



Level 9 Samples

3 Reading Comprehension Assessments

ReadTheory.org

For exciting updates, offers, and other helpful information, follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ReadTheory and Twitter at www.twitter.com/ReadTheory.

Comprehension materials similar to those featured in this workbook are available online at www.ReadTheory.org -- an interactive teaching tool where students can take reading comprehension quizzes, earn achievements, enter contests, track their performance, and more. Supplementary materials to this workbook are available in printable worksheet form at www.EnglishForEveryone.org.

COPYRIGHT NOTICE

Reproduction and or duplication on websites, creation of digital or online quizzes or tests, publication on intranets, and or use of this publication for commercial gain is strictly prohibited.

Use of this publication is restricted to the workbook purchaser and his or her students. This publication and its contents are non-transferrable between teachers.

All materials in our publications, such as graphics, text, and logos are the property of Read Theory LLC and are protected by United States and international copyright laws.

© Copyright Read Theory LLC, 2012. All rights reserved.

• Reading Comprehension Sample 9.1

Directions: Read the passage. Then answer the questions below.

Avalanche!



Most people know that an avalanche is a large mass of snow that detaches from a mountainside and rushes down the slope, often at a very high speed. However, not everyone realizes that there are many different kinds of avalanches, with various causes and effects. Avalanches are categorized based on whether the snow is wet or dry, and whether or not it is compacted. The four most common types are: dry snow, wet snow, wet slab, and dry slab.

The least dangerous type is a dry snow avalanche, which is made up of powdery snow. A dry snow avalanche most often occurs on steeper slopes during a snowstorm when the temperatures are below freezing. Despite the fact that they can reach speeds of up to 225 miles per hour, these avalanches tend to be small, and their snow is loose, not compacted, so they are less dangerous. Yet even a dry snow avalanche can cause harm under the right conditions.

A wet snow avalanche differs from a dry snow avalanche in that it consists of loose, partially melted snow and water. Wet snow avalanches generally occur during the springtime when temperatures are consistently above freezing and there is an abundance of both sunshine and rainfall. The warmer temperatures and the sun melt the outer layers of snow. The increased springtime rainfall saturates the snow with water, weakening the cohesive layers beneath the surface. The combination of these factors results in unstable conditions. Wet snow avalanches are the least common type of avalanche, and they are much slower than dry snow avalanches, typically traveling at speeds of only 10-20 miles per hour.

Like a wet snow avalanche, a wet slab avalanche most often occurs during the spring, due to melting snow and increased rainfall. The additional moisture weakens the bonds between the water molecules of the snow. Daytime melting and nighttime refreezing of the ice and snow create ideal conditions for a wet slab avalanche. This type of avalanche is the slowest, generally traveling at a speed of no more than 10 miles per hour. But because the snow is compacted, not loose, a wet slab avalanche is still quite dangerous even at this slow speed.

The last type, a dry slab avalanche, is the most dangerous of all. It occurs when substantial snowfall accumulates over a layer of existing snow in a very short period of time. The stress caused by the weight of the newly fallen snow can make the compacted layer underneath break away. This creates a dry slab avalanche, which travels at speeds of 60-80 miles per hour. Dry slab avalanches account for roughly 90% of all avalanche-related casualties annually.

Millions of avalanches happen around the world each year, the vast majority of which occur naturally. However, nearly all of the avalanches that result in fatalities are triggered by either the victim or someone in the victim's party. Each year, approximately 150 people become casualties of an avalanche. Sadly, most of these avalanche accidents are preventable. The first step in preventing avalanche related fatalities is to be better informed about the various types of avalanches and the conditions under which they occur.

Sources:
"Avalanches." *Environment Insights*, Web, 18 Jun. 2012.

Questions

- 1) The main purpose this passage is to
 - A. communicate the dangers of avalanches
 - B. show how preventable an avalanche can be
 - C. describe the four basic types of avalanches
 - D. define what an avalanche is
- 2) In paragraph 2 the author writes, "Yet even a dry snow avalanche can cause harm under the right conditions." The purpose of this statement is to
 - A. contradict a previous idea
 - B. support a later point
 - C. qualify an earlier statement
 - D. introduce a larger idea
- 3) As used in paragraph 3, which is the best synonym for **saturates**?
 - A. soaks
 - B. damages
 - C. covers
 - D. dehydrates
- 4) According to the passage, the main causes of wet snow and wet slab avalanches are
 - A. melting snow and increased rainfall
 - B. decreased rainfall and warmer temperatures
 - C. warmer temperatures and longer days
 - D. shorter nights and melting snow
- 5) As used in paragraph 4, which is the best antonym for **ideal**?
 - A. predictable
 - B. flawed
 - C. unstable
 - D. suitable
- 6) Based on information in the passage, it can be inferred that which of the following statements is true?
 - A. Because it can travel at very high speeds, the dry snow avalanche is the most dangerous type.
 - B. All avalanches, whether they are traveling at 10 miles per hour or 225 miles per hour, can be very dangerous.
 - C. The speed at which an avalanche travels shares a direct correlation with the degree of danger it poses.
 - D. Most casualties occur from wet slab avalanches.
- 7) Based on information in the passage, it can be inferred that wet slab avalanches and dry slab avalanches are the only two types that
 - A. consist of compacted snow
 - B. travel at higher speeds
 - C. occur at unexpected times of the year
 - D. result from below freezing temperatures
- 8) According to the passage, the avalanche capable of reaching the highest speed is the
 - A. dry snow avalanche
 - B. wet snow avalanche
 - C. wet slab avalanche
 - D. dry slab avalanche
- 9) The main purpose of the final paragraph is to
 - A. state the precise number of avalanche related casualties that happen each year
 - B. describe how avalanches typically are triggered
 - C. illustrate how tragic it can be to lose a friend in an avalanche related incident
 - D. suggest a way in which readers can help prevent avalanche related accidents

• Reading Comprehension Sample 9.2

Directions: Read the passage. Then answer the questions below.

