Long Reading Comprehension Skill Set Four

Note: Skill sets may contain more questions than the actual SAT to show the potential range of questioning.

The passages below are followed by questions based on their content; questions following a pair of related passages may also be based on the relationship between the paired passages. Answer the questions on the basis of what is stated or implied in the passages and in any introductory material that may be provided.

Questions 1–4 are based on the following passage.

The following is from Aesop: The Frogs Desiring a King written in the 3rd century C.E.

The frogs always had lived a happy life in the marshes. They had jumped and splashed about with never a care in the world. Yet some of them were not satisfied with their easygoing life. They thought they should have a king to rule over them and to watch over their morals. So they decided to send a petition to Jupiter asking him to appoint a king.

Jupiter was amused by the frogs’ plea. Good-naturedly he threw down a log into the lake, which landed with such splash that it sent all the frogs scampering for safety. But after a while, when one venturesome frog saw that the log lay still, he encouraged his friends to approach the fallen monster. In no time at all the frogs, growing bolder and bolder, swarmed over the log Jupiter had sent and treated it with the greatest contempt.

Dissatisfied with so tame a ruler, they petitioned Jupiter a second time, saying: “We want a real king, a king who will really rule over us.” Jupiter, by this time, had lost some of his good nature and was tired of the frogs’ complaining.

So he sent them a stork, who proceeded to gobble up the frogs right and left. After a few days the survivors sent Mercury with a private message to Jupiter, beseeching him to take pity on them once more.

“Tell them,” said Jupiter coldly, “that this is their own doing. They wanted a king. Now they will have to make the best of what they asked for.”

1. Which of the following devices does Aesop use in relation to the frogs?
   A. hyperbole
   B. onomatopoeia
   C. alliteration
   D. personification
   E. allegory

2. What can be inferred from the story about the frogs’ initial beliefs regarding the character of a king?
   A. A king would set down just rules and create order in the swamp.
   B. A king would understand the needs peculiar to a frog.
   C. A king would necessarily be superior to them and therefore a benefit.
   D. Kings must be inherently moral as this was the rationale for requesting one.
   E. Kings sent from gods must possess all necessary powers to maintain order and rule.

3. Jupiter’s initial response to the frogs’ plea was ironic in all of the following except?
   A. Jupiter sends a nonliving object as a king to rule living would-be subjects.
   B. The primary responsibility desired from the frogs could not have been supplied by the king.
   C. The log caused a great disturbance as delivered such that no pomp or circumstance was possible.
   D. Jupiter’s response is a default endorsement of a form of idolatry.
   E. The entrance of the new god causes all subjects to hide rather than welcome.

4. Which of the following might be the best moral for this story?
   A. Beware kings with long beaks.
   B. The concerns of a few can serve the masses.
   C. Let well enough alone.
   D. Be careful what you ask unless detailed in the request.
   E. Asking for a change may anger the one asked.
Questions 5–10 are based on the following passage.

*The following is from a moral treatment about a spider and a bee by Jonathan Swift.*

Things were at this crisis, when a material accident fell out. For, upon the highest corner of a large window, there dwelt a certain spider, swollen up to the first magnitude by the destruction of infinite number of flies, whose spoils lay scattered before the gates of his palace, like human bones before the cave of some giant. The avenues of his castle were guarded with turnpikes and palisades, all after the modern way of fortification. After you had passed several courts, you came to the center, wherein you might behold the constable himself in his own lodgings, which had windows fronting to each avenue, and ports to sally out upon all occasions of prey or defense. In this mansion he had for some time dwelt in peace and plenty, without danger to his person by swallows from above, or to his palace by brooms from below, when it was the pleasure of fortune to conduct thither a wandering bee, to whose curiosity a broken pane in the glass had discovered itself, and in he went; where expatiating a while, he at last happened to alight upon one of the outward walls of the spider’s citadel; which, yielding to the unequal weight, sunk down to the very foundation. Thrice he endeavored to force his passage, and thrice the center shook. The spider within, feeling the terrible convulsion, supposed at first that nature was approaching to her final dissolution; or else Beelzebub, with all his legions, was come to revenge the death of many thousands of his subjects, whom his enemy had slain and devoured. However, he at length valiantly resolved to issue forth, and meet his fate. Meanwhile the bee had acquitted himself of his toils, and posted securely at some distance, was employed in cleansing his wings, and disengaging them from the ragged remnants of the spiderweb. By this time the spider was adventured out, when beholding the chasms and ruins, and dilapidations of his fortress, he was very near at his wit’s end; he stormed and swore like a madman, and swelled till he was ready to burst.

5. Which of the following accurately identifies the literary device used in the following phrase, “like human bones before the cave of some giant” line (3)?

A. metaphor  
B. personification  
C. simile  
D. litote  
E. hyperbole

6. Which term best describes the word “sally” as used in line (6)?

A. a rushing attack  
B. walk  
C. venture  
D. cautiously observe from  
E. watch with interest

7. Which term best describes the word “expatiating” as used in line (9)?

A. resting  
B. wandering freely  
C. observing curiously  
D. relaxing  
E. plotting ardently

8. All of the following are revealed by the author in the phrase, “nature was approaching to her final dissolution; or else that Beelzebub with all his legions, was come to revenge the death of many thousands of his subjects whom his enemy had slain and devoured” lines (12–14) EXCEPT:

A. the author believes that at some appointed time the end of the world will come.  
B. flies are considered to be of a lower order than spiders.  
C. there is a supreme creator and ruler of the universe.  
D. there is a supremely evil spirit who will extract revenge.  
E. the author understands that the food chain of life is established by evil.
9. The phrase, “he was very near at his wit’s end; he stormed and swore like a madman, and swelled till he was ready to burst” best exemplifies which of the following literary devices?
   A. descriptive speech
   B. figurative language
   C. juxtaposition
   D. personification
   E. anaphora

10. What moral lesson might be inferred from the evidence presented in the story about the characterizations of the spider and the bee, respectively?
   A. the spider is a good worker to keep his palace but the bee is clumsy to destroy part of it.
   B. the spider is fairly lazy waiting for his food but the bee works to collect his.
   C. the spider tricks the bee hoping to eat him but the bee is too smart to be caught.
   D. the spider is angry because of the broken window and the bee should not have entered if not invited.
   E. the spider should worry about the end of nature but the bee can fly to safety unharmed.
Answers and Explanations for Skill Set Four

1. The correct choice is D.

   Explanation: As the frogs are given human-like qualities, Choice D, “personification” is correct.

2. The correct choice is D.

   Explanation: The story states that some frogs “thought they should have a king to rule over them and to watch over their morals.” Although we don’t know how far the frogs had fallen into a state of moral degradation, it can be inferred that a king must be of good moral fiber if one of their charters would be to watch over the frogs’ morals making Choice D correct.

3. The correct choice is C.

   Explanation: One of the nice parts about a fable is that convention is left open in large measure. Fortunately, this allows for some unusually rich writing. In this fable, much presented is ironic, generally situational. Choice A has Jupiter sending an inanimate, dead tree to rule as king over living subjects. Choice B furthers that dilemma in that a dead tree has no morals and would be unqualified to rule over the frogs’ morals. Choice D continues with the same difficulty in that an inanimate object being revered as a king is tantamount to idolatry. Choice E relates that since the log “landed with such a splash that it sent all the frogs scampering for safety” instead of welcoming the arrival of their newly appointed king. Choice C may seem ironic and close to Choice E on the surface, but there is no irony in the fact that a log hurled from the heavens would cause a great splash and generally disturb the otherwise peaceful lake. This non-ironic disturbance causes there to be no opportunity for pomp and circumstance, which again, is not ironic as it is grounded in a natural physical occurrence.

4. The correct choice is C.

   Explanation: Remember that a moral must teach, be universal in application, and foster good. The only choice qualifying as a moral, by default, is Choice C.

5. The correct choice is C.

   Explanation: The author compares the flies’ carcasses to human bones and connects the two with “like” qualifying as a simile, making Choice C correct.

6. The correct choice is A.

   Explanation: Although difficult to determine strictly from the sentence, looking at a broader context for clues might help. We know that the spider is an accomplished slayer, and his being swollen is a testimonial to that fact. We also know as a universal truth that defending cannot be passive by nature. With these two facts, we can determine that Choice A, “a rushing attack” is correct.

7. The correct choice is B.

   Explanation: The line where the term is used is, “where expatiating a while, he at last happened to alight upon one of the outward walls of the spider’s citadel.” Based on available clues, we know there was some physical action involved in order for the bee to get from where he went in, to when he alighted upon the outward walls of the spider’s citadel. The only selection involving any physical action is Choice B.

8. The correct choice is E.

   Explanation: Let’s take these one at a time. Choice A, “the author believes that at some appointed time the end of the world will come” is supported by “nature was approaching to her final dissolution.” Choice B, “flies are considered to be of a lower order than spiders” is supported by the fact that dominion over the flies was given to the spiders for food. Choice C, “there is a supreme creator and ruler of the universe” is supported by the established order of dominion and by the fact that the author invokes the name Beelzebub who represents Satan. Choice D, “there is a supremely evil spirit who will extract revenge,” is supported by “Beelzebub, with all his legions, was come to revenge the death of many thousands of his subjects.” Only Choice E, “the author understands that the food chain of life is established by evil” cannot be directly support by the passage. If there were to be support, it would be that the supreme being established the chain, not evil.
9. The correct choice is D.

