

Exercise Reading Comprehension

A. Fill in the blank

1. Psychology has slowly evolved into an scientific discipline that now functions autonomously with the same privileges and responsibilities as other sciences.
 - A. Independent
 - B. Unusual
 - C. Outmoded
 - D. Uncontrolled
 - E. Inactive

2. A major goal of law, to deter potential criminals by punishing wrongdoers, is not served when the penalty is so seldom invoked that it to be a threat.
 - A. Tends ... serious
 - B. Appears ... real
 - C. Ceases ... credible
 - D. Fails ... deceptive
 - E. Seems ... coercive

3. When people are happy, they tend to give ... interpretations of events they witness: the eye of the beholder is ... by the emotions of the beholder.
 - A. Charitable ... colored
 - B. Elaborate ... disquieted
 - C. Conscientious ... deceived
 - D. Vague ... sharpened
 - E. Coherent ... confused

4. Even those who disagreed with Carmen's views rarely faulted her for expressing them, for the positions she took were as ... as they were controversial.
 - A. Complicated
 - B. Political
 - C. Subjective
 - D. Commonplace
 - E. Thoughtful

5. New research on technology and public policy focuses on how seemingly ... design features, generally overlooked in most analyses of public works projects or industrial machinery, actually ... social choices of profound significance.
 - A. Insignificant ... mask
 - B. Inexpensive ... produce
 - C. Innovative ... represent

- D. Ingenious ... permit
 - E. Inopportune ... hasten
6. Paradoxically, Robinson's excessive denials of the worth of early works of science fiction suggest that she has become quite ... them.
- A. Reflective about
 - B. Enamored of
 - C. Skeptical of
 - D. Encouraged by
 - E. Offended by
7. Cézanne's delicate watercolor sketches often served as ... of a subject, a way of gathering fuller knowledge before the artist's final engagement of the subject in an oil painting.
- A. An abstraction
 - B. An enhancement
 - C. A synthesis
 - D. A reconnaissance
 - E. A transcription

B. Select the pair that best expresses a relationship similar to that expressed in the original pair

1. Grazing : foragers
- A. Skipping : readers
 - B. Strolling : prisoners
 - C. Weeding : gardeners
 - D. Stalking : hunters
 - E. Resting : pickers
2. Pertinent : relevance
- A. Insistent : rudeness
 - B. Benevolent : perfection
 - C. Redundant : superfluity
 - D. Prevalent : universality
 - E. Aberrant : uniqueness
3. Assert : belabor
- A. Tend : fuss
 - B. Refine : temper
 - C. Describe : demean
 - D. Resemble : portray
 - E. Contaminate : purge

4. Transgression : morality
 - A. Mistake : probity
 - B. Invitation : hospitality
 - C. Gift : generosity
 - D. Presumption : propriety
 - E. Misconception : curiosity

5. Plummet : fall
 - A. Radiate : glow
 - B. Converge : attract
 - C. Flounder : move
 - D. Swerve : turn
 - E. Flow : ebb

C. Answer questions based on this passage

Ragtime is a musical form that synthesizes folk melodies and musical techniques into a brief quadrille-like structure, designed to be played – exactly as written – on the piano. A strong analogy exists between European composers like Ralph Vaughan Williams, Edvard Grieg, and Anton Dvorak who combined folk tunes and their own original materials in larger compositions and the pioneer ragtime composers in the United States. Composers like Scott Joplin and James Scott were in a sense collectors or musicologists, collecting dance and folk music in Black communities and consciously shaping it into brief suites or anthologies called piano rags.

It has sometimes been charged that ragtime is mechanical. For instance, Wilfred Mellers comments, “rags were transferred to the pianola roll and, even if not played by a machine, should be played *like* a machine, with meticulous precision.” However, there is no reason to assume that ragtime is inherently mechanical simply because commercial manufacturers applied a mechanical recording method to ragtime, the only way to record pianos at that date. Ragtime’s is not a mechanical precision, and it is not precision limited to the style of performance. It arises from ragtime’s following a well-defined form and obeying simple rules within that form.

