



“Interstate Highways”

Reading Comprehension – Informational Passages

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

The year 2006 was the golden anniversary, or the 50th birthday, of the Dwight D. Eisenhower National System of Interstate and Defense Highways. This system, usually referred to as The Interstate Highway System, is a system of freeways named after the U.S. President who supported it. The system is the largest highway system in the world, consisting of 46,876 miles (75,440 km) of freeways. The construction of the interstate highway system is an important part of American history. It has played a major role in **preserving** and maintaining the American way of life.

The Interstate highway system has several major functions. One of its major functions is to **facilitate** the distribution of US goods. Because the interstate passes through many downtown areas, it plays an important role in the **distribution** of almost all goods in the United States. Nearly all products travel at least part of the way to their destination on the Interstate System. Another major function of the Interstate system is to facilitate military troop movement to and from airports, seaports, rail terminals and other military destinations. The Interstate highways are connected to routes in the Strategic Highway Network, which is a system of highways that are **vital** to the U.S. Department of Defense.

Today, most of the Interstate system consists of newly constructed highways. The longest section of the Interstate system runs from Boston, Massachusetts to Seattle, Washington. It covers 3,020.54 miles. The shortest two-digit interstate is from Emery, North Carolina to Greensboro, North Carolina. It covers only 12.27 miles. All state capitals except five are served by the system. The five that are not directly served are Juneau, AK, Dover, DE, Jefferson City, MO, Carson City, NV, and Pierre, SD. The Interstate Highway System serves almost all major U.S. cities

Each Interstate highway is marked with a red, white, and blue shield with the word “Interstate,” the name of the state, and the route number. Interstate highways are named with one or two-digit numbers. North-south highways are **designated** with odd numbers; east-west highways are named with even numbers. The north-south Interstate highways begin in the west with the lowest odd numbers; the east-west highways begin in the south with the lowest even numbers. There are mile markers at each mile of the Interstate system, starting at the westernmost or southernmost point on the highway. Every Interstate highway begins with the number “0.” Interchanges are numbered according to their location on the highway in relation to mileage; an exit between milepost 7 and milepost 8 would be designated “Exit 7.” This system allows drivers to quickly estimate the distance to a desired exit, which is a road leading off the highway. Despite the common acceptance of the numbering system on the Interstate highways, some states have adopted different numbering systems. For example, a portion of the Interstate 19 in Arizona is measured in kilometers instead of miles since the highway goes south to Mexico.

Since the Interstate highways are freeways – highways that do not have stop signs and cross streets – they have the highest speed limits in the nation. Most Interstate highways have speed limits between 65–75 miles per hour (105–120 kilometers per hour), but some areas in Texas and Utah have an 80 mile-per-hour (130 kilometer-per-hour) speed limit.

The federal government primarily funds interstate highways. However, they are owned and operated by the individual states or toll authorities in the states. The federal government generally funds up to 90% of the cost of an Interstate highway, while the states pay the remainder of the cost.

Questions:

1) Which President supported the Interstate Highway System?

- A. Jefferson
- B. Eisenhower
- C. Washington
- D. Bush
- E. Obama

2) When did the Interstate Highway System begin?

- A. 1946
- B. 1956
- C. 1957
- D. 2000
- E. 2006

3) Where are the highest-numbered East-West Interstate highways located?

- A. In the Eastern U.S.
- B. In the Western U.S.
- C. In the Southern U.S.
- D. In the Northern U.S.
- E. In the Midwestern U.S.

4) How does a driver leave an Interstate highway?

- A. By taking a cross street
- B. By taking a toll road
- C. By taking a freeway
- D. By taking an exit
- E. By driving on the grass

5) Where are the highest speeds allowed on Interstate highways?

- A. Massachusetts
- B. Texas
- C. Utah
- D. North Carolina
- E. Both B and C are correct.

Vocabulary:

1) When you *preserve* something, you...

- A. keep and maintain it.
- B. uphold and exercise it.
- C. strengthen it.
- D. make it more pleasant.
- E. make it more complicated.

2) When you *facilitate* something, you

- A. easier.
- B. more complicated.
- C. more lengthy.
- D. make it easier.
- E. less interesting.

2) Something *vital* is very...

- A. national.
- B. important.
- C. expensive.
- D. audacious.
- E. perilous.

3) *Distribution* is the process of...

- A. traveling.
- B. taking up.
- C. giving out.
- D. producing.
- E. manufacturing.

5) If something is *designated*, it is...

- A. made.
- B. saved.
- C. required.
- D. included.
- E. marked.