_Explanation:_ Although Choices A and B, “descriptive speech” and “figurative language,” may appear good possibilities, the best choice is the one that represents giving human characteristics to a nonhuman subject like the author gives in this example to the spider in his rant.

10. The correct choice is B.

_Explanation:_ Remember that lessons of morality must teach. In this regard, Choice B presents a better work ethic for the bee and is the correct choice.
The stranger touched his arm, motioned him to step aside—which the startled minister did—and took his place. During some moments he surveyed the spellbound audience with solemn eyes in which burned an uncanny light; then in a deep voice he said: “I come from the Throne—bearing a message from Almighty God!” The words smote the house with a shock; if the stranger perceived it he gave no attention. “He has heard the prayer of His servant your shepherd and will grant it if such shall be your desire after I, His Messenger, shall have explained to you its import—that is to say, its full import. For it is like unto many prayers of men, in that it asks for more than he who utters it is aware of – except he pause and think.

“God’s servant and yours has prayed his prayer. Has he paused and taken thought? Is it one prayer? No, it is two—one uttered, the other not. Both have reached the ear of Him Who heareth all supplications, the spoken and the unspoken. Ponder this—keep it in mind. If you would beseech a blessing upon yourself, beware! lest without intent you invoke a curse upon a neighbor at the same time. If you pray for the blessing of rain upon your crop which needs it, by that act you are possibly praying for a curse upon some neighbor’s crop which may not need rain and can be injured by it.

“You have heard your servant’s prayer—the uttered part of it. I am commissioned of God to put into words the other part of it—that part which the pastor, and also you in your hearts, fervently prayed silently. And ignorantly and unthinkingly? God grant that it was so! You heard these words: ‘Grant us the victory, O Lord our God!’ That is sufficient. The whole of the uttered prayer is compact into those pregnant words. Elaborations were not necessary. When you have prayed for victory you have prayed for many unmentioned results which follow victory—must follow it. Upon the listening spirit of God the Father fell also the unspoken part of the prayer. He commandeth me to put it into words. Listen!

“O Lord our Father, our young patriots, idols of our hearts, go forth to battle—be Thou near them! With them, in spirit, we also go forth for the sweet peace of our beloved firesides to smite the foe. O Lord our God, help us to tear their soldiers to bloody shreds with our shells; help us to cover their smiling fields with the pale forms of their patriot dead; help us to drown the thunder of the guns with the shrieks of their wounded, writhing in pain; help us to lay waste their humble homes with a hurricane of fire; help us to wring the hearts of their unoffending widows with unavailing grief; help us to turn them out roofless with their little children to wander unfriended the wastes of their desolated land in rags and hunger and thirst, sports of the sun flames of summer and icy winds of winter, broken in spirit, worn with travail, imploring Thee for the refuge of the grave and denied it—for our sakes who adore Thee, Lord, blast their hopes, blight their lives, protract their bitter pilgrimage, make heavy their steps, water their way with their tears, stain the white snow with blood of their wounded feet! We ask it, in the spirit of love, of Him Who is the Source of Love, and Who is the ever-faithful refuge and friend of all that are sore beset and seek His aid with humble and contrite hearts. Amen.”

“Ye have prayed it: if ye still desire it, speak! The messenger of the Most High waits.”
1. All of the following might explain the author having given the speaker a “deep voice” EXCEPT:
   A. it commands attention when heard.
   B. it extracts a great degree of seriousness.
   C. it establishes a belief that the possessor has authority.
   D. it supports the notion that a messenger from God will be heard.
   E. it reinforces the idea that the speaker speaks in jest.

2. Which of the following choices best describes the word, “smote” as used in line (4)?
   A. strongly affected
   B. curiously aroused
   C. simultaneously confused
   D. guardedly feared
   E. brought to attention

3. Which of the following best describes the situational irony in the following quote, “He has heard the prayer of His servant your shepherd and will grant it if such shall be your desire after I, His Messenger, shall have explained to you its import” lines (5–6)?
   A. A messenger from God has visited their church.
   B. God has chosen them from all the churches to receive a message.
   C. God has affirmed that their pastor is indeed His servant.
   D. The crowd would need an explanation to a prayer they just uttered.
   E. The messenger informs the crowd that their prayer will in fact be answered.

4. Which selection might best summate the mini-moral in paragraph (3), lines (9–14)?
   A. Reflect upon what you ask that you ask for yourself.
   B. Clarify what you ask such that you will always receive your request.
   C. Determine the importance of your need before you ask.
   D. Consider that your supplication bring not curse with answer.
   E. Pray that you pray for what you really need so as not to waste requests.

5. Which selection best relates the meaning of, “Is it one prayer? No, it is two—one uttered, the other not” lines (9–10)?
   A. When someone prays, they also utter another.
   B. When the pastor prays, the crowd utters another prayer.
   C. The crowd and the pastor sometimes utter two different prayers.
   D. There is always an unspoken prayer with each spoken one.
   E. Because there are two prayers, only one can be answered.

6. What best relates the inference from the messenger to the crowd?
   A. Because the eyes of the crowd were open watching him enter, the prayer is invalid.
   B. Because the crowd had their eyes open during the prayer, they didn’t agree with the prayer.
   C. Because the pastor nor the crowd did “pause and take thought” the prayer wouldn’t be answered.
   D. The crowd and the pastor are joined in their common failing to think about what they were praying.
   E. The crowd bears the full responsibility for the erroneous prayer they demanded of the pastor.

7. What choice best describes the author’s purpose in using figurative language in paragraph (5), lines (22–33)?
   A. Keeps the tone of the story the same throughout.
   B. Effectively changes the mood by describing the gore of the unspoken prayer in detail.
   C. Plays an important role in evidencing the author’s abilities in word choice.
   D. Creates an opportunity for the author to present varied syntax for effect.
   E. Challenges the reader to remain actively engaged with the plot.
8. The phrase, “hurricane of fire” is a good example of what device?
   A. onomatopoeia
   B. oxymoron
   C. double entendre
   D. assonance
   E. alliteration

9. What selection could best qualify the quote, “Ye have prayed it: if ye still desire it, speak!”
   A. The messenger did as charged by God and now requires an answer as to which message he delivers back to God.
   B. The pastor and the crowd prayed and it will be granted just as soon as the messenger delivers their decision to God.
   C. Now that you understand what you really prayed for, do you still consider it appropriate?
   D. Now that I have explained the offsetting curse you would bring about, do you still want your soldiers to be victorious?
   E. Tell me that you want the offsetting prayer answered as well as your spoken one and I’ll deliver that message to God.

10. The primary focus of the passage is to
    A. expose the lunacy of war.
    B. present the full scope of prayer.
    C. attest to the fact that God is just.
    D. confirm the ideology that God is alive.
    E. convey the parishioners desire to protect their soldiers.
Answers and Explanations for Skill Set Five

1. The correct choice is D.

Explanation: All choices except D are basic universal truths. In fact, the only information needed from the passage for this question was that the speaker did indeed have a deep voice.

2. The correct choice is A.

Explanation: This is a fairly straightforward vocabulary question. Choices A, B, and E, “strongly affected,” “curiously aroused,” and “brought to attention” are the only viable choices given the ending of the phrase, “with a shock.” Given the gravity of the situation in the tone of the passage, having just heard someone profess he is a messenger from God would likely extol the most egregious response, which is what makes Choice A correct.

3. The correct choice is D.

Explanation: Why would someone need to have a prayer as simple as, “Grant us the victory, O Lord our God,” explained to them? Herein lay the situational irony. A messenger directly from the Throne takes over a church meeting to explain to the crowd the meaning of such a simple prayer. Choice D is correct.

4. The correct choice is D.

Explanation: Given the seriousness of the subject, we are looking for some moral lesson as the question states. In this regard, the cited paragraph clearly tells us to be mindful that we don’t accidentally ask for another to be cursed as we are blessed qualifying Choice D as the correct selection.

5. The correct choice is D.

Explanation: This type question is one of those literal questions that simply require a reading and rephrasing into different words. While not quoted, the restatement of the quote without altering meaning is Choice D.

6. The correct choice is D.

Explanation: Inference questions rely firstly upon the facts given. The messenger addresses the entire crowd, not just the pastor. The messenger’s admonishment is to all who hear his deep voice. The messenger addresses the crowd as “you” such as to enjoin them in whatever errors or omissions suffered by the pastor. As this infraction was not thinking about the totality of what was meant by the prayer offered, Choice D is best.

7. The correct choice is B.

Explanation: It is important to keep in mind that this is a moral piece wherein the author is conveying some universal lesson of good. One of the best ways to do this for a writer is to really detail the error or the negative of the actions that create a need for change. In this case, it is the unspoken prayer that offsets the spoken prayer. In order to expose the error of the spoken prayer, it is important to descriptively relate the horror of the negative consequences. This is why the author employs figurative language making Choice E appropriate.

