

Nonfiction Reading Test

Mongoose

Directions: Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow. Refer to the text to check your answers when appropriate.

If you plan on going to Hawaii, don't bring any pets. Hawaiians are wary of letting in foreign animals. Your beloved Rex or Fi-fi could spend up to 120 days in quarantine. They have strict rules for importing animals. They carefully screen all incoming pets. Who could blame them? They've had problems with new animals in the past.

The black rat was introduced to Hawaii in the 1780s. These ugly suckers *originated* in Asia, but they migrated to Europe in the 1st century. Since then they've snuck on European ships and voyaged the world with them. These rats carry many diseases including the plague. They are also good at surviving and tend to displace native species. That means that after they infest an area, there will be fewer birds and more black rats. Most people prefer living around birds.

Since their arrival in Hawaii, black rats have been pests. They've feasted on sea turtle eggs. They've eaten tree saplings, preventing trees from being reforested. And they've been a leading cause in the extinction of more than 70 species of Hawaiian birds. They love to climb trees to eat bird eggs. They also compete with forest birds for food, such as snails, insects, and seeds.

Perhaps more troubling, black rats threaten humans. They spread germs and incubate disease. They are a vector for more than 40 deadly illnesses. Some think that rat-borne diseases have killed more people than war in the last 1,000 years. Rats also eat our food. They eat more than 20% of the world's farmed food. And that's why the mongoose was brought to Hawaii.

During the mid 1800s, the Hawaiian sugar industry was thriving. Americans were just realizing that they loved sugar. Hawaii was pretty much the only place in America where one could grow sugarcane. But those filthy vermin were tearing up the fields. Black rats were destroying entire crops. What's a plantation owner to do? The answer is simple. Import an animal known to kill rats. What could go wrong with that? In 1883 plantation owners imported 72 mongooses and began breeding them.

People *revere* the mongoose in its homeland of India. They are often kept tame in Indian households. Mongooses feed on snakes, rats, and lizards, creatures that most people dislike. They are also cute and furry. And they kill deadly cobras. What's not to love? Sadly, India is a much different place than Hawaii.

When the mongooses got to Hawaii, they did not wipe out the rats as plantation owners hoped. Instead, they joined them in ravaging the birds, lizards, and small plants that were native to Hawaii. It's not that the mongooses became friends with the rats. They still ate a bunch of them. But mongooses are not too different from most other animals: they go for the easy meal. In Hawaii they had a choice. Pursue the elusive black rat or munch on turtle eggs while tanning on the beach. Most took the easy route.

Now Hawaii has two unwanted guests defacing the natural beauty. The Hawaiians have learned their lesson. Talks of bringing in mongoose-eating gorillas have been tabled. So don't get uptight when they don't welcome your cat Mittens with open arms. They're trying to maintain a delicate ecosystem here.

1. Based on the text, which best explains how black rats were introduced to Hawaii?

- a. The native Hawaiians imported them to solve a problem with their crops.
- b. The Asians brought them to Hawaii when they first arrived.
- c. The Europeans brought them on their ships.
- d. The rats were able to swim to Hawaii from Asia.

2. Which best defines the word *originate* as it was used in the **second** paragraph?

- a. To come from a place
- b. To go to a place
- c. To become independent
- d. To wander the world

3. Which event happened **first**?

- a. The mongoose was introduced to Hawaii
- b. The black rat was introduced to Hawaii
- c. The black rat migrated to Europe
- d. Plantation owners bred mongooses

4. Which statement would the author most likely **disagree** with?

- a. Black rats threaten many creatures native to Hawaii.
- b. Mongooses threaten many creatures native to Hawaii.
- c. Mongooses were brought to Hawaii intentionally.
- d. The only reason people dislike rats is because they are ugly.

5. Which best express the author's main purpose in writing this text?

- a. To persuade readers to protect the endangered mongoose
- b. To describe the habits and hazards of the black rat
- c. To inform readers about species that have invaded Hawaii
- d. To entertain readers with tales of a mongoose's adventures

6. Which best expresses the main idea of the **sixth** paragraph?

- a. This paragraph is about Indian culture and wildlife.
- b. This paragraph is about the mongoose's role in Indian society.
- c. This paragraph is about the lifecycle of the mongoose.
- d. This paragraph is about how mongooses migrated to India.

