

TOEFL Reading Practice Test 25

SET 1

Questions 1–6 Read the passage.

Then answer the questions below. This is the first of three sections.

Distant Planet Said to Be Half-Melted

Astronomers have obtained what they call the most detailed "fingerprint" of a rocky planet outside our solar system to date, and concluded that half of that world is almost completely molten.

Scientists also say the planet is even hotter than radiation from its star alone would explain, so (5) there must be an unknown heat source.

The researchers, led by the University of Cambridge in the U.K., say scorching temperatures on the planet's hotter side may have made the atmosphere evaporate. Temperatures on the hot side can reach 2,500 degrees

C (4,500 F), while temperatures on the cool side are around 1,100 degrees C (2,000 degrees F), according to the findings, reported in the journal "Nature"

(10) Using data from NASA's Spitzer Space Telescope, the researchers examined this planet known as 55 Cancri, which orbits a sun-like star located 40 light years away in the Cancer constellation. They have mapped how conditions on the planet change throughout a complete orbit, the first time this has been done for such a small planet. 55 Cancri e is classified as a "super Earth," a rocky world about twice the size and eight times (15) the weight of Earth, and orbits its parent star so closely that a year lasts just 18 hours. The planet is also tidally locked, meaning that it always shows the same face to its parent star, similar to the Moon, so there is a permanent "day" side and a "night" side. It is among the nearest known super Earths whose makeup can be studied. Uncovering the characteristics of super Earths is hard, since they're so small compared to the (20) parent star and their contrast relative to the star is tiny compared to gas giant planets, so-called "hot

Jupiters." We haven't yet found any other planet that is this small and orbits so close to its parent star, and is relatively close to us, so 55 Cancri e offers lots of possibilities," said Brice-Olivier Demory of the university's Cavendish Laboratory, the paper's lead author. "We still don't know exactly (25) what this planet is made of--it's still a riddle. These results are like adding another brick to the wall, but the exact nature of this planet is still not completely understood." 55 Cancri has been extensively studied since its 2011 discovery. Based on readings taken at different times, it was thought to be a water world, or even made of diamond, but researchers now think it's almost completely

Lava-covered. (30) We have entered a new era of atmospheric remote sensing of rocky exoplanets," said study co-author Nikku Madhusudhan, from Cambridge's Institute of Astronomy. An exoplanet is a planet outside our solar system. "It is incredible that we are now able to measure the large-scale temperature distribution on the surface of a rocky exoplanet." One thing that's unclear is that there seems to be an unknown heat source that makes the (35) planet hotter than expected solely from its star, the astronomers said. They added that they may have to wait until the next generation of space telescopes are launched to find out.

Q1. The word scorching on line 6 is closest in meaning to _____.

1. ironing
2. extremely hot
3. catching on fire
4. cooling

Q2. The word examined on line 10 is closest in meaning to ____.

1. viewed
2. recorded
3. analyzed
4. went to

Q3. Which of the sentences best expresses the essential information given in this sentence?

“Uncovering the characteristics of super Earths is hard, since they’re so small compared to the parent star and their contrast relative to the star is tiny compared to gas giant planets, so-called ‘hot Jupiters.’”

1. It is difficult to know the features of a super Earth because it is small compared to the parent star and other massive planets.
2. The features of giant gas planets and “hot Jupiters” have been uncovered.
3. Giant planets uncover the features of super Earths because of its small size.
4. It is difficult to know the features of a super Earth because the parent star and other planets are so small.

Q4. The author uses “like adding another brick to the wall” in paragraph 6 to suggest that ____.

1. each time they learn something new, they build upon their knowledge of the planet
2. 55 Cancri e is made up of the same material as bricks
3. the researchers have not found any answers about the planet
4. they intend to build a brick wall on the planet in the future

Q5. It can be inferred from paragraph 7 that, around 2000, ____.

1. scientists named the small planet “55 Cancri e”
2. 55 Cancri e was a water planet
3. 55 Cancri e hadn’t been discovered yet
4. 55 Cancri e was discovered

Q6. The phrase “the next generation of space telescopes” in line 36, is closest in meaning to ____.