8. The correct choice is B.

Explanation: Choice B is the only selection qualifying as an “oxymoron” in the use of seemingly dichotomous terms. We normally think of a hurricane as a tropical storm with tremendous amounts of water coupled with high winds, not of fire.

9. The correct choice is C.

Explanation: To qualify something is to establish a set of criteria against which the merits will be compared. The quote was, “Ye have prayed it: if ye still desire it, speak!” Keeping in mind that this is teaching a moral, we can qualify the quote as follows: you are a church; you believe in the powers of a God of love; you now know that if God grants your spoken prayer, he must grant your unspoken prayer as they both have been equally asked; given what you now know, speak your answer and it shall be done as soon as I communicate your decision to God. Choice D seems plausible, but poses an unqualified question wherein having been given the information from the messenger about the horrid devastation that would accompany their answered spoken prayer, they have been asked to now sacrifice their own soldiers—this doesn’t actually teach a moral. Choice C however simply asks that they now make a moral decision based upon their full understanding of the attendant consequences.
10. The correct choice is A.

Explanation: Choice B, “present the full scope of prayer,” represents the vehicle used by the author to expose the tragedies of war. Choices C and D “attest to the fact that God is just” and “confirm the ideology that God is alive,” respectively, relate to the vehicle as well. Choice E, “convey the parishioners desire to protect their soldiers,” simply restates the original prayer and accomplishes nothing in terms of teaching any moral values. Choice A, “expose the lunacy of war,” follows the title given in the informational section, teaches the moral counterpoints of war, and furthers the position that if the purpose were to simply teach the silent sides to spoken prayers, the author could have furthered the example of rain helping one farmer while ruining the other.
Long Reading Comprehension Review Questions

Long Reading Comprehension Skill Set Six

Note: Skill sets may contain more questions than the actual SAT to show the potential range of questioning.

The passages below are followed by questions based on their content; questions following a pair of related passages may also be based on the relationship between the paired passages. Answer the questions on the basis of what is stated or implied in the passages and in any introductory material that may be provided.

Questions 1–10 are based on the following passage.

The following is an excerpt from Life on the Mississippi by Mark Twain. Twain spent considerable time on the Mississippi River and was well versed in the perils of navigating this body of water.

Now on very dark nights, light is a deadly enemy to piloting; you are aware that if you stand in a lighted room, on such a night, you cannot see things in the street to any purpose; but if you put out the lights and stand in the gloom you can make out objects in the street pretty well. So, on very dark nights, pilots do not smoke; they allow no fire in the pilot-house stove if there is a crack which can allow the least ray to escape; they order the furnaces to be curtained with huge tarpaulins and the sky-lights to be closely blinded. Then no light whatever issues from the boat. The undefinable shape that now entered the pilot-house had Mr. X.’s voice. This said—

‘Let me take her, George; I’ve seen this place since you have, and it is so crooked that I reckon I can run it myself easier than I could tell you how to do it.’

‘It is kind of you, and I swear—I—am willing. I haven’t got another drop of perspiration left in me. I have been spinning around and around the wheel like a squirrel. It is so dark I can’t tell which way she is swinging till she is coming around like a whirligig.’

So Ealer took a seat on the bench, panting and breathless. The black phantom assumed the wheel without saying anything, steadied the waltzing steamer with a turn or two, and then stood at ease, coaxing her a little to this side and then to that, as gently and as sweetly as if the time had been noonday. When Ealer observed this marvel of steering, he wished he had not confessed! He stared, and wondered, and finally said—

‘Well, I thought I knew how to steer a steamboat, but that was another mistake of mine.’

X. said nothing, but went serenely on with his work. He rang for the leads; he rang to slow down the steam; he worked the boat carefully and neatly into invisible marks, then stood at the center of the wheel and peered blandly out into the blackness, fore and aft, to verify his position; as the leads shoaled more and more, he stopped the engines entirely, and the dead silence and suspense of ‘drifting’ followed when the shoalest water was struck, he cracked on the steam, carried her handsomely over, and then began to work her warily into the next system of shoal marks; the same patient, heedful use of leads and engines followed, the boat slipped through without touching bottom, and entered upon the third and last intricacy of the crossing; imperceptibly she moved through the gloom, crept by inches into her marks, drifted tediously till the shoalest water was cried, and then, under a tremendous head of steam, went swinging over the reef and away into deep water and safety!

Ealer let his long-pent breath pour out in a great, relieving sigh, and said—

‘That’s the sweetest piece of piloting that was ever done on the Mississippi River! I wouldn’t believed it could be done, if I hadn’t seen it.’

There was no reply, and he added—

‘Just hold her five minutes longer, partner, and let me run down and get a cup of coffee.’

A minute later Ealer was biting into a pie, down in the ‘texas,’ and comforting himself with coffee. Just then the night watchman happened in, and was about to happen out again, when he noticed Ealer and exclaimed—

‘Who is at the wheel, sir?’

‘X.’

‘Dart for the pilot-house, quicker than lightning!’

The next moment both men were flying up the pilot-house companion way, three steps at a jump! Nobody there! The great steamer was whistling down the middle of the river at her own sweet will! The watchman shot out of the place again; Ealer seized the wheel, set an engine back with power, and held his breath while the boat reluctantly swung away from a ‘towhead’ which she was about to knock into the middle of the Gulf of Mexico!
By and by the watchman came back and said—

‘Didn’t that lunatic tell you he was asleep, when he first came up here?’

‘NO.’

‘Well, he was.

I found him walking along on top of the railings just as unconcerned as another man would walk a pavement; and I put him to bed; now just this minute there he was again, away astern, going through that sort of tight-rope deviltry the same as before.’

‘Well, I think I’ll stay by, next time he has one of those fits. But I hope he’ll have them often. You just ought to have seen him take this boat through Helena crossing. I never saw anything so gaudy before. And if he can do such gold-leaf, kid-glove, diamond-breastpin piloting when he is sound asleep, what COULDN’T he do if he was dead!’

1. What is the primary purpose for the first paragraph lines (1–6)?
   A. to explain what lengths pilots go to keep the pilot-house
   B. to explain that even though freezing, no furnace is burned at night in the pilot-house
   C. to explain that pilots do not even smoke in the pilot-house to keep it dark
   D. to explain the dangers of piloting at night
   E. to explain that it was difficult to identify anyone entering the pilot-house at night

2. What can the reader infer by the comment of Mr. X., “I’ve seen this place since you have” line (7)?
   A. It was simply a nice way to take over the wheel of the boat.
   B. It implies it had been a very long time since George had seen this part of the river.
   C. It suggests that due to the current, the river shifts with some frequency.
   D. It is simply a form of boasting by Mr. X. that he pilots more frequently than George.
   E. It means that Mr. X. has been in the pilot-house more recently than George and can better pilot.

3. Which statement best summarizes George’s statements in lines (9–11)?
   A. He is upset at the suggestion and swears at Mr. X. albeit he acquiesces in the end.
   B. He has fought the darkness and over-steered such that he has sweat to the point of dehydration.
   C. The currents are so strong that the wheel was very difficult to turn making him sweat profusely.
   D. He is disgusted that it is so dark in the pilot-house that he over-steers because he can’t see the instruments.
   E. He has been spinning around the wheel like a squirrel runs around a tree getting nowhere.

4. Why does the phrase, “It is so dark I can’t tell which way she is swinging” line (10) seem strange?
   A. because a dark pilot-house is supposed to help pilot the boat, not confuse the pilot
   B. because darker is supposed to be better, so it could not be too dark
   C. because at first glance you don’t know he is speaking of the outside and it doesn’t match with the desire for total darkness in the pilot-house
   D. because you would initially think that darkness was a friend to the pilot in the pilot-house and now he is saying it was too dark to know which way the boat was turning
   E. because of the discussions about it being dark in the pilot-house and it being very dark at night and that if light is deadly, why is it now a problem
5. Which device is evidenced with the phrase, “waltzing steamer” in line (13)?
   A. symbolism
   B. anachronism
   C. anaphora
   D. assonance
   E. personification

6. What can be inferred by the phrase “he wished he had not confessed” line (15)?
   A. He felt childish for having not been tougher during a tense situation and thought that Mr. X. would think less of him as a comrade.
   B. Given the ease with which Mr. X. traversed the river, George was more than a little embarrassed with his confession that he could not do nearly so well.
   C. Because Mr. X. was not engaged in conversation with him, George thought he was upset that his companion could not have managed this piece of the river, particularly given the ease with which it obviously could be done.
   D. He felt like since he so easily relinquished the wheel to Mr. X. that now Mr. X. would think that he was unwilling to pull his own weight aboard the boat.
   E. He was fearful the Mr. X. would share his confession and inadequacy with the other hands or even the captain.

7. Which of the following would not be a reasonable deduction as a result of Mr. X. not speaking to George the whole of the relief piloting episode lines (12–29)?
   A. Mr. X. was fully focused on the task at hand and did not wish to engage in conversation.
   B. Mr. X. was offended by the readiness George demonstrated by giving up the wheel so readily.
   C. George was a less tendered mate and Mr. X. did not choose to engage in social conversation with someone of lesser position.
   D. Mr. X. had a hearing impairment and simply didn’t hear George.
   E. Mr. X. was answering George but George was hearing impaired.

