

Reading: Question 1

Questions 1-9 are based on the following passage.

This passage is adapted from Zia Haider Rahman, *In the Light of What We Know*. ©2014 by Zia Haider Rahman. The narrator, a Bangladeshi immigrant in London, has been describing a job he had as a teenager, working as an assistant to carpenters.

I warmed to Bill and Dave quickly. I remember that both of them always said “thanks” or “cheers, mate,” even to each other. Such words did not seem to figure in the vocabulary of Sylheti, a language in which, rather than saying thank you, one balanced the whole sentence on terms of deference to age or class. This had the effect, I had noticed, that those who were senior in age or higher in class weren’t required by the language to indicate deference and were therefore saved from stooping for the tools to express gratitude.

My mother had always winced when I said please and thank you. Thank you, I’d say when she gave me a second helping of rice and curry. Or thank you when she handed me a lightbulb as I stood on a chair to change the ceiling light. Thank you was an English phrase that ruptured my spoken Sylheti. My mother would grimace and insist that I stop saying it. Because we never had that kind of relationship, I could never ask her why. I have thought that she couldn’t bear to hear me say thank you because it signified how far away I’d moved from the culture and values she had inherited, even then. But over the years that have passed since boyhood, I have come to regard such explanations, where mere cultural difference is invoked at every turn, as facile and unilluminating. I now consider her distaste as having had a quality of depth I had not attributed to it before. I think the woman who had raised me, who had provided a family for me, however flawed that family was, was offended that I had turned the web of duties, which bound a family together, into the mere exchange of favors, thank you and please standing for reciprocation. In her mind, I believe, a network of duty and service, tightened under centuries of evolution, had been reduced by my thank you to the trading culture of the West. It was duty and obligation, not measured gains, that reinforced the bonds within the extended family to make something stronger than there would have been otherwise, strong enough and large enough to endure hardships. My understanding came much later,

though. But in the summer before college, when I heard Bill and Dave say please and thank you, occasioned at every turn and gesture, I was charmed.

Above all, I liked Bill and Dave because of the banter between them. The two of them talked incessantly about the work in a language that was new to me. A carpenter's world is steeped in a vocabulary of its own, and Bill and Dave were masters of that vocabulary. It was never just a hammer but a cross pein pin hammer, never just a plane but a rebate plane, never a mere clamp but a three-way edging clamp or a G or an F clamp. Each tool had a specific function, and Bill and Dave would never make do with one tool where another was better suited to the job. I fetched the tools as need arose, and very quickly I came to know each tool's name and function.

By the way, Bill said, you may think knowing the names of tools and hardware is about identifying them, but if that's all you think then you'd be wrong. You see, calling things by their proper names is the beginning of wisdom. That's a Chinese proverb and they invented writing. The wisdom, in case you're wondering, is that when you get names right, you narrow the gap between you and the thing. The most important tool is your hand and you'd be in serious trouble if there were a gap between you and your hand. So names are important. Unless you're talking about roses, that is. But only roses.

Over the course of the passage, the focus of the narrator shifts from

- A. reflecting on certain interactions with his mother to describing an insight he gained at work.
- B. introducing individuals who influenced his childhood to examining why those individuals had such an impact.
- C. determining the source of his mother's discontent to comparing his mother with other people.
- D. describing a time in which he sought direction to explaining how a particular profession helped him find that direction.

Choice A is the best answer. In the first and second paragraphs of the passage, the narrator describes his family's native Sylheti language and recalls interactions with his Bangladeshi mother that highlight her distaste at his use of the English phrase "thank you" when speaking Sylheti. In the third and fourth paragraphs, the narrator focuses on how working with Bill and

Dave taught him the importance of “calling things by their proper names.” Therefore, over the course of the passage, the narrator’s focus shifts from reflecting on certain interactions with his mother to describing an insight he gained at work.

Choice B is incorrect because, taken as a whole, the first and second paragraphs don’t serve to introduce individuals who influenced the narrator’s childhood. Choice C is incorrect because in the third and fourth paragraphs, the narrator’s focus shifts to describing an insight he gained at work, not comparing his mother with other people. Choice D is incorrect because the narrator doesn’t describe a time in which he sought direction, nor does he explain how a particular profession helped him find that direction.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Reading: Question 2

Questions 1-9 are based on the following passage.

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I warmed to Bill and Dave quickly. I remember that both of them always said “thanks” or “cheers, mate,” even to each other. Such words did not seem to figure in the vocabulary of Sylheti, a language in which, rather than saying thank you, one balanced the whole sentence on terms of deference to age or class. This had the effect, I had noticed, that those who were senior in age or higher in class weren’t required by the language to indicate deference and were therefore saved from stooping for the tools to express gratitude.

My mother had always winced when I said please and thank you. Thank you, I’d say when she gave me a second helping of rice and curry. Or thank you when she handed me a lightbulb as I stood on a chair to change the ceiling light. Thank you was an English phrase that ruptured my spoken Sylheti. My mother would grimace and insist that I stop saying it. Because we never had that kind of relationship, I could never ask her why. I have thought that she couldn’t bear to hear me say thank you because it signified how far away I’d moved from the culture and values she had inherited, even then. But over the years that have passed since boyhood, I have come to regard such explanations, where mere cultural difference is invoked at every turn, as facile and unilluminating. I now consider her distaste as having had a quality of depth I had not attributed to it before. I think the woman who had raised me, who had provided a family for me, however flawed that family was, was offended that I had turned the web of duties, which bound a family together, into the mere exchange of favors, thank you and please standing for reciprocation. In her mind, I believe, a network of duty and service, tightened under centuries of evolution, had been reduced by my thank you to the trading culture of the West. It was duty and obligation, not measured gains, that reinforced the bonds within the extended family to make something stronger than there would have been otherwise, strong enough and large enough to endure hardships. My understanding came much later,

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Above all, I liked Bill and Dave because of the banter between them. The two of them talked incessantly about the work in a language that was new to me. A carpenter's world is steeped in a vocabulary of its own, and Bill and Dave were masters of that vocabulary. It was never just a hammer but a cross pein pin hammer, never just a plane but a rebate plane, never a mere clamp but a three-way edging clamp or a G or an F clamp. Each tool had a specific function, and Bill and Dave would never make do with one tool where another was better suited to the job. I fetched the tools as need arose, and very quickly I came to know each tool's name and function.

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In the context of the passage, the use of the word "ruptured" (line:VH368888_5) serves mainly to

- A. foreshadow the permanent breach that will occur between the narrator and his country of birth.
- B. indicate the difficulty that the narrator has communicating in his native language.
- C. highlight the state of distrust that has developed between the narrator and his family.
- D. emphasize the extent to which the narrator's adoption of Western ways is incompatible with the culture he grew up in.

Choice D is the best answer. According to the first paragraph, Sylheti speakers convey social deference through sentence structure and physical gestures, while phrases like "thank you" aren't common. In the second paragraph, the narrator observes, "Thank you was an English phrase that ruptured my spoken Sylheti." To the narrator's mother, such phrases "turned the web of duties, which bound a family together, into the mere exchange of favors." Hence, the word "ruptured," as used in the second paragraph, serves mainly to emphasize the extent to which the narrator's adoption of Western ways is incompatible with the culture he grew up in.

Choice A is incorrect because the word “ruptured” emphasizes an incompatibility the mother perceives between Western customs and her own culture; it doesn’t foreshadow a permanent breach that will occur between the narrator and his country of birth. Choice B is incorrect because the passage implies that the narrator speaks Sylheti with ease. Choice C is incorrect because the narrator describes his mother’s distaste, not distrust, when his Sylheti is “ruptured” by English phrases.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Reading: Question 3

Questions 1-9 are based on the following passage.

This passage is adapted from Zia Haider Rahman, *In the Light of What We Know*. ©2014 by Zia Haider Rahman. The narrator, a Bangladeshi immigrant in London, has been describing a job he had as a teenager, working as an assistant to carpenters.

I warmed to Bill and Dave quickly. I remember that both of them always said “thanks” or “cheers, mate,” even to each other. Such words did not seem to figure in the vocabulary of Sylheti, a language in which, rather than saying thank you, one balanced the whole sentence on terms of deference to age or class. This had the effect, I had noticed, that those who were senior in age or higher in class weren’t required by the language to indicate deference and were therefore saved from stooping for the tools to express gratitude.

My mother had always winced when I said please and thank you. Thank you, I’d say when she gave me a second helping of rice and curry. Or thank you when she handed me a lightbulb as I stood on a chair to change the ceiling light. Thank you was an English phrase that ruptured my spoken Sylheti. My mother would grimace and insist that I stop saying it. Because we never had that kind of relationship, I could never ask her why. I have thought that she couldn’t bear to hear me say thank you because it signified how far away I’d moved from the culture and values she had inherited, even then. But over the years that have passed since boyhood, I have come to regard such explanations, where mere cultural difference is invoked at every turn, as facile and unilluminating. I now consider her distaste as having had a quality of depth I had not attributed to it before. I think the woman who had raised me, who had provided a family for me, however flawed that family was, was offended that I had turned the web of duties, which bound a family together, into the mere exchange of favors, thank you and please standing for reciprocation. In her mind, I believe, a network of duty and service, tightened under centuries of evolution, had been reduced by my thank you to the trading culture of the West. It was duty and obligation, not measured gains, that reinforced the bonds within the extended family to make something stronger than there would have been otherwise, strong enough and large enough to endure hardships. My understanding came much later,

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The passage suggests that working with Bill and Dave had which effect on the narrator?

- A. It caused him to view his mother's habits as quaint and unsophisticated.
- B. It led him eventually to appreciate the complexity of familial relationships in his native culture.
- C. It demonstrated how thoughtless he had always been toward his mother.
- D. It helped him to feel more confident about his language skills in unfamiliar settings.

Choice B is the best answer. In the first paragraph, the narrator contrasts Bill and Dave's casual expressions of gratitude ("thanks . . . cheers, mate,") with the careful deference shown to one's elders and superiors in his native culture; furthermore, the passage implies that the narrator's affinity for Bill and Dave inspired his use of English phrases at home, which his mother found distasteful. "In her mind," the narrator concludes in the second paragraph, "a network of duty and service, tightened under centuries of evolution, had been reduced by my thank you to the trading culture of the West." Hence, the passage suggests that working with Bill and Dave led the narrator eventually to appreciate the complexity of familial relationships in his native culture.

Choice A is incorrect because the passage doesn't suggest that working with Bill and Dave led the narrator to view his mother's habits as quaint and unsophisticated. Choice C is incorrect

because the narrator indicates that he hadn't fully understood his mother's reaction to his use of "thank you," not that he had acted thoughtlessly toward her. Choice D is incorrect because the passage suggests that working with Bill and Dave led the narrator to better appreciate his native culture, not to feel more confident in his language skills.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Reading: Question 4

Questions 1-9 are based on the following passage.

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I warmed to Bill and Dave quickly. I remember that both of them always said “thanks” or “cheers, mate,” even to each other. Such words did not seem to figure in the vocabulary of Sylheti, a language in which, rather than saying thank you, one balanced the whole sentence on terms of deference to age or class. This had the effect, I had noticed, that those who were senior in age or higher in class weren’t required by the language to indicate deference and were therefore saved from stooping for the tools to express gratitude.

My mother had always winced when I said please and thank you. Thank you, I’d say when she gave me a second helping of rice and curry. Or thank you when she handed me a lightbulb as I stood on a chair to change the ceiling light. Thank you was an English phrase that ruptured my spoken Sylheti. My mother would grimace and insist that I stop saying it. Because we never had that kind of relationship, I could never ask her why. I have thought that she couldn’t bear to hear me say thank you because it signified how far away I’d moved from the culture and values she had inherited, even then. But over the years that have passed since boyhood, I have come to regard such explanations, where mere cultural difference is invoked at every turn, as facile and unilluminating. I now consider her distaste as having had a quality of depth I had not attributed to it before. I think the woman who had raised me, who had provided a family for me, however flawed that family was, was offended that I had turned the web of duties, which bound a family together, into the mere exchange of favors, thank you and please standing for reciprocation. In her mind, I believe, a network of duty and service, tightened under centuries of evolution, had been reduced by my thank you to the trading culture of the West. It was duty and obligation, not measured gains, that reinforced the bonds within the extended family to make something stronger than there would have been otherwise, strong enough and large enough to endure hardships. My understanding came much later,

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

- A. {line:VH368888_7} (“Such . . . gratitude”)
- B. {line:VH368888_8} (“In her . . . hardships”)
- C. {line:VH368888_9} (“But in . . . charmed”)
- D. {line:VH368888_10} (“A carpenter’s . . . vocabulary”)

Choice B is the best answer. The previous question asks what effect working with Bill and Dave had on the narrator, according to the passage. The answer, that it led the narrator to appreciate the complexity of familial relationships in his native culture, is best supported in the second paragraph when he imagines his mother's thoughts: “In her mind, I believe, a network of duty and service, tightened under centuries of evolution, had been reduced by my thank you to the trading culture of the West. It was duty and obligation, not measured gains, that reinforced the bonds within the extended family to make something stronger than there would have been otherwise, strong enough and large enough to endure hardships.”

Choices A, C, and D are incorrect because the cited lines don't provide the best evidence for the answer to the previous question. Instead, they explain that rather than saying “thank you” in Sylheti, speakers convey social deference through sentence structure and gestures (choice A), describe the narrator's pleasure at hearing Bill and Dave say “please” and “thank you” (choice C),

and conclude that Bill and Dave were masters of their specialized carpentry vocabulary (choice D).

Question Difficulty: Hard

Reading: Question 5

Questions 1-9 are based on the following passage.

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I warmed to Bill and Dave quickly. I remember that both of them always said “thanks” or “cheers, mate,” even to each other. Such words did not seem to figure in the vocabulary of Sylheti, a language in which, rather than saying thank you, one balanced the whole sentence on terms of deference to age or class. This had the effect, I had noticed, that those who were senior in age or higher in class weren’t required by the language to indicate deference and were therefore saved from stooping for the tools to express gratitude.

My mother had always winced when I said please and thank you. Thank you, I’d say when she gave me a second helping of rice and curry. Or thank you when she handed me a lightbulb as I stood on a chair to change the ceiling light. Thank you was an English phrase that ruptured my spoken Sylheti. My mother would grimace and insist that I stop saying it. Because we never had that kind of relationship, I could never ask her why. I have thought that she couldn’t bear to hear me say thank you because it signified how far away I’d moved from the culture and values she had inherited, even then. But over the years that have passed since boyhood, I have come to regard such explanations, where mere cultural difference is invoked at every turn, as facile and unilluminating. I now consider her distaste as having had a quality of depth I had not attributed to it before. I think the woman who had raised me, who had provided a family for me, however flawed that family was, was offended that I had turned the web of duties, which bound a family together, into the mere exchange of favors, thank you and please standing for reciprocation. In her mind, I believe, a network of duty and service, tightened under centuries of evolution, had been reduced by my thank you to the trading culture of the West. It was duty and obligation, not measured gains, that reinforced the bonds within the extended family to make something stronger than there would have been otherwise, strong enough and large enough to endure hardships. My understanding came much later,

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As used in {line:VH368888_12}, "reduced" most nearly means

- A. converted.
- B. conquered.
- C. subjugated.
- D. degraded.

