies.

ID: 5a36e9e0 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer because it most accurately states the main idea of the text. The text begins by mentioning NASA’s Aspera mission, which will investigate the low-density gas that makes up the circumgalactic medium (CGM). According to the text, this mission will focus on a portion of the CGM’s gas that exists in a “warm-hot” phase; this “warm-hot” gas has not been previously observed, but it is thought to make up most of the mass of galaxies and play a part in star formation. Finally, the text mentions a telescope capable of examining this previously unobservable “warm-hot” gas: the Aspera mission will use this telescope in the hope of answering questions about galaxy formation and change. Therefore, the main idea of the text is that the Aspera mission is likely to produce the first direct observations of CGM gas in the “warm-hot” phase, which likely has an important role in the evolution of galaxies.

Choice A is incorrect. Although this choice mentions the Aspera mission, names its leader, and generally states the mission’s purpose, it does not reference the “warm-hot” gas or fully convey the reason why the Aspera mission is significant. Choice B is incorrect. Although this choice mentions the “warm-hot” gas that makes up a portion of the CGM, it does not reference the Aspera mission or describe its importance. The text also does not mention that galaxies surrounded by the CGM have been studied. Choice C is incorrect. Although this choice describes a problem related to the CGM that researchers have been attempting to solve and presents the speculation of those researchers, it does not mention the Aspera mission or describe its purpose.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID bc7cfb93

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: bc7cfb93

The following text is from William Shakespeare’s play *The Tempest*, first performed in 1611. Miranda has lived on an island with her father, Prospero, since she was three years old. Prospero has stated that Miranda likely does not remember anything other than her life on the island.

MIRANDA: 'Tis far off,
And rather like a dream than an assurance
That my remembrance warrants. Had I not
Four or five women once that tended me?

PROSPERO: Thou hadst, and more, Miranda. But how is it
That this lives in thy mind? What seest thou else
In the dark backward and abysm of time?
If thou remember'st ought ere thou camest here,
How thou camest here thou mayst.

- In the text, which point does Prospero most directly make about Miranda and her memories?
- A. Miranda’s reminiscences about her early childhood have a melancholy quality that betrays her discontented view of her current circumstances.
 - B. Miranda’s doubts about the accuracy of one recollection of a place other than the island are clouding her judgment and seem to be making her reluctant to explore her recollection of traveling to the island.
 - C. Miranda’s ability to summon details of an experience she had before arriving on the island suggests that she may also be able to summon details of her arrival on the island.
 - D. Miranda’s impression of a scene is vague because she is remembering a scenario she had daydreamed about as a child rather than a scenario that had occurred in reality.

ID: bc7cfb93 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer because it presents a point that Prospero makes about Miranda. The text begins with Miranda responding to Prospero’s claim that she probably doesn’t remember her life before the island. She describes a distant memory, asking if she had "four or five women" caring for her. Prospero confirms this ("thou hadst") and then asks what else she can recall, stating that because she remembers one thing from the time before she lived on the island ("ought ere thou camest here"), she might also remember arriving on the island ("how thou camest here"). That is, Prospero indicates that Miranda’s ability to summon details of an experience from before her arrival on the island suggests that she may also be able to summon details of her arrival.

Choice A is incorrect because Prospero doesn't say anything about how Miranda presents her early childhood memory of having several people care for her—he indicates only his surprise that she remembers something from so long ago ("the dark backward and abysm of time") and his thought that she may also be able to recall another childhood event: her arrival on the island. Further, Prospero doesn't suggest that he believes Miranda is discontent in her current circumstances. Choice B is incorrect. Although Miranda suggests some doubt about her recollection of a place other than the island, in that she describes it as "like a dream" she can't be certain of, Prospero doesn't mention her uncertainty—though he himself wonders how it is possible that she correctly recalls something from so long ago ("abysm of time"). Rather than indicating that doubt is making Miranda reluctant, Prospero simply states that Miranda may have the ability to remember traveling to the island. Choice D is incorrect. Although Miranda describes a vague impression of several people who cared for her as a young child and states that it is "rather like a dream" instead of something she is certain is real, Prospero doesn't indicate that Miranda is remembering a childhood daydream. Instead, he confirms that what Miranda remembers actually happened, answering her question about having had caregivers with "thou hadst," and asks her what else she can remember from long ago.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID e688875b

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: e688875b

The following text is adapted from Guy de Maupassant’s nineteenth-century short story “The Trip of Le Horla” (translated by Albert M. C. McMaster, A. E. Henderson, Mme. Quesada, et al.). The narrator is part of a group traveling in a hot-air balloon at night.

The earth no longer seems to exist, it is buried in milky vapors that resemble a sea. We are now alone in space with the moon, which looks like another balloon travelling opposite us; and our balloon, which shines in the air, appears like another, larger moon, a world wandering in the sky amid the stars, through infinity. We no longer speak, think nor live; we float along through space in delicious inertia. The air which is bearing us up has made of us all beings which resemble itself, silent, joyous, irresponsible beings, peculiarly alert, although motionless.

Which choice best states the main idea of the text?

- A. The narrator feels a growing sense of isolation even though his companions are nearby during the balloon ride.
- B. The narrator and his companions are completely absorbed in the change in perspective they gain while riding in the balloon.
- C. The narrator and his companions are troubled by the disorienting effects of the altitude while riding in the balloon.
- D. The narrator is pleasantly surprised by his companions’ unrestrained enthusiasm about the sensation of riding in the balloon.

ID: e688875b Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it most accurately states the main idea of the text. The narrator describes the view he and his companions have from the balloon: the earth lies beneath "milky vapors," and the balloon itself looks like another moon. The narrator goes on to explain how the people riding in the balloon are affected by the ride, explaining that they are immersed in the experience: floating along in "delicious inertia," or inactivity, like "silent, joyous, irresponsible beings." Thus, the main idea is that the narrator and his companions are completely absorbed in the change in perspective they gain while riding in the balloon.

Choice A is incorrect because the narrator never describes himself as feeling isolated from his companions; instead, he characterizes riding in the balloon as an experience he is sharing with them. And although he does imply a sense of isolation, it is isolation from those on the ground, as when he says of himself and his companions, "We are now alone." Choice C is incorrect because the narrator doesn’t suggest that he or his companions are troubled by the effects of the balloon ride. Instead, he describes himself and his companions as "joyous" and the experience of floating in the balloon as "delicious." Choice D is incorrect because nothing in the text suggests that the narrator is surprised by his companions’ response to the balloon ride. In fact, the text indicates that the narrator and his companions are having the same experience: they’re described as "silent" and "motionless," rather than as having unrestrained enthusiasm.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 17607b25

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 17607b25

The recovery of a 1,000-year-old Chinese shipwreck in the Java Sea near present-day Indonesia has yielded a treasure trove of artifacts, including thousands of small ceramic bowls. Using a portable X-ray fluorescence analyzer tool, Lisa Niziolek and her team were able to detect the chemical composition of these bowls without damaging them. By comparing the chemical signatures of the bowls with those of the materials still at old Chinese kiln sites, Niziolek and her team can pinpoint which Chinese kilns likely produced the ceramic bowls.

