

Bonnie & Clyde – Grade 11

The outlaws Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow hold a unique position in American culture. They are the rare individuals who have been made into icons, yet their icons bare almost no reflection of their individuality. That is, when most think of Bonnie and Clyde, they think not of Bonnie and Clyde but, rather, of Faye Dunaway as *Bonnie* and Warren Beatty as *Clyde*. The movie image has become the reality, even while everyone knows the movie image is not the truth. Americans are smart enough to know that the 1967 film *Bonnie & Clyde* does not tell the story of Bonnie and Clyde so much as an ideal of what their story could be stylized to mean. However, Americans are also naïve enough to simply not want to separate the reality from the myth and the true identities of Bonnie and Clyde from the Hollywood versions.

My book exposes the truth, but it also discusses the cultural impact of Bonnie and Clyde and outlaws in general. Thus, like most Americans do, I too have to begin with the film version. Bonnie and Clyde's real story, of course, begins in the Dustbowl Days of the Great Depression, but their cultural story begins in 1966.

By the mid-60s, Hollywood was in the process of changing. As outlined in Peter Biskind's *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls* and several works by Geoff King and Robert Kolker, the studio system was dying, as the emerging mass of young consumers wanted something different. Films about traditional heroes standing up for the American Way were no longer selling tickets, and, just as rock 'n' roll and politics were moving toward protest and new ways of thinking, so too were the young ticket buyers. Studio heads, looking for any new revenue, offered a series of new young directors carte blanche to do whatever they saw fit. These new directors mostly were educated in film school and interested in new film techniques from French cinema as well as the classic dark genres in American films, especially film noir and Westerns. The result was the period known as the New Hollywood, which created such classics as *The Godfather* and *Easy Rider*, amongst hundreds of other films mostly made in the 1970s. Far and away the film most important to the birth of the New Hollywood movement was *Bonnie and Clyde*.

The concept for the film was simple. Screenwriters David Newman and Robert Benton conceived of the film as a French New Wave-styled love triangle that just happened to be about criminals. With Beatty attached to star and produce the film, the story was rewritten to play to his strengths as an actor. Thus, later drafts dropped the love triangle in favor of a more traditional—though also more comedic—story about crime, and Clyde became a charming bumbler, Beatty's stock character. The director, Arthur Penn, decided to make the movie more violent than anything anyone had seen before, but he also made some of the violence comical. Thus, the movie's tone contrasted sharply at times, with quick edits between scenes of horror and scenes of humor. The quick edits, unusual tones, antiestablishment views (after all, the audience roots for the criminals, not the ruthless cops chasing them), and un-heroic ending all became trademarks of the New Hollywood era. The movie became a huge hit too,

grossing more than twenty times the production costs. It also reintroduced Bonnie and Clyde into the American zeitgeist.

However, the movie's version of the outlaws was far from reality. While the two criminals did make a living robbing banks and were responsible for the deaths of dozens of people, the film romanticizes their exploits. It seems to imply that ennui—a feeling of listlessness brought on by boredom and disinterest and disillusionment from the world—led to their capers and that a Robin Hood sense of right and wrong further spurred them on. The true Bonnie and Clyde were ruthless and greedy, and any attempts to “rob the rich and help the poor” were mostly coincidental. After all, the gang (which included more than just the five characters shown in the film) was not robbing Wall Street itself; rather, it robbed small-town banks that often did not have all that much money in them during the heights of the Depression. Regardless of truth, for Bonnie and Clyde, myth has become fact in the public's eyes.

This book will go into more detail about the famed outlaws, treating their story like a series of math equations. The first section concerns the history of Clyde, the second of Bonnie, and the third, their sum: Clyde + Bonnie = Bonnie and Clyde. That equation could be reconceived, of course, as the Depression + Outlaw Romanticism = Bonnie and Clyde, and section 4 will attempt to do just that. Finally, the end of the book approaches a third formula: (truth + myth) + the context of the 1960s = *Bonnie & Clyde*, the film. I suggest you read this book not looking backward on two pasts (the 1930s and 1960s) but looking sideways at two interpretations of the truth. One is what the outlaws meant in the context of a failed economy and crumbling social structure (the 1930s), and the other is what the outlaws meant in the context of a crumbling social structure and optimism about what might replace it (the 1960s). Obviously, in our present, such a reading requires a little bit of looking back, and the story of Bonnie and Clyde certainly does seem emblematic of bygone eras. However, I would also encourage the reader to keep in mind that these stories of the past and the interpretation of them matter today. Our society makes similar mythologies about the past and similarly reshapes those myths as though they were made of modeling clay. Ultimately the story of Bonnie and Clyde gives insight into how societal mythmaking happens, so, finally, I encourage the reader to connect these stories to the present and to ask how our society too should treat the past.

Sources:

Biskind, Peter. *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997. Book.

Guinn, Jeff. *Go Down Together: The True, Untold Story of Bonnie and Clyde*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011. Book.

- 1) In the first paragraph, the author introduces the idea that
- A. Bonnie and Clyde are primarily known through the film *Bonnie and Clyde*, which tells a story that is historically accurate
 - B. characters who are outlaws have long fascinated Hollywood filmmakers, even though their stories are not as interesting as the movie versions
 - C. there are different versions of the supposed true accounts of Bonnie and Clyde's story
 - D. the movie *Bonnie and Clyde* is so farfetched that the public refuses to take interest in the real story of Bonnie and Clyde
 - E. the public chooses to combine the real Bonnie and Clyde with the film characters from *Bonnie and Clyde* (CORRECT)

Question Type: Reasoning

Explanation:

The first paragraph introduces the author's twin points about Bonnie and Clyde: that the film *Bonnie and Clyde* is not historically accurate but that it is what most people think about when they visualize Bonnie and Clyde. He or she states that "American are smart enough" to know that the film is not historically accurate but "also naïve enough to simply not want to separate the reality from the myth." The author also states that "the movie image has become the reality" in spite of the fact that most people know the movie is not realistic or historically accurate. That is, the author alleges that the public at large tends to combine the fact with the film version, mixing true parts of Bonnie and Clyde's story with the filmic depictions of them. For this reason, choice (E) is correct.

Choice (A) is incorrect because the first paragraph makes it clear that the film *Bonnie and Clyde* is not accurate historically, as it instead shows an "ideal of what their story could be stylized to mean."

