

Reading Test

65 MINUTES, 52 QUESTIONS

Turn to Section 1 of your answer sheet to answer the questions in this section.

DIRECTIONS

Each passage or pair of passages below is followed by a number of questions. After reading each passage or pair, choose the best answer to each question based on what is stated or implied in the passage or passages and in any accompanying graphics (such as a table or graph).

Questions 1-10 are based on the following passage.

This passage is adapted from MacDonald Harris, *The Balloonist*. ©2011 by The Estate of Donald Heiney. During the summer of 1897, the narrator of this story, a fictional Swedish scientist, has set out for the North Pole in a hydrogen-powered balloon.

My emotions are complicated and not readily verifiable. I feel a vast yearning that is simultaneously a pleasure and a pain. I am certain
Line of the consummation of this yearning, but I don't
5 know yet what form it will take, since I do not understand quite what it is that the yearning desires. For the first time there is borne in upon me the full truth of what I myself said to the doctor only an hour ago: that my motives in this undertaking are not
10 entirely clear. For years, for a lifetime, the machinery of my destiny has worked in secret to prepare for this moment; its clockwork has moved exactly toward this time and place and no other. Rising slowly from the earth that bore me and gave me sustenance, I am
15 carried helplessly toward an uninhabited and hostile, or at best indifferent, part of the earth, littered with the bones of explorers and the wrecks of ships, frozen supply caches, messages scrawled with chilled fingers and hidden in cairns that no eye will ever see.
20 Nobody has succeeded in this thing, and many have died. Yet in freely willing this enterprise, in choosing this moment and no other when the south wind will carry me exactly northward at a velocity of eight knots, I have converted the machinery of my

25 fate into the servant of my will. All this I understand, as I understand each detail of the technique by which this is carried out. What I don't understand is why I am so intent on going to this particular place. Who wants the North Pole! What good is it! Can you eat
30 it? Will it carry you from Gothenburg to Malmö like a railway? The Danish ministers have declared from their pulpits that participation in polar expeditions is beneficial to the soul's eternal well-being, or so I read in a newspaper. It isn't clear how this doctrine is to
35 be interpreted, except that the Pole is something difficult or impossible to attain which must nevertheless be sought for, because man is condemned to seek out and know everything whether or not the knowledge gives him pleasure. In
40 short, it is the same unthinking lust for knowledge that drove our First Parents out of the garden.

And suppose you were to find it in spite of all, this wonderful place that everybody is so anxious to stand on! What would you find? Exactly nothing.
45 A point precisely identical to all the others in a completely featureless wasteland stretching around it for hundreds of miles. It is an abstraction, a mathematical fiction. No one but a Swedish madman could take the slightest interest in it. Here I am. The
50 wind is still from the south, bearing us steadily northward at the speed of a trotting dog. Behind us, perhaps forever, lie the Cities of Men with their

teacups and their brass bedsteads. I am going forth of my own volition to join the ghosts of Bering and poor Franklin, of frozen De Long and his men. What I am on the brink of knowing, I now see, is not an ephemeral mathematical spot but myself. The doctor was right, even though I dislike him. Fundamentally I am a dangerous madman, and what I do is both a challenge to my egotism and a surrender to it.

1

Over the course of the passage, the narrator's attitude shifts from

- A) fear about the expedition to excitement about it.
- B) doubt about his abilities to confidence in them.
- C) uncertainty of his motives to recognition of them.
- D) disdain for the North Pole to appreciation of it.

2

Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?

- A) Lines 10-12 ("For . . . moment")
- B) Lines 21-25 ("Yet . . . will")
- C) Lines 42-44 ("And . . . stand on")
- D) Lines 56-57 ("What . . . myself")

3

As used in lines 1-2, "not readily verifiable" most nearly means

- A) unable to be authenticated.
- B) likely to be contradicted.
- C) without empirical support.
- D) not completely understood.

4

The sentence in lines 10-13 ("For years . . . other") mainly serves to

- A) expose a side of the narrator that he prefers to keep hidden.
- B) demonstrate that the narrator thinks in a methodical and scientific manner.
- C) show that the narrator feels himself to be influenced by powerful and independent forces.
- D) emphasize the length of time during which the narrator has prepared for his expedition.

5

The narrator indicates that many previous explorers seeking the North Pole have

- A) perished in the attempt.
- B) made surprising discoveries.
- C) failed to determine its exact location.
- D) had different motivations than his own.

6

Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?

- A) Lines 20-21 ("Nobody . . . died")
- B) Lines 25-27 ("All . . . out")
- C) Lines 31-34 ("The . . . newspaper")
- D) Lines 51-53 ("Behind . . . bedsteads")

7

Which choice best describes the narrator's view of his expedition to the North Pole?

- A) Immoral but inevitable
- B) Absurd but necessary
- C) Socially beneficial but misunderstood
- D) Scientifically important but hazardous

8

The question the narrator asks in lines 30-31 (“Will it . . . railway”) most nearly implies that

- A) balloons will never replace other modes of transportation.
- B) the North Pole is farther away than the cities usually reached by train.
- C) people often travel from one city to another without considering the implications.
- D) reaching the North Pole has no foreseeable benefit to humanity.

9

As used in line 49, “take the slightest interest in” most nearly means

- A) accept responsibility for.
- B) possess little regard for.
- C) pay no attention to.
- D) have curiosity about.

10

As used in line 50, “bearing” most nearly means

- A) carrying.
- B) affecting.
- C) yielding.
- D) enduring.

Questions 11-21 are based on the following passage and supplementary material.

This passage is adapted from Alan Ehrenhalt, *The Great Inversion and the Future of the American City*. ©2013 by Vintage. Ehrenhalt is an urbanologist—a scholar of cities and their development. Demographic inversion is a phenomenon that describes the rearrangement of living patterns throughout a metropolitan area.

We are not witnessing the abandonment of the suburbs, or a movement of millions of people back to the city all at once. The 2010 census certainly did not
 Line turn up evidence of a middle-class stampede to the
 5 nation’s cities. The news was mixed: Some of the larger cities on the East Coast tended to gain population, albeit in small increments. Those in the Midwest, including Chicago, tended to lose substantial numbers. The cities that showed gains in
 10 overall population during the entire decade tended to be in the South and Southwest. But when it comes to measuring demographic inversion, raw census numbers are an ineffective blunt instrument. A closer look at the results shows that the most powerful
 15 demographic events of the past decade were the movement of African Americans out of central cities (180,000 of them in Chicago alone) and the settlement of immigrant groups in suburbs, often ones many miles distant from downtown.
 20 Central-city areas that gained affluent residents in the first part of the decade maintained that population in the recession years from 2007 to 2009. They also, according to a 2011 study by Brookings, suffered considerably less from increased
 25 unemployment than the suburbs did. Not many young professionals moved to new downtown condos in the recession years because few such residences were being built. But there is no reason to believe that the demographic trends prevailing prior
 30 to the construction bust will not resume once that bust is over. It is important to remember that demographic inversion is not a proxy for population growth; it can occur in cities that are growing, those whose numbers are flat, and even in those
 35 undergoing a modest decline in size.

America’s major cities face enormous fiscal problems, many of them the result of public pension obligations they incurred in the more prosperous years of the past two decades. Some, Chicago