Which choice best states the main idea of the text?

- A. Because of a new technology, researchers can locate and recover more shipwrecks than they could in the past.
- B. Researchers have been able to identify the location of a number of Chinese kilns in operation 1,000 years ago.
- C. With the help of a special tool, researchers have determined the likely origin of bowls recovered from a shipwreck.
- D. Before the invention of portable X-ray fluorescence, researchers needed to take a small piece out of an artifact to analyze its components.

ID: 17607b25 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer because it most accurately states the main idea of the text. According to the text, thousands of ceramic bowls were found in a recovered Chinese shipwreck. The text goes on to say that Niziolek and her team used a special tool, a portable X-ray fluorescence analyzer, to determine the bowls’ chemical signatures. Comparing these chemical signatures with the chemical signatures of materials they had collected from old Chinese kiln sites, the text says, allowed the researchers to identify which kilns had produced the bowls. In other words, the researchers determined the bowls’ origin.

Choice A is incorrect. Although the text indicates that the researchers used technology in the form of a portable X-ray fluorescence analyzer, it doesn’t specifically state that this technology is new. In addition, the text says that Niziolek and her team used the tool to determine the chemical composition of bowls that were found in a Chinese shipwreck, not to locate and recover the shipwreck itself. There’s no indication in the text that a new technology can help researchers locate and recover shipwrecks. Choice B is incorrect because the text indicates that the researchers collected materials from old kiln sites for chemical comparison with the ceramic bowls, which means that the researchers must have already known the location of those kiln sites. Rather than identifying the location of the kilns, the researchers determined which kilns in operation 1,000 years ago had likely produced the bowls that were found in the shipwreck. Choice D is incorrect. Although the text says that using a portable X-ray fluorescence analyzer tool enabled Niziolek and her team to analyze artifacts in the form of ceramic bowls without damaging them, the text doesn’t discuss how researchers analyzed artifacts before this tool was invented. Moreover, the point that the bowls were left undamaged isn’t the text’s main idea. Rather, it’s a detail that’s provided to develop the main idea, which is that the researchers used a special tool to determine where the bowls had been produced.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID ea1b9108

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: ea1b9108

Paleontologists searching for signs of ancient life have found many fossilized specimens of prehistoric human ancestors, including several from the Pleistocene era discovered in a geological formation in the Minatogawa quarry in Japan. However, to study the emergence of the earliest multicellular organisms to appear on Earth, researchers must turn elsewhere, such as to the Ediacaran geological formation at Mistaken Point in Canada. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, the 146-hectare reserve contains more than 10,000 fossils that together document a critical moment in evolutionary history.

What does the text indicate about the geological formation at Mistaken Point?

- A. It holds a greater number of fossils but from a smaller variety of species than the formation in the Minatogawa quarry does.
- B. It has provided evidence that the earliest human species may have emerged before the Pleistocene era.
- C. It is widely considered by paleontologists to be the most valuable source of information about prehistoric life forms.
- D. It contains specimens from an older time period than those found in the formation in the Minatogawa quarry.

ID: ea1b9108 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The text says that the formation at Mistaken Point contains fossils of “the earliest multicellular organisms,” which implies that these fossils are from an older time period than the fossils of “prehistoric human ancestors” found in the Minatogawa quarry.

Choice A is incorrect. The text says that the formation at Mistake Point contains “more than 10,000 fossils,” but it doesn’t compare this number to the number of fossils in the Minatogawa quarry. It also doesn’t say anything about the variety of species in either formation. Choice B is incorrect. The text says that the formation at Mistaken Point contains fossils of “the earliest multicellular organisms,” but it never says that the site contains early human fossils too. Rather, the early human fossils mentioned in the text were found in the formation at Minatogawa quarry. Choice C is incorrect. The text says that the fossils at Mistaken Point “document a critical moment in evolutionary history,” but it never says that Mistaken Point is the most valuable source of information about prehistoric life forms.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 9393428d

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 9393428d

In 2018, scientists discovered an immense aggregation of *Muusoctopus robustus* (pearl octopuses) along a hydrothermal vent 3,200 meters beneath the ocean’s surface. Water temperatures at this site—named the Octopus Garden—climb as high as 11°C, much warmer than the ambient 1.6°C typical at this depth. Based on observations made over three years, scientists concluded that temperatures at the site likely confer reproductive benefits and that the site is used exclusively for reproduction—6,000 *M. robustus* adults, hatchlings, and eggs were observed at the garden, but no juveniles were present.

Which statement about *M. robustus* and the Octopus Garden is best supported by the text?

- A. *M. robustus* leave the Octopus Garden upon reaching an intermediary stage of development.
- B. The *M. robustus* population at the Octopus Garden remains stable despite variations in water temperature.
- C. *M. robustus* nests in the Octopus Garden contain on average fewer but larger eggs than nests at similar ocean depths.
- D. The Octopus Garden provides an ideal feeding ground for *M. robustus* hatchlings.

ID: 9393428d Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of the *M. robustus* population at the Octopus Garden. The text states that the scientists concluded that the site is likely used only for reproduction because over three years they saw many adults, freshly hatched octopuses, and eggs but didn’t see any juveniles. This suggests that the *M. robustus* octopuses that hatch at the Octopus Garden leave the site when they reach an intermediary state of development, returning only as adults for reproductive purposes.

Choice B is incorrect because the text never discusses the stability of the *M. robustus* population at the site, only that the scientists observed 6,000 adults, hatchlings, and eggs there. Further, the text presents the site’s temperatures as likely beneficial. Choice C is incorrect because the text doesn’t provide any details about the eggs at the site and makes no mention of nests; it indicates only that eggs are present along with hatchlings and adults. Choice D is incorrect because the text makes no mention of the hatchlings feeding at the Octopus Garden, indicating only that the temperatures at the site are probably beneficial and that the site is likely used for reproduction.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 7f22da70

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 7f22da70

Conservationists worldwide are working to protect ecosystems from habitat destruction and biodiversity loss, and in many cases, initiatives that rely on natural features or processes can help address such challenges. In response to a rapidly dwindling population of blueback salmon, the Quinault Indian Nation (a tribe in Washington State) partnered with the conservation organization Wild Salmon Center to restore naturally occurring logjams in the Quinault River. The logjams create shady pools where the blueback salmon can rest and spawn, thus promoting blueback population recovery.

