

## Critical Reading Practice Test 1

**Directions:** Questions follow each of the passages below. Using only the stated or implied information in each passage and in its introduction, if any, answer the questions.

### Passage 1

Gauguin decided to settle in Mataiea, some forty-five kilometres from Papeete, probably on the advice of a Tahitian chief whom he had befriended. There he rented a (5) native-style oval bamboo hut, roofed with pandanu leaves. Once settled, he was in a position to begin work in earnest and to tackle serious figure studies. It was probably soon after this that he painted Vahine (10) no te tiare, his first portrait of a Tahitian model. By the late summer of 1892 the completed canvas was back in Paris, hanging in the Goupil gallery. From the many subsequent (15) references to this image in his correspondence, it is clear that Gauguin set considerable store by his “Tahitienne” and, by sending her on ahead to Paris, wanted her to serve as an ambadress for the further (20) images of Tahitian women he would be bringing back with him on his return. He pressed his male friends for their reactions to the girl, rather than to the picture, anxious to know whether they, like him, would (25) be responsive to the beauty of her face: “And her forehead,” he later wrote, “with the majesty of upsweeping lines, reminded me of that saying of Poe’s, ‘There is no perfect beauty without a certain singularity (30) in the proportions.’” No one, it seems, was quite attuned to his emotional perception: while Aurier was enthusiastic, excited by the picture’s rarity value, Schuffenecker was somewhat taken aback by the painting’s

(35) lack of Symbolist character. Indeed, apart from the imaginary floral background which harked back to Gauguin’s 1888 Self-Portrait, the image is a relatively straightforward one. Recent anthropological (40) work, backed by the use of photography, had scientifically characterized the physical distinctions between the different races, distinctions that in the past had been imperfectly understood. Generally speaking, (45) artists before Gauguin’s time had represented Tahitians as idealized types, adjusting their features and proportions to accord with European taste. This meant that hitherto the Tahitian in Western art (50) could scarcely be distinguished from his African or Asian counterpart. Unfortunately, Charles Giraud’s paintings have disappeared, so we cannot compare them with Gauguin’s, but this first image (55) by Gauguin suggests a desire to portray the Tahitian physiognomy naturalistically, without the blinkers of preconceived rules of beauty laid down by a classical culture. Naturalism as an artistic creed, though, (60) was anathema to Gauguin; it made the artist a lackey of science and knowledge rather than a god-like creator. He wanted to go beyond empirical observation of this kind, to find a way of painting Tahiti that (65) would accord with his Symbolist aspirations, that would embody the feelings he had about the place and the poetic image he carried with him of the island’s mysterious past.

**Q1. In lines 15–16, the word “correspondence” means**

- A. correlation.
- B. agreement.

- C. conformity.
- D. similarity.
- E. letters.

Answer \_\_\_\_\_

**Q2. Gauguin found the faces of Tahitian women beautiful because of their**

- A. elegant coloration.
- B. unusual proportions.
- C. refusal to wear makeup.
- D. dark hair covering the forehead.
- E. openness and innocence.

Answer \_\_\_\_\_

**Q3. The passage suggests that a painter depicting a Tahitian in a period sometime before Gauguin would probably**

- A. rely on photographs for models.
- B. make an image that was not in accord with European ideals of female beauty.
- C. paint a picture that employed a symbolic landscape as background.
- D. fail to differentiate a Tahitian from the inhabitants of Asian countries.
- E. paint only models who were fully clothed in Western-style costume.

Answer \_\_\_\_\_

**Q4. It can be inferred that the author would like to see the lost paintings of Charles Giraud in order to**

- A. determine whether they presented the Tahitians realistically.
- B. determine whether they were better paintings than Gauguin's.
- C. determine whether they deserve their high reputation.
- D. compare the symbolism of these paintings with that of Gauguin's.
- E. discover what subjects Giraud chose to paint.

Answer \_\_\_\_\_

**Q5. Of the following phrases, which does the author use to refer to the aspect of Gauguin's art that attempts to depict the real world accurately?**

I. "the image is a relatively straightforward one" (lines 38–39)

II. "desire to portray the Tahitian physiognomy naturalistically" (lines 55–56)

III. "a way of painting Tahiti that would accord with his Symbolist aspirations" (lines 64–66)

- A. II only
- B. III only
- C. I and II only
- D. I and III only
- E. I, II, and III

Answer \_\_\_\_\_

**Q6. The passage suggests that an important problem Gauguin would have to deal with in his paintings of Tahiti was how to**

- A. reconcile his naturalistic and symbolistic impulses.
- B. make Europeans understand the beauty of Tahiti.
- C. find the necessary supplies in a remote location.
- D. earn enough money to support himself by selling his paintings in Paris.
- E. make artistic use of the new advances in photography.

Answer \_\_\_\_\_

## Passage 2

Questions 7 through 15 are based on the following passage:

Jim Hansen, a climatologist at NASA's Goddard Space Institute, is convinced that the earth's temperature is rising and places the blame on the buildup of greenhouse (5) gases in the atmosphere. Unconvinced, John Sununu, former White House chief of staff, doubts that the warming will be great enough to produce a serious threat and fears that measures to reduce the emissions (10) would throw a wrench into the gears that drive the United States' troubled economy. The stakes in this debate are extremely high, for it pits society's short-term well-being against the future of all the (15) planet's inhabitants. Our past transgressions have altered major portions of the earth's surface, but the effects have been limited. Now we can foresee the possibility that to satisfy the energy needs of an expanding (20) human population, we will rapidly change the climate of the entire planet, with consequences for even the most remote and unspoiled regions of the globe. The notion that certain gases could warm (25) the planet is not new. In 1896 Svante Arrhenius, a Swedish chemist, resolved the long-standing question of how the earth's atmosphere could maintain the planet's relatively warm temperature when the oxygen (30) and nitrogen that make up 99 percent of the atmosphere do not absorb any of the heat escaping as infrared radiation from the earth's surface into space. He discovered that even the small amounts of carbon (35) dioxide in the atmosphere could absorb large amounts of heat. Furthermore, he reasoned that the burning of coal, oil, and natural gas could eventually release enough carbon dioxide to warm the earth. Hansen (40) and most other climatologists agree that enough greenhouse gases have accumulated in the atmosphere to make Arrhenius's prediction come true. Burning

fossil fuels is not the only problem; a fifth (45) of our emissions of carbon dioxide now come from clearing and burning forests. Scientists are also tracking a host of other greenhouse gases that emanate from a variety of human activities; the warming effect (50) of methane, chlorofluorocarbons, and nitrous oxide combined equals that of carbon dioxide. Although the current warming from these gases may be difficult to detect against the (55) background noise of natural climate variation, most climatologists are certain that as the gases continue to accumulate, increases in the earth's temperature will become evident even to skeptics. The battle lines for (60) this particular skirmish are surprisingly well balanced. Those with concerns about global warming point to the recent report from the United Nations Intergovernmental Plan on Climate Change, which suggests (65) that with "business as usual," emissions of carbon dioxide by the year 2025 will be 25 percent greater than previously estimated. On the other side, the George C. Marshall Institute, a conservative think tank, (70) published a report warning that without greenhouse gases to warm things up, the world would become cool in the next century. Stephen Schneider, a leading computer modeler of future climate change, accused (75) Sununu of "brandishing the [Marshall] report as if he were holding a crucifix to repel a vampire." If the reality of global warming were put on trial, each side would have trouble making (80) its case. Jim Hansen's side could not prove beyond a reasonable doubt that carbon dioxide and the other greenhouse gases have warmed the planet. But neither could John Sununu's side prove beyond a reasonable (85) doubt that the warming expected from greenhouse gases has not occurred.

**Q7. The purpose of the first paragraph (lines 1–23) of the passage is to**

- A. argue for the reduction of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.
- B. defend on economic grounds the reduction of greenhouse gases.
- C. present two opposing positions on the subject of the earth's rising temperature.
- D. lessen the concern of the public about the alleged buildup of greenhouse gases.
- E. introduce the two most important spokesmen for and against ecological reforms.

Answer \_\_\_\_\_

**Q8. In the first paragraph in line 13, the word "pits" means**

- A. removes the core of.
- B. sets in competition.
- C. depresses.
- D. marks with small scars.
- E. hardens.

Answer \_\_\_\_\_

**Q9. From the information in the second paragraph of the passage, you can infer that a planet**

- A. whose atmosphere was made up entirely of oxygen would be warmer than a planet equally distant from the sun with an atmosphere made up entirely of nitrogen.
- B. whose atmosphere was made up entirely of nitrogen would be warmer than a planet equally distant from the sun with an atmosphere made up entirely of oxygen.
- C. with a larger amount of carbon dioxide in its atmosphere, other factors being equal, will be warmer than a planet with less carbon dioxide.
- D. with a small amount of carbon dioxide in its atmosphere cannot increase this amount.
- E. with little infrared radiation escaping from its surface is likely to be extremely cold.

Answer \_\_\_\_\_

**Q10. The passage implies that a greenhouse gas is one that**

- I. forms a large part of the earth's atmosphere.
- II. absorbs heat escaping from the earth's surface.
- III. can be formed by the clearing and burning of forests.

- A. III only
- B. I and II only
- C. I and III only
- D. II and III only
- E. I, II, and III

Answer \_\_\_\_\_

**Q11. From the passage, it can be inferred that all the following are greenhouse gases EXCEPT**

- A. nitrogen.
- B. carbon dioxide.
- C. methane.
- D. chlorofluorocarbons.
- E. nitrous oxide.

Answer \_\_\_\_\_

**Q12. Which of the following, if true, would call into question the argument of the Marshall report?**

I. Since the earth's climate did not grow colder in the five hundred years since 1400 when the amount of greenhouse gases released by humans was small, there is no reason to expect a decrease in temperature when the amounts of gas released are now much larger.

II. The radical reduction of the emission of greenhouse gases will result in massive unemployment throughout the industrial world.

III. Some scientific studies have shown that the temperature of the earth is unaffected by the presence of oxygen in the atmosphere.

- A. I only
- B. II only
- C. I and II only
- D. I and III only
- E. I, II, and III

Answer \_\_\_\_\_

**Q13. The word "skeptics" in line 59 most nearly means**

- A. scientists.
- B. ecologists.
- C. opponents.
- D. doubters.
- E. politicians.

Answer \_\_\_\_\_

**Q14. Stephen Schneider probably referred to Sununu's "brandishing the [Marshall] report as if he were holding a crucifix to repel a vampire" in order to**

I. amuse his audience.

II. suggest that Sununu's claims are melodramatic.

III. imply that the idea that greenhouse gases are dangerous is as imaginary as a vampire.

- A. III only
- B. I and II only
- C. I and III only
- D. II and III only
- E. I, II, and III

Answer \_\_\_\_\_

**Q15. The effect of the final paragraph of the passage is to**

- A. stress the superiority of Jim Hansen's case.
- B. undermine Sununu's argument.
- C. support the conclusions of the Marshall report.
- D. call Arrhenius's theories into question.
- E. leave the debate about global warming unresolved.

Answer \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer Keys and Explanation Link**

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