

Study Island: Main Ideas & Details

Directions: Please read each passage and answer all of the comprehension questions. Place the correct answer on the line that's provided for you.

Passage A

In the U.S., teenagers are considered adults when they reach the age of 18. At 18, they are allowed to serve in the military, they are allowed to sign legal contracts (like apartment, house, and car leases), and they are allowed to vote. All of these activities are important; however, one of the most important is left out. The driving age in many states is 16. Is driving less important than serving in the military? Federal law should require that teenagers should not be allowed to drive until they are 18.

One reason that the driving age should be raised to 18 is because 16-year-olds have a different set of responsibilities than 18-year-olds. For example, many 16-year-olds have only just entered high school. Some high schools offer early graduation for students who do well academically. This should be their first priority—school. Many high school kids are too distracted by the thought of a driver's license to study. This shows the type of drivers they will be—distracted. Do people really want a 16-year-old who can't even concentrate on studying distracted and behind the wheel of a two-ton car? A 2005 study of cell phone users shows that many use their cell phones while they drive.

Another reason the driving age should be raised is because it will make kids more responsible. By the age of 18, many students are starting to grow into adults. Many have jobs. Many will graduate. Many will start to plan for college. This is exactly what it is like to be an adult—having responsibility. A teenager turning 18 will be more likely to take his or her driving habits seriously because it would be one of many other adult responsibilities they would have.

Finally, at the age of 18, the government can hold teenagers accountable as adults. This would make things safer for all drivers. Teenagers behind the wheel of a car cause more accidents than adult drivers. Each year, S.U.V.s are involved in more accidents than regular cars. In an accident where someone is injured, the person responsible for the accident can be punished by the government. This isn't the case if the person responsible is 16. Laws apply differently to adults than they do to teens. Many times, the parents are responsible. If a driver had to wait until he or she were 18 to drive, he or she would be the only person to blame in an accident. This means that the 18-year-old would be punished by the same law that punishes adults. The same driver at 16 would not be held to the same punishment since he or she is considered underage. This is clearly not fair.

_____ 1.) Which sentence from this passage supports the main idea the least?

- A. Finally, at the age of 18, the government can hold teenagers accountable as adults.
 - B. Teenagers behind the wheel of a car cause more accidents than adult drivers.
 - C. Each year, S.U.V.s are involved in more accidents than regular cars.
 - D. Many high school kids are too distracted by the thought of a driver's license to study.
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Passage B

Compliments ought to be specific. The best ones don't just say what you like, they say why you like whatever it is that you like. If you compliment someone on a new dress, don't just say, "I like that dress." Instead, you could say, "I like that dress. The red and green gargoyles and the purple stripes bring out the yellow in your eyes." It's a much more specific compliment than "That's a pretty dress."

_____ 2.) **What is this passage mostly about?**

- A. making compliments more specific
 - B. telling someone a dress is nice
 - C. learning how to make eyes yellow
 - D. wearing a dress with purple stripes
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Passage C

98 Degrees is cooling off for a while. The four-member boy-band called *98 Degrees* is taking "an extended break," according to its official Web site.

"They have no immediate plans to record or tour," the site says in a message to fans. The site also says that "their future is unclear" and that the band is accepting no new fan club members.

_____ 3.) **What is the main idea of this passage?**

- A. The band called *98 Degrees* has its own Web site.
 - B. The band *98 Degrees* will not perform for a while.
 - C. *98 Degrees* is not as popular a band as it used to be.
 - D. *98 Degrees* is a boy-band with four members.
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Passage D

Abraham Lincoln has moved to the top of the list of greatest presidents. ABC News found this out during a President's Day poll. Lincoln was chosen by 20 percent of the people polled. President George W. Bush and John F. Kennedy were in a tie for second. Ronald Reagan, Bill Clinton and Franklin Roosevelt were tied for third. They each got 8 percent.

_____ 4.) **What is the passage mainly about?**

- A. Abraham Lincoln
 - B. the current President
 - C. a President's Day poll
 - D. President's Day
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Passage E

The blank page. For many writers, this is one of the most intimidating things they must encounter. Many think to themselves: *How can I possibly fit everything I want to say onto this page? Will I be able to connect with my audience? or How do I focus?* The one question that every writer asks, however, is *Where do I start?*

Finding a starting point is difficult. It can even be overwhelming. In fact, many writers get anxious and nervous when they begin writing. Many famous authors have had to experience being nervous about writing. Ernest Hemingway's novel *The Sun Also Rises* takes place during World War I.