Choice D is the best answer. In the second paragraph, the narrator says, "In her mind . . . a network of duty and service . . . had been reduced by my thank you to the trading culture of the West." The narrator's mother felt that his use of the phrase "thank you" degraded, or diminished, his spoken Sylheti. Therefore, in the context of the sentence, the word "reduced" most nearly means degraded.

Choices A, B, and C are incorrect because in the context of the sentence, "reduced" means degraded, not converted (choice A), conquered (choice B), or subjugated (choice C).

Question Difficulty: Medium

Reading: Question 6

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The passage suggests that the narrator most enjoyed which aspect of carpentry?

- A. The opportunity to practice his spoken English
- B. The experience of learning new jargon
- C. The chance to impress others with his knowledge
- D. The physicality of working with his hands

Choice B is the best answer. In the third paragraph, the narrator states, "Above all, I liked Bill and Dave because of the banter between them. The two of them talked incessantly about the work in a language that was new to me." The passage indicates that the narrator learns about carpentry from Bill and Dave, and this paragraph details how their "language" is composed of precise professional terms. Thus, the passage suggests that the aspect of carpentry the narrator most enjoyed was the experience of learning new jargon.

Choices A, C, and D are incorrect because the passage doesn't suggest that the narrator most enjoyed the opportunity to practice his spoken English (choice A), the chance to impress others with his knowledge (choice C), or the physicality of working with his hands (choice D).

Question Difficulty: Medium

Reading: Question 7

Questions 1-9 are based on the following passage.

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I warmed to Bill and Dave quickly. I remember that both of them always said “thanks” or “cheers, mate,” even to each other. Such words did not seem to figure in the vocabulary of Sylheti, a language in which, rather than saying thank you, one balanced the whole sentence on terms of deference to age or class. This had the effect, I had noticed, that those who were senior in age or higher in class weren’t required by the language to indicate deference and were therefore saved from stooping for the tools to express gratitude.

My mother had always winced when I said please and thank you. Thank you, I’d say when she gave me a second helping of rice and curry. Or thank you when she handed me a lightbulb as I stood on a chair to change the ceiling light. Thank you was an English phrase that ruptured my spoken Sylheti. My mother would grimace and insist that I stop saying it. Because we never had that kind of relationship, I could never ask her why. I have thought that she couldn’t bear to hear me say thank you because it signified how far away I’d moved from the culture and values she had inherited, even then. But over the years that have passed since boyhood, I have come to regard such explanations, where mere cultural difference is invoked at every turn, as facile and unilluminating. I now consider her distaste as having had a quality of depth I had not attributed to it before. I think the woman who had raised me, who had provided a family for me, however flawed that family was, was offended that I had turned the web of duties, which bound a family together, into the mere exchange of favors, thank you and please standing for reciprocation. In her mind, I believe, a network of duty and service, tightened under centuries of evolution, had been reduced by my thank you to the trading culture of the West. It was duty and obligation, not measured gains, that reinforced the bonds within the extended family to make something stronger than there would have been otherwise, strong enough and large enough to endure hardships. My understanding came much later,

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

- A. {line:VH368888_13} ("Above . . . me")
- B. {line:VH368888_14} ("It was . . . F clamp")
- C. {line:VH368888_15} ("Each . . . job")
- D. {line:VH368888_16} ("The most . . . hand")

Choice A is the best answer. The previous question asks which aspect of carpentry the narrator most enjoyed. The answer, that the narrator most enjoyed learning new jargon, is best supported in the third paragraph: "Above all, I liked Bill and Dave because of the banter between them. The two of them talked incessantly about the work in a language that was new to me."

Choices B, C, and D are incorrect because the cited lines don't provide the best evidence for the answer to the previous question. Instead, they emphasize the precision of Bill and Dave's professional vocabulary (choice B), describe the men's insistence on using the most appropriate tool for a job (choice C), and illustrate Bill's view on the importance of always calling things by their proper names (choice D).

Question Difficulty: Hard

Reading: Question 8

Questions 1-9 are based on the following passage.

This passage is adapted from Zia Haider Rahman, *In the Light of What We Know*. ©2014 by Zia Haider Rahman. The narrator, a Bangladeshi immigrant in London, has been describing a job he had as a teenager, working as an assistant to carpenters.

I warmed to Bill and Dave quickly. I remember that both of them always said “thanks” or “cheers, mate,” even to each other. Such words did not seem to figure in the vocabulary of Sylheti, a language in which, rather than saying thank you, one balanced the whole sentence on terms of deference to age or class. This had the effect, I had noticed, that those who were senior in age or higher in class weren’t required by the language to indicate deference and were therefore saved from stooping for the tools to express gratitude.

My mother had always winced when I said please and thank you. Thank you, I’d say when she gave me a second helping of rice and curry. Or thank you when she handed me a lightbulb as I stood on a chair to change the ceiling light. Thank you was an English phrase that ruptured my spoken Sylheti. My mother would grimace and insist that I stop saying it. Because we never had that kind of relationship, I could never ask her why. I have thought that she couldn’t bear to hear me say thank you because it signified how far away I’d moved from the culture and values she had inherited, even then. But over the years that have passed since boyhood, I have come to regard such explanations, where mere cultural difference is invoked at every turn, as facile and unilluminating. I now consider her distaste as having had a quality of depth I had not attributed to it before. I think the woman who had raised me, who had provided a family for me, however flawed that family was, was offended that I had turned the web of duties, which bound a family together, into the mere exchange of favors, thank you and please standing for reciprocation. In her mind, I believe, a network of duty and service, tightened under centuries of evolution, had been reduced by my thank you to the trading culture of the West. It was duty and obligation, not measured gains, that reinforced the bonds within the extended family to make something stronger than there would have been otherwise, strong enough and large enough to endure hardships. My understanding came much later,

though. But in the summer before college, when I heard Bill and Dave say please and thank you, occasioned at every turn and gesture, I was charmed.

Above all, I liked Bill and Dave because of the banter between them. The two of them talked incessantly about the work in a language that was new to me. A carpenter's world is steeped in a vocabulary of its own, and Bill and Dave were masters of that vocabulary. It was never just a hammer but a cross pein pin hammer, never just a plane but a rebate plane, never a mere clamp but a three-way edging clamp or a G or an F clamp. Each tool had a specific function, and Bill and Dave would never make do with one tool where another was better suited to the job. I fetched the tools as need arose, and very quickly I came to know each tool's name and function.

By the way, Bill said, you may think knowing the names of tools and hardware is about identifying them, but if that's all you think then you'd be wrong. You see, calling things by their proper names is the beginning of wisdom. That's a Chinese proverb and they invented writing. The wisdom, in case you're wondering, is that when you get names right, you narrow the gap between you and the thing. The most important tool is your hand and you'd be in serious trouble if there were a gap between you and your hand. So names are important. Unless you're talking about roses, that is. But only roses.

The last paragraph serves primarily to

- A. introduce a way of thinking that opposes the point of view of the narrator's mother.
- B. question the fundamental relationship between names and the things they designate.
- C. allow insight into the narrator's way of thinking.
- D. provide a further reflection on the deeper significance of language.

Choice D is the best answer. The last paragraph includes a monologue by Bill on the importance of "calling things by their proper names." According to Bill, using precise vocabulary offers more than just practical benefits; it also allows a person to "narrow the gap" between the speaker and the object. Hence, the last paragraph serves primarily to provide a further reflection on the deeper significance of language.

Choice A is incorrect. In the first paragraph, the narrator introduces a contrast between Bill and Dave's use of language and his mother's; however, Bill's philosophical musings in the last paragraph don't serve to contradict the mother's worldview. Choice B is incorrect because in the last paragraph Bill doesn't question, but emphasizes the fundamental relationship between names and the things they designate. Choice C is incorrect because in the last paragraph the narrator offers insights into Bill's thinking, not the narrator's.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Reading: Question 9

Questions 1-9 are based on the following passage.

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I warmed to Bill and Dave quickly. I remember that both of them always said “thanks” or “cheers, mate,” even to each other. Such words did not seem to figure in the vocabulary of Sylheti, a language in which, rather than saying thank you, one balanced the whole sentence on terms of deference to age or class. This had the effect, I had noticed, that those who were senior in age or higher in class weren’t required by the language to indicate deference and were therefore saved from stooping for the tools to express gratitude.

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In the last paragraph, Bill is characterized primarily as a

- A. strict disciplinarian.
- B. loyal confidant.
- C. thoughtful mentor.
- D. lovable fraud.

Choice C is the best answer. In the last paragraph, Bill delivers a monologue on the importance of "calling things by their proper names." Under the pretense of talking about carpentry, Bill offers philosophical advice to the narrator on the virtues of using precise language. Therefore, Bill is characterized primarily as a thoughtful mentor.

Choice A is incorrect because Bill isn't characterized as a strict disciplinarian. Choice B is incorrect because the paragraph provides no evidence that Bill is a loyal confidant. Choice D is incorrect because the narrator's affection for Bill is evident throughout the passage, but Bill isn't characterized as a fraud.

Question Difficulty: Easy

Reading: Question 10

Questions 10-19 are based on the following passage and supplementary material.

This passage is adapted from David Streitfeld, “Why Web Reviewers Make Up Bad Things.” ©2013 by The New York Times Company.

It’s pretty clear exactly who writes fake positive reviews on the Web: friends or relatives of the author or the shop or restaurant owner, or sometimes the author or shop owner himself. The goal of fake positive reviews is to increase sales, and the reviewers are the ones who benefit, or want their friends to benefit.

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Registered customers wrote over 325,000 reviews in the study period. But for 16,000 of those reviews, there is no evidence that the customer bought the item. These reviews are on balance much more negative. (Could the items have been gifts, which could explain a higher level of dissatisfaction? No, the reviewers explicitly said they bought the items. The researchers were

also able to rule out other possibilities, such as the negative reviews' being attributable to differences among items or among reviewers.)

The researchers cannot say directly what the comments look like that accompany these reviews, because then it would be possible to do a Web search and identify the company. But Mr. Simester said they are something like this:

- I should have read all of the negative reviews before ordering. Please bring back the old style.
- I ordered this item over your Web site. Why is it that good designs are always changed? Please go back to the original.
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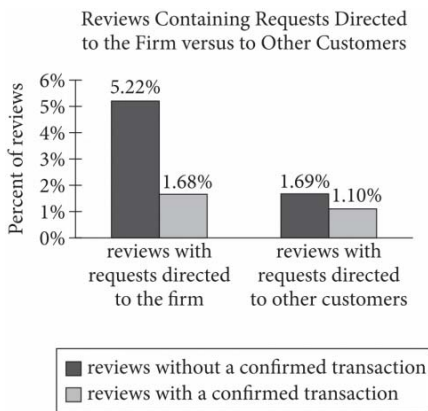
The other conclusion is that behavior online is too easily taken as a mirror of reality when it is nothing of the sort. What seems to be the voice of the masses is the voice of a self-appointed few, magnified and distorted.

"For every thousand customers, only about 15 write these reviews—and one of them is writing negative reviews of products he hasn't bought," Mr. Simester said. "How surprised should we be that one out of a thousand people do something we have trouble understanding?"

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Figure 2



Figures adapted from Eric T. Anderson and Duncan I. Simester, “Reviews

without a Purchase: Low Ratings, Loyal Customers, and Deception.” ©2014

by American Marketing Association.

Anderson and Simester’s study suggests that a common reason that consumers review an item they have not bought is that they

- A. own a business that competes with the product’s brand.
- B. underestimate the economic impact of their actions.
- C. have never shopped online.
- D. do not want the brand’s product line to change.

Choice D is the best answer. The sixth paragraph of the passage discusses Anderson and Simester’s discovery that online reviews were disproportionately negative when there was no evidence the reviewers bought the items they were reviewing. According to the eighth paragraph, the researchers concluded that these “fake” negative reviewers were acting as “self-appointed brand managers”; that is, they were attempting to change the company’s behavior. Thus, the study suggests that a common reason consumers review an item they haven’t bought is that they don’t want the brand’s product line to change.

Choice A is incorrect because the common assumption that a company’s competitors are responsible for “fake” negative reviews of its products isn’t supported by Anderson and

Simester's research. Choice B is incorrect because the study implies that the negative reviewers leverage the potential economic impact of these reviews to change a brand, not that they underestimate their impact. Choice C is incorrect because the study doesn't conclude that people who reviewed items they hadn't bought did so because they had never shopped online before.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Reading: Question 11

Questions 10-19 are based on the following passage and supplementary material.

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It's pretty clear exactly who writes fake positive reviews on the Web: friends or relatives of the author or the shop or restaurant owner, or sometimes the author or shop owner himself. The goal of fake positive reviews is to increase sales, and the reviewers are the ones who benefit, or want their friends to benefit.

But who writes fake negative reviews, denouncing stuff without any obvious reason? The usual assumption is that the perpetrators are competitors of some sort, hoping to get an edge on other novelists or chefs or innkeepers. But are there really so many nasty people in the world who need to get some slight advantage by tearing down the restaurant one block over? The question has been shrouded in mystery.

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Registered customers wrote over 325,000 reviews in the study period. But for 16,000 of those reviews, there is no evidence that the customer bought the item. These reviews are on balance much more negative. (Could the items have been gifts, which could explain a higher level of dissatisfaction? No, the reviewers explicitly said they bought the items. The researchers were

also able to rule out other possibilities, such as the negative reviews' being attributable to differences among items or among reviewers.)

The researchers cannot say directly what the comments look like that accompany these reviews, because then it would be possible to do a Web search and identify the company. But Mr. Simester said they are something like this:

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The cranky customers are acting, the study concludes, as "self-appointed brand managers." To put it another way, they are venting. The review forum gives them a simple and direct means of doing so: I hated this product, so listen to me.

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The apparel retailer was somewhat alarmed to discover this was going on, Mr. Simester said. One possible solution is to allow customers to write reviews only if they have purchased the product. Or give customers easier ways to let their feelings be known.

For the rest of us, the rule remains the same: read reviews if you have no other source of information, but never place your full trust in them. Mr. Simester, who says he has never written a review himself, follows this philosophy.

The other conclusion is that behavior online is too easily taken as a mirror of reality when it is nothing of the sort. What seems to be the voice of the masses is the voice of a self-appointed few, magnified and distorted.

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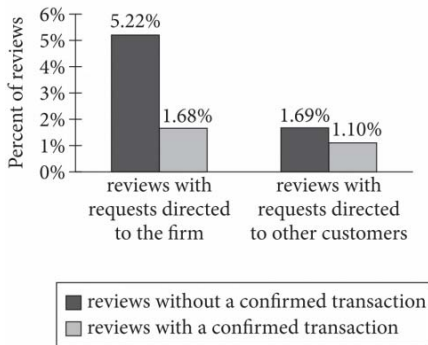
Figure 1

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Figure 2

Reviews Containing Requests Directed to the Firm versus to Other Customers



Figures adapted from Eric T. Anderson and Duncan I. Simester, “Reviews

without a Purchase: Low Ratings, Loyal Customers, and Deception.” ©2014

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Which choice best supports the idea that Anderson and Simester wish to conceal the identity of the company involved in their study?

