

• Reading Comprehension 1 Level 10

Directions: Read the passage. Then answer the questions below.

Xandersol, a new, potentially lethal drug, is being blamed for numerous illnesses and the deaths of six Anchorstown residents. According to water and sewer authority officials, the drug has somehow found its way into the city water system, resulting in the contamination of household drinking water for thousands of local residents.

The question lies not in determining how, but, more importantly, where the drug entered the city water system; once the leak is found it can quickly be contained. Experts agree that, given the relative scarcity of Xandersol in amounts large enough to affect an entire community, the leak could only have occurred in the following three locations: 1) the Griffen Pharmaceuticals Production Facility (GPPF), 2) the Waste Pharmaceuticals Processing Plant (WPPP), or 3) the Riverdale Testing Center (RTC).

Support for the claim that Xandersol entered the city water system at the GPPF is widespread. According to a recent poll, an overwhelming majority of local residents—nearly 80%—believe this to be the case. Marcia Downing, a mother of three, **advocates** that the GPPF is to blame. "It seems pretty obvious that the leak happened at the GPPF," she says. "Just ask around. Nearly everyone on the block will tell you so. I mean, I don't understand what the big mystery is. If everyone says it's true, then it's probably true. Strength in numbers," she says. "That's what my mom used to say." As a result of the disaster, Marcia has had to take off work to care for her children, whom she believes have been adversely affected by the contaminated water. "I've taken off three days since the disaster. And those are unpaid days. I don't have the luxury of paid sick days like some people." She shakes her head. "You know things are bad when you can't even drink the water."

While support for the claim that Xandersol entered the water at the GPPF is popular, this theory lacks the support of widely recognizable figures such as big name actor Evert Milkin. Milkin, on location for a shoot for his upcoming blockbuster movie, had a chance to spend two days in Anchorstown. Upon being warned about the drinking water problem, he decided to investigate for himself. Milkin was shocked at what he found. He purports to have discovered a dried pool of Xandersol residue collected about the entrance of a city sewer opening just outside the WPPP. Acting upon these findings, Milkin has **galvanized** many to support the claim that the Xandersol entered the city water system at the WPPP. Alyssa Davis, one of Milkin's newest followers, explains, "If a nationally recognized and highly respected actor like Milkin tells you it's true, you can rest assured it most definitely is." Milkin says that he won't comment on his plans to indict the WPPP for negligence, but he says that the "wheels are in motion."

Since Milkin's investigation, the WPPP has come under increased scrutiny. But that is not to say the RTC is not also feeling the heat. According to local engineer Todd Severs, the RTC is the one at fault. "It should be pretty clear to everyone that the RTC is responsible for the disaster. Just take a look at their past record. In the last two years alone, the RTC has incurred 16 citations for noncompliance with federal and state drug testing standards." Severs continues, "Make no mistake, a corporation like that is the one to turn your attention to in a situation like this." In recent days, Severs' statements have begun to **resonate** with the public. When confronted with growing concern, the RTC issued the following statement in its defense: "We of the RTC are troubled by the recent accusations regarding our involvement in the contamination of the city water system. While we understand that much of this blame stems from our poor record of upholding testing standards, we would like to remind local residents of the simple, yet important facts: The RTC has been testing the drugs that the people have come to depend on. What is more, we have done it on a shoestring budget. Many of our employees are forced to work under meager circumstances—circumstances that few would put up with unless they weren't so dutifully driven to carry out this noble endeavor. Several of our employees are barely able to clothe their children and put food on the table. In our quest to create safe, helpful, reliable drugs, regardless of the hardships we suffer, it seems we have now become completely unappreciated."

Reports of those adversely affected by Xandersol are on the rise. In desperation, residents have resorting to fitting out their taps with makeshift Xandersol filters. For many, it seems no solution is on the horizon. In passing, we conducted a final interview with a man pushing a cart who, despite our efforts, evades identification. "Instead of wasting time blaming everybody," says the man, "why not just check all three?" It seems he is referring to the GFFC, WPPP, and RTC—the three potential leak sites. "I'm thirsty," he continues, moving away. "You wouldn't happen to have any bottled water, would you?"

