

ACT Reading Exam

Volume: 85 Questions

Scenario 1

After reading a passage, choose the best answer from the choices given.

There was nothing of the giant in the aspect of the man who was beginning to awaken on the sleeping-porch of a Dutch Colonial house in that residential district of Zenith known as Floral Heights. His name was George A. Babbitt. He was forty-six years old now, in April, 1920, and he made nothing in particular, neither butter nor shoes nor poetry, but he was nimble in the calling of selling houses for more than people could afford to pay.

His large head was pink, his brown hair thin and dry. His face was babyish in slumber, despite its wrinkles and the red spectacle-dents on the slopes of his nose. He was not fat but he was exceedingly well fed; his cheeks were pads, and the unroughened hand which lay helpless upon the khaki-colored blanket was slightly puffy. He seemed prosperous, extremely married and unromantic; and altogether unromantic appeared this sleeping-porch, which looked on one sizable elm, two respectable grass-plots, a cement driveway, and a corrugated iron garage.

Yet Babbitt was again dreaming of the fairy child, a dream more romantic than scarlet pagodas by a silver sea. For years the fairy child had come to him. Where others saw but Georgie Babbitt, she discerned gallant youth. She waited for him, in the darkness beyond mysterious groves. When at last he could slip away from the crowded house he darted to her. His wife, his clamoring friends, sought to follow, but he escaped, the girl fleet beside him, and they crouched together on a shadowy hillside.

She was so slim, so white, so eager! She cried that he was gay and valiant, that she would wait for him, that they would sail Rumble and bang of the milk-truck. Babbitt moaned; turned over; struggled back toward his dream. He could see only her face now, beyond misty waters. The furnace-man slammed the basement door. A dog barked in the next yard. As Babbitt sank blissfully into a dim warm tide, the paper-carrier went by whistling, and the rolled-up Advocate thumped the front door. Babbitt roused, his stomach constricted with alarm. As he relaxed, he was pierced by the familiar and irritating rattle of some one cranking a Ford: snap-ah-ah, snap-ah-ah, snap-ah-ac. Himself a pious motorist, Babbitt cranked with the unseen driver, with him waited through taut hours for the roar of the starting engine, with him agonized as the roar ceased and again began the infernal patient snap-ah-ah—a round, flat sound, a shivering cold-morning sound, a sound infuriating and inescapable. Not till the rising voice of the motor told him that the Ford was moving was he released from the panting tension. He glanced once at his favorite tree, elm twigs against the gold patina of sky, and fumbled for sleep as for a drub. He who had been a boy very credulous of life was no longer greatly interested in the possible and improbable adventures of each new day.

He escaped from reality till the alarm-clock rang, at seven-twenty.

It was the best of nationally advertised and quantitatively produced alarm-clocks, with all modern attachments, including cathedral chime, intermittent alarm, and a phosphorescent dial. Babbitt was proud of being awakened by such a rich device. Socially it was almost as creditable as buying expensive cord tires.

He sulkily admitted now that there was no more escape, but he lay and detested the grind of the

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real-estate business, and disliked his family, and disliked himself for disliking them. The evening before, he had played poker at Vergil Gunch's till midnight, and after such holidays he was irritable before breakfast. It may have been the tremendous home-brewed beer of the prohibitionera and the cigars to which that beer enticed him; it may have been resentment of return from this fine, bold man-world to a restricted region of wives and stenographers, and of suggestions not to smoke so much.

From the bedroom beside the sleeping-porch, his wife's detestably cheerful "Time to get up, Georgie boy," and the itchy sound, the brisk and scratchy sound, of combing hairs out of a stiff brush.

He grunted; he dragged his thick legs, in faded baby-blue pajamas, from under the khaki blanket; he sat on the edge of the cot, running his fingers through his wild hair, while his plump feet mechanically felt for his slippers. He looked regretfully at the blanket—forever a suggestion to him of freedom and heroism. He had bought it for a camping trip which had never come off. It symbolized gorgeous loafing, gorgeous cursing, virile flannel shirts.