- A. {line:VH308368_8} (“But . . . mystery”)
- B. {line:VH308368_9} (“A fascinating . . . operators”)
- C. {line:VH308368_10} (“It turns . . . have”)
- D. {line:VH308368_11} (“The researchers . . . company”)

Choice D is the best answer. The seventh paragraph discusses Anderson and Simester’s research involving online reviews of an unnamed company. The first sentence of the paragraph states, “The researchers cannot say directly what the comments look like that accompany these reviews, because then it would be possible to do a Web search and identify the company.” Thus, this sentence best supports the idea that Anderson and Simester wish to conceal the identity of the company involved in their study.

Choices A, B, and C are incorrect because the cited lines don’t provide the best support for the idea that Anderson and Simester wish to conceal the identity of the company involved in their study. Instead, they discuss the general assumption that negative online reviews are posted by a

company's competitors (choice A), introduce the study without discussing its findings in detail (choice B), and assert that competitors may not be responsible for negative online reviews (choice C).

Question Difficulty: Medium

Reading: Question 12

Questions 10-19 are based on the following passage and supplementary material.

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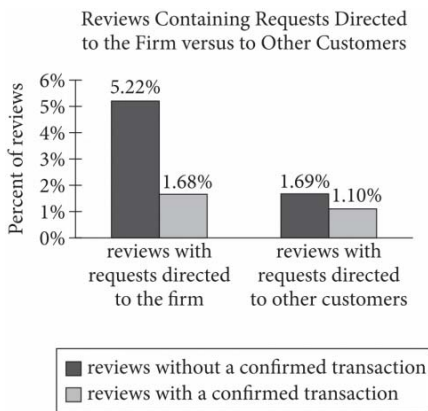
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Figure 2



Figures adapted from Eric T. Anderson and Duncan I. Simester, “Reviews without a Purchase: Low Ratings, Loyal Customers, and Deception.” ©2014 by American Marketing Association.

As used in {line:VH308368_1}, “miserable” most nearly means

- A. meager.
- B. unhappy.
- C. tragic.
- D. suffering.

Choice A is the best answer. The fourth paragraph states, “It turns out that competitors are not necessarily the ones giving one miserable star to products they did not buy or experiences they did not have.” In this sentence, the single-star rating that some reviewers give to products is characterized as insultingly deficient. Hence, the word “miserable,” as used in the fourth paragraph, most nearly means meager.

Choices B, C, and D are incorrect because in the context of the sentence, “miserable” means meager, not unhappy (choice B), tragic (choice C), or suffering (choice D).

Question Difficulty: Medium

Reading: Question 13

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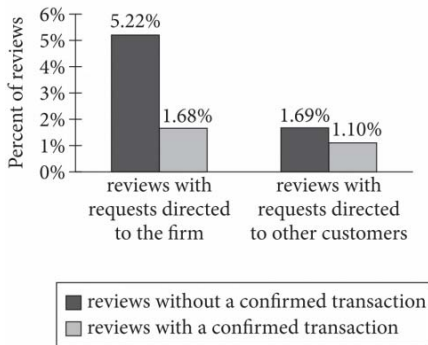
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What can most reasonably be inferred from the passage about products made by the company used in Anderson and Simester's study?

- A. They are more popular among people who shop in stores than among online shoppers.
- B. Their quality has improved since the company began manufacturing overseas.
- C. They are usually purchased directly from the company itself.
- D. Their design is changed frequently based on customer feedback.

Choice C is the best answer. According to the fifth paragraph, the company that Anderson and Simester researched "does not use third-party sellers and few of its products turn up on eBay." In other words, the company doesn't use intermediaries when selling its products to customers. Therefore, it can most reasonably be inferred from the passage that products made by the company used in the study are usually purchased directly from the company.

Choice A is incorrect. According to the fifth paragraph, the company markets through "catalogs, a few stores and a Web site"; thus, it can't be reasonably inferred that the company's products are more popular among people who shop in stores than among online shoppers. Choice B is

incorrect because the passage doesn't indicate that a move to overseas manufacturing has led to improvements in the company's products. Choice D is incorrect because the passage indicates that the company solicits feedback from customers in the form of reviews, but it doesn't suggest that the company changes product designs based on that feedback.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Reading: Question 14

Questions 10-19 are based on the following passage and supplementary material.

This passage is adapted from David Streitfeld, “Why Web Reviewers Make Up Bad Things.” ©2013 by The New York Times Company.

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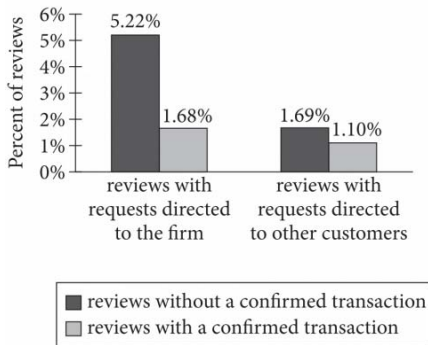
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Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?

- A. {line:VH308368_136} (“This . . . background”)
- B. {line:VH308368_3} (“The study . . . Management”)
- C. {line:VH308368_5} (“The company . . . eBay”)
- D. {line:VH308368_6} (“so it . . . experiment”)

Choice C is the best answer. The previous question asks what can most reasonably be inferred from the passage about products made by the company used in Anderson and Simester’s study. The answer, that these products are usually purchased directly from the company itself, is best supported by the last sentence of the fifth paragraph: “The company does not use third-party sellers and few of its products turn up on eBay.”

Choices A, B, and D are incorrect because the cited lines don’t provide the best evidence for the answer to the previous question. Instead, they highlight the counterintuitive nature of the study’s findings (choice A), introduce the study’s authors and their credentials (choice B), and explain why they chose to study the company in question (choice D).

Question Difficulty: Medium

Reading: Question 15

Questions 10-19 are based on the following passage and supplementary material.

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It's pretty clear exactly who writes fake positive reviews on the Web: friends or relatives of the author or the shop or restaurant owner, or sometimes the author or shop owner himself. The goal of fake positive reviews is to increase sales, and the reviewers are the ones who benefit, or want their friends to benefit.

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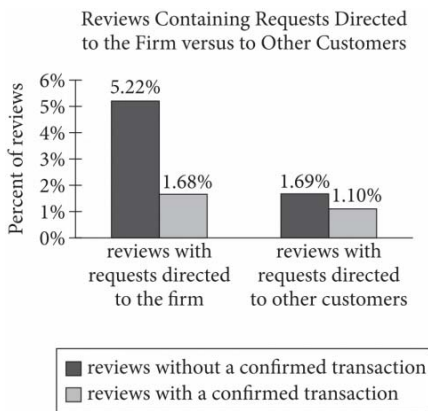
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The main purposes of the sentences in parentheses in {line:VH308368_7} are to

- A. anticipate readers’ questions and rule out possible weaknesses in the study’s design.
- B. mention interesting data and explain how they are related to the study’s main finding.
- C. explain dissatisfaction with the study’s results and encourage critics to reconsider.
- D. point out flaws in the researchers’ methods and offer alternate theories on the causes of the behavior being studied.

Choice A is the best answer. According to the sixth paragraph of the passage, Anderson and Simester found that online reviews were disproportionately negative when there was no evidence the reviewers bought the items they were reviewing. This paragraph also contains the following sentences in parentheses: “(Could the items have been gifts, which could explain a higher level of dissatisfaction? No, the reviewers explicitly said they bought the items. The researchers were also able to rule out other possibilities, such as the negative reviews’ being attributable to differences among items or among reviewers.)” Having addressed potential criticisms of the study, the researchers proceed to their main conclusion: some negative reviewers were acting as “self-

appointed brand managers.” Thus, the main purposes of the sentences in parentheses are to anticipate readers’ questions and rule out possible weaknesses in the study’s design.

Choice B is incorrect because the sentences don’t provide data related to the study’s main finding. Choice C is incorrect because the sentences are intended to support the study’s results, not express dissatisfaction with them. Choice D is incorrect because the sentences don’t offer alternate theories on the causes of the behavior being studied.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Reading: Question 16

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It’s pretty clear exactly who writes fake positive reviews on the Web: friends or relatives of the author or the shop or restaurant owner, or sometimes the author or shop owner himself. The goal of fake positive reviews is to increase sales, and the reviewers are the ones who benefit, or want their friends to benefit.

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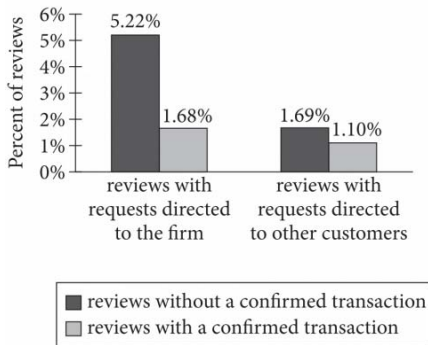
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As used in {line:VH308368_16}, "operating" most nearly means

- A. managing.
- B. performing.
- C. engaging.
- D. occurring.

Choice D is the best answer. The ninth paragraph states, "The same phenomenon seems to be operating here and, perhaps, all over the Web, distorting the review process in a way never imagined." In other words, this phenomenon appears to be taking place across the internet. Therefore, the word "operating," as used in the context of this sentence, most nearly means occurring.

Choices A, B, and C are incorrect because in the context of the sentence, "operating" means occurring, not managing (choice A), performing (choice B), or engaging (choice C).

Question Difficulty: Easy

Reading: Question 17

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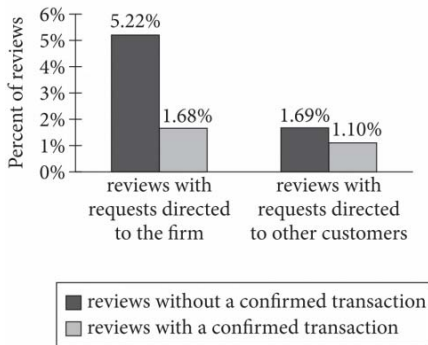
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Which choice best summarizes the two paragraphs in {line:VH308368_17}?

- A. Shoppers should read reviews carefully to determine whether the reviewer actually purchased the item.
- B. Only a small percentage of the people who buy a product review it online, so shoppers should not assume reviews represent how most customers feel about a product.
- C. All customers who buy a product should review it online so that online reviews provide shoppers with an accurate reflection of how the product has been received.
- D. As more companies require customers to verify the purchase of an item before they are able to review it, online reviews are becoming more trustworthy.

Choice B is the best answer. The eleventh paragraph cautions shoppers to “read reviews if you have no other source of information, but never place your full trust in them.” Subsequently, the twelfth paragraph concludes that “behavior online is too easily taken as a mirror of reality when it

is . . . the voice of a self-appointed few, magnified and distorted.” Taken together, the best summary of these paragraphs is that only a small percentage of people who buy a product review it online, so shoppers shouldn’t assume reviews represent how most customers feel about a product.

Choice A is incorrect. The research described in the passage indicates that not all online reviewers have purchased the item they are reviewing; however, the two paragraphs don’t suggest that shoppers should read reviews carefully to determine whether the reviewer actually purchased the item. Choice C is incorrect. The research described in the passage indicates that online reviews may present an inaccurate reflection of how an item has been received; however, the two paragraphs don’t encourage all customers who buy a product to review it online to produce a more accurate representation. Choice D is incorrect because the two paragraphs don’t indicate that more companies are requiring customers to verify the purchase of an item before reviewing it, nor that online reviews are becoming more trustworthy.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Reading: Question 18

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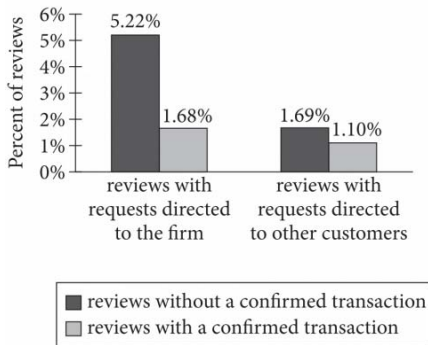
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Based on figure 1, which statement is true for both reviewers with confirmed transactions and reviewers without confirmed transactions?

- A. They are more likely to give a product rating of 2 than of 3.
- B. They are most likely to give a product rating of 4 or 5.
- C. They are least likely to give a product rating of 1.
- D. Their product ratings are concentrated at the center of the rating scale.

Choice B is the best answer. According to figure 1, 13.83% of reviewers without a confirmed transaction gave a rating of 4, while 60.51% of these reviewers gave a rating of 5. These percentages are both higher than the percentages for 1, 2, and 3 ratings among the same set of reviewers. Meanwhile, reviewers with a confirmed transaction followed the same pattern, with 16.96% giving a rating of 4, and 65.89% giving a rating of 5. Therefore, based on figure 1, both reviewers with confirmed transactions and those without confirmed transactions are more likely to give a product rating of 4 or 5.

Choice A is incorrect because higher percentages of reviewers in both groups gave a product rating of 3 than gave a product rating of 2. Choice C is incorrect because the smallest percentage

of reviewers without a confirmed transaction gave a rating of 2, indicating that reviewers in this group were least likely to give a rating of 2, rather than 1. Choice D is incorrect because the product ratings for both groups of reviewers are concentrated at the high end, not the center, of the rating scale.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Reading: Question 19

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It’s pretty clear exactly who writes fake positive reviews on the Web: friends or relatives of the author or the shop or restaurant owner, or sometimes the author or shop owner himself. The goal of fake positive reviews is to increase sales, and the reviewers are the ones who benefit, or want their friends to benefit.

But who writes fake negative reviews, denouncing stuff without any obvious reason? The usual assumption is that the perpetrators are competitors of some sort, hoping to get an edge on other novelists or chefs or innkeepers. But are there really so many nasty people in the world who need to get some slight advantage by tearing down the restaurant one block over? The question has been shrouded in mystery.

Until now. A fascinating new academic study sheds light on the fake negative review, finding not only that the source is totally unexpected but also that the problem is much bigger than a few malicious operators.

It turns out that competitors are not necessarily the ones giving one miserable star to products they did not buy or experiences they did not have. Customers do it—in fact, devoted customers.

This is hard to wrap your brain around, so first some background. The study was done by Eric Anderson of Northwestern University and Duncan Simester of the M.I.T. Sloan School of Management, using data from an unnamed apparel company that markets through catalogs, a few stores and a Web site. The company does not use third-party sellers and few of its products turn up on eBay, so it provided a relatively controlled experiment.