8. What literary device is used when it is disclosed that Mr. X. was asleep?
   A. twist of fate
   B. dénouement
   C. surprise ending
   D. flashback
   E. foreshadowing

9. In line (48), the word “gaudy” most nearly means
   A. professional.
   B. expertly done.
   C. flawlessly.
   D. showy.
   E. amazing.

10. What is most likely the main purpose for writing the story?
    A. to inform
    B. to argue a point
    C. to persuade
    D. to entertain
    E. to dissuade
Answers and Explanations for Skill Set Six

1. The correct choice is **D**.

   *Explanation:* Although all choices are correct statements, all but D and E deal with the lengths undertaken to make the pilot-house dark rather than the purpose for darkness. Choice E simply identifies a result of that darkness, leaving only Choice D “to explain the dangers of piloting at night,” which is the correct selection.

2. The correct choice is **C**.

   *Explanation:* River pilots are not likely given to formality, making Choice A wrong. Although it is possible that some time had passed since George had navigated this part of the river, if it was that treacherous, pilots remember those areas and commit them to memory notwithstanding navigational maps, so Choice B can’t be correct. Mr. X. boasting is a possibility, but there was no hint of that in the words used. The tone of his voice did not suggest any boasting, making Choice D erroneous. The remainder of the sentence about it being “crooked” eliminates Choice E, leaving only Choice C as correct.

3. The correct choice is **B**.

   *Explanation:* In summary type questions, the trick is to look for matching information. Remember that the answer choices may be restated, reworded, or reverse-worded but still convey the same meaning. In this case, we are looking for an answer that conveys that it was very dark outside, creating the need for much attention to steering in this very treacherous area of the river and that the physical demands of the pilot, possibly coupled with raw nerves, causes such perspiration as to be on the brink of dehydration. Choice B fulfills this need.

4. The correct choice is **C**.

   *Explanation:* The strangeness of the phrase is set up in the information presented previously in the passage. In speaking of the darkest of nights, a goodly portion of text is then presented to demonstrate what great efforts the crew performs to make the pilot-house completely dark. Naturally, the reader is left with the notion and belief that the more darkness, the better—but this is only true of the pilot-house. not outside. This then, is what seems strange. Until the reader realizes George is speaking of how dark it is outside, the phrase can seem strange, making Choice C correct.

5. The correct choice is **E**.

   *Explanation:* Giving a steamer humanlike traits such as waltzing is clearly personification, making Choice E correct.

6. The correct choice is **B**.

   *Explanation:* Sometimes the timing of when something is said is as important as what they say. In this case, George has just watched a display in piloting such as he has never before seen and his confession previously about how tremendously difficult this piece of the river was seems totally errant at this time. Clearly, Choice B is correct.

7. The correct choice is **E**.

   *Explanation:* At this point in the story, all choices are reasonable deductions except for Choice E. This might have made for a good twist had it not been for the fact that George heard Mr. X. clearly when he asked whether he could take over the wheel.

8. The correct choice is **C**.

   *Explanation:* A surprise ending is what happens when you simply don’t see coming what is actually presented. The element of surprise in Mr. X. being asleep certainly qualifies as a surprise ending for this passage, making Choice C correct.

9. The correct choice is **D**.

   *Explanation:* Although a number of choices might fit the situation, we can acquire some context clues with the tone and expressions used by George in the next line. Terms such as “gold-leaf” and “diamond-breastpin” are flashy, showy items leading to Choice D, which is correct.

10. The correct choice is **D**.

    *Explanation:* Here is a case in which there is no real useable information, no instruction, no one trying to convince you of one thing or another, but simply to entertain the reader, making Choice D correct.
Long Reading Comprehension Skill Set Seven

Note: Skill sets may contain more questions than the actual SAT to show the potential range of questioning.

The passages below are followed by questions based on their content; questions following a pair of related passages may also be based on the relationship between the paired passages. Answer the questions on the basis of what is stated or implied in the passages and in any introductory material that may be provided.

Questions 1–10 are based on the following passage.

This is an excerpt from The Stolen White Elephant.

You know in what reverence the royal white elephant of Siam is held by the people of that country. You know it is sacred to kings, only kings may possess it, and that it is, indeed, in a measure even superior to kings, since it receives not merely honor but worship. Very well; five years ago, when the troubles concerning the frontier line arose between Great Britain and Siam, it was presently manifest that Siam had been in the wrong. Therefore every reparation was quickly made, and the British representative stated that he was satisfied and the past should be forgotten. This greatly relieved the King of Siam, and partly as a token of gratitude, partly also, perhaps, to wipe out any little remaining vestige of unpleasantness which England might feel toward him, he wished to send the Queen a present—the sole sure way of propitiating an enemy, according to Oriental ideas. This present ought not only to be a royal one, but transcendentally royal. Wherefore, what offering could be so meet as that of a white elephant? My position in the Indian civil service was such that I was deemed peculiarly worthy of the honor of conveying the present to Her Majesty. A ship was fitted out for me and my servants and the officers and attendants of the elephant, and in due time I arrived in New York harbor and placed my royal charge in admirable quarters in Jersey City. It was necessary to remain awhile in order to recruit the animal’s health before resuming the voyage.

All went well during a fortnight - then my calamities began. The white elephant was stolen! I was called up at dead of night and informed of this fearful misfortune. For some moments I was beside myself with terror and anxiety; I was helpless. Then I grew calmer and collected my faculties. I soon saw my course - for, indeed, there was but the one course for an intelligent man to pursue. Late as it was, I flew to New York and got a policeman to conduct me to the headquarters of the detective force. Fortunately I arrived in time, though the chief of the force, the celebrated Inspector Blunt was just on the point of leaving for his home. He was a man of middle size and compact frame, and when he was thinking deeply he had a way of knitting his brows and tapping his forehead reflectively with his finger, which impressed you at once with the conviction that you stood in the presence of a person of no common order. The very sight of him gave me confidence and made me hopeful. I stated my errand. It did not flurry him in the least; it had no more visible effect upon his iron self-possession than if I had told him somebody had stolen my dog. He motioned me to a seat, and said, calmly:

"Allow me to think a moment, please."

So saying, he sat down at his office table and leaned his head upon his hand. Several clerks were at work at the other end of the room; the scratching of their pens was all the sound I heard during the next six or seven minutes. Meantime the inspector sat there, buried in thought. Finally he raised his head, and there was that in the firm lines of his face which showed me that his brain had done its work and his plan was made. Said he - and his voice was low and impressive:

““This is no ordinary case. Every step must be warily taken; each step must be made sure before the next is ventured. And secrecy must be observed - secrecy profound and absolute. Speak to no one about the matter, not even the reporters. I will take care of them; I will see that they get only what it may suit my ends to let them know.”” He touched a bell; a youth appeared.

““Alaric, tell the reporters to remain for the present.”” The boy retired. ““Now let us proceed to business - and systematically. Nothing can be accomplished in this trade of mine without strict and minute method.””

He took a pen and some paper. ““Now - name of the elephant?””

““Hassan Ben Ali Ben Selim Abdallah Mohammed Moist Alhhammal Jamsetjeeebhoy Dhuleep Sultan Ebu Bhudpoor.””

““Very well. Given name?””

““Jumbo.””

““Very well. Place of birth?””
“The capital city of Siam.”
“Parents living?”
“No - dead.”
“Had they any other issue besides this one?”
“None. He was an only child.”
“Very well. These matters are sufficient under that head. Now please describe the elephant, and leave out no particular, however insignificant—that is, insignificant from your point of view. To me in my profession there are no insignificant particulars; they do not exist.”

1. What is the mood throughout the story?
   A. raucous
   B. solemn
   C. dire
   D. giddy
   E. reverent

2. All of the following presented in the first paragraph, lines (1–13) might indicate that the author is foreshadowing some dire event as it relates to the delivery of this great gift EXCEPT?
   A. The gift was one that was even more than royal.
   B. The gift was to completely appease a head of state after the offending faux pas.
   C. The gift was to be entrusted to only one man.
   D. There was a requisite stop-over in New York of all places.
   E. There was only one other gift of this kind as a safeguard.

3. In line (8) “propitiating” most nearly means
   A. conquering.
   B. placating.
   C. wooing.
   D. regaining favor.
   E. artificially apologizing.

4. In line (9) “transcendentally” most nearly means
   A. rise above.
   B. extend to.
   C. encapsulate.
   D. marginally.
   E. effectively.

5. Which of the following would likely not convey why the term “fearful” line (15) was used?
   A. It was likely a fearful situation for the elephant.
   B. It created fear in he who was in charge of the gift.
   C. It is fearful because of how the King of Siam would likely react.
   D. It would create ear for the well-being of the gift.
   E. It would cause fear that they wouldn’t find the gift in time to set sail for Great Britain.

6. All of the following questions asked by Inspector Blunt qualify as ironic EXCEPT:
   A. name of the elephant.
   B. given name.
   C. place of birth.
   D. parents living.
   E. color.