Choice (B) is incorrect because the first paragraph provides no information about other films besides *Bonnie and Clyde*. Thus, the paragraph does not support the claim that filmmakers have long been fascinated by outlaws.

The first paragraph does not suggest that there are several versions of the story of Bonnie and Clyde; it only implies that the film version differs from the facts slightly. It does not, however, bring up other versions or suggest that there are several versions. For this reason, choice (C) is incorrect.

The first paragraph does imply that the movie *Bonnie and Clyde* is not historically accurate, but it does not suggest that the lack of historical truth in it prevented the public from becoming interested in Bonnie and Clyde. In fact, the passage implies very much the opposite. For this reason, choice (D) is incorrect.

2) According to the passage, each of the following contributed to the birth of New Hollywood EXCEPT

- A. the decline in the studio system
- B. the growth of a youth culture
- C. changes in American culture
- D. interest in new film genres (CORRECT)
- E. diminishing box office receipts

Question Type: Research

Explanation:

To answer this question, look for the part of the passage that discusses the birth of New Hollywood. This occurs in paragraph 3. There, the author lists the reasons listed in each of the answer choices except for that listed in choice (D). The author states that the New Hollywood directors were actually interested primarily in “the classic dark genres in American films,” not new genres. Because the question asks for the answer choice that did NOT contribute to the birth of New Hollywood, choice (D) is correct.

In paragraph 3, the author describes the birth of New Hollywood. There, he or she states that “the studio system was dying.” Because the question asks for the answer choice that presents an event that did NOT contribute to the birth of New Hollywood, choice (A) is incorrect.

3) According to the author, the film *Bonnie and Clyde*

- A. was written by Geoff King and Robert Kolker
- B. helped create the New Hollywood movement (CORRECT)
- C. disappointed the studio at the box office
- D. ushered in an era of realism in film
- E. made people interested in researching the real Bonnie and Clyde

Question Type: Research

Explanation:

This question is unclear unless you read the answer choices first, as the question is open-ended. Using process of elimination, though, will reveal that choice (B) is correct. The end of paragraph 3 states that “far and away the film most important to the birth of the New Hollywood movement was *Bonnie and Clyde*.” Thus, it is clear that *Bonnie and Clyde* helped create the New Hollywood movement, and choice (B) is correct.

The third paragraph lists Geoff King and Robert Kolker as authors of works about New Hollywood. Paragraph 4 states that the film *Bonnie and Clyde* was written by David Newman and Robert Benton. For this reason, choice (A) is incorrect.

Paragraph 4 states that *Bonnie and Clyde* “became a huge hit too, grossing more than twenty times the production costs.” This makes it clear the film did not disappoint at the box office, so choice (C) is incorrect.

The passage states that *Bonnie and Clyde* was “important to the birth of the New Hollywood movement” in paragraph 3. Paragraph 4 says that “unusual tones, antiestablishment views... and un-heroic ending all became trademarks of the New Hollywood era.” None of this suggests that *Bonnie and Clyde* or New Hollywood films in general were concerned with realism, so choice (D) is incorrect.

The fourth paragraph states that the film “reintroduced Bonnie and Clyde into the American zeitgeist,” but it does not state nor imply that Americans became interested in researching them. Being culturally aware of something and being willing to research it are not the same things, so choice (E) is incorrect.

- 4) The passage implies that the casting of Warren Beatty to *Bonnie and Clyde* made the film’s script become
- A. less accurate
 - B. more violent
 - C. more comical (CORRECT)
 - D. less traditional
 - E. darker in tone

Question Type: Reasoning

Explanation:

In paragraph 4, the author discusses the making of *Bonnie and Clyde*. There, the author states that, “With Beatty attached to star and produce the film, the story was rewritten to play to his strengths as an actor.” He or she adds that, in “later drafts, Clyde became a charming bumbler, Beatty’s stock character.” This implies that humor was added to the film to “play to [Beatty’s] strengths,” since a “charming bumbler” would be funny. Further, the author explicitly states that the film became “more comedic” because of Beatty’s involvement, making choice (C) correct.

Though the author does make it clear that *Bonnie and Clyde* is not historically accurate, he or she does not imply that Warren Beatty’s involvement in the film made it less accurate. Choice (A) is incorrect because of this.

The fourth paragraph actually makes it clear that it was the director of the film, Arhtur Penn, “decided to make the movie more violent than anything anyone had seen before.” Thus, it was not Beatty’s involvement of the film but, rather, Penn’s that made the film more violent than originally intended. Because of this, choice (B) is incorrect.

The fourth paragraph states that, the film was rewritten after Beatty was attached to the film and that “later drafts dropped the love triangle in favor of a more traditional” story. Thus, Beatty’s presence on the film made the movie’s script become more traditional, not less traditional. As such, choice (D) is incorrect.

The fourth paragraph does not suggest that *Bonnie and Clyde* was darker or lighter in tone before or after Beatty was attached. Instead, “the movie’s tone contrasted sharply at times,” alternating between dark and light, serious and comical. Choice (E) is incorrect, then, because Beatty’s attachment to the film did not make the film’s themes change.

5) As used in paragraph 5, the word spurred most nearly means

- A. imagined
- B. rejected
- C. attacked
- D. encouraged (CORRECT)
- E. robbed

Question Type: Vocabulary

Explanation:

spurred (verb): gave an incentive or encouragement to someone.

In paragraph 5, the author discusses the reasons for Bonnie and Clyde’s crime spree as shown in the film *Bonnie and Clyde*, stating that ennui caused it but that “a Robin Hood sense of right and wrong further spurred them on.” The use of the modifier further there implies that the author is continuing the conversation about the motivations for Bonnie and Clyde. The author implies that their sense of right and wrong made them continue to pursue crime. Thus, it follows that the verb spurred must mean encouraged, as the author is only discussing things that made Bonnie and Clyde want to pursue crime. Choice (D) is correct as a result.

Nothing in paragraph 5 implies that the spurred means imagined, as logically a “sense of right and wrong” cannot imagine anything, though it could be imagined. As a result, choice (A) is incorrect.

Nothing in paragraph 5 implies that the spurred means rejected, as logically a “sense of right and wrong” cannot reject anything, though a sense of right and wrong could itself be rejected. As a result, choice (B) is incorrect.