1. technology that is launched on a new planet
2. old telescope technology used in a new way
3. telescopes that use newer space technology
4. the new group of scientists to use the telescopes

SET 2

Uncle Wilbur

My uncle Wilbur used to spend hours every day checking on the lightning rods that stood guard on the roof of his house. We get a lot of storms here in our state. Sometimes we see wind up to sixty miles per hour and baseball-size hail. Lightning, Uncle Wilbur would say, is a living thing, and like a cat, it will strike anything that moves. You'd better not tempt it, he always told us. He advised my cousins and me to always be mindful of the nearest sheltering tree. He said we should be prepared to drop to the ground like a hot potato at the first sound of thunder. Knowing that lightning is attracted to the tallest thing around, Uncle Wilbur worried constantly about my cousin Jared, who, at sixteen, was 6'2" and still growing.

Uncle Wilbur has always been a smart man. We all listened as he dismissed the automobile as a passing fancy. Every year it seemed more and more Model Ts came rolling into town, but Uncle Wilbur insisted that nothing could replace the reliability of a good old-fashioned mule when it came to transportation, work, or even entertainment. Yes, Uncle Wilbur's Mule Olympics, complete with obstacle courses and a long jump, was known far and wide. Sadly, the Mule Olympics did not survive into the next decade because the mules got too old and lost interest.

Nonetheless, my uncle Wilbur continued to predict future trends and warn us of impending tragedy. To this day, he reminds us that he foresaw the stock market crash of 1929, and that's why he kept his money wrapped in a handkerchief under his mattress. When the government started collecting income taxes a few years back, Uncle Wilbur reluctantly shared his wealth with Uncle Sam, insisting that the money was just a temporary loan.

Uncle Wilbur did not take kindly to the power company man who came knocking one day in 1936. This was the year the government launched a campaign to bring electricity to rural areas like ours. Most people, like Uncle Wilbur, were a little wary of having electricity in their homes. Many of us had running water, and we just weren't sure that the two mixed. Nevertheless, Uncle Wilbur was downright floored when the man said he wanted to string power lines up to the house. Nearly losing his temper, Uncle Wilbur exclaimed, "Here I am doing everything in my power to keep from getting struck by lightning, and you want to bring it right to my doorstep?" He sent the man on his way with a "No, thank you," and a "Good day, sir," but in the months that followed, we all eventually relented and let in the light. I must admit, playing checkers in the dark is a talent you can easily lose without daily practice.

Many things have changed since those times. Uncle Wilbur still lives in mortal fear of a lightning strike, but because he doesn't get out much anymore, most of his lightning rods have rusted through and fallen to the ground. Uncle Wilbur lives mostly on Social Security, which he proudly proclaims as his victory (see, he says, the government did eventually give his money back). He probably spends more time reminiscing about the past than he does making future predictions, but Uncle Wilbur will be the first to tell you that television will never be as popular as radio, and the idea of a human traveling into outer space is just plain crazy!

1. What is the prefix in the word foresaw?

- A. fore
- B. saw
- C. for
- D. aw

2. Which phrase is an example of personification?

- A. lightning rods standing guard
- B. dismissed the automobile as a passing fancy
- C. string power lines up to the house
- D. idea of a human traveling into outer space

3. How would Uncle Wilbur feel about cellular phones?

- A. fearful
- B. distrustful
- C. welcoming
- D. indifferent

4. Compared to Uncle Wilbur, how does the narrator feel toward modern advancements?

- A. resisting
- B. accepting
- C. uncertain
- D. exhilarated

5. Which reason explains why the author wrote about Uncle Wilbur?

- A. to explain him
- B. to pacify him
- C. to remember him
- D. to persuade him

6. Which pair of words best describe how the narrator most likely feels about Uncle Wilbur?

- A. annoyed and frustrated
- B. respectful and amused
- C. sad and indifferent
- D. envious and distrustful

7. What BEST describes the passage?

- A. a character sketch
- B. a factual research
- C. a persuasive essay
- D. a news article