7. What linguistic modification is utilized in, “Said he—and his voice was low and impressive” line (29–30)?
   A. characterization
   B. anthropomorphism
   C. exposition
   D. syntax
   E. foil
8. When the author has Inspector Blunt state, “This is no ordinary case,” in line (31), he accomplishes all of the following EXCEPT:
   A. stating the obvious.
   B. qualifying an unknown.
   C. set up the ironic treatment of this as anything but an exceptional case.
   D. establish Inspector Blunt as a comic relief figure as it took “six or seven” minutes to receive this revelation.
   E. establish that the messenger is absolutely gullible when it comes to dealing with the inspector.

9. From the readers’ perspective, which is the best choice to describe the entire question and answer sequence between Inspector Blunt and the messenger, lines (37–50)?
   A. informative
   B. ludicrous
   C. appalling
   D. absurd
   E. raucous

10. What is the overriding factor in making this piece qualify as irony?
   A. The most precious gift, one greater than royalty was lost.
   B. The most qualified person in all of Siam to deliver the gift lost it.
   C. Inspector Blunt was caught in the nick of time, and he was the most qualified to work the case.
   D. The details of a white elephant are so painstakingly needed to start looking.
   E. None of the servants, officers, or attendants of the elephant were posted as guards.
Answers and Explanations for Skill Set Seven

1. The correct choice is B.

Explanation: The situation between Siam and Great Britain is solemn. The charge to deliver this token of great importance is solemn. The theft is solemn. And even Inspector Blunt was solemnly performing his duties albeit humorous to us. Therefore, Choice B is correct.

2. The correct choice is E.

Explanation: All of the selections could be considered to foreshadow some dire event except Choice E, which was never mentioned in the passage but would be highly unlikely anyway.

3. The correct choice is D.

Explanation: The object and direction of the paragraph have not changed and is still sincere in its goal; to give an extraordinarily priceless gift to the targeted country. As they had only recently been at odds with Great Britain and the purpose of the gift was to make final appeasement for an awkward situation, Choice D, “regaining favor,” is correct.

4. The correct choice is A.

Explanation: To transcend is to rise above so this is a fairly straightforward vocabulary question. You know from the context it will need to be something that indicates the best or better than royal because of the language leading up to the word in question, “This present ought not only to be a royal one, but transcendentally royal.” Choice A, “rise above,” is the only choice meeting this criterion.

5. The correct choice is E.

Explanation: The only fear not supported in the passage is E, “fear that they wouldn’t find the gift in time to set sail for Great Britain.”

6. The correct choice is E.

Explanation: Although we are not told specifically that the messenger informed Inspector Blunt when he stated his errand that the elephant was indeed white (making it extremely rare. . .not to mention noticeable), we do know that the inspector did not ask that question directly in the text, making Choice E correct. Of course, the author speaks tongue-in-cheek when the inspector follows a meticulously set and laid out “minute method” of questioning as if he were looking for an abducted child.

7. The correct choice is D.

Explanation: Although Choice A looks like a candidate because the voice of Inspector Blunt is being identified as “low and impressive,” which does give character to him, this is not a deviation or modification, making it an incorrect choice. Rather, Choice D, “syntax,” is correct as the normal placement of word order has been changed or modified for effect.

8. The correct choice is B.

Explanation: Clearly, a great deal can be established with few words. All choices except B, “qualifying and unknown,” happen almost simultaneously with this singular comment. Although hoping for some actual revelation from the inspector given his pre-established notoriety as a great and wondrous detective, we get something so academic, it needn’t have even been said. All the while, the messenger remains awestruck by the “greatness” before him.

9. The correct choice is B.

Explanation: Choice A, “informative,” is actually kind of tricky. It was informative from the readers’ perspective, but not in terms of learning about the elephant. It was informative to the reader as to identifying the humor and irony being presented by the author. This question is actually asking for a qualification upon the actual questioning in the sequence rather than the imparting of any specific devices being used by the author. Toward this end, Choice D, “absurd,” looks good as it relates to being ridiculous or unreasonable were it not for the fact that “absurd” does not take into account the humor involved from “the readers’ perspective.” Choice B, however, “ludicrous” describes the sequence from the readers’ perspective perfectly—comically ridiculous.
10. The correct choice is D.

*Explanation:* Although all of the choices contain their own bits of irony, the classic and overriding qualifier is the fact that we're looking for a huge white elephant. This isn’t a pocket-watch easily hidden under someone’s coat; it’s an elephant, which leads to the obvious choice of D. The turning point and revelation of this is the following: “I stated my errand. It did not flurry him in the least; it had no more visible effect upon his iron self-possession than if I had told him somebody had stolen my dog. He motioned me to a seat, and said, calmly:

“Allow me to think a moment, please.”

I invite you to do the same on the SAT.
Vanity was the beginning and the end of Sir Walter Elliot’s character; vanity of person and of situation. He had been remarkably handsome in his youth; and, at fifty-four, was still a very fine man. Few women could think more of their personal appearance than he did, nor could the valet of any new made lord be more delighted with the place he held in society. He considered the blessing of beauty as inferior only to the blessing of a baronetcy; and the Sir Walter Elliot, who united these gifts, was the constant object of his warmest respect and devotion.

His good looks and his rank had one fair claim on his attachment; since to them he must have owed a wife of very superior character to any thing deserved by his own. Lady Elliot had been an excellent woman, sensible and amiable; whose judgement [sic] and conduct, if they might be pardoned the youthful infatuation which made her Lady Elliot, had never required indulgence afterwards. She had humoured [sic], or softened, or concealed his failings, and promoted his real respectability for seventeen years; and though not the very happiest being in the world herself, had found enough in her duties, her friends, and her children, to attach her to life, and make it no matter of indifference to her when she was called on to quit them. Three girls, the two eldest sixteen and fourteen, was an awful legacy for a mother to bequeath, an awful charge rather, to confide to the authority and guidance of a conceited, silly father. She had, however, one very intimate friend, a sensible, deserving woman, who had been brought, by strong attachment to herself, to settle close by her, in the village of Kelhynch; and on her kindness and advice, Lady Elliot mainly relied for the best help and maintenance of the good principles and instruction which she had been anxiously giving her daughters.

This friend, and Sir Walter, did not marry, whatever might have been anticipated on that head by their acquaintance. Thirteen years had passed away since Lady Elliot’s death, and they were still near neighbours [sic] and intimate friends, and one remained a widower, the other a widow.

That Lady Russell, of steady age and character, and extremely well provided for, should have no thought of a second marriage, needs no apology to the public, which is rather apt to be unreasonably discontented when a woman does marry again, than when she does not; but Sir Walter’s continuing in singleness requires explanation. Be it known then, that Sir Walter, like a good father, (having met with one or two private disappointments in very unreasonable applications), prided himself on remaining single for his dear daughters’ sake. For one daughter, his eldest, he would really have given up any thing, which he had not been very much tempted to do. Elizabeth had succeeded, at sixteen, to all that was possible, of her mother’s rights and consequence; and being very handsome, and very like himself, her influence had always been great, and they had gone on together most happily. His two other children were of very inferior value. Mary had acquired a little artificial importance, by becoming Mrs. Charles Musgrove; but Anne, with an elegance of mind and sweetness of character, which must have placed her high with any people of real understanding, was nobody with either father or sister; her word had no weight, her convenience was always to give way—she was only Anne.

To Lady Russell, indeed, she was a most dear and highly valued god-daughter, favourite [sic], and friend. Lady Russell loved them all; but it was only in Anne that she could fancy the mother to revive again.

A few years before, Anne Elliot had been a very pretty girl, but her bloom had vanished early; and as even in its height, her father had found little to admire in her (so totally different were her delicate features and mild dark eyes from his own), there could be nothing in them, now that she was faded and thin, to excite his esteem. He had never indulged much hope, he had now none, of ever reading her name in any other page of his favourite [sic] work. All equality of alliance must rest with Elizabeth, for Mary had merely connected herself with an old country family of respectability and large fortune, and had therefore given all the honour [sic] and received none: Elizabeth would, one day or other, marry suitably.

[71x671]Note: Skill sets may contain more questions than the actual SAT to show the potential range of questioning.

The passages below are followed by questions based on their content; questions following a pair of related passages may also be based on the relationship between the paired passages. Answer the questions on the basis of what is stated or implied in the passages and in any introductory material that may be provided.

Questions 1–10 are based on the following passage.

The following is an excerpt from Persuasion by Jane Austen.
1. What is the author’s purpose in the first paragraph, lines (1–5)?
   A. to establish a time frame for the story
   B. to establish a setting for the story
   C. to establish an overall tone in the story
   D. to establish the character of Sir Elliot in the story
   E. to establish the financial condition of Sir Elliot in the story

2. Which selection properly identifies the “fair claim” in line (6)?
   A. His wealth stemmed from looks and rank.
   B. His birthright gave him looks and rank attainable.
   C. His possession of looks and rank commanded respect.
   D. He got his wife because of looks and rank.
   E. He was held high in society because of looks and rank.

3. What does “his own” refer to as used in line (7)?
   A. his own wife
   B. his own looks
   C. his own character
   D. his own rank
   E. his own claim

4. The device evidenced in line (7) by eliminating the word “character” after “his own” is known as
   A. parasynthesis.
   B. mythopoetics.
   C. monosemy.
   D. ellipsis.
   E. interpolation.