Anna Maria's

I love food, and I love to eat at restaurants. As a matter of fact, I have eaten at over 40 restaurants in the Virginia Beach area just this year. Because I know a thing or two about local cuisine, I was surprised by your recent restaurant review, "Anna Maria's Italian Café Disappoints" (7/10/11). You must have visited Anna Maria's on a day when the chef was sick, the waiters were tired, and the owner had just lost her best friend. I can think of no other reason for you to have disliked the restaurant—my personal favorite—so much.



You wrote in your review that "Anna Maria's spaghetti is so terrible that I wouldn't feed it to my worst enemy." Now this is a flat-out lie. Anna Maria's spaghetti is the best I have ever eaten. Whenever I lift those strands of pasta on my fork, their aroma makes my mouth water. Sure, the sauce might be a little gritty, but I'm certain that's just how they make it in Italy. Perhaps you should learn more about authentic Italian food.

You also said in your review that the waiters at Anna Maria's seemed "lazy and not at all interested in waiting on me." Are you sure you were writing about the correct restaurant? Every time I have visited Anna Maria's, the service has been excellent, and the waiters have gone out of their way to show me a good time. In fact, on one occasion, a particularly **exceptional** waiter, Daniel I believe his name was, folded my napkin into the shape of a swan when I left the table to use the restroom. What is more, he made a little joke every time he came to refill our water glasses. Daniel's attention to detail and sense of humor really made my meal a memorable one.

While I was surprised by your comments about the food and the waiters at Anna Maria's, I was even more astounded by what you said about the owner, Anna Maria herself. She is not "rude" or "snobby" at all! The last time I ate at the restaurant, she cooked the best pasta primavera I have ever had.

I hope that you will reconsider the comments you made about Anna Maria's Italian Café after reading my letter. I would hate for your review to damage the restaurant's business. Anna Maria is a wonderful restaurateur and she deserves a chance to succeed just like anyone else!

Questions

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1) This passage would <u>most likely</u> be found in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. the letters to the editor section of a newspaper B. a brochure about restaurants in Virginia Beach C. a handbook intended for those in the food service industry D. an online collection of food writing | <p>2) As used in paragraph 3, which is the best <u>antonym</u> for exceptional?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. defective B. slow C. inferior D. foolish |
|--|---|

- 3) In paragraph 3, the author writes, “Are you sure you were writing about the correct restaurant?” Which of the following literary devices is used in this sentence?
- A. Pun, characterized by the use of a play on words intended to suggest the presence of two of more possible meanings. This is generally intended to produce an effect of irony, humor, or wit.
 - B. Metaphor, characterized by the comparison of two unlike things without the use of “like” or “as.” This often involves taking a concept or identity that is clearly understood and applying it to a second, less well-known element.
 - C. Metaphor, characterized by the comparison of two unlike things without the use of “like” or “as.” This often involves taking a concept or identity that is clearly understood and applying it to a second, less well-known element.
 - D. Rhetorical question, characterized by a question posed for effect rather than one that expects a reply.
- 4) Which of the following represents a flaw in the author's argument set forth in paragraph 3?
- A. The author assumes his or her personal preferences regarding restaurant service are universal.
 - B. The author provides evidence to support an argument other than the one he or she intends to make.
 - C. The author does not use facts to support his or her argument.
 - D. The author asks a question and then fails to answer it.
- 5) Which of the following represents a flaw in the author's argument set forth in paragraph 4?
- A. The author attempts to refute an argument that the reviewer did not make.
 - B. The author makes a claim that cannot possibly be true.
 - C. The author relies on personal experience to support his or her claim.
 - D. The author attempts to disprove an argument using irrelevant evidence.
- 6) Which of the following accurately describes the organization of the passage?
- A. The author lists reasons why he or she disagrees with the restaurant review in order of increasing importance.
 - B. The author lists one of the reviewer's complaints at the start of each body paragraph, and then attempts to disprove each complaint through counterexamples.
 - C. The author lists the reviewer's complaints in the opening paragraph, and then uses the remaining paragraphs to provide his or her own review of Anna Maria's.
 - D. The author shows how his or her opinion of the review changed over time by providing examples in the body paragraphs.
- 7) The author's overall argument could be strengthened by removing which of the following sentences from the passage?
- A. “You must have visited Anna Maria's on a day when the chef was sick, the waiters were tired, and the owner had just lost her best friend.” (paragraph 1)
 - B. “Sure, the sauce might be a little gritty, but I'm certain that's just how they make it in Italy!” (paragraph 2)
 - C. “Every time I have visited Anna Maria's, the waiters have gone out of their way to show me a good time.” (paragraph 3)
 - D. “I was even more astounded by what you said about the owner, Anna Maria herself.” (paragraph 4)

• Reading Comprehension Sample 9.3

Directions: Read the passage. Then answer the questions below.

