

TOEFL Reading practice paper

Passage 1

The questions below are based on this passage

In 1603, Queen Elizabeth I of England died. She had never married and had no heir, so the throne passed to a distant relative: James Stuart, the son of Elizabeth's cousin and one-time rival for the throne, Mary, Queen of Scots. James was crowned King James I of England. At the time, he was also King James VI of Scotland, and the combination of roles would create a spirit of conflict that haunted the two nations for generations to come.

The conflict developed as a result of rising tensions among the people within the nations, as well as between them. Scholars in the 21st century are far too hasty in dismissing the role of religion in political disputes, but religion undoubtedly played a role in the problems that faced England and Scotland. By the time of James Stuart's succession to the English throne, the English people had firmly embraced the teachings of Protestant theology. Similarly, the Scottish Lowlands was decisively Protestant. In the Scottish Highlands, however, the clans retained their Catholic faith. James acknowledged the Church of England and still sanctioned the largely Protestant translation of the Bible that still bears his name.

James's son King Charles I proved himself to be less committed to the Protestant Church of England. Charles married the Catholic Princess Henrietta Maria of France, and there were suspicions among the English and the Lowland Scots that Charles was quietly a Catholic. Charles's own political troubles extended beyond religion in this case, and he was beheaded in 1649. Eventually, his son King Charles II would be crowned, and this Charles is believed to have converted secretly to the Catholic Church. Charles II died without a legitimate heir, and his brother James ascended to the throne as King James II.

James was recognized to be a practicing Catholic, and his commitment to Catholicism would prove to be his downfall. James's wife Mary Beatrice lost a number of children during their infancy, and when she became pregnant again in 1687 the public became concerned. If James had a son, that son would undoubtedly be raised a Catholic, and the English people would not stand for this. Mary gave birth to a son, but the story quickly circulated that the royal child had died and the child named James's heir was a foundling smuggled in. James, his wife, and his infant son were forced to flee; and James's Protestant daughter Mary was crowned the queen. In spite of a strong resemblance to the king, the young James was generally rejected among the English and the Lowland Scots, who referred to him as "the Pretender." But in the Highlands the Catholic princeling was welcomed. He inspired a group known as Jacobites, to reflect the Latin version of his name. His own son Charles, known affectionately as Bonnie Prince Charlie, would eventually raise an army and attempt to recapture what he believed to be his throne. The movement was soundly defeated at the Battle of Culloden in 1746, and England and Scotland have remained Protestant ever since.

1. Which of the following sentences contains an opinion on the part of the author?

a. James was recognized to be a practicing Catholic, and his commitment to Catholicism would prove to be his downfall.

- b. James' son King Charles I proved himself to be less committed to the Protestant Church of England.
- c. The movement was soundly defeated at the Battle of Culloden in 1746, and England and Scotland have remained ostensibly Protestant ever since.
- d. Scholars in the 21st century are far too hasty in dismissing the role of religion in political disputes, but religion undoubtedly played a role in the problems that faced England and Scotland.

2. Which of the following is a logical conclusion based on the information that is provided within the passage?

- a. Like Elizabeth I, Charles II never married and thus never had children.
- b. The English people were relieved each time that James II's wife Mary lost another child, as this prevented the chance of a Catholic monarch.
- c. Charles I's beheading had less to do with religion than with other political problems that England was facing.
- d. Unlike his son and grandsons, King James I had no Catholic leanings and was a faithful follower of the Protestant Church of England.

3. Based on the information that is provided within the passage, which of the following can be inferred about King James II's son?

- a. Considering his resemblance to King James II, the young James was very likely the legitimate child of the king and the queen.
- b. Given the queen's previous inability to produce a healthy child, the English and the Lowland Scots were right in suspecting the legitimacy of the prince.
- c. James "the Pretender" was not as popular among the Highland clans as his son Bonnie Prince Charlie.
- d. James was unable to acquire the resources needed to build the army and plan the invasion that his son succeeded in doing.

