



## Pre-Professional Skills Test (PPST) - Reading Section

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**QUESTION NO: 1**

Read the following passage and answer the question.

The houses in Peking are built in a very rambling fashion, covering a large amount of ground, and our former house was no exception to the rule. It had sixteen small houses, one story high, containing about 175 rooms, arranged in quadrangles facing the courtyard, which went to make up the whole; and so placed, that without having to actually go out of doors, you could go from one to the other by verandas built along the front and enclosed in glass. My reader will wonder what possible use we could make of all of these rooms; but what with our large family, numerous secretaries, Chinese writers, messengers, servants, mafoos (coachmen), and chair coolies, it was not a difficult task to use them. The gardens surrounding the houses were arranged in the Chinese way, with small lakes, stocked with gold fish, and in which the beautiful lotus flower grew; crossed by bridges; large weeping willows along the banks; and many different varieties of flowers in prettily arranged flower beds, running along winding paths, which wound in and out between the lakes. At the time we left for Paris, in the month of June, 1899, the gardens were a solid mass of flowers and foliage, and much admired by all who saw them.

Which of the following words probably describes the author?

- A. greedy
- B. foolish
- C. Chinese
- D. poor
- E. wealthy

**ANSWER: E****Explanation:**

The author would need to be wealthy to have so many servants and such a large home.

**QUESTION NO: 2**

Read the following passage and answer the question.

The following passage is from a discussion of various ways that living creatures have been classified over the years.

The world can be classified in different ways, depending on one's interests and principles of classification. The classifications (also known as taxonomies) in turn determine which comparisons seem natural or unnatural, which literal or analogical. For example, it has been common to classify living creatures into three distinct groups — plants, animals, and humans. According to this classification, human beings are not a special kind of animal, nor animals a special kind of plant. Thus, any comparisons between the three groups are strictly analogical. Reasoning from inheritance in garden peas to inheritance in fruit flies, and from these two species to inheritance in human beings, is sheer poetic metaphor. Another mode of classifying living creatures is commonly attributed to Aristotle. Instead of treating plants, animals, and humans as distinct groups, they are nested. All living creatures possess a vegetative soul that enables them to grow and metabolize. Of these, some also have a sensory soul that enables them to sense their environments and move. One species also has a rational soul that is capable of true understanding. Thus, human beings are a special sort of animal, and animals are a special sort of plant.

Given this classification, reasoning from human beings to all other species with respect to the attributes of the vegetative soul is legitimate, reasoning from human beings to other animals with respect to the attributes of the sensory soul is also legitimate, but reasoning from the rational characteristics of the human species to any other species is merely analogical. According to both classifications, the human species is unique. In the first, it has a kingdom all to itself; in the second, it stands at the pinnacle of the taxonomic hierarchy. Homo sapiens is unique. All species are. But this sort of uniqueness is not enough for many (probably most) people, philosophers included. For some reason, it is very important that the species to which we belong be uniquely unique. It is of utmost importance that the human species be insulated from all other species with respect to how we explain certain qualities. Human beings clearly are capable of developing and learning languages. For some reason, it is very important that the waggle dance performed by bees not count as a genuine language. I have never been able to understand why. I happen to think that the waggle dance differs from human languages to such a degree that little is gained by terming them both

"languages", but even if "language" is so defined that the waggle dance slips in, bees still remain bees. It is equally important to some that no other species use tools. No matter how ingenious other species get in the manipulation of objects in their environment, it is absolutely essential that nothing they do count as "tool use." I, however, fail to see what difference it makes whether any of these devices such as probes and anvils, etc. are really tools. All the species involved remain distinct biological species no matter what decisions are made. Similar observations hold for rationality and anything a computer might do.

Which best summarizes the idea of "uniquely unique"?

- A. We are unique in the same way that all other species are unique.
- B. We are defined by attributes that we alone possess and that are qualitatively different from those of other species.
- C. We are, by virtue of our elevated rank, insulated from many of the problems of survival faced by less sophisticated species.
- D. Our awareness of our uniqueness defines us as a rational species.
- E. Our apparently unique status is an unintended by-product of classification systems.