Big Box Stores

A new term has recently cropped up in America: “big-box stores.” This term refers to large chain stores, often located in suburban shopping malls and offering products like electronics, clothing, or pet supplies. These chains have spread so quickly that you can now shop at the same stores whether you live in Oregon or Delaware. But these businesses are running out of places to build new stores. With the suburbs **saturated**, developers are eyeing urban areas as the next frontier.



In addition to satisfying the need for a place to put new stores, big-box stores hope to move into cities for another reason. In the past five years, population growth has shifted. Previously, growth was higher in the suburbs, but now urban and suburban areas are growing at roughly the same rate. This means that more and more people are choosing to live in cities, and they need places to buy televisions, jeans, and dog food.

However, building in cities presents several challenges for big-box stores. Their business model has been to build, organize, and stock a store in much the same way no matter its location. But it is harder to standardize stores this way in a city. Stores often have to be smaller, fitting into pre-existing spaces rather than built as new construction. Also, a diverse urban population makes it more difficult to target a standardized group of customers. A store may need to offer different products depending on where in the city it is located. The one-size-fits-all model that served these stores so well as they were **replicated** across the suburbs simply will not work as well in cities.

Furthermore, the future of brick-and-mortar stores is in question. With nearly every product available for purchase from an online retailer, many shoppers cannot resist the convenience of having a product delivered to their doorstep. If building big-box stores in urban areas is going to be harder to standardize and therefore less cost-effective, while at the same time the consumer base for retail stores is shrinking, developers may need to be more creative in their search for a new frontier.

Sources:

Yglesias, Matthew. “The End of Retail Watch: Chains Going Urban in Effort to Fight the End of Retail.” *Slate*. 26 July 2012. Web. 9 Oct. 2012.

Questions

- 1) In paragraph 1, the passage says, “With the suburbs saturated, developers are eyeing urban areas as the next frontier.” As used in paragraph 1, which of the following can also be described as **saturated**?
- the skyscraper, which is so tall that it towers over all the nearby buildings
 - the student, who is asleep in class because she has no interest in the topic
 - the tomato plant, which is no longer growing now that it is fall
 - the sponge, which is dripping because it is so full of water

- 2) Based on information in the passage, it can be understood that developers want big-box stores to move into cities because the
- I. businesses are nearing their limits for expansion in the suburbs
 - II. developers see the numerous city-dwellers as potential customers
 - III. competition in suburban areas has become too intense
- A. I only
 - B. I and II only
 - C. II and III only
 - D. I, II, and III
- 3) The author apparently believes that for big-box stores, moving into cities may be
- A. needless
 - B. dangerous
 - C. unwise
 - D. impossible
- 4) The topic of paragraph 3 can best be summarized as
- A. information about the business model of one big-box store
 - B. information about the challenges of finding space in a city
 - C. reasons why big-box stores may not work as well in cities
 - D. reasons why people in cities will not welcome big-box stores
- 5) According to the author, one reason it is harder to standardize stores in a city is because
- A. stores often have to fit into pre-existing spaces
 - B. new construction is not allowed in major cities
 - C. people in cities tend to prefer unique stores
 - D. city governments often object to chain stores
- 6) Based on its use in paragraph 3, it can be understood that the word **replicated** belongs to which of the following word groups?
- A. hurried, impelled, hastened
 - B. developed, changed, transformed
 - C. marched, strutted, paraded
 - D. copied, reproduced, cloned
- 7) In the final paragraph, the author writes that “developers may need to be more creative in their search for a new frontier.” By this the author means that developers
- A. should consider more artistic business opportunities instead of retail stores
 - B. will likely have to look harder to find places to build new big-box stores
 - C. might need a new business model to take advantage of the current retail landscape
 - D. may have been blinded by the easy profits of big-box stores and lost their creativity

Sample 9.1
1) C
Question Type: Global

To determine the main purpose of a passage, it is helpful to examine the content of the entire passage. In paragraph 1, the author tells us “there are many different kinds of avalanches... Avalanches are categorized based on whether the snow is wet or dry, and whether or not it is compacted. The four most common types are: dry snow, wet snow, wet slab, and dry slab.” Each of the next four paragraphs is devoted to explaining one of these four types. Paragraph 6 concludes the passage by highlighting the importance of knowing how and why the different types form. Based on its content, we can determine that the main purpose of the passage is to describe the four basic types of avalanches. Therefore **(C)** is correct. The author does mention the level of danger for each of the various types of avalanches. However, he or she does not go into detail about what the specific dangers of avalanches are. Since the author focuses more on contrasting the four types than explaining their dangers, the main purpose of the passage cannot be to communicate the dangers of avalanches. This means **(A)** is incorrect. In paragraph 6, the author writes that “most of these avalanche accidents are preventable.” However, this is only one line in the entire passage, most of which is devoted to describing the four different types of avalanches. The author claims that avalanches are preventable, but he or she does not actually show how preventable they are, so this is not the main purpose of the passage. This makes **(B)** incorrect. The first sentence of the passage defines what an avalanche is. The rest of the passage describes the four main types of avalanches more specifically, so the main purpose of the passage cannot be just to define an avalanche. This means **(D)** is incorrect.

