



Level 11 Samples

3 Reading Comprehension Assessments

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• Reading Comprehension Sample 11.1

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

English Ivy: Friend or Foe?

English Ivy **betrays** its poor reputation as a nuisance by its unparalleled ability to provide shade. By seamlessly covering the exterior of a building, it works as a natural insulator, blocking the sun and decreasing air conditioning costs. This means big savings for both building tenants and homeowners alike. And it can happen quickly, too. Under the proper conditions, established English Ivy can grow to cover an area of roughly 500 square feet per year. Given that most homes have a roof measuring roughly 2000 square feet, ivy-friendly homeowners can rest assured that their roofs will be completely covered in about four years. When considering growth rates of newly planted ivy, just remember the old adage: First year, it sleeps. Second year, it creeps. Third year, it leaps! For English Ivy, this is especially true.



Now, detractors may take this opportunity to remind readers about how invasive English Ivy can be. For what ivy enthusiast hasn't been cautioned about its ability to burrow holes, fracture windows, and even **deteriorate** brick? But be warned. Oftentimes, this suggestion is taken to the comical extreme. Naysayers take a strange pleasure in spinning yarns about a particularly **malevolent** strand of ivy—one that slips in through the cracks on a hot summer night, silently strangling homeowners in their sleep. Admittedly, this can be a funny story to tell. But are we to believe such a tale? The intelligent gardener will quickly dismiss such rubbish for what it is.

Questions

- 1) The primary purpose of the passage is to
 - A. highlight the reasons why English Ivy's fast growth rate is beneficial
 - B. argue that English Ivy is an essential plant for homeowners
 - C. educate readers about how to use English Ivy to insulate their homes
 - D. belittle detractors of English Ivy
 - E. defend the reputation of English Ivy

- 2) As used in paragraph 1, which is the best definition for **betrays**?
 - A. gives away
 - B. contradicts
 - C. reveals
 - D. supports
 - E. highlights

- 3) In paragraph 1, the author states, “Given that most homes have a roof measuring roughly 2000 square feet, ivy-friendly homeowners can rest assured that their roofs will be completely covered in about four years.” Which of the following logical mistakes does the author make in drawing this conclusion?
- I. English Ivy will not cover the area of most roofs in 4 years if it only grows 500 square feet per year.
 - II. Homes may not have the proper conditions necessary for English Ivy to grow at the specified rate.
 - III. Newly planted ivy does not grow as fast as established ivy.
- A. I only
 - B. II only
 - C. I and II only
 - D. II and III only
 - E. I, II, and III
- 4) As used in paragraph 2, which is the best definition for **deteriorate**?
- A. wear away
 - B. shield
 - C. add to
 - D. climb on
 - E. strengthen
- 5) As used in paragraph 2, which is the best antonym for **malevolent**?
- A. wary
 - B. sensitive
 - C. virtuous
 - D. injured
 - E. willing
- 6) This passage would most likely be found
- A. in a scholarly journal about botany
 - B. in a magazine article about gardening
 - C. in a letter from one gardener to another
 - D. on a website identifying different types of plants
 - E. in a pamphlet about the best ways to make a home more energy-efficient
- 7) The author's tone can best be described as
- A. passionate
 - B. defensive
 - C. argumentative
 - D. persuasive
 - E. accusatory

• Reading Comprehension Sample 11.2

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

Things to Consider

Many farmers use pesticides to ensure that their crops are healthy and abundant. These chemicals kill or repel a variety of pests, including weeds, insects, and rodents, in order to prevent them from feeding on or destroying the farmer's crops. Although there are certainly advantages to using pesticides, there are also some serious disadvantages that farmers should consider before using them on crops. Because of the various negative effects of chemical pesticides, farmers might decide to use more natural alternatives instead.



Pesticides help crops grow larger and faster as well as allow for a wider variety of plants. Because farmers who use pesticides harvest more crops than they would otherwise, they are able to sell them at lower prices. So, by keeping the price of domestic produce low, pesticides reduce our reliance on imported products. Pesticides also allow farmers to use smaller tracts of land to raise their crops, which frees up more land for other uses. For these reasons, many people argue that using pesticides is beneficial for both the farmer and the consumer.

Despite these advantages, there are significant dangers associated with the use of chemical pesticides. Many scientific studies have shown that the farm workers who come into contact with pesticides can develop serious medical conditions, such as cancer, lung damage, or severe burns. When pregnant women have long-term contact with these chemicals, their unborn babies may be harmed. Studies have also shown that when people ingest residual pesticides left on fruits and vegetables, they might suffer from many health problems. Furthermore, pesticides harm the environment; some experts estimate that over 95% of the pesticides sprayed on crops end up in the soil, water, or air, all places where they can do severe damage to the ecosystem.