Which choice best states the main idea of the text?

- A. A partnership between the Quinault Indian Nation and Wild Salmon Center shows the importance of collaborative approaches to preserving biodiversity.
- B. Nature-based approaches can be effective ways to achieve conservation goals.
- C. As indicated by a recent project, logjams help the blueback salmon thrive and reproduce.
- D. Scientists now realize that nature-based conservation methods offer better long-term solutions to environmental issues than methods that are not nature-based do.

ID: 7f22da70 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it best states the main idea of the text: that nature-based approaches can be effective for achieving conservation goals. The text indicates that in many cases where conservationists are trying to protect ecosystems, their methods depend on natural processes or features. The text then gives an example of this phenomenon, a project with the Quinault Indian Nation that allowed logjams to form naturally in a river, creating spawning habitats for blueback salmon.

Choice A is incorrect. Although the text does suggest that the partnership with the Quinault Indian Nation was beneficial, this is not the central aim of the text; the text primarily argues that nature-based approaches to conservation can be effective. Choice C is incorrect. Although the text indicates that logjams are helpful to blueback salmon, the example of the blueback salmon project is included to illustrate the larger point made earlier in the text: that nature-based approaches to conservation are often effective. Choice D is incorrect. There is no evidence in the text to support a direct comparison of the efficacy of nature-based conservation approaches to other types of approaches. The text merely indicates that nature-based approaches can often be effective.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 613e4900

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 613e4900

Some astronomers searching for extraterrestrial life have proposed that atmospheric NH₃ (ammonia) can serve as a biosignature gas—an indication that a planet harbors life. Jingcheng Huang, Sara Seager, and colleagues evaluated this possibility, finding that on rocky planets, atmospheric NH₃ likely couldn't reach detectably high levels in the absence of biological activity. But the team also found that on so-called mini-Neptunes—gas planets smaller than Neptune but with atmospheres similar to Neptune's— atmospheric pressure and temperature can be high enough to produce atmospheric NH₃.

Based on the text, Huang, Seager, and colleagues would most likely agree with which statement about atmospheric NH₃?

- A. Its presence is more likely to indicate that a planet is a mini-Neptune than that the planet is a rocky planet that could support life.
- B. Its absence from a planet that's not a mini-Neptune indicates that the planet probably doesn't have life.
- C. It should be treated as a biosignature gas if detected in the atmosphere of a rocky planet but not if detected in the atmosphere of a mini-Neptune.
- D. It doesn't reliably reach high enough concentrations in the atmospheres of rocky planets or mini-Neptunes to be treated as a biosignature gas.

ID: 613e4900 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer because it states a conclusion the researchers likely agree with, given the details in the text. The text explains that a biosignature gas is a gas that can be used as an indicator that a planet harbors some form of life and some astronomers have proposed that NH₃ could serve as a biosignature gas. The researchers evaluating this claim found that the atmosphere of rocky planets would be unlikely to reach "detectably high levels" of NH₃ without biological activity, which would support the proposal of NH₃ serving as a biosignature gas. However, the text also states that mini-Neptune planets can produce NH₃ in the absence of biological activity. Thus, the text is structured to lead to the conclusion that detectable levels of NH₃ in the atmospheres of rocky planets could constitute a biosignature, but that is not the case for detectable levels of the gas in the atmospheres of mini-Neptune planets.

Choice A is incorrect because the text indicates that biological activity likely accounts for detectable levels of NH₃ in the atmospheres of rocky planets but mini-Neptune planets can have detectable levels of NH₃ in their atmospheres in the absence of biological activity. Therefore, both rocky planets and mini-Neptune planets can have detectable levels of atmospheric NH₃. Choice B is incorrect because the text states that for NH₃ to reach detectable levels in the atmospheres of rocky planets likely means they harbor biological activity, meaning that rocky planets with detectable NH₃ usually harbor biological activity. However, that does not entail that every rocky planet with biological activity will have detectable levels of NH₃ in their atmospheres. Choice D is incorrect because the text claims only that some astronomers have proposed using NH₃ as a biosignature gas without mentioning a minimum concentration of atmospheric NH₃ that must be met for it to function as a biosignature gas.

Question ID 3c2ac1ec

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 3c2ac1ec

The following text is adapted from Robert Louis Stevenson’s 1883 novel *Treasure Island*. Bill is a sailor staying at the Admiral Benbow, an inn run by the narrator’s parents.

Every day when [Bill] came back from his stroll he would ask if any seafaring men had gone by along the road. At first we thought it was the want of company of his own kind that made him ask this question, but at last we began to see he was desirous to avoid them. When a seaman did [stay] at the Admiral Benbow (as now and then some did) he would look in at him through the curtained door before he entered the parlour; and he was always sure to be as silent as a mouse when any such was present.

According to the text, why does Bill regularly ask about “seafaring men”?

- A. He’s hoping to find an old friend and fellow sailor.
- B. He’s trying to secure a job as part of the crew on a new ship.
- C. He isn’t sure that other guests at the inn will be welcoming of sailors.
- D. He doesn’t want to encounter any other sailor unexpectedly.

ID: 3c2ac1ec Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The narrator says that, at first, they thought Bill asked regularly about other seafarers because he wanted their company, but eventually they realized that Bill actually wanted to avoid them.

Choice A is incorrect. This isn’t the reason the text gives for why Bill regularly asks about “seafaring men.” The narrator says that, at first, they thought Bill asked regularly about other seafarers because he wanted their company, but eventually they realized that Bill wanted to avoid them. Choice B is incorrect. This isn’t the reason the text gives for why Bill regularly asks about “seafaring men.” The narrator says that, at first, they thought Bill asked regularly about other seafarers because he wanted their company, but eventually they realized that Bill wanted to avoid them. Choice C is incorrect. This isn’t the reason the text gives for why Bill regularly asks about “seafaring men.” The narrator says that, at first, they thought Bill asked regularly about other seafarers because he wanted their company, but eventually they realized that Bill wanted to avoid them.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 497b2ccd

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 497b2ccd

Philosophers note that many people have an intuitive sense that while we ought not to lie, there may be circumstances in which lying is permissible. If this intuition is correct and we lack an inviolable duty to speak truthfully, what grounds opposition to lying in the first place? Japa Pallikkathayil has advanced one answer by appealing to a duty to respect others’ agential interests: the possession of false beliefs constrains agency, and thus we ought not to impede the formation of true beliefs unless doing so prevents a greater constraint on someone’s agency or an otherwise impermissible end.