2) C
Question Type: Inference

To determine the author’s intentions in writing the statement in question, it helps to examine the surrounding context. In the sentence before the statement in question, the author writes, “Despite the fact that they can reach speeds of up to 225 miles per hour, these avalanches tend to be small, and their snow is loose, not compacted, so they are less dangerous.” Here the author tells us that simply because dry snow avalanche travels at high speeds, this does not mean that it is more dangerous. However, the author wishes to not give the wrong impression; the dry snow avalanche can still cause harm. Using this information, we can understand that the author writes the statement in question in order to qualify, or refine, an earlier statement. Choice **(C)** is correct. The passage does not provide information to support choices **(A)**, **(B)**, and **(D)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

3) A
Question Type: Vocabulary

saturate (*verb*): to cause something to become thoroughly soaked; to drench or wet through.

In paragraph 3, the author writes, “The increased springtime rainfall saturates the snow with water, weakening the cohesive layers beneath the surface.” Because the rainfall is “increased,” we can infer that there is more of it. The more rain there is, the more the water mixes with the snow, even “beneath the surface.” This tells us that when the rainfall *saturates* the snow with water, the water goes all the way through, or *soaks*, the snow. Therefore **(A)** is correct. Although the author states that the rainfall saturating the snow is a cause of avalanches, the rainfall does not directly *damage* the snow. This means **(B)** is incorrect. Because the water reaches the “layers beneath the surface,” we know that the rainfall does not just *cover* the snow. It soaks all the way through. This makes **(C)** incorrect. *Dehydrate* means to dry out, which is the opposite of what the water does to the snow. This means **(D)** is incorrect.

4) A
Question Type: Global

In paragraph 3, the author describes the conditions that cause wet snow avalanches to occur in the spring: “Wet snow avalanches generally occur during the springtime when temperatures are consistently above freezing and there is an abundance of both sunshine and rainfall. The warmer temperatures and the sun melt the outer layers of snow. The increased springtime rainfall saturates the snow with water, weakening the cohesive layers beneath the surface. The combination of these factors results in unstable conditions.” From this information, we can understand that the sunshine causes the snow to melt, and the increased rainfall weakens the existing snow. In paragraph 4, the author reinforces this idea by writing, “Like a wet snow avalanche, a wet slab avalanche most often occurs during the spring, due to melting snow and increased rainfall.” This means that melting snow and increased rainfall are the main causes of wet snow and wet slab avalanches. Choice **(A)** is correct. In paragraph 3, the author claims that spring brings “increased rainfall,” not decreased rainfall. This means that decreased rainfall and warmer temperatures are not the main causes of wet snow and wet slab avalanches. So **(B)** is incorrect. Although the sunshine does bring warmer temperatures to melt the snow, the author cites the other cause as “increased rainfall,” not longer days. This means that warmer temperatures and longer days are not the main causes of wet snow and wet slab avalanches. This means **(C)** is incorrect. Although melting snow is one of the causes, the other is “increased rainfall,” not shorter nights. This means that shorter nights and melting snow are not the main causes of wet snow and wet slab avalanches. So **(D)** is incorrect.

5) B
Question Type: Vocabulary

ideal (*adjective*): regarded as perfect or excellent.

In paragraph 4, the author describes how a wet slab avalanche forms: “Daytime melting and nighttime refreezing of the ice and snow create ideal conditions for a wet slab avalanche.” Since the author is describing the conditions that make a wet slab avalanche most likely to happen, we can understand that the melting and “refreezing of the ice and snow” create very good, or even perfect, conditions for this type of avalanche. Using this information we can understand that *ideal* must mean perfect or excellent. Since the opposite of perfect is *flawed*, **(B)** is correct. *Predictable* is the opposite of unpredictable, but the “ideal conditions” are not necessarily unpredictable. This means **(A)** is incorrect. *Unstable* is the opposite of stable, but the “ideal conditions” are more than just stable conditions for an avalanche. They are very good conditions. Moreover, the ice and snow become unstable, not the conditions. This means **(C)** is not the best choice. *Suitable* is the opposite of unsuitable, but the “ideal conditions” are not unsuitable. They are actually very suitable for a wet slab avalanche to form, which means **(D)** is incorrect.

6) **B**

Question Type: Global

In paragraph 2, the author writes that even a dry snow avalanche, the “least dangerous” kind, “can cause harm under the right conditions.” In paragraph 4, the author claims that a wet slab avalanche travels at “no more than 10 miles per hour. But because the snow is compacted, not loose, a wet slab avalanche is still quite dangerous even at this slow speed.” In paragraph 5, the author tells us that dry slab avalanches travel “at speeds of 60-80 miles per hour” and are “the most dangerous of all.” From this information, we can infer that whether avalanches are fast or slow, they can all be very dangerous. This means **(B)** is correct. In paragraph 2, the author writes that the dry snow avalanche is the “least dangerous” type, so **(A)** is incorrect. In paragraph 1, we learn that dry snow avalanches can go 225 miles per hour, but are the least dangerous type. In paragraph 4, we learn that a wet slab avalanche going 10 miles per hour is “still quite dangerous.” In paragraph 5, we learn that the most dangerous type of avalanche, dry slab, can travel at 60-80 miles per hour. This means that the speed at which an avalanche travels does not share a direct correlation with the degree of danger it poses. This makes **(C)** incorrect. In paragraph 5, we learn that “dry slab avalanches account for roughly 90% of all avalanche-related casualties annually,” not wet slab avalanches. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.