Registered customers wrote over 325,000 reviews in the study period. But for 16,000 of those reviews, there is no evidence that the customer bought the item. These reviews are on balance much more negative. (Could the items have been gifts, which could explain a higher level of dissatisfaction? No, the reviewers explicitly said they bought the items. The researchers were

also able to rule out other possibilities, such as the negative reviews' being attributable to differences among items or among reviewers.)

The researchers cannot say directly what the comments look like that accompany these reviews, because then it would be possible to do a Web search and identify the company. But Mr. Simester said they are something like this:

- I should have read all of the negative reviews before ordering. Please bring back the old style.
- I ordered this item over your Web site. Why is it that good designs are always changed? Please go back to the original.
- I am on a "Made in the USA" campaign and so am returning this item. Please stop importing.

The cranky customers are acting, the study concludes, as "self-appointed brand managers." To put it another way, they are venting. The review forum gives them a simple and direct means of doing so: I hated this product, so listen to me.

As Mr. Simester put it in an interview: "Your best friends are your worst critics." The study mentions in passing that Harley-Davidson's customers were upset when the company introduced a perfume. They took it personally. The same phenomenon seems to be operating here and, perhaps, all over the Web, distorting the review process in a way never imagined.

The apparel retailer was somewhat alarmed to discover this was going on, Mr. Simester said. One possible solution is to allow customers to write reviews only if they have purchased the product. Or give customers easier ways to let their feelings be known.

For the rest of us, the rule remains the same: read reviews if you have no other source of information, but never place your full trust in them. Mr. Simester, who says he has never written a review himself, follows this philosophy.

The other conclusion is that behavior online is too easily taken as a mirror of reality when it is nothing of the sort. What seems to be the voice of the masses is the voice of a self-appointed few, magnified and distorted.

"For every thousand customers, only about 15 write these reviews—and one of them is writing negative reviews of products he hasn't bought," Mr. Simester said. "How surprised should we be that one out of a thousand people do something we have trouble understanding?"

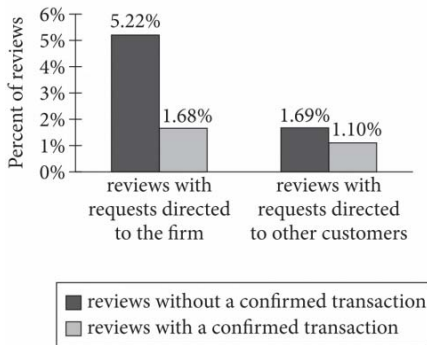
Figure 1

Distribution of Product Ratings

	Without a confirmed transaction	With a confirmed transaction	Difference
Average rating	4.07	4.33	-.26
Rating = 1	10.66%	5.28%	5.38%
Rating = 2	6.99%	5.40%	1.59%
Rating = 3	8.01%	6.47%	1.54%
Rating = 4	13.83%	16.96%	-3.13%
Rating = 5	60.51%	65.89%	-5.38%

Figure 2

Reviews Containing Requests Directed to the Firm versus to Other Customers



Figures adapted from Eric T. Anderson and Duncan I. Simester, "Reviews

without a Purchase: Low Ratings, Loyal Customers, and Deception." ©2014

by American Marketing Association.

According to figure 2, the highest percentage of requests made in product reviews were written by

- A. reviewers without a confirmed transaction, directed toward the firm selling the product.
- B. reviewers with a confirmed transaction, directed toward the firm selling the product.
- C. reviewers without a confirmed transaction, directed toward all other reviewers.
- D. the firm selling the product, directed toward reviewers with a confirmed transaction.

Choice A is the best answer. According to the graph, reviews without a confirmed transaction in which requests were directed to the firm represented 5.22% of the reviews studied, the highest percentage among the four types of reviews with requests shown in the graph. Thus, according to figure 2, the highest percentage of requests made in product reviews were written by reviewers without a confirmed transaction and directed toward the firm selling the product.

Choice B is incorrect because figure 2 shows that reviews written by reviewers with a confirmed transaction and directed toward the firm selling the product represented only 1.68% of reviews. Choice C is incorrect because figure 2 presents data about reviews directed to other customers,

not reviews directed to all other reviewers. Choice D is incorrect because figure 2 presents data on reviews directed to the firm selling the product, not written by the firm selling the product, and reviews written by reviewers with a confirmed transaction, not directed toward reviewers with a confirmed transaction.

Question Difficulty: Easy

Reading: Question 20

Questions 20-28 are based on the following passage and supplementary material.

This passage is adapted from Niina Heikkinen and ClimateWire, “Does Agave Hold the Secret to Drought-Resistant Farming?” ©2015 by Scientific American, a Division of Nature America, Inc.

Agave is teaching scientists about how to craft more drought-resistant plants. The hardy succulent, along with species like prickly pear (an edible cactus), pineapple, and vanilla orchids, has evolved over millions of years to perform a different kind of photosynthesis that allows the plants to survive in semiarid environments where water isn't always readily available.

The process is called crassulacean acid metabolism, or CAM, and a small group of scientists have been studying it for several decades because the plants that have it use less water. However, it has only been in the last couple of years that a growing number of researchers have been attempting to fully identify and transfer this photosynthetic pathway to other plant species.

Re-creating an entire metabolic pathway in a plant is far from a simple task. Once scientists figure out all the genes associated with its basic function, as well as its regulation, they then have to find a way to add that genetic material into the target plant, or make existing genes and proteins within the plant work the way they want them to. Altogether, that could involve somewhere around 100 genes, the researchers said, though they don't know the exact number yet.

Xiaohan Yang, a staff scientist in the Biosciences Division at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, is one of the researchers working to figure out how to get CAM to work in other types of plants. He said interest in CAM has increased rapidly in the last few years alone, as concern about the effects of drought has gone up and more funding from the federal government has come in.

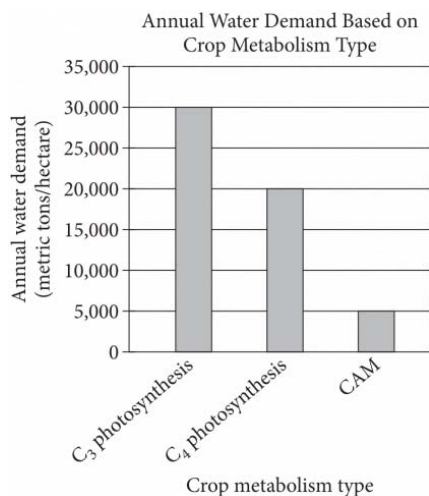
What makes photosynthesis in agave and cactus so different? Unlike most plants that take up carbon dioxide through stomata [small openings that allow plants to regulate the intake and release of gases] in their leaves during the day (known as C₃ and C₄ plants), CAM plants absorb most of their CO₂ [carbon dioxide] at night. This timing shift means less water evaporates

off of the leaves through transpiration. In fact, CAM plants require between a [sixth] and a [fourth] of the water that C₃ and C₄ plants need, respectively.

However, CAM plants also need a way of storing carbon overnight, because just like other plants, they cannot use it to build energy reserves like sugars and starches without sunlight. They do this by temporarily fixing carbon in a transient pool of mostly malic acid. When the sun rises, the plants break down the organic acids, releasing the CO₂. At this point, the plant is able to perform photosynthesis like a C₃ plant, except the stomata don't have to stay open because the carbon is already available in the leaf.

The challenge for researchers like Yang is to find a way to get other plants to create this nocturnal carbon storage. Since the genomes of a number of different CAM plants have been sequenced in the past two years, researchers are beginning to develop a better understanding of how the pathway works.

“We have a very good idea of what genes are important for CAM species,” Yang said. “Right now, we are working on how those genes come together, and then we test their efficiency.”



Adapted from Xiaohan Yang et al., “A Roadmap for Research on Crassulacean Acid Metabolism (CAM) to Enhance Sustainable Food and Bioenergy Production in a Hotter, Drier World.” ©2015 by ORNL/UT-Battelle and New Phytologist Trust.

The main purpose of the passage is to

- A. describe research that may facilitate the cultivation of plants in conditions of limited water availability.
- B. endorse a promising approach to water conservation as appropriate for agricultural contexts.
- C. explain how crassulacean acid metabolism disrupts photosynthesis in commonly farmed plant species.
- D. clarify why a particular study of plant genetics has not produced results that can be applied to agriculture.

Choice A is the best answer. The passage opens by listing examples of plants that perform an alternate form of photosynthesis known as CAM that makes them more drought-resistant. The second paragraph introduces research seeking to “identify and transfer this photosynthetic pathway to other plant species.” This research comes amid growing concern about the effects of drought, according to the fourth paragraph. Subsequent paragraphs describe CAM in greater depth, and outline the progress scientists have made in better understanding it. Thus, the main purpose of the passage is to describe research that may facilitate the cultivation of plants in conditions of limited water availability.

Choice B is incorrect because the passage describes research on CAM that aims to make plants more drought-resistant, but it doesn’t endorse an approach to water conservation or explicitly discuss agricultural applications of the research. Choice C is incorrect because the passage explains how CAM modifies photosynthesis in naturally occurring plant species, not how it disrupts photosynthesis in commonly farmed species. Choice D is incorrect because the main purpose of the passage is to describe research that may facilitate the cultivation of drought-resistant plants, not to clarify the failure of a study to produce results that can be applied to agriculture.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Reading: Question 21

Questions 20-28 are based on the following passage and supplementary material.

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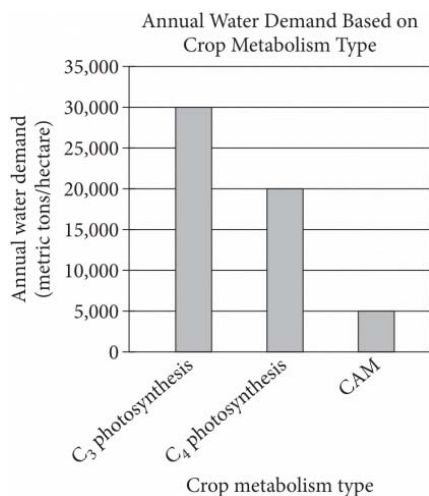
What makes photosynthesis in agave and cactus so different? Unlike most plants that take up carbon dioxide through stomata [small openings that allow plants to regulate the intake and release of gases] in their leaves during the day (known as C₃ and C₄ plants), CAM plants absorb most of their CO₂ [carbon dioxide] at night. This timing shift means less water evaporates

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Which choice provides the fullest explanation for the recent rise in scientific research on CAM?

- A. {line:VH388829_25} (“Agave . . . plants”)
- B. {line:VH388829_26} (“The process . . . water”)
- C. {line:VH388829_27} (“He said . . . come in”)
- D. {line:VH388829_28} (“Since . . . works”)

Choice C is the best answer. The fourth paragraph presents researcher Xiaohan Yang’s explanation for increased scientific attention to CAM: “He said interest in CAM has increased rapidly in the last few years alone, as concern about the effects of drought has gone up and more funding from the federal government has come in.” This sentence provides the fullest explanation for the recent rise in scientific research on CAM.

Choices A, B, and D are incorrect because the cited lines don’t provide the fullest explanation for the recent rise in scientific research on CAM. Instead, they introduce the subject of the passage (choice A), clarify the scientific terminology for the process described and explain why a small group of scientists have been studying it for a long time (choice B), and report on recent progress in understanding the CAM process (choice D).

Question Difficulty: Hard

Reading: Question 22

Questions 20-28 are based on the following passage and supplementary material.

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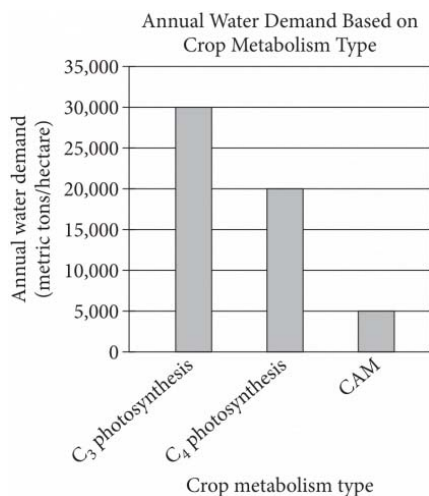
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In {line:VH388829_29}, the references to specific plant species serve primarily to

- A. identify plants whose biochemical processes have been artificially altered.
- B. specify the plants that the researchers used in the experiment.
- C. provide examples of plants that rely on an alternative kind of metabolism.
- D. note exceptions to the plant behavior that the scientists observed.

Choice C is the best answer. The first paragraph lists several plant species, including the prickly pear, pineapple, and vanilla orchid. The paragraph explains that all these species have evolved to perform a different kind of photosynthesis known as CAM. Hence, the first paragraph references several specific plant species to provide examples of plants that rely on an alternative kind of metabolism.

Choice A is incorrect because the plant species referenced in the first paragraph have alternate biochemical processes that occur naturally, not artificially. Choice B is incorrect because the species referenced in the first paragraph provide general examples of plants that perform CAM, not the specific plants researchers used in their experiments. Choice D is incorrect because the species referenced in the first paragraph provide examples of a process, not exceptions to a behavior, that scientists studied.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Reading: Question 23

Questions 20-28 are based on the following passage and supplementary material.

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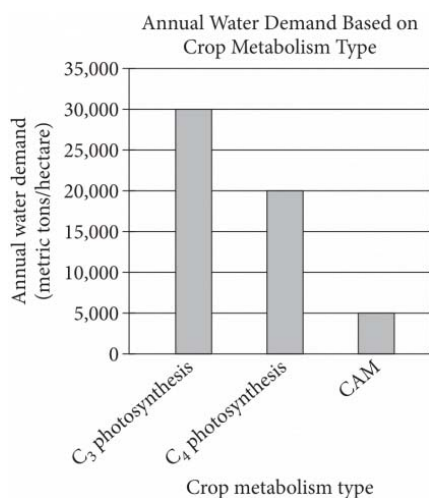
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As used in {line:VH388829_4}, “allows” most nearly means

- A. enables.
- B. authorizes.
- C. excuses.
- D. acknowledges.

Choice A is the best answer. The first paragraph describes “a different kind of photosynthesis that allows the plants to survive in semiarid environments where water isn’t always readily available.” In other words, this process makes it possible for plants to survive in dry places. Therefore, the word “allows,” as used in the context of this sentence, most nearly means enables.

Choices B, C, and D are incorrect because in the context of the sentence, “allows” most nearly means enables, not authorizes (choice B), excuses (choice C), or acknowledges (choice D).

Question Difficulty: Easy

Reading: Question 24

Questions 20-28 are based on the following passage and supplementary material.

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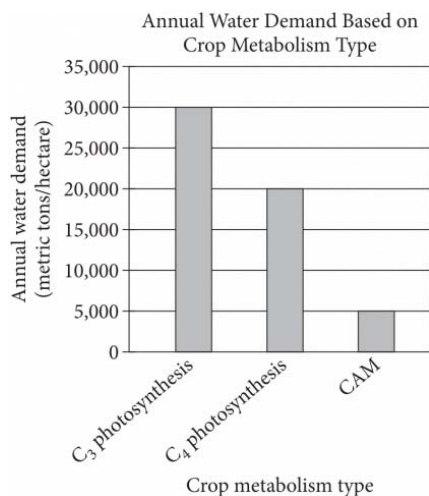
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As used in {line:VH388829_6}, “challenge” most nearly means

- A. requirement.
- B. competition.
- C. dispute.
- D. difficulty.