Questions

- 1) In which of the following publications would this passage be most likely to appear?
- A. a magazine about powerful new drugs
 - B. an Anchorstown newspaper
 - C. a cautionary pamphlet included in every new pack of Xandersol
 - D. an encyclopedia article about Xandersol
 - E. a blockbuster movie review
- 2) Based on its use in paragraph 3, it can be inferred that **advocate** belongs to which of the following word families?
- A. acknowledge, concede, recognize
 - B. adjudicate, determine, select
 - C. propose, suggest, recommend
 - D. champion, bolster, support
 - E. admit, concede, grant
- 3) Which of the following logical fallacies is present in the argument made in paragraph 3 regarding the claim that the GFFC is responsible for the disaster?
- A. *Hasty generalization*, characterized by making assumptions about a whole group or range of cases based on a sample that is inadequate (usually because it is atypical or too small).
 - B. *Missing the point*, characterized by a condition in which the premises of an argument do support a particular conclusion—but not the conclusion that the arguer actually draws.
 - C. *Slippery slope*, characterized by an argument in which the arguer claims that a sort of chain reaction, usually ending in some dire consequence, will take place, but without enough evidence for that assumption. The arguer asserts that if we take even one step onto the "slippery slope," we will end up sliding all the way to the bottom; he or she assumes we can't stop partway down the hill.
 - D. *Weak analogy*, characterized by an argument that relies on an analogy between two or more objects, ideas, or situations which are not really alike in the relevant respects.
 - E. *Ad populum*, characterized by an argument in which the arguer takes advantage of the desire most people have to be liked and to fit in with others, using that desire to try to get the audience to accept his or her argument.
- 4) As used in paragraph 4, which of the following describes something that is **galvanized**?
- A. Jamie is a welder. Yesterday, I watched him join two pieces of soft, red hot metal by hammering them together. Sometimes he adds fusible materials to the pieces to be joined.
 - B. When a bone in the human body gets broken, it can take months before it becomes fully healed. Oftentimes, once the fractured ends are fused back together, the bone is stronger after the break than it was before.
 - C. In Darbyville, poor work conditions have gone unchecked for too long, and the situation is getting worse. Margo is exciting the impoverished class to rise up against their oppressors.
 - D. Ichiro is tired of being unappreciated at work. So, he decides to do something about it: tomorrow he will ask to meet with his boss to discuss the situation personally.
 - E. Joining in the movement that is sweeping the nation, Alyssa Deporto Roberts, the world renowned artist, has agreed to quit smoking. The news is making headlines.

- 5) Which of the following logical fallacies is present in the argument made in paragraph 4 regarding the claim that the WPPP is responsible for the disaster?
- A. *Ad hominem*, characterized by an argument in which the arguer attacks his or her opponent instead of the opponent's argument.
 - B. *Red herring*, characterized by an argument in which, partway through the argument, the arguer goes off on a tangent, raising a side issue that distracts the audience from what is really at stake.
 - C. *Begging the question*, characterized by an argument that asks the reader to simply accept the conclusion without providing real evidence; the argument either relies on a premise that says the same thing as the conclusion (commonly referred to as "being circular" or "circular reasoning"), or simply ignores an important (but questionable) assumption that the argument rests on.
 - D. *Appeal to ignorance*, characterized by the supposition that, due to a lack of conclusive evidence, the conclusion of an argument should be accepted.
 - E. *Appeal to authority*, characterized by the attempt to get readers to agree with us simply by impressing them with a prominent figure or by appealing to a supposed authority who really is not much of an expert.
- 6) Which of the following logical fallacies is present in the argument made in paragraph 5 regarding the claim that the RTC is responsible for the disaster?
- A. *Post hoc*, characterized by an argument in which two sequential events are said to be causally related, when this is not actually the case; the arguer wrongly concludes that the earlier event caused the later. That is, correlation is not the same thing as causation.
 - B. *Ad hominem*, characterized by an argument in which the arguer attacks his or her opponent instead of the opponent's argument.
 - C. *Hasty generalization*, characterized by making assumptions about a whole group or range of cases based on a sample that is inadequate (usually because it is atypical or too small).
 - D. *Equivocation*, characterized by sliding between two or more different meanings of a single word or phrase that is important to the argument.
 - E. *False dichotomy*, characterized by an argument in which the arguer makes it look like there are only two choices (one that is logical and one that is illogical), when, in reality, there are multiple options.
- 7) As used in paragraph 5, which is the best antonym for **resonate**?
- A. reflect
 - B. reduce
 - C. repeat
 - D. renounce
 - E. reverberate
- 8) Which of the following logical fallacies is present in the argument made in paragraph 5 regarding the defense put forth by the RTC?
- A. *Missing the point*, characterized by an argument in which the premises support a particular conclusion—but not the conclusion that the arguer actually draws.
 - B. *Ad populum*, characterized by an argument in which the arguer takes advantage of the desire most people have to be liked and to fit in with others, using that desire to try to get the audience to accept his or her argument.
 - C. *Appeal to pity*, characterized by an argument in which the arguer tries to get people to accept a conclusion by making them feel sorry for someone.
 - D. *Slippery slope*, characterized by an argument in which the arguer claims that a sort of chain reaction, usually ending in some dire consequence, will take place, but without enough evidence for that assumption. The arguer asserts that if we take even one step onto the "slippery slope," we will end up sliding all the way to the bottom; he or she assumes we can't stop partway down the hill.
 - E. *Red herring*, characterized by an argument in which, partway through the argument, the arguer goes off on a tangent, raising a side issue that distracts the audience from what is really at stake.

