

Answer Explanations

SAT Practice Test #9

Section 1: Reading Test

QUESTION 1

Choice D is the best answer. Throughout the passage, the narrator describes a visit to her family’s ink shop. The narrator’s father and uncles are employed at the shop, and in the third and fifth paragraphs the narrator describes her father’s interactions with a customer. Her father praises the color, sound, and smell of an ink sample as indicators of the ink’s quality. This interaction leads the narrator to conclude in the last paragraph, “I was very proud to hear Father speak of our family’s ink this way.” Therefore, the passage is best summarized as a character’s visit to her family’s ink shop that deepens her appreciation of her family’s work.

Choice A is incorrect. Although the narrator’s arrival at her family’s ink shop does spark memories of her Precious Auntie, these memories center on Precious Auntie’s beliefs about creativity, including the conviction that inferior ink produces inferior thought. The narrator’s thoughts on Precious Auntie occur in the fourth paragraph, so choice A isn’t the best summary of the overall passage. Choice B is incorrect. Although the passage describes the narrator’s surprise visit to the ink shop and a reunion with her uncles, these events occur in the first paragraph. Therefore, choice B doesn’t provide the best summary of the passage as a whole. Choice C is incorrect because the narrator doesn’t make any reference to her father’s ambitions.

QUESTION 2

Choice B is the best answer. In the fourth paragraph, the narrator recounts her Precious Auntie’s belief that “you can never be an artist if your work comes without effort.” Her Precious Auntie states that when the physical act of writing is done with an “inkstick along an inkstone,” this process requires an artist to “take the first step to cleansing your mind and your heart. You push and you ask yourself, What are my intentions? What is in my heart that matches my mind?” In the following paragraphs, the narrator recalls the pride she felt while listening to her father describe the high quality of the ink that her family had worked hard to produce. Therefore, a main theme of the passage is that quality is achieved through deliberate effort.

Choice A is incorrect. Although family relationships form a backdrop to the passage, the nurturing of these relationships isn't a main theme. Choice C is incorrect. Although the passage does emphasize that hard work produces higher quality writing than that which is produced through minimal work, the passage doesn't mention that hard work results in material compensation. Choice D is incorrect. Although the passage discusses the role of concentrated effort in creative expression, a main theme of the passage isn't that creativity needs to be expressed concretely.

QUESTION 3

Choice B is the best answer. In the first sentence of the second paragraph, the narrator states: "I tried to notice everything so I could later tell GaoLing what I had seen." She then proceeds to describe the floors of the family's ink shop, the walls and display cases, and the various items for sale. According to the third paragraph, these include an inkstick "with a top shaped like a fairy boat," another inkstick with "a bird shape," and a collection of ink cakes "embellished with designs of peonies and bamboo." Therefore, throughout the passage, the narrator is portrayed as someone who is attuned to her immediate surroundings.

Choice A is incorrect. Although the narrator describes herself as shy, the people she interacts with aren't unfamiliar to her because they are members of her family whom she has met before. Choices C and D are incorrect because the narrator isn't portrayed as sympathetic to the needs of others (choice C) or anxious about her responsibilities (choice D).

QUESTION 4

Choice A is the best answer. Big Uncle and Little Uncle offer Old Widow Lau and the narrator a seat at a table reserved for customers upon their arrival at the narrator's family's ink shop. According to the tenth sentence of the first paragraph, "Old Widow Lau refused their invitation three times, exclaiming that my father and uncles must be too busy for visitors." Old Widow Lau's rejection of the uncles' offer is characterized as insincere, as the next sentence of that paragraph shows that she doesn't actually want to leave the shop: "She made weak efforts to leave." Instead, her gestures are intended to inspire exaggerated insistence from the uncles, such that it isn't until the uncles' "fourth insistence, [that Old Widow Lau and the narrator] finally sat." Therefore, it can be most reasonably inferred from the passage that Old Widow Lau's reluctance to stay for tea is feigned because she isn't genuinely firm in her resolve.

Choice B is incorrect because the passage doesn't imply that Old Widow Lau's reluctance is inconsiderate or that the family has been planning her visit. Choice C is incorrect because the shop isn't unusually busy. Instead, only one customer is mentioned in the passage. Choice D is incorrect because the passage doesn't state or imply that Old Widow Lau is exhausted from her journey.