One way to overcome this anxiousness is to think about the first sentence as opposed to the final draft. Think of it as building a house. Writing is put together in a similar way—word by word and then sentence by sentence. Another way to get over the nervousness of a blank page is to write anything down. Even if doesn't make sense, this is a good exercise to get you started in the act of writing. Even writing your name over and over at least gets you into the act of writing instead of sitting around waiting for the ideas to come to you. Also, it gets rid of your nervous energy. Writing a name over and over on a chalkboard is one way teachers punish students. In addition, another way to get over the first step of writing is to talk. Talk to friends, parents, or whoever will listen. Ask them questions about what they think about certain subjects. When it's time to write, you'll find that those ideas and talks will come back to you.

_____ **5.) Which sentence supports the idea that even authors get nervous about writing?**

- A. Author Stephen Crane was similar to his Civil War character in *The Red Badge of Courage* in that Crane served in a war.
 - B. For example, Stephen King once said that looking at a blank page is like "looking out into a desert and seeing nothing but sand."
 - C. Jack London was an author, a hobo, and a seaman who gained admission to the University of California at Berkeley.
 - D. Henry James was a novelist and author of short stories and plays and wrote *Daisy Miller* and *Portrait of a Lady*.
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Passage F

It's the first day of school. The smells of fresh paint, new crayons, pencils, and paper fill the air. They mingle with the wonderful smells drifting from the lunchroom—delicious smells of the cinnamon rolls and cornbread baking in the ovens. The school bus drives up and the disgruntled bus driver gets off. The scent of soup simmering on the stoves joins the potpourri of scents that permeate the halls, seeps into the classrooms, and trickles out to the playgrounds.

_____ **6.) This paragraph is mostly about**

- A. the wonderful smells on the first day of school.
 - B. the difficulty of driving a school bus each day.
 - C. when the classrooms and hallways are painted.
 - D. how the cafeteria gets ready for lunch time.
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Passage G

Global warming is a topic that has been causing a lot of arguments lately. Some scientists say that temperatures around the globe have been rising because of all the pollution humans have let into the air. Others say that temperatures around the globe naturally rise every few thousand years. They say that it is not the fault of humans at all. People cannot seem to agree on the cause. Whatever the case, however, rising temperatures are causing glaciers around the world to melt. The lives of plants and animals are in danger. Effects of rising temperatures are being felt around the world. Whether everyone agrees about the causes or not, everyone is going to have to deal with the effects.

_____ 7.) This paragraph is mostly about

- A. the causes of, effects of, and arguments about global warming.
 - B. the melting of glaciers caused by global warming and its effects on animals.
 - C. the rising of global temperatures that is caused by pollution.
 - D. the natural rise of global temperatures that happens every few thousand years.
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Passage H

Hummingbirds will entertain for food. They will put on an aerial show by soaring, diving, then hovering in midair before retreating temporarily to nearby trees and shrubs. Other tiny performers perch in nearby trees and shrubs or sip nectar from flowers while waiting their turn to go onstage. Several years ago we thought it would be nice to invite a few hummingbirds to our back yard. We put up a feeder and a few birds showed up for dinner. Little did we know they would invite all their friends. More of the feisty little birds show up each year. The birds earn their keep by entertaining us and our guests. Children and adults love to see their shows. The aerobatics start early each morning and continue until nightfall, so the entertainment is available most any time of the day.

_____ 8.) Which sentence from the passage best describes the main idea?

- A. Children and adults love to see their shows.
 - B. Hummingbirds will entertain for food.
 - C. Other tiny performers perch in nearby trees.
 - D. More of the feisty little birds show up each year.
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Passage I

In the early 1800s, boats, canals, and trains made it easier to head west. After the War of 1812, thousands of Americans moved beyond the Appalachians. The Appalachians are not as tall as the Rockies. More and more people came from Europe, too. Some of these people had been poor and hungry in their old countries. In America, they hoped to find land to farm. They wanted the chance for a better life.

_____ 9.) This paragraph is mainly about

- A. westward movement in America.
 - B. the heights of mountain ranges.
 - C. the Appalachian mountains.
 - D. Europeans moving to America.
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Passage J

President Barack Obama did not have an easy trail to the White House. One year before Obama was elected president, most people did not think he had any chance of being the Democratic Party's candidate for president. Barack Obama, however, worked hard to prove them wrong.