Which choice best states the main idea of the text?

- A. One potential means of justifying opposition to lying is Pallikkathayil’s argument that we have an obligation to respect other people’s agency that entails a commitment to truthfulness except in certain circumstances.
- B. Many people have an intuitive sense that lying is permissible in some circumstances but lack a principled way to identify those circumstances, and Pallikkathayil’s argument may provide a means of resolving that problem.
- C. Pallikkathayil’s argument suggests that if we have a duty to respect other people’s agential interests and if possession of false beliefs constrains agency, then we have an inviolable duty to speak truthfully.
- D. Pallikkathayil’s argument shows that if our intuition that circumstances may make lying permissible is correct, then it is unclear whether there are any grounds for an opposition to lying in the first place.

ID: 497b2ccd Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer because it most accurately states the main idea of the text. The text begins by noting a common intuition that lying might sometimes be permissible, which raises the question of what is the reason for being against lying. The text then presents Pallikkathayil’s answer to this question: we have a duty to respect others’ agential interests (that is, we have an obligation to allow people to exercise their free will in order to best serve their own ends), false beliefs constrain agency (the implication here being that people who are deceived about what is true are impeded in acting in their own best interests), and so we should not hinder the formation of true beliefs (we should not deliberately deceive a person) unless doing so prevents a greater limitation on someone’s agency or prevents some otherwise impermissible end (for example, it might be morally permissible to lie to someone in the rare circumstance where a false belief would lead a person to act in their own best interest, and where they would not do so if they knew the truth). Thus, the main idea of the text is that Pallikkathayil offers a potential justification for opposing lying based on respecting agency, while still allowing for exceptions in specific circumstances.

Choice B is incorrect because the text doesn’t focus on people’s lack of a principled way to identify circumstances where lying is permissible or indicate that Pallikkathayil’s argument resolves this specific problem. Rather, the text presents Pallikkathayil’s argument that lies limit agency but may be permitted in very specific situations (to prevent a greater limitation on someone’s agency or an otherwise unacceptable outcome) as one of a number of possible arguments about why lies are undesirable but sometimes permissible. Choice C is incorrect because it directly contradicts the text. Pallikkathayil’s argument, as described in

the text, wouldn't lead to an "inviolable duty to speak truthfully." On the contrary, the text explicitly states that Pallikkathayil's position is that interfering with people developing accurate beliefs is wrong, except when such interference prevents either a more significant limitation on someone's agency or an outcome that would be unacceptable for other reasons. This indicates that Pallikkathayil's argument allows for some exceptions to the duty to speak truthfully, making it not inviolable. Choice D is incorrect because Pallikkathayil's argument doesn't suggest that if it is permissible to lie in at least some circumstances, then it is unclear whether there are good reasons for opposing lying in any circumstances. Instead, the text presents Pallikkathayil as offering a specific ground for opposing lying (respecting others' ability to act in their own best interests) while qualifying that assertion by presenting a situation in which lying might sometimes be morally permissible.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 0ccf0b35

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 0ccf0b35

To understand how temperature change affects microorganism-mediated cycling of soil nutrients in alpine ecosystems, Eva Kaštovská et al. collected plant-soil cores in the Tatra Mountains at elevations around 2,100 meters and transplanted them to elevations of 1,700–1,800 meters, where the mean air temperature was warmer by 2°C. Microorganism-mediated nutrient cycling was accelerated in the transplanted cores; crucially, microorganism community composition was unchanged, allowing Kaštovská et al. to attribute the acceleration to temperature-induced increases in microorganism activity.

It can most reasonably be inferred from the text that the finding about the microorganism community composition was important for which reason?

- A. It provided preliminary evidence that microorganism-mediated nutrient cycling was accelerated in the transplanted cores.
- B. It suggested that temperature-induced changes in microorganism activity may be occurring at increasingly high elevations.
- C. It ruled out a potential alternative explanation for the acceleration in microorganism-mediated nutrient cycling.
- D. It clarified that microorganism activity levels in the plant-soil cores varied depending on which microorganisms comprised the community.

ID: 0ccf0b35 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer because it accurately describes why the finding about the microorganism community composition was important. The text describes an experiment by Eva Kaštovská and her team in which they collected plant-soil cores at one elevation and transplanted them to sites at a lower elevation, where the mean air temperature was warmer. Kaštovská and her team observed that microorganism-mediated nutrient cycling was accelerated in the transplanted cores and that "crucially, microorganism community composition was unchanged," which allowed the team to attribute the acceleration to changes in microorganism activity brought about by the difference in temperature. This strongly implies that the team wouldn't have been able to make that attribution otherwise, meaning that a change in microorganism composition represented another possible explanation for the acceleration that had to be ruled out.

Choice A is incorrect. Although the text says microorganism-mediated cycling of soil nutrients increased in the transplanted cores, this is unrelated to what's important about the finding that the microorganism composition didn't change—that it allowed the team to attribute the change in activity solely to the change in temperature. Choice B is incorrect. Although the text compares activity in one core at two different elevations, the text doesn't address changes in activity at various elevations over time. Choice D is incorrect. Although different microorganisms likely exhibit different levels of activity, the text indicates that there was no change in microorganism composition, and there is nothing in the text about different microorganisms having different activity levels.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID e0ed503d

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: e0ed503d

Culinary anthropologist Vertamae Smart-Grosvenor may be known for her decades of work in national public television and radio, but her book *Vibration Cooking: or, the Travel Notes of a Geechee Girl* is likely her most influential project. The 1970 book, whose title refers to Smart-Grosvenor’s roots in the Low Country of South Carolina, was unusual for its time. It combined memoir, recipes, travel writing, and social commentary and challenged notions about conventions of food and cooking. Long admired by many, the book and its author have shaped contemporary approaches to writing about cuisine.

Which choice best describes the main idea of the text?

- A. Smart-Grosvenor’s unconventional book *Vibration Cooking: or, the Travel Notes of a Geechee Girl* is an important contribution to food writing.
- B. Smart-Grosvenor held many different positions over her life, including reporter and food writer.
- C. Smart-Grosvenor’s groundbreaking book *Vibration Cooking: or, the Travel Notes of a Geechee Girl* didn’t receive the praise it deserved when it was first published in 1970.
- D. Smart-Grosvenor was a talented chef whose work inspired many people to start cooking for themselves.

