

Reading SAT Practice Test 23

Questions 11-21 are based on the following passages.

Passage 1 is adapted from Catharine Beecher, *Essay on Slavery and Abolitionism*. Originally published in 1837. Passage 2 is adapted from Angelina E. Grimké, *Letters to Catharine Beecher*. Originally published in 1838. Grimké encouraged Southern women to oppose slavery publicly. Passage 1 is Beecher's response to Grimké's views. Passage 2 is Grimké's response to Beecher.

Passage 1

Heaven has appointed to one sex the superior, and to the other the subordinate station, and this without any reference to the character or conduct of either. It is therefore as much for the dignity as it is for the interest of females, in all respects to conform to the duties of this relation. . . . But while woman holds a subordinate relation in society to the other sex, it is not because it was designed that her duties or her influence should be any the less important, or all-pervading. But it was designed that the mode of gaining influence and of exercising power should be altogether different and peculiar. . . .

A man may act on society by the collision of intellect, in public debate; he may urge his measures by a sense of shame, by fear and by personal interest; he may coerce by the combination of public sentiment; he may drive by physical force, and he does not outstep the boundaries of his sphere. But all the power, and all the conquests that are lawful to woman, are those only which appeal to the kindly, generous, peaceful and benevolent principles.

Woman is to win every thing by peace and love; by making herself so much respected, esteemed and loved, that to yield to her opinions and to gratify her wishes, will be the free-will offering of the heart. But this is to be all accomplished in the domestic and social circle. There let every woman become so cultivated and refined in intellect, that her taste and judgment will be respected; so benevolent in feeling and action; that her motives will be revered;—so unassuming and unambitious, that collision and competition will be banished;—so “gentle and easy to be entreated,” as that every heart will repose in her presence; then, the fathers, the husbands, and the sons, will find an influence thrown around them, to which they will yield not only willingly but proudly. . . .

A woman may seek the aid of co-operation and combination among her own sex, to assist her in her appropriate offices of piety, charity, maternal and

domestic duty; but whatever, in any measure, throws a woman into the attitude of a combatant, either for herself or others—whatever binds her in a party conflict—whatever obliges her in any way to exert coercive influences, throws her out of her appropriate sphere. If these general principles are correct, they are entirely opposed to the plan of arraying females in any Abolition movement.

Passage 2

The investigation of the rights of the slave has led me to a better understanding of my own. I have found the Anti-Slavery cause to be the high school of morals in our land—the school in which *human rights* are more fully investigated, and better understood and taught, than in any other. Here a great fundamental principle is uplifted and illuminated, and from this central light, rays innumerable stream all around.

Human beings have *rights*, because they are *moral* beings: the rights of *all* men grow out of their moral nature; and as all men have the same moral nature, they have essentially the same rights. These rights may be wrested from the slave, but they cannot be alienated: his title to himself is as perfect now, as is that of Lyman Beecher:¹ it is stamped on his moral being, and is, like it, imperishable. Now if rights are founded in the nature of our moral being, then the *mere circumstance of sex* does not give to man higher rights and responsibilities, than to woman. To suppose that it does, would be to deny the self-evident truth, that the “physical constitution is the mere instrument of the moral nature.” To suppose that it does, would be to break up utterly the relations, of the two natures, and to reverse their

functions, exalting the animal nature into a monarch, and humbling the moral into a slave; making the former a proprietor, and the latter its property.

When human beings are regarded as *moral* beings, *sex*, instead of being enthroned upon the summit, administering upon rights and responsibilities, sinks into insignificance and nothingness. My doctrine then is, that whatever it is morally right for man to do, it is morally right for woman to do. Our duties originate, not from difference of sex, but from the diversity of our relations in life, the various gifts and talents committed to our care, and the different eras in which we live.

¹ Lyman Beecher was a famous minister and the father of Catharine Beecher.

11

In Passage 1, Beecher makes which point about the status of women relative to that of men?

- A) Women depend on men for their safety and security, but men are largely independent of women.
- B) Women are inferior to men, but women play a role as significant as that played by men.
- C) Women have fewer rights than men do, but women also have fewer responsibilities.
- D) Women are superior to men, but tradition requires women to obey men.

12

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

- A) Lines 6-10 (“But . . . all-pervading”)
- B) Lines 13-14 (“A man . . . debate”)
- C) Lines 16-18 (“he may coerce . . . sphere”)
- D) Lines 41-46 (“but whatever . . . sphere”)

13

In Passage 1, Beecher implies that women’s effect on public life is largely

- A) overlooked, because few men are interested in women’s thoughts about politics.
- B) indirect, because women exert their influence within the home and family life.
- C) unnecessary, because men are able to govern society themselves.
- D) symbolic, because women tend to be more idealistic about politics than men are.

14

As used in line 2, “station” most nearly means

- A) region.
- B) studio.
- C) district.
- D) rank.

15

As used in line 12, “peculiar” most nearly means

- A) eccentric.
- B) surprising.
- C) distinctive.
- D) infrequent.

16

What is Grimké’s central claim in Passage 2?

- A) The rights of individuals are not determined by race or gender.
- B) Men and women must learn to work together to improve society.
- C) Moral rights are the most important distinction between human beings and animals.
- D) Men and women should have equal opportunities to flourish.

17

In Passage 2, Grimké makes which point about human rights?

- A) They are viewed differently in various cultures around the world.
- B) They retain their moral authority regardless of whether they are recognized by law.
- C) They are sometimes at odds with moral responsibilities.
- D) They have become more advanced and refined throughout history.

18

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

- A) Lines 58-61 (“Human . . . same rights”)
- B) Lines 61-65 (“These . . . imperishable”)
- C) Lines 71-76 (“To suppose . . . property”)
- D) Lines 77-81 (“When . . . nothingness”)

19

Which choice best states the relationship between the two passages?

- A) Passage 2 illustrates the practical difficulties of a proposal made in Passage 1.
- B) Passage 2 takes issue with the primary argument of Passage 1.
- C) Passage 2 provides a historical context for the perspective offered in Passage 1.
- D) Passage 2 elaborates upon several ideas implied in Passage 1.

20

Based on the passages, both authors would agree with which of the following claims?

- A) Women have moral duties and responsibilities.
- B) Men often work selflessly for political change.
- C) The ethical obligations of women are often undervalued.
- D) Political activism is as important for women as it is for men.

21

Beecher would most likely have reacted to lines 65-68 ("Now . . . woman") of Passage 2 with

- A) sympathy, because she feels that human beings owe each other a debt to work together in the world.
- B) agreement, because she feels that human responsibilities are a natural product of human rights.
- C) dismay, because she feels that women actually have a more difficult role to play in society than men do.
- D) disagreement, because she feels that the natures of men and women are fundamentally different.