

SSAT Advantage

SSAT Practice Test Upper Level Reading:

Suspicious thoughts, like bats among birds, they ever fly by twilight. Certainly they are to be repressed (2), or at least well guarded: for they cloud the mind; they lease friends; and they check with business, whereby business cannot go on currently and constantly. They dispose kings to tyranny, husbands to jealousy, wise men to irresolution and melancholy. They are defects, not in the heart, but in the brain; for they take place in the stoutest natures; as in the example of Henry the Seventh of England. There was not a more suspicious man, nor a more stout. And in such a composition they do small hurt. For commonly they are not admitted, but with examination, whether they be likely or no. But in fearful natures they gain ground too fast.

There is nothing makes a man suspect much, more than to know little (1); and therefore men should remedy suspicion, by procuring to know more, and not to keep their suspicions in smother. What would men have? Do they think, those they employ and deal with, are saints? Do they not think, they will have their own ends, and be truer to themselves, than to them? Therefore there is no better way, to moderate suspicions, than to account upon such suspicions as true, and yet to bridle them as false. For so far a man ought to make use of suspicions, as to provide, as if that should be true, that he suspects, yet it may do him no hurt. Suspicious thoughts that the mind of itself gathers, are but buzzes; but suspicions that are artificially nourished, and put into men's heads, by the tales and whisperings of others, have stings.

1. The author writes, "There is nothing makes a man suspect much, more than to know little" at (1). Which answer choice best expresses the author's meaning?
 - a. Men are by nature suspicious.
 - b. People are only suspicious when they have reason to be.
 - c. A lack of knowledge makes people suspicious.
 - d. Even wise men often have suspicions.
 - e. Only saints are not suspicious.
2. The word "repressed" at (2) most nearly means
 - a. discouraged
 - b. envied
 - c. allowed
 - d. inspected
 - e. betrayed
3. The primary purpose of this passage is to
 - a. blame other people for the author's suspicions.
 - b. describe Henry the Seventh.
 - c. leave the reader in a state of suspense.
 - d. illustrate reasons for being suspicious.
 - e. explain the harm that suspicions cause.
4. What does the author suggest people do if they become suspicious?

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- a. act on their suspicions
- b. gather more information
- c. visit with friends
- d. speak to wise men
- e. listen to other people

(5)	My Sorrow, when she's here with me, Thinks these dark days of autumn rain Are as beautiful as days can be; She loves the bare, the withered tree; She walks the sodden pasture lane. Her pleasure will not let me stay. She talks and I am fain to list:
(15)	She's glad the birds are gone away, She's glad her simple worsted gray Is silver now with clinging mist. The desolate, deserted trees, The faded earth, the heavy sky, The beauties she so truly sees, She thinks I have no eye for these,
(20)	And vexes me for reason why. Not yesterday I learned to know The love of bare November days Before the coming of the snow But it were vain to tell her so,
(25)	And they are better for her praise

- 5. Who is "she" that the speaker of the poem refers to?
 - a. November days
 - b. the bats have flown away
 - c. the speaker of the poem
 - d. the speaker's sorrow
 - e. someone who praises the speaker
- 6. In this poem what does the speaker author come to appreciate?
 - a. how November weather makes the spring seem even better
 - b. the peaceful winter snow
 - c. long walks in the summer rain
 - d. dreary November weather
 - e. a warm fire when he returns home
- 7. The mood of the poem can best be described as
 - a. lonely

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- b. raucous
 - c. factual
 - d. loving
 - e. exuberant
8. Which statement best summarizes the main idea of this poem?
- a. Stay inside on cold fall days.
 - b. Always keep your socks dry.
 - c. Beauty can be found even on gray days.
 - d. People are often misunderstood.
 - e. It is hard to have a favorite season.

Chlorine is a commonly used gas. Because it is a strong oxidizing agent, it reacts easily with other elements and compounds. This makes it useful as a bleaching agent. It also makes it an extremely effective disinfectant in swimming pools. It is fast-acting, kills algae that might otherwise grow in pool water, and destroys contaminants such as bacteria and viruses. Its high reactivity has a downside, however, as anyone who has opened their eyes in a pool without wearing goggles can tell you.

At high concentrations, chlorine can be poisonous for humans, however. If concentrated chlorine gas enters human lungs, it can react with the water in lungs to form hydrochloric acid, which can be lethal (1). The first recorded instance of chlorine being used as a weapon was during World War I.

Chlorine has saved countless lives with its disinfectant properties; it has also cost many lives when used as a weapon.