Answers and Explanations

1) **B**

In paragraph 1, we learn that Xandersol has caused “the deaths of six Anchorstown residents” and has contaminated the “household drinking water for thousands of local residents.” The passage continues to quote opinions from local residents. From these facts we can infer that the passage has a local focus and is of particular interest to the residents of Anchorstown. The passage presents three differing opinions about who is to blame for the leak, and it does not take a side in the issue. From this structure, as well as the unbiased tone, we can infer that the passage presents an impartial, informative view of the situation. An Anchorstown newspaper would be an impartial, informative publication of particular interest to local Anchorstown residents. Therefore **(B)** is correct. While we learn in paragraph 1 that Xandersol is a powerful new drug, the focus of the passage is not on the drug but on the group responsible for the leak. The passage is also addressed to a local audience. For these reasons, it would not make sense for the passage to appear in a magazine about powerful new drugs. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. Since the focus of the passage is not about the specific negative effects of exposure to Xandersol, it would not make sense for the passage to appear in a cautionary pamphlet included in every new pack of Xandersol. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect. The local focus on Anchorstown and the lack of details about what Xandersol is make this passage unsuitable for an encyclopedia article about Xandersol. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect. Though the actor Evert Milkin is in Anchorstown filming for his blockbuster movie, the focus of the passage is on the Xandersol leak, not the movie, so this passage would not belong in a movie review. Therefore **(E)** is incorrect.

2) **D**

advocate (*verb*): to speak, plead, or argue in favor of.

In paragraph 3, we learn that “Marcia Downing, a mother of three, advocates that the GPPF is to blame.” In Marcia’s following remarks, she argues in favor of the theory that GPPF is to blame. Using this information, we can understand that *advocate* means to argue in favor of something. This meaning fits in well with the word family *champion, bolster, support*. Therefore **(D)** is correct. To *acknowledge, concede, recognize* something is to accept or comprehend the facts. To *advocate* means to take a side of a controversial issue, not just accept it. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. While in order to *advocate* one must choose a side, it is more specific than merely to *adjudicate, determine, select*. To *advocate* one must choose and also argue for a position. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect. To *propose, suggest, recommend* something implies a willingness to hear other positions and alternatives. To *advocate* for something implies already having made a decision and chosen a side. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect. To *admit, concede, grant* something is to give in to the opposing side, which is not the same as to *advocate*. Therefore **(E)** is incorrect.

3) **E**

In paragraph 3, we learn that “an overwhelming majority of local residents—nearly 80%—believe” that Xandersol entered the water system at GFFC. From this fact we know that most people in Anchorstown believe this theory. Also in paragraph 3, Marcia Downing claims, “Nearly everyone on the block will tell you so. I mean, I don’t understand what the big mystery is. If everyone says it’s true, then it’s probably true.” Downing claims here that if most people believe something, it must be right. This logical fallacy relies on the belief that people want to be liked and fit in with others, so they will go along with the majority opinion. *Ad populum* means “to the people” in Latin. An appeal to the people implies that if most people think something, it is the truth, regardless of facts. Therefore **(E)** is correct. In paragraph 3, there are no assumptions made about a large group based on an inadequate sample. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. There are no premises to the argument which support a different conclusion than the one actually drawn. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect. There is no information in the paragraph about a chain reaction ending in a dire consequence. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect. There is no analogy or comparison between two things in this paragraph. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.

4) **C**

galvanize (*verb*): to arouse to awareness or action; spur.

In paragraph 4, we learn that the famous actor Evert Milkin “has galvanized many to support the claim that the Xandersol entered the city water system at the WPPP.” From this line, we can infer that to *galvanize* means to inspire, spur or arouse to action. *Excite* is a synonym for *galvanize*. In the same way that Milkin excited many to support his claim about Xandersol, Margo is exciting the impoverished class to rise up against their oppressors in Darbyville. Therefore **(C)** is correct. To *galvanize* can mean to coat metals such as iron or steel with a protective coating, in the context of welding or metallurgy. However, that is the not the meaning used in paragraph 4. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. A fused broken bone is not an example of arousing people to awareness or action. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect. Ichiro arouses himself to action when he decides to confront his boss personally. However, he does not arouse others to action in the way that Milkin does in the passage. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect. Making a personal decision to quit smoking does not require arousing others to awareness or action. Making headlines is also not the same as arousing others to awareness. Therefore **(E)** is incorrect.