How can we achieve the benefits of pesticides while minimizing these negative consequences? Some farmers have attempted to solve this **conundrum** by using biological pest control instead of synthetic pesticides. For example, a farmer who wants to control an infestation of aphids on his or her crops might introduce a population of ladybugs, insects that prey on aphids. Wasps can also be helpful, as they eat caterpillars and beetles, which destroy many crops. Because wasps also eat nectar, they supply the additional benefit of pollinating plants as they fly from flower to flower. Farmers can also use trap crops, plants that work as traps to lure insects away from the crop farmers are trying to protect. A field of cotton plants, for instance, can be protected by nearby alfalfa plants. The lygus bugs that can infest cotton are more attracted to the alfalfa plants, and so they will eat the trap crop instead of destroying the cotton.

Even though biological pest control seems safer than using synthetic pesticides, there are still risks involved. Introducing a non-native species into a new environment might create a great deal of problems in the ecosystem. Furthermore, biological pest control does not work nearly as quickly as chemical pesticides; it may take weeks or months for a trap crop to successfully lure insects away from the protected crop. This solution is obviously not effective for pest problems that require immediate action. Finally, pests can become increasingly resistant to any form of pest control, whether it is biological or synthetic. Although biological pest control might not be a perfect solution to the pest problem, it is the one that seems to carry the least risk for both human beings and the environment.

Sources:
 "Pesticides." *United States Environmental Protection Agency*, Web, 19 Jun. 2012.
 "Pesticides." *Medline Plus*, Web, 28 Jun. 2012.

Questions

- 1) Which of the following would be the best subtitle for this passage?
- A. The Dangers of Chemical Pesticides
 - B. A Farmer's Biggest Dilemma
 - C. Biological Pest Control: The Lesser of Two Evils
 - D. The Economic Benefits of Using Biological Pest Control
 - E. The Effectiveness of Trap Crops
- 2) The author likely chooses to include paragraph 2, which outlines the benefits of chemical pesticides, in order to
- I. present a balanced perspective before concluding that it is better to use biological pest control
 - II. provide sufficient information so that readers can develop their own conclusions about chemical pesticides versus biological pest control
 - III. demonstrate that chemical pesticides are more effective than biological pest control
- A. I only
 - B. II only
 - C. I and II only
 - D. II and III only
 - E. I, II, and III
- 3) As used in paragraph 4, which is the best synonym for **conundrum**?
- A. puzzle
 - B. obstacle
 - C. failure
 - D. disaster
 - E. issue
- 4) Paragraph 4 begins: "How can we achieve the benefits of pesticides while minimizing these negative consequences?" Which of the following literary devices does the author use in this line?
- A. Ambiguity, characterized by the expression of an idea in such a way that it becomes possible to glean more than one meaning from it.
 - B. Hyperbole, characterized by the use of specific words and phrases that exaggerate and overemphasize the core of the statement in order to produce a grander, more noticeable effect. This usually works to convey an action or sentiment that is generally not realistically possible or plausible but helps to emphasize an emotion.
 - C. Indirect question, characterized by a sentence that reports a question instead of directly asking one.
 - D. Rhetorical question, characterized by a question posed for effect rather than one that expects a reply.
 - E. Inversion, characterized by the reversal of the usual order of words in order to add emphasis or character.

- 5) Which of the following would provide support for the author's overall argument?
- A. Studies have shown that a ban on chemical pesticides in the United States might result in rising food prices, job loss, and an increase in world hunger.
 - B. Scientists have discovered a natural, environmentally-friendly fertilizer that helps wheat crops grow twice as fast as they normally do.
 - C. Farmers who do not use any sort of pest control on their crops grow 30% less produce than farmers who use some kind of pesticide.
 - D. In addition to weeds, insects, and rodents, plants can also be harmed by birds, bacteria, and fungi.
 - E. The use of trap crops in Sudan has dramatically increased the production of crops such as sorghum and maize.
- 6) In the final paragraph, the author writes, "Although biological pest control might not be a perfect solution to the pest problem, it is the one that seems to carry the least risk for both human beings and the environment." The author most likely admits that biological pest control is not "a perfect solution" because
- A. the author has no hope that there will ever be an ideal solution to the problem of agricultural pests
 - B. the author is not sure if chemical pesticides are really as dangerous as he or she originally thought
 - C. by admitting that his or her solution is not perfect, the author shows that he or she has thought carefully about the practicality of using biological pest control
 - D. by admitting that his or her solution is not perfect, the author shows the reader that even the best ideas have flaws
 - E. the author is concerned that using biological pest control will cause too many economic and environmental problems