Choice D is the best answer. The seventh paragraph asserts, “The challenge for researchers like Yang is to find a way to get other plants to create this nocturnal carbon storage.” In other words, the researchers have encountered a problem that they are trying to overcome. Therefore, the word “challenge,” as used in the context of this sentence, most nearly means difficulty.

Choices A, B, and C are incorrect because in the context of the sentence, “challenge” most nearly means difficulty, not requirement (choice A), competition (choice B), or dispute (choice C).

Question Difficulty: Easy

Reading: Question 25

Questions 20-28 are based on the following passage and supplementary material.

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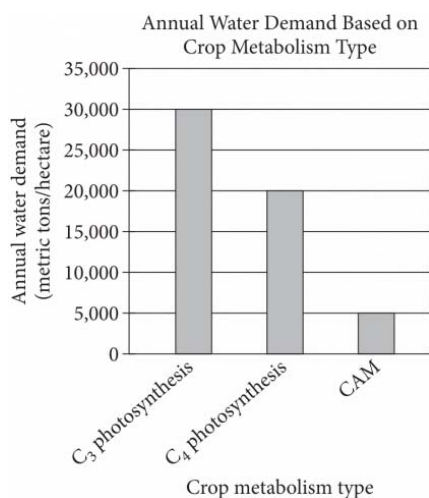
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Based on the passage, which choice best identifies the point to which genetic research on CAM has advanced?

- A. Scientists believe that once they isolate the genes involved in CAM, they can alter them to perform new functions in CAM plants.
- B. Scientists possess an incomplete understanding of how CAM-related genes function because many CAM species' genomes have yet to be sequenced.
- C. Scientists feel more confident about which genes are involved in CAM than about the precise interactions among those genes.
- D. Scientists know that CAM pathways differ from one species to another but have not yet determined the specific differences.

Choice C is the best answer. In the eighth paragraph, the author quotes researcher Xiaohan Yang: "We have a very good idea of what genes are important for CAM species. . . . Right now, we are working on how those genes come together, and then we test their efficiency." Therefore, based on the passage, scientists feel more confident about which genes are involved in CAM than about the precise interactions among those genes.

Choice A is incorrect because scientists are attempting to isolate the genes involved in CAM so they can replicate the process in other species, not alter them to perform new functions in CAM plants. Choice B is incorrect because genome sequencing for many CAM species is complete. Choice D is incorrect because the passage suggests that the CAM pathway operates similarly, not differently, from one species to another.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Reading: Question 26

Questions 20-28 are based on the following passage and supplementary material.

This passage is adapted from Niina Heikkinen and ClimateWire, “Does Agave Hold the Secret to Drought-Resistant Farming?” ©2015 by Scientific American, a Division of Nature America, Inc.

Agave is teaching scientists about how to craft more drought-resistant plants. The hardy succulent, along with species like prickly pear (an edible cactus), pineapple, and vanilla orchids, has evolved over millions of years to perform a different kind of photosynthesis that allows the plants to survive in semiarid environments where water isn't always readily available.

The process is called crassulacean acid metabolism, or CAM, and a small group of scientists have been studying it for several decades because the plants that have it use less water. However, it has only been in the last couple of years that a growing number of researchers have been attempting to fully identify and transfer this photosynthetic pathway to other plant species.

Re-creating an entire metabolic pathway in a plant is far from a simple task. Once scientists figure out all the genes associated with its basic function, as well as its regulation, they then have to find a way to add that genetic material into the target plant, or make existing genes and proteins within the plant work the way they want them to. Altogether, that could involve somewhere around 100 genes, the researchers said, though they don't know the exact number yet.

Xiaohan Yang, a staff scientist in the Biosciences Division at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, is one of the researchers working to figure out how to get CAM to work in other types of plants. He said interest in CAM has increased rapidly in the last few years alone, as concern about the effects of drought has gone up and more funding from the federal government has come in.

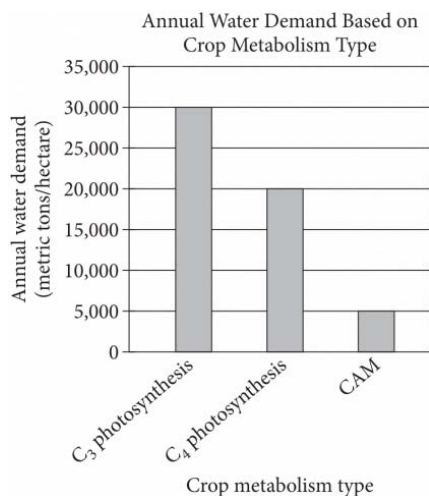
What makes photosynthesis in agave and cactus so different? Unlike most plants that take up carbon dioxide through stomata [small openings that allow plants to regulate the intake and release of gases] in their leaves during the day (known as C₃ and C₄ plants), CAM plants absorb most of their CO₂ [carbon dioxide] at night. This timing shift means less water evaporates

off of the leaves through transpiration. In fact, CAM plants require between a [sixth] and a [fourth] of the water that C₃ and C₄ plants need, respectively.

However, CAM plants also need a way of storing carbon overnight, because just like other plants, they cannot use it to build energy reserves like sugars and starches without sunlight. They do this by temporarily fixing carbon in a transient pool of mostly malic acid. When the sun rises, the plants break down the organic acids, releasing the CO₂. At this point, the plant is able to perform photosynthesis like a C₃ plant, except the stomata don't have to stay open because the carbon is already available in the leaf.

The challenge for researchers like Yang is to find a way to get other plants to create this nocturnal carbon storage. Since the genomes of a number of different CAM plants have been sequenced in the past two years, researchers are beginning to develop a better understanding of how the pathway works.

“We have a very good idea of what genes are important for CAM species,” Yang said. “Right now, we are working on how those genes come together, and then we test their efficiency.”



Adapted from Xiaohan Yang et al., “A Roadmap for Research on Crassulacean Acid Metabolism (CAM) to Enhance Sustainable Food and Bioenergy Production in a Hotter, Drier World.” ©2015 by ORNL/UT-Battelle and New Phytologist Trust.

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

- A. {line:VH388829_7} (“Once . . . them to”)
- B. {line:VH388829_8} (“Altogether . . . yet”)
- C. {line:VH388829_9} (“The challenge . . . storage”)
- D. {line:VH388829_10} (“We have . . . efficiency”)

Choice D is the best answer. The previous question asks what best identifies the point to which genetic research on CAM has advanced. The answer, that scientists feel more confident about which genes are involved in CAM than about the precise interactions among those genes, is best supported by the eighth paragraph, which quotes researcher Xiaohan Yang: “‘We have a very good idea of what genes are important for CAM species,’ Yang said. ‘Right now, we are working on how those genes come together, and then we test their efficiency.’”

Choices A, B, and C are incorrect because the cited lines don’t provide the best evidence for the answer to the previous question. Instead, they outline a potential approach to re-creating CAM in other species without describing the status of current research (choice A), provide an estimate of the number of genes that may be involved in the CAM process (choice B), and introduce the remaining challenge of transferring CAM processes to other species (choice C).

Question Difficulty: Hard

Reading: Question 27

Questions 20-28 are based on the following passage and supplementary material.

This passage is adapted from Niina Heikkinen and ClimateWire, “Does Agave Hold the Secret to Drought-Resistant Farming?” ©2015 by Scientific American, a Division of Nature America, Inc.

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Re-creating an entire metabolic pathway in a plant is far from a simple task. Once scientists figure out all the genes associated with its basic function, as well as its regulation, they then have to find a way to add that genetic material into the target plant, or make existing genes and proteins within the plant work the way they want them to. Altogether, that could involve somewhere around 100 genes, the researchers said, though they don't know the exact number yet.

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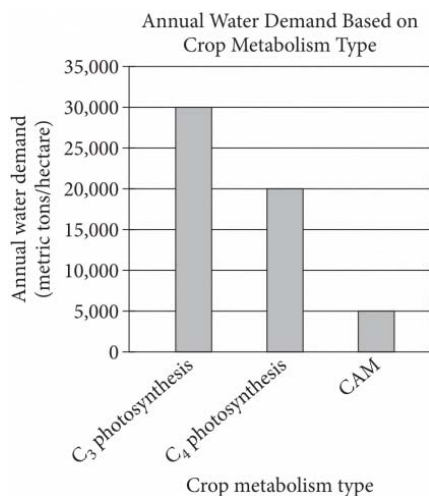
What makes photosynthesis in agave and cactus so different? Unlike most plants that take up carbon dioxide through stomata [small openings that allow plants to regulate the intake and release of gases] in their leaves during the day (known as C₃ and C₄ plants), CAM plants absorb most of their CO₂ [carbon dioxide] at night. This timing shift means less water evaporates

off of the leaves through transpiration. In fact, CAM plants require between a [sixth] and a [fourth] of the water that C₃ and C₄ plants need, respectively.

However, CAM plants also need a way of storing carbon overnight, because just like other plants, they cannot use it to build energy reserves like sugars and starches without sunlight. They do this by temporarily fixing carbon in a transient pool of mostly malic acid. When the sun rises, the plants break down the organic acids, releasing the CO₂. At this point, the plant is able to perform photosynthesis like a C₃ plant, except the stomata don't have to stay open because the carbon is already available in the leaf.

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“We have a very good idea of what genes are important for CAM species,” Yang said. “Right now, we are working on how those genes come together, and then we test their efficiency.”



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According to the graph, approximately how much water does a hectare of CAM plants require per year?

- A. 5,000 metric tons
- B. 10,000 metric tons
- C. 15,000 metric tons
- D. 20,000 metric tons

Choice A is the best answer. In the graph, the bar representing CAM plants indicates an annual water demand of 5,000 metric tons per hectare. Thus, a hectare of CAM plants requires approximately 5,000 metric tons of water per year.

Choices B and C are incorrect because 10,000 metric tons (choice B) and 15,000 metric tons (choice C) don't represent the annual water demands per hectare for any of the three types of plants represented in the graph. Choice D is incorrect because, according to the graph, 20,000 metric tons represents the annual water demands per hectare of C₄ plant species rather than the demands of CAM plants.

Question Difficulty: Easy

Reading: Question 28

Questions 20-28 are based on the following passage and supplementary material.

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The process is called crassulacean acid metabolism, or CAM, and a small group of scientists have been studying it for several decades because the plants that have it use less water. However, it has only been in the last couple of years that a growing number of researchers have been attempting to fully identify and transfer this photosynthetic pathway to other plant species.

Re-creating an entire metabolic pathway in a plant is far from a simple task. Once scientists figure out all the genes associated with its basic function, as well as its regulation, they then have to find a way to add that genetic material into the target plant, or make existing genes and proteins within the plant work the way they want them to. Altogether, that could involve somewhere around 100 genes, the researchers said, though they don't know the exact number yet.

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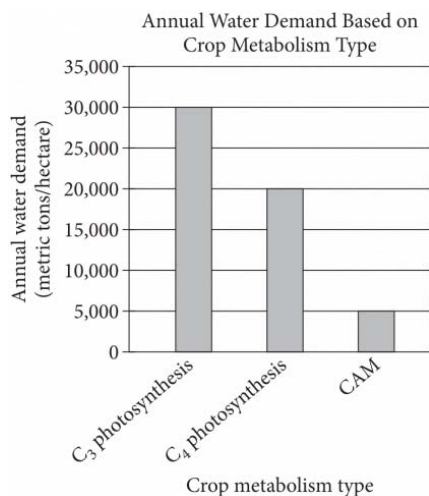
What makes photosynthesis in agave and cactus so different? Unlike most plants that take up carbon dioxide through stomata [small openings that allow plants to regulate the intake and release of gases] in their leaves during the day (known as C₃ and C₄ plants), CAM plants absorb most of their CO₂ [carbon dioxide] at night. This timing shift means less water evaporates

off of the leaves through transpiration. In fact, CAM plants require between a [sixth] and a [fourth] of the water that C₃ and C₄ plants need, respectively.

However, CAM plants also need a way of storing carbon overnight, because just like other plants, they cannot use it to build energy reserves like sugars and starches without sunlight. They do this by temporarily fixing carbon in a transient pool of mostly malic acid. When the sun rises, the plants break down the organic acids, releasing the CO₂. At this point, the plant is able to perform photosynthesis like a C₃ plant, except the stomata don't have to stay open because the carbon is already available in the leaf.

The challenge for researchers like Yang is to find a way to get other plants to create this nocturnal carbon storage. Since the genomes of a number of different CAM plants have been sequenced in the past two years, researchers are beginning to develop a better understanding of how the pathway works.

“We have a very good idea of what genes are important for CAM species,” Yang said. “Right now, we are working on how those genes come together, and then we test their efficiency.”



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Which of the following choices is a claim in the passage that is supported by the data in the graph?

- A. CAM plants do not leave their stomata open throughout photosynthesis.
- B. CAM plants demand less water on average than either C₃ or C₄ plants do.
- C. CAM plants absorb more CO₂ during the night than during the day.
- D. CAM plants perform a certain phase of photosynthesis in the same manner that C₃ plants do.

Choice B is the best answer. The fifth paragraph of the passage states, “CAM plants require between a [sixth] and a [fourth] of the water that C₃ and C₄ plants need, respectively.” According to the graph, the annual water demands of a hectare of CAM plants are lower, at 5,000 metric tons, than the annual demands of a hectare of C₃ and C₄ plants, at 30,000 and 20,000 metric tons, respectively. Therefore, the claim that CAM plants demand less water on average than either C₃ or C₄ plants do is best supported by the data in the graph.

Choices A, C, and D are incorrect because the claims that CAM plants don’t leave their stomata open throughout photosynthesis (choice A), that CAM plants absorb more CO₂ during the night than during the day (choice C), and that CAM plants perform a certain phase of photosynthesis in the same manner that C₃ plants do (choice D) are all supported by the passage, but not by the graph.

Question Difficulty: Easy

Reading: Question 29

Questions 29-37 are based on the following passage.

This passage is adapted from George H. W. Bush's inaugural address as president of the United States of America. Delivered in 1989.

America today is a proud, free nation, decent and civil, a place we cannot help but love. We know in our hearts, not loudly and proudly, but as a simple fact, that this country has meaning beyond what we see, and that our strength is a force for good. But have we changed as a nation even in our time? Are we enthralled with material things, less appreciative of the nobility of work and sacrifice?

My friends, we are not the sum of our possessions. They are not the measure of our lives. In our hearts we know what matters. We cannot hope only to leave our children a bigger car, a bigger bank account. We must hope to give them a sense of what it means to be a loyal friend, a loving parent, a citizen who leaves his home, his neighborhood and town better than he found it. What do we want the men and women who work with us to say when we are no longer there? That we were more driven to succeed than anyone around us? Or that we stopped to ask if a sick child had gotten better, and stayed a moment there to trade a word of friendship?

