

Preparing for the ACT (2009-2010)

<https://www.answerexplanations.com/act/answer-explanations/form-0964e/3/>

Reading

Prose Fiction

- 1) B) This passage is written in the first person, and the narrator spends most of the passage describing the woman who does not dream through her conversations with that woman and her thoughts about those conversations. Answer choice A is incorrect because the woman does not relate her dreams since she cannot dream. C is incorrect because it implies a third person omniscient narrator rather than the first person narrator featured in this passage. D is incorrect because only one of the narrator's dreams is described in any depth.
- 2) F) F offers the most accurate description of the woman, who cannot dream despite her best attempts and great desire to do so. F also offers the most accurate description of the narrator, because she attempts to "console" (line 37) the woman who cannot dream and attempts to help her with her problem.
- 3) B) The woman most accurately hopes to learn about herself from dreaming, as is shown in lines 2-4 and 25-30, so B is the best description of what she hopes to gain.
- 4) J) The door metaphorically describes the threshold between the presence and absence of dreams. The woman cannot dream because she either lacks or cannot open this door to dreaming, as is described in lines 4-7.
- 5) C) In lines 4-13, the passage describes the door to dreaming as impossible to open for the woman. The narrator's description in lines 10-13 makes the situation seem that much more hopeless by describing the door as a flat surface without a handle or any other way of gaining access to the world on the other side.
- 6) G) Answer choice G is clearly supported in line 71. Answer choices F, H, and J all seem possible but are not specifically justified by the text. Always look for the answer that has specific textual justification over the answer that appears to be a very good interpretation.
- 7) D) One of the woman's greatest worries about not dreaming is that her inability to dream makes her unlike other people. Her quote in lines 31-34 provides evidence of this concern.
- 8) J) J is an accurate description of the woman's attempts to dream the narrator's dreams because these attempts occur "in the privacy of her room with the light out, hiding" (lines 53-54). F does not work because she is not confronting anybody but instead making these attempts in secret, and her attempts certainly are not "powerful" because they are unsuccessful. G cannot work because her attempts to dream the narrator's dreams are not a game; indeed, dreaming is a cause of distress to the woman. H is incorrect because the woman lacks any confidence in her ability to dream. Process of elimination is a very effective strategy on this type of question; if you can eliminate even one of the two words of an answer choice, you can eliminate that answer choice altogether.
- 9) C) On vocabulary in context questions, you should go back to the context to figure out what the word means before reading any of the answer choices. Doing so will prevent you from being tempted by an answer choice that might sound good but does not accurately capture the meaning. Be careful, since these questions frequently feature uncommon secondary definitions of the word. In this case, "humor" is synonymous with *temperament* or *emotional state*, since the woman's attempts to dream make her frustrated and unhappy. Therefore, C is the correct answer.
- 10) H) The parenthetical in lines 61-64 indicates that the narrator respects Kafka as perhaps the only person who could write about dreams in an authentic, meaningful way, so H is the correct answer. Answer choices F, G, and J are all contrary to what is stated in this parenthetical.