7) **A**

Question Type: Global

In paragraph 2, we learn that a dry snow avalanche consists of “powdery snow.” In paragraph 3, we learn that a wet snow avalanche consists of “loose, partially melted snow and water.” In contrast, we learn in paragraph 4 that a wet slab avalanche contains snow that “is compacted.” Likewise, in paragraph 5, we learn that a dry slab avalanche is caused when “newly fallen snow...cause[s] the compacted layer underneath to break away.” This tells us that both wet slab avalanches and dry slab avalanches contain compacted snow, unlike the other two types, which contain “loose” or “powdery” snow. Therefore **(A)** is correct. Although a dry snow avalanche travels at 60-80 miles per hour, a wet slab avalanche goes “no more than 10 miles per hour.” This means **(B)** is incorrect. A wet slab avalanche is most likely to occur in spring, but so is a wet snow avalanche. Furthermore, the passage does not contain any information about when avalanches are most expected or unexpected. This means **(C)** is incorrect. A dry snow avalanche occurs when the “temperatures are below freezing,” as stated in paragraph 2, so **(D)** is incorrect.

8) **A**

Question Type: Detail

In paragraph 2 the author discusses the dry snow avalanche. He or she writes, “Despite the fact that they can reach speeds of up to 225 miles per hour, these avalanches tend to be small, and their snow is loose, not compacted.” Since the dry snow avalanche is capable of reaching the highest speed, choice **(A)** is correct. In paragraph 3 the author discusses the wet snow avalanche. He or she writes, “Wet snow avalanches are the least common type of avalanche, and they are much slower than dry snow avalanches, typically traveling at speeds of only 10-20 miles per hour.” Since the wet snow avalanche is not capable of reaching the highest speed, choice **(B)** is incorrect. In paragraph 4 the author discusses the wet slab avalanche. He or she writes, “This type of avalanche is the slowest, generally traveling at a speed of no more than 10 miles per hour.” Since the wet slab avalanche is not capable of reaching the highest speed, choice **(C)** is incorrect. In paragraph 5 the author discusses the dry slab avalanche. He or she writes, “This creates a dry slab avalanche, which travels at speeds of 60-80 miles per hour.” Since the dry slab avalanche is not capable of reaching the highest speed, choice **(D)** is incorrect.

9) **D**

Question Type: Global

In the final paragraph, the author provides statistics in order to impress upon us how dangerous avalanches can be. The reason in doing this is to show how we might help to prevent avalanche related accidents. The author states, “The first step in preventing avalanche related fatalities is to be better informed about the various types of avalanches and the conditions under which they occur.” By educating ourselves about the various types of avalanches and the conditions under which they occur, we can be better suited to help prevent them. Choice **(D)** is correct. Although the author does say that “Each year, approximately 150 people become casualties of an avalanche,” this is an approximation, and not a precise number. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. Although the author does say that “nearly all of the avalanches that result in fatalities are triggered by either the victim or someone in the victim’s party,” this is meant to substantiate his or her later point that we can help prevent avalanche related accidents by educating ourselves about them. This means **(B)** is incorrect. While the author does write that “Sadly, most of these avalanche accidents are preventable,” he or she does not expound on how tragic it can be to lose a friend in an avalanche related incident. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect.

Sample 9.2

1) **A**

Question Type: Global

In paragraph 1, the author claims that he or she was surprised by a “recent restaurant review, ‘Anna Maria’s Italian Café Disappoints’ (7/10/11).” Although a restaurant review could be published in many places, a reader’s *response* to a restaurant review would likely only be published in a newspaper. The letters to the editor section of a newspaper is where readers can respond to articles, which is what the author of this passage is doing. Therefore **(A)** is correct. Although it is reasonable to believe that a restaurant review might appear in a brochure about restaurants or an online collection of food writing, a reader’s response to the review would likely not appear in those places. Therefore **(B)** and **(D)** are incorrect. A handbook is more likely to contain guidelines, expectations, or recipes, not an informal letter to an editor. This means **(C)** is incorrect.

2) **C**

Question Type: Vocabulary

exceptional (*adjective*): unusually excellent; superior.

In paragraph 3, the author calls Daniel, the waiter, *exceptional*. The author describes this waiter in a very positive light, saying that his “attention to detail and sense of humor really made my meal a memorable one.” The author compliments the jokes Daniel made

and even the way he folded a napkin. From these details we can infer that the author believes Daniel is an excellent, or superior, waiter. The best antonym for superior is *inferior*. Therefore **(C)** is correct. *Defective* specifically means imperfect or faulty, which is a negative word, but its direct opposite is perfect or unflawed. Something superior is not necessarily perfect. This means **(A)** is incorrect. *Slow* is also a negative word in this context, but its opposite is fast, not superior. This makes **(B)** incorrect. *Foolish* is another negative word, but its direct opposite is intelligent, not superior, so **(D)** is incorrect.