• Reading Comprehension Sample 11.3

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

Passage 1

During the Age of Reason, humanity was in a state of transition. The old superstitions were proven wrong by science. And so some thinkers wondered if the old ways of organizing societies and governments were wrong too. To that end, philosophers began to develop and later debate the very natures of society. And three men in particular argued that society was in fact formed by something called the social contract.

The social contract is an **abstract** agreement. No one technically signs it, but everyone agrees to it informally. It is an agreement among the people of a society to cooperate with each other because it is mutually beneficial to do so. That is, it is in everyone's interests to work together.

Thomas Hobbes first proposed the theory in his *Leviathan*, from 1651. He argued that people were essentially evil in nature and entered society for mutual protection. To Hobbes, people gave power to a monarch or king because that person protected them.

Decades later, John Locke adapted the notion. He argued that people were free in nature and gave up political power in society. However, people joined the social contract to get protection for their natural rights of life, liberty, and property. He argued that the government's power derives from the people and that people should form a new government if the existing one does not protect those natural rights.

Finally, just over 110 years after Hobbes, Jean-Jacques Rousseau argued in his *The Social Contract* that all the power of a just government comes from the people. That is, when one enters the social contract, he gives up his freedom but gets political power. Thus, in a little over a century, philosophers had switched. Where they once argued that people have little power in society, they were now arguing that the people had all of the power.

Passage 2

To the men who formed the United States, only one thing was agreed upon: the British had broken the social contract with them. They may have disagreed about what they should do about it or, later, about what the new country should look like. However, they were certain that the king had not done what he was supposed to do. Thus, the Thomas Jefferson-penned Declaration of Independence is primarily an explanation of how King George III had broken that contract.

The first section of the document expresses the colonists' belief that man has three essential natural rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It also expresses the belief that government power comes from the governed. The second section lists the English government's abuses on the colonists. They include keeping a standing army in a time of peace, disallowing representation in parliament, and suspending colonial assemblies. Finally, the third section explains that the Americans have taken less extreme measures in the past but that, finally, they were severing their bond, their social contract, with England.

Sources:

Ellis, Joseph J. *Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation*. New York: Vintage, 2003. Book.
Social Contract: Essays by Locke, Hume, and Rousseau. Ed: Sir Ernest Baker. New York: Oxford University Press, USA. 1960. Book.

Questions

- 1) It can be inferred from Passage 1 that the Age of Reason
- A. occurred in the 17th and 18th centuries
 - B. influenced the men who formed the United States
 - C. was possible only because of new science breakthroughs
 - D. was started by Thomas Hobbes and his Leviathan
- 2) According to Passage 1, the primary difference between the social contracts defined by Hobbes and Rousseau is that
- A. Hobbes believes the government cannot take away three things, while Rousseau argues the government has total power to do what it likes
 - B. Hobbes argues that one joins the social contract for protection, while Rousseau argues that people give up their political power in joining the social contract
 - C. Hobbes argues that man has natural rights, while Rousseau argues that man gives up his rights to join society
 - D. Hobbes argues that more power lies in the government, while Rousseau argues that more power lies in the people
- 3) As used in paragraph 2 of Passage 1, the word **abstract** most nearly means
- A. unusual
 - B. concrete
 - C. theoretical
 - D. representational
- 4) According to Passage 2, each of the following is true about the Declaration of Independence EXCEPT that
- A. it is rooted in the social contract theory
 - B. it was inspired by Jean-Jacques Rousseau
 - C. it was written by Thomas Jefferson
 - D. it listed ways the English had abused the colonists
- 5) Which of the following best describes the relationship between the two passages?
- A. While one argues that a belief exists in theory only, the other argues that it exists in concrete form too.
 - B. While one explains the historical development of a theory, the other shows a specific application of that same theory.
 - C. While one is about the history of the social contract, the other is about a specific event in history.
 - D. While one analyzes three different conceptions of a theory, the other argues that one conception is better than another.

