

Reading SAT Practice Test 16

Question 1

Adapted from "A Defense of Slang" in *The Romance of the Commonplace* by Gelett Burgess (1902)

Could Shakespeare come to Chicago and listen curiously to "the man in the street," he would find himself more at home than in London. In the mouths of messenger boys and clerks he would find the English language used with all the freedom of unexpected metaphor and the plastic, suggestive diction that was the privilege of the Elizabethan dramatists; he would say, no doubt, that he had found a nation of poets. There was hardly any such thing as slang in his day, for no graphic trope was too virile or uncommon for acceptance, if its meaning were patent. His own heroes often spoke what corresponds to the slang of today.

The word, indeed, needs precise definition, before we condemn all unconventional talk with vigor. Slang has been called "poetry in the rough," and it is not all coarse or vulgar. There is a prosaic as well as a poetic license. The man in the street calls a charming girl, for instance, a "daisy." Surely this is not inelegant, and such a reference will be understood a century from now. Slang, to prove adjuvant to our speech, which is growing more and more rigid and conventional, should be terse; it should make for force and clarity, without any sacrifice of beauty.

1. Why does the author believe there was no slang in Shakespeare's time?

- A. There were too few laboring classes from which slang could be drawn.
- B. The people of Elizabethan England were too serious for such prosaic creativity.
- C. English dramatists refused to employ slang in their work.
- D. Even strong, offensive, and unusual language was widely accepted and understood.
- E. Slang was considered too vulgar and its usage was discouraged by Queen Elizabeth I.

Question 2

Passage adapted from *The Confidence-Man: His Masquerade* by Herman Melville (1857)

At sunrise on a first of April, there appeared suddenly a man in cream-colors at the water-side in the city of St. Louis.

His cheek was fair, his chin downy, his hair flaxen, his hat a white fur one, with a long fleecy nap. He had neither trunk, valise, carpet-bag, nor parcel. No porter followed him. He was unaccompanied by friends. From the shrugged shoulders, titters, whispers, wonderings of the crowd, it was plain that he was, in the extremest sense of the word, a stranger.

In the same moment with his advent, he stepped aboard the favorite steamer Fidèle, on the point of starting for New Orleans. Stared at, but unsaluted, with the air of one neither courting nor shunning regard, but evenly pursuing the path of duty, lead it through solitudes or cities, he held on his way along the lower deck until he chanced to come to a placard nigh the captain's office, offering a reward for the capture of a mysterious impostor, supposed to have recently arrived from the East; quite an original genius in his vocation, as would appear, though wherein his originality consisted was not clearly given; but what purported to be a careful description of his person followed.

As if it had been a theatre-bill, crowds were gathered about the announcement, and among them certain chevaliers, whose eyes, it was plain, were on the capitals, or, at least, earnestly seeking sight of them from behind intervening coats; but as for their fingers, they were enveloped in some myth; though, during a chance interval, one of these chevaliers somewhat showed his hand in purchasing from another chevalier, ex-officio a peddler of money-belts, one of his popular safe-guards, while another peddler, who was still another versatile chevalier, hawked, in the thick of the throng, the lives of Measan, the bandit of Ohio, Murrel, the pirate of the Mississippi, and the brothers Harpe, the Thugs of the Green River country, in Kentucky—creatures, with others of the sort, one and all exterminated at the time, and for the most part, like the hunted generations of wolves in the same regions, leaving comparatively few successors; which would seem cause for unalloyed gratulation, and is such to all except those who think that in new countries, where the wolves are killed off, the foxes increase.

Pausing at this spot, the stranger so far succeeded in threading his way, as at last to plant himself just beside the placard, when, producing a small slate and tracing some words upon it, he held it up before him on a level with the placard, so that they who read the one might read the other. The words were these:—

"Charity thinketh no evil."

- 1 The narrator's tone in the underlined description of "the man in cream-colors" is best described as _____.
- A. romantic and deeply emotional

- B. distant and vague
- C. mocking and incisive
- D. distant and precise

Question -3-

Excerpt from Rachel Ehrenberg's The Facts Behind the Frack, from an issue of Science News.

Hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, wrenches open rock deep beneath the Earth's surface, freeing the natural gas that's trapped inside. (1) Proponents argue that fracking-related gas recovery is a game changer, a bridge to the renewable energy landscape of the future. (2) The gas, primarily methane, is cheap and relatively clean. (3) Because America is brimful of the stuff, harvesting the fuel via fracking could provide the country jobs and reduce its dependence on foreign sources of energy. (4)

But along with these promises have come alarming local incidents and national reports of blowouts, contamination and earthquakes. (5) Fracking opponents contend that the process poisons air and drinking water and may make people sick. (6) Fears that fracking companies are operating in a Wild West environment with little regulation have prompted political action. (7) Legislation banning the process has been considered but is now on hold in California. (8) New York — which sits atop a giant natural gas reserve — has a statewide fracking moratorium; pending policies would allow the process only where local officials support it. (9)

SAT Reading Practice Question 3

The main purpose of the passage is to...

- A. consider investing in an energy company that will create new jobs through fracking.
- B. argue in favor of new legislation that restricts fracking in certain regions.
- C. present an analysis of data that proves the harmful effects of fracking.
- D. explore the circumstances that have led to legislation regarding energy sources.

SAT Reading Practice Question 4

The author argues that fracking...

- A. is the best long term energy resource option.
- B. will completely change the energy industry.
- C. needs an overhaul to best meet energy production needs.
- D. does not need to be addressed seriously.

SAT Reading Practice Question 5

Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?

- A. Sentence 2 (“Proponents...future.”)
- B. Sentence 4 (“Because...energy.”)
- C. Sentence 7 (“Fears...action.”)
- D. Sentence 9 (“New York...support it.”)