3) **D**

Question Type: Inference

The author begins paragraph 3 by quoting the reviewer's comment that Anna Maria's waiters seemed "lazy and not at all interested in waiting on me." Then the author says, "Are you sure you were writing about the correct restaurant?" By asking this question, the author implies that he or she does not agree that Anna Maria's waiters seemed "lazy and not at all interested in waiting on me." The author does not expect for the reviewer to answer this question. Rather, he asks this question because it expresses his disagreement with the reviewer's opinion. This lets us know that the author uses the literary device rhetorical question in this sentence. Therefore **(D)** is correct. The passage does not provide information to support choices **(A)**, **(B)**, and **(C)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

4) **A**

Question Type: Inference

In paragraph 3, the author attempts to defend the quality of service at Anna Maria's. In doing so, the author writes, "A particularly exceptional waiter...folded my napkin into the shape of a swan when I left the table to use the restroom. What is more, he made a little joke every time he came to refill our water glasses." While some people may like this kind of service, it is wrong to assume that all people do. After all, it is possible that some people would be offended by a waiter who touches their napkin, or who makes jokes during their meal. Since the author assumes that his or her personal preferences regarding restaurant service are shared by all, this argument is flawed. This makes **(A)** correct. The author claims that he or she wishes to defend the service at Anna Maria's. In discussing the waiters, the author does provide relevant evidence about the service. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect. In addition, the author does use facts to support his or her argument. While it is an opinion that a good waiter makes jokes during your meal, it is a fact that the author interacted with the waiter as he or she claims. This means **(C)** is incorrect. Finally, while it is true that the author asks a question and then fails to answer it, this does not represent a flaw in the argument. In the beginning of the paragraph, the author asks the reviewer, "Are you sure you were writing about the correct restaurant?" This question is used merely for rhetorical purposes; it is intended to show how ridiculous the author found the reviewer's statements. It is highly unlikely that the reviewer actually went to some restaurant other than Anna Maria's—of course the reviewer went to the restaurant he or she is reviewing. This means **(D)** is incorrect.

5) **D**

Question Type: Inference

In paragraph 4, the author attempts to refute the reviewer's statement that Anna Maria is "rude" and "snobby" by telling us that she cooked the best pasta primavera the author has ever had. In doing this, the author attempts to challenge a comment about Anna Maria's personality by providing evidence about the quality of her food. This argument is flawed because Anna Maria's food has nothing to do with her personality. Evidence about Anna Maria's food is irrelevant to the author's attempt to refute a statement about her personality. This means **(D)** is correct. The author does attempt to refute the reviewer's claim that Anna Maria is "rude" and "snobby," but this is not the flaw in the author's argument. The flaw is that the quality of the pasta primavera has nothing to do with the perceived rudeness or snobbishness of Anna Maria. This means **(A)** is incorrect. The only claim that the author makes is that Anna Maria cooked the best pasta primavera he or she has ever had, which could certainly be true. This makes **(B)** incorrect. It makes sense to rely on personal experience when debating the quality of a restaurant. After all, this is the main type of evidence that can be presented in such a case. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect.

6) **B**

Question Type: Global

The body paragraphs provide examples and explanations and are usually contained between the introduction and conclusion. In this passage, the body paragraphs are paragraphs 2-4. In paragraph 2, the author says, "You wrote in your review that 'Anna Maria's spaghetti is so terrible that I wouldn't feed it to my worst enemy.' Now this is a flat-out lie. Anna Maria's spaghetti is the best I have ever eaten." This lets us know that the author is attempting to disprove the reviewer's complaint that the food is not good at Anna Maria's. In paragraph 3, the author says, "You also said in your review that the waiters at Anna Maria's seemed 'lazy and not at all interested in waiting on me.' Are you sure you were writing about the correct restaurant? Every time I have visited Anna Maria's, the waiters have gone out of their way to show me a good time." This lets us know that the author is attempting to disprove the reviewer's complaint that the service is not good at Anna Maria's. In paragraph 4, the author says, "While I was surprised by your comments about the food and the waiters at Anna Maria's, I was even more astounded by what you said about the owner, Anna Maria herself. She is not 'rude' or 'snobby' at all!" This lets us know that the author is attempting to disprove the reviewer's complaint that Anna Maria is impolite. Using this information, we can see that the author lists one of the reviewer's complaints at the start of each body paragraph, and then attempts to disprove each complaint by providing counterexamples. Therefore **(B)** is correct. The author does not claim that the reasons why he or she disagrees with the restaurant review are listed in order of increasing importance. For example, the author never suggests that the service is more important than the food at Anna Maria's. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. The author does not provide his or her own review of Anna Maria's. Instead, the author replies to a previous review, so **(C)** is incorrect. The author is constant in his or her opinion that Anna Maria's is a good restaurant; the opinion does not change over time. This means **(D)** is incorrect.

7) **B**

Question Type: Inference

The author writes in paragraph 2 that "Anna Maria's spaghetti is the best I have ever eaten." He or she says this in order to refute the reviewer's claim that Anna Maria's food is "terrible." However, when the author later says that "the sauce might be a little gritty,"

it undermines his or her own argument about the excellence of Anna Maria's food. Though authors occasionally admit problems with their arguments in order to show that they have carefully considered their arguments, the author of this passage does not benefit by admitting that "the sauce might be a little gritty." Instead, the author weakens the defense of Anna Maria's food, making readers doubt the author's credibility. Therefore **(B)** is correct. It would not strengthen the author's argument to remove choices **(A)**, **(C)**, or **(D)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

Sample 9.3

1) **D**

Question Type: Vocabulary

saturated (*adjective*): filled, soaked, or loaded thoroughly and completely.

