

TOEIC PRACTICE - Reading Comprehension: Author's Purpose

In this test, you will find short paragraph, accompanied by questions that ask you to identify explicit information, analyze, and interpret what is written. While reading the paragraph, try to think of the author's motive for writing the passage. Ask the questions, "*Who? What? When? Where? How? and Why?*" Is the author's purpose to inform you of facts, persuade you of something, or simply to entertain you?

Paragraph 1

In cities throughout the country, there is a new direction in local campaign coverage. Frequently in local elections, journalists are not giving voters enough information to understand the issues and evaluate the candidates. The local news media devotes too much time to scandal and not enough time to policy.

1. This paragraph best supports the statement that the local news media
 - a. is not doing an adequate job when it comes to covering local campaigns.
 - b. does not understand either campaign issues or politics.
 - c. should learn how to cover politics by watching the national news media.
 - d. has no interest in covering stories about local political events.

Paragraph 2

The use of desktop computer equipment and software to create high quality documents such as newsletters, business cards, letterhead, and brochures is called Desktop Publishing, or DTP. The most important part of any DTP project is planning. Before you begin, you should know your intended audience, the message you want to communicate, and what form your message will take.

2. The paragraph best supports the statement that
 - a. Desktop Publishing is one way to become acquainted with a new business audience.
 - b. computer software is continually being refined to produce high quality printing.
 - c. the first stage of any proposed DTP project should be organization and design.

- d. the planning stage of any DTP project should include talking with the intended audience.

Paragraph 3

The entire low-carbohydrate versus low-fat diet argument is so prevalent that one would think that these are the only two options available for losing weight and staying healthy. Some experts even feel that the low-carb/low-fat debate distracts us from an even more important issue—our culture's reliance on processed and manufactured foods.

3. The paragraph best supports the statement that
- a. experts state that not all fats are equal, so we need not reduce our intake of all fats; just those that contain partially hydrogenated oils.
 - b. important health concerns get overlooked when we focus exclusively on the low-fat versus low-carb question.
 - c. low-carbohydrate diets lead to significant and sustained weight loss.
 - d. processed foods can lead to many adverse health problems including heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and obesity.

Paragraph 4

Every year, Americans use over one billion sharp objects to administer healthcare in their homes. These sharp objects include lancets, needles, and syringes. If not disposed of in puncture-resistant containers, they can injure sanitation workers. Sharp objects should be disposed of in hard plastic or metal containers with secure lids. The containers should be clearly marked and be puncture resistant.

4. The paragraph best supports the idea that sanitation workers can be injured if they
- a. do not place sharp objects in puncture-resistant containers.
 - b. come in contact with sharp objects that have not been placed in secure containers.
 - c. are careless with sharp objects such as lancets, needles, and syringes in their homes.
 - d. do not mark the containers they pick up with a warning that those containers contain sharp objects.

Paragraph 5

Litigation is not always the only or best way to resolve conflicts. Mediation offers an alternative approach and it is one that can be quite efficient and successful. Mediation can be faster, less expensive, and can lead to creative solutions not always possible in a court of law. Additionally, mediation focuses on mutually acceptable solutions, rather than on winning or losing.

5. This paragraph best supports the idea that
- a. there is too much reliance on litigation in our society.
 - b. litigation is expensive, slow, and limited by its reliance on following the letter of the law.
 - c. mediation is the best way to resolve a crisis.
 - d. mediation can be an effective way to resolve conflicts.

Paragraph 6

One of the missions of the Peace Corps is to help the people of interested countries meet their need for trained men and women. People who work for the Peace Corps do so because they want to, but to keep the agency dynamic with fresh ideas, no staff member can work for the agency for more than five years.

6. The paragraph best supports the statement that Peace Corps employees
- a. are highly intelligent people.
 - b. must train for about five years.
 - c. are hired for a limited term of employment.
 - d. have both academic and work experience.

Paragraph 7

More and more office workers telecommute from offices in their own homes. The upside of telecommuting is both greater productivity and greater flexibility. Telecommuters produce, on average, 20% more than if they were to work in an

office, and their flexible schedule allows them to balance both their family and work responsibilities.