7. Which statement is **false** according to information in the text?

- a. Rats eat lots of vegetation and crops.
- b. Mongooses eat sea turtle eggs.
- c. Rats climb trees and eat bird eggs.
- d. Mongooses have spread more than 40 diseases.

Nonfiction Reading Test

A Tale of Two Countries

Directions: Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow. Refer to the text to check your answers when appropriate.

Some call it the "Hermit Kingdom." It is a place where the outside world has been walled off. American pop music is illegal here and you can get executed for watching soap operas. This is not a make-believe world in a science fiction novel. It's a 46,000 square mile nation hanging off the east coast of China. It is one of the poorest nations in the world and it is armed with nuclear weapons. It is North Korea.

Immediately to the south lies a nation with one of the world's richest economies. About one-third of all phones and TVs are made here. The people of this nation are among the world's most educated. Unemployment is low, job security is high, and workers in this nation enjoy the highest salaries in Asia. It is South Korea. The people of this nation share origins with their northern neighbor, but they have since grown far apart.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (known to Westerners as North Korea) was founded in 1945 after World War II. Their neighbor at the end of the Korean Peninsula, South Korea or the Republic of Korea, was established at the same time. These two nations have an unusual history. For one thing, they have technically been at war since 1950.

Though they were born at the same time, these two countries had different parents. The United States supported South Korea in its infancy. China and the Soviet Union supported North Korea. The U.S. and the Soviet Union may have ended World War II as allies, but they had different ways of organizing their societies.

The U.S. is a capitalist country. That means that some people are rich and some people are poor. Resources are distributed unevenly. Business are owned by private entities. The Soviet Union claimed to have a communist system. That means that everybody supposedly gets the same. Resources are distributed more evenly. Business are owned in "common" by the government. These two superpower nations raised North and South Korea in their own images.



The two Koreas went to war in 1950. The North attacked and took over much of South Korea. But the United States jumped in and pushed the North Koreans back to the Chinese border. Then China got involved and pushed the Americans and South Koreans back. The nations agreed to a ceasefire. Millions of people were dead and the living returned to their original boundaries. The war never officially ended, though combat has ceased for the most part.

After the war, South Korea was one of the poorest nations in the world. In 1960 the average citizen made \$79 a year. The country did not have a lot of natural resources to sell, but they did have many hardworking people. During the 1960s, the country began manufacturing labor-intensive products. Selling these products to people in other nations made South Korea rich. They now have one of the largest and most thriving economies in the world. As of 2012, the average South Korean citizen makes around \$32,020 a year.

The economy of North Korea is dramatically different. Since its birth in the 1940s, North Korea has been one of the most secluded countries in the world. They promote an idea of self-reliance that they call Juche. Under this idea, they do little to no trading with other nations. Up until the 1980s, they received large cash infusions from China and the Soviet Union. But the Soviet Union fell apart in the 80s and became separate capitalist countries, of which Russia is largest. Without the Soviet contributions, North Korea entered a long period of *famine* that lasted through the 90s. Food was hard to come by and some estimate that millions of people starved to death. Still, the country persisted when much of the world thought that it would fall apart. Not only did they survive, they managed to build a nuclear arsenal during this time.

North Korea and South Korea share a border. Since they are locked in state of perpetual war, it's not a regular boarder with a simple checkpoint. The border they share is known as a "demilitarized zone." A demilitarized zone is supposed to be free from military installations. Yet, the Korean Demilitarized Zone is the most heavily militarized border in the world. Both nations have their biggest guns lined-up on the divide and pointed at the other side. It is literally the opposite of what the phrase "demilitarized zone" implies.

Some day Korea may be unified again. It seems unlikely now, but stranger things have happened. Yet, even if they did unify, how could these very different societies acclimate to one another? They have grown in different directions. One country is among the wealthiest, the other amongst the poorest. The average North Korean male is estimated to be five-inches shorter than a South Korean (some suspect because of malnutrition). With such big differences, will they ever be able to see eye to eye?

