

## PSAT Reading Practice Test 2

### Passage 1

The following passages are excerpted from **Abraham Lincoln's** two inaugural addresses. The first was given in 1861, before the Civil War began. The second was delivered in 1865 as the fighting between North (anti-slavery) and South (pro-slavery) raged. (1865 was the final year of the Civil War.)

One section of our country believes slavery is RIGHT, and ought to be extended, while the other believes it is WRONG, and ought not to be extended. This is the only substantial dispute. The fugitive-slave clause of the Constitution, and the law for the suppression of the foreign slave-trade, are each as well enforced, perhaps, as any law can ever be in a community where the moral sense of the people imperfectly supports **(5)** the law itself. The great body of the people abide by the dry legal obligation in both cases, and a few break over in each. This, I think, cannot be perfectly cured; and it would be worse in both cases AFTER the separation of the sections than BEFORE. The foreign slave-trade, now imperfectly suppressed, would be ultimately revived, without restriction, in one section, while fugitive slaves, now only partially surrendered, would not be surrendered at all by the other

**(10)** Physically speaking, we cannot separate. We cannot remove our respective sections from each other, nor build an impassable wall between them. A husband and wife may be divorced, and go out of the presence and beyond the reach of each other, but the different parts of our country cannot do this. They cannot but remain face to face, and intercourse, either amicable or hostile, must continue between them. Is it possible, then, to make that intercourse more advantageous or more satisfactory after separation than **(15)** before? Can aliens make treaties easier than friends can make laws? Can treaties be more faithfully enforced between aliens than laws can among friends? Suppose you go to war, you cannot fight always; and when, after much loss on both sides, and no gain on either, you cease fighting, the identical old questions as to terms of intercourse are again upon you.

This country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it. Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing government, **(20)** they can exercise their CONSTITUTIONAL right of amending it, or their REVOLUTIONARY right to dismember or overthrow it. I cannot be ignorant of the fact that many worthy and patriotic citizens are desirous of having the national Constitution amended. While I make no recommendation of amendments, I fully recognize the rightful authority of the people over the whole subject, to be exercised in either of the modes prescribed in the instrument itself, and I should, under **(25)** existing circumstances, favor rather than oppose a fair opportunity being afforded the people to act upon it. I will venture to add that to me the convention mode seems preferable, in that it allows amendments to originate with the people themselves, instead of only permitting them to take or reject propositions originated by others not specially chosen for the purpose, and which might not be precisely such as they would wish to either accept or refuse. I understand a proposed amendment to the Constitution—which **(30)** amendment, however, I have not seen—has passed Congress, to the effect that the Federal Government shall never interfere with the domestic institutions of the States, including that of persons held to service. To avoid misconstruction of what I have said, I depart from my purpose not to speak of particular amendments so far as to say that, holding such a provision to now be implied Constitutional law, I have no objection to its being made express and irrevocable.

**Passage 2**

(35) Fellow countrymen: At this second appearing to take the oath of the presidential office, there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first. Then a statement, somewhat in detail, of a course to be pursued, seemed fitting and proper. Now, at the expiration of four years, during which public declarations have been constantly called forth on every point and phase of the great contest which still absorbs the attention and engrosses the energies of the nation, little that is new could be presented. (40) The progress of our arms, upon which all else chiefly depends, is as well known to the public as to myself; and it is, I trust, reasonably satisfactory and encouraging to all. With high hope for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured. On the occasion corresponding to this four years ago, all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil war. All dreaded it—all sought to avert it. While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to saving the Union without war, insurgent agents (45) were in the city seeking to destroy it without war—seeking to dissolve the Union, and divide effects, by negotiation. Both parties deprecated war; but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive; and the other would accept war rather than let it perish. And the war came.

One-eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the Southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was, somehow, (50) the cause of the war. To strengthen, perpetuate, and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union, even by war; while the government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it. Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with, or even before, the conflict itself (55) should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding.

**Q1. In lines 4–5, when Lincoln says the moral sense of the people imperfectly supports the law itself, he means**

- A. slavery is wrong
- B. the law is imperfect
- C. it is moral to follow the law
- D. not everyone agrees about the law
- E. some people in the community are law breakers

**Correct Answer**

**Q2. In line 6, why does Lincoln say it would be worse if the country's sections separate?**

- A. War is always undesirable.
- B. The disagreement would deepen in its expression.
- C. The slaves would not be freed.
- D. It would encourage law breakers.
- E. The wall between them would remain impassable.

**Correct Answer**

**Q3. What is Lincoln's point in the second paragraph (lines 10–18) of Passage 1?**

- A. Divorce leads to estrangement.
- B. It is better to make a treaty than to have war.
- C. Separation is not the solution to the country's problems.
- D. It is better to be friends than aliens.

- E. You can't fight forever.

**Correct Answer**

**Q4. In line 31, the phrase domestic institutions of the States refers to**

- A. state schools
- B. state laws
- C. state churches
- D. state elections
- E. state political parties

**Correct Answer**

**Q5. Lincoln's tone in the last paragraph of Passage 1 (lines 19–34) is**

- A. conciliatory
- B. hostile
- C. grandiose
- D. humble
- E. firm

**Correct Answer**

**Q6. In Passage 2, lines 35–36, why does Lincoln say there is less occasion for an extended address?**

- A. The war is going well.
- B. There is no time to speak at length.
- C. There is little interest in his speech.
- D. He doesn't know what else to say.
- E. Everyone already knows his position

**Correct Answer**

**Q7. In line 44, in referring to insurgent agents, Lincoln means**

- A. foreign soldiers
- B. foreign spies
- C. secessionists
- D. southern spies
- E. slave traders

**Correct Answer**

**Q8. In Passage 2, whom does Lincoln blame for the war?**

- A. the North
- B. the South
- C. both sides
- D. neither side
- E. himself

**Correct Answer**

**Q9. In line 52, the word it in the phrase the territorial enlargement of it refers to**

- A. territory
- B. slavery
- C. interest
- D. government
- E. the Union

Correct Answer

## Answers Keys and Explanation Link

<https://gotestprep.com/psat-reading-practice-test-2/>