In paragraph 1, the author writes, "With the suburbs saturated, developers are eyeing urban areas as the next frontier." To understand what saturated means it is helpful to look at the surrounding context. Earlier in the paragraph, the author tells us that big-box stores are "often located in suburban shopping malls," but that "these businesses are running out of places to build new stores." From this we can understand that the suburbs are full of these stores, so there are not many places to build new ones. This tells us that saturated means full or unable to hold any more. If the sponge is dripping because it is so full of water, then it is unable to hold any more water. Therefore **(D)** is correct. If we only know that the skyscraper is so tall that it towers over all the nearby buildings, we do not know whether it is full or empty. This eliminates **(A)**. If the student is asleep in class because she has no interest in the topic, she is bored, but that does not mean she is full or unable to hold any more knowledge about the topic. This makes **(B)** incorrect. If the tomato plant is no longer growing now that it is fall, this does not mean the plant is full or unable to hold more. This means **(C)** is incorrect.

2) **B**

Question Type: Global

In paragraph 1, the author writes, "But these businesses are running out of places to build new stores. With the suburbs saturated, developers are eyeing urban areas as the next frontier." From this we can understand that developers want big-box stores to move into cities because the businesses are nearing their limits for expansion in the suburbs. This supports **option (I)**. In paragraph 2, the author writes that "big-box stores hope to move into cities for another reason," which is that "now urban and suburban areas are growing at roughly the same rate." The author explains, "This means that more and more people are choosing to live in cities, and they need places to buy televisions, jeans, and dog food." From this we can understand that developers want big-box stores to move into cities because the developers see the numerous city-dwellers as potential customers who might shop at big-box stores. This supports **option (II)**. In paragraph 1, the author writes, "These chains have spread so quickly that you can now shop at the same stores whether you live in Oregon or Delaware. But these businesses are running out of places to build new stores. With the suburbs saturated, developers are eyeing urban areas as the next frontier." This tells us that there are a lot of these stores in suburban areas. But it does not suggest that these stores are competing with each other for the same customers. The author tells us that these stores offer "products like electronics, clothing, or pet supplies." If they offer different products, they may not be in competition with each other. This means that we cannot conclude that developers want big-box stores to move into cities because the competition in suburban areas has become too intense. This eliminates **option (III)**. Therefore **(B)** is correct.

3) **C**

Question Type: Global

In paragraphs 1 and 2, the author explains two reasons why developers want big-box stores to move into cities: "the need for a place to put new stores" and the fact that "more and more people are choosing to live in cities," meaning more and more potential customers. In paragraph 3, however, the author outlines two major challenges to transferring the big-box store business model from the suburbs to the cities: that "it is harder to standardize stores this way in a city" and also that "a diverse urban population makes it more difficult to target a standardized group of customers." In the final paragraph, the author introduces yet another reason why it might not be a good idea for big-box stores to move into cities. He or she writes that now "nearly every product [is] available for purchase from an online retailer." The author concludes, "If building big-box stores in urban areas is going to be harder to standardize and therefore less cost-effective, while at the same time the consumer base for retail stores is shrinking, developers may need to be more creative in their search for a new frontier." This tells us that the author thinks that it would be smart for developers of big-box stores to do something other than build more big-box stores in cities. From this, we can conclude that the author apparently believes that for big-box stores, moving into cities may be unwise. Therefore **(C)** is correct. In paragraph 1, the author tells us that "these businesses are running out of places to build new stores." In the final paragraph, the author recognizes that the developers must search for "a new frontier." From this information, we can understand that big-box stores need a new place to go, so the author does not apparently believe that for big-box stores, moving into cities may be needless. It may not be wise, but it would fulfill a need. This eliminates **(A)**. In the final paragraph, the author suggests that it may be risky for big-box stores to move into cities, because "building big-box stores in urban areas is going to be harder to standardize and therefore less cost-effective, while at the same time the consumer base for retail stores is shrinking." But this does not mean that the author apparently believes that this move may be dangerous in any way. This means **(B)** is incorrect. In paragraph 3, the author suggests it may be difficult for big-box stores to move into cities, because "building in cities presents several challenges for big-box stores." However, the author does not suggest that it may be impossible. This makes **(D)** incorrect.