The classic formula for the piano rag disposes three to five themes in sixteen-bar strains, often organized with repeats. The rag opens with a bright, memorable strain or theme, followed by a similar theme, leading to a trio of marked lyrical character, with the structure concluded by a lyrical strain that parallels the rhythmic developments of the earlier themes. The aim of the structure is to rise from one theme to another in a stair-step manner, ending on a note of triumph or exhilaration. Typically, each strain is divided into two 8-bar segments that are essentially alike, so the rhythmic-melodic unit of ragtime is only eight bars of 2/4 measure. Therefore, themes must be brief with clear, sharp melodic figures. Not concerned with development of musical themes, the ragtime composer instead sets a theme down intact, in finished form, and links it to various related themes. Tension in ragtime compositions arises from a polarity between two basic ingredients: a continuous base – called by jazz musicians a boom-chick bass – in the pianist’s left hand, and its melodic, syncopated counter-part in the right hand.

Ragtime remains distinct from jazz both as an instrumental style and as a genre. Ragtime style stresses a pattern of repeated rhythms, not the constant inventions and variations of jazz. As a genre, ragtime requires strict attention to structure, not inventiveness or virtuosity. It exists as a tradition, a set of conventions, a body of written scores, separate from the individual players associated with it. In the sense ragtime is more akin to folk music of the nineteenth century than to jazz.

1. Which of the following best described the main purpose of the passage?
 - A. To contrast ragtime music and jazz
 - B. To acknowledge and counter significant adverse criticisms of ragtime music
 - C. To define ragtime music as an art form and describe its structural characteristics
 - D. To review the history of ragtime music and analyze ragtime's effect on listeners
 - E. To explore the similarities between ragtime music and certain European musical compositions
2. According to the passage, each of the following is a characteristic of ragtime compositions that follow the classic ragtime formula EXCEPT
 - A. Syncopation
 - B. Well-defined melodic figures
 - C. Rising rhythmic-melodic intensity
 - D. Full development of musical themes
 - E. A bass line distinct from the melodic line
3. According to the passage, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Anton Dvorak and Scott Joplin are similar in that they all
 - A. Conducted research into musicological history
 - B. Wrote original compositions based on folk tunes
 - C. Collected and recorded abbreviated piano suites
 - D. Created intricate sonata-like musical structures
 - E. Explored the relations between Black music and continental folk music
4. The author rejects the argument that ragtime is a mechanical music because that argument
 - A. Overlooks the precision required of the ragtime player
 - B. Does not accurately describe the sound of ragtime pianola music
 - C. Confuses the means of recording and the essential character of the music
 - D. Exaggerates the influence of the performance style of professional ragtime players on the reputation of the genre
 - E. Improperly identifies commercial ragtime music with the subtler classic ragtime style
5. It can be inferred that the author of the passage believes that the most important feature of ragtime music is its
 - A. Commercial success
 - B. Formal structure
 - C. Emotional range

- D. Improvisational opportunities
 - E. Role as a forerunner of jazz
6. It can be inferred from the passage that the essential nature of ragtime has been obscured by commentaries based on
- A. The way ragtime music was first recorded
 - B. Interpretations of ragtime by jazz musicians
 - C. The dance fashions that were contemporary with ragtime
 - D. Early reviewers' accounts of characteristic structure
 - E. The musical sources used by Scott Joplin and James Scott
7. Which of the following is most nearly analogous in source and artistic character to a ragtime composition as described in the passage?
- A. Symphonic music derived from complex jazz motifs
 - B. An experimental novel based on well-known cartoon characters
 - C. A dramatic production in which actors invent scenes and improvise lines
 - D. A ballet whose disciplined choreography is based on folk-dance steps
 - E. A painting whose abstract shapes evoke familiar objects in a natural landscape

Answer the questions based on this paragraph:

Reviving the practice of using elements of popular music in classical composition, an approach that had been in hibernation in the United States during the 1960s, composer Philip Glass (born 1937) embraced the ethos of popular music in his compositions. Glass based two symphonies on music by rock musicians David Bowie and Brian Eno, but the symphonies' sound is distinctively his. Popular elements do not appear out of place in Glass's classical music, which from its early days has shared certain harmonies and rhythms with rock music. Yet this use of popular elements has not made Glass a composer of popular music. His music is not a version of popular music packaged to attract classical listeners; it is high art for listeners steeped in rock rather than the classics.

Select only one answer choice.

1. The passage addresses which of the following issues related to Glass's use of popular elements in his classical compositions?
 - A. How it is regarded by listeners who prefer rock to the classics
 - B. How it has affected the commercial success of Glass's music
 - C. Whether it has contributed to a revival of interest among other composers in using popular elements in their compositions
 - D. Whether it has had a detrimental effect on Glass's reputation as a composer of classical music
 - E. Whether it has caused certain of Glass's works to be derivative in quality

Consider each of the three choices separately and select all that apply.