5) **E**

In paragraph 4, we learn that “big name actor Evert Milkin” supports the claim that WPPP is responsible for the disaster. Later in the paragraph, Alyssa Davis is quoted as saying, “If a nationally recognized and highly respected actor like Milkin tells you it’s true, you can rest assured it most definitely is.” Though Milkin is highly respected as an actor, there is no evidence he has any expertise in the area of water contamination. People are listening to his theory because he is famous, not because he is an expert on the situation. This logical fallacy is an appeal to authority. Therefore **(E)** is correct. In paragraph 4, no one attacks an opponent personally rather than the opponent’s argument. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. There is no side issue which distracts the audience’s attention from the real issue. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect. There is no circular reasoning, wherein the reader must accept a conclusion which is the same as the premise, or else accept a questionable assumption of the argument. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect. There is no claim that a conclusion should be accepted due to a lack of evidence. Indeed Milkin presents the evidence of the dried pool of Xandersol. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.

6) **B**

In paragraph 5, we learn that some believe “the RTC is the one at fault.” Todd Severs is quoted as saying, “It should be pretty clear to everyone that the RTC is responsible for the disaster. Just take a look at their past record. In the last two years alone, the RTC has incurred 16 citations for noncompliance with federal and state drug testing standards.” Here Severs attacks the RTC for the type of corporation it is and for its history of noncompliance. It is an attack on the corporation’s reputation rather than a presentation of evidence that the RTC was actually responsible for the leak. Severs focuses on attacking the RTC rather than attacking their argument or presenting a more compelling argument of his own. *Ad hominem* means *against the man* in Latin. In this fallacy, people are led to believe that a person (or in this case, a corporation) is bad, and thus should not be believed about anything. Therefore **(B)** is correct. There is no confusion between causation and correlation in Severs’ argument. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. In paragraph 5, there are no assumptions made about a large group based on an inadequate sample. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect. There is no word or phrase used with multiple meanings in the paragraph. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect. The argument is not mistakenly reduced to only two choices. Therefore **(E)** is incorrect.

7) **A**

resonate (*verb*): to be understood or receive a sympathetic response; to reverberate.

In paragraph 5, we learn that “Severs’ statements have begun to resonate with the public” which has led to “growing concern” about RTC’s responsibility for the leak. From this context, we can infer that to resonate means to reverberate or be understood and received sympathetically by others. The opposite of being understood or received is to be *reflected*. Therefore **(A)** is correct. *To resonate* can mean *to amplify* sound but that is not how it is used in this context, so *reduce* is not a good antonym here. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect. *To resonate* can also mean to echo, in which case *repeat* would be a synonym, but that is not the case in this context and the question asks for the best antonym. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect. *To renounce* is to give something up. That is not the opposite of being understood. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect. *To reverberate* is a synonym for *resonate*. Therefore **(E)** is incorrect.

8) **C**

In paragraph 5, the RTC claims, “The RTC has been testing the drugs that the people have come to depend on. What is more, we have done it on a shoestring budget. Many of our employees are forced to work under meager circumstances—circumstances that few would put up with unless they weren’t so dutifully driven to carry out this noble endeavor. Several of our employees are barely able to clothe their children and put food on the table. In our quest to create safe, helpful, reliable drugs, regardless of the hardships we suffer, it seems we have now become completely unappreciated.” Rather than focus on the issue of the argument—whether or not there is any evidence that RTC is responsible for the leak—the statement appeals to the emotions of listeners. The description of the personal difficulties that employees face in their “quest to create safe, helpful, reliable drugs” attempts to lead people to pity these employees, and thus the company. If people pity the company, then they won’t accuse it of being responsible for the leak. This logical fallacy is an appeal to pity. Therefore **(C)** is correct. There are no premises to the argument which support a different conclusion than the one actually drawn. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. There is no appeal to the majority opinion, or the impulse people have to fit in and be liked and therefore go along with the group. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect. There is no information in the paragraph about a chain reaction ending in a dire consequence. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect. There is no side issue which distracts the audience’s attention from the real issue. Therefore **(E)** is incorrect.