

Pre-Professional Skills Test: Reading (0710)

Test at a Glance

Test Name	Pre-Professional Skills Test: Reading		
Test Code	0710		
Time	60 minutes		
Number of Questions	40		
Format	Multiple-choice questions based on reading passages and statements		
	Content Categories	Approximate Number of Questions	Approximate Percentage Examination
	I. Literal Comprehension	18	45%
	II. Critical and Inferential Comprehension	22	55%

About This Test

The Pre-Professional Skills Test in Reading measures the ability to understand, analyze, and evaluate written messages. Varying in difficulty, the reading material is drawn from a variety of subject areas and real-life situations that educated adults are likely to encounter. Each passage is followed by questions that are based on its content and that relate to a variety of reading skills. All questions can be answered by using information contained within the passage; no question requires outside knowledge of the content.

The test consists of three types of stimulus material: long passages of approximately 200 words with 4 to 7 questions, short passages of approximately 100 words with 2 or 3 questions, and brief statements followed by a single question. Passages are drawn from both print and electronic media, such as newspapers, magazines, journals, nonfiction books, novels, online articles, and visual representations. Questions in each of the three formats may pose tasks of varying difficulty and test any of the skills identified in the Topics Covered section.

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Topics Covered

Representative descriptions of topics covered in each category are provided below.

I. Literal Comprehension

Literal comprehension content measures the ability to understand accurately and completely what is directly stated in a written message.

- **Main Ideas**

- Identify summaries or paraphrases of the main idea or primary purpose of a reading selection

- **Supporting Ideas**

- Identify summaries or paraphrases of the supporting ideas and specific details in a reading selection

- **Organization**

- Identify how a reading selection is organized in terms of cause/effect, compare/contrast, problem/solution, etc.
- Identify key transition words and phrases in a reading selection and how they are used

- **Vocabulary in Context**

- Identify the meanings of words as they are used in the context of a reading selection

II. Critical and Inferential Comprehension

Critical and inferential comprehension content measures the ability to evaluate a reading selection and its messages.

- **Evaluation**

- Determine whether evidence strengthens, weakens, or is relevant to the arguments in a reading selection
- Determine the role that an idea, reference, or piece of information plays in an author's discussion or argument
- Determine whether information presented in a reading selection is presented as fact or opinion
- Identify the relationship among ideas presented in a reading selection

- **Inferential Reasoning**

- Draw inferences and implications from the directly stated content of a reading selection
- Determine the logical assumptions upon which an argument or conclusion is based
- Determine the author's attitude toward material discussed in a reading selection

- **Generalization**

- Recognize or predict ideas or situations that are extensions of or similar to what has been presented in a reading selection
- Draw conclusions from material presented in a reading selection
- Apply ideas presented in a reading selection to other situations

Sample Test Questions

The sample questions that follow illustrate the kinds of questions in the test. They are not, however, representative of the entire scope of the test in either content or difficulty. Answers with explanations follow the questions.

Directions: Each statement or passage in this test is followed by a question or questions based on its content. After reading a statement or passage, choose the best answer to each question from among the five choices given. Answer all questions following a statement or passage on the basis of what is *stated* or *implied* in that statement or passage; you are not expected to have any previous knowledge of the topics treated in the statements and passages.

Be sure to mark all your answers on your answer sheet and fill in completely the lettered space with a heavy, dark mark so that you cannot see the letter.

Remember, try to answer every question.

Question 1

1. Marguerite Duras' achievement as a filmmaker was marked by refusal to become a professional of the cinema, with all that this implies in terms of prestige, influence, financial backing, and even know-how. Although she made many films, she said that she knew very little about the technology of cinema and that she had no reason to learn any more: "I want to remain where I am, on the first grounds of cinema, in the primitive zones."

The passage is primarily concerned with

- (A) condemning critics' failure to appreciate the work of a particular filmmaker
- (B) describing the attitude of a particular filmmaker
- (C) analyzing the style of a particular filmmaker
- (D) criticizing the technical shortcomings of a particular filmmaker
- (E) discussing the content of the works of a particular filmmaker

Questions 2–3

The Plains Indians typically painted the hides they used as robes with designs that either were abstract or depicted scenes from their lives.