QUESTION 5

Choice C is the best answer. The previous question asks what can be most reasonably inferred from the passage about Old Widow Lau's reluctance to stay for tea. The answer, that her reluctance is feigned because she isn't genuinely firm in her resolve, is best supported by the tenth and eleventh sentences of the first paragraph: "Old Widow Lau refused their invitation three times, exclaiming that my father and uncles must be too busy for visitors. She made weak efforts to leave."

Choices A, B, and D are incorrect because the cited lines don't support the answer to the previous question. Instead, they describe the narrator and Old Widow Lau's arrival at the shop (choice A), their initial reception by the uncles (choice B), and the hospitality the uncles lavish on them once they are seated (choice D).

QUESTION 6

Choice A is the best answer. In the second paragraph, the narrator describes the "shiny" glass display cases at her family's ink shop and how the silk-wrapped boxes of ink inside these cases "looked so much nicer [in the shop] than they had in the ink-making studio at Immortal Heart village." Therefore, the narrator indicates that the contrast between the ink-making studio at Immortal Heart village and her family's ink shop is that the ink shop displays the family's ink more impressively.

Choices B, C, and D are incorrect because the narrator doesn't state or imply that her family's ink shop, in comparison to the ink-making studio at Immortal Heart village, is more conveniently located for the public (choice B), provides greater individual attention to customers (choice C), or offers a larger space for presenting products (choice D).

QUESTION 7

Choice C is the best answer. In the fourth paragraph, the narrator summarizes Precious Auntie's artistic philosophy: when you write without effort, "you do not have to think. You simply write what is swimming on the top of your brain. And the top is nothing but pond scum, dead leaves, and mosquito spawn." In other words, anything written too quickly, and therefore without concerted effort and thought, would be synonymous with the debris floating on top of a pool of water. Therefore, it is reasonable to infer that Precious Auntie would consider a hastily written first draft of a story to be essentially worthless in and of itself.

Choice A is incorrect because Precious Auntie's description of work made without effort is exclusively negative; therefore, it isn't reasonable to infer that she would praise a hastily written story draft as emotionally raw and powerful. Choice B is incorrect because Precious Auntie's artistic philosophy is concerned solely with the quality of the artist's output rather than with the satisfaction the artist experiences. Choice D is incorrect because whether a hastily produced work would be inappropriately analytical isn't discussed in the passage.

QUESTION 8

Choice C is the best answer. The previous question asks what can be reasonably inferred about Precious Auntie’s view of a hastily written first draft of a story, based on the artistic philosophy expressed in the fourth paragraph. The answer, that she would consider such a story to be essentially worthless in and of itself, is best supported by the sixth and seventh sentences of the fourth paragraph, which describe Precious Auntie’s view of writing produced without effort: “You simply write what is swimming on the top of your brain. And the top is nothing but pond scum, dead leaves, and mosquito spawn.”

Choices A, B, and D are incorrect because the cited lines don’t support the answer to the previous question. Instead, they transition between the scene in the ink shop and the narrator’s memories of Precious Auntie (choice A), summarize Precious Auntie’s assessment of ink quality (choice B), and describe the process of creating good writing through concerted effort (choice D).

QUESTION 9

Choice B is the best answer. In the last sentences of the fourth paragraph, the narrator describes Precious Auntie’s artistic philosophy, or, more specifically, the questions that an artist is forced to ask when working with concerted effort: “You push and you ask yourself, What are my intentions? What is in my heart that matches my mind?” With the second question, Precious Auntie highlights how an artist must strive to create work that resembles, or corresponds with, what is in both the artist’s heart and mind. Therefore, the word “matches,” as used in this sentence, most nearly means corresponds with.

Choices A, C, and D are incorrect because in the context of the passage, “matches” means corresponds with, not competes against (choice A), runs counter to (choice C), or treats equally (choice D).

QUESTION 10

Choice C is the best answer. In the fifth paragraph, the narrator’s father demonstrates the quality of an inkstick to a customer. He strikes the inkstick, and the narrator describes “a sound as clean and pure as a small silver bell.” Therefore, the word “clean,” as used in this paragraph to describe a sound that the inkstick produced, most nearly means distinct, or clear.

Choices A, B, and D are incorrect because in the context of the passage, “clean” means distinct, not complete (choice A), skillful (choice B), or upright (choice D).