Nothing in paragraph 5 implies that the spurred means attacked, as logically a “sense of right and wrong” cannot attack anything, though Bonnie and Clyde themselves attacked many people and were attacked themselves. As a result, choice (C) is incorrect.

Though paragraph 5 discusses the motivations for Bonnie and Clyde’s many robberies, it does not imply that spurred itself means robbed. As a result, choice (E) is incorrect.

- 6) The sixth paragraph suggests that an understanding of a historical topic requires both
- A. rules and regulations
 - B. men and women
 - C. facts and myths
 - D. past and present
 - E. context and content (CORRECT)

Question Type: Reasoning

Explanation:

In paragraph 6, the author lists a number of equations he or she used to create his or her work on Bonnie and Clyde. He or she goes on to say that the reader should look “sideways at two interpretations of the truth,” one involving “the context of a failed economy and crumbling social structure” and one involving “the context of a crumbling social structure and optimism about what might replace it.” The author also states that the equations he or she formulates involve the actual content of Bonnie and Clyde’s story, as he or she will spend three chapters of the work going through the stories of Bonnie, Clyde, and the duo, respectively. Thus, to the author, proper historical research requires both context (the information about the times) and content (the true story), and choice (E) is correct.

The author never mentions rules and regulations in the passage. Thus, even though it is clear that Bonnie and Clyde typically did not follow rules or regulations, choice (A) is incorrect because it is off topic for the question.

Though Bonnie and Clyde are opposite genders, nothing in the passage suggests that the author believes full historical understanding requires both men and women. Choice (B) is incorrect as a result.

The final paragraph does talk about facts and myths, as “truth + myth” are grouped together in the making of *Bonnie and Clyde*. However, the author

suggests fact and myth merely make up part of a film, not historical knowledge. As a result, choice (C) is incorrect.

The author does talk about the past and the present in the final paragraph. However, he or she suggests that historical knowledge does not require knowledge of the present; rather, historical knowledge contributes to knowledge about the present. As such, choice (D) is incorrect.

7) This passage is most likely a/an

- A. conclusion of a larger collection
- B. beginning of a collection of stories
- C. introduction of a scholarly book (CORRECT)
- D. opening of a book about Hollywood
- E. section of a biography of Bonnie Parker

Question Type: Reasoning

Explanation:

The author provides several pieces of information that suggest the passage is part of a larger work. He or she makes reference to “my book” and what “this book will” do. This suggests that the passage is part of the introduction of a larger work. That work is likely scholarly in nature, since the author uses relatively formal language and seems to be outlining a thesis on a historical topic. For these reasons, choice (C) is correct.

The passage is clearly a part of a larger book, but the passage indicates that it is an introduction, not a conclusion. This is clear because the author keeps referencing what his or her “book will go into” rather than reviewing what his or her book has already done. Thus, choice (A) is incorrect.

The passage makes it clear that it is the beginning of a larger work, but it does not seem to be part of a collection of stories. At no point does the author bring up fiction or reference “stories” that would be read later in the book. Thus, choice (B) is incorrect.

The passage is clearly the opening section of a larger work. However, that work seems to be about more than just Hollywood. In the final paragraph, the author suggests his or her book is about Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow as well as the film *Bonnie and Clyde*. In the context of the latter, the book would seem to cover aspects of Hollywood history, but the book as a whole would not likely be about Hollywood at large. Choice (D) is incorrect because of this.

The passage is clearly part of a larger work. However, that larger work is not just a biography of Bonnie Parker. In the final paragraph, the author outlines his or her book as one that contains a section about her but that also contains sections on Clyde Barrow, Bonnie and Parker together, the time period, and the film *Bonnie and Clyde*. Thus, the work is so much more than just a biography of Bonnie Parker, so choice (E) is incorrect.

- 8) In your own words, describe some of the differences between the true story of Bonnie and Clyde and the film version of their story.
- 9) The author defines ennui as “a feeling of listlessness brought on by boredom and disinterest and disillusionment from the world.” Can you think of a time in your life when you’ve felt ennui? Or can you think of a character from literature that has experienced ennui? What brought it on, and what happened as a result of the feeling?
- 10) The author ends the passage with directions about how to read his or her book. What strikes you as the most interesting aspect of his or her directions? How might you apply that advice about reading history to your own history studies?

Mushrooms – Grade 6

A fungus is an organism that produces spores and feeds on other organic matter. The fungus you are probably most familiar with is mold, which grows on rotting food. As you probably know, you should not eat breads or fruits that have mold growing on them. What you may not know is that some fungi (the plural form of fungus) are actually supposed to be eaten. In fact, such fungi are more than just edible. They’re actually quite delicious!

I am speaking of mushrooms. A mushroom is type of fungal growth. It is almost like the flower of the fungus, just as an apple is like the flower of an apple tree. Unlike apples though, mushrooms grow in flat patches, rather than on branches. The part that springs out of the patch is the part that you want to eat.

However, not all things that grow from fungi are mushrooms. To be labeled a mushroom, the fungus typically has to grow a cap on top of a stem. In most edible varieties of mushroom, both the cap and the stem are edible.

That is an important point to note. Not all mushrooms are edible. Indeed, many mushrooms are toxic. These poisonous ones should not be eaten because they will make you very sick (or worse!). To be safe, you should not eat wild mushrooms. Stick to the ones you can get at farmer’s markets or grocery stores.

Most stores only sell a few types of mushrooms. But there are actually over 250 varieties of edible mushrooms, and they grow almost anywhere in the world. However, they grow in a way not unlike any other vegetable does.

Because they grow in places most things do not grow, mushrooms were thought to be magical by earlier civilizations. Even as recently as five hundred years ago, mushrooms were assumed to at least be able to cure diseases.

In reality, mushrooms are not magical at all. That does not mean they are not incredible, though.

Growing Mushrooms

Mushrooms are unique among vegetables because they do not grow from seeds. Instead, they grow from spores. Spores are so small that they cannot be seen by any human eye. Each mushroom, however, contains nearly a billion spores. In nature, the spores come from the mushrooms naturally. For professional farmers, though, the spores will be placed somewhere. Most mushroom farmers make trays of mushrooms or place them in patches near other plants.

