

# Paragraph Comprehension

## Subtest 4: Paragraph Comprehension

**Time:** 13 minutes for 15 questions

**Directions:** This test contains items that measure your ability to understand what you read. This section includes one or more paragraphs of reading material followed by incomplete statements or questions. Read the paragraph and select the choice that best completes the statement or answers the question. Mark your choice on your answer sheet, using the correct letter with each question number.

An important stage of personal time management is to take control of appointments. Determined by external obligation, appointments constitute interaction with other people and an agreed-on interface between your activities and those of others. Start with a simple appointment diary. List all appointments, including regular and recurring ones. Now, be ruthless and eliminate the unnecessary. There may be committees where you can't productively contribute or where a subordinate may be able to participate. Eliminate the waste of your time.

1. Effectively managing your appointments allows you to
  - (A) spend more time with your subordinates.
  - (B) delegate responsibility to subordinates.
  - (C) make more efficient use of your time.
  - (D) attend only the most important meetings.

The U.S. Congress consists of 100 senators and 435 representatives. Two senators are elected from each state. The number of representatives from each state is based on population, although each state has at least one representative. Senators serve six-year terms, and representatives serve two-year terms.

2. According to this passage,
  - (A) there are equal numbers of senators and representatives.
  - (B) the number of representatives from each state is decided by a lottery.
  - (C) it's possible for a state to have no representatives.
  - (D) senators and representatives have different term lengths.

Indo-European languages consist of those languages spoken by most of Europe and in those parts of the world that Europeans have colonized since the 16th century (such as the United States). Indo-European languages are also spoken in India, Iran, parts of western Afghanistan, and in some areas of Asia.

3. The author of this passage would agree that
  - (A) Indo-European languages are spoken in areas all over the world.
  - (B) Indo-European languages include all the languages spoken in the world.
  - (C) only Europeans speak Indo-European languages.
  - (D) Indo-European language speakers can easily understand one another.

In privatization, the government relies on the private sector to provide a service. However, the government divests itself of the entire process, including all assets. With privatized functions, the government may specify quality, quantity, and timeliness requirements, but it has no control over the operations of the activity. Also, the government may not be the only customer. Whoever the government chooses to provide the services would likely provide the same services to others.

4. This paragraph best supports the statement that
  - (A) the government must closely supervise privatized functions.
  - (B) privatized functions consist of a mixture of government employees, military personnel, and private contractors.
  - (C) privatized functions are those institutions that provide services only to a government agency.
  - (D) privatized functions provide essential services to the government.

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The success or failure of a conference lies largely with its leader. A leader's zest and enthusiasm must be real, apparent, and contagious. The leader is responsible for getting the ball rolling and making the attendees feel as if the meeting is theirs and its success depends on their participation. A good, thorough introduction helps establish the right climate.

5. A good title to this paragraph would be
- (A) "Lead by Example."
  - (B) "The Importance of Proper Introductions."
  - (C) "Leading a Successful Conference."
  - (D) "Conference Participation Basics."

Cloud seeding is accomplished by dropping particles of dry ice (solid carbon dioxide) from a plane onto super-cooled clouds. This process encourages condensation of water droplets in the clouds, which usually, but not always, results in rain or snow.

6. From this passage, it's reasonable to assume that
- (A) cloud seeding could be used to end a drought.
  - (B) cloud seeding is prohibitively expensive.
  - (C) cloud seeding is rarely used.
  - (D) cloud seeding can be accomplished by using regular ice.

To write or not to write — that is the question. If assigned a writing task, there's no option. However, if someone is looking for a specific answer, find out if they need a short answer or a detailed one. Can the requirement be met with a telephone call, e-mail, or short note, or is something more necessary? A former CEO of a major corporation once commented that he had looked at 13,000 pieces of paper in a 5-day period. Think how much easier and more economical it would be if people would use the telephone, send an e-mail, or write a short note.

