

SAT Reading Test 1

Read the passage below and the questions that follow it. As you form your answers, be sure to base them on what is stated in the passage and introduction, or the inferences you can make from the material.

This passage, written by John Fiske in the late 1800s, offers the author's perspective on what he says are two kinds of genius.

There are two contrasted kinds of genius, the poetical and the philosophical; or, to speak yet more generally, the artistic and the critical. The former is distinguished by a concrete, the latter by an abstract, imagination. The former sees things synthetically, in all their natural complexity; the latter pulls things to pieces analytically and scrutinizes their relations. The former sees a tree in all its glory, where the latter **(5)** sees an exogen with a pair of cotyledons. The former sees wholes, where the latter sees aggregates. Corresponding with these two kinds of genius, there are two classes of artistic productions. When the critical genius writes a poem or a novel, he constructs his plot and his characters in conformity to some prearranged theory, or with a view to illustrate some favorite doctrine. When he paints a picture, he first thinks how certain persons would look under certain given circumstances, and paints them accordingly.

(10) When he writes a piece of music, he first decides that this phrase expresses joy, and that phrase disappointment, and the other phrase disgust, and he composes accordingly. We therefore say ordinarily that he does not create, but only constructs and combines. It is far different with the artistic genius, who, without stopping to think, sees the picture and hears the symphony with the eyes and ears of imagination, and paints and plays merely what he has seen and heard. When Dante, in imagination, arrived at the lowest **(15)** circle of hell, where traitors like Judas and Brutus are punished, he came upon a terrible frozen lake, which, he says, "Ever makes me shudder at the sight of frozen pools." I have always considered this line a marvelous instance of the intensity of Dante's imagination. It shows, too, how Dante composed his poem. He did not take counsel of himself and say: "Go to, let us describe the traitors frozen up to their necks in a dismal lake, for that will be most terrible." But the picture of the lake, in all its iciness, with the haggard faces staring

(20) out from its glassy crust, came unbidden before his mind with such intense reality that, for the rest of his life, he could not look at a frozen pool without a shudder of horror. He described it exactly as he saw it; and his description makes us shudder who read it after all the centuries that have intervened. So Michelangelo, a kindred genius, did not keep cutting and chipping away, thinking how Moses ought to look, and what sort of a nose he ought to have, and in what position his head might best rest upon his shoulders.

(25) But, he looked at the rectangular block of Carrera marble, and beholding Moses grand and lifelike within it, knocked away the environing stone, that others also might see the mighty figure. And so Beethoven, an artist of the same colossal order, wrote out for us those mysterious harmonies which his ear had for the first time heard; and which, in his mournful old age, it heard none the less plainly because of its complete physical deafness. And in this way, Shakespeare wrote his Othello; spinning out no abstract **(30)** thoughts

about jealousy and its fearful effects upon a proud and ardent nature, but revealing to us the living concrete man, as his imperial imagination had spontaneously fashioned him.

Q1. In line 2 of this passage, the word concrete is contrasted with the word

- a. imagination
- b. wholes
- c. complexity
- d. abstract
- e. aggregates

Answer _____

Q2. The author's use of the phrase *prearranged* theory in line 8 suggests that

- a. it is wise to plan ahead
- b. a non-genius uses someone else's theories
- c. a critical genius is not truly creative
- d. a true genius first learns from others
- e. a writer should follow an outline

Answer _____

Q3 In line 27, the use of the word *colossal* to describe Beethoven implies

- a. no one really understands Beethoven's music
- b. Beethoven's symphonies are often performed in coliseums
- c. Beethoven was a large man
- d. Beethoven wrote music to his patrons' orders
- e. Beethoven was a musical genius

Answer _____

Q4. In lines 26–29, the author uses the example of Beethoven's deafness to illustrate

- a. Beethoven's sadness
- b. Beethoven's inherent creativity
- c. Beethoven's continuing musical relevance
- d. Beethoven's genius at overcoming obstacles
- e. Beethoven's analytical genius

Answer _____

Q5. In this passage, the author suggests that

- a. a good imagination is crucial to artistic genius
- b. a genius sees things that aren't there
- c. no one understands a genius's thought process
- d. many artists are unusual people
- e. a genius doesn't need to think

Answer _____

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.)

Passage 1

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

(5) supports 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 before?

(15) 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

(20) weary of the existing government, 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 existing **(25)** 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 especially 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 amendment, **(30)** 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.

(50) All knew that this interest was, somehow, 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 should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding

Q6. 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

Answer _____

Q7. 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.

Answer _____

Q8. 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.

Answer _____

Q9. 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

Answer _____

Q10. Lincoln’s tone in the last paragraph of Passage 1 (lines 19–34) is

- a. conciliatory
- b. hostile
- c. grandiose
- d. humble
- e. firm

Answer _____

Q11. 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

Answer _____

Q12. In line 44, in referring to insurgent agents, Lincoln means

- a. foreign soldiers
- b. foreign spies
- c. secessionists
- d. southern spies
- e. slave traders

Answer _____

Q13. In Passage 2, whom does Lincoln blame for the war?

- a. the North
- b. the South
- c. both sides
- d. neither side

- e. himself

Answer _____

Q14. 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

Answer _____

Answers and Explanation

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