5. Which statement best defines the meaning of the phrase “attach her to life” line (11), as used in this passage?
   A. Make her feel alive due to all the social activities resulting from her husband’s rank.
   B. Her duties, friends, and children were constantly attached to her demanding attention.
   C. She found reason to live in her duties, friends, and children.
   D. Her entire life was relegated to her duties, friends, and children.
   E. Ensure that she lived well when she could not attend to her duties or be with her friends or children.

6. The phrase “no matter of indifference” lines (11–12) is best represented as an example of
   A. hyperbole.
   B. understatement.
   C. exaggeration.
   D. assonance.
   E. litotes.

7. The phrase “called on to quit them” line (12) qualifies as
   A. a metaphor.
   B. a simile.
   C. hyperbole.
   D. anaphora.
   E. ellipses.

8. Which selection best represents the dichotomous views of Anne as demonstrated in lines (35–38)?
   A. Elliot believes she will marry one day—Russell believes she does not.
   B. Elliot believes she is still fair—Russell believes she has inward qualities.
   C. Elliot believes she has nothing to offer—Russell believes she has her mother’s qualities.
   D. Elliot believes she had worth—Russell believes she had no worth.
   E. Elliot believes she resembles his looks—Russell believes she does not.
9. What is the author telling us that Elliot believes of his daughters as it concerns marriage in lines (25–41)?

A. Anne will eventually marry to good stock; Elizabeth will stay and attend estate needs; Mary married for convenience.
B. Anne married, but not well; Elizabeth will marry well; Mary will never marry as she is too thin.
C. Anne won’t marry; Elizabeth married, but not well; Mary will marry well.
D. Anne lost what little looks she had so will marry into a bad alliance; Elizabeth will marry a good alliance; Mary married into a lower level family.
E. Anne was too thin and homely so won’t marry; Elizabeth is best suited and will marry with good alliance; Mary married into a family that adds nothing to the Elliot alliance.

10. Which selection best describes the relationship between the first and last paragraphs?

A. Information presented in paragraph one is contradictory to the last paragraph.
B. Information presented in paragraph one is opposite to what is presented in the last paragraph.
C. Information presented in paragraph one is validated in the final paragraph.
D. Information presented in paragraph one is similar to that in the final paragraph.
E. Information presented in paragraph one is basically the same as that in the final paragraph.
Answers and Explanations for Skill Set Eight

1. The correct choice is **D**.

   *Explanation:* Although the first paragraph addresses some of the choices, it most importantly establishes the character of Sir Walter Elliot and even states, “Vanity was the beginning and the end of Sir Walter Elliot’s character,” making Choice D correct.

2. The correct choice is **D**.

   *Explanation:* This is one of those, “Go figure out the syntax” questions. So, if we look at the sentence, it basically says he owes his good looks and rank for the gaining of the one prize of worth, his wife, Lady Elliot. This is the “fair claim” then, that he could claim that his looks and rank won him his wife.

3. The correct choice is **C**.

   *Explanation:* If test-makers only selected passages that were more formulaically written, we wouldn’t have questions like this, but they don’t, so we do. Now to the task at hand; looking at the entire sentence, we know that he owed his looks and rank for landing him a wife. We also know that his wife had a superior character, which was one of the qualities he didn’t deserve based on his own character, making Choice C correct.

4. The correct choice is **D**.

   *Explanation:* There are those who will tell you that it is not important to know the device terminology to pass the SAT. I agree; but I do not agree that you can score your best if you aren’t familiar enough with them to know them by name, because if you don’t know them by name, you likely can’t master them, and many of the questions on the SAT utilize the structure and detail of a device as a basis for a question. So, I make no apologies for asking these types of questions as a study guide for improving SAT scores, which this book will do. Having said that, an ellipses, Choice D is the device that omits one or more words that might be essential grammatically, but easily supplied for meaning.

5. The correct choice is **C**.

   *Explanation:* Effectively, we are told that in spite of her husband’s failings creating hardships on her and in spite of her basically making him what he was perceived to be in society, she found enough reason to live in her positive duties, friends, and her children, making Choice C, “she found reason to live in her duties, friends, and children,” correct.

6. The correct choice is **E**.

   *Explanation:* Although Choice B, “understatement,” is correct, it is not the selection that is the best representative. Litotes is a form of understatement in which something is affirmed by stating the negative of its opposite. To say “no matter of indifference” qualifies as that form of understatement called litotes, making Choice E correct.

7. The correct choice is **A**.

   *Explanation:* The phrase “called on to quit them” is simply a metaphor for dying. Certainly, if understatement would have been a choice, that would have been correct also. Choice A is correct.

8. The correct choice is **C**.

   *Explanation:* Sometimes, the best way to handle a question like this is to employ that old strategy used when there were two blanks in the Sentence Completion Section. If you remember, verifying one side of the equation will help eliminate some choices immediately. Then work through the other side until all the conditions match. In this case, Choice C, “Elliot believes she has nothing to offer—Russell believes she has her mother’s qualities,” is supported by the text.
9. The correct choice is E.

Explanation: This is just another follow-the-trail question. Similar to multiple blank sentence completion questions, it is sometimes better to work through the first qualifier crossing off the selections that don’t comply. Systematically work through the second (and third if necessary), qualifier until the correct selection literally presents itself. In this case, Choice E is the only selection left standing.

10. The correct choice is C.

Explanation: Choice D, “information presented in paragraph one is similar to that in the final paragraph,” seems feasible but similar would indicate a repetition of sorts of the same information, which is not correct. Choice C, “information presented in paragraph one is validated in the final paragraph,” is the best selection as the character flaws attributed to Sir Elliot are realized in the final paragraph.
Long Reading Comprehension Skill Set Nine

Note: Skill sets may contain more questions than the actual SAT to show the potential range of questioning.

The passages below are followed by questions based on their content; questions following a pair of related passages may also be based on the relationship between the paired passages. Answer the questions on the basis of what is stated or implied in the passages and in any introductory material that may be provided.

Questions 1–10 are based on the following passage.

The following is an excerpt from Dracula by Bram Stoker.

I shuddered as I bent over to touch him, and every sense in me revolted at the contact, but I had to search, or I was lost. The coming night might see my own body a banquet in a similar way to those horrid three. I felt all over the body, but no sign could I find of the key. Then I stopped and looked at the Count. There was a mocking smile on the bloated face which seemed to drive me mad. This was the being I was helping to transfer to London, where, perhaps, for centuries to come he might, amongst its teeming millions, satiate his lust for blood, and create a new and ever-widening circle of semi-demons to batten on the helpless.

The very thought drove me mad. A terrible desire came upon me to rid the world of such a monster. There was no lethal weapon at hand, but I seized a shovel which the workmen had been using to fill the cases, and lifting it high, struck, with the edge downward, at the hateful face. But as I did so the head turned, and the eyes fell upon me, with all their blaze of basilisk horror. The sight seemed to paralyze me, and the shovel turned in my hand and glanced from the face, merely making a deep gash above the forehead. The shovel fell from my hand across the box, and as I pulled it away the flange of the blade caught the edge of the lid which fell over again, and hid the horrid thing from my sight. The last glimpse I had was of the bloated face, blood-stained and fixed with a grin of malice which would have held its own in the nethermost hell.

I thought and thought what should be my next move, but my brain seemed on fire, and I waited with a despairing feeling growing over me. As I waited I heard in the distance a gipsy song sung by merry voices coming closer, and through their song the rolling of heavy wheels and the cracking of whips. The Szgany and the Slovaks of whom the Count had spoken were coming. With a last look around and at the box which contained the vile body, I ran from the place and gained the Count's room, determined to rush out at the moment the door should be opened. With strained ears, I listened, and heard downstairs the grinding of the key in the great lock and the falling back of the heavy door. There must have been some other means of entry, or some one had a key for one of the locked doors.

Then there came the sound of many feet tramping and dying away in some passage which sent up a clanging echo. I turned to run down again towards the vault, where I might find the new entrance, but at the moment there seemed to come a violent puff of wind, and the door to the winding stair blew to with a shock that set the dust from the lintels flying. When I ran to push it open, I found that it was hopelessly fast. I was again a prisoner, and the net of doom was closing round me more closely.

As I write there is in the passage below a sound of many tramping feet and the crash of weights being set down heavily, doubtless the boxes, with their freight of earth. There was a sound of hammering. It is the box being nailed down. Now I can hear the heavy feet tramping again along the hall, with many other idle feet coming behind them.

The door is shut, the chains rattle. There is a grinding of the key in the lock. I can hear the key withdrawn, then another door opens and shuts. I hear the creaking of lock and bolt.

Hark! In the courtyard and down the rocky way the roll of heavy wheels, the crack of whips, and the chorus of the Szgany as they pass into the distance.

I am alone in the castle with those horrible women. Faugh! Mina is a woman, and there is nought in common. They are devils of the Pit!

I shall not remain alone with them. I shall try to scale the castle wall farther than I have yet attempted. I shall take some of the gold with me, lest I want it later. I may find a way from this dreadful place.

And then away for home! Away to the quickest and nearest train! Away from the cursed spot, from this cursed land, where the devil and his children still walk with earthly feet!