ID: e0ed503d Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer because it most accurately states the main idea of the text. The text describes the book *Vibration Cooking: or, the Travel Notes of a Geechee Girl* as Smart-Grosvenor’s “most influential project” and as “unusual for its time.” The text also notes that the book and author have influenced contemporary approaches to writing about food and cooking. Therefore, the text mainly conveys that *Vibration Cooking: or, the Travel Notes of a Geechee Girl* is an unconventional and important contribution to food writing.

Choice B is incorrect. Although the text mentions that Smart-Grosvenor worked in national public television and radio and was a food writer, these details aren’t the main focus. Rather than focusing on Smart-Grosvenor’s various jobs, the text focuses specifically on one specific book she wrote. Choice C is incorrect. Although the text suggests that *Vibration Cooking: or, the Travel Notes of a Geechee Girl* was groundbreaking, it doesn’t suggest that the book didn’t receive praise when it was published. In fact, the text states that the book is “long admired.” Choice D is incorrect because the text states that Smart-Grosvenor was a culinary anthropologist and that her book influenced later approaches to food writing but doesn’t indicate that Smart-Grosvenor or her book influenced people to begin cooking for themselves.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 4591c86f

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 4591c86f

Microplastics are tiny pieces of plastic waste. Areas of the ocean with higher concentrations of microplastic particles also have smaller and fewer waves. A study by Yukun Sun and colleagues found that the concentration of microplastic particles cannot be the only reason for this reduced wave activity because the concentration of particles that would have the observed effect is much higher than that found in these areas of the ocean. However, they found that surfactants, chemicals often used to manufacture plastics, are released into the water from microplastics and have a much stronger wave-reducing effect.

According to the text, what did Sun and colleagues discover about surfactants?

- A. They have a much stronger effect on wave activity than microplastics alone do.
- B. They are mainly composed of water.
- C. They are helpful for removing microplastics from the ocean.
- D. They can be used to contain microplastics within certain areas of the ocean.

ID: 4591c86f Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer because it presents a statement about surfactants that is supported by the text. The text indicates that higher concentrations of microplastics have been associated with waves that are relatively small and few. According to the text, however, a study by Sun and colleagues found that concentrations of microplastic particles can't be the only reason for the reduced wave activity because a much higher concentration of particles is needed to produce that observed effect. Instead, the text indicates that Sun and colleagues found that surfactants are released from microplastics into the ocean and have a much stronger wave-reducing effect than microplastics alone do.

Choice B is incorrect because the text doesn't discuss what surfactants are made of. Instead, it indicates that surfactants are frequently used to manufacture microplastics and that Sun and colleagues discovered that surfactants are released from microplastics into the ocean. Choice C is incorrect because the text doesn't discuss how microplastics can be removed from the ocean. Instead, the text indicates that Sun and colleagues discovered that surfactants are released into the ocean from microplastics and have a much stronger wave-reducing effect than microplastics alone do. Choice D is incorrect because the text doesn't indicate that surfactants can be used to contain microplastics within certain areas of the ocean. Instead, the text indicates that Sun and colleagues discovered that surfactants are released from microplastics into the ocean and have a much stronger wave-reducing effect than microplastics alone do.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID d09e5eb4

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: d09e5eb4

To protect themselves when being attacked, hagfish—jawless marine animals that resemble eels—will release large quantities of slimy, mucus-like threads. Because these threads are unusually strong and elastic, scientist Atsuko Negishi and her colleagues have been trying to recreate them in a lab as an eco-friendly alternative to petroleum-based fibers that are often used in fabrics. The researchers want to reproduce the threads in the lab because farming hagfish for their slime would be expensive and potentially harmful to the hagfish.

Which choice best states the text’s main idea?

- A. The slimy threads that hagfish release might help researchers create a new kind of fabric.
- B. Hagfish have inspired researchers to develop a new petroleum-based fabric.
- C. Hagfish are not well suited to being raised in captivity.
- D. The ability of hagfish to slime their attackers compensates for their being jawless.

ID: d09e5eb4 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The text first describes hagfish slime and its properties, then it transitions to talking about the possibilities of using lab-made equivalents to use in eco-friendly fabrics.

Choice B is incorrect. The text says the opposite of this choice. The researchers are developing an alternative to petroleum-based fabric. Choice C is incorrect. This choice is too narrow to be the main point of the text. Only one line describes how farming would be “potentially harmful” to the hagfish. Choice D is incorrect. This choice isn’t supported by the text. We don’t know from the text whether being jawless makes the hagfish more vulnerable.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 1f8c598e

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 1f8c598e

A common assumption among art historians is that the invention of photography in the mid-nineteenth century displaced the painted portrait in the public consciousness. The diminishing popularity of the portrait miniature, which coincided with the rise of photography, seems to support this claim. However, photography’s impact on the portrait miniature may be overstated. Although records from art exhibitions in the Netherlands from 1820 to 1892 show a decrease in the number of both full-sized and miniature portraits submitted, this trend was established before the invention of photography.

- Based on the text, what can be concluded about the diminishing popularity of the portrait miniature in the nineteenth century?
- A. Factors other than the rise of photography may be more directly responsible for the portrait miniature’s decline.
 - B. Although portrait miniatures became less common than photographs, they were widely regarded as having more artistic merit.
 - C. The popularity of the portrait miniature likely persisted for longer than art historians have assumed.
 - D. As demand for portrait miniatures decreased, portrait artists likely shifted their creative focus to photography.

ID: 1f8c598e Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The text says that the impact of photography on the portrait miniature might be "overstated," as some records show a decrease in the number of portrait miniatures *before* the invention of photography. From this, we can conclude that factors *other* than the rise of photography may be more directly responsible for the portrait miniature’s decline.

Choice B is incorrect. The text never discusses the "artistic merit" of either art form. Choice C is incorrect. The text never suggests that the portrait miniature was popular for longer than historians thought—if anything, it suggests that the portrait miniature started losing its popularity *earlier* than historians thought. Choice D is incorrect. The text never suggests that portrait painters shifted to become photographers.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID bc17231b

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: bc17231b

In many of his sculptures, artist Richard Hunt uses broad forms rather than extreme accuracy to hint at specific people or ideas. In his first major work, *Arachne* (1956), Hunt constructed the mythical character Arachne, a weaver who was changed into a spider, by welding bits of steel together into something that, although vaguely human, is strange and machine-like. And his large bronze sculpture *The Light of Truth* (2021) commemorates activist and journalist Ida B. Wells using mainly flowing, curved pieces of metal that create stylized flame.

Which choice best states the text’s main idea about Hunt?