4. Which of the following best describes the organization of the information in the passage?

- a. Cause-effect
- b. Chronological sequence
- c. Problem-solution
- d. Comparison-contrast

5. Which of the following best describes the author's intent in the passage?

- a. To persuade
- b. To entertain
- c. To express feeling
- d. To inform

6. What can be inferred from paragraph two about the author's view of 21st century scholars?

- a. 21st century scholars often disregard the role of religious views in historical political disputes.
- b. 21st century scholars make hasty observations about historical political disputes.
- c. 21st century scholars lack the details necessary to understand historical political disputes.
- d. 21st century scholars think that religion is never used in political disputes.

7. What is the nickname of the founder of a group called the Jacobites?

- a. Jacob
- b. The Deceiver
- c. The Pretender
- d. The Fool

8. Who does the passage say ascended the throne because someone else did not have a legitimate heir?

- a. King James Stuart
- b. Queen Elizabeth I
- c. King Charles II
- d. King James II

9. Which of the following best describes what the passage is about?

- a. The lineage of the current Queen of England
- b. The history of religions in Scotland and in England
- c. The role of religion had in conflict between England and Scotland
- d. The history and origin of the Jacobites

10. What was the result of King Charles I's political troubles?

- a. He was beheaded
- b. He was exiled
- c. He was hanged
- d. He was dethroned

11. Based on the following sentence, what can you infer about the meaning of the italicized word?

"Mary gave birth to a son, but the story quickly circulated that the royal child had died and the child named James's heir was a *foundling* smuggled in."

- a. A prince
- b. An orphan
- c. A nephew
- d. An illegitimate child

12. What kind of tone does this passage have?

- a. humorous
- b. informative
- c. solemn
- d. sarcastic

13. Which piece of information is least important to the purpose of the passage?

- a. Queen Elizabeth I died in 1603
- b. King James I had a bible translation commissioned
- c. Bonnie Prince Charlie attempted to reclaim the throne
- d. King Charles II was believed to have secretly converted to Catholicism

14. What was the end result of the conflict after the Battle of Culloden?

- a. England and Scotland became Catholic as a result of the battle
- b. James the Pretender and his wife had to flee for safety
- c. This battle started conflict that would continue for generations
- d. England and Scotland have remained Protestant

Passage 2

Human anatomy is the scientific study of the body's structures. Some of these structures are very small and can only be observed and analyzed with the assistance of a microscope. Other larger structures can readily be seen, manipulated, measured, and weighed. The word "anatomy" comes from a Greek root that means "to cut apart." Human anatomy was first studied by observing the exterior of the body and observing the wounds of soldiers and other injuries. Later, physicians were allowed to dissect bodies of the dead to augment their knowledge. When a body is dissected, its structures are cut apart in order to observe their physical attributes and their relationships to one another. Dissection is still used in medical schools, anatomy courses, and in pathology labs.

1. The word augment is closest in meaning to

- 1. Prove
- 2. Increase
- 3. Validate
- 4. Spread

2. Which of the following is true about human anatomy?

- 1. The word "anatomy" is derived from a French root that means "cut"
- 2. The observation of soldiers' wounds were originally used to study human anatomy
- 3. Human and animal bodies were dissected in labs to understand human anatomy
- 4. The smaller structures of the human body need to be observed with a telescope

Passage 3

Did you hear? The genome of the banana has been sequenced, an important development in scientist's efforts to produce better bananas.

A look at that genome has revealed curious things, said Pat Heslop-Harrison, a plant geneticist at the University of Leicester in England who was a coauthor of the report published this week in the journal *Nature*.

For example, there are regions of the banana genome that don't seem to be involved in making proteins but are shared by many different species of plants, far beyond bananas. What, he wonders, are they doing?

There are remnants of bits of banana streak virus spliced into the banana genome (too broken-up to cause disease, however).

There are whole sets of DNA repeats that plants normally have but bananas do not. And, intriguingly, three times since this genus of giant herbs took an evolutionary turn away from its relatives -- the grasses -- it has duplicated its entire set of chromosomes.

Two of the doublings took place at the Cretaceous-Tertiary boundary 65 million years ago, back when the dinosaurs and lots of other species went extinct, Heslop-Harrison noted.

Duplications like this are known to have happened in other plant groups at this same time but haven't occurred since, Heslop-Harrison said. Scientists don't know why, but they believe having extra copies of genes may have imparted some stability to plants during a time of rapid climate change after an asteroid hit Earth.