Sample 11.1

1) E

Question Type: Global

To answer this question correctly, we must study the first sentence: “English Ivy betrays its poor reputation as a nuisance by its unparalleled ability to provide shade.” In this sentence, the author lets us know that he or she is providing reasons why English Ivy betrays, or contradicts, its poor reputation. In other words, the author intends to point out some benefits of English Ivy. By pointing out these benefits, as well as discrediting detractors of ivy who often “take a strange pleasure in spinning yarns” about it, the author defends the reputation of English Ivy. Therefore (E) is correct. Although the author does highlight one reason why English Ivy’s fast growth rate is beneficial (it will quickly cover a house and thus act as a natural insulator), he or she does not point out additional reasons. Furthermore, this minor point serves the author’s larger argument, which is that English Ivy does not deserve its poor reputation. Therefore (A) is incorrect. The author does not argue that English Ivy is an essential plant for homeowners, only that it does not deserve its reputation as a nuisance. This means (B) is incorrect. In paragraph 1, the author states that homeowners can use ivy to insulate their homes, but he or she does not provide details about precisely how to do this. The author’s lack of specific directions indicates that he or she is more concerned with defending English Ivy’s reputation than with educating readers. This makes (C) incorrect. The author does not intend to belittle, or disparage, detractors of English Ivy, but rather to contradict them. Although the author does gently mock their tendency to “take a strange pleasure in spinning yarns” about ivy, this statement is not so harsh as to be considered belittling. Therefore (D) is incorrect.

2) B

Question Type: Vocabulary
betray (*verb*): to be unfaithful in guarding, maintaining, or fulfilling.

In paragraph 1, the author indicates his or her intention to explain how English Ivy “betrays its poor reputation as a nuisance.” The author then goes on to cite reasons why English Ivy is beneficial. Based on this information, we can infer that English Ivy has a bad reputation, but in the author’s opinion, it does not deserve such a reputation. This means that in this context *betrays* means goes against or fails to remain true to. *Contradicts* is the only answer choice that reflects this meaning, so it is a good definition in this context. Therefore (B) is correct. Although the word *betray* is often used to describe the act of treason, or someone who disloyally *gives away* secrets, this is not the definition used in the passage. This means (A) is incorrect. While *betray* can mean to *reveal* information that should remain secret, this is not the definition used in the passage. Indeed, in this context, if the English Ivy revealed its poor reputation as a nuisance, it would confirm it, not contradict it. This makes (C) incorrect. *Support* means to maintain. This is the opposite meaning of contradict, so (D) is incorrect. *Highlight* means to emphasize. This is the opposite meaning of contradict, so (E) is incorrect.

3) D

Question Type: Inference

In paragraph 1, the author states, “Under the proper conditions, established English Ivy can grow to cover an area of roughly 500 square feet per year. Given that most homes have a roof measuring roughly 2000 square feet, ivy-friendly homeowners can rest assured that their roofs will be completely covered in about four years.” 500 (square feet) multiplied by 4 (years) equals 2000 (square feet). Given that English Ivy can grow to cover an area of roughly 500 square feet per year, and most homes have a roof measuring roughly 2000 square feet, then it makes mathematical sense to figure that English Ivy will indeed have enough time to cover the area of most roofs in 4 years. This means the author does not make a logical mistake in this calculation. This eliminates **option (I)**. While the author’s math checks out correctly, there are other flaws in his or her logic. In paragraph 1, the author states, “Under the proper conditions, established English Ivy can grow to cover an area of roughly 500 square feet per year.” Given that these figures only hold true under the proper conditions, it is wrong to assume that English Ivy will grow at this rate at most homes. After all, many houses may not get sufficient light, rain, or temperatures necessary for English Ivy to grow well. This supports **option (II)**. At the end of paragraph 1, the author states, “When considering growth rates of newly planted ivy, just remember the old adage: First year, it sleeps. Second year, it creeps. Third year, it leaps! For English Ivy, this is especially true.” Using this information, it can be inferred that English Ivy will need up to two years before it begins to grow at a regular pace. The author cites the growth rates for “established” ivy, or ivy that is not newly planted. Using this information, we can infer that newly planted English Ivy will likely take longer than 4 years to cover a 2000-square foot roof. This supports **option (III)**. Therefore (D) is correct.

4) A

Question Type: Vocabulary
deteriorate (*verb*): to make or become worse in quality or character; to disintegrate or wear away.