- A. He often depicts the subjects of his sculptures using an unrealistic style.
- B. He uses different kinds of materials depending on what kind of sculpture he plans to create.
- C. He tends to base his art on important historical figures rather than on fictional characters.
- D. He has altered his approach to sculpture over time, and his works have become increasingly abstract.

ID: bc17231b Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer because it most accurately states the main idea of the text. According to the text, many of Richard Hunt’s sculptures “use broad forms rather than extreme accuracy”—in other words, they are more abstract than realistic. To illustrate Hunt’s abstract approach, the text characterizes his sculpture of Arachne as “vaguely human” and his work in honor of Ida B. Wells as “using mainly flowing, curved pieces of metal that create stylized flame.” Thus, the main idea is that Hunt often depicts the subjects of his sculptures using an unrealistic style.

Choice B is incorrect. Although the text indicates that one of Hunt’s sculptures is made of steel and another of bronze, there is no mention of why he chose these materials. Choice C is incorrect because the text says nothing about how Hunt chose the subjects for his sculptures. Furthermore, of the two examples provided in the text, only Ida B. Wells is an important historical figure; Arachne is a “mythical character.” Choice D is incorrect because the text says nothing about how Hunt’s style changed over time. In fact, although the two examples of Hunt’s work discussed in the text were created 65 years apart, they are both described as heavily stylized rather than realistic, which may suggest that some aspects of Hunt’s style haven’t changed over that time.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 2a7bd213

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 2a7bd213

In their 2022 paper, Christos Dimopoulos et al., having granted that the existence of antigravity—in which antimatter and matter repel rather than attract each other—lacked affirmative experimental support, rightly argued that such antigravity was worth considering on theoretical grounds given that evidence against it was similarly lacking. But a 2023 report by an international team of researchers details the first direct ballistic observations of antihydrogen atoms under gravity inside a CERN particle accelerator. Corresponding most closely to predictions under gravitational attraction, these observations were thoroughly inconsistent with antigravity.

Which choice best states the main idea of the text?

- A. Antihydrogen ballistics observations were conducted at CERN to test specific conclusions about antigravity presented in the 2022 paper by Dimopoulos et al.
- B. Although theoreticians were justified in studying antigravity before the release of the 2023 report, the report’s findings suggest that the rationale for theoretical consideration offered in the 2022 paper by Dimopoulos et al. is no longer applicable.
- C. The theoretical approach represented in the 2022 paper by Dimopoulos et al. assumed that unambiguous proof of antigravity would not be achievable, but the results in the 2023 report undermine that assumption.
- D. Before 2023, researchers’ inordinate focus on theoretical considerations hindered the development of the experimental regimen for direct antihydrogen ballistics observations.

ID: 2a7bd213 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it most accurately states the main idea of the text. The text begins by acknowledging that in 2022, Dimopoulos et al. were justified in arguing for antigravity on theoretical grounds because although there was no experimental evidence supporting its existence at that time, there was no evidence contradicting its existence either. The text then introduces the 2023 report describing an experiment that produced observations "thoroughly inconsistent with antigravity." Thus, the main idea is that while the study of antigravity was theoretically justified before the 2023 report (due to lack of evidence against it), the report’s findings undermine the rationale for such theoretical consideration since there is now evidence against this hypothetical phenomenon.

Choice A is incorrect. Although antihydrogen ballistics observations were conducted at CERN, the text provides no evidence that they were conducted to test conclusions in Dimopoulos et al.’s 2022 paper. Rather, the text presents the 2023 report as new evidence that contradicts the existence of the hypothetical phenomenon that Dimopoulos et al. had considered. Choice C is incorrect because the text doesn’t suggest that Dimopoulos et al. assumed that unambiguous proof of antigravity would be unattainable. Rather, the text states that they argued antigravity was worth considering theoretically because evidence against it was lacking at that time. At the same time, the results in the 2023 report do not undermine but strengthen the idea that the proof of antigravity might not be achievable. Choice D is incorrect because the text doesn’t suggest that there was an "inordinate focus

on theoretical considerations" before 2023 or that such a focus hindered the development of experimental methods. In fact, the text describes Dimopoulos et al.'s position regarding the theoretical consideration of antigravity as "rightly argued," indicating approval of their approach given the absence of experimental evidence at that time.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 67d94bb6

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 67d94bb6

To understand how Paleolithic artists navigated dark caves, archaeologist M^a Ángeles Medina-Alcaide and her team tested different lighting methods in a cave in Spain using replicas of artifacts found in European caves with art. They used three different Paleolithic light sources—torches, animal-fat lamps, and fireplaces—determining that each likely had a specific purpose. For instance, the team learned that the animal-fat lamps were less useful than torches while walking because the lamps didn’t illuminate the cave floor.

Which choice best states the main idea of the text?

- A. Medina-Alcaide and her team’s study demonstrated that fireplaces were essential to the creators of Paleolithic cave art.
- B. Medina-Alcaide and her team discovered that Paleolithic cave artists in Spain used animal-fat lamps more often than they used torches.
- C. Medina-Alcaide and her team were reluctant to draw many conclusions from their study because of the difficulty they had replicating light sources based on known artifacts.
- D. Medina-Alcaide and her team tested Paleolithic light sources and learned some details about how Paleolithic artists traveled within dark caves.

ID: 67d94bb6 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer because it most accurately states the main idea of the text. The text indicates that archaeologist M^a Ángeles Medina-Alcaide and her team used replicas of Paleolithic light sources to understand how Paleolithic artists moved through dark caves. The researchers learned, for example, that torches were more helpful for moving through caves than animal-fat lamps were. Thus, the main idea of the text is that Medina-Alcaide and her team tested Paleolithic light sources and learned some details about how Paleolithic artists traveled within dark caves.

Choice A is incorrect because the text doesn’t address the usefulness of fireplaces for Paleolithic cave artists; it only mentions fireplaces briefly as one of the three lighting methods the researchers tested. Choice B is incorrect because the text doesn’t discuss how often Paleolithic cave artists used each kind of light source tested. Although the text does compare animal-fat lamps with another lighting method, the point of that comparison is that animal-fat lamps were less useful than torches when walking, not that one method was used more often than another. Choice C is incorrect because the text doesn’t discuss either how difficult it was for Medina-Alcaide and her team to replicate light sources or how the team felt about drawing conclusions from their study. Instead, the text reveals that the team was able to conclude that each light source likely had a distinct purpose.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 2df0f36b

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 2df0f36b

Since its completion in 2014, Bosco Verticale (Vertical Forest)—a pair of residential towers in Milan, Italy, covered by vegetation—has become a striking symbol of environmental sustainability in architecture. Stefano Boeri intended his design, which features balconies that are home to hundreds of trees, to serve as a model for promoting urban biodiversity. However, the concept has faced skepticism: critics note that although the trees used in Bosco Verticale were specifically cultivated for the project, it’s too early to tell if they can thrive in this unusual setting.