**ANSWER: B**

**Explanation:**

The subsequent text explains that each species is unique in accordance with its separate and distinct position in the classification schemes. However, many humans see Homo sapiens as also being distinguished for reasons existing outside the classification systems. The text provides examples of how certain abilities are not considered shared by any other species and are thus distinctly human: "For some reason, it is very important that the waggle dance performed by bees not count as a genuine language" and "No matter how ingenious other species get in the manipulation of objects in their environment, it is absolutely essential that nothing they do count as "tool use".

**QUESTION NO: 3**

Read the following passage and answer the question.

Daniel Boone will always occupy a unique place in our history as the archetype of the hunter and wilderness wanderer. He was a true pioneer, and stood at the head of that class of Indianfighters, game-hunters, forest-fellers, and backwoods farmers who, generation after generation, pushed westward the border of civilization from the Alleghenies to the Pacific. As he himself said, he was "an instrument ordained of God to settle the wilderness." Born in Pennsylvania, he drifted south into western North Carolina, and settled on what was then the extreme frontier. There he married, built a log cabin, and hunted, chopped trees, and tilled the ground like any other frontiersman. The Alleghany Mountains still marked a boundary beyond

which the settlers dared not go; for west of them lay immense reaches of frowning forest, uninhabited save by bands of warlike Indians. Occasionally some venturesome hunter or trapper penetrated this immense wilderness, and returned with strange stories of what he had seen and done.

What literary device is the author using in the phrase “frowning forest”?

- A. caesura
- B. simile
- C. metaphor
- D. assonance
- E. personification

**ANSWER: C**

**Explanation:**

Personification is when something that is not a person is described as if it were a person.

#### QUESTION NO: 4

Read the following passage and answer the question.

Daniel Boone will always occupy a unique place in our history as the archetype of the hunter and wilderness wanderer. He was a true pioneer, and stood at the head of that class of Indianfighters, game-hunters, forest-fellers, and backwoods farmers who, generation after generation, pushed westward the border of civilization from the Alleghenies to the Pacific. As he himself said, he was “an instrument ordained of God to settle the wilderness.” Born in Pennsylvania, he drifted south into western North Carolina, and settled on what was then the extreme frontier. There he married, built a log cabin, and hunted, chopped trees, and tilled the ground like any other frontiersman. The Alleghany Mountains still marked a boundary beyond which the settlers dared not go; for west of them lay immense reaches of frowning forest, uninhabited save by bands of warlike Indians. Occasionally some venturesome hunter or trapper penetrated this immense wilderness, and returned with strange stories of what he had seen and done.

Which of the following would be the best title for the passage?

- A. “The Birth of Daniel Boone”
- B. “The Great American Pioneers”
- C. “The Life of Daniel Boone”
- D. “Daniel Boone’s Parents”
- E. “Westward to the Pacific”

**ANSWER: C**

**Explanation:**

Boone's life is the subject of the passage.

**QUESTION NO: 5**

Read the following passage and answer the question.

While Thomas Edison was a newsboy on the train, a request came to him one day to go to the office of E.

B. Ward & Company, at that time the largest owners of steamboats on the Great Lakes. The captain of their largest boat had died suddenly, and they wanted a message taken to another captain who lived about fourteen miles from Ridgeway station on the railroad. This captain had retired, taken up some lumber land, and had cleared part of it. Edison was offered \$15 by Mr. Ward to go and fetch him, but as it was a wild country and would be dark, Edison stood out for \$25, so that he could get the companionship of another lad. The terms were agreed to. Edison arrived at Ridgeway at 8.30 P.M., when it was raining and as dark as ink. Getting another boy with difficulty to volunteer, he launched out on his errand in the pitch-black night. The two boys carried lanterns, but the road was a rough path through dense forest. The country was wild, and it was a usual occurrence to see deer, bear, and coon skins nailed up on the sides of houses to dry. Edison had read about bears, but couldn't remember whether they were day or night prowlers. The farther they went the more apprehensive they became, and every stump in the ravished forest looked like a bear. The other lad proposed seeking safety up a tree, but Edison demurred on the plea that bears could climb, and that the message must be delivered that night to enable the captain to catch the morning train. First one lantern went out, then the other. We leaned up against a tree and cried. I thought, if I ever got out of that scrape alive, I would know more about the habits of animals and everything else, and be prepared for all kinds of mischance when I undertook an enterprise. However, the intense darkness dilated the pupils of our eyes so as to make them very sensitive, and we could just see at times the outlines of the road. Finally, just as a faint gleam of daylight arrived, we entered the captain's yard and delivered the message. In my whole life, I never spent such a night of horror as this, but I got a good lesson.