Line

- (5) The robes with abstract designs represent the oldest stylistic tradition and were painted by women. These designs seem to follow a distinct tradition: they are simple and symmetrical, contain
- (10) geometric elements, and follow conventional patterns. The design generally covers only the back of the robe and seldom appears without a surrounding border pattern. Abstract
- (15) designs contain primarily the colors red, yellow, blue, and green, flatly and evenly applied. The most striking aspect of the abstract designs is the contrast in scale and texture they produce—the
- (20) discrepancy between the delicate tracery of the designs and the thick, bulky hides on which they are painted.
- Life scenes are even better suited to the bulky hides. Most of these scenes are
- (25) dynamic and, taken together, they form patterns of great animation that completely cover the robe. Figures are placed on a background lacking sky or earth, are flatly painted in a wide variety
- (30) of colors, and are sometimes outlined in dark paint. The main subjects are warriors and horses shown in battles and epic events. These designs usually serve to illustrate the exploits of the men who
- (35) painted them.
2. The phrase "the contrast in scale and texture" (lines 18–19) refers to the contrast between the
- (A) weight of the hide and the quality of the leather
 - (B) symmetry of the design and the effect of the colors
 - (C) size of the hide and the extent of the design
 - (D) complexity of the design and the pattern that the design creates
 - (E) delicacy of the design and the bulkiness of the hide

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3. It can be inferred from the passage that robes with abstract designs and robes with life scenes differ in all of the following ways EXCEPT the
- (A) amount of the hide covered by the design
 - (B) range of colors used in the design
 - (C) pattern of the design
 - (D) sex of the artist who painted the robe
 - (E) type of hide used
4. The passage states that sea-based windmills could provide energy effectively if
- (A) they were constructed in shallow water
 - (B) they were located near major urban ports
 - (C) they were placed on stationary platforms
 - (D) the power they generated could be transferred efficiently to shore
 - (E) the power they generated could be stored in advanced high-capacity batteries

Questions 4–5

One promising energy source is sophisticated development of the basic windmills that have ground grain, drained land, and pumped water for centuries.

- Line Coupled with advanced storage batteries, very large
(5) windmills might satisfy total energy needs for rural areas, towns, and even small cities in locales where strong and prevalent winds can be counted on. Wind power has several advantages. First, no new technology is really required. Second, the energy
(10) source is inexhaustible and one hundred percent clean. Third, relatively little capital investment is needed to install or operate windmills.

- But wind power has major disadvantages, too. Most obviously, it will work only in limited geographical
(15) areas. Less obviously, large-scale deployment of huge windmills might have unforeseen atmospheric and environmental effects. And forests of giant windmills might turn into ugly eyesores. Finally, the amount of electricity that could be generated by wind power
(20) would simply be insufficient to meet major nationwide energy needs.

- However, a network of sea-based windmills, placed on deep-ocean buoys and driven by the same prevailing winds that once powered sailing vessels all over the
(25) world, could provide a substantial fraction of the world's electrical energy—especially if the buoy-based windmills could be linked to land by loss-free superconducting power transmission cables.

5. Which of the following best describes the organization of the passage?
- (A) A series of interrelated events is arranged chronologically.
 - (B) A controversial theory is proposed and then persuasively defended.
 - (C) An unforeseen problem is described and several examples are provided.
 - (D) A criticism is summarized, evaluated, and then dismissed.
 - (E) A problematical issue is discussed and a partial solution suggested.

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6. When Michelangelo began painting the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, he had five painters assisting him in the techniques of fresco, in which he was relatively unskilled. Finding their work inadequate, he dismissed them and resolved to accomplish the whole task by himself. Vasari, his friend and biographer, tells us that Michelangelo worked through four years “with the utmost solicitude, labor, and study.”

Line
(5) Creativity such as Michelangelo’s is self-nourishing: Vasari states that Michelangelo “became more and more kindled by his fervor in the work.” I believe that this interplay of creativity and effort is what constitutes genius—and what made Michelangelo a great artist.

In order to evaluate the validity of the author’s claim regarding Michelangelo (lines 11–13), it would be most helpful to know which of the following?

- (A) How well Vasari knew Michelangelo
- (B) How Vasari characterized other great painters
- (C) Whether Vasari’s descriptions of Michelangelo are accurate
- (D) Whether Michelangelo was skilled at fresco painting when he finished the Sistine ceiling
- (E) Whether Michelangelo created all of his major works without assistants

7. In 1888, just as its hospital was nearing completion, what was to become the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine ran out of funds; the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, on which the parent university had been depending for money, was experiencing financial difficulty. The railroad’s financial troubles proved a stroke of luck for the cause of women’s rights. When the directors did open the school in 1893, it was because five women had raised more than \$500,000 through a multicity campaign. They had insisted, as a condition of this endowment, that Hopkins be the first school of medicine in the nation to admit men and women on equal terms.

Line
(5) Which of the following is an unstated assumption made by the author of the passage?

- (A) Even if it had not experienced financial difficulties, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad would not have furnished Johns Hopkins University with additional funds.
- (B) The Johns Hopkins School of Medicine would have excluded women if the fund-raisers had not insisted that the school admit women.
- (C) In 1888, Johns Hopkins University was suffering from a shortage of funds in all its schools.
- (D) The establishment of the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine would spur the development of other schools of medicine.
- (E) The women fund-raisers themselves wished to be trained as doctors.