According to the text, why are some critics skeptical of the concept behind Bosco Verticale?

- A. Some essential aspects of Bosco Verticale’s design are difficult to adapt to locations other than Milan.
- B. The plant life on Bosco Verticale ended up being less varied than Boeri had envisioned it would be.
- C. The construction of Bosco Verticale was no less environmentally damaging than the construction of more conventional buildings is.
- D. It is unclear whether Bosco Verticale can support the plant life included in its design.

ID: 2df0f36b Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer because it presents a statement about critics’ skepticism of Bosco Verticale that is supported by the text. The text states that Boeri’s design for Bosco Verticale features hundreds of trees on balconies and is intended to serve as a model for promoting urban biodiversity. But the text goes on to state that some critics believe that it is too early to determine if the trees planted on Bosco Verticale can thrive there. Therefore, according to the text, critics are skeptical of the concept behind Bosco Verticale because it is unclear whether Bosco Verticale can support the plant life included in its design.

Choice A is incorrect. Although the text states that one of Boeri’s goals was for Bosco Verticale to serve as a model for promoting biodiversity in architecture, which suggests that Boeri would likely support the idea of reproducing the same concept in other locations, the text does not discuss whether it is feasible to adapt the design to locations other than Milan. Instead, the text describes critics’ concerns that the plant life that currently exists on Bosco Verticale might not thrive in its current setting. Choice B is incorrect. Although the text states that one of Boeri’s goals in creating Bosco Verticale was to promote biodiversity, which implies a goal of including varied plant life in the design, it does not mention whether the hundreds of trees that were planted on its balconies failed to meet this goal. Rather, the text states that some critics are concerned that the trees on Bosco Verticale’s balconies may not thrive in this setting. Choice C is incorrect because the text does not mention how Bosco Verticale was constructed, let alone how environmentally destructive its construction may have been relative to the construction of more conventional buildings.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 951a51e7

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 951a51e7

The following text is from Milan Kundera’s 1984 novel *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (translated by Michael Henry Heim in 1984). Karenin is a dog that belongs to Tomas and Tereza.

Karenin was not overjoyed by the move to Switzerland [from Prague]. Karenin hated change. Dog time cannot be plotted along a straight line; it does not move on and on, from one thing to the next. It moves in a circle like the hands of a clock, which—they, too, unwilling to dash madly ahead—turn round and round the face, day in and day out following the same path. In Prague, when Tomas and Tereza bought a new chair or moved a flower pot, Karenin would look on in displeasure. It disturbed his sense of time. It was as though they were trying to dupe the hands of the clock by changing the numbers on its face.

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- Which choice best states the main idea of the text?
- A. As a dog, Karenin possesses a sense of time that involves a strong preference for predictability and an aversion to disruption.
 - B. After he’s moved to a new home, Karenin’s negative response to changes has become more pronounced.
 - C. Similar to Tomas and Tereza, Karenin comprehends time as circular rather than as a straightforward progression.
 - D. As is the case for other dogs, Karenin’s sense of time seems to accelerate depending on the objects and places that surround him.

ID: 951a51e7 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer because it most accurately states the main idea of the text. The text begins by stating that Tomas and Tereza’s dog Karenin felt disrupted by a recent move because of his dislike of change. The text then goes on to suggest that this is because the way a dog experiences time differs from the way humans experience time: time for a dog doesn’t move linearly, going "on and on, from one thing to the next," but instead moves circularly, "like the hands of a clock." That is, time for a dog is experienced as a cyclical pattern characterized by routine and predictability, with each day "following the same path." The text then concludes by providing examples of seemingly insignificant changes in routine that profoundly "disturbed [Karenin’s] sense of time," causing him to feel displeasure. Thus, the main idea of the text is that Karenin’s sense of time as a dog involves a strong preference for predictability and an aversion to disruption.

Choice B is incorrect. Although the text emphasizes Karenin’s displeasure with the recent move to a new home, it doesn’t suggest that the move has made his negative responses more pronounced than they once were. Rather, in accounting for Karenin’s displeasure with the move to Switzerland, the text explains that Karenin generally has a negative response to any kind of change.

Choice C is incorrect because the text doesn’t suggest that Karenin comprehends time similarly to how Tomas and Tereza comprehend it. On the contrary, the text strongly implies a contrast between dogs’ circular experience of time with the way humans experience time as a straightforward progression that can be "plotted on a straight line." Choice D is incorrect because

the text provides no indication that a change in the places and objects surrounding Karenin causes him to feel as though time is accelerating. Although the text does use the language of "dash[ing] madly ahead" in relation to time, the phrase appears in the context of a comparison illustrating how dogs experience time: time for a dog moves just as the hands of a clock do, in a circle and "unwilling to dash madly ahead"—that is, always in a regular and predictable way.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 116148ea

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 116148ea

Cats can judge unseen people’s positions in space by the sound of their voices and thus react with surprise when the same person calls to them from two different locations in a short span of time. Saho Takagi and colleagues reached this conclusion by measuring cats’ levels of surprise based on their ear and head movements while the cats heard recordings of their owners’ voices from two speakers spaced far apart. Cats exhibited a low level of surprise when owners’ voices were played twice from the same speaker, but they showed a high level of surprise when the voice was played once each from the two different speakers.

According to the text, how did the researchers determine the level of surprise displayed by the cats in the study?

- A. They watched how each cat moved its ears and head.
- B. They examined how each cat reacted to the voice of a stranger.
- C. They studied how each cat physically interacted with its owner.
- D. They tracked how each cat moved around the room.

ID: 116148ea Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer because it explains how the researchers determined the level of surprise displayed by the cats in the study. The text states that Saho Takagi and colleagues played recordings of the voice of each cat’s owner and measured how surprised the cat was by the recording based on how it moved its ears and head.

Choice B is incorrect because, as the text explains, the recordings played for each cat in the study were of the voice of the cat’s owner, not a stranger’s voice. Choice C is incorrect because the text explains that during the study, the cats didn’t interact directly with their owners; instead, the cats listened to recordings of their owners’ voices. Choice D is incorrect because the text doesn’t indicate that the researchers monitored the cats’ movement around the room in which the study was conducted.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID f4c261c7

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: f4c261c7

Paleontologist Alan Tennyson and colleagues studied fossil bones found in New Zealand that are more than 55 million years old. The researchers determined that the fossil bones belonged to two previously unknown species of prehistoric penguins. Moreover, they estimated that one of the two penguin species was more than three times the size of the emperor penguin, which is the largest penguin species that exists today.