At least God’s mercy is better than that of those monsters, and the precipice is steep and high. At its foot a man may sleep, as a man. Goodbye, all. Mina!
1. What of these selections is not one of the sensations of the narrator in this excerpt?
   A. levity  
   B. hesitation  
   C. terror  
   D. fear  
   E. trepidation

2. Which of the following best describes “satiate” line (5) as used in the excerpt?
   A. spur  
   B. spread  
   C. furnish  
   D. overindulge  
   E. create

3. The combination “blaze of basilisk horror” line (10) is an example of what device?
   A. anadiplosis  
   B. anaphora  
   C. alliteration  
   D. assonance  
   E. repetition

4. The quote, “The sight seemed to paralyze me,” line (10) seems to be necessary because
   A. it helps explain the definition of basilisk.  
   B. it explains why the shovel struck only a glancing blow.  
   C. it establishes a change of pace in the story slowing it down for effect.  
   D. it helps explain why, even though it would appear there was a perfect opportunity, he didn’t finish what he started.  
   E. it helps explain why as he drew the shovel away the flange of the blade caught the edge of the lid causing it to close.

5. What can we determine of the physical setting related in lines (18–26)?
   A. There is a passageway from the Count’s room, which is on the main floor, to a vault below where the boxes reside; an alternative entrance to the vault exists or the villagers have key access to it.  
   B. The Count’s room is on the second floor and the boxes are kept on the main floor in a vault where the villagers gain entry through a side door or have a key to the main door.  
   C. The vault is on the main floor and there is a passageway from the main floor to the Count’s room where the villagers gain entry with a key or alternative entrance.  
   D. The boxes are in the vault on the second floor and the Count’s room is on the first floor; the villagers gain access through an alternative route or door.  
   E. There is an entrance to the Count’s room through the passageway to where the boxes are stored on the second floor; the vault is on the first floor and the villagers gain access through a different entrance.

6. Which of the following best describes “lintels” line (25) as used in the excerpt?
   A. lamp shades  
   B. firebox supports  
   C. chandelier bobbles  
   D. door framing  
   E. curving banister

7. Which selection should the reader NOT infer in lines (30–31)?
   A. The villagers attendance was pre-planned.  
   B. The villagers had previously visited the castle.  
   C. The villagers were unaware of the narrator’s presence in the castle.  
   D. The entry used by the villagers was infrequently used.  
   E. The villagers recently frequented the castle.
8. Which of the selections provide the least support for the inference that the boxes the villagers removed were believed by them to have been filled with corpses?
   A. Line (28) refers to the boxes as “freight of earth.”
   B. Line (2) says “The coming night might see my own body a banquet in a similar way to those horrid three.”
   C. Lines (34–35) reads “I am alone in the castle with those horrible women. Faugh! Mina is a woman, and there is nought in common. They are devils of the Pit!”
   D. Lines (25–26) says “I was again a prisoner, and the net of doom was closing round me more closely.”
   E. Lines (38–39) state “Away from the cursed spot, from this cursed land, where the devil and his children still walk with earthly feet!”

9. Which device is best represented by “They are devils of the Pit” line (35)?
   A. alliteration
   B. allusion
   C. allegory
   D. assonance
   E. anaphora

10. Which word best describes the overall tone of the entire passage?
    A. frustrating
    B. eerie
    C. nerve racking
    D. foreboding
    E. anticipatory
Answers and Explanations for Skill Set Nine

1. The correct choice is A.
   
   Explanation: The narrator experiences all of these feelings during the passage except A, “levity,” making it the correct choice.

2. The correct choice is D.
   
   Explanation: All choices save for D have something to do with furthering the lust for blood so all of these might fit if that were the condition. Ironically, the only way for Dracula to pass his lust or craving for blood to others is to drink their blood himself. Since “overindulge” would only be possible by his drinking of blood, Choice D is correct.

3. The correct choice is C.
   
   Explanation: The repetition of the initial consonant sound like “blaze of basilisk” is alliteration, making Choice C correct.

4. The correct choice is D.
   
   Explanation: This is a tough question. All of the answer choices are correct, but only Choice D is the best choice. Choice A is correct because it does provide context clues for the definition of “basilisk,” which is a legendary reptile with a fatal glare and breath. Choices B, C, and E are all correct because someone with even partial paralysis would have difficulty performing mostly routine physical tasks. Choice D provides the best answer to the question as it relates to necessity. The necessity for the partial paralysis is that it is the only factor given to answer the unspoken question, “Why don’t you finish the job you started with the shovel?” If not for the paralysis, a flaw in the development of the plot is born.

5. The correct choice is A.
   
   Explanation: Dare I say that these are the times that try men’s souls? A question like this won’t appear often, thank goodness, but you may see one at some time to test your ability to remain active in your reading. If you follow the story, or go back and “follow the yellow brick road,” you will see that Choice A is correct.

6. The correct choice is D.
   
   Explanation: Upon close review, we see that the wind did not cause the dust to fly, but rather the door that blew to with a shock. So the door is actually what caused the flying dust. The closest thing to the door is obviously the door framing, which makes Choice D correct, and once again shows how context clues help determine the meaning of words.

7. The correct choice is E.
   
   Explanation: Choice A, “that the villagers attendance was pre-planned,” is correct as they had their own key. Choice B, “that the villagers had previously visited the castle,” is correct because without guidance they knew where to go and how to get there. Choice C, “that the villagers were unaware of the narrator’s presence in the castle,” as they didn’t look for him. Choice D, “that the entry used by the villagers was infrequently used,” is correct because of the grinding and creaking in the locks and bolt, evidencing limited use. Choice E, “that the villagers recently frequented the castle,” does not seem likely as they did not know of the narrator’s presence, and the locks creaked, making it the best choice.

8. The correct choice is D.
   
   Explanation: We’ll need to walk through these to see how they all provide better support than Choice D. Choice A, “freight of earth,” supports that the boxes were weighted with earth to replicate corpses so the villagers would not miss the three women who had become semi-demons. Choice B, “The coming night might see my own body a banquet in a similar way to those horrid three,” supports that the three women are in fact now semi-demons and as such couldn’t be in the boxes because semi-demons are children of the devil and still walk with earthly feet. Choice C, “I alone in the castle with those horrible women. Faugh! Mina is a woman, and there is nought in common. They are devils of the Pit!” supports again that the three women are still wandering about. Choice E, “Away from the cursed spot, from this cursed land, where the devil and his children still walk with earthly feet!”
support that the Count and the three women are in position to make the narrator’s body the banquet of the evening. Choice D, “I was again a prisoner, and the net of doom was closing round me more closely,” conveys a concern but does not provide as good support to the inference as the other choices, making it the best choice for this question.

9. The correct choice is B.


10. The correct choice is B.

Explanation: Certainly, it was frustrating, Choice A, when the narrator couldn’t get back in the passage. Certainly, it was nerve racking, Choice C, knowing that if things didn’t change, tonight would be his night. Certainly, it was foreboding to hear the villagers leaving without attracting their attention. And, certainly, it was anticipatory in that the narrator anticipated what would befall him at next nightfall. But, the overall tone, at every turn and during each of the previous examples, was “eerie,” Choice B.
Long Reading Comprehension Skill Set Ten

Note: Skill sets may contain more questions than the actual SAT to show the potential range of questioning.

The passages below are followed by questions based on their content; questions following a pair of related passages may also be based on the relationship between the paired passages. Answer the questions on the basis of what is stated or implied in the passages and in any introductory material that may be provided.

Questions 1–10 are based on the following passage.

The following is an excerpt from Oliver Twist by Charles Dickens.

Among other public buildings in a certain town, which for many reasons it will be prudent to refrain from mentioning, and to which I will assign no fictitious name, there is one anciently common to most towns, great or small: to wit, a workhouse; and in this workhouse was born; on a day and date which I need not trouble myself to repeat, inasmuch as it can be of no possible consequence to the reader, in this stage of the business at all events; the item of mortality whose name is prefixed to the head of this chapter.

For a long time after it was ushered into this world of sorrow and trouble, by the parish surgeon, it remained a matter of considerable doubt whether the child would survive to bear any name at all; in which case it is somewhat more than probable that these memoirs would never have appeared; or, if they had, that being comprised within a couple of pages, they would have possessed the inestimable merit of being the most concise and faithful specimen of biography, extant in the literature of any age or country.

Although I am not disposed to maintain that the being born in a workhouse, is in itself the most fortunate and enviable circumstance that can possibly befall a human being, I do mean to say that in this particular instance, it was the best thing for Oliver Twist that could by possibility have occurred. The fact is, that there was considerable difficulty in inducing Oliver to take upon himself the office of respiration, - a troublesome practice, but one which custom has rendered necessary to our easy existence; and for some time he lay gasping on a little flock mattress, rather unequally poised between this world and the next: the balance being decidedly in favour of the latter. Now, if, during this brief period, Oliver had been surrounded by careful grandmothers, anxious aunts, experienced nurses, and doctors of profound wisdom, he would most inevitably and indubitably have been killed in no time. There being nobody by, however, but a pauper old woman, who was rendered rather misty by an unwonted allowance of beer; and a parish surgeon who did such matters by contract; Oliver and Nature fought out the point between them. The result was, that, after a few struggles, Oliver breathed, sneezed, and proceeded to advertise to the inmates of the workhouse the fact of a new burden having been imposed upon the parish, by setting up as loud a cry as could reasonably have been expected from a male infant who had not been possessed of that very useful appendage, a voice, for a much longer space of time than three minutes and a quarter.