9. It can be inferred from the passage that chlorine is
- a. most commonly used as a weapon
 - b. is too expensive for widespread use
 - c. is deadly in small doses
 - d. was only discovered during World War I
 - e. irritating to the human eye
10. Where would this passage most likely be found?
- a. in an anthology
 - b. in a science textbook
 - c. in a chemical journal
 - d. in a letter between two chemists
 - e. in a novel about World War I
11. The passage suggests that chlorine gas
- a. should not be released in an enclosed space
 - b. is no longer used as a weapon
 - c. should be banned from use
 - d. is not the best disinfectant for swimming pools

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- e. still needs to be further researched
12. The author's tone can best be described as
- a. angered
 - b. ambivalent
 - c. optimistic
 - d. informative
 - e. ironic
13. The word "lethal" at (1) as used in this passage most nearly means
- a. helpful
 - b. gloomy
 - c. deadly
 - d. overused
 - e. limited
14. According to the author, chlorine gas
- a. is known in almost every country
 - b. can be both a benefit and a curse to humans
 - c. is not effective at smaller quantities
 - d. lasts a long time
 - e. is explosive at high quantities

Although sharks capture the human imagination like almost no other species, we actually know relatively little about them. This is rapidly changing, however, as shark populations dwindle. There is a new urgency in learning more about sharks so that we can protect them.

One species that scientists have been studying in particular is thresher sharks. Thresher sharks are an unusual species. They have long, pointy tails that are almost equal in length to their entire body. Scientists have long been puzzled by their tails and why they are so long. Do thresher sharks use these tails to swim faster? Attract a potential mate? Appear more fearsome to predators (1)?

A group of scientists recently decided to find out. The scientists followed a group of thresher sharks hunting in the waters off of Pescador Island in the Philippines. They carefully observed the behavior of the sharks as they attempted to feed on a school of sardines.

The sharks were seen using their tails as a weapon. They would slap the smaller sardines with their tails, leaving the sardines too stunned to move. The thresher sharks would then quickly consume the sardines before the sardines were able to recover.

The thresher sharks were able to bring their tails in an arc through the water at an astonishing speed. The thresher sharks brought their tail down on prey at an average speed of 30 miles per hour, with the fastest slap clocking in at 50 miles per hour. The sharks were also successful in stunning the prey about one-third of the times that they attempted to hunt, which is remarkable for any species.

Now that scientists know more about how thresher sharks hunt, it will be easier to put into place protections that will preserve their hunting grounds.

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15. This passage is primarily concerned with
- different species of sharks
 - how sardines escape thresher sharks
 - why thresher sharks are endangered
 - the speed with which a thresher shark can move its tail
 - the hunting habits of thresher sharks
16. According to the passage, studying thresher sharks is important because
- they are interesting
 - they are one of the fastest moving species of sharks
 - if we understand how they hunt we can better preserve the species
 - if we can limit how often thresher sharks hunt we can save the sardines species
 - humans rely on thresher sharks for food
17. The passage implies that
- most species are successful in capturing prey in less than one-third of attempts
 - thresher sharks are not easily studied
 - most sharks have relatively long tails
 - after years of decline, shark populations are now rebounding
 - thresher sharks only eat sardines
18. What does the author mean by “appear more fearsome to predators” at (1)?
- Thresher sharks might attempt to scare prey with their size.
 - Thresher sharks are intimidating to scientists.
 - Thresher sharks are currently endangered.
 - A large tail might make thresher sharks less likely to become prey.
 - Predators are easily scared away.
19. Why were scientists puzzled by the tails of thresher sharks?
- There was no public interest in the sharks.
 - The tails of thresher sharks are unlike the tails of other shark species.
 - Thresher sharks had not yet been studied.
 - Overfishing had left thresher sharks endangered.
 - The human appetite for thresher shark tail had grown.
20. The passage implies which of the following about sardines?
- They are endangered.
 - They are abundant off the coast of Pescador Island.
 - They can easily escape a thresher shark.
 - Little is known about them.
 - Their habitat should be preserved so that thresher sharks will continue to have a food source.

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During these first hurries I was stupid, lying still in my cabin, which was in the steerage, and cannot describe my temper: I could ill resume the first penitence which I had so apparently trampled upon and hardened myself against: I thought the bitterness of death had been past, and that this would be nothing like the first; but when the master himself came by me, as I said just now, and said we should be all lost, I was dreadfully frightened. I got up out of my cabin and looked out; but such a dismal sight I never saw: the sea ran mountains high, and broke upon us every three or four minutes; when I could look about, I could see nothing but distress round us; two ships that rode near us, we found, had cut their masts by the board, being deep laden; and our men cried out that a ship which rode about a mile ahead of us was foundered. Two more ships, being driven from their anchors, were run out of the Roads to sea, at all adventures, and that with not a mast standing. The light ships fared the best, as not so much labouring in the sea; but two or three of them drove, and came close by us, running away with only their spritsail out before the wind.