In paragraph 2, the author writes, “Now, detractors may take this opportunity to remind readers about how invasive English Ivy can be. For what ivy enthusiast hasn’t been cautioned about its ability to burrow holes, fracture windows, and even deteriorate brick?” The author describes how invasive ivy can be by listing ways in which it can be destructive. Based on this information, we can infer that *deteriorate* has a negative, destructive connotation. *Wear away* is the only answer choice that has a destructive connotation, so it is the best definition for *deteriorate*. Therefore (A) is correct. *Shield* means to cover or protect, which is not a negative or destructive action. Since the author uses *deteriorate* in a list of negative actions, we know that (B) is incorrect. *Add to* means to increase or build on, which is not a negative or destructive action. Since the author uses *deteriorate* in a list of negative actions, we know that (C) is incorrect. *Climb on* means to ascend or crawl up. Although this may accurately describe how ivy grows, it does not indicate a way that ivy could be destructive to brick. Therefore (D) is incorrect. *Strengthen* means to make stronger. This is not a negative or destructive action, so (E) is incorrect.

5) C

Question Type: Vocabulary
malevolent (*adjective*): evil, harmful, or injurious.

In paragraph 2, the author writes, “Naysayers take a strange pleasure in spinning yarns about a particularly malevolent strand of ivy—one that slips in through the cracks on a hot summer night, silently strangling homeowners in their sleep.” A plant that wishes to

strangle someone is portrayed as bad, so *malevolent* must mean bad or evil. *Virtuous* is the best antonym for evil. Therefore **(C)** is correct. *Wary* means cautious. Although one might be wary about something evil, wary is not the opposite of evil. This means **(A)** is incorrect. *Sensitive* means emotional or perceptive. Although these are generally considered positive characteristics, they are not the opposite of evil. This makes **(B)** incorrect. *Injured* means harmed in some way. Although something evil could cause harm, the opposite of evil is not injured. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect. *Willing* means compliant or agreeable. Although this is a positive characteristic, it is not the opposite of evil. This means **(E)** is incorrect.

6) **B**

Question Type: Global

The passage provides a defense of English Ivy's reputation. In paragraph 1, the author notes its benefits, namely that it can provide shade, act as an insulator, and is fast-growing. In paragraph 2, the author argues that those who claim ivy is invasive often take their warnings "to the comical extreme." Overall, the author argues that English Ivy does not deserve its poor reputation as a nuisance. Moreover, the author uses familiar, colloquial language that gives the passage a folksy tone. For example, he or she writes: "When considering growth rates of newly planted ivy, just remember the old adage: First year, it sleeps. Second year, it creeps. Third year, it leaps!" This tone is also evident when the author asks, "But are we to believe such a tale?" Finally, the author seems to address a general audience that includes "building tenants and homeowners," "detractors," "naysayers," as well as "ivy enthusiasts." Based on the content, the colloquial tone, and the general audience of this passage, we can infer that it would most likely be found in a magazine article about gardening. Therefore **(B)** is correct. The folksy, familiar tone and general audience of this passage do not belong in a scholarly journal, so **(A)** is incorrect. The audience of this passage includes many different types of people, and while the tone is familiar, it is not as intimate as one would expect in a personal letter. This eliminates **(C)**. The purpose of the passage is not to identify plants in an objective way, but to defend English Ivy's reputation. This means it would not likely be found on a website identifying plants, so **(D)** is incorrect. Although in paragraph 1 the author does note that English Ivy can act as a "natural insulator, blocking the sun and decreasing air conditioning costs," the focus of the passage is on English Ivy's reputation, not on ways to make a home energy-efficient. Therefore **(E)** is incorrect.

7) **B**

Question Type: Global

At the beginning of the passage, the author writes, "English Ivy betrays its poor reputation as a nuisance by its unparalleled ability to provide shade." This lets us know that the author intends to defend English Ivy against its poor reputation. He or she then provides several reasons why English Ivy might be considered a desirable plant. In paragraph 2, the author expresses indignation about how English Ivy acquired such a bad reputation, suggesting that "naysayers take a strange pleasure in spinning yarns about a particularly malevolent strand of ivy—one that slips in through the cracks on a hot summer night, silently strangling homeowners in their sleep." Furthermore, the author advises the reader to "be warned" about these detractors of English Ivy, which implies that the author considers their tactics somehow unfair or offensive. The author continues to discuss how detractors will try to scare the reader into believing false accounts of English Ivy that the author states are "rubbish." Based on the displeasure the author expresses about English Ivy's poor reputation and how it is acquired, we can determine that the author's tone is defensive. Therefore **(B)** is correct. The author may indeed be passionate about gardening and English Ivy. However, the author's tone in this passage is not as passionate as it is defensive. In passionate writing, the author would be more sentimental and expressive. Moreover, the author would probably focus on his or her love of English Ivy rather than his or her indignation at its detractors. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. While the author does present several arguments in the passage, the passage as a whole does not restrict itself to formal argument. In argumentative writing, facts are used to support an opinion. However, in this passage, there is a mixture of facts ("Under the proper conditions, established English Ivy can grow to cover an area of roughly 500 square feet per year") and opinions ("Oftentimes, this suggestion is taken to the comical extreme," and "But are we to believe such a tale?"). Furthermore, the author relies on anecdotal, conjectural evidence instead of concrete facts and statistics to support his or her claim that the reader should ignore ivy's detractors. This means the tone is not strictly argumentative. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect. While one of the author's secondary purposes is to persuade the reader to agree with him or her, the author does not overtly call the reader to action using language such as *should*, *must*, *needs to*, or *has to*. The author is not explicitly persuasive about what the reader should believe. He or she merely claims that the reader should not listen to those who criticize English Ivy. This means **(D)** is incorrect. The author does not overtly accuse or blame anyone, but rather provides a defense against general "detractors." An accusatory tone is harsher than the author's tone in this passage, so **(E)** is incorrect.