1. Which term best describes South Korea based on information from the text?
 - a. capitalist
 - b. communist
 - c. socialist
 - d. totalitarian

2. Based on the author's tone and viewpoint, which person would most likely **disagree** with the conclusions drawn in this text?
 - a. An American businessman
 - b. A South Korean businessman
 - c. A North Korean politician
 - d. A South Korean politician

3. Which statement would the author most likely **agree** with?
 - a. The Korean War was a major win for the United States of America.
 - b. North Korea is poor because they don't trade with many other nations.
 - c. South Korean people are naturally more gifted than their northern brethren.
 - d. The South Korean economy grew at an average pace after 1960.

4. Which statement best expresses the main idea of the **seventh** paragraph?
 - a. South Korea was a very poor nation in 1960.
 - b. South Korea makes a lot of money by trading natural resources.
 - c. South Korea had a remarkable economic turnaround.
 - d. South Korea produces many electronic products.

5. Which statement best describes the results of the Korean War?
 - a. The South Koreans gained a lot of ground after winning the war.
 - b. The North Koreans benefitted tremendously from the war.
 - c. The Korean War led to the formation of South Korea.
 - d. Both sides lost many people and got little to show for it.

6. Which best defines the word **famine** as it is used in the eighth paragraph?
 - a. A period of time when food is scarce
 - b. A period of time when it is hard to get laborers
 - c. A period of time when the government is going through a transition
 - d. A period of time when a country does not have a leader

Tigers | Nonfiction Reading Test 2

Who would win in a fight, a lion or a tiger? Well, if size has anything to do with the matter, the tiger would win. That's because tigers are the largest of all cat species. They grow up to eleven feet long and weigh as much as 670 lbs. This makes tigers the third largest land carnivore. The only larger land carnivores are polar bears and brown bears. Tigers are not only large, they are also fast. They can sprint as fast as 40 miles per hour for short distances and leap as far as 30 feet horizontally. This makes for an extremely dangerous pounce. You might not think that such large, fast, and ferocious creatures need help to survive, but they do. The tiger is an endangered species.

Despite all of the tiger's strengths, the future of the species is uncertain. Tigers face a very high risk of extinction. It is estimated that at the start of the 20th century, there were over 100,000 tigers living in the wild. By the turn of the century, the number of tigers outside of captivity dwindled to just over 3,000. Interestingly, the most serious threats that tigers face come from a much smaller species, one with an average weight of around 140 lbs. That species is *Homo sapiens*, better known as humans. Humans threaten tigers in primarily two ways: hunting and destroying habitat.

Tigers are hunted for many reasons. People have long valued the famous striped skins. Though trading tiger skins is now illegal in most parts of the world, tiger pelts are worth around \$10,000 on the black-market. Though the fur would be incentive enough for most poachers, other parts of the tiger can also fetch a pretty penny. Some people in China and other Asian cultures believe that various tiger parts have healing properties. Traditional Chinese medicine calls for the use of tiger bones, amongst other parts, in some prescriptions.

Tigers have also been hunted as game. In other words people hunted tigers solely for the thrill and achievement of killing them. Such killings took place in large scale during the 19th and early 20th centuries, when a single maharaja or English hunter might claim to kill over a hundred tigers in their hunting career. Though this practice is much less popular today than it was in the past, it has not ceased entirely.



Humans have done considerable damage to the world's tiger population through hunting, but perhaps more damage has been caused through the destruction of habitat. Tigers once ranged widely across Asia, all the way from Turkey to the eastern coast of Russia. But over the past 100 years, tigers have lost 93% of their historic range. Instead of spanning all the way across Asia, the tiger population is now isolated in small pockets in south and southeastern Asia. This is because humans have drastically changed the environments. Humans have built towns and cities. Road and transit systems were created to connect these towns and cities. To feed the people living in these areas, forests and fields have been cleared to create farmland. Large tracts of land have been strip-mined to yield metals and other materials used in manufacturing. All of these activities have consumed habitats that at one time supported tigers.

A major obstacle to preserving tigers is the enormous amount of territory that each tiger requires. Each wild tiger demands between 200 and 300 square miles. Tigers are also both territorial and solitary animals. This means that they are protective of the areas that they claim and they generally do not share with other tigers. Because tigers need so much territory, it is difficult for conservationists to acquire land enough to support a large population of tigers. Even when such these considerable spaces are allocated, it is even more difficult to patrol such large areas to prevent poaching. There is no easy way to preserve the wild tiger population without making large sacrifices.