7. The paragraph best supports the statement that telecommuters
- get more work done in a given time period than workers who travel to the office.
 - produce a better quality work product than workers who travel to the office.
 - are more flexible in their ideas than workers who travel to the office.
 - would do 20% more work if they were to work in an office.

Paragraph 8

Sushi, the thousand-year-old Japanese delicacy, started small in the United States, in a handful of restaurants in big cities. Today, sushi consumption in America is 50% greater than it was ten years ago and not just in restaurants. Sushi is also sold at concession stands in sports stadiums, university dining halls, and in supermarkets throughout the country.

8. This paragraph best supports the statement that
- sushi is now a fast food as popular as hot dogs, burgers, and fries.
 - more sushi is sold in restaurants than in supermarkets.
 - Americans are more adventurous eaters than they were in the past.
 - sushi wasn't always widely available in the United States.

Paragraph 9

Today's shopping mall has as its antecedents historical marketplaces, such as Greek *agoras*, European *piazas*, and Asian *bazaars*. The purpose of these sites, as with the shopping mall, is both economic and social. People not only go to buy and sell wares, but also to be seen, catch up on news, and be part of the human drama.

9. The paragraph best supports the statement that
- modern Americans spend an average of 15 hours a month in shopping malls.
 - shopping malls serve an important purpose in our culture.

- c. shopping malls have a social as well as commercial function.
- d. there are historical antecedents for almost everything in contemporary society.

Paragraph 10

Many animals hibernate during parts of the year, entering a state that is similar to a very deep sleep. But hibernation is more than simply a deep sleep. The animal's body temperature drops well below its normal range, the animal does not wake up for a long period of time, and its metabolism slows to the point that the animal does not need to eat or relieve itself during that period. In order to prepare for hibernation, the animal must build up its body weight and increase its body fat. This is important, since the animal will be living off its own body fat during the months of hibernation. Of course, once the period of hibernation is over, the animal "wakes up" to find itself slim and trim once again!

10. How does an animal prepare for hibernation?

- a. It exercises for two months.
- b. It gradually increases its sleeping habits.
- c. It grows extra fur.
- d. It eats more food than usual.

11. This passage best supports the statement that

- a. all animals hibernate to some degree.
- b. food is scarce in the winter.
- c. hibernation is very different from normal sleep.
- d. bears hibernate every year.

Answers:

1. a. Choice **d** may seem attractive at first, but the passage simply says that the local media does not adequately cover local politics—it doesn't discuss the reason for their neglect.

2. c. Sentence 3 indicates the importance of organization and design. The other choices, even if true, are not in the passage.

3. b. Both sentences in this passage support the idea that the emphasis on the low-carb/low-fat debate is misleading and might distract us from other important ideas. The other choices are not supported by or developed in this passage.

4. b. The other choices are wrong because the passage is not concerned with how sanitation workers should deal with sharp objects but with how everyone should dispose of sharp objects in order to avoid hurting sanitation workers.

5. d. See the second sentence of the passage. Choices **a** and **b** are not in the passage. Choice **c** might seem attractive, but the passage does not say that mediation is the best way to resolve a conflict, simply that it is an alternative way that might prove effective.

6. c. See the final sentence of the passage. The other choices might be true but are not in the passage.

7. a. The second sentence speaks of *the greater productivity* of telecommuters. The other choices may seem attractive on the surface because they contain words and phrases from the passage, but a closer look will show them to be incorrect or absent from the passage.

8. d. The first sentence indicates that sushi was once available only in a handful of eating establishments.

9. c. Choice **b** may seem attractive at first, but the passage doesn't offer the opinion that the purpose of the shopping mall is important, it simply tells us what the purposes are.

10. d. The second paragraph states that an animal prepares for hibernation by increasing its body weight and fat. The reader can infer from this that the animal eats more food than usual.

11. c. The passage states that hibernation is "more than simply a deep sleep," then lists several ways that hibernation differs from sleep. The other choices are not addressed in the passage.