Why did the shipping company ask Edison to fetch the captain?

**A.** he was a better captain

**B.** Ward & Company, at that time the largest owners of steamboats on the Great Lakes. The captain of their largest boat had died suddenly, and they wanted a message taken to another captain who lived about fourteen miles from Ridgeway station on the railroad. This captain had retired, taken up some lumber land, and had cleared part of it. Edison was offered \$15 by Mr. Ward to go and fetch him, but as it was a wild country and would be dark, Edison stood out for \$25, so that he could get the companionship of another lad. The terms were agreed to. Edison arrived at Ridgeway at 8.30 P.M., when it was raining and as dark as ink. Getting another boy with difficulty to volunteer, he launched out on his errand in the pitch-black night. The two boys carried lanterns, but the road was a rough path through dense forest. The country was wild, and it was a usual occurrence to see deer, bear, and coon skins nailed up on the sides of houses to dry. Edison had read about bears, but couldn't remember whether they were day or night prowlers. The farther they went the more apprehensive they became, and every stump in the ravished forest looked like a bear. The other lad proposed seeking safety up a tree, but Edison demurred on the plea that bears could climb, and that the message must be delivered that night to enable the captain to catch the morning train. First one lantern went out, then the other. We leaned up against a tree and cried. I thought, if I ever got out of that scrape alive, I would know more about the habits of animals and everything else, and be prepared for all kinds of mischance when I undertook an enterprise. However, the intense darkness dilated the pupils of our eyes so as to make them very sensitive, and we could just see at times the outlines of the road. Finally, just as a faint gleam of daylight arrived, we entered the captain's yard and delivered the message. In my whole life, I never spent such a night of horror as this, but I got a good lesson.

Why did the shipping company ask Edison to fetch the captain?  
to stop trees from being cut down

**C.** another captain had retired

**D.** another captain had recently died

E. to teach him a lesson

**ANSWER: D**

**Explanation:**

The shipping company needed a replacement captain immediately.

**QUESTION NO: 6**

Read the following passage and answer the question.

While Thomas Edison was a newsboy on the train, a request came to him one day to go to the office of E.

B. Ward & Company, at that time the largest owners of steamboats on the Great Lakes. The captain of their largest boat had died suddenly, and they wanted a message taken to another captain who lived about fourteen miles from Ridgeway station on the railroad. This captain had retired, taken up some lumber land, and had cleared part of it. Edison was offered \$15 by Mr. Ward to go and fetch him, but as it was a wild country and would be dark, Edison stood out for \$25, so that he could get the companionship of another lad. The terms were agreed to. Edison arrived at Ridgeway at 8.30 P.M., when it was raining and as dark as ink. Getting another boy with difficulty to volunteer, he launched out on his errand in the pitch-black night. The two boys carried lanterns, but the road was a rough path through dense forest. The country was wild, and it was a usual occurrence to see deer, bear, and coon skins nailed up on the sides of houses to dry. Edison had read about bears, but couldn't remember whether they were day or night prowlers. The farther they went the more apprehensive they became, and every stump in the ravished forest looked like a bear. The other lad proposed seeking safety up a tree, but Edison demurred on the plea that bears could climb, and that the message must be delivered that night to enable the captain to catch the morning train. First one lantern went out, then the other. We leaned up against a tree and cried. I thought, if I ever got out of that scrape alive, I would know more about the habits of animals and everything else, and be prepared for all kinds of mischance when I undertook an enterprise. However, the intense darkness dilated the pupils of our eyes so as to make them very sensitive, and we could just see at times the outlines of the road. Finally, just as a faint gleam of daylight arrived, we entered the captain's yard and delivered the message. In my whole life, I never spent such a night of horror as this, but I got a good lesson.