Though tiger population faces many threats and obstacles to recovery, there have been some successes in conservation and preservation efforts. For example, Save China's Tigers, an organization working to restore the wild tiger population, successfully rewilded a small number of South China tigers. These tigers were born into concrete cages from parents who were also captive and unable to sustain in the wild.

This organization brought these tigers to South Africa and helped them learn the necessary skills for a predator to survive in the wild. Current evidence indicates that the project was been successful. While this is just a small step, it shows that restoring the world's tiger population is possible.

Directions: Read each question carefully and choose the best answer. Refer to the text if necessary. Write your answer on the provided space.

1. Which of the following is **not** a reason in the article explaining why tigers are hunted? _____
 - a. Because tiger skins are worth a lot of money
 - b. Because tiger parts are used as medicines in some cultures
 - c. Because some tigers attack local villages
 - d. Because tigers are hunted for enjoyment by some people

2. Which animal does **not** grow larger than the tiger? _____
 - a. Brown bear
 - b. Lion
 - c. Polar bear
 - d. All of these animals grow larger than a tiger

3. Which number is *closest* to the estimation of the wild Tiger population in 2003? _____
 - a. 3,000
 - b. 100,000
 - c. 140
 - d. 30,000

4. Which of the following best describes the author's main purpose in writing this article? _____
 - a. To provide readers with interesting information about the lifestyles of tigers
 - b. To persuade readers to help the world's tiger population and to offer ways to help
 - c. To entertain readers with stories about how tigers hunt and are hunted
 - d. To explain to readers why the world's tiger population is endangered

5. Information in the third paragraph is *mainly* organized using which text structure? _____
 - a. Cause and effect
 - b. Compare and contrast
 - c. Chronological order
 - d. Spatial order

6. Which *best* explains why tigers have lost so much of their habitat according to the text? _____
 - a. Because humans are afraid of tigers
 - b. Because tiger skins are extremely valuable
 - c. Because humans have changed the land
 - d. Because tigers need so much space to survive

7. Based on information in the text, which *best* explains why tigers are poached? _____
 - a. Poachers hunt tigers to protect their families from dangerous animals.
 - b. Poachers hunt tigers for medicine to cure sick family members.
 - c. Poachers hunt tigers because they enjoy killing dangerous animals.
 - d. Poachers hunt tigers to earn large amounts money.

8. Which *best* explains why it is so difficult to preserve the wild tiger population? _____

- a. Tigers do not get along with most other animals.
- b. Tigers must make their homes close to rivers and the world's rivers are evaporating.
- c. Tigers require a lot of space.
- d. Tigers hunt in large packs and there are too few tigers left to make these packs.

9. Which of the following is an opinion? _____

- a. Tigers can grow up to eleven feet long.
- b. Saving the wild tiger population is important.
- c. South China tigers were brought to live in South Africa.
- d. Humans have endangered the world's wild tiger population.

10. Based on context, which *best* defines the term "rewilded" as used in the last paragraph? _____

- a. To preserve animals by keeping them in zoos
- b. To teach animals to coexist with humans
- c. To teach humans to coexist with animals
- d. To bring animals born in zoos back to nature

11. What does this idiom mean: "*other parts of the tiger can also fetch a pretty penny*"? _____

- a. The fur is the only valuable part of the tiger.
- b. Other parts of the tiger are worth a lot of money.
- c. The tiger is a very beautiful animal.
- d. Tigers can be trained to do tricks like in the circus.

12. Which of the following could be best supported by information from the text? _____

- a. Efforts to save tigers have had some success, but there are many obstacles to recovery.
- b. Efforts to save tigers have failed in the past, but there is reason to continue trying.
- c. Efforts to save tigers have been so successful that they saved tigers from endangerment.
- d. Efforts to save tigers have failed completely.

Nonfiction Reading Comprehension Test 7

Kevlar

Directions: Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow. Refer to the text to check your answers when appropriate.