Once the spores are spread, a mushroom harvester will place a variety of nutrients in the same location. What is a nutrient for a mushroom is not a nutrient for most other forms of life. Mushroom nutrients can include sawdust, pieces of wood, or various liquids. A blend of the nutrients and the spores is known as the spawn.

The spawn is capable of growing mushrooms. Most professional mushroom farmers, though, add another material to the spawn. This is called a substrate, and the substrate can include straw, cardboard, or wood chips. The exact mixture of spore, spawn, and substrate will create specific types of mushrooms.

Mushrooms like dark, cool, and moist growing areas. In the wild, mushrooms commonly grow in forests. Before the mushroom itself forms, small pieces will poke through. They look nothing like mushrooms, despite the fact that they will form full mushrooms within a week. The whole process from planting to harvesting usually only takes 12 days. This makes mushrooms a crop that is easily replaced since it grows so quickly. As such, mushrooms are available year round in most places. So, unlike other vegetables, most types of mushrooms are not seasonal. And mushroom shortages are very rare.

Mushrooms are also favorites of farmers for another reason. The growth medium used for mushrooms helps other plants grow. So, in addition to being easy to grow, mushrooms actually make everything else easier to grow too!

Eating Mushrooms

In addition to being beneficial to farmers, mushrooms are also very good to eat. Not only are they delicious, but they are very good for you. They are an excellent source of B-group vitamins, fiber, potassium, and zinc. Most vegetables are not good sources of any of these nutrients, since most vegetables instead offer vitamins A and C.

Also, unlike many other delicious foods, mushrooms have practically nothing bad in them. They have almost no sugar. And they are low in fat, making them good for people concerned about weight.

There are many ways to eat mushrooms. They make a great addition to many pastas and soups. Some people grill the larger mushrooms and use them in place of meat on a sandwich. They can be added to salads for an interesting texture. Or they can simply be fried and served as a side dish on their own.

As stated above, there are hundreds of varieties of edible mushrooms. Each kind has a slightly different flavor, so each kind belongs in different kinds of recipes. The most common mushrooms in American kitchens are white mushrooms, cremini mushrooms, and portabella mushrooms. Asian recipes often use wood ear mushrooms, shiitake mushrooms, or enoki mushrooms. And some of the finest restaurants in the world make frequent use of black and white truffles. These are two of the most expensive, sought after, and rare mushrooms in the world. Each mushroom is different in taste and appearance, but all edible mushrooms offer something worth investigating.

Overall, mushrooms are pretty amazing vegetables. It's no wonder that our ancestors thought they had magical powers! Of course, today we know almost everything there is to know about them. But that does not make them any less remarkable.

Sources:

Schwab, Alexander. *Mushrooming Without Fear: The Beginner's Guide to Collecting Safe and Delicious Mushrooms*. New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2007. Book.

1) Paragraph 1 helps

- A. define a general term (CORRECT)
- B. describe how mushrooms grow
- C. explain the history of something
- D. introduce the author's view of most vegetables

Question Type: Reasoning

Explanation:

In the first paragraph, the author states what a fungus is: it's "an organism that produces spores and feeds on other organic matter." He or she goes on to introduce types of fungi, including mushrooms, which is his or her main subject. This means that paragraph 1 is used to define a general term—fungi—and then to use that term to introduce a more specific one—mushrooms. Choice (A) is correct because of this.

Paragraphs 8 – 12 describe how mushrooms grow. This question asks about paragraph 1, though. Because of this, choice (B) is not correct.

No part of the passage describes the history of anything, so choice (C) is not correct.

The author does not introduce any view of vegetables other than mushrooms in paragraph 1. Instead, he or she only states that some fungi—mushrooms—are “quite delicious.” This means that the author introduces his or her view of mushrooms in paragraph 1 but not of most vegetables. It also means choice (D) is not correct.

2) In paragraph 3, the author notes the difference between

- A. mushrooms and vegetables in general
- B. mushrooms and fungi in general (CORRECT)
- C. fungi and organic life-forms in general
- D. fungi and edible vegetables in general

Question Type: Reasoning

Explanation:

In paragraph 3, the author opens by stating that “not all things that grow from fungi are mushrooms.” He or she goes on to state that a mushroom has “a cap on top of a stem” and suggests that other fungal growths do not. In this way, he or she is noting the differences between mushrooms and general fungi. Because of this, choice (B) is correct.

The author does not discuss other vegetables in paragraph 3, though he or she does note the differences between mushrooms and other vegetables later in the passage. Choice (A) is not correct because of this.

The author only notes the differences between mushrooms and other things that grow from fungi in paragraph 3. He or she does not discuss “organic life-forms in general,” so choice (C) is not correct.

The author does not discuss other edible vegetables in paragraph 3, so choice (D) is not correct.

3) As used in paragraph 4, the word toxic most nearly means

- A. edible
- B. disgusting
- C. harmful (CORRECT)
- D. fungal

Question Type: Vocabulary

Explanation:

toxic (adjective): poisonous or harmful.

In paragraph 4, the author states that “many mushrooms are poisonous” before referring to “these poisonous ones.” This suggests that toxic and poisonous mean the same thing. Since they “make you very sick,” it seems that toxic and poisonous things must be harmful. This means that toxic must have a similar meaning to harmful, so choice (C) is correct.

The fourth paragraph actually notes a difference between “edible” mushrooms and “toxic ones.” This suggests that toxic and edible are not similar in meaning. It also suggests that choice (A) is not correct.

The passage never describes mushrooms as “disgusting.” It does suggest that many mushrooms are “delicious,” and it suggests that some are not “edible.” But the author never says anything is disgusting or gross. This means that toxic and disgusting must not have similar meanings. It also means choice (B) is not correct.

All mushrooms are “fungal,” since all grow out of fungi. In paragraph 4, the author only refers to “many mushrooms” as being “toxic,” so it does not make sense that toxic would be the same as fungal. If all mushrooms are fungal but only some are toxic, they cannot be the same thing. Because of this, choice (D) is not correct.