No President, no government, can teach us to remember what is best in what we are. But if the man you have chosen to lead this government can help make a difference; if he can celebrate the quieter, deeper successes that are made not of gold and silk, but of better hearts and finer souls; if he can do these things, then he must.

America is never wholly herself unless she is engaged in high moral principle. We as a people have such a purpose today. It is to make kinder the face of the Nation and gentler the face of the world. My friends, we have work to do. . . .

The old solution, the old way, was to think that public money alone could end these problems. But we have learned that is not so. And in any case, our funds are low. We have a deficit to bring down. We have more will than wallet; but will is what we need. We will make the hard choices, looking at what we have and perhaps allocating it differently, making our decisions

based on honest need and prudent safety. And then we will do the wisest thing of all: We will turn to the only resource we have that in times of need always grows—the goodness and the courage of the American people.

I am speaking of a new engagement in the lives of others, a new activism, hands-on and involved, that gets the job done. We must bring in the generations, harnessing the unused talent of the elderly and the unfocused energy of the young. For not only leadership is passed from generation to generation, but so is stewardship. And the generation born after the Second World War has come of age.

I have spoken of a thousand points of light, of all the community organizations that are spread like stars throughout the nation, doing good. We will work hand in hand, encouraging, sometimes leading, sometimes being led, rewarding. We will work on this in the White House, in the Cabinet agencies. I will go to the people and the programs that are the brighter points of light, and I will ask every member of my government to become involved. The old ideas are new again because they are not old, they are timeless: duty, sacrifice, commitment, and a patriotism that finds its expression in taking part and pitching in.

Bush's central claim in the speech is that

- A. when the United States overcomes its love of material things, the country will become a beacon to the rest of the world.
- B. even though the United States is economically strong, the country faces many perplexing problems.
- C. if each citizen engages in the kind of behavior that is truly valued in the United States, many of the nation's problems will be addressed.
- D. because each US citizen is a point of light in his or her neighborhood, the country's future will always be bright.

Choice C is the best answer. In the first and second paragraphs, Bush argues that while Americans may seem to be “enthralled with material things,” they value family and community more than possessions. In the fifth paragraph, Bush contends that “the goodness and the courage of the American people,” rather than money, will solve the nation's problems. Accordingly, in the final paragraph, Bush hails community organizations devoted to the public good spread out like “a thousand points of light” across the nation. Hence, Bush's central claim is

that if each citizen engages in the kind of behavior that is truly valued in the United States, many of the nation's problems will be addressed.

Choice A is incorrect because Bush contends that Americans understand that family and community are more important than possessions, not that they need to overcome their love of material things. Choice B is incorrect because Bush highlights the moral, rather than the economic, strength of the United States. Choice D is incorrect because Bush describes community organizations, not individual US citizens, as points of light spread across the country.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Reading: Question 30

Questions 29-37 are based on the following passage.

This passage is adapted from George H. W. Bush's inaugural address as president of the United States of America. Delivered in 1989.

America today is a proud, free nation, decent and civil, a place we cannot help but love. We know in our hearts, not loudly and proudly, but as a simple fact, that this country has meaning beyond what we see, and that our strength is a force for good. But have we changed as a nation even in our time? Are we enthralled with material things, less appreciative of the nobility of work and sacrifice?

My friends, we are not the sum of our possessions. They are not the measure of our lives. In our hearts we know what matters. We cannot hope only to leave our children a bigger car, a bigger bank account. We must hope to give them a sense of what it means to be a loyal friend, a loving parent, a citizen who leaves his home, his neighborhood and town better than he found it. What do we want the men and women who work with us to say when we are no longer there? That we were more driven to succeed than anyone around us? Or that we stopped to ask if a sick child had gotten better, and stayed a moment there to trade a word of friendship?

No President, no government, can teach us to remember what is best in what we are. But if the man you have chosen to lead this government can help make a difference; if he can celebrate the quieter, deeper successes that are made not of gold and silk, but of better hearts and finer souls; if he can do these things, then he must.

America is never wholly herself unless she is engaged in high moral principle. We as a people have such a purpose today. It is to make kinder the face of the Nation and gentler the face of the world. My friends, we have work to do. . . .

The old solution, the old way, was to think that public money alone could end these problems. But we have learned that is not so. And in any case, our funds are low. We have a deficit to bring down. We have more will than wallet; but will is what we need. We will make the hard choices, looking at what we have and perhaps allocating it differently, making our decisions

based on honest need and prudent safety. And then we will do the wisest thing of all: We will turn to the only resource we have that in times of need always grows—the goodness and the courage of the American people.

I am speaking of a new engagement in the lives of others, a new activism, hands-on and involved, that gets the job done. We must bring in the generations, harnessing the unused talent of the elderly and the unfocused energy of the young. For not only leadership is passed from generation to generation, but so is stewardship. And the generation born after the Second World War has come of age.

I have spoken of a thousand points of light, of all the community organizations that are spread like stars throughout the nation, doing good. We will work hand in hand, encouraging, sometimes leading, sometimes being led, rewarding. We will work on this in the White House, in the Cabinet agencies. I will go to the people and the programs that are the brighter points of light, and I will ask every member of my government to become involved. The old ideas are new again because they are not old, they are timeless: duty, sacrifice, commitment, and a patriotism that finds its expression in taking part and pitching in.

Which choice best supports the conclusion that Bush views the president as a moral guide for the nation?

- A. {line:VH248742_2} (“America . . . love”)
- B. {line:VH248742_3} (“My . . . lives”)
- C. {line:VH248742_4} (“But . . . must”)
- D. {line:VH248742_6} (“The old . . . pitching in”)

Choice C is the best answer. In the third paragraph Bush states, “if the man you have chosen to lead this government can help make a difference; if he can celebrate the quieter, deeper successes that are made not of gold and silk, but of better hearts and finer souls; if he can do these things, then he must.” This paragraph best supports the conclusion that Bush views the president as a moral guide for the nation.

Choices A, B, and D are incorrect because the cited lines don’t suggest that Bush views the president as a moral guide for the nation. Instead, they praise American values and patriotism (choice A), counter the notion that Americans define themselves by their possessions (choice B), and conclude that community involvement is a timeless American idea (choice D).

Question Difficulty: Medium

Reading: Question 31

Questions 29-37 are based on the following passage.

This passage is adapted from George H. W. Bush's inaugural address as president of the United States of America. Delivered in 1989.

America today is a proud, free nation, decent and civil, a place we cannot help but love. We know in our hearts, not loudly and proudly, but as a simple fact, that this country has meaning beyond what we see, and that our strength is a force for good. But have we changed as a nation even in our time? Are we enthralled with material things, less appreciative of the nobility of work and sacrifice?

My friends, we are not the sum of our possessions. They are not the measure of our lives. In our hearts we know what matters. We cannot hope only to leave our children a bigger car, a bigger bank account. We must hope to give them a sense of what it means to be a loyal friend, a loving parent, a citizen who leaves his home, his neighborhood and town better than he found it. What do we want the men and women who work with us to say when we are no longer there? That we were more driven to succeed than anyone around us? Or that we stopped to ask if a sick child had gotten better, and stayed a moment there to trade a word of friendship?

No President, no government, can teach us to remember what is best in what we are. But if the man you have chosen to lead this government can help make a difference; if he can celebrate the quieter, deeper successes that are made not of gold and silk, but of better hearts and finer souls; if he can do these things, then he must.

America is never wholly herself unless she is engaged in high moral principle. We as a people have such a purpose today. It is to make kinder the face of the Nation and gentler the face of the world. My friends, we have work to do. . . .

The old solution, the old way, was to think that public money alone could end these problems. But we have learned that is not so. And in any case, our funds are low. We have a deficit to bring down. We have more will than wallet; but will is what we need. We will make the hard choices, looking at what we have and perhaps allocating it differently, making our decisions

based on honest need and prudent safety. And then we will do the wisest thing of all: We will turn to the only resource we have that in times of need always grows—the goodness and the courage of the American people.

I am speaking of a new engagement in the lives of others, a new activism, hands-on and involved, that gets the job done. We must bring in the generations, harnessing the unused talent of the elderly and the unfocused energy of the young. For not only leadership is passed from generation to generation, but so is stewardship. And the generation born after the Second World War has come of age.

I have spoken of a thousand points of light, of all the community organizations that are spread like stars throughout the nation, doing good. We will work hand in hand, encouraging, sometimes leading, sometimes being led, rewarding. We will work on this in the White House, in the Cabinet agencies. I will go to the people and the programs that are the brighter points of light, and I will ask every member of my government to become involved. The old ideas are new again because they are not old, they are timeless: duty, sacrifice, commitment, and a patriotism that finds its expression in taking part and pitching in.

As used in {line:VH248742_7}, “measure” most nearly means

- A. course of action.
- B. piece of legislation.
- C. degree of concern.
- D. standard of comparison.

Choice D is the best answer. In the second paragraph, Bush argues that material possessions “are not the measure of our lives.” In other words, the value of our lives can’t be judged by the things we own. Therefore, the word “measure,” as used in the context of this sentence, most nearly means standard of comparison.

Choices A, B, and C are incorrect because in the context of this sentence, “measure” most nearly means standard of comparison, not course of action (choice A), piece of legislation (choice B), or degree of concern (choice C).

Question Difficulty: Medium

Reading: Question 32

Questions 29-37 are based on the following passage.

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America today is a proud, free nation, decent and civil, a place we cannot help but love. We know in our hearts, not loudly and proudly, but as a simple fact, that this country has meaning beyond what we see, and that our strength is a force for good. But have we changed as a nation even in our time? Are we enthralled with material things, less appreciative of the nobility of work and sacrifice?

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In the speech, Bush suggests that, fundamentally, most individuals truly esteem

- A. family members more than friends and neighbors.
- B. personal character more than material acquisitions.
- C. business opportunities more than government programs.
- D. civic activism more than political rhetoric.

Choice B is the best answer. In the second paragraph, Bush suggests that Americans value moral integrity more than possessions: “In our hearts we know what matters. We cannot hope only to leave our children a bigger car, a bigger bank account. We must hope to give them a sense of what it means to be a loyal friend, a loving parent.” Thus, Bush suggests that, fundamentally, most individuals truly esteem personal character more than material acquisitions.

Choice A is incorrect because Bush doesn’t distinguish between family, friends, and neighbors when speaking of the duty and sacrifice Americans value. Choice C is incorrect because Bush suggests that Americans truly esteem personal character, not business opportunities or government programs. Choice D is incorrect because Bush praises civic activism, but doesn’t discuss it in relation to political rhetoric.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Reading: Question 33

Questions 29-37 are based on the following passage.

This passage is adapted from George H. W. Bush's inaugural address as president of the United States of America. Delivered in 1989.

America today is a proud, free nation, decent and civil, a place we cannot help but love. We know in our hearts, not loudly and proudly, but as a simple fact, that this country has meaning beyond what we see, and that our strength is a force for good. But have we changed as a nation even in our time? Are we enthralled with material things, less appreciative of the nobility of work and sacrifice?

My friends, we are not the sum of our possessions. They are not the measure of our lives. In our hearts we know what matters. We cannot hope only to leave our children a bigger car, a bigger bank account. We must hope to give them a sense of what it means to be a loyal friend, a loving parent, a citizen who leaves his home, his neighborhood and town better than he found it. What do we want the men and women who work with us to say when we are no longer there? That we were more driven to succeed than anyone around us? Or that we stopped to ask if a sick child had gotten better, and stayed a moment there to trade a word of friendship?

No President, no government, can teach us to remember what is best in what we are. But if the man you have chosen to lead this government can help make a difference; if he can celebrate the quieter, deeper successes that are made not of gold and silk, but of better hearts and finer souls; if he can do these things, then he must.

America is never wholly herself unless she is engaged in high moral principle. We as a people have such a purpose today. It is to make kinder the face of the Nation and gentler the face of the world. My friends, we have work to do. . . .

The old solution, the old way, was to think that public money alone could end these problems. But we have learned that is not so. And in any case, our funds are low. We have a deficit to bring down. We have more will than wallet; but will is what we need. We will make the hard choices, looking at what we have and perhaps allocating it differently, making our decisions

based on honest need and prudent safety. And then we will do the wisest thing of all: We will turn to the only resource we have that in times of need always grows—the goodness and the courage of the American people.

I am speaking of a new engagement in the lives of others, a new activism, hands-on and involved, that gets the job done. We must bring in the generations, harnessing the unused talent of the elderly and the unfocused energy of the young. For not only leadership is passed from generation to generation, but so is stewardship. And the generation born after the Second World War has come of age.

I have spoken of a thousand points of light, of all the community organizations that are spread like stars throughout the nation, doing good. We will work hand in hand, encouraging, sometimes leading, sometimes being led, rewarding. We will work on this in the White House, in the Cabinet agencies. I will go to the people and the programs that are the brighter points of light, and I will ask every member of my government to become involved. The old ideas are new again because they are not old, they are timeless: duty, sacrifice, commitment, and a patriotism that finds its expression in taking part and pitching in.

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

- A. {line:VH248742_8} (“We know . . . good”)
- B. {line:VH248742_9} (“Are . . . sacrifice”)
- C. {line:VH248742_10} (“In our . . . parent”)
- D. {line:VH248742_12} (“We will . . . grows”)

Choice C is the best answer. The previous question asks what Bush suggests that most individuals truly esteem. The answer, that Bush suggests they value personal character more than material acquisitions, is best supported in the second paragraph: “In our hearts we know what matters. We cannot hope only to leave our children a bigger car, a bigger bank account. We must hope to give them a sense of what it means to be a loyal friend, a loving parent.”

Choices A, B, and D are incorrect because the cited lines don’t provide the best evidence for the answer to the previous question. Instead they describe an innate belief in American strength and righteousness (choice A), question rhetorically whether Americans are overly enamored of material wealth (choice B), and outline the necessity of making difficult but wise policy decisions (choice D).

Question Difficulty: Medium

Reading: Question 34

Questions 29-37 are based on the following passage.

This passage is adapted from George H. W. Bush's inaugural address as president of the United States of America. Delivered in 1989.

America today is a proud, free nation, decent and civil, a place we cannot help but love. We know in our hearts, not loudly and proudly, but as a simple fact, that this country has meaning beyond what we see, and that our strength is a force for good. But have we changed as a nation even in our time? Are we enthralled with material things, less appreciative of the nobility of work and sacrifice?

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No President, no government, can teach us to remember what is best in what we are. But if the man you have chosen to lead this government can help make a difference; if he can celebrate the quieter, deeper successes that are made not of gold and silk, but of better hearts and finer souls; if he can do these things, then he must.

America is never wholly herself unless she is engaged in high moral principle. We as a people have such a purpose today. It is to make kinder the face of the Nation and gentler the face of the world. My friends, we have work to do. . . .