Sample 11.2

1) **C**

Question Type: Global

A good subtitle captures the main idea of a passage and lets readers know what to expect should they continue reading. In paragraph 1, the author states the main idea of this passage: "Because of the various negative effects of chemical pesticides, farmers might decide to use more natural alternatives instead." Paragraph 2 presents the benefits of chemical pesticides, while paragraph 3 presents their disadvantages. Paragraph 4 introduces the solution of biological pest control. In the final paragraph, the author concedes that biological pest control also has disadvantages, but concludes: "Although biological pest control might not be a perfect solution to the pest problem, it is the one that seems to carry the least risk for both human beings and the environment." Overall, the author admits that there are some drawbacks to using biological pest control, but suggests that it is less dangerous to both humans and the environment than chemical pesticides. The author might therefore consider biological pest control to be "the lesser of two evils," since both biological and chemical pesticides have serious drawbacks. The subtitle "Biological Pest Control: The Lesser of Two Evils" lets readers know that the passage will discuss biological pest control, which, though not perfect, seems better than the alternative. Therefore **(C)** is correct. Only a small part of the passage focuses on the dangers of chemical pesticides. Because this title does not incorporate the idea of biological pest control, **(A)** is incorrect. Although the author does present the decision to use chemical pesticides or biological pest control as a dilemma for farmers, the passage does not provide evidence to suggest that it is a farmer's biggest dilemma. This means **(B)** is incorrect. In paragraph 2, the author notes the economic benefits of

using chemical pesticides. He or she does not claim that biological pest control offers economic benefits, so **(D)** is incorrect. The effectiveness of trap crops is only a minor point in the passage, not the main idea, so **(E)** is incorrect.

2) **A**

Question Type: Inference

In general, including an opposing point of view can strengthen an author's argument because it shows the reader that the author has carefully considered both sides of the issue before coming to his or her conclusion. Presenting a balanced perspective can make an author seem more credible to the reader. In this passage, the author notes in paragraph 1 that using pesticides does have advantages, and in paragraph 2 he or she elaborates on these advantages to present a balanced perspective. Ultimately, though, the author concludes that it is better to use biological pest control because the disadvantages of chemical pesticides outweigh their advantages. This supports **option (I)**. It may seem as though the author provides information about the benefits of chemical pesticides in paragraph 2 so that readers can develop their own conclusions about chemical pesticides versus biological pest control. However, careful readers will note that the author is not particularly interested in readers coming to their own conclusions; the author wants the reader to agree with his or her final conclusion, which is: "While biological pest control might not be a perfect solution to the pest problem, it is the one that seems to carry the least risk for both human beings and the environment." The purpose of the passage is to persuade, not to inform. This eliminates **option (II)**. While the information in paragraph 2 concerns the benefits of chemical pesticides, the author does not state, either in paragraph 2 or elsewhere in the passage, that chemical pesticides are more effective than biological pest control. In the final paragraph, the author concedes that biological pest control "does not work nearly as quickly" as chemical pesticides. However, this does not necessarily mean that biological pest control is less effective than chemical pesticides, only that it requires more time. This eliminates **option (III)**. Therefore **(A)** is correct.

3) **A**

Question Type: Vocabulary

conundrum (*noun*): a confusing and difficult problem or question; riddle; puzzle.