Did you know that there is a fiber that is as flexible and lightweight as nylon yet five times stronger than steel? Did you know that this fabric is resistant to temperatures higher than 500 degrees Fahrenheit? Did you know that a woman invented this fiber? This miraculous fabric is called Kevlar and it is used to make everything from body armor to musical instruments.

The year was 1964. There were gasoline shortages due to conflict in the Middle East. A Polish-American chemist named Stephanie Louise Kwolek was working for DuPont, an American chemical company. She and her group were trying to make a lightweight, yet durable fiber to be used in tires. Lighter tires would allow vehicles to get better gas mileage, but the tires had to be strong enough to resist the wear and tear of the road. They had been working on the problem for some time and had little success, until Kwolek had a breakthrough.

Kwolek and her group were synthesizing or creating fibers to test. During one of the steps in the process, Kwolek created a milky white solution by mixing two chemicals that were often used in the process. This solution was usually thrown away, but Kwolek convinced one of the technicians to help her test it. They were amazed to discover that the fabric that Kwolek had created was not only more durable than nylon, it was more durable than steel. Kwolek had invented Kevlar.

Kevlar is a remarkable fabric known for its strength and durability. Since its invention it has found its way into a wide variety of products. Kevlar is used in sporting equipment like bike tires, bowstrings, and tennis racquets. It is used in musical instruments like drum heads, reeds, and speaker cones. And it is used in protective gear like motorcycle safety jackets, gloves, and shoes. However, Kevlar is best known for its ability to stop bullets.

Richard Armellino created the first Kevlar bulletproof vest in 1975. It contained 15 layers of Kevlar, which could stop handgun and shotgun bullets. The vest also had a steel plate over the heart, which made the vest strong enough to stop rifle rounds. Vests like Armellino's were quickly picked up by police forces and it is estimated that by 1990, half of all police officers in America wore bulletproof vests daily. By 2006 there were over 2,000 documented police vest "saves," or instances where officers were protected from deadly wounds by wearing bulletproof vests.

Kevlar is an amazing fabric not only for its hardness and durability, but also for its heat resistance. Because of this it has been used to replace asbestos. Asbestos is a naturally occurring material that is known for its ability to resist fire. Asbestos can resist temperatures over 1000 degrees Fahrenheit. For this reason it was used in roofs, electrical cables, and brake pads, until people discovered that it causes cancer and other serious health problems. Kevlar poses no such risks. It is lightweight, flexible, and resistant to fire. Therefore, it has proven to be a good replacement for asbestos in many cases.

Since its invention in 1964, Kevlar has won its way into our lives. From musical instruments and brake pads to protective equipment and sporting gear, Kevlar is everywhere. Every day of your life you are exposed to something that was made better by Kevlar. Who'd have known?

1. Which of the following is **not** a product that has been made with Kevlar?

- a. Tennis racquets
- b. Bungee jumping cords
- c. Brake pads
- d. Body armor

2. When was the first bulletproof vest invented?

- a. 1964
- b. 1975
- c. 1990
- d. 2006

3. For which of the following characteristics is Kevlar known?

- a. Heat resistance
- b. Strength
- c. Durability
- d. All of the above

4. Who is credited with inventing Kevlar?

- a. Robert Kevlar
- b. Richard Armellino
- c. Stephanie Kwolek
- d. None of the above

5. Which of the following caused the search for a fabric like Kevlar?

- a. A shortage in the gasoline supply
- b. A desire to protect police officers
- c. The need to replace asbestos
- d. The want of better musical instruments

6. A vest made of 15 layers of Kevlar with **no** steel plates could stop **all but which** of the following rounds?

- a. Handgun rounds
- b. Shotgun pellets
- c. Rifle rounds
- d. It could stop all of the above

7. Why did people begin using asbestos in buildings?

- a. It was extremely durable
- b. It was very heavy
- c. It was poisonous to insects
- d. It was resistant to fire

8. According to the article, how many American police officers are estimated to wear bulletproof vests daily?

- a. 1,000
- b. 2,000
- c. Over half
- d. Almost all of them

9. How much stronger is Kevlar than steel?

- a. Half as strong
- b. As strong
- c. Five times as strong
- d. 200 times as strong

10. What product was Kwolek trying to improve when she invented Kevlar?

- a. Tires
- b. Milk
- c. Brake pads
- d. Armor