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8. Recently, increasing attention has been called to the fact that the four freedoms of universities—the freedom to determine who may teach, what will be taught, how it will be taught, and who may study what is taught—are being threatened by the many regulations imposed on universities by the federal government.
- Surprisingly, much of this criticism of governmental regulation has come from the universities themselves. After all, universities eagerly accepted the money that was made available for research and scholarships by the National Defense Education Act, which was a governmental response to the launching of Sputnik I in 1957 by the Soviet Union. As its name implies, the National Defense Education Act was concerned with a governmental goal, the national defense. Moreover, the federal government made it clear from the very beginning that it intended to control how such money was spent. Similarly, universities actively supported the Higher Education Act of 1965, which was part of a governmental attempt to end discrimination—a goal that can accurately be described as political.
- Clearly, any attempt by the federal government to limit the four freedoms of universities is undesirable. But it is also important to remember that the federal government became involved in university education because it was seeking admirable goals, goals that were also sought by universities.

The author would be LEAST likely to agree with which of the following statements about governmental regulation and universities?

- (A) Universities are better able to define their four freedoms than is the federal government.
- (B) Universities are going to continue to criticize governmental regulation in the near future.
- (C) The federal government should consult with university personnel before imposing new regulations.
- (D) The federal government passed the National Defense Education Act in order to attain a desirable goal.
- (E) The federal government should limit the four freedoms of universities if the goal it seeks is a desirable one.

Answers

1. The passage describes filmmaker Marguerite Duras' attitude toward becoming a professional of the cinema: she refused to become involved with the fame, financial matters, and technology associated with film. Thus, the correct answer is B. Choices A and D can be eliminated because the passage neither criticizes Duras nor indicates that others have failed to appreciate her work. Choices C and E can be eliminated because the passage discusses neither the style nor the content of Duras' films.
2. Choice E is the best answer. The phrase "contrast in scale and texture" is found in lines 18–19 of the passage. Lines 19–22 indicate the nature of the contrast mentioned in lines 18–19. These lines state that there is a discrepancy between the delicacy of the design and the thickness of the hides.
3. Choice E is the best answer. Choice A can be eliminated because lines 11–13 state that abstract designs cover the back of the robe only, whereas lines 26–27 state that life scenes cover the whole robe. Choice B can be eliminated because lines 15–16 state that abstract designs "contain primarily the colors red, yellow, blue, and green," whereas lines 29–30 state that life scenes are painted in a "wide variety of colors." Choice C can be eliminated because lines 10–14 state that the robes with abstract designs follow conventional patterns and usually appear with a surrounding border pattern, whereas lines 25–27 state that the robes with life scenes "form patterns of great animation that completely cover the robe." Choice D can be eliminated because lines 5–7 state that abstract designs were painted by women, whereas lines 34–35 state that life scenes were painted by men. Choice E is the best answer because the passage does NOT state that the type of hide used in abstract designs and life scenes differs. In fact, the passage suggests that abstract designs and life scenes were painted on the same type of hide.
4. Choice A can be eliminated because the windmills are described as being placed in deep water; choice B can be eliminated because there is no indication that the windmills would have to be near ports. The passage directly contradicts choice C, since "buoys" (line 23) are not stationary platforms. Choice E brings up the batteries that were mentioned in line 4. However, such batteries are not specifically related in the passage to sea-based windmills. The passage *does* specifically mention highly efficient cables as a critical part of the sea-based system. Therefore, D is the best answer.
5. Choice E is the correct answer. "A problematical issue is discussed" summarizes the first two paragraphs, in which both the pros and cons of a complicated situation are examined. They are followed, in the third paragraph, by the suggestion of "a partial solution," which partially remedies some of the problems of using windmills to generate electricity.
6. In making the comment about Michelangelo's greatness, the author relies on information Vasari has supplied. If Vasari's claims that Michelangelo worked with great care and was inspired by his work are not correct, the author's claim about Michelangelo may not be valid. It would therefore be useful to know the information represented by choice C. Choice A may appear at first glance to be relevant, but it is not as good a choice as C, since Vasari might have known Michelangelo quite well but not have supplied accurate information in his biography. Choice B is even less satisfactory since we are concerned only with how Vasari described Michelangelo, not how he described other painters. Choice D, while it might confirm statements about Michelangelo's skill, does not help us evaluate the author's claim in the last sentence of the passage. Choice E can be eliminated for similar reasons. C is, therefore, the best answer to this question.
7. Choice B is clearly supported by the last sentence of the passage. Because the fund-raisers had to insist that Johns Hopkins admit women, it can be inferred that the author believes the admission of women was directly caused by their insistence and would otherwise not have taken place.
8. In the first sentence of the third paragraph, the author expresses the opinion that all attempts by the government to limit the four freedoms of universities are undesirable. Thus, the author would be least likely to agree with E, the best answer, which states that the federal government should limit university freedoms if the goal it plans to achieve by doing so is desirable.