In paragraph 4, the author asks: "How can we achieve the benefits of pesticides while minimizing these negative consequences? Some farmers have attempted to solve this conundrum by using biological pest control instead of synthetic pesticides." The author establishes a puzzling situation, which is the difficulty of achieving the benefits of pesticides without their accompanying drawbacks. In the following sentence, the author lets us know that this is a *conundrum*, or a problem that farmers must "solve." Since it is a puzzling situation that must be solved, we can infer that a good synonym for conundrum is *puzzle*. Therefore **(A)** is correct. *Obstacle* means something that obstructs or hinders progress. Obstacles are not solved, but rather, overcome. This eliminates **(B)**. *Failure* means a lack of success. Although this situation is a puzzle to be solved, it is not necessarily a failure. This eliminates **(C)**. *Disaster* means a calamitous event. This is too strongly negative and does not address the fact that there is a problem, or puzzle, to be solved. This means **(D)** is incorrect. *Issue* means a point in question. Although the author does refer back to a point in question, this question is intended to be puzzling, not merely questionable. This makes **(E)** incorrect.

4) **D**

Question Type: Inference

Paragraph 4 begins: "How can we achieve the benefits of pesticides while minimizing these negative consequences?" This is a rhetorical question because the author does not expect the reader to reply. Although the author does actually provide answers to this question, he or she does not expect the reader to answer it. Therefore **(D)** is correct. This line does not contain more than one possible meaning, so **(A)** is incorrect. This line does not exaggerate the dilemma, so **(B)** is incorrect. This line directly poses a question; it does not just report it. This means **(C)** is incorrect. The word order in this line is standard English word order for questions, so **(E)** is incorrect.

5) **E**

Question Type: Inference

In the final paragraph, the author writes, "Although biological pest control might not be a perfect solution to the pest problem, it is the one that seems to carry the least risk for both human beings and the environment." The author states that biological pest control has fewer risks for people and the environment, so any information showing that biological pest control is effective would strengthen the argument that it should be chosen over chemical pesticides. In paragraph 4, the author states that trap crops are a type of biological pest control. This means that an example of a trap crop being used successfully to increase production of crops would provide the best support for the author's overall argument. Therefore **(E)** is correct. The drawbacks to discontinuing the use of chemical pesticides is information that would weaken, not strengthen, the author's argument that biological pest control is a better choice than chemical pesticides. This makes **(A)** incorrect. Although a natural, environmentally-friendly fertilizer sounds like a promising alternative to chemical pesticides, the author does not include fertilizer as an example of biological pest control. The passage does not provide information for us to infer whether this fertilizer would be considered a chemical pesticide, biological pest control, or neither. Since the author's argument is specifically that biological pest control is a better choice than chemical pesticides, not just that chemical pesticides are harmful, **(B)** is incorrect. A statistic comparing the crop production of farmers who do not use any pest control to that of farmers using pesticides is irrelevant to the author's argument that biological pest control is better than chemical pesticides. This means **(C)** is incorrect. Additional examples of pests are irrelevant to the author's argument that biological pest control is better than chemical pesticides. This makes **(D)** incorrect.

6) **C**

Question Type: Inference

Pointing out the negative aspects of biological pest control shows that the author does not blindly subscribe to his or her opinion that it is the better choice. A well-considered argument is more persuasive than one that ignores possible counterarguments. By admitting in the final paragraph that the solution of biological pest control is not perfect, the author shows that he or she has thought carefully about the practicality of using biological pest control. After weighing both the advantages and disadvantages, the author ultimately concludes that biological pest control is the better alternative. Therefore **(C)** is correct. The author does not express hopelessness that there will ever be an ideal solution to the problem of agricultural pests, so **(A)** is incorrect. The author does not

indicate any doubt in the passage about whether or not chemical pesticides are as dangerous as he or she originally thought. This means (B) is incorrect. We cannot infer from this one specific situation that the author believes, in general, that even the best ideas have flaws. This makes (D) incorrect. The author does not indicate any concern that using biological pest control will cause too many economic and environmental problems. This eliminates (E).

Sample 11.3

1) A

Question Type: Inference

The author of Passage 1 describes various arguments that took place during the Age of Reason, and he or she specifically describes the theories of Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau. While describing those men, the author mentions their works, stating that *Leviathan* was published in 1651 and *The Social Contract* “just over 110 years after Hobbes,” meaning it was published in the 1760s. As these are texts of the Age of Reason, it follows that the Age of Reason occurred in the 1600s and 1700s, or the 17th and 18th centuries, making choice (A) correct. Though the author of Passage 2 does suggest that the Age of Reason—specifically, the social contract theory—inspired the men who formed the United States, Passage 1 does not mention the United State at all. As such, choice (B) is incorrect, since this question asks only about Passage 1. Though the author of Passage 1 does suggest that new thoughts in science are linked to the Age of Reason, he or she seems to imply that the new breakthroughs in science are part of the Age of Reason, not the cause of it. Thus, choice (C) is incorrect. Though the author of Passage 1 does cite *Leviathan* as a breakthrough work of the Age of Reason, he or she does not argue that it was the first book published as part of the Age of Reason or that Hobbes triggered the Age of Reason. As such, choice (D) is incorrect.