The old solution, the old way, was to think that public money alone could end these problems. But we have learned that is not so. And in any case, our funds are low. We have a deficit to bring down. We have more will than wallet; but will is what we need. We will make the hard choices, looking at what we have and perhaps allocating it differently, making our decisions

based on honest need and prudent safety. And then we will do the wisest thing of all: We will turn to the only resource we have that in times of need always grows—the goodness and the courage of the American people.

I am speaking of a new engagement in the lives of others, a new activism, hands-on and involved, that gets the job done. We must bring in the generations, harnessing the unused talent of the elderly and the unfocused energy of the young. For not only leadership is passed from generation to generation, but so is stewardship. And the generation born after the Second World War has come of age.

I have spoken of a thousand points of light, of all the community organizations that are spread like stars throughout the nation, doing good. We will work hand in hand, encouraging, sometimes leading, sometimes being led, rewarding. We will work on this in the White House, in the Cabinet agencies. I will go to the people and the programs that are the brighter points of light, and I will ask every member of my government to become involved. The old ideas are new again because they are not old, they are timeless: duty, sacrifice, commitment, and a patriotism that finds its expression in taking part and pitching in.

Which choice best describes Bush’s view of the “citizen” described in {line:VH248742_13}?

- A. Heartfelt approval
- B. Tempered enthusiasm
- C. Reluctant endorsement
- D. Quiet concern

Choice A is the best answer. In the second paragraph, Bush describes “a citizen who leaves his home, his neighborhood and town better than he found it.” Throughout the passage, Bush extolls the virtues of public service embodied by this citizen, and thus, Bush’s view of him is best described as heartfelt approval.

Choices B and C are incorrect. The citizen described in these lines represents Bush’s ideal American, so his view of this citizen can’t be characterized as tempered enthusiasm (choice B), or reluctant endorsement (choice C). Choice D is incorrect because Bush expresses approval of, not concern for, the citizen described in these lines.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Reading: Question 35

Questions 29-37 are based on the following passage.

This passage is adapted from George H. W. Bush's inaugural address as president of the United States of America. Delivered in 1989.

America today is a proud, free nation, decent and civil, a place we cannot help but love. We know in our hearts, not loudly and proudly, but as a simple fact, that this country has meaning beyond what we see, and that our strength is a force for good. But have we changed as a nation even in our time? Are we enthralled with material things, less appreciative of the nobility of work and sacrifice?

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No President, no government, can teach us to remember what is best in what we are. But if the man you have chosen to lead this government can help make a difference; if he can celebrate the quieter, deeper successes that are made not of gold and silk, but of better hearts and finer souls; if he can do these things, then he must.

America is never wholly herself unless she is engaged in high moral principle. We as a people have such a purpose today. It is to make kinder the face of the Nation and gentler the face of the world. My friends, we have work to do. . . .

The old solution, the old way, was to think that public money alone could end these problems. But we have learned that is not so. And in any case, our funds are low. We have a deficit to bring down. We have more will than wallet; but will is what we need. We will make the hard choices, looking at what we have and perhaps allocating it differently, making our decisions

based on honest need and prudent safety. And then we will do the wisest thing of all: We will turn to the only resource we have that in times of need always grows—the goodness and the courage of the American people.

I am speaking of a new engagement in the lives of others, a new activism, hands-on and involved, that gets the job done. We must bring in the generations, harnessing the unused talent of the elderly and the unfocused energy of the young. For not only leadership is passed from generation to generation, but so is stewardship. And the generation born after the Second World War has come of age.

I have spoken of a thousand points of light, of all the community organizations that are spread like stars throughout the nation, doing good. We will work hand in hand, encouraging, sometimes leading, sometimes being led, rewarding. We will work on this in the White House, in the Cabinet agencies. I will go to the people and the programs that are the brighter points of light, and I will ask every member of my government to become involved. The old ideas are new again because they are not old, they are timeless: duty, sacrifice, commitment, and a patriotism that finds its expression in taking part and pitching in.

What main effect do the phrases “high moral principle” and “make kinder the face of the Nation,” used in the fourth paragraph (line:VH248742_16), have on the tone of the speech?

- A. They create an optimistic tone that tempers Bush’s warnings to listeners about challenges that lie ahead.
- B. They create an inspirational tone that contributes to Bush’s efforts at rallying listeners.
- C. They create an ominous tone that lends gravity to Bush’s call for listeners to change their behavior.
- D. They create a calming tone that reassures Bush’s listeners of the ease with which problems can be overcome.

Choice B is the best answer. In the fourth paragraph, Bush declares, “America is never wholly herself unless she is engaged in high moral principle. We as a people have such a purpose today. It is to make kinder the face of the Nation and gentler the face of the world. My friends, we have work to do.” The phrases “high moral principle” and “make kinder the face of the Nation,” serve to arouse listeners’ sense of purpose and spur them to action. Thus, the main effect of these phrases is that they create an inspirational tone that contributes to Bush’s efforts at rallying listeners.

Choice A is incorrect because the tone of these phrases is best characterized as inspirational, not optimistic, because their purpose is to promote action. Choice C is incorrect because these phrases aren't ominous and are designed to encourage listeners to aspire to their highest ideals. Choice D is incorrect because Bush uses these phrases to animate, not calm, his listeners and says that the problems ahead will be challenging, not easily overcome.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Reading: Question 36

Questions 29-37 are based on the following passage.

This passage is adapted from George H. W. Bush's inaugural address as president of the United States of America. Delivered in 1989.

America today is a proud, free nation, decent and civil, a place we cannot help but love. We know in our hearts, not loudly and proudly, but as a simple fact, that this country has meaning beyond what we see, and that our strength is a force for good. But have we changed as a nation even in our time? Are we enthralled with material things, less appreciative of the nobility of work and sacrifice?

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based on honest need and prudent safety. And then we will do the wisest thing of all: We will turn to the only resource we have that in times of need always grows—the goodness and the courage of the American people.

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In the speech, Bush indicates that at the time of his inauguration, there is a shortage of

- A. financial resources.
- B. political will.
- C. patriotic sentiment.
- D. community organizations.

Choice A is the best answer. In the fifth paragraph of the passage, Bush argues that Americans can't expect public financing to solve their problems. "Our funds are low," he contends. "We have a deficit to bring down." Thus, Bush indicates that at the time of his inauguration, there is a shortage of financial resources.

Choice B is incorrect because Bush states in the fifth paragraph that Americans have a shortage of financial resources, not political will. Choice C is incorrect because, throughout the speech, Bush highlights the patriotism of Americans, rather than suggesting it's in short supply. Choice D is incorrect because in the last paragraph Bush invokes a multitude, not a shortage, of community organizations.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Reading: Question 37

Questions 29-37 are based on the following passage.

This passage is adapted from George H. W. Bush's inaugural address as president of the United States of America. Delivered in 1989.

America today is a proud, free nation, decent and civil, a place we cannot help but love. We know in our hearts, not loudly and proudly, but as a simple fact, that this country has meaning beyond what we see, and that our strength is a force for good. But have we changed as a nation even in our time? Are we enthralled with material things, less appreciative of the nobility of work and sacrifice?

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based on honest need and prudent safety. And then we will do the wisest thing of all: We will turn to the only resource we have that in times of need always grows—the goodness and the courage of the American people.

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In the speech, Bush characterizes himself as someone who will support

- A. government assistance for both the elderly and the very young.
- B. increased citizen involvement in community organizations.
- C. business leaders who possess and act upon a social conscience.
- D. rugged individualism and self-sufficiency for all Americans.

Choice B is the best answer. In the sixth paragraph, Bush speaks of “a new activism” that will encourage greater engagement from both young and old. In the following paragraph, he describes the nation’s community organizations as “a thousand points of light,” declaring, “we will work hand in hand, encouraging, sometimes leading, sometimes being led.” Thus, Bush characterizes himself as someone who will support increased citizen involvement in community organizations.

Choice A is incorrect because Bush calls for a new engagement of the old and young in public service, but doesn’t suggest he will support government assistance for them. Choice C is incorrect because throughout his speech Bush encourages the social conscience of all Americans, not just business leaders. Choice D is incorrect because Bush characterizes himself as someone who will support interdependence among citizens, not rugged individualism and self-sufficiency.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Reading: Question 38

Questions 38-47 are based on the following passages.

Passage 1 is adapted from Stephen Jay Gould, “Cope’s Rule as Psychological Artefact.” ©1997 by Nature Publishing Group. Passage 2 is adapted from Joseph Dussault, “When It Comes to Evolution, Bigger Really Is Better.” ©2015 by The Christian Science Monitor. Both passages consider Cope’s rule, the notion that animal lineages tend to increase in physical size over evolutionary time.

Passage 1

We should ask a basic, emperor’s-new-clothes question about Cope’s rule: is it even true at all? One would think that an issue so fundamental, and so eminently testable, had been conclusively resolved long ago—except for a perverse trait of the human psyche. We tend to pick most “notable” cases out of general pools, often for idiosyncratic reasons that can only distort a proper scientific investigation.

Might not our convictions about the validity of Cope’s rule be a psychological artefact of singling out lineages that display size increase because we all know that “bigger is better”? Such a procedure might provide an example of another pervasive and lamentable bias of human reasoning: our tendency to focus on extremes that intrigue us, rather than full ranges of variation. The obvious test requires that we abandon our habit of selective search for the expected and, instead, study all lineages in large clades with excellent data over substantial geological intervals. David Jablonski has followed this admirable procedure in the most comprehensive set of data ever assembled to test Cope’s rule—and the rule fails in this case.

In 1997, Jablonski studied all 191 bivalve and gastropod lineages of mollusks with sufficient data (including 1,086 species) during 16 million years of Late Cretaceous time for the rich faunas of the Gulf and Atlantic coastal plain of North America. He consistently concentrated on complete ranges of variations, rather than expansion or contraction of extreme values alone.

Jablonski found, first of all, that lineages showing net increase in size (that is, increase in both the smallest and largest species) are no more common than lineages showing net decrease of both the smallest and largest: 27–30% display net increase; 26–27% display net decrease. Moreover, in the additional 25–28% of lineages that show size increase for the largest

species, the smallest species also decrease in size over the same interval—yielding a pattern of expansion in the overall range of variation (at both high and low ends), not a directed trend towards increasing general size. In short, although many individual lineages do show increase in body size, just as many decrease. So a full account of all data provides no support for Cope's rule as a preferential bias for evolution of size.

Passage 2

After conducting an extensive study on size, a Stanford research team found that, over time, marine animal lineages generally evolve to be larger.

The team amassed mountains of data under Stanford paleobiologist Jonathan Payne. The hulking dataset they compiled spans 542 million years, and includes five of the major phyla and over 17,000 genera—about 75 percent of all marine genera in the fossil record, and nearly 60 percent of all animal genera to have ever lived.

Payne says his research seems to support Cope's rule.

“The average animal in the oceans today is 150 times larger in biovolume than the average animal in the oceans during the Cambrian, 540 million years ago,” Payne says. “Prior to our study, it was unknown whether there had been size change and, if so, in what direction or by how much.”

“We [also] found that size did not result from universal selection toward larger size,” Payne adds. “Rather, the classes that were already larger early in the evolution of animal life have diversified differentially across evolutionary time. In other words, our data suggest that larger size favors diversification, rather than that larger sizes are favored in all populations.”

While the overall increase in marine animal size is pretty much indisputable, some scientists argue that size is not a matter of “active selection,” but a result of random, non-selective mutations—a concept known as neutral drift. In other words, neutral drift could cause some lineages to grow in size, but only by chance—that doesn't necessarily mean evolution “favors” size. The neutral drift argument is supported by evidence from bird and insect populations, who have not grown in size as Cope's rule postulates.

“It is possible that Cope's rule applies mainly to marine animals,” Payne admits. “Understanding the underlying causes better will be critical to

determining whether or not we should expect animals in other environments to exhibit the same patterns.”

But Payne says that, at least in this case, neutral drift isn't his culprit.

The main purpose of the first paragraph of Passage 1 is to

- A. cast doubt on the reliability of certain research methods.
- B. present a human tendency for which there is no reasonable explanation.
- C. call into question a scientific concept.
- D. offer new evidence for a traditional theory.

Choice C is the best answer. According to the introduction to the passages, Cope's rule is the notion that animal lineages tend to increase in physical size over evolutionary time. In the first paragraph of Passage 1, the author argues that scientists haven't conclusively proved Cope's rule to be true because a bias toward "notable" cases has distorted their research. Therefore, the main purpose of the first paragraph of Passage 1 is to call into question a scientific concept.

Choice A is incorrect because the first paragraph of Passage 1 focuses on the psychological reasons researchers have generally not challenged Cope's rule, but doesn't cast doubt on research methods that could be used to test it. Choice B is incorrect because the author's reference to the human tendency to be biased toward "notable" cases is a supporting point, not the main purpose of the paragraph. Choice D is incorrect because in the paragraph the author discusses a traditional theory in order to question it, not to offer new evidence for it.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Reading: Question 39

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Might not our convictions about the validity of Cope’s rule be a psychological artefact of singling out lineages that display size increase because we all know that “bigger is better”? Such a procedure might provide an example of another pervasive and lamentable bias of human reasoning: our tendency to focus on extremes that intrigue us, rather than full ranges of variation. The obvious test requires that we abandon our habit of selective search for the expected and, instead, study all lineages in large clades with excellent data over substantial geological intervals. David Jablonski has followed this admirable procedure in the most comprehensive set of data ever assembled to test Cope’s rule—and the rule fails in this case.

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“It is possible that Cope's rule applies mainly to marine animals,” Payne admits. “Understanding the underlying causes better will be critical to

determining whether or not we should expect animals in other environments to exhibit the same patterns.”

But Payne says that, at least in this case, neutral drift isn't his culprit.

As used in {line:VH448427_1}, “cases” most nearly means

- A. arguments.
- B. explanations.
- C. circumstances.
- D. examples.

Choice D is the best answer. The first paragraph of Passage 1 states, “We tend to pick most ‘notable’ cases out of general pools, often for idiosyncratic reasons that can only distort a proper scientific investigation.” In other words, the human tendency to focus on striking examples, or instances, distorts legitimate scientific research. Therefore, the word “cases,” as used in the context of this sentence, most nearly means examples.

Choices A, B, and C are incorrect because in the context of this sentence, “cases” most nearly means examples, not arguments (choice A), explanations (choice B), or circumstances (choice C).

Question Difficulty: Medium

Reading: Question 40

Questions 38-47 are based on the following passages.

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Passage 1

We should ask a basic, emperor’s-new-clothes question about Cope’s rule: is it even true at all? One would think that an issue so fundamental, and so eminently testable, had been conclusively resolved long ago—except for a perverse trait of the human psyche. We tend to pick most “notable” cases out of general pools, often for idiosyncratic reasons that can only distort a proper scientific investigation.

Might not our convictions about the validity of Cope’s rule be a psychological artefact of singling out lineages that display size increase because we all know that “bigger is better”? Such a procedure might provide an example of another pervasive and lamentable bias of human reasoning: our tendency to focus on extremes that intrigue us, rather than full ranges of variation. The obvious test requires that we abandon our habit of selective search for the expected and, instead, study all lineages in large clades with excellent data over substantial geological intervals. David Jablonski has followed this admirable procedure in the most comprehensive set of data ever assembled to test Cope’s rule—and the rule fails in this case.