4) **C**

Question Type: Inference

The topic sentence of a paragraph will likely tell us what information can be found in the rest of that paragraph. The topic sentence of paragraph 3 reads: "However, building in cities presents several challenges for big-box stores." From this we can understand that this paragraph likely discusses challenges faced by big-box stores when building in cities. The author then outlines two specific challenges: that "it is harder to standardize stores this way in a city" and also that "a diverse urban population makes it more difficult to target a standardized group of customers." The author concludes the paragraph by writing, "The one-size-fits-all model that

served these stores so well as they were replicated across the suburbs simply will not work as well in cities.” From this we can understand that paragraph 3 is about the challenges that will make the big-box store business model work less well in cities. This means that the topic of paragraph 3 can best be summarized as reasons why big-box stores may not work as well in cities. Therefore **(C)** is correct. In paragraph 3, the author writes of big-box stores: “Their business model has been to build, organize, and stock a store in much the same way no matter its location.” But this is the business model for big-box stores in general, not just one big-box store. Furthermore, the purpose of paragraph 3 is not just to provide information about this business model, but to explain why this model will not work as well in cities. This eliminates **(A)**. In paragraph 3, the author writes, “Stores often have to be smaller, fitting into pre-existing spaces rather than built as new construction.” This detail supports the larger purpose of the paragraph, because it is one reason why the big-box store model will not work as well in cities. But it is only one of the reasons the author discusses, so the topic of the entire paragraph cannot be summarized as information about the challenges of finding space in a city. This makes **(B)** incorrect. The author discusses why big-box stores will not work as well in cities in paragraph 3, but he or she does not say that people in cities will not welcome big-box stores. This means **(D)** is incorrect.

5) **A**

Question Type: Detail

To answer this detail question correctly, we need to find where the author discusses why it is harder to standardize stores in a city in the passage. A good way to do this is to scan the topic sentence of each paragraph, since this sentence will likely tell us what information can be found in the rest of that paragraph. The topic sentence of paragraph 3 reads: “However, building in cities presents several challenges for big-box stores.” This lets us know that the details we are looking for can likely be found in paragraph 3. In paragraph 3, the author writes, “But it is harder to standardize stores this way in a city. Stores often have to be smaller, fitting into pre-existing spaces rather than built as new construction.” This tells us that one reason it is harder to standardize stores in a city is because stores often have to fit into pre-existing spaces. Therefore **(A)** is correct. The author writes, “Stores often have to be smaller, fitting into pre-existing spaces rather than built as new construction.” However, this does not mean that new construction is not allowed in major cities. There may just not be any room for new construction. This means **(B)** is incorrect. The passage does not provide information to support choices **(C)** and **(D)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

6) **D**

Question Type: Vocabulary

replicate (*verb*): make an exact copy of; reproduce; duplicate.

In paragraph 3, the author writes, “The one-size-fits-all model that served these stores so well as they were replicated across the suburbs simply will not work as well in cities.” To understand what replicate means, it is helpful to study the surrounding context. Earlier in paragraph 3, the author writes, “Their business model has been to build, organize, and stock a store in much the same way no matter its location.” This tells us that the “one-size-fits-all model” was based on reproducing nearly identical stores across the suburbs. From this we can understand that replicate means to copy or reproduce. This means that it belongs to the word group *copied, reproduced, cloned*. Therefore **(D)** is correct. In paragraph 1, the author tells us, “These chains have spread so quickly that you can now shop at the same stores whether you live in Oregon or Delaware.” This tells us that the stores have spread quickly across the suburbs. However, in paragraph 3, the author focuses on the identical, “one-size-fits-all” nature of these stores, not how quickly they spread. This means that replicate does not belong to the word group *hurried, impelled, hastened*. This eliminates **(A)**. The passage does not provide information to suggest that big-box stores have changed as they have spread across the suburbs. Instead, the author focuses on the identical, “one-size-fits-all” nature of these stores in paragraph 3, suggesting that the stores have basically stayed the same. This means that replicate does not belong to the word group *developed, changed, transformed*. This makes **(B)** incorrect. The author does not suggest that these stores have been showy as they have spread across the suburbs. This means that replicate does not belong to the word group *marched, strutted, paraded*. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect.

7) **C**

Question Type: Inference

In the final paragraph, the author writes, “If building big-box stores in urban areas is going to be harder to standardize and therefore less cost-effective, while at the same time the consumer base for retail stores is shrinking, developers may need to be more creative in their search for a new frontier.” From this we can understand that the current retail landscape is changing, because “the consumer base for retail stores is shrinking.” We can also understand that although the developers hoped that urban areas would be the “new frontier,” these areas may not prove to be as “cost-effective” or successful as they hoped. Based on this we can understand that the author means that given the current circumstances, the big-box store may no longer be an effective business model. This means developers “may need to be more creative,” because they may need to come up with a new business model to better fit the current circumstances. This tells us that by this statement, the author means that developers might need a new business model to take advantage of the current retail landscape. Therefore **(C)** is correct. The author says that “developers may need to be more creative....” However, we can understand that the author does not mean “creative” in the sense of “artistic.” Instead, he or she means “creative” in the sense of “inventive.” This tells us that the author does not mean that developers should consider more artistic business opportunities instead of retail stores, only that they should be more inventive in the future. This means **(A)** is incorrect. Since the author states that “the consumer base for retail stores is shrinking,” he or she suggests that the business model of big-box stores may no longer be as effective in the current retail landscape. This tells us that the author does not mean that developers will likely have to look harder to find places to build new big-box stores, but that they will have to search harder to find something to do instead of big-box stores. This eliminates **(B)**. The author says that “developers may need to be more creative....” However, the author does not discuss the easy profits of big-box stores, but rather the changing retail landscape. The circumstances have changed, not the developers. This tells us that the author does not mean that developers may have been blinded by the easy profits of big-box stores and lost their creativity. This makes **(D)** incorrect.