7. The main point of this passage is that
- (A) written records are important because they provide detailed documentation.
  - (B) more businesspeople should invest time and energy improving their writing skills.
  - (C) writing may not be the best way to communicate information.
  - (D) it's pointless for businesspeople to spend time improving their writing skills.

The transistor, a small, solid-state device that can amplify sound, was invented in 1947. At first, it was too expensive and too difficult to produce to be used in cheap, mass-market products. By 1954, though, these cost and production problems had been overcome, and the first transistor radio was put on the market.

8. According to this passage,
- (A) there was no market for transistors before 1954.
  - (B) when transistors could be produced cheaply and easily, the transistor radio was put on the market.
  - (C) transistors were invented in 1947 by order of the Department of Defense.
  - (D) transistors are still expensive to produce.

I returned from the City about three o'clock on that May afternoon pretty well disgusted with life. I had been three months in the Old Country and was fed up with it. If people had told me a year ago that I would've been feeling like that I should've laughed at them; but there was the fact. The weather made me liverish, the talk of the ordinary Englishman made me sick, I couldn't get enough exercise, and the amusements of London seemed as flat as soda water that had been standing in the sun.

9. The author is speaking of his travels in
- (A) Spain.
  - (B) Great Britain.
  - (C) Germany.
  - (D) Scotland.

Surveys show that the average child under the age of 18 watches four hours of television per day. Although some of the programming may be educational, most isn't. Spending this much time watching television interferes with a child's ability to pursue other interests, such as reading, participating in sports, and playing with friends.

10. The author of this passage would agree that
- (A) television viewing should be restricted.
  - (B) parents who let their children watch this much television are neglectful.
  - (C) reading, participating in sports, playing with friends, and watching television should all be given equal time.
  - (D) adults over 18 can watch as much television as they want.

# Paragraph Comprehension

Questions 11 and 12 are based on the following passage.

High school and college graduates attempting to find jobs should participate in mock job interviews. These mock interviews help students prepare for the types of questions they'll be asked, make them more comfortable with common interview formats, and help them critique their performance before facing a real interviewer. Because they're such a valuable aid, schools should organize mock job interviews for all of their graduating students.

11. The above passage states that mock job interviews
  - (A) frighten students.
  - (B) should be offered to the best students.
  - (C) help prepare students for real job interviews.
  - (D) should be organized by students.
12. From the above passage, it is reasonable to assume that
  - (A) mock interviews can increase a student's confidence when he or she goes into a real job interview.
  - (B) mock interviews are expensive to organize.
  - (C) few students are interested in mock interviews.
  - (D) students don't need job interview preparation.

Questions 13 through 15 are based on the following passage.

*Due process*, the guarantee of fairness in the administration of justice, is part of the 5th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The 14th Amendment further requires states to abide by due process. After this amendment was enacted, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down many state laws that infringed on the civil rights guaranteed to citizens in the Bill of Rights.

13. According to the above passage, due process
  - (A) is an outdated concept.
  - (B) guarantees fairness in the justice system.
  - (C) never became part of the U.S. Constitution.
  - (D) is the process by which winning lottery tickets are selected.
14. According to the above passage, it's reasonable to assume that the 5th Amendment
  - (A) is about taxes.
  - (B) guarantees due process in all criminal and civil cases.
  - (C) guarantees due process in federal law.
  - (D) should never have become part of the Bill of Rights.
15. The author of the above passage would agree that
  - (A) without the passage of the 14th Amendment, many laws restricting civil rights would still exist in various states.
  - (B) the Supreme Court overstepped its jurisdiction when it struck down laws infringing on citizens' civil rights.
  - (C) the Supreme Court had every right to strike down state laws before the passage of the 14th Amendment.
  - (D) the 14th Amendment was opposed by all states.



# Paragraph Comprehension

## Answers

### *Subtest 4: Paragraph Comprehension Answers*

Like Word Knowledge, your Paragraph Comprehension score goes toward your AFQT score, so pay special attention if you've missed more than a couple of these answers — you need some study time (see Chapter 5). Remember that rereading the paragraph several times to make sure you have the right answer is perfectly fine. You can find additional practice questions in Chapter 6.