The word "ravished" probably means:

**A. burned**

**B. Ward & Company**, at that time the largest owners of steamboats on the Great Lakes. The captain of their largest boat had died suddenly, and they wanted a message taken to another captain who lived about fourteen miles from Ridgeway station on the railroad. This captain had retired, taken up some lumber land, and had cleared part of it. Edison was offered \$15 by Mr. Ward to go and fetch him, but as it was a wild country and would be dark, Edison stood out for \$25, so that he could get the companionship of another lad. The terms were agreed to. Edison arrived at Ridgeway at 8.30 P.M., when it was raining and as dark as ink. Getting another boy with difficulty to volunteer, he launched out on his errand in the pitch-black night. The two boys carried lanterns, but the road was a rough path through dense forest. The country was wild, and it was a usual occurrence to see deer, bear, and coon skins nailed up on the sides of houses to dry. Edison had read about bears, but couldn't remember whether they were day or night prowlers. The farther they went the more apprehensive they became, and every stump in the ravished forest looked like a bear. The other lad proposed seeking safety up a tree, but Edison demurred on the plea that bears could climb, and that the message must be delivered that night to enable the captain to catch the morning train. First one lantern went out, then the other. We leaned up against a tree and cried. I thought, if I ever got out of that scrape alive, I would know more about the habits of animals and everything else, and be prepared for all kinds of mischance when I undertook an enterprise. However, the intense darkness dilated the pupils of our eyes so as to make them very sensitive, and we could just see at times the outlines of the road. Finally, just as a faint gleam of daylight arrived, we entered the captain's yard and delivered the message. In my whole life, I never spent such a night of horror as this, but I got a good lesson.

The word “ravished” probably means:  
uplifted

- C. dangerous
- D. dark
- E. cleared of trees

**ANSWER: E**

**Explanation:**

The passage refers to stumps as a feature of the “ravished” forest.

### QUESTION NO: 7

Read the following passage and answer the question.

People loved to come to the Grogrande Bakery. When one opened the door, an exquisite fragrance of newly baked bread and cakes greeted the nostrils; and, if you were not hungry when you entered, you were sure to become so when you examined and smelled the delicious pies and doughnuts and gingerbread and buns with which the shelves and show-cases were stocked. There were trays of French candies, too; and because all the goods were fresh and wholesome the bakery was well patronized and did a thriving business.

Who is the likely audience for this passage?

- A. bakers
- B. children
- C. professors
- D. retired citizens
- E. policemen

**ANSWER: B**

**Explanation:**

The diction and subject matter of this passage is appropriate for children.

### QUESTION NO: 8

Read the following passage and answer the question.

Cities across the world are essentially blends of smaller cultural environments that lead people to have vastly different experiences. Each city typically contains a broad spectrum of dining establishments along with various art institutions like

museums and theaters. Yet with all these blends of dining, art and night lives, what is the one characteristic that can distinguish a city?

History. The undeniably unique history of each city provides rich traditions and a bond between the local people that overshadows any other city's mélange of dining and art institutions.

In context, which word most closely defines mélange?

- A. frivolous
- B. tradition
- C. assortment
- D. opportunity
- E. brochure

**ANSWER: C**

**Explanation:**

The author selects words such as "spectrum" and "various" to refer to the dining and art institutions. Clearly mélange must be some sort of variety offering. Only choice "assortment" matches this definition.

**QUESTION NO: 9**

Read the following passage and answer the question.

The Gilded Age and Rutherford

B. Hayes – the period in American history between the Reconstruction and the Progressive Era is commonly known as the Gilded Age. In this period, the US seemed to be simultaneously abandoning the ideals of the past and failing to anticipate the future; this was in large part due to the confusion of a horrendous Civil War and massive immigration, industrialization, and urbanization. During this period, many Americans sought refuge in community organizations like the Moose Lodge, the Elks Club, and the Masonic Lodge. The politicians of the Gilded Age tended to avoid the major issues of social injustice and inequality, instead focusing on minor issues like public and parochial schools, and the blue laws (laws restricting commercial activity on Sunday). Foolishly, Rutherford