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Jablonski found, first of all, that lineages showing net increase in size (that is, increase in both the smallest and largest species) are no more common than lineages showing net decrease of both the smallest and largest: 27–30% display net increase; 26–27% display net decrease. Moreover, in the additional 25–28% of lineages that show size increase for the largest

species, the smallest species also decrease in size over the same interval—yielding a pattern of expansion in the overall range of variation (at both high and low ends), not a directed trend towards increasing general size. In short, although many individual lineages do show increase in body size, just as many decrease. So a full account of all data provides no support for Cope's rule as a preferential bias for evolution of size.

Passage 2

After conducting an extensive study on size, a Stanford research team found that, over time, marine animal lineages generally evolve to be larger.

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Payne says his research seems to support Cope's rule.

“The average animal in the oceans today is 150 times larger in biovolume than the average animal in the oceans during the Cambrian, 540 million years ago,” Payne says. “Prior to our study, it was unknown whether there had been size change and, if so, in what direction or by how much.”

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While the overall increase in marine animal size is pretty much indisputable, some scientists argue that size is not a matter of “active selection,” but a result of random, non-selective mutations—a concept known as neutral drift. In other words, neutral drift could cause some lineages to grow in size, but only by chance—that doesn't necessarily mean evolution “favors” size. The neutral drift argument is supported by evidence from bird and insect populations, who have not grown in size as Cope's rule postulates.

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determining whether or not we should expect animals in other environments to exhibit the same patterns.”

But Payne says that, at least in this case, neutral drift isn't his culprit.

As used in {line:VH448427_2}, “proper” most nearly means

- A. distinctive.
- B. relevant.
- C. lawful.
- D. legitimate.

Choice D is the best answer. The first paragraph of Passage 1 states, “We tend to pick most ‘notable’ cases out of general pools, often for idiosyncratic reasons that can only distort a proper scientific investigation.” In other words, the impulse many people have to focus on extreme examples can result in observations that distort legitimate, or valid, scientific research. Therefore, the word “proper,” as used in the context of this sentence, most nearly means legitimate.

Choices A, B, and C are incorrect because in the context of this sentence, “proper” most nearly means legitimate, not distinctive (choice A), relevant (choice B), or lawful (choice C).

Question Difficulty: Easy

Reading: Question 41

Questions 38-47 are based on the following passages.

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Passage 1

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The author of Passage 1 implies that confidence in Cope's rule is the result of

- A. a common tendency that inhibits scientific inquiry.
- B. a reluctance to contradict scientific authorities.
- C.
an arbitrary preference for scientific data that are quantitative rather than observational.
- D. an unwillingness to alter established practices of scientific research.

Choice A is the best answer. In the second paragraph of Passage 1, the author asks, “Might not our convictions about the validity of Cope's rule be a psychological artefact of singling out lineages that display size increase because we all know that ‘bigger is better’?” By posing this question, the author suggests that an everyday bias regarding size has undermined scientific research and led to an unwarranted conviction that Cope's rule is true. Thus, the author of Passage 1 implies that confidence in Cope's rule is the result of a common tendency that inhibits scientific inquiry.

Choices B, C, and D are incorrect because the author of Passage 1 doesn't argue that confidence in Cope's rule is the result of a reluctance to contradict scientific authorities (choice B), an arbitrary preference for scientific data that are quantitative rather than observational (choice C), or an unwillingness to alter established practices of scientific research (choice D).

Question Difficulty: Hard

Reading: Question 42

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Passage 1

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species, the smallest species also decrease in size over the same interval—yielding a pattern of expansion in the overall range of variation (at both high and low ends), not a directed trend towards increasing general size. In short, although many individual lineages do show increase in body size, just as many decrease. So a full account of all data provides no support for Cope’s rule as a preferential bias for evolution of size.

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determining whether or not we should expect animals in other environments to exhibit the same patterns.”

But Payne says that, at least in this case, neutral drift isn't his culprit.

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

- A. {line:VH448427_3} (“We should . . . all”)
- B. {line:VH448427_4} (“Might . . . better”)
- C. {line:VH448427_5} (“He consistently . . . alone”)
- D. {line:VH448427_7} (“So a . . . size”)

Choice B is the best answer. The previous question asks what the author of Passage 1 implies is the cause of confidence in Cope's rule. The answer, that it is the result of a common tendency that inhibits scientific inquiry, is best supported in the second paragraph of Passage 1: “Might not our convictions about the validity of Cope's rule be a psychological artefact of singling out lineages that display size increase because we all know that ‘bigger is better’?”

Choices A, C, and D are incorrect because the cited lines don't provide the best evidence for the answer to the previous question. Instead, they introduce the notion that Cope's rule is unfounded (choice A), note the breadth of Jablonski's study (choice C), and conclude that Jablonski's study provides no support for Cope's rule (choice D).

Question Difficulty: Hard

Reading: Question 43

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According to Passage 2, scientists who support the neutral drift argument believe that the overall increase in the size of marine animal life is due to the

- A. random survival of mutations that affect size within particular lineages.
- B. direct influence of evolutionary selection on animal populations.
- C. cumulative effect of long-term shifts in environmental conditions.
- D. psychological biases that often affect researchers' observations.

Choice A is the best answer. According to the sixth paragraph of Passage 2, proponents of the neutral drift argument hold that “random, non-selective mutations . . . could cause some lineages to grow in size.” Thus, according to Passage 2, scientists who support the neutral drift argument believe that the overall increase in the size of marine animal life is due to the random survival of mutations that affect size within particular lineages.

Choices B and C are incorrect because, according to Passage 2, scientists who support the neutral drift argument attribute size increases to the random survival of mutations, not the direct influence of evolutionary selection (choice B), or the cumulative effect of long-term shifts in environmental conditions (choice C). Choice D is incorrect because psychological biases are only discussed in Passage 1, not in Passage 2.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Reading: Question 44

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Which choice best states the relationship between the two passages?

- A. Passage 2 disputes the scientific foundation of the work reported in Passage 1.
- B. Passage 2 describes evidence in support of a concept that Passage 1 challenges.
- C. Passage 2 discusses an experiment that Passage 1 rejects as inconclusive.
- D. Passage 2 expands upon the preliminary results of a study outlined in Passage 1.

Choice B is the best answer. Both passages discuss Cope's rule, the notion that animal lineages tend to increase in physical size over evolutionary time. The author of Passage 1 questions the validity of Cope's rule, while the author of Passage 2 describes a study that supports Cope's rule. Therefore, the choice that best states the relationship between the two passages is: Passage 2 describes evidence in support of a concept that Passage 1 challenges.

Choices A, C, and D are incorrect. Passage 2 doesn't mention the specific research described in Passage 1 or dispute its scientific foundation (choice A), nor does it discuss an experiment it rejects as inconclusive (choice C), or expand upon the preliminary results of a study outlined in Passage 1 (choice D).

Question Difficulty: Medium

Reading: Question 45

Questions 38-47 are based on the following passages.

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Passage 2

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Which statement best identifies the overall structures of the two passages?

- A.
Passage 1 explores a sequence of contrasting arguments, while Passage 2 explores a single argument throughout.
- B.
Passage 1 supports a position with a series of generalizations, while Passage 2 supports a position through a detailed analysis of scientific data.
- C.
Passage 1 considers a topic solely from a historical perspective, while Passage 2 alternates between historical and contemporary perspectives.
- D.
Passage 1 shifts from a theoretical discussion to an analysis of specific results, while Passage 2 presents concrete results and then concedes the limitations of a theory that may explain them.

Choice D is the best answer. In Passage 1, the first and second paragraphs contend that human biases have distorted research supporting Cope's rule, while the third and fourth paragraphs discuss a study that contradicts Cope's rule. Conversely, in Passage 2, the first five paragraphs describe a study of marine animals that supports Cope's rule, while the sixth through eighth paragraphs concede that Cope's rule hasn't been observed outside of marine populations. Hence, the statement that best identifies the overall structures of the two passages is: Passage 1 shifts from a theoretical discussion to an analysis of specific results, while Passage 2 presents concrete results and then concedes the limitations of a theory that may explain them.

Choice A is incorrect because Passage 1 explores a single theory and contrasting argument, not a sequence of contrasting arguments, while Passage 2 explores several interrelated ideas, rather than a single argument. Choice B is incorrect because Passage 1, like Passage 2, supports a position through a detailed analysis of scientific data, not a series of generalizations. Choice C is incorrect because neither passage discusses a topic from a historical perspective.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Reading: Question 46

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Passage 1

We should ask a basic, emperor’s-new-clothes question about Cope’s rule: is it even true at all? One would think that an issue so fundamental, and so eminently testable, had been conclusively resolved long ago—except for a perverse trait of the human psyche. We tend to pick most “notable” cases out of general pools, often for idiosyncratic reasons that can only distort a proper scientific investigation.

Might not our convictions about the validity of Cope’s rule be a psychological artefact of singling out lineages that display size increase because we all know that “bigger is better”? Such a procedure might provide an example of another pervasive and lamentable bias of human reasoning: our tendency to focus on extremes that intrigue us, rather than full ranges of variation. The obvious test requires that we abandon our habit of selective search for the expected and, instead, study all lineages in large clades with excellent data over substantial geological intervals. David Jablonski has followed this admirable procedure in the most comprehensive set of data ever assembled to test Cope’s rule—and the rule fails in this case.

In 1997, Jablonski studied all 191 bivalve and gastropod lineages of mollusks with sufficient data (including 1,086 species) during 16 million years of Late Cretaceous time for the rich faunas of the Gulf and Atlantic coastal plain of North America. He consistently concentrated on complete ranges of variations, rather than expansion or contraction of extreme values alone.

Jablonski found, first of all, that lineages showing net increase in size (that is, increase in both the smallest and largest species) are no more common than lineages showing net decrease of both the smallest and largest: 27–30% display net increase; 26–27% display net decrease. Moreover, in the additional 25–28% of lineages that show size increase for the largest

species, the smallest species also decrease in size over the same interval—yielding a pattern of expansion in the overall range of variation (at both high and low ends), not a directed trend towards increasing general size. In short, although many individual lineages do show increase in body size, just as many decrease. So a full account of all data provides no support for Cope's rule as a preferential bias for evolution of size.

Passage 2

After conducting an extensive study on size, a Stanford research team found that, over time, marine animal lineages generally evolve to be larger.

The team amassed mountains of data under Stanford paleobiologist Jonathan Payne. The hulking dataset they compiled spans 542 million years, and includes five of the major phyla and over 17,000 genera—about 75 percent of all marine genera in the fossil record, and nearly 60 percent of all animal genera to have ever lived.

Payne says his research seems to support Cope's rule.

“The average animal in the oceans today is 150 times larger in biovolume than the average animal in the oceans during the Cambrian, 540 million years ago,” Payne says. “Prior to our study, it was unknown whether there had been size change and, if so, in what direction or by how much.”

“We [also] found that size did not result from universal selection toward larger size,” Payne adds. “Rather, the classes that were already larger early in the evolution of animal life have diversified differentially across evolutionary time. In other words, our data suggest that larger size favors diversification, rather than that larger sizes are favored in all populations.”

While the overall increase in marine animal size is pretty much indisputable, some scientists argue that size is not a matter of “active selection,” but a result of random, non-selective mutations—a concept known as neutral drift. In other words, neutral drift could cause some lineages to grow in size, but only by chance—that doesn't necessarily mean evolution “favors” size. The neutral drift argument is supported by evidence from bird and insect populations, who have not grown in size as Cope's rule postulates.

“It is possible that Cope's rule applies mainly to marine animals,” Payne admits. “Understanding the underlying causes better will be critical to

determining whether or not we should expect animals in other environments to exhibit the same patterns.”

But Payne says that, at least in this case, neutral drift isn't his culprit.

The author of Passage 1 would most likely have considered the data set used for Payne's study in Passage 2 to be

- A. exemplary, because Payne excluded data that had been identified as statistically problematic.
- B. promising, because Payne's analysis was wide-ranging and encompassing.
- C. acceptable, because Payne considered differences between marine and terrestrial species.
- D. deficient, because Payne analyzed only 75 percent of all marine animals.

Choice B is the best answer. The second paragraph of Passage 1 states, “The obvious test requires that we . . . study all lineages in large clades with excellent data over substantial geological intervals.” Meanwhile, the second paragraph of Passage 2 describes the research compiled by Payne as a “hulking dataset . . . [that] spans 542 million years, and includes five of the major phyla and over 17,000 genera—about 75 percent of all marine genera in the fossil record, and nearly 60 percent of all animal genera to have ever lived.” Therefore, the author of Passage 1 would most likely have considered the data set used for Payne's study in Passage 2 to be promising because Payne's analysis was wide-ranging and encompassing.

Choice A is incorrect because the author of Passage 1 would have most likely approved of Payne's study for its inclusion, rather than exclusion, of data. Choice C is incorrect because Payne's study considered only marine, not terrestrial, species. Choice D is incorrect because the author of Passage 1 proposes future studies must be wide-ranging and encompassing, not all-inclusive. Hence, he would most likely have considered Payne's analysis of 75% of all marine animals sufficient, rather than deficient.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Reading: Question 47

Questions 38-47 are based on the following passages.

Passage 1 is adapted from Stephen Jay Gould, “Cope’s Rule as Psychological Artefact.” ©1997 by Nature Publishing Group. Passage 2 is adapted from Joseph Dussault, “When It Comes to Evolution, Bigger Really Is Better.” ©2015 by The Christian Science Monitor. Both passages consider Cope’s rule, the notion that animal lineages tend to increase in physical size over evolutionary time.

Passage 1

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Passage 2

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determining whether or not we should expect animals in other environments to exhibit the same patterns.”

But Payne says that, at least in this case, neutral drift isn't his culprit.

Which choice from Passage 1 provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?

- A. {line:VH448427_15} (“We tend . . . investigation”)
- B. {line:VH448427_16} (“Such . . . variation”)
- C. {line:VH448427_17} (“The obvious . . . intervals”)
- D. {line:VH448427_18} (“Jablonski . . . decrease”)

Choice C is the best answer. The previous question asks how the author of Passage 1 would most likely have assessed the data used for the study in Passage 2. The answer, that he would have considered the data set to be promising because Payne's analysis was wide-ranging and encompassing, is best supported in the second paragraph of Passage 1: “The obvious test requires that we abandon our habit of selective search for the expected and, instead, study all lineages in large clades with excellent data over substantial geological intervals.”

Choices A, B, and D are incorrect because the cited lines don't provide the best evidence for the answer to the previous question. Instead, they note how the tendency to overemphasize the importance of extreme examples can bias scientific observations (choice A), suggest that this tendency may have distorted research to support Cope's rule (choice B), and relate findings that contradict Cope's rule (choice D).

Question Difficulty: Hard