1. **C.** Effective appointment management eliminates the waste of your time, as the last sentence of the passage explains.
2. **D.** The passage gives the numbers of senators and representatives, so Choice (A) is incorrect. The passage states that each state's population determines the number of representatives a state has, so Choice (B) is incorrect. As the passage states, each state has at least one representative, so Choice (C) is incorrect.
3. **A.** Many languages are excluded from the Indo-European language group, so Choice (B) is incorrect. Indians, Iranians, Asians, and Afghans aren't Europeans, so Choice (C) is incorrect. The passage gives no evidence to support Choice (D), which isn't true.
4. **D.** Privatized functions operate independently of the government, making Choices (A) and (B) incorrect. The passage states that privatized functions may sell goods and services to other customers as well as the government, so Choice (C) is also incorrect. Choice (D) is the correct answer, because privatized functions do perform essential services to government agencies.
5. **C.** Choice (A) — “Lead by Example” — is a good philosophy but isn't pertinent to the main point of the passage. Choices (B) and (D) are subpoints, which support the main point of the passage, which is how to lead a successful conference (C).
6. **A.** You can assume that causing rain or snow would end a drought, Choice (A). Nothing in the passage has to do with expense, so Choice (B) is incorrect. The passage says nothing about how frequently the process is used, so Choice (C) is incorrect. The passage specifies that dry ice (solid carbon dioxide) is used; regular ice (solid water) is a different substance, so Choice (D) is wrong.
7. **C.** Choices (A) and (B) may be true in certain situations, but they're not the point of this particular paragraph. The passage doesn't say anything about working to improve writing skills being a waste of time, so Choice (D) is incorrect. The main point of the paragraph is that writing may not be the most efficient way of communicating, depending on the situation.
8. **B.** Products with transistors weren't widely sold before 1954 because of the expense and difficulty of production, not because markets didn't exist, so Choice (A) is incorrect. Choice (C) has the right date, but the passage doesn't say who invented the transistor, so it's wrong as well. Choice (D) is wrong because the passage states that the problem of transistors' being expensive to produce was solved by 1954. The last sentence notes that the first transistor radio went on the market after cost and production problems were overcome, so (B) is the right answer.

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9. **B.** The words *London* and *Englishman* make it clear that the author is speaking of his travels in England, which is part of Great Britain.
10. **A.** The author makes no reference to parents in the passage, so Choice (B) is incorrect. The author doesn't imply anything about all these interests requiring equal time, so Choice (C) is incorrect. The passage is about children under 18; you can't draw a conclusion about what the author thinks people over 18 should do, so Choice (D) is incorrect.
11. **C.** The passage doesn't say anything about mock job interviews being frightening, so Choice (A) is wrong. The passage says that mock job interviews should be available to all students, so Choice (B) is wrong. The passage says that schools, not students, should organize mock interviews, so Choice (D) is incorrect.
12. **A.** Choices (B), (C), and (D) are the opposite of what the paragraph states and implies.
13. **B.** Nothing in the paragraph supports Choice (A), which is incorrect. When an amendment is passed, it becomes part of the Constitution, so Choice (C) is incorrect. The passage doesn't support Choice (D), because the passage doesn't mention anything related to lottery tickets. The passage defines *due process* as "the guarantee of fairness in the administration of justice," so (B) is correct.
14. **C.** Because the 14th Amendment guarantees due process in states' laws, the 5th Amendment must guarantee due process only in federal law, which makes Choice (C) right. Nothing in the passage implies that the 5th Amendment is about taxes, so Choice (A) is wrong. Because the passage states that the 14th Amendment had to be enacted to require states to abide by due process, Choice (B) is incorrect. Choice (D) is neither stated nor implied in the passage.
15. **A.** Because the Supreme Court struck down many state laws after the 14th Amendment was enacted, it's probably true that these laws would still exist if there'd been no 14th Amendment. The passage doesn't support Choices (B), (C), or (D).