2. The passage suggests that Glass's work displays which of the following qualities?
 - A. A return to the use of popular music in classical compositions
 - B. An attempt to elevate rock music to an artistic status more closely approximating that of classical music
 - C. A long-standing tendency to incorporate elements from two apparently disparate musical styles
3. Select the sentence that distinguishes two ways of integrating rock and classical music.

Answer the questions based on these two passages.

Passage 1

I experienced a shock when I saw a curtain go up for the first time. My mother had taken me to see a play at the Schubert Theater on Lenox Avenue in Harlem in New York City. Here were living people talking to one another inside a large ship whose deck actually heaved up and down with the swells of the sea. By this time I had been going to the movies every Saturday afternoon – Charlie Chaplin’s little comedies, adventure serials, Westerns. Yet once you knew how they worked, movies, unlike the stage, left the mind’s grasp of reality intact since the happenings were not in the theater where you sat. But to see the deck of the ship in the theater moving up and down, and people appearing at the top of a ladder or disappearing through a door – where did they come from and where did they go? Obviously into and out of the real world of Lenox Avenue. This was alarming.

And so I learned that there were two kinds of reality, but that the stage was far more real. As the play’s melodramatic story developed, I began to feel anxious, for there was a villain on board who had a bomb and intended to blow everybody up. All over the stage people were looking for him but he appeared, furtive and silent, only when the searchers were facing the other way. They looked for him behind posts and boxes and on top of beams, even after the audience had seen him jump into a barrel and pull the lid over him. People were yelling, “He’s in the barrel,” but the passengers were deaf. What anguish! The bomb would go off any minute, and I kept clawing at my mother’s arm, at the same time glancing at the theater’s walls to make sure that the whole thing was not really real. The villain was finally caught, and we happily walked out onto sunny Lenox Avenue, saved again.

Passage 2

I was six years old when I saw my first play at the Old Drury. Upon entering the theater, the first thing I beheld was the green curtain that veiled a heaven to my imagination. What breathless anticipations I endured! I had seen something like it in an edition of Shakespeare, an illustration of the tent scene with Diomedes in *Troilus and Cressida*. (A sight of that image can always bring back in a measure the feeling of that evening.) The balconies at that time, full of well-dressed men and women, projected over the orchestra pit; and the pilasters reaching down were adorned with a glistening substance resembling sugar candy. The orchestra lights at length rose. Once the bell sounded. It was to ring out yet again – and, incapable of the anticipation, I reposed my shut eyes in a sort of resignation upon my mother’s lap. It rang the second time. The curtain drew up – and the play was *Artaxerxes*! Here was the court of ancient Persia. I took no proper interest in the action going on, for I understood not its import. Instead, all my feeling was absorbed in vision. Gorgeous costumes, gardens, palaces, princesses, passed before me. It was all enchantment and a dream.

After the intervention of six or seven years I again entered the doors of a theater. That old *Artaxerxes* evening had never done ringing in my fancy. I expected the same feelings to come again with

the same occasion. But we differ from ourselves less at sixty and sixteen, than the latter does from six. In that interval what had I not lost! At six I knew nothing, understood nothing, discriminated nothing. I felt all, loved all, wondered all. I could not tell how, but I had left the temple a devotee, and was returned a rationalist. The same things were there materially; but the emblem, the reference, was gone. The green curtain was no longer a veil, drawn between two worlds, the unfolding of which was to bring back past ages, but a certain quantity of green material, which was to separate the audience for a given time from certain of their fellows who were to come forward and pretend those parts. The lights – the orchestra lights – came up a clumsy machinery. The first ring, and the second ring, was now but a trick of the prompter's bell. The actors were men and women painted. I thought the fault was in them; but it was in myself, and the alteration which those many centuries – those six short years – had wrought in me.

Questions

1. What do the 'happenings' in passage 1 refer to?

2. Explain: 'left the mind's grasp of reality intact'

3. What is the function of the bell mentioned in passage 2?

4. Explain the underlined sentence in passage 2.

5. What emotion does the author express in the final sentence of passage 2?
6. Where would we situate both passages in history? How do we deduce this?
7. What is the main difference between the narratives of passage 1 and passage 2?