As Oliver gave this first proof of the free and proper action of his lungs, the patchwork coverlet which was carelessly flung over the iron bedstead, rustled; the pale face of a young woman was raised feebly from the pillow; and a faint voice imperfectly articulated the words, “Let me see the child, and die.”

The surgeon had been sitting with his face turned towards the fire: giving the palms of his hands a warm and a rub alternately. As the young woman spoke, he rose, and advancing to the bed’s head, said, with more kindness than might have been expected of him:

“Oh, you must not talk about dying yet.”

“Lor bless her dear heart, no!” interposed the nurse, hastily depositing in her pocket a green glass bottle, the contents of which she had been tasting in a corner with evident satisfaction.

“Lor bless her dear heart, when she has lived as long as I have, sir, and had thirteen children of her own, and all on ’em dead except two, and them in the wurkus with me, she’ll know better than to take on in that way, bless her dear heart! Think what it is to be a mother, there’s a dear young lamb do.”

Apparently this consolatory perspective of a mother’s prospects failed in producing its due effect. The patient shook her head, and stretched out her hand towards the child.

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Apparently this consolatory perspective of a mother’s prospects failed in producing its due effect. The patient shook her head, and stretched out her hand towards the child.

The surgeon deposited it in her arms. She imprinted her cold white lips passionately on its forehead; passed her hands over her face; gazed wildly round; shuddered; fell back - and died. They chafed her breast, hands, and temples; but the blood had stopped forever. They talked of hope and comfort. They had been strangers too long.

“It’s all over, Mrs. Thingummy!” said the surgeon at last.
"Ah, poor dear, so it is!" said the nurse, picking up the cork of the green bottle, which had fallen out on the pillow, as she stooped to take up the child. "Poor dear!"

You needn’t mind sending up to me, if the child cries, nurse," said the surgeon, putting on his gloves with great deliberation. "It’s very likely it WILL be troublesome. Give it a little gruel if it is." He put on his hat, and, pausing by the bed-side on his way to the door, added, "She was a good-looking girl, too; where did she come from?"

"She was brought here last night," replied the old woman, "by the overseer’s order. She was found lying in the street. She had walked some distance, for her shoes were worn to pieces; but where she came from, or where she was going to, nobody knows."

The surgeon leaned over the body, and raised the left hand. "The old story," he said, shaking his head: "no wedding-ring, I see. Ah! Good night!"

The medical gentleman walked away to dinner; and the nurse, having once more applied herself to the green bottle, sat down on a low chair before the fire, and proceeded to dress the infant.

What an excellent example of the power of dress, young Oliver Twist was! Wrapped in the blanket which had hitherto formed his only covering, he might have been the child of a nobleman or a beggar; it would have been hard for the haughtiest stranger to have assigned him his proper station in society. But now that he was enveloped in the old calico robes which had grown yellow in the same service, he was badge and ticketed, and fell into his place at once - a parish child - the orphan of a workhouse—he humble, half-starved drudge - to be cuffed and buffeted through the world—despised by all, and pitied by none.

Oliver cried lustily. If he could have known that he was an orphan, left to the tender mercies of church-wardens and overseers, perhaps he would have cried the louder.

1. The phrase “the item of mortality” line (4–5) is an example of
   A. anastrophe.
   B. synecdoche.
   C. hyperbole.
   D. metaphor.
   E. oxymoron.

2. The author is unwilling to give many details in the first paragraph because
   A. his sources are sketchy and incomplete information could harm the authenticity of the story.
   B. likely because the establishment that allowed the writer to observe conditioned that allowance on anonymity.
   C. a workhouse is not something representing community pride so the author is giving consideration.
   D. writers like to protect sources and he is protecting that privilege.
   E. orphanages records are protected so to protect all parties so little information could be given.

3. The overall purpose for the third paragraph can best be described
   A. to give the reader a first good look at the hardships facing someone born into a workhouse.
   B. to reinforce the difficulty Twist had coming into this world.
   C. to identify some of the main characters in the story.
   D. to introduce the coldness and callousness of the economy at that time.
   E. to inform the reader that in some respects, Twist is better off in the workhouse.

4. The fact that Twist, we are told, would have surely died at birth had he not been born in a place where literally only the strong survive, creates an example of
   A. an extended metaphor.
   B. an allegory.
   C. a situational irony.
   D. a foil.
   E. an altruism.
5. What season can the reader infer it is based upon the information given in the passage?
   A. early spring
   B. summer
   C. fall
   D. winter
   E. late spring

6. What was the author’s purpose in referring to Twist’s arrival as a “new burden” line (22)?
   A. to remind the reader that, like the nurse, an infant is not easy to care for
   B. to establish that all residents in the workhouse contribute to all duties which have now just increased
   C. to reinforce the harsh conditions in the workhouse and the declination of resources due to his arrival
   D. to qualify the notion that space in the workhouse is at a critical shortage
   E. to forward the idea that there are limited beds in the workhouse and there would be shortages

7. The phrase “imperfectly articulated” line (27) exemplifies
   A. assonance.
   B. synecdoche.
   C. parataxis.
   D. oxymoron.
   E. ellipses.

8. What of the following does not qualify as irony presented by the nurse’s speech to the new mother in paragraph 8 lines (34–36)?
   A. All the new mother wants to do is see her baby, and the nurse launches a soliloquy.
   B. The new mother is hanging onto life by a thread with the first child, and the nurse is encouraging her to hold on so she can experience this festive occasion multiples of times.
   C. The nurse, in trying to console her, likely makes her feel even more miserable in that all but two of the nurses children have died and a new mother likely does not wish to face that prospect.
   D. The workhouse overseer did accept her, even with child, into the workhouse.
   E. Understanding that the only hope you might have for your newborn is that you can spend life together, albeit in a workhouse living from hand-to-mouth daily in a cold, overcrowded, under-rationed facility should be the one piece of information to brighten any new mother.

9. Which of the following best describes what the inner voice of the surgeon likely was saying during his remarks in lines (51–52)?
   A. It’s another shame that the parish couldn’t have helped before now.
   B. What’s wrong with our society that men are not supporting women in this condition?
   C. Why doesn’t the parish open its doors to these women before it becomes a matter of life or death?
   D. She’s just another loose woman who got herself into trouble and deserved what she got.
   E. She’s probably addicted to drugs as well as being pregnant.

10. What does the author convey with “What an excellent example of the power of dress, young Oliver Twist was!” line (55)?
    A. His blanket was of excellent quality.
    B. In the beginning, in the very beginning, all are noble.
    C. Every newborn is dressed the same initially.
    D. All infants who are warm are happy with their clothing.
    E. Only older people are concerned with the clothes of infants.
Answers and Explanations for Skill Set Ten

1. The correct choice is **D**.
   
   *Explanation:* Choice D, “metaphor,” is correct as “the item of mortality” is a metaphor for the baby Twist.

2. The correct choice is **C**.
   
   *Explanation:* Based on the overall tone of the piece, one might understand that workhouses were not well-thought-of and sometimes represented the back or dark side of church orphanages. Choice C captures this position.

3. The correct choice is **A**.
   
   *Explanation:* Although all of the choices contribute to the overall development and understanding of the story line, Choice A best describes the totality of the purpose.

4. The correct choice is **C**.
   
   *Explanation:* Choice C, “situational irony,” is correct as the situation of his being born in a workhouse where there are no emergency or supplemental medical opportunities, a minimally hardly qualified staff to handle an emergency, and wherein the only ones who live are the ones that have the will and strength to fight and survive.

5. The correct choice is **D**.
   
   *Explanation:* Choice D, “winter,” is correct. Because the doctor warms and rubs his hands by the fire and the nurse dressed the infant by the fire indicating the coldness inside the workhouse derived likely from the winter season.

6. The correct choice is **C**.
   
   *Explanation:* As the parish who ran the workhouse relied upon donations and contributions for the continuation of their services, each new arrival (particularly a newborn who would not be able to work and contribute to the efforts for years to come), became a burden and an immediate drain on extraordinarily limited resources.

7. The correct choice is **D**.
   
   *Explanation:* Choice D, “oxymoron,” is correct as one cannot imperfectly articulate. They are incompatible as articulation is the effective delivery which is not imperfect, ergo; oxymoron.

8. The correct choice is **D**.
   
   *Explanation:* All other choices present either situational, dramatic, or verbal irony, making Choice D the one that does not.

9. The correct choice is **D**.
   
   *Explanation:* The fact that the surgeon thought to look at the finger for a ring and, seeing none, the body language (shaking his head), suggest his disdain with the situation makes Choice D the best selection.

10. The correct choice is **B**.

   *Explanation:* The author is effectively saying that at birth, all are noble creatures whether the son of a nobleman or a pauper. The distinction is thrust upon them by others, not their own merits. But, for that first moment, all experience greatness, making Choice B correct.