Towards evening the mate and boatswain begged the master of our ship to let them cut away the fore-mast, which he was very unwilling to do; but the boatswain protesting to him that if he did not the ship would founder, he consented; and when they had cut away the fore-mast, the main-mast stood so loose, and shook the ship so much, they were obliged to cut that away also, and make a clear deck. Any one may judge what a condition I must be in at all this, who was but a young sailor, and who had been in such a fright before at but a little. But if I can express at this distance the thoughts I had about me at that time, I was in tenfold more horror of mind upon account of my former convictions, and the having returned from them to the resolutions I had wickedly taken at first, than I was at death itself; and these, added to the terror of the storm, put me into such a condition that I can by no words describe it. But the worst was not come yet; the storm continued with such fury that the seamen themselves acknowledged they had never seen a worse. We had a good ship, but she was deep laden, and wallowed in the sea, so that the seamen every now and then cried out she would founder.

21. The narrator can best be described as
 - a. someone recalling being an inexperienced sailor on the deck of a ship
 - b. a boat passenger who hid out in his cabin during a storm
 - c. an old man being sentimental
 - d. the captain of the ship
 - e. an accomplished storyteller
22. The crew of the ship can best be described as
 - a. inexperienced
 - b. frightened
 - c. humbled
 - d. united
 - e. seasick
23. The passage implies that the word “founder” means
 - a. to be damaged

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- b. to be still
 - c. to begin again
 - d. to shake
 - e. to sink
24. The primary purpose of this passage is to
- a. explain why the masts had to be cut away
 - b. describe a ship that sunk in a storm
 - c. recount one man's traumatic experience
 - d. provide guidance on how to survive on a ship during a storm
 - e. prove the captain's incompetence
25. The ship in this passage is
- a. in an isolated location
 - b. an older ship
 - c. a light ship
 - d. surrounded by other boats
 - e. foundered

In 1944, The New York City Opera opened its doors. It was built on the premise that opera should be affordable to all. The New York City Opera placed itself in direct competition with the Metropolitan Opera. The Metropolitan Opera had big stars and higher ticket prices to go along with those famous names.

The New York City Opera saved money by recruiting singers that were relatively unknown. In the process, they discovered some of the leading opera singers of the 1940s such as Martha Lipton and Hugh Thompson. Unfortunately, as soon as the talent of these singers became apparent, they were poached (1) by the Metropolitan Opera with more generous salaries.

The New York City Opera broke ground with making opera accessible to the masses but they were also the first major American opera troop to feature an African American performer. In 1945, at a time when much of America remained racially segregated, African American Todd Duncan took to the stage at the New York City Opera playing the role of Tonio in *Pagliacci*. Several other African American performers followed him in short order.

The New York City Opera also made a point of performing the work of American composers. This wasn't always easy as opera was not the dominant form preferred by American composers. Many operas were written in European languages. One source of conflict among members of the Opera's board was whether or not operas should be translated into and performed in English so as to be more accessible to the American audience.

Sadly, after years of innovation, the New York City Opera fell on hard times. In 2013, the company ran out of money and had to shut their doors for good. New York City had lost a great cultural leader.

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26. Which of the following would be the best title for this passage?
- Todd Duncan Makes Opera History
 - The Birth of a Cultural Institution
 - Opera Company Brought Opera to the Masses
 - Controversy at New York City Opera
 - Great American Composers
27. The term "poached" at (1) as appears in the text most nearly means
- protected
 - coaxed away
 - rejected
 - infuriated
 - ignored
28. The author implies which of the following about the Metropolitan Opera?
- It was more financially successful than the New York City Opera
 - Its board prefers to stage operas by American composers
 - It is well known for desegregating opera
 - Its ticket prices are lower than most
 - It has a limited season
29. The tone of the entire passage can best be described as
- mournful
 - critical
 - optimistic
 - indifferent
 - admiring
30. It can be inferred from the passage that American composers
- often had performances at the Metropolitan Opera
 - choose to write in European languages
 - have trouble finding an audience
 - frequently compose music in forms other than operas
 - are better composers

In the days of Babylonia's prosperity the Euphrates was hailed as "the soul of the land" and the Tigris as "the bestower of blessings". Skilful engineers had solved the problem of water distribution by irrigating sun-parched areas and preventing the excessive flooding of those districts which are now rendered impassable swamps when the rivers overflow. A network of canals was constructed throughout the country, which restricted the destructive tendencies of the Tigris and Euphrates and developed to a high degree their potentialities as fertilizing agencies.