2) D

Question Type: Global

The author of Passage 1 states that Hobbes believed that “people gave power to a monarch or king because that person protected them.” Of Rousseau, the author writes that he believed “all the power of a just government comes from the people.” In the final sentence, the author refers to Hobbes and Rousseau as opposite ends of a spectrum. Men like Hobbes “once argued that people have little power in society,” while men like Rousseau argued “the people had all of the power.” Thus, choice (D) provides the best explanation for Passage 1’s differences between Hobbes and Rousseau. Choice (A) is incorrect because it is Locke who argues the government cannot take away three things and Hobbes who argues that the government has total control, not Hobbes and Rousseau respectively, as choice (A) has it. Choice (B) is incorrect because it only provides a true statement about Hobbes. In fact, Rousseau argues that people gain political power in the social contract, not that they give it up. Choice (C) is incorrect because it only provides a true statement about Rousseau. It is Locke, not Hobbes, who argues that man has natural rights.

3) C

Question Type: Vocabulary

abstract (*adjective*): existing in thought or idea but not having a physical existence.

The author of Passage 1 refers to the social contract as “an abstract agreement,” one that “no one technically signs” but that “everyone agrees to... informally.” This implies that the social contract does not technically exist but that it exists in theory, meaning that abstract is closest in meaning to theoretical. Thus, choice (C) is correct. Though abstract can mean unusual, in context it means something else, as the author never implies that the social contract was bizarre or strange. Thus, choice (A) is incorrect. In fact, the author makes it clear that abstract does not mean concrete, as he or she refers to the social contract as “an abstract agreement” that “no one technically signs.” This makes it clear that it does not exist in a solid form, so choice (B) is incorrect. Art is often referred to as representational or abstract, but this passage is not about art. Further, even if it were, representational would be an antonym of abstract, not a synonym of it. Thus, choice (D) is incorrect.

4) B

Question Type: Global

This question asks for the statement that is NOT true, so the best approach is to do process of elimination. The only choice not stated by the author is choice (B), making it correct. The passage implies that the Declaration of Independence was inspired more by Locke than by Rousseau, as it describes the “natural rights” that Locke outlines (although one is changed). The first paragraph of Passage 2 argues that the Declaration of Independence was written because “the British had broken the social contract” with the colonists. This suggests the document is rooted in social contract theory, making choice (A) a true statement and an incorrect answer. The final sentence of the first paragraph of Passage 2 refers to “the Thomas Jefferson-penned Declaration of Independence,” making it clear that Jefferson wrote the document. It makes choice (C) a true statement and an incorrect answer. The second paragraph of Passage 2 states that the Declaration of Independence’s “second section lists the English government’s abuses on the colonists.” Thus, choice (D) provides a true statement and is, as such, incorrect.

5) B

Question Type: Global

The first passage describes the history of the social contract theory, arguing that “three men in particular argued that society was in fact formed by something called the social contract.” It goes on to describe the conceptions of the theory as formulated by Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau. The second passage, however, focuses on one document, the Declaration of Independence. This document, according to Passage 2’s author, was framed in the understanding that “the British had broken the social contract” with the colonists, suggesting that the entire document is rooted in the social contract theory. As such, the first passage explains the historical development of a theory (the social contract), while the second shows the a specific application (the Declaration of Independence) of that same theory, making choice (B) correct. Though the first passage does call the social contract “abstract” and imply that it does not exist in concrete form, the second passage does not argue against this belief. Rather, it only argues that the Declaration of Independence, a concrete document, is itself rooted in the theory. Therefore, choice (A) is incorrect because it distorts information in the second passage. Though the first passage is about the history of the social contract theory, the second one is not about a

specific event in history but, rather, a specific document from history. Thus, choice **(C)** is incorrect. Though the first passage does analyze three conceptions of the theory of the social contract, the second does not argue that one conception is better than another. Instead, it only describes how “the men who formed the United States” interpreted it. As such, choice **(D)** is incorrect.