Based on the text, which choice best describes the two previously unknown penguin species?

- A. They are frequently studied by paleontologists.
- B. They are no longer living species.
- C. They were smaller than penguin species that exist today.
- D. They spent little of their lives in water.

ID: f4c261c7 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it presents a statement about the two previously unknown penguin species that is supported by the text. According to the text, Alan Tennyson and colleagues studied fossil bones belonging to two previously unknown penguin species that are described as prehistoric, or ancient. The text goes on to say that one of the two species was considerably larger than the emperor penguin, which is currently the largest penguin in existence. Thus, the text indicates that the other species aren't in existence today, or that the two previously unknown penguin species are no longer living species.

Choice A is incorrect. Although the text states that Alan Tennyson is a paleontologist who studied the fossils of two previously unknown penguin species, it doesn't say whether these penguins are frequently studied by paleontologists. Choice C is incorrect because the text says that one of the two previously unknown penguin species was three times larger than the emperor penguin (a penguin alive today), not that they were both smaller than penguin species that exist today. Choice D is incorrect because the text doesn't discuss whether the two previously unknown penguin species spent any time in water.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 755dd24b

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 755dd24b

The fynbos shrubland is a diverse habitat found only in South Africa. It is adjacent to the Afro-temperate forest, with almost no transition space between the two distinct habitats. Plants in the fynbos have uniquely thin and long root systems that spread out over large distances to absorb nutrients from the soil. Ecologists transplanted tree seedlings from the forest into plots in the fynbos. Seedlings in plots isolated from the roots of fynbos plants exhibited a growth rate five times greater than that of the seedlings in plots in close proximity to the roots of fynbos plants.

Based on the text, what role do fynbos roots most likely have in maintaining the border between the fynbos shrubland and the Afro-temperate forest habitats?

- A.

Fynbos roots damage the root systems of forest plants, leaving those plants unable to acquire sufficient nutrients.
- B.

Fynbos roots extend close enough to the forest plants’ roots that they constitute a physical barrier that forest plants’ roots cannot pass.
- C.

The root systems of fynbos plants allow the plants to take in so many soil nutrients that forest plants are prevented from flourishing in the fynbos.
- D.

The root systems of fynbos plants enhance the soil immediately surrounding the plants, allowing them to thrive in an otherwise harsh habitat.

ID: 755dd24b Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer because it presents a conclusion about the role of fynbos roots in maintaining the border with the Afro-temperate forest that can be reasonably inferred from the text. The text states that plants in the fynbos have "uniquely thin and long root systems that spread out over large distances to absorb nutrients from the soil." The text then describes an experiment where forest tree seedlings grown in plots isolated from fynbos roots grew at a rate five times greater than seedlings in areas near fynbos roots. This strongly suggests that fynbos roots are depleting soil nutrients to such an extent that forest plants can’t get enough nutrients from that soil to flourish, thereby hindering the formation of any significant "transition space" between the habitats and helping keep the border between them sharp.

Choice A is incorrect because there is no evidence in the text that fynbos roots physically damage the root systems of forest plants. Instead, the text explicitly describes fynbos plants as having "uniquely thin and long root systems that spread out over large distances to absorb nutrients from the soil." This description establishes that fynbos roots are specialized for efficient nutrient absorption. The experiment then confirms this function of the roots by showing that forest seedlings "isolated from the roots of fynbos plants exhibited a growth rate five times greater" than those near fynbos roots. This result demonstrates that when forest seedlings don’t have to compete with the nutrient-absorbing fynbos roots, they grow much better. Choice B is incorrect. Although the text does indicate that the fynbos and the Afro-temperate forest are distinct from, and adjacent to, each other and that there is "almost no transition space" (area of mixed fynbos and forest plants), the experiment shows that forest

plants can grow in soil occupied by fynbos roots, just not very well. So, the idea that the fynbos roots physically obstruct forest plants is unsupported by the text. Choice D is incorrect because it directly contradicts the text's claim that fynbos roots absorb nutrients from, and therefore deplete, the soil they're in, and furthermore, nothing in the text suggests that the habitat of the fynbos is harsh in general.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID ca3e7233

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Information and Ideas	Central Ideas and Details	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: ca3e7233

In her 1998 book *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism*, Angela Y. Davis bases her analysis in part on recordings of songs sung in the 1920s by Gertrude “Ma” Rainey and Bessie Smith. Davis focuses on how Rainey and Smith improvised the lyrics—replacing the original lines with mischievous jokes and wordplay. Davis’s work was particularly labor intensive because in order to transcribe, or write down, the lyrics as Rainey and Smith sang them, Davis had to listen repeatedly to the vinyl recordings, which weren’t very clear.

What does the text most strongly suggest about the songs sung by Rainey and Smith?

- A. The songs have grown in popularity since Rainey and Smith first sang them.
- B. There were more recordings made of Rainey’s songs than there were of Smith’s.
- C. There were few, if any, reliable transcriptions of Smith’s and Rainey’s improvised lyrics when Davis began her research.
- D. According to Davis, the songs sung by Rainey were more musically innovative than those sung by Smith typically were.

ID: ca3e7233 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer because it describes the songs sung by Gertrude "Ma" Rainey and Bessie Smith in a way the text implies is accurate. The text describes Angela Y. Davis’s research on Rainey and Smith for her book *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism*, focusing on her efforts to transcribe the improvised lyrics in Rainey’s and Smith’s songs. The text calls Davis’s transcription process "labor intensive" since the lack of clarity in the recordings required her to listen to each repeatedly to verify the accuracy of her transcripts. The fact that Davis undertook a painstaking transcription process using only fairly low-fidelity recordings suggests that reliable transcriptions were otherwise unavailable to her.

Choice A is incorrect. The text doesn’t discuss the popularity of Rainey’s and Smith’s songs either in the 1920s or after. Although it is plausible that the music of Rainey and Smith is more widely enjoyed than it was in the 1920s, this isn’t supported by the text. Choice B is incorrect. The text doesn’t discuss which of Rainey and Smith was the more prolific recording artist and so provides no support for such a claim. Choice D is incorrect. The text discusses the creativity of both Rainey and Smith, but it does so only to note similarities between them in terms of improvisation and wit, not to emphasize differences between them or Davis’s relative views of the artists’ inventiveness.

Question Difficulty: Hard