Question No: 1

What physical attributes of George Babbitt can be inferred from the passage?

- A. He is overweight.
- B. He is skinny.
- C. He is of average build.
- D. He is very tall.

Answer: C

Explanation:

The best way to handle this question is to go through the possible answers and eliminate the incorrect ones. The first line states that "there is nothing of the giant" in Babbitt, which eliminates choice d, because he was not tall. 2nd paragraph says he was not fat, but he was "well fed," which eliminates his being overweight (choice a) or skinny (choice b).

Question No: 2

According to the passage, George Babbitt is:

- A. a poet.
- B. a shoemaker.

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C. a real estate broker.

D. unemployed.

Answer: C

Explanation:

The passage rattles off a number of occupations that Babbitt does not perform, but lines 5-6 says what he does do: sell houses.

Question No: 3

It can be inferred from the passage that George Babbitt is:

A. good at his job.

B. lazy.

C. a hard worker.

D. overworked.

Answer: A

Explanation:

The reader knows that on this particular day, Babbitt is having a difficult time getting out of bed. Does this mean he is lazy? It could, but later we learn that the poker game he went to the night before may have something to do with it. We are never given any indication that Babbitt works hard at his job, but the 1st paragraph say he was “nimble in the calling of selling houses for more than people could afford to pay.” In other words, that he was good at his job, not that he worked hard at it.

Question No: 4

What can be inferred from the passage about Babbitt’s relationship with his wife?

A. It is romantic and passionate.

B. They openly dislike each other.

C. They have no strong feelings about each other.

D. Babbitt dislikes his wife and feels guilty about it.

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Answer: D

Explanation:

This question asks that you infer something about the relationship that Babbitt has with his wife by paying attention to how they interact. We know that they do not openly dislike each other because Babbitt's wife tries to wake him by cheerfully calling him "Georgie boy." But in the same line Babbitt refers to this cheerfulness as detestable to him, so we know it is not romantic and passionate, but that Babbitt has strong feelings about his wife (thus eliminating choices f and h as possible answers).

Question No: 5

As it is used in line 31, the word patina most nearly means:

- A. the pattern of clouds in the sky.
- B. the pattern of the elm tree branches.
- C. the shine of the sky.
- D. the color of the sky.

Answer: D

Explanation:

The biggest clue that the meaning of patina is color is the fact that the word gold immediately precedes it.

Question No: 6

Which is the first noise to wake Babbitt from his sleep?

- A. his alarm clock
- B. a milk truck
- C. the paperboy
- D. a car starting

Answer: B

Explanation:

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There are many things that wake Babbitt from his sleep. We know that the noise of the milk truck wakes him because the next line is “Babbitt moaned; turned over; struggled back toward his dream.” All the other options may have woken Babbitt, but choice B is the first and therefore correct.

Question No: 7

The blanket in the last paragraph represents what to Babbitt?

- A. a manly freedom that he has had to abandon
- B. beauty over practicality
- C. warmth and comfort
- D. the sleep to which he wishes to return

Answer: A

Explanation:

It is perfectly clear that Babbitt wishes to return to sleep, but this fact has nothing to do with his blanket. His blanket may indeed offer him warmth and comfort, but the passage does not say as much and we know that Babbitt bought this blanket for a camping trip he never took.

Question No: 8

Which of the following best explains Babbitt’s reluctance to get out of bed?

- I. He dislikes his job.
- II. He has a hangover.
- III. He has had a fight with his wife.

- A. I and II
- B. I only
- C. II only
- D. I, II, and III

Answer: A

Explanation:

When the alarm goes off, what keeps Babbitt in bed is stated in the passage, that he “detested

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the grind of the real-estate business.” This makes it clear that Babbitt hates his job. And although the next line refers to his dislike of his family, we cannot assume that he is in a fight with his wife (she seems cheerful enough when she calls him “Georgie boy” to wake him). We also learn in the lines immediately following that he went to a poker game and drank too much beer, so it is safe to assume that he has a hangover.