Obama got people who were not used to voting to volunteer to work for him. These people became a part of the huge team of Obama supporters that stretched across the country. They made millions of phone calls and explained why Obama would make a good president. They convinced people to vote for him. In early 2008, Obama won his first small election contest. He proved that Hillary Clinton and the other candidates had to take him seriously. His volunteers were making a difference.

During the entire campaign, Obama's supporters never stopped making phone calls. They constantly told people why they should vote for him. Those millions and millions of people helped get Obama elected, and Obama told them all that he couldn't have become president without them.

_____ 10.) What is the main idea of this selection?

- A. Many people were surprised when Obama won his first small election contest in early 2008.
 - B. President Obama and his supporters worked hard to get him elected when others thought it was impossible.
 - C. Hillary Clinton and the other Democratic Party's candidates did not think Obama had a chance of winning.
 - D. Barack Obama got millions of people to volunteer to work for him after he became president.
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Passage K

We often let others know what we are thinking without using words. The name that we give for this kind of communication is body language. Body language includes gestures, facial expressions, and posture. Body language does not always mean the same thing to everyone.

_____ 11.) What is the main idea of the paragraph?

- A. Body language may not mean the same thing to everyone.
 - B. Body language includes gestures, facial expression, and posture.
 - C. We sometimes use words to express ourselves.
 - D. We use body language to communicate with others.
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Passage L

The Naismith Award is given to the nation's best college basketball player. Voters found room on their ballots this year for Illinois guard Frank Williams. His team is not playing well, even though he is. They also nominated Maryland's Lonny Baxter. Baxter is playing well but averages only 15.3 points a game. The most surprising name on the list was Kansas forward Nick Collison. Collison is having a fine year for one of the nation's top teams. He is probably only his team's third-best player.

For some reason, the sportswriters voting on this award did not pick Kansas player Kirk Hinrich. That is hard to understand. It is possible that no one has been more valuable to the Kansas team than him. This includes player of the year candidate Drew Gooden. Hinrich is at least one of the twenty best players in college this season. He may even be one of the ten best.

_____ **12.) What is the main idea in this passage?**

- A.** Kansas is one of the nation's top college basketball teams, and it has at least three great players on the team.
 - B.** Kansas player Kirk Hinrich is one probably of the ten best college basketball players in the entire country.
 - C.** The list of players nominated for the Naismith Award is surprising because of who it includes and who is missing.
 - D.** The people who nominated players for the Naismith Award are actually sportswriters from around the country.
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Passage M

On October 11, 1910, Theodore Roosevelt became the first president to fly in a plane. The flight took place after Roosevelt's last term as president. The plane had been built by the Wright brothers. The plane was flown by Arch Huxley for about four minutes. Roosevelt and Huxley took off from Kinloch Field in St. Louis, Missouri. Today, that field is home to that city's major airport.

_____ **13.) This passage is mostly about**

- A.** Roosevelt being the first president to fly in a plane.
 - B.** the Wright brothers making a plane in St. Louis.
 - C.** Kinloch Field turning into St. Louis's major airport.
 - D.** Arch Huxley flying a plane made by the Wright brothers.
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Passage N

The idea of human rights is the belief that everyone should have certain rights. They are entitled to these rights just because they are human. The idea is not a new one. It has been developing since the beginning of man's history. A strong commitment to human rights is considered a good measure of a country's potential for being a good neighbor and contributing to world peace. The use of threats and violence is an indication that a government cannot be trusted and may be a threat to world peace. In 1948 the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The declaration lists the rights that individuals should have. One of those rights is the right to take part in government. Others have to do with working and living conditions.

_____ **14.) Which best describes the main idea of the passage?**

- A.** The idea of human rights is the belief that everyone should have certain rights.
 - B.** The declaration lists the rights that individuals around the world should have.
 - C.** The use of threats and violence is a sign that a government cannot be trusted.
 - D.** This idea has been developing since the very beginning of man's history.
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Passage O

Number One Observatory Circle is the home of the U.S. vice president. The house is located on land for the U.S. Naval Observatory. The home was built in 1893. It was first the home for the head of the observatory. In 1923, it became the home for the Chief of Naval Operations. Congress made it the vice president's home in 1974. Before this, the vice president lived in his own home. The first vice president to live in the home full time was Walter Mondale. He was Vice President to Jimmy Carter.

_____ 15.) This passage is mainly about

- A. the Chief of Naval Operations.
 - B. the vice president's home.
 - C. President Jimmy Carter.
 - D. the U.S. Naval Observatory.
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