4) In paragraph 6, the author suggests that

- A. earlier civilizations did not attempt to eat as many mushrooms as humans do today
- B. earlier civilizations did not understand mushrooms as well as humans do today (CORRECT)
- C. earlier civilizations did not attempt to grow as many mushrooms on their own as humans do today
- D. earlier civilizations did not know as many varieties of mushrooms as humans do today

Question Type: Reasoning

Explanation:

In paragraph 6, the author describes how “earlier civilizations” viewed mushrooms. He or she states they thought mushrooms were “magical” or had the power “to cure diseases.” We know mushrooms are not magical today (the author makes this clear in the final paragraph), so it seems that earlier civilizations did not understand mushrooms as well as we do today. Because of

this, choice (B) is correct.

In paragraph 6, the author describes how “earlier civilizations” viewed mushrooms. He or she states they thought mushrooms were “magical” or had the power “to cure diseases.” The sixth paragraph does not, however, mention anything about how mushrooms were eaten by earlier civilizations. Because of this, choice (A) is not correct.

In paragraph 6, the author describes how “earlier civilizations” viewed mushrooms. He or she states they thought mushrooms were “magical” or had the power “to cure diseases.” The sixth paragraph does not, however, mention anything about how mushrooms were grown or not grown by earlier civilizations. Because of this, choice (C) is not correct.

In paragraph 6, the author describes how “earlier civilizations” viewed mushrooms. He or she states they thought mushrooms were “magical” or had the power “to cure diseases.” The sixth paragraph does not, however, mention anything about how many varieties of mushrooms were known to earlier civilizations. Because of this, choice (D) is not correct.

5) According to the passage, a single mushroom contains

- A. nearly a million spawns
- B. nearly a million spores
- C. nearly a billion spawns
- D. nearly a billion spores (CORRECT)

Question Type: Research

Explanation:

To answer this question, look for the part of the passage that describes spores and spawns. This occurs in the middle section of the passage, under the heading “Growing Mushrooms.” There, in paragraph 8, the author states that “each mushroom... contains nearly a billion spores.” Because of this, choice (D) is correct.

Choices (A) and (C) are not correct because the passage says mushrooms do not contain spawns. Instead, the spawn is “a blend of the nutrients and the spores,” but the mushrooms themselves only contain spores.

Choice (B) is not correct because the eighth paragraph states that each mushroom contains “nearly a billion spores,” not nearly a million.

6) Each of the following is involved in the professional mushroom-growing process EXCEPT

- A. substrates
- B. shards (CORRECT)
- C. spawns
- D. spores

Question Type: Research

Explanation:

To answer this question, look for the part of the passage that describes how mushrooms grow. This occurs in the middle section of the passage, under the heading “Growing Mushrooms.” There, the author mentions all of the listed choices except for “shards.” While shards of wood might make up a part of the substrate or spawn, they are not definitely part of the mushroom-growing process. Because this question asks for the listed choice that is NOT part of the process, choice (B) is correct.

In paragraph 10, the author states that “most professional mushroom farmers... add another material to the spawn,” a material “called a substrate.” This makes it clear that substrates are involved in the mushroom-growing process. Because this question asks for the listed choice that is NOT part of the process, choice (A) is not correct.

In paragraph 9, the author describes a farmer adding nutrients to the mushroom spores, creating “a blend... known as the spawn.” This makes it clear that spawns are involved in the mushroom-growing process. Because this question asks for the listed choice that is NOT part of the process, choice (C) is not correct.

In paragraph 8, the author states that mushrooms “grow from spores.” This makes it clear that spores are involved in the mushroom-growing process. Because this question asks for the listed choice that is NOT part of the process, choice (D) is not correct.

7) Paragraph 16 best answers which of the following questions?

- A. What kinds of mushrooms would be used by certain chefs? (CORRECT)
- B. What conditions are best for growing mushrooms at home?
- C. What types of mushrooms are best for frying or sautéing?
- D. What conditions are best for storing mushrooms?

Question Type: Reasoning

Explanation:

In paragraph 16, the author discusses the different “varieties of edible mushrooms.” He or she refers to the types of mushrooms that are common in various cuisines. The author includes references to “American kitchens,” “Asian recipes,” and “the finest restaurants in the world” and lists the types of mushrooms used in each. This means that the question posed in choice (A) is answered. We know what kinds of mushrooms would be used by certain chefs: an American would likely use white, cremini, or portabella mushrooms; an Asian would likely use woodear, shiitake, or enoki; and a fine chef would use truffles. Choice (A) is correct because of this.

The sixteenth paragraph is about what kinds of mushrooms are common in different foods, not about growing mushrooms at home. As such, choice (B) is not correct. It does not provide a question answered by paragraph 16.

The sixteenth paragraph is about what kinds of mushrooms are common in different foods, but it does not describe specific techniques used to cook each type of mushrooms. As such, choice (C) is not correct. It does not provide a question answered by paragraph 16. We do not know what types of mushrooms are best for frying or sautéing.

The sixteenth paragraph is about what kinds of mushrooms are common in different foods, not about storing mushrooms. As such, choice (D) is not correct. It does not provide a question answered by paragraph 16. We do not know how to store mushrooms.

8) According to the passage, mushrooms are UNLIKE most other vegetables because of

- I. the number of different types of mushrooms
- II. the way mushrooms grow
- III. the nutritional content of mushrooms

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

Question Type: Research

Explanation:

Use process of elimination to answer this question. The passage states in paragraph 8 that “mushrooms are unique among vegetables because they do not grow from seeds.” This makes it clear that mushrooms are unlike other vegetables in how they grow. Because of this, option (II) is supported.

In paragraph 13, the author states that mushrooms “are an excellent source of B-group vitamins, fiber, potassium, and zinc” and that “most vegetables are not good sources of any of these nutrients.” This means that mushrooms are unlike most other vegetables in their nutritional content. Because of this, option (III) is also supported.

The passage does not make a comparison between the variety of mushrooms as compared to the variety of other vegetables. Though we know there are more than 250 varieties of edible mushrooms, the passage provides no information about the number of different types of other vegetables. Because of this, option (I) is NOT supported.

Since only options (II) and (III) are not supported, choice (C) is correct.

Choices (A) and (D) are each not correct because option (I) is not supported.

Choice (B) is not correct because option (II) is not the only option supported by the passage.

9) In your own words, try to describe the benefits of mushroom farming.

10) Do you like to eat mushrooms? If so, what is your favorite way of cooking them? If not, why don't you like them?

11) At the end of the passage, the author states that “mushrooms are pretty amazing vegetables.” In your own words, explain what the author thinks makes mushrooms so “amazing.”

Perceptions – Grade 10

Passage 1

In many fields, experts often discuss something called the “eye test.” Using the eye test, one bases opinions on what one sees and feels based on those sights rather than on hard statistics or facts. It is a suggestion that one’s perceptions are better indicators of the way something is than are unempirical types of evidence. When coaches evaluate basketball players, for instance, they can rely on hard statistics such as field goal percentage, speed, rebounds per game, or they can use the eye test and simply watch a player play ball and see for themselves how good he is. Likewise, when we pick political leaders, we can look at their voting records, their statements on the issues, or other facts about them, but we can also ask ourselves who just looks presidential. This partially explains Warren G. Harding’s rise to the presidency in 1920—he looked and sounded like a president, though he was inexperienced and not in actuality what would be considered presidential. This last example is crucial, as it explains my main point: our eyes really are lousy evaluators.

See, the eye is the opposite of what one should be using to objectively assess anything, for the eye is little more than a tool manipulated by perceptions and the power of suggestion. The same rays of light enter everyone’s eyes, but different experiences allow people to see different things or to focus on different aspects of the same thing. That is because the eye itself is not the main factor in sight; the brain is. Let me explain.

Light reflects off an object and enters your lens, which focuses the light onto the back of your eye. There, an upside-down image is reflected on the retina, which contains millions of photoreceptors called rods and cones. They translate the images into electrical impulses, which then get carried to the brain via the optic nerve. It is the brain’s job to then make sense of the image. However, the brain can only make sense of images that make sense to it: that is, if the brain has not seen something before, it may not see it at all. The brain, thus, uses its own biases to choose what’s important and not important. If you have seen a teapot before, your brain will likely identify something as a teapot. However, if there’s an object that is only similar to a teapot and it’s something you haven’t seen before (say a tagine), your brain will likely see an earthenware pot that kind of resembles a teapot. Or, similarly, you might misclassify a species of animal based on what it looks like. That’s why pandas are called bears even though they are actually more similar to raccoons.

All of that may sound unimportant, but it proves exactly why we need to evaluate everything by using something other than the eye test. The eye test favors the known even when the unknown might be better; it allows for prejudices to trump priorities and goes a long way toward explaining why people so often think that things are a certain way just because they’ve always been a certain way. More simply, the biases favored by the eye test allow for mistakes to persist as fact.

Passage 2

Art museums are wonderful lessons in the powers of perception and prejudices. We visit them expecting to see art and end up accepting the narrative that anything in a museum has been classified as art and is, therefore, art. All of us have been taught to buy into the notion that everything in the museum has aesthetic value just because it is on display. It leads us to desire what is considered good and to consider good what we have been programmed to desire to see. As James Joyce asked in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, “Is the portrait of the *Mona Lisa* good if I desire to see it?” A better question might be why we have deemed the *Mona Lisa* to be a better painting than, say, a watercolor painting done by an amateur artist. Unless the latter has some personal significance for us—it was painted by a close friend or family member, for instance, or it is a painting of a place that was important to us when we were younger—we will invariably desire to see the *Mona Lisa* and not the amateur watercolor. It all comes down to context. We desire the *Mona Lisa* because it hangs in a museum; we see another painting as lesser because it does not hang in a museum.

There is a wonderful display at the Brooklyn Museum that highlights this very point: a silver-colored meat slicer. This stainless steel object was a common sight on the counter of any delicatessen in Brooklyn in the 1940s and evoked, as the exhibit puts it, “cleanliness, efficiency, and modernity.” But the museum puts it on display to invoke the idea that it can be seen as an art; indeed, at the museum, the exhibit refers to it as “an abstract piece of streamlined design.” It is the same object in two different contexts. In either case, the object is objectively neat looking, but only in one case do we perceive its aesthetic value rather than its functional value.

Sources:

Joyce, James. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. New York: Penguin Classics, 1916. Book.

Meat Slicer. N.d. Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, New York. Museum Exhibit.

Oyster, Clyde W. *The Human Eye: Structure and Function*. Sunderland, Massachusetts: Sinauer Associates, 1999. Book.

- 1) Based on how the eye test is defined in Passage 1, which of the following would be an example of the use of the eye test?
- A. An art critic determines a painting's monetary worth by comparing it to the selling prices of other paintings.
 - B. A scientist conducts an experiment to test a hypothesis.
 - C. A traveler picks a hotel room based on photos of the room on the hotel's website. (CORRECT)
 - D. A salesman chooses how many shirts to order for his store based on how the shirt sold in other markets.
 - E. A stockbroker buys stock based on how the stock has performed over the past year.

Question Type: Inference

Explanation:

The author of Passage 1 defines the "eye test" in the first paragraph. There, he or she writes that, "using the eye test, one bases opinions on what one sees and feels based on those sights rather than on hard statistics or facts." Thus, the eye test involves sights and general impressions rather than cold hard facts. The author provides the example of a basketball coach watching a player play and the public picking a president based on who "looks presidential." Of the answer choices, only one provides a situation in which one is making an opinion or evaluation based entirely on sights and impressions, and this is the situation presented in choice (C). Picking a room based on pictures of the room is using the eye test, so choice (C) is incorrect.

The author of Passage 1 defines the "eye test" in the first paragraph. There, he or she writes that, "using the eye test, one bases opinions on what one sees and feels based on those sights rather than on hard statistics or facts." Figuring out how much a painting is worth by comparing it to the selling prices of other paintings involves the use of statistics and facts rather than mere impressions or images. As such, choice (A) is incorrect, as it does not provide an example of the use of the eye test.

The author of Passage 1 defines the "eye test" in the first paragraph. There, he or she writes that, "using the eye test, one bases opinions on what one sees and feels based on those sights rather than on hard statistics or facts." A scientist conducting an experiment is almost the complete opposite of a person using the eye test, as an experiment will provide facts and data, rather than just images and impressions. As such, choice (B) is incorrect, as it does not provide an example of the use of the eye test.

The author of Passage 1 defines the "eye test" in the first paragraph. There, he or she writes that, "using the eye test, one bases opinions on what one sees and feels based on those sights rather than on hard statistics or facts." A salesman

who is ordering shirts based on how they sold elsewhere is an example of a person making a decision by using hard data (sales figures) rather than general impressions to make a judgment. As such, choice (D) is incorrect, as it does not provide an example of the use of the eye test.