B. Hayes made himself a lame-duck president by announcing soon after taking office that he would not seek a second term. Hayes' wife was nicknamed "Lemonade Lucy," because she would not allow any alcohol in the White House. Hayes tried to restore the power of the presidency after the debacle of Grant, but he was weakened by intense struggles over his Cabinet confirmations. One thing Hayes can be credited with is making a gallant attempt to destroy the spoils system. He replaced the Collector of the Customs House after discovering the corruption of that body, and he appointed Carl Schurz Secretary of the Interior on the basis of merit. In turn, Schurz established a merit system in his department, creating an entrance exam for potential employees. One of the failures of the Hayes administration was its handling of the Great Rail Strike of 1877. When over two-thirds of the rail lines were shut down by strikes, Hayes sent in federal troops, and there was considerable bloodshed. This set a bad precedent for how strikes would be handled in the future. Hayes also vetoed an attempt by western labor unions to restrict Chinese immigration, saying that this would be a violation of the Burlingame Treaty. One of the main issues in the Hayes years was monetary policy. Farmers, who were often in debt, wanted a soft currency not backed by anything; they were willing to settle for a silver standard. In *Hepburn v. Griswold* (1869), the Supreme Court had ruled that there could not be paper money without a gold standard; in the *Legal Tender* cases of 1871, however, the Court reversed itself. The bickering over these conflicting rulings plagued the Hayes administration. After the Specie Resumption Act of 1875, Hayes worked to minimize the effects of the oncoming "day of redemption," in which paper money could be

exchanged for gold coins. He began a policy of contraction, wherein the government gradually took in paper money and issued gold, and he funded attempts to mine more gold. The Greenbackers were those who wanted Hayes to postpone the day of redemption; he did not, and it ultimately proved anticlimactic, as people assumed their paper money was “good as gold” and didn’t bother to redeem it. Hayes also had to deal with the Silverites. In 1873, the government had enraged silver prospectors by announcing that it would no longer make coins out of silver. In answer to their fury, Hayes pushed through the Bland-Allison Act, which established that a minimum of \$2 million of silver had to be purchased and coined by the government every month.

What was slated to happen on the “day of redemption”?

**A.** Silverites would be jailed

**B.** Hayes – the period in American history between the Reconstruction and the Progressive Era is commonly known as the Gilded Age. In this period, the US seemed to be simultaneously abandoning the ideals of the past and failing to anticipate the future; this was in large part due to the confusion of a horrendous Civil War and massive immigration, industrialization, and urbanization. During this period, many Americans sought refuge in community organizations like the Moose Lodge, the Elks Club, and the Masonic Lodge. The politicians of the Gilded Age tended to avoid the major issues of social injustice and inequality, instead focusing on minor issues like public and parochial schools, and the blue laws (laws restricting commercial activity on Sunday). Foolishly, Rutherford

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What was slated to happen on the “day of redemption”?

gold coins could be exchanged for paper money

**C.** all ongoing strokes would be broken

**D.** paper money would be exchanged for gold coins

**E.** convicts would have their offenses forgiven

**ANSWER: D**

**Explanation:**

The United States was engaged in a process of typing paper money, which had been subject to massive inflation, to a gold and silver standard.

**QUESTION NO: 10**

Read the following passages and answer the question.

Passage 1. Because it is filled with contradictions, performance is also filled with risk. This is the domain of stage fright. The actor is aware that appearing in front of an audience is a scary proposition. Maintaining the reality of the character is, in itself, a fragile affair; it demands of the actor a series of complex transformations. The actor has the unique problem of hiding and showing at the same time. The actor's conscious fear is not about making a mistake, but about allowing the audience to see something that it is not supposed to see: namely, the performer's fear, or stage fright.

Passage 2. The term "stage fright" has largely dropped out of use, because we know now that dwelling on something this malevolent gives it power. If I tell you not to be afraid, you may dwell on your fear. If I say, do not think of fast-food burgers under any circumstances, a line of them will parade through your mind. The key to most fears is substitution. On the simplest level, you replace the ogre with something less menacing to fill your consciousness. If you will imagine yourself to be a host rather than an actor, and think more about the comfort of your listeners than their verdicts, everything will fall into place.

In the context of Passage 1, the phrase "Maintaining the reality of the character" most directly refers to:

- A. believing oneself to be the character
- B. playing the character in a way that resembles real life
- C. presenting to the audience only behavior relevant to the character
- D. showing the audience how the character sees a situation
- E. keeping the character from becoming purely imaginative

**ANSWER: C****Explanation:**

Passage 1 suggests that "maintaining the reality of the character" involves the "unique problem of hiding and showing at the same time". The text further suggests that the actor must not allow "the audience to see something it is not supposed to see: namely, the performer's fear, or stage fright". This suggests that the actor must hide things that do not relate to the character and, by extension, show the audience only behavior relevant to the character.