Having more than one gene of each type means that if one gene of a set loses function, the plant still has another one that works. And there's more room for adaptability to new circumstances, because one gene could be altered and co-opted for new purposes and there would still be the other one left to perform the original job.

"Perhaps it's the reason [bananas have] done so well in the subsequent millions of years," Heslop-Harrison said. "One can ask, will changes occurring in the world's climate now mean there's going to be a whole set of new genome duplications that will enable plants to survive? We don't know that, but it's interesting to consider."

The banana genome sequenced by the French scientists was from the Pahang, a wild Malaysian banana of the species *Musa acuminata*. It's a key species in the complicated evolution of the bananas and plantains people eat around the world, including the Cavendish banana that we buy at the supermarket.

The sterile Cavendish is a so-called triploid: It has three sets of chromosomes instead of the normal two. One of those genomes came from Pahang. The others came from other subspecies of *Musa acuminata*.

The changes occurred stepwise, and went something like this:

- Thousands of years ago, two wild banana species from different parts of the islands of Southeast Asia were brought into the same range by people. They formed hybrids. A bit like mules, the hybrids were vigorous but fairly sterile.
- The hybrids were kept going without sex through propagation of their shoots.
- At some point, the hybrids developed the ability to set fruit without being fertilized.
- Then (for most bananas, including the Cavendish) came another chance event that caused the hybrids to end up with three sets of chromosomes. Every now and again, the few viable eggs and pollen that they made would mistakenly contain two sets of chromosomes instead of just one.

When a double-chromosome pollen combined with a single-chromosome egg (or vice versa), the result was a hopelessly sterile plant with even more vigorous fruit.

Events like this happened more than once and sometimes included other types of ancestral banana species.

Some scientists, in fact, have made a whole study of banana domestication and movement around the world. They've pieced the story together using quite different strands of information, including the genomes of wild and cultivated bananas, the microscopic relics of banana leaf material found at archaeological sites, and even the word for "banana" in different languages.

1. In paragraph 2, the word "curious" is closest in meaning to

- A) inquisitive
- B) peculiar
- C) nosy
- D) intricate

2. What does paragraph 5 suggest about bananas?

- A) The banana genus may not yet be classifiable into a traditional category
- B) Bananas are actually a species of grass
- C) Bananas may now be categorized as "herbs" in supermarkets
- D) Because banana chromosomes duplicate themselves, they have better potential for successful cloning

3. Why does the author use "intriguingly" to describe the phenomenon in paragraph 5?

- A) To imply that bananas are far more interesting than other fruits
- B) To make readers doubt the claims scientists are making about bananas

C) To suggest that duplication of chromosomes is a rare and interesting occurrence in the plant world

D) To encourage questions about whether bananas are grasses or herbs

4. Why is the observation in paragraph 6 important?

A) It suggests that the banana mutated its genetic structure for survival

B) It shows that bananas can be traced as far back as dinosaurs

C) It suggests that bananas were fatal to dinosaurs and other species

D) It proves that bananas are immune to atmospheric changes

5. The word "co-opted" in paragraph 8 is closest in meaning to

A) decided upon together

B) argued against

C) removed from the study

D) adopted

6. The quote in paragraph 9 most closely suggests

A) Bananas may be an example of ways that species might alter their genetics to survive changes in the earth's climate and atmosphere

B) That the genetic mutations of bananas have no implications for other species

C) That genetic structure is the only factor that should be considered when predicting survival

D) Though bananas have made it this far, there is no proof that they will survive the next wave of significant atmospheric changes.

7. According to the article, all are steps in the evolution of the banana EXCEPT

A) Some banana hybrids began to develop three sets of chromosomes

B) The merging of two different banana species

C) Bananas reproduced widely and easily through fertilization

D) Bananas developed the ability to develop fruit without fertilization

8. The word "chance" in paragraph 16 is closest in meaning to

A) random

B) gamble

C) risky

D) opportune

9. All are variations of banana mentioned in the article EXCEPT

A) the Cavendish

B) Dolus mundi

C) Musa acuminata

D) plantains

10. The word "domestication" in the final paragraph is closest in meaning to >

A) housebroken

- B) well-controlled
- C) adapted for human consumption
- D) accepted within the culture