The author of Passage 1 defines the “eye test” in the first paragraph. There, he or she writes that, “using the eye test, one bases opinions on what one sees and feels based on those sights rather than on hard statistics or facts.” A stockbroker deciding to buy a stock after monitoring its progress is an example of a person making a decision by using hard data (stock reports) rather than general impressions to make a judgment. As such, choice (E) is incorrect, as it does not provide an example of the use of the eye test.

2) According to Passage 1, each of the following is part of the eye EXCEPT

- A. lens
- B. optic nerve
- C. retina
- D. lashes (CORRECT)
- E. rods

Question Type: Detail

Explanation:

To answer this detail question, look for the part of Passage 1 that discusses the parts of the eye and their function. This occurs in paragraph 3. There, the author writes that light “enters your lens,” which reflects an image “upside-down... on the retina.” The retina itself “contains millions of photoreceptors called rods and cones” which send electrical impulses “to the brain via the optic nerve.” The only answer choice not listed as a part of the eye is lashes. Lashes are outside the eye and are not mentioned in paragraph 3 or anywhere else in Passage 1. As this question asks for something NOT stated as part of the eye, choice (D) is correct.

Paragraph 3 of Passage 1 mentions the lens as part of the eye, as it “focuses the light onto the back of your eye.” Because this question asks for something that is NOT a part of the eye, choice (A) is incorrect.

Paragraph 3 of Passage 1 mentions the optic nerve as part of the eye, as it is what carries “electrical impulses” of what is seen up to the brain. Because this question asks for something that is NOT a part of the eye, choice (B) is incorrect.

Paragraph 3 of Passage 1 mentions the retina as part of the eye, as it receives reflected images and “contains millions of photoreceptors.” Because this question asks for something that is NOT a part of the eye, choice (C) is incorrect.

Paragraph 3 of Passage 1 mentions rods as part of the eye, as they are examples of “photoreceptors” contained in the retina. Because this question asks for something that is NOT a part of the eye, choice (E) is incorrect.

- 3) Which of the following best summarizes the main point of Passage 1?
- A. The author refutes the notion that the eye is a good evaluative tool because seeing is not objective and can lead to biases. (CORRECT)
 - B. The author challenges the idea that the eye cannot be used to evaluate anything objectively, since the eye is used to analyze statistics.
 - C. The author argues that the eye test should not be used to evaluate anything important such as presidential elections but can work for judging unimportant things.
 - D. The author invalidates the use of the eye test as an evaluative tool because the brain is actually a better tool to use than the eye.
 - E. The author explains how the eye functions in order to prove that the eye test has been misunderstood in recent years.

Question Type: Global

Explanation:

The author states his or her “main point” at the end of the first paragraph: that “our eyes really are lousy evaluators.” The rest of the passage explains why the eye is a bad evaluative tool. This is because “the eye is little more than a tool manipulated by perceptions and the power of suggestion” and “allows for prejudices to trump priorities” and for “mistakes to persist as fact.” In the beginning of the passage, the author introduces the idea of the eye test, the use of which he or she rails against. Thus, it is accurate that “the author refutes the notion that the eye is a good evaluative tool because seeing is not objective and can lead to biases,” making choice (A) correct.

The author never once says anything positive about the eye as an evaluative tool, as the author seems to prefer that people use statistics instead. In fact, he or she states that “our eyes really are lousy evaluators.” He or she never states that the “eye is used to analyze statistics” though, so there is no way the author ever challenges the idea the eye cannot be used to evaluate anything, and choice (B) is incorrect.

Though the author does suggest that the eye test should not have been used to choose a president (through his or her example of Warren G. Harding’s election), he or she does not say that the eye test is fine for evaluating anything, regardless

of import. In fact, he or she states that “our eyes really are lousy evaluators.” Thus, choice (C) is incorrect.

Though the author does rail against the use of the eye test, he or she never states that the brain is inherently a better tool. In fact, he or she argues that the brain is equally subject to manipulation through his or her tagine/tea kettle example. Thus, choice (D) is incorrect.

Though the author does explain how the eye works, he or she does not do so in order to argue in favor of the eye test. In fact, he or she is overtly critical of the eye test, as “our eyes really are lousy evaluators.” For these reasons, choice (E) is incorrect.

4) As used in paragraph 1 of Passage 2, the word programmed most nearly means

- A. arranged
- B. scheduled
- C. conditioned (CORRECT)
- D. planned
- E. broadcasted

Question Type: Vocabulary

Explanation:

program (verb): to cause a person or animal to behave in a certain way.

In the first paragraph of Passage 2, the author states that “all of us have been taught to buy into the notion that everything in the museum has aesthetic value” and that this “leads us to desire what is considered good and to consider good what we have been programmed to desire to see.” The author implies that programmed and taught are related in meaning, suggesting that programmed, in context, is most similar in meaning to conditioned. Choice (C) is correct because of this.

Though programmed can be synonymous to arranged in other contexts, there is no indication that programmed means arranged in the context of Passage 2. As such, choice (A) is incorrect.

Though programmed can be synonymous to scheduled in other contexts, there is no indication that programmed means scheduled in the context of Passage 2. As such, choice (B) is incorrect.

Though programmed can be synonymous to planned in other contexts, there is no indication that programmed means planned in the context of Passage 2. As such, choice (D) is incorrect.

Though programmed can be synonymous to broadcasted in other contexts, there is no indication that programmed means broadcasted in the context of Passage 2. As such, choice (E) is incorrect.

5) In Passage 2, the author

- A. uses direct quotations to argue that art is not subjective
- B. provides a description of museum display as an example of his or her point (CORRECT)
- C. discusses the types of art that people tend to prefer to see or experience
- D. argues that context is more important than substance in evaluating objects
- E. All of the above

Question Type: Global

Explanation:

In the second paragraph of Passage 2, the author describes the meat slicer on display at the Brooklyn Museum. This is used as an example of his or her main point, that “art museums are wonderful lessons in the powers of perception and prejudices” and that the context of seeing something in a museum makes us assume it has aesthetic value. Thus, choice (B) is correct.