Question No: 9

The young girl in Babbitt’s dream best symbolizes what desire?

- A. to return to sleep
- B. to be young and free from his workaday world
- C. the love he once had for his wife
- D. his desire to move out of the suburbs

Answer: B

Explanation:

The passage give the best clues as to the meaning of Babbitt’s dream. The fairy sees Babbitt as nobody else: a “gallant youth,” or young. He also escapes from his wife and friends who attempt to follow him in this dream (he is free).

Question No: 10

The lines “He who had been a boy very credulous of life was no longer greatly interested in the possible and improbable adventures of each new day” (at the end of 4th paragraph) most closely means:

- A. as a child, Babbitt was optimistic about life, but he now believes they will always be the same.
- B. Babbitt has never seen the possibilities of life.
- C. Babbitt has always looked forward to each new day.
- D. as a boy Babbitt was pessimistic about his life, but now sees its possibilities.

Answer: A

Explanation:

This question asks you to find a more succinct way of stating at the end of 4th paragraph, which

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basically say that as a boy Babbitt was more interested in life. Even if you do not know what the word credulous means here, you can still assume that it is something different from the way he is now just from the way the sentence is phrased. We know that now he is not interested in life, or “each new day.”

Scenario 2

There are two types of diabetes, insulin-dependent and non-insulin-dependent. Between 90 and 95 percent of the estimated 13 to 14 million people in the United States with diabetes have noninsulin-dependent, or Type II, diabetes. Because this form of diabetes usually begins in adults over the age of 40 and is most common after the age of 55, it used to be called adult-onset diabetes. Its symptoms often develop gradually and are hard to identify at first; therefore, nearly half of all people with diabetes do not know they have it. Someone who has developed Type II diabetes may feel tired or ill without knowing why, a circumstance which can be particularly dangerous because untreated diabetes can cause damage to the heart, blood vessels, eyes, kidneys, and nerves.

While the causes, short-term effects, and treatments of the two types of diabetes differ, both types can cause the same long-term health problems.

Most importantly, both types of diabetes affect the body’s ability to use digested food for energy. Diabetes does not interfere with digestion, but it does prevent the body from using an important product of digestion, glucose (commonly known as sugar), for energy. After a meal, the normal digestive system extracts glucose from some foods. The blood carries the glucose or sugar throughout the body, causing blood glucose levels to rise. In response to this rise, the hormone insulin is released into the bloodstream and signals the body tissues to metabolize or burn the glucose for fuel, which causes blood glucose levels to return to normal. The glucose that the body does not use right away is stored in the liver, muscle, or fat.

In both types of diabetes, this normal process malfunctions. A gland called the pancreas, found just behind the stomach, makes insulin. In patients with insulin-dependent diabetes, the pancreas does not produce insulin at all. This condition usually begins in childhood and is known as Type I (formerly called juvenile-onset) diabetes. These patients must have daily insulin injections to survive. People with non-insulin-dependent diabetes usually produce some insulin in their pancreas, but the body’s tissues do not respond very well to the insulin signal and therefore do not metabolize the glucose properly—a condition known as insulin resistance.

Insulin resistance is an important factor in non-insulin-dependent diabetes, and scientists are researching the causes of insulin resistance. They have identified two possibilities. The first is that there could be a defect in the insulin receptors on cells. Like an appliance that needs to be plugged into an electrical outlet, insulin has to bind to a receptor in order to function. Several things can go wrong with receptors. For example, there may not be enough receptors for insulin to bind to, or a defect in the receptors may prevent insulin from binding. The second possible cause of insulin resistance is that, although insulin may bind to the receptors, the cells may not read the signal to metabolize the glucose. Scientists continue to study these cells to see why this might happen.