Social Science

- 11)** A) Lines 62-66 provide direct evidence of this answer. B is incorrect because, although the last line of the passage states that climate change is ignored, lines 64-66 indicate the author's belief that it should not be ignored. C is incorrect because, although it might be a reasonable assumption to make, it is not specifically supported by the text. D is incorrect because it is a misrepresentation of the words used in lines 62-64.
- 12)** H) Lines 3-7 provide evidence of this answer. These referenced lines also make J a tempting answer. However, while J represents a true statement from lines 6-7, it does not represent the opening paragraph's main point, since the rest of the paragraph discusses the nature of the many climate changes rather than going into detail on the interactions that caused the shifts. G is incorrect because it describes the Ice Age, not the Little Ice Age, and F is contrary to everything stated in the paragraph.
- 13)** D) The author states that, with such remarks, "their usefulness in making comparisons is limited" (26-27) and that they "do not an accurate meteorological record make" (29-30). The only other tempting answer choice is A, but the passage does not go so far as to state that Evelyn's records are "useless." This answer is simply too extreme, since it goes beyond what is stated in the passage, that the records are "limited."
- 14)** F) Evidence that these events occurred in the Little Ice Age is found in the first part of the sentence that contains these events, lines 47-50. It is important to recognize that, when going back to the text, you will often have to look not only in the lines referenced in the question, but also in the immediate context of these lines.
- 15)** A) Answer choice A is a perfect paraphrase of lines 71-75. B is incorrect because line 71 states that this difference can be "life and death." Answer choice C is never stated in the text, and in fact the opposite is implied in the next paragraph. D is incorrect because although lines 71-73 state that the presence or lack of food pushed people to action, the passage never states that the action it spurred was working harder.
- 16)** J) Lines 80-83 provide evidence for this answer. Answer choice F is the exact opposite of what is stated in these lines. Although answer choice G may be a reasonable criticism to make given the evidence the author presents, in no way does the author voice this criticism. H is incorrect because the author believes that environmental determinism is no longer intellectually viable (lines 86-87). He does not believe that the environment determined the course of history but instead merely that it played a role in the development of Western civilization.
- 17)** D) Watch out for the "EXCEPT." Answer choices A, B, and C are all mentioned in lines 84-85 as causes of food crises. In lines 86-87, the author states that environmental determinism is no longer intellectually viable, but he does not mention this as a cause of the food crises.
- 18)** G) Lines 6-7 provide evidence for answer choice G.
- 19)** D) Watch out for the "NOT." Although "mild winters" are mentioned in the first paragraph, "an unusually calm ocean" is not. Answer choices A, B, and C are all mentioned in their entirety in lines 7-13.
- 20)** G) Lines 15-16 provide evidence for answer choice G.

Humanities

- 21)** C) Answer choice C most accurately describes the main point of the passage, which is Armstrong's innovations and influences on music which are still alive today. A is incorrect because lines 72-73 indicate that his emotional range was the greatest of any jazz musician ever. B is incorrect because lines 35-37 describe "soft and luminous" as merely one of many tones featured in Armstrong's playing. D is a tempting answer choice because it is a

statement supported by lines 30-31 in the text. However, it is incorrect because it is far too narrow to capture the main point of the passage. It is important on main point questions to find the answer choice that represents the correct breadth of topic. In other words, avoid answer choices that are too broad or too narrow.

22) J) Watch out for the “NOT.” The passage does not name any of Armstrong’s songs by name. F is answered in the first sentence of the passage, lines 1-4. G is answered in lines 7-9. H is answered in lines 30-33.

23) B) Armstrong’s greatest contribution to jazz, and what made him different from any musician who came before him, was the focus he placed on improvising, so B is the correct answer. His groundbreaking improvisational ability is detailed in lines 1-12. A is incorrect because, although line 37 states that Armstrong’s “music conquered Europe,” it does so as merely a side note. C is incorrect because, although lines 21-24 mention his work with King Oliver, this work is not described as one of his main contributions to Jazz. D is incorrect because the passage never claims that Armstrong invented the blues sound.

24) G) Although this paragraph mentions Armstrong’s work both with King Oliver and with Fletcher Henderson, neither of these people are central to the function of the paragraph. Instead, the paragraph provides a list of many important events in the early part of Armstrong’s career. Included in these events are some of the people he played with and some of the places he traveled.

25) C) Watch out for the “EXCEPT.” Armstrong playing for an entire night is never mentioned in the passage. Answer choices A, B, and D are all mentioned in lines 51-53 as examples of his endurance.

26) F) Watch out for the “EXCEPT.” Although the passage argues that Armstrong reshaped American music, nowhere does it indicate that this was ever a goal of his. G is incorrect because his joyful attitude and undeniable purpose is described in lines 84-88. H is incorrect because his wide-ranging influences are described in lines 75-78. J is incorrect because some of the settings of his performances are described in lines 74-75.

27) C) Lines 79-81 indicate that Armstrong hoped to give his listeners “pleasure” through his music.

28) G) Line 29 indicates that Armstrong eventually ended up in living in New York, in 1929. New Orleans and Chicago are mentioned in the second paragraph as places he lived prior to settling in New York. Although the passage mentions his music conquering Europe, it never indicates that he lived in Paris.

29) A) The fact that the trumpeters from a renowned orchestra were skeptical that Armstrong was even planning the same instrument as them (lines 53-57) indicates that some of the best trumpet players in the world were in awe of Armstrong’s glissandos. Their disbelief of the sounds coming from Armstrong’s trumpet is indicative of his incredible skill.

30) H) The quote in lines 66-68 indicates that the orchestra did not even realize they had begun to swing, so H is the correct answer.

Natural Science

31) C) Watch out for the “EXCEPT.” Lines 12-15 describe answer choices A, B, and D all as causes of illness. C is never mentioned as a cause of illness, so C is the correct answer.

32) F) A careful reading of lines 39-45 reveals that answer choice F is an accurate paraphrase of the mechanism described.

33) C) The studies described in this paragraph showed that acupuncture can release “chemicals that block pain signals” (line 44). This blocking of pain signals would explain acupuncture’s ability to treat headaches, a type of pain, but not the other answer choices, which have nothing to do with pain. The sixth paragraph goes on to indicate that scientists are uncertain how acupuncture treats non-pain related ailments.

- 34)** J) The seventh paragraph, lines 55-63, indicates that acupoints related to vision are found along the foot between the little toe and the ankle. The next paragraph indicates that experimental subjects who were stimulated in one of these acupoints experienced an increase in activity in the visual cortex (lines 67-75).
- 35)** B) Lines 81-84 indicate that while science has explained some of the mechanisms by which acupuncture works, there are still many questions to be answered. Answer choice B also simply sounds like a better ACT answer choice than answer choices A or D since it is weaker and less committing than A or D. With words like “thoroughly” and “any,” answer choices A and D exhibit absolute language and are therefore unlikely ACT answers.
- 36)** J) The passage indicates that too little qi causes Yin conditions (lines 28-29) while too much qi causes Yang conditions (line 30), so J is the correct answer.
- 37)** A) Lines 28-31 indicate that a pale face is a symptom of a yin condition, while the other answer choices are all symptoms of a yang condition. If you were low on time at this point and could not afford to consult the passage to make certain of your answer, answer choice A would have been an excellent guess because it is the symptom that seems to fit least with the others.
- 38)** H) On vocabulary in context questions, you should go back to the context to figure out what the word means before reading any of the answer choices. Doing so will prevent you from being tempted by an answer choice that might sound good but does not accurately capture the meaning. Be careful, since these questions frequently feature uncommon secondary definitions of the word. In this case, “concentrated” (line 49) means *clustered*, since many nerves are found in these spots, so H is the correct answer.
- 39)** D) A placebo effect is when a specific result is achieved by a treatment that should not produce that result, due to a person’s expectations. For example, if a person is given a sugar pill but told it is a pain pill, it would be considered a placebo effect if that person reports a decrease in pain. Knowing what a placebo effect is would be helpful to getting this question correct, but it is not essential, since the context provides adequate clues. Answer choice A and answer choice C would be expected to stimulate the visual cortex, so they would not represent examples of a placebo effect. Cho hypothesized that stimulating a visual acupoint would also stimulate the visual cortex, so answer choice B would not represent a placebo effect either. Answer choice D would represent a placebo effect if it stimulated the visual cortex, since the big toe is not a visual acupoint. Cho wanted to make sure that the visual cortex stimulation caused by stimulating a visual acupoint was actually due to the stimulation of that acupoint and not merely the result of the subject’s expectations, as is described in lines 78-79.
- 40)** G) The author makes a generalization about scientists who undertake new types of research that when she states “like many preliminary scientific reports, Cho’s study raises more questions than it answers” (lines 81-82), so G is the correct answer.