The author of Passage 2 does use direct quotations in both paragraphs. However, he or she uses them to make the point that art is subjective and that how we perceive art is influenced by the experience of where and how we see art. Thus, the author uses direct quotations to argue that art IS subjective. Choice (A) is incorrect because it states the opposite reason the author uses direct quotations.

Though Passage 2 does discuss the “desire” to see certain art, the author never discusses the various types of art people prefer to see. Rather, he or she only uses a quotation from Joyce to highlight the fact that there are certain works—in this case the *Mona Lisa*—that people do prefer to see. As such, choice (C) is incorrect.

The author of Passage 2 argues that context determines how we see art, but he or she never implies that context itself is more important for evaluating objects than is substance. Passage 2 never discusses how we should evaluate anything; it only discusses what influences evaluation currently. Because of this, choice (D) is incorrect.

Choice (E) is incorrect because three of the four answer choices are only close to being accurate, and only one choice actually is accurate. Thus, not all of the above choices are true.

- 6) The meat slicer is used in Passage 2 as an example of an object that
- A. does not get appreciated enough by mass society
 - B. is ugly but considered beautiful by art museums
 - C. has been incorrectly evaluated by the eye test
 - D. can only be understood properly in a historic context
 - E. takes on new meaning in certain contexts (CORRECT)

Question Type: Inference

Explanation:

In paragraph 2 of Passage 2, the author states that “there is a wonderful display at the Brooklyn Museum that highlights this very point: a silver-colored meat slicer.” The point being highlighted is the one mentioned in paragraph 1: that “we desire the *Mona Lisa* because it hangs in a museum; we see another painting as lesser because it does not hang in a museum.” This implies that the context—specifically the context of hanging in a museum—influences how we perceive an object. When the meat slicer is viewed in a deli, it is not art, but when it is in a museum, it very much is. Thus, choice (E) is correct.

The author never implies that the meat slicer is not appreciated much by either mass society or small segments of the population. In fact, the author never suggests that the meat slicer has anything to do with popularity at all, as it is instead an example of something seen in two different ways depending on where it is seen. As such, choice (A) is incorrect.

The author does suggest that the meat slicer is considered a certain way when it is seen in the Brooklyn Museum, but he or she never implies that it is ugly or beautiful. In fact, the author states that, “in either case, the object is objectively neat looking.” Thus, the object looks the same way in both cases but is perceived differently depending on the context. For this reason, choice (B) is incorrect.

Passage 2 never discusses the Eye Test, so there is no indication that the Eye Test has been used to misjudge the meat slicer. Choice (C) is incorrect because it mistakes information from Passage 1 with information from Passage 2.

The author never states that there is a correct way to see or understand the meat slicer; he or she only states that it is seen differently depending on the context it is viewed in. Thus, choice (D) is incorrect.

- 7) Which of the following best describes the relationship between Passages 1 and 2?
- A. Both argue that subjective evaluation is preferable to objective evaluation, since objective evaluations are often impossible to make.
 - B. Both argue that objectivity can only be determined by statistics and facts.

- C. Passage 1 argues that the eye test cannot work in any circumstance, while Passage 2 argues that the eye test cannot work in museums alone.
- D. Passage 1 challenges the notion that anyone can determine aesthetic value objectively, while Passage 2 believes there is no such thing as objectivity.
- E. Both argue that objectivity cannot be determined by sight alone, but the passages focus on different ideas to make that point. (CORRECT)

Question Type: Inference

Explanation:

Both passages are principally interested in exploring subjectivity and arguing that it is impossible to evaluate objects in an objective way by sight alone. However, Passage 1 argues that all sight is biased and that, therefore, the eye test is not good for evaluating things, while Passage 2 argues only that context influences the way we perceive objects, particularly art. Passage 1's author makes his or her point by describing how the eye works, while Passage 2's author makes it by describing how we see things in an art museum as different from things outside an art museum. Thus, both passages argue that objectivity cannot be determined by sight alone, but they focus on different ideas to make that point. Because of this, choice (E) is correct.

Both passages do argue that it is hard to make objective evaluations, but neither passage argues that subjective evaluation is better. In fact, Passage 1 seems to argue that objective evaluation is better and can be made by using statistics and data. As such, choice (A) is incorrect.

Both passages do argue that it is hard to make objective evaluations, but only Passage 1 ever discusses statistics or hard data. Passage 2 never discusses hard facts in any way, as it only describes the experience of seeing objects at a museum. For this reason, choice (B) is incorrect.

Only Passage 1 ever discusses the eye test, so choice (C) is incorrect.

Passage 2 never implies that there is no such thing as objectivity; it only implies that the way we evaluate art is based largely on the subjective experience of where we see it. Additionally, Passage 1 never discusses the evaluation of aesthetic values. As such, choice (D) is incorrect.

8) Both authors do each of the following EXCEPT

- A. discuss subjectivity
- B. provide examples
- C. use quotations (CORRECT)
- D. make an argument
- E. use hypotheticals

Question Type: Global

Explanation:

To approach this global question, use the process of elimination. Look for the answer choice that provides an example of something that is used in one passage or neither passage but not in both passages. Choice (C) provides such a case. While Passage 2 makes use of quotations to make its point, Passage 1 never does. As such, choice (C) is correct.

Both passages discuss subjectivity. Passage 1 argues that the eye test is a bad way of evaluating things because the eyes are not able to perceive things objectively; Passage 2 argues that “museums are wonderful lessons in the powers of perception and prejudices,” both of which are associated with subjectivity. This question asks for something NOT done by both passages, so choice (A) is not correct.

Both passages provide examples. Passage 1, for instance, provides the example of “when coaches evaluate basketball players,” while Passage 2 provides the example of the meat slicer on display at the Brooklyn Museum. This question asks for something NOT done by both passages, so choice (B) is not correct.

Both passages make arguments. Passage 1 argues that “our eyes really are lousy evaluators” and that, therefore, the eye test is not a good evaluation tool, while Passage 2 argues that “art museums are wonderful lessons in the powers of perception and prejudices.” This question asks for something NOT done by both passages, so choice (D) is not correct.

Both passages use hypotheticals. Passage 1 uses the hypothetical example of seeing something “you haven’t seen before (say a tagine),” while Passage 2 describes “say, a watercolor painting done by an amateur artist” who may or may not have “personal significance” to us. These are both hypotheticals. This question asks for something NOT done by both passages, so choice (E) is not correct.