The greatest of these canals appear to have been anciently river beds. One, which is called Shatt en Nil to the north, and Shatt el Kar to the south, curved eastward from Babylon, and sweeping past Nippur,

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flowed like the letter S towards Larsa and then rejoined the river. It is believed to mark the course followed in the early Sumerian period by the Euphrates river, which has moved steadily westward many miles beyond the sites of ancient cities that were erected on its banks.

Another important canal, the Shatt el Hai, crossed the plain from the Tigris to its sister river, which lies lower at this point, and does not run so fast. Where the artificial canals were constructed on higher levels than the streams which fed them, the water was raised by contrivances known as "shaddufs"; the buckets or skin bags were roped to a weighted beam (1), with the aid of which they were swung up by workmen and emptied into the canals. It is possible that this toilsome mode of irrigation was substituted in favourable parts by the primitive water wheels which are used in our own day by the inhabitants of the country who cultivate strips of land along the river banks

31. It can be inferred from the passage that
 - a. Babylonia had a series of effective leaders
 - b. the success of Babylonia was due in large part to engineers
 - c. the water wheel was never used in Babylonia
 - d. in ancient times the Euphrates lay west of where it currently runs
 - e. canals were not important in Babylonia
32. What was the purpose of the "weighted beam" at (1)?
 - a. to move farm tools
 - b. to ensure the safety of workers
 - c. to limit water flow
 - d. to act as a foundation for a water wheel
 - e. to assist workers in raising water into canals
33. According to the passage, what were the two most important rivers in Babylonia?
 - a. Shatt en Nil and Shatt el Kar
 - b. Babylon and Nippur
 - c. Tigris and Euphrates
 - d. Shatt el Hai and Tigris
 - e. Shatt el Kar and Euphrates
34. Which of the following questions is answered by the passage?
 - a. How was water raised into the canals?
 - b. Who was the first leader of Babylonia?
 - c. What was the name of the engineer that invented the water wheel?
 - d. What led to the flooding of the rivers?
 - e. How often did the rivers flood?
35. The Tigris and Euphrates rivers are described as
 - a. minor
 - b. highly variable
 - c. unimportant to modern settlers of the river valley
 - d. in the same place that they were centuries ago

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- e. mainly forgotten

The next morning, Thursday, October 11th, it rained, as hard as ever; but we were determined to proceed on foot, nevertheless. We first made some inquiries with regard to the practicability of walking up the shore on the Atlantic side to Provincetown, whether we should meet with any creeks or marshes to trouble us. Higgins said that there was no obstruction, and that it was not much farther than by the road, but he thought that we should find it very "heavy" walking in the sand; it was bad enough in the road, a horse would sink in up to the fetlocks there. But there was one man at the tavern who had walked it, and he said that we could go very well, though it was sometimes inconvenient and even dangerous walking under the bank, when there was a great tide, with an easterly wind, which caused the sand to cave. For the first four or five miles we followed the road, which here turns to the north on the elbow, —the narrowest part of the Cape, —that we might clear an inlet from the ocean, a part of Nauset Harbor, in Orleans, on our right. We found the travelling good enough for walkers on the sides of the roads, though it was "heavy" for horses (1) in the middle. We walked with our umbrellas behind us, since it blowed hard as well as rained, with driving mists, as the day before, and the wind helped us over the sand at a rapid rate. Everything indicated that we had reached a strange shore.

- 36. It can be inferred from the passage that the wind
 - a. was uncommon in Nauset Harbour
 - b. blew away the sand
 - c. determined the path that the narrator chose
 - d. made the narrator turn around
 - e. was blowing at the narrator's back
- 37. The phrase "'heavy' for horses" at (1) refers to
 - a. horses being injured
 - b. horses only being able to carry light packages
 - c. the tendency of horses to avoid the rain
 - d. horses' hooves sinking into a muddy road
 - e. the natural tendency of horses to weigh a lot
- 38. The passage implies
 - a. that the narrator has not been in a place like this before
 - b. it is safer to walk along the beach than to walk along the road
 - c. the narrator wishes he had stayed in the tavern
 - d. there are many creeks and marshes between the tavern and Provincetown
 - e. Higgins has never walked to Provincetown
- 39. The narrator can best be described as
 - a. lonely
 - b. reflective
 - c. determined

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- d. lazy
 - e. arrogant
40. In this passage, the author's primary purpose is to
- a. provide directions to Provincetown
 - b. give a history of the Cape
 - c. explain how to care for horses
 - d. describe a treacherous journey on foot
 - e. discourage readers from visiting Provincetown