There is no cure for diabetes yet. However, there are ways to alleviate its symptoms. In 1986, a

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National Institutes of Health panel of experts recommended that the best treatment for noninsulin dependent diabetes is a diet that helps one maintain a normal weight and pays particular attention to a proper balance of the different food groups. Many experts, including those in the American Diabetes Association, recommend that 50 to 60 percent of daily calories come from carbohydrates, 12 to 20 percent from protein, and no more than 30 percent from fat. Foods that are rich in carbohydrates, such as breads, cereals, fruits, and vegetables, break down into glucose during digestion, causing blood glucose to rise. Additionally, studies have shown that cooked foods raise blood glucose higher than raw, unpeeled foods. A doctor or nutritionist should always be consulted for more information and for help in planning a diet to offset the effects of this form of diabetes.

Question No: 11

According to the passage, the most dangerous aspect of Type II diabetes is:

- A. the daily insulin shots that are needed for treatment of Type II diabetes
- B. that Type II diabetes may go undetected and, therefore, untreated
- C. that in Type II diabetes, the pancreas does not produce insulin
- D. that Type II diabetes interferes with digestion

Answer: B

Explanation:

The answer to this question lies in the 1st paragraph of the passage, which states that people with Type II diabetes “may feel tired or ill without knowing why, a circumstance which can be particularly dangerous because untreated diabetes can cause damage to the heart, blood vessels, eyes, kidneys, and nerves.” Therefore choice b is correct. Choices a and c are incorrect because they are not examples of the danger of diabetes, but rather facts relating to the disease. Choice d is an incorrect statement; the passage states that diabetes does not interfere with digestion.

Question No: 12

The author of the passage compares Type I and Type II diabetes and states which of the following the same are for both?

- A. treatments
- B. long-term health risks
- C. short-term effects

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D. causes

Answer: A

Explanation:

The first paragraph of the passage discusses both types of diabetes and the last line states: "both types can cause the same long-term health problems."

Question No: 13

According to the passage, one place in which excess glucose is stored is the:

A. stomach.

B. insulin receptors.

C. pancreas.

D. liver.

Answer: D

Explanation:

There are a lot of organs doing a lot of different things in this passage, which means that if you do not read carefully you may confuse them. At the end of 2nd paragraph state that "glucose that the body does not use right away is stored in the liver, muscle, or fat," and the only one of these that is a possible answer is choice d, the liver.

Question No: 14

A diet dominated by which of the following is recommended for non-insulin-dependent diabetics?

A. protein

B. fat

C. carbohydrates

D. raw foods

Answer: C

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Explanation:

The last paragraph of the passage discusses the dietary recommendations for people with diabetes. Ending lines specifically says that “50 to 60 percent” of their diet should come from carbohydrates (and 12 to 20 from protein and a maximum of 30 percent from fat), making choice C the correct answer. The passage also says that raw foods are better than cooked (choice D), but not that the diet should be dominated by them.

Question No: 15

Which of the following is the main function of insulin?

- A. It signals tissues to metabolize sugar.
- B. It breaks down food into glucose.
- C. It carries glucose throughout the body.
- D. It binds to receptors.

Answer: A

Explanation:

Using the information given in the passage that glucose is sugar, the answer to this question can be found in 2nd paragraph: “insulin is released into the bloodstream and signals the body tissues to metabolize or burn the glucose for fuel.”

Question No: 16

Which of the following statements best summarizes the main idea of the passage?

- A. Type I and Type II diabetes are best treated by maintaining a high-protein diet.
- B. Type II diabetes is a distinct condition that can be managed by maintaining a healthy diet.
- C. Type I diabetes is an insidious condition most harmful when the patient is not taking daily insulin injections.
- D. Adults who suspect they may have Type II diabetes should immediately adopt a high carbohydrate diet.

Answer: B

Explanation: