

# Theme

## Question 1 .

### The Visit Home

Chiba had never wanted anything more than to go back home. His son, now three, was beginning to ask questions. "Idua, there is no place like Abuja," Chiba said. He stroked his boy's hair, as he added, "I'm telling you!"

"Papa, is your yellow house still there? And the big river by the park? And the million trees?" Idua asked as the plane landed on the runway.

"We'll see. I haven't been home in years—not since I moved to Atlanta and met your mother," Chiba said, unable to contain his nostalgia and excitement.

The father and son were now outside the airport and roaming the city in a cab. Chiba looked outside the window trying to find the traces of his old city. The sky was punctuated by bridges, flyovers, and skyscrapers. As he passed the city gate, he saw more fast-food chains and tall office buildings than trees.

"This looks like Atlanta!" Idua made his disappointment clear. And he asked his father the same question again and again, "Papa, where's the yellow house, and the big river, and the million trees?"

A theme of this selection is

- ☐ A. one may not feel at home with his or her family.
- ☐ B. what a person sees may or may not be real.
- ☐ C. modernization is not always a good thing.
- ☐ D. children should retain their innocence.

**Question 2 .**

Alejandro reached the platform just as the train's doors closed. He would have made it in time had it not been for his crutches. Had it not been for his stupid injury, he would have been on that train. Instead he was stuck on the platform, waiting all by himself.

Since the injury, not a day had passed that he hadn't been reminded of his poor luck. He was a perfectly healthy 22 year old, supposedly in the prime of his life. And yet, while playing soccer with his friends, he'd fallen and torn his ACL, a ligament in his knee. As a result, he'd been sentenced to three months of physical therapy and a long, slow recovery.

Alejandro felt as if his body had betrayed him. Injuries like this were supposed to happen to old out-of-shape guys—but not to him. And the physical therapy was a nightmare. His therapist, Dr. Mike, expected him to do a full hour of stretches every day. A full hour! Alejandro barely had the patience for 15 minutes of stretching. "You're not used to being injured, are you?" Dr. Mike had asked him during their first meeting.

"Of course not," Alejandro had responded. "I'm in great shape."

"Even world-class athletes get injured," Dr. Mike said. "The first step on the road to recovery is to take the time to recover. We can't push our bodies too far. From there, we should learn acceptance. Our bodies don't last forever. The sooner you accept this fact, the sooner you will heal. Plus, you'll be better equipped to deal with injuries in the future."

Now, as Alejandro waited for the next train, he had time to contemplate Dr. Mike's advice. People had always told Alejandro to appreciate his youth while he had it. But Dr. Mike was saying something else. He was telling Alejandro to prepare for a day when his body would fail. Dr. Mike was telling Alejandro to accept his body's shortcomings, even though he was still young.

As these thoughts occurred to Alejandro, an old man appeared on the train platform. He made his way slowly toward Alejandro, using a cane to support his weight. His body was hunched, and a hump was visible in his back. And though his cautious, deliberate progress across the platform was painful to watch, Alejandro noticed that the old man was smiling. The old man reached Alejandro just as the next train arrived. Alejandro nodded at him respectfully. Then the two of them boarded the same car: Alejandro with his crutches, and the old man with his cane.

Which universal idea does the author address in this passage?

- ☐ A. A person must be true to his or her beliefs no matter the situation.
- ☐ B. A person should tolerate new and unfamiliar traditions.
- ☐ C. A person should respect the advice from his or her elders.
- ☐ D. A person must learn how to accept the limitations of his or her body.

**Question 3 .**

**Directions: Select the correct text in the poem.**

Which **two** lines in the poem help the reader determine the theme?

**A Life on the Ocean Wave**

by Epes Sargent

A life on the ocean wave,  
A home on the rolling deep,  
Where the scattered waters rave,  
And the winds their revels keep!

- 5   [Like an eagle caged, I pine](#)  
On this dull, unchanging shore:  
[Oh! give me the flashing brine,](#)  
The spray and the tempest's roar!

- Once more on the deck I stand
- 10   [Of my own swift-gliding craft:](#)  
Set sail! farewell to the land!  
The gale follows fair abaft.  
[We shoot through the sparkling foam](#)  
Like an ocean-bird set free;—
- 15   Like the ocean-bird, our home  
We'll find far out on the sea.

- The land is no longer in view,  
The clouds have begun to frown;  
[But with a stout vessel and crew,](#)
- 20   We'll say, Let the storm come down!  
And the song of our hearts shall be,  
While the winds and the waters rave,  
A home on the rolling sea!  
A life on the ocean wave!

**Question 4 .****The Three Pots**

Jacob fidgeted with his watch nervously as he sat alone in the principal's office waiting for his mother to come and pick him up. Not more than twenty minutes back, the principal had a rather heated conversation with Jacob's mother over the phone over his new act of "misbehavior," and they had ultimately decided that Jacob be taken home for the day.

About ten minutes later, the office door opened and his mother walked in, followed by his grim-looking teacher.

"I surely do not know what other tactic to use on Jacob, Mrs. Paxton, so that he would be more cooperative with his peers. I sincerely hope you can do something to change the current circumstances," his teacher said, and giving him once last look of disapproval, walked away. His mother quietly grabbed his things and headed out, knowing that he would follow her.

On the way home, the only thing his mother asked him was what had happened this time.

"Those boys in my class are just really mean to me. Sometimes I honestly can't figure out what I want to do, whether I want to go out and play on the field or just sit back in class and read a book or sketch something. They see my confusion as snobbish behavior and try their best to trouble me with crude jokes and mockery, and I can't help but retaliate. They believe I am either good for nothing, or that I consider myself too good to be around them, and I can't simply sit around and let them believe what they like, which is why I fought back today and that was when my teacher happened to walk in."

Jacob's mother simply nodded her head, as if to communicate that she understood his point. When they reached home, she made him sit in the kitchen and filled three pots with water.

"I want to show you something interesting. Observe what I am doing and then tell me the significance of it."

In one pot she added a carrot, in the second pot she added an egg, and in the third pot she added ground coffee beans, and put all three pots to boil. Soon, the water in the pots began boiling, changing the contents inside the pots. Jacob looked at the pots curiously but could not conceive what his mother wanted to prove. Upon seeing his confusion, his mother smiled and sat down to explain.

"In the first pot, the carrot went in hard and now has completely softened, while in the second pot, the egg went in soft and has become hard. In both cases, the boiling water changed them. However, in the third pot, it is the coffee beans that changed the water into something else. What I want you to understand from this is that sometimes, like the item in the boiling water, when we are in the heart of a situation, we can either let the situation change us, making us into a tough or a weak person, or we can change the situation itself. In your case, you are in a dilemma with yourself and that is affecting the environment around you. I am not saying that your peers aren't at fault, but by retaliating negatively, you aren't improving the situation either. I suggest you try out everything with your peers until you know what you actually want to do and if they trouble you again, rather than react to it, walk away and distract yourself."

Jacob contemplated on his mother's advice and figured that it was worth a shot. A week later, Jacob came home all smiles and when his mother asked him for the reason, he told her all about how his peers had challenged him to a game and how he had not only accepted their challenge but also won the game, impressing his peers, and how their attitude toward him had completely changed since that moment.

Which archetypal theme is found in the passage?

- ☐ A. the theme of growing wise
- ☐ B. the theme of victory of good over evil
- ☐ C. the theme of the power of love
- ☐ D. the theme of estrangement and suffering

**Question 5 .****Lights Out**

by J. Robbins

"How could this have happened?" exclaimed Valancy as she surveyed the storage room full of ruined flowers. Micawber, who had been working with his best friend Valancy at Newflower Market for a year, had been responsible for closing the store the previous night. He hung his head in shame.

"I have no idea, V," he replied. "I swear to you, I thought I closed the door and turned the temperature down. I followed the checklist exactly! I'm going to get fired, aren't I?" Valancy looked at him sympathetically.

"Um, probably," she said. "I wish I could lie to you, but this mistake is going to cost the company a lot of money. Mr. Sheepsnose will be here in a few minutes, and I'll tell him about the flowers then."

"Wait!" cried Micawber. "Maybe he doesn't have to know! We could tell him that someone broke into the store last night, and he'll never have to know the truth. We can blame it on a disgruntled ex-employee. When 'Road Rage' Darryl got fired last week, he looked pretty disgruntled."

"No way," Valancy replied. "I don't lie for anyone, and neither should you. Mr. Sheepsnose is a nice person, and he'll be completely fair with you. There is no reason to make up a crazy story about a break-in." Micawber sighed and glumly sat on an overturned bucket.

"I guess you're right," he told his friend. "I still don't know how I could be so stupid. Mr. Sheepsnose trusted me to close down the store, and I've let him down. Now I'll never become the CEO of a Fortune-500 company."

"Good morning, kids," called Mr. Sheepsnose cheerfully as he walked into the store. "Why the sad faces?" Valancy busied herself with paperwork while Micawber stepped forward to face his supervisor.

"I have some bad news, sir," he told Mr. Sheepsnose. "Somehow, I left the store last night without closing the storage room door, and all of the flowers were ruined. I have no idea how it happened, but I am so sorry. If you want to fire me, I completely understand." Mr. Sheepsnose surveyed the damaged flowers and his despondent employee over the rim of his half-glasses.

"Well, Micawber, I am impressed," said Mr. Sheepsnose. "It took a lot of courage to tell the truth, and not many people would have done the same thing in your position. I know for a fact that you did close the storage room door last night because it was closed when I arrived at midnight. The building manager called me up here because the power went out for the whole block and shut down our refrigeration unit. That is why the flowers are ruined—it wasn't anything you did. Your job is safe, Micawber. In fact, I think I can give you even more responsibility now that you've proven yourself trustworthy." Mr. Sheepsnose patted his relieved employee on the shoulder and went to his office.

"Thanks for the great advice," Micawber told Valancy as he grabbed a broom and began sweeping the front room. He whistled a happy tune as he began to daydream about becoming a supervisor himself one day.

What is the best way to describe the theme of the story?

- ☐ A. People do their best work when they are afraid of the boss.
- ☐ B. Honesty should not protect a bad employee from being fired.
- ☐ C. Telling the truth, even when it's difficult, is the best option.
- ☐ D. Ambitious employees are more valuable than honest ones.

**Question 6 .****The Twins**

A pair of young, mischievous twins once lived in a small village called Redwood. Emily and Emmett, both seven years of age, had a knack for stirring trouble, sometimes by agitating the farm animals and at other times by stealing fruits and vegetables from their neighbors' farms. The villagers were tired of the twins' antics, but tended to forgive them because they made up for their pranks by helping out around the village whenever someone was in need of it. But the

twins were known to be thick as thieves and always looked out for each other whenever they got into trouble.

One afternoon, the two were busy making a ruckus at home. Their mother, desperate for some peace and quiet, sent the two into the woods to gather berries. The twins were more than happy to be let out and ran into the woods with a basket. They forgot the task of collecting berries in no time and instead began a game of hide and seek. It was Emmett's turn to seek his sister, and he was busy looking behind trees trying to find her.

Emily knew her brother's tactics well and chose to hide behind a big boulder instead of a tree. As she stood there, silently peeping from behind the boulder, she heard dry leaves crunching behind her. She turned around startled, to find an old woman slyly grinning down at her.

The old woman lived in the forest and rarely entered the village. In fact, the villagers had driven her out years ago when they caught her stealing her neighbor's crops. Since then, she had stayed away from the village, but kept a close watch on the village with the dark desire of avenging her mistreatment. She saw an opportunity when she noticed the two young children running carefree in the forest, oblivious to her presence.

Before Emily could react, however, the old woman offered her a candy.

"There is nothing to worry about child. Here, have a delicious piece of candy." The old woman whispered.

Emily was still a bit taken aback by the sudden appearance of the woman, but readily ate the candy as her mother usually refused to let her and Emmett have candy at home. On seeing Emily's delighted expression, the old woman thought of an evil plan and asked Emily to come to her cabin so she could collect some more candies for her and Emmett. In her moment of excitement about receiving more candies, Emily forgot about Emmett, and instead followed the old woman to her cabin.

Emmett had been looking for Emily for a while and knew something was wrong. He ran around, calling out to her but got no response in return. He came up on the empty candy wrapper and immediately knew that this was where Emily had been. The twins were like two peas in a pod, and Emmett knew that Emily loved candy just as much as he did. He found it suspicious that Emily would acquire a piece of candy in the middle of the forest, and guessed that there was someone else with her. He walked a couple of yards ahead, and found another candy wrapper, and knew he had guessed right. Soon he located the old woman's cabin and saw Emily sitting at the table eating more candy. He saw the old woman at the kitchen and sneaked up to the window to take a closer look at what she was doing.

"This is marvelous! Now I shall make those villagers believe that their precious little girl is missing and give them a good scare, while she sits here enjoying candies." The old woman whispered to herself.

On hearing this, Emmett knew he had to inform Emily about the old woman's plan. He quietly snuck in through the dining room window, quickly grabbed Emily and ran from the cabin. On their way back to the village, Emmett explained to a confused Emily the old woman's true plans with her. Emily could not have been more grateful to her brother at that moment for helping her escape the evil old woman.

They rushed back to the village and informed everyone what had taken place in the forest. Emily narrated how her brother had bravely rescued her and that she knew she could rely on him with her life. The villagers praised Emmett on his bravery and warned the twins to never stray too close to the old woman again.

Is the power of love an archetypal theme that can be associated with the twins?

- ☐ A. Yes, because the twins share a strong bond, which makes Emily rely on Emmett.
- ☐ B. No, because they are constantly playing pranks on each other.
- ☐ C. No, because Emily deliberately runs away from Emmett in the forest.
- ☐ D. Yes, because Emily and Emmett look out for each other when the villagers catch them.

**Question 7 .**

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A theme of this selection is

- ☐ A. patience is the best medicine.
- ☐ B. good opportunities are rare.
- ☐ C. a healthy body lasts forever.
- ☐ D. life is mysterious and strange.

## Question 8 .

**Resolution**

by A. Gautam

The new year begins on a set of old promises.  
I look at my list crumpled in my fist.  
A carefully torn page, inside my wishful cage—  
It is the same yellow as the year before,  
Twelve things that could change my life.  
I can see the cursive letters when I close my eyes.  
There my past remains, here my future lies.  
I resolve again, to give my old ambitions a refreshed try.

What is the best way to describe a theme of this poem?

- ☐ A. People would accomplish their New Year's resolutions if they wrote them down.
- ☐ B. The main purpose of having New Year's resolutions is to make people feel bad.
- ☐ C. The failures of the past should inspire people to accomplish more in the future.
- ☐ D. By the end of the year, it is too late to make any changes to a person's life.

## Question 9 .

**Directions: Select the correct text in the passage.**

Which **two** lines in the passage help the reader determine the theme?

*from The Gift of the Magi*

by O. Henry

"But you've cut off your hair?" asked Jim, laboriously, as if he had not arrived at that patent fact yet even after the hardest mental labor.

"Cut it off and sold it," said Della. "Don't you like me just as well, anyhow? I'm me without my hair, ain't I?"

Jim looked about the room curiously.

"You say your hair is gone?" he said, with an air almost of idiocy.

"You needn't look for it," said Della. "It's sold, I tell you—sold and gone, too. It's Christmas Eve, boy. Be good to me, for it went for you. Maybe the hairs of my head were numbered," she went on with sudden serious sweetness, "but nobody could ever count my love for you. Shall I put the chops on, Jim?"

Out of his trance Jim seemed quickly to wake. He enfolded his Della. For ten seconds let us regard with discreet scrutiny some inconsequential object in the other direction. Eight dollars a week or a million a year—what is the difference? A mathematician or a wit would give you the wrong answer. The magi brought valuable gifts, but that was not among them. This dark assertion will be illuminated later on.

Jim drew a package from his overcoat pocket and threw it upon the table.

"Don't make any mistake, Dell," he said, "about me. I don't think there's anything in the way of a haircut or a shave or a shampoo that could make me like my girl any less. But if you'll unwrap that package you may see why you had me going a while at first."

White fingers and nimble tore at the string and paper. And then an ecstatic scream of joy; and then, alas! a quick feminine change to hysterical tears and wails, necessitating the immediate employment of all the comforting powers of the lord of the flat.



For there lay The Combs—the set of combs, side and back, that Della had worshipped long in a Broadway window. Beautiful combs, pure tortoise shell, with jewelled rims—just the shade to wear in the beautiful vanished hair. They were expensive combs, she knew, and her heart had simply craved and yearned over them without the least hope of possession. And now, they were hers, but the tresses that should have adorned the coveted adornments were gone.

But she hugged them to her bosom, and at length she was able to look up with dim eyes and a smile and say: "My hair grows so fast, Jim!"

And then Della leaped up like a little singed cat and cried, "Oh, oh!"

Jim had not yet seen his beautiful present. She held it out to him eagerly upon her open palm. The dull precious metal seemed to flash with a reflection of her bright and ardent spirit.

"Isn't it a dandy, Jim? I hunted all over town to find it. You'll have to look at the time a hundred times a day now. Give me your watch. I want to see how it looks on it."

Instead of obeying, Jim tumbled down on the couch and put his hands under the back of his head and smiled.

"Dell," said he, "let's put our Christmas presents away and keep 'em a while. They're too nice to use just at present. I sold the watch to get the money to buy your combs. And now suppose you put the chops on."

The magi, as you know, were wise men—wonderfully wise men—who brought gifts to the Babe in the manger. They invented the art of giving Christmas presents. Being wise, their gifts were no doubt wise ones, possibly bearing the privilege of exchange in case of duplication. And here I have lamely related to you the uneventful chronicle of two foolish children in a flat who most unwisely sacrificed for each other the greatest treasures of their house.

**Question 10 .****Near the Black Wing**

Sasha stood in the middle of the desert with blood-stained hands. The sand stretched for miles like the ocean, and only the soft howl of wind could be heard. He wondered if the desert heard his shrieks and wounded outcries. The remnants of the helicopter were nowhere to be seen. Sasha wondered how he could have been flung so far away from the machine that had carried him earlier. For Sasha, the sky was just a view, and the earth was just a runway—until now. The desert was real. It had crater-like holes and waves. There was not a single hint of green as far as bare human eyes could see.

The sun was piercing right through Sasha's bruises and cuts. Grains of sand were competing to stick to his naked wounds. Waves of sand rearranged themselves. Finally, Sasha saw a big black metallic rod near the horizon. He knew which direction he was supposed to walk, but he did not know if he would make it that far.

Which of the following is a theme of the passage?

- ☐ A. One must rebel against his or her own self.
- ☐ B. Nature's relationship with people can be unkind.
- ☐ C. Isolation allows one to learn from mistakes.
- ☐ D. Satisfaction lies beyond a person's comfort zone.

**Question 11 .****Listening**  
by Amy Lowell

- 'T is you that are the music, not your song.  
The song is but a door which, opening wide,  
Lets forth the pent-up melody inside,  
Your spirit's harmony, which clear and strong  
5 Sings but of you. Throughout your whole life long  
Your songs, your thoughts, your doings, each divide  
This perfect beauty; waves within a tide,  
Or single notes amid a glorious throng.  
The song of earth has many different chords;  
10 Ocean has many moods and many tones  
Yet always ocean. In the damp Spring woods  
The painted trillium smiles, while crisp pine cones  
Autumn alone can ripen. So is this  
One music with a thousand cadences.

**Directions: Select the correct answer from the drop-down menu.**

The theme of "Listening" is

## Question 12 .

**Lights Out**

by J. Robbins

"How could this have happened?" exclaimed Valancy as she surveyed the storage room full of ruined flowers. Micawber, who had been working with his best friend Valancy at Newflower Market for a year, had been responsible for closing the store the previous night. He hung his head in shame.

"I have no idea, V," he replied. "I swear to you, I thought I closed the door and turned the temperature down. I followed the checklist exactly! I'm going to get fired, aren't I?" Valancy looked at him sympathetically.

"Um, probably," she said. "I wish I could lie to you, but this mistake is going to cost the company a lot of money. Mr. Sheepsnose will be here in a few minutes, and I'll tell him about the flowers then."

"Wait!" cried Micawber. "Maybe he doesn't have to know! We could tell him that someone broke into the store last night, and he'll never have to know the truth. We can blame it on a disgruntled ex-employee. When 'Road Rage' Darryl got fired last week, he looked pretty disgruntled."

"No way," Valancy replied. "I don't lie for anyone, and neither should you. Mr. Sheepsnose is a nice person, and he'll be completely fair with you. There is no reason to make up a crazy story about a break-in." Micawber sighed and glumly sat on an overturned bucket.

"I guess you're right," he told his friend. "I still don't know how I could be so stupid. Mr. Sheepsnose trusted me to close down the store, and I've let him down. Now I'll never become the CEO of a Fortune-500 company."

"Good morning, kids," called Mr. Sheepsnose cheerfully as he walked into the store. "Why the sad faces?" Valancy busied herself with paperwork while Micawber stepped forward to face his supervisor.

"I have some bad news, sir," he told Mr. Sheepsnose. "Somehow, I left the store last night without closing the storage room door, and all of the flowers were ruined. I have no idea how it happened, but I am so sorry. If you want to fire me, I completely understand." Mr. Sheepsnose surveyed the damaged flowers and his despondent employee over the rim of his half-glasses.

"Well, Micawber, I am impressed," said Mr. Sheepsnose. "It took a lot of courage to tell the truth, and not many people would have done the same thing in your position. I know for a fact that you did close the storage room door last night because it was closed when I arrived at midnight. The building manager called me up here because the power went out for the whole block and shut down our refrigeration unit. That is why the flowers are ruined—it wasn't anything you did. Your job is safe, Micawber. In fact, I think I can give you even more responsibility now that you've proven yourself trustworthy." Mr. Sheepsnose patted his relieved employee on the shoulder and went to his office.

"Thanks for the great advice," Micawber told Valancy as he grabbed a broom and began sweeping the front room. He whistled a happy tune as he began to daydream about becoming a supervisor himself one day.

Which detail from the story **best** helps illustrate why it is foolish to make up stories to cover oneself?

- ☐ A. Micawber did not have all the facts—he didn't know about the power failure.
- ☐ B. Micawber's ambition was to become the CEO of a Fortune-500 company.
- ☐ C. Mr. Sheepsnose decided to give Micawber more responsibilities.
- ☐ D. Valancy convinced Micawber that he should be honest with Mr. Sheepsnose.

**Question 13 .****An Unexpected Homecoming**

Beth hadn't been home in almost four years. And now that she was home, she wished the circumstances were different. Her grandfather had recently passed away. She'd come home for the funeral.

Her parents seemed distracted and melancholy. They were also looking a lot older than the last time she'd seen them. The house wasn't in the best shape, either. All of the plumbing fixtures leaked, the carpets were threadbare in places, and the backyard garden was full of weeds.

Paula, Beth's sister, had also flown in for the funeral and had suggested they spend the weekend fixing up the house. They started with the garden, where they found a neglected compost heap that smelled of death and decomposition. "Well, you know what they say," Paula said, "yesterday's trash in the compost is tomorrow's thriving garden."

Disgusted, Beth made a face. "What are you talking about?"

"Oh, c'mon," Paula said. "Don't you know how the compost heap works? The organic materials decompose, and then they make the soil rich for new plant growth."

"I guess it's all part of life, huh?" Beth said.

"Yep. Which reminds me of a little something I wanted to tell you . . ." Paula turned to Beth with a strange grin on her face. "Matthew and I are expecting."

"Expecting what?" Beth said. She was still thinking about the horrible smell in the compost heap.

"What do you think? A baby, of course."

Beth was speechless. The news, much like the news of her grandfather's passing, had caught her totally off guard. "I can't believe it," she said. "Have you told Mom and Dad?"

"Not yet," Paula said. "But I'm thinking now might be a good time to tell them. You know, it might help them cope with Grandpa's death. Like you said, it's all part of life. I think it's important to remember that without death, there would be no life."

Beth thought about the truth of this. Then she shoveled some of the stinky compost into the garden and started planting.

A major theme in this passage is

- ☐ A. a house cannot always become a home.
- ☐ B. nature is the best healer.
- ☐ C. life and death is a continuous cycle.
- ☐ D. siblings are often rivals.

## Question 14 .

**The Sweet Smell of Victory**

Devas Patel had done it again. He stood in front of a mirror like he had done so many times and examined his smile. The boyish charm of his face now possessed a hint of maturity. Devas still could not believe that he was actually wearing a new suit. The breast pocket held the proof of his dream. He had a job offer letter that would pay off all his debts.

He stared at the mirror as if the reflection showcased glimpses of his past. In the mirror, he saw his ill-fitted apron he wore at his first job in the college cafeteria. The hours of mopping and dishwashing followed by the nights of studying had passed like a long winter. He remembered the time he fell asleep descending the steps of the library and fell down to the bottom. He had cried that night feeling malnourished on ramen noodles.

The mirror showed his diploma from MIT and his parents' loud tears. They had chosen not to wear their Western outfits on his graduation day. They wanted to tell every stranger in the graduation hall that their son was a magna cum laude.

What does the author most likely mean by this excerpt from the passage?

They had chosen not to wear their Western outfits on his graduation day. They wanted to tell every stranger in the graduation hall that their son was a magna cum laude.

- ☐ A. Success only comes to those who work the hardest.
- ☐ B. Western outfits do not make everyone comfortable.
- ☐ C. People often feel proud of their kids' achievement.
- ☐ D. The future of those without education is insecure.

## Question 15 .

**The Twins**

A pair of young, mischievous twins once lived in a small village called Redwood. Emily and Emmett, both seven years of age, had a knack for stirring trouble, sometimes by agitating the farm animals and at other times by stealing fruits and vegetables from their neighbors' farms. The villagers were tired of the twins' antics, but tended to forgive them because they made up for their pranks by helping out around the village whenever someone was in need of it. But the twins were known to be thick as thieves and always looked out for each other whenever they got into trouble.

One afternoon, the two were busy making a ruckus at home. Their mother, desperate for some peace and quiet, sent the two into the woods to gather berries. The twins were more than happy to be let out and ran into the woods with a basket. They forgot the task of collecting berries in no time and instead began a game of hide and seek. It was Emmett's turn to seek his sister, and he was busy looking behind trees trying to find her.

Emily knew her brother's tactics well and chose to hide behind a big boulder instead of a tree. As she stood there, silently peeping from behind the boulder, she heard dry leaves crunching behind her. She turned around startled, to find an old woman slyly grinning down at her.

The old woman lived in the forest and rarely entered the village. In fact, the villagers had driven her out years ago when they caught her stealing her neighbor's crops. Since then, she had stayed away from the village, but kept a close watch on the village with the dark desire of avenging her mistreatment. She saw an opportunity when she noticed the two young children running carefree in the forest, oblivious to her presence.

Before Emily could react, however, the old woman offered her a candy.

"There is nothing to worry about child. Here, have a delicious piece of candy." The old woman whispered.

Emily was still a bit taken aback by the sudden appearance of the woman, but readily ate the candy as her mother usually refused to let her and Emmett have candy at home. On seeing Emily's delighted expression, the old woman thought of an evil plan and asked Emily to come to her cabin so she could collect some more candies for her and Emmett. In her moment

of excitement about receiving more candies, Emily forgot about Emmett, and instead followed the old woman to her cabin.

Emmett had been looking for Emily for a while and knew something was wrong. He ran around, calling out to her but got no response in return. He came up on the empty candy wrapper and immediately knew that this was where Emily had been. The twins were like two peas in a pod, and Emmett knew that Emily loved candy just as much as he did. He found it suspicious that Emily would acquire a piece of candy in the middle of the forest, and guessed that there was someone else with her. He walked a couple of yards ahead, and found another candy wrapper, and knew he had guessed right. Soon he located the old woman's cabin and saw Emily sitting at the table eating more candy. He saw the old woman at the kitchen and sneaked up to the window to take a closer look at what she was doing.

"This is marvelous! Now I shall make those villagers believe that their precious little girl is missing and give them a good scare, while she sits here enjoying candies." The old woman whispered to herself.

On hearing this, Emmett knew he had to inform Emily about the old woman's plan. He quietly snuck in through the dining room window, quickly grabbed Emily and ran from the cabin. On their way back to the village, Emmett explained to a confused Emily the old woman's true plans with her. Emily could not have been more grateful to her brother at that moment for helping her escape the evil old woman.

They rushed back to the village and informed everyone what had taken place in the forest. Emily narrated how her brother had bravely rescued her and that she knew she could rely on him with her life. The villagers praised Emmett on his bravery and warned the twins to never stray too close to the old woman again.

Which archetypal theme is found in the passage?

- ☐ A. the theme of estrangement and suffering
- ☐ B. the theme of growing wise
- ☐ C. the theme of struggle with the self
- ☐ D. the theme of victory of good over evil

**Question 16 .****Life Goes On**

Antonio had practiced his best for the chess tournament. He had read books about chess and played many games with his grandfather, a former grandmaster. Each day passed and brought Antonio closer to the tournament which, Antonio thought, would make him a champion. Each night, he thought about the possible moves of his opponents before he went to bed and dreamed about the game. He knew which meals could help him concentrate better and which outfit would keep him relaxed. If anybody was ready to win, it was Antonio Morales.

The much awaited day came, and Antonio's father drove him to the city hall. It was a cloudy day, and the parking lot of the city hall was overflowing with people. Just as Antonio stepped out of the car, he felt a sharp pain in his stomach. Before he knew it, he was throwing up on his new, plaid pants. There were only a few minutes left before the tournament, and Antonio had barely managed to clean up. Antonio sat on the chair rumbling, hustling, and breathing really fast. The game had begun before Antonio could gather himself. Just when things could not get worse, he knew his bishops on the board had already made his king open to a sure attack.

How does the plot affect the theme of the passage?

- ☐ A. The climax of the story makes the character interesting.
- ☐ B. The chess tournament makes Antonio a hard-working boy.
- ☐ C. The main character's loss earns the reader's sympathy.
- ☐ D. The events that unfold determine the theme of the story.



## Question 17 .

**The Tiger in the Trap**

Once upon a time, there was a small village in the deep mountains. The people of this village were afraid of tigers that roamed in the surrounding mountains. One day, their fear and anxiety brought all the villagers together to discuss their problem and find some way of living peacefully without this constant fear. After much discussion, they came to an agreement: they decided to dig pits to trap tigers. Every able-bodied villager came out to dig deep pits around the village, and particularly, along both sides of the mountain pass leading to the village.

One day, a traveler was passing through the area and heard strange groaning sounds nearby. He approached where the sounds came from and found a large tiger trapped in a pitfall and trying to jump out. Seeing the traveler, the tiger begged him for help: "Please, help me out of this trap, and I will never forget your kindness." Out of mercy, the traveler dragged a felled tree and lowered it into the pitfall. And the tiger climbed out.

As soon as the tiger was out of the trap, he said to the traveler: "I am grateful for your help, but because humans made the trap to catch me, for that I will have to kill you."

The traveler was utterly speechless and became frightened. Trying to be calm and mustering his courage, however, he said: "Wait a minute, Mr. Tiger. It is patently unfair and outrageous to kill me. Fairness demands that we should have a few impartial parties to judge who is right." The tiger agreed and both of them went to an ox.

After listening to their story, the ox said: "Well, it is the fault of humans. We, oxen, too have a grudge against humans. They drive us hard for their own benefit and then they butcher us mercilessly. This is all very unfair!"

Next, they went to a pine tree. The pine tree listened to their story and said: "Humans are wrong. They cut us down for lumber and for their firewood. What have we done to them to deserve that? They just have no heart!"

Listening to the second opinion, the tiger was elated and ready to attack the traveler, when a hare was hopping toward them. "Phew. Just in time, Mr. Hare. Please, judge our case," and the traveler told the hare what had happened.

The hare then said: "Fine, but before I make any judgment, I must see the original scene." So, the traveler, the tiger, and the hare all went to the pitfall where the tiger had been trapped. The hare said to the tiger: "I must see exactly how you were before this traveler rescued you. Where exactly were you?" Eager to show where he was, the tiger jumped right into the pitfall. The hare asked: "Was this felled tree in the pitfall when you fell into it, Mr. Tiger?"

"No, it was not." So, the hare and the traveler took the tree out of the pitfall. The hare then said to the traveler: "Mr. Traveler, now, be on your way." And the hare, too, hopped away.

*adapted from "The Unmannerly Tiger," a Korean fairytale*

What is the best way to describe the theme of the story?

- ☐ A. Never make your home near wood where there are vicious animals.
- ☐ B. Don't hunt animals.
- ☐ C. Be careful who you harm because it can come back to haunt you.
- ☐ D. Always avoid going into the wood alone.

**Question 18 .**

When Michelle's dad, an army lieutenant, was transferred to a new base in Fort Hood, Texas, her family had to pick up and move for the second time in three years. "Don't worry," her mother said. "You'll get used to the new school in no time."

But everything about the school in Texas was different. The hallways were crowded, the cafeteria food was gross, all the tests were multiple-choice tests, and the teachers were stricter. Her least favorite time of day was the break between lunch and third period. All the students gathered on the football field's bleachers and separated into different groups. There were the punks in one area, the theater kids in another, the jocks near the back, the academics near the middle, and so on. Michelle felt as if she didn't belong to any of these groups, and so, she often suffered the embarrassment of sitting alone on the bleachers in the front.

One day, while outside, Michelle was horrified to see a cockroach crawling around the bleachers near her. She screamed and then put her hand to her mouth self-consciously. Almost everyone had turned to stare at her. Gillian, a girl from her chemistry class, came over to ask Michelle if she was okay.

"I'm fine," Michelle said nervously. "I just freaked out because I'm not used to cockroaches."

Gillian glanced under the table. "You're not from around here, huh?" she said.

"How could you tell?" Michelle asked.

"Because here, cockroaches are a dime a dozen," Gillian said. "They adapt well to our climate. How about you?"

"What about me?" Michelle said.

"How are you adapting?"

"All right, I guess," Michelle said.

Gillian stood there, smiling, as though she expected Michelle to say something more. That was when Michelle realized the obvious: this was the perfect opportunity to make a new friend.

"Hey, have you studied for the chemistry test yet?" Michelle asked her.

Gillian shook her head. "No. And I didn't do that well on the last test."

"Well, maybe we could study together later?" Michelle said.

"Sure," Gillian said. "Meet you in the library later?"

Michelle nodded.

Which statement best expresses the main theme of the passage?

- ☐ A. Honesty is essential for anyone seeking true happiness.
- ☐ B. A person must learn how to adjust to a new environment.
- ☐ C. Taking action without thinking ahead can lead to trouble.
- ☐ D. To enjoy life, one should learn to appreciate being alone.

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## Question 19 .

## Simmy the Champion

## CHARACTERS:

SIMMY

JEWEL

## Stage Set:

The two characters are standing in the middle of a living room.

SIMMY: Why didn't you tell me what heartache feels like?

JEWEL: Sweetie, there are things only life can teach you.

SIMMY: But, Mother . . . how'd you ever know? Nobody can reject someone so cool like you.

JEWEL: Trust me, sweetie. I've had my share of heartache.

SIMMY: Ma . . . how did you deal with it? I mean, did you *ever* get over it?

JEWEL: Oh, I thought I'd never ever smile again or love again, but then I met your father, and I had you to make me forget about everything that is wrong with the world.

SIMMY: Ma, the guys I know are not as nice as Papa.

JEWEL: Remember this: the world is full of all kinds of people. You oughta be careful who you trust.

SIMMY: So, Ma . . . why does it feel like I can never face the world again? I *never* want to go back to school.

JEWEL: Hey, listen. You will get over it. Maybe not today, but soon enough. You gotta get busy doing other things.

SIMMY: Maybe. . . . Well, I didn't know I could talk to you about stuff . . . I mean, like this.

JEWEL: Now you know!

Which of these is a recurring theme in the play?

- ☐ A. One should never trust his or her heart.
- ☐ B. Those who are different are not tolerated.
- ☐ C. People always strive to stand out from the crowd.
- ☐ D. People are sometimes disillusioned with their lives.

**Question 20 .****The Three Pots**

Jacob fidgeted with his watch nervously as he sat alone in the principal's office waiting for his mother to come and pick him up. Not more than twenty minutes back, the principal had a rather heated conversation with Jacob's mother over the phone over his new act of "misbehavior," and they had ultimately decided that Jacob be taken home for the day.

About ten minutes later, the office door opened and his mother walked in, followed by his grim-looking teacher.

"I surely do not know what other tactic to use on Jacob, Mrs. Paxton, so that he would be more cooperative with his peers. I sincerely hope you can do something to change the current circumstances," his teacher said, and giving him once last look of disapproval, walked away. His mother quietly grabbed his things and headed out, knowing that he would follow her.

On the way home, the only thing his mother asked him was what had happened this time.

"Those boys in my class are just really mean to me. Sometimes I honestly can't figure out what I want to do, whether I want to go out and play on the field or just sit back in class and read a book or sketch something. They see my confusion as snobbish behavior and try their best to trouble me with crude jokes and mockery, and I can't help but retaliate. They believe I am either good for nothing, or that I consider myself too good to be around them, and I can't simply sit around and let them believe what they like, which is why I fought back today and that was when my teacher happened to walk in."

Jacob's mother simply nodded her head, as if to communicate that she understood his point. When they reached home, she made him sit in the kitchen and filled three pots with water.

"I want to show you something interesting. Observe what I am doing and then tell me the significance of it."

In one pot she added a carrot, in the second pot she added an egg, and in the third pot she added ground coffee beans, and put all three pots to boil. Soon, the water in the pots began boiling, changing the contents inside the pots. Jacob looked at the pots curiously but could not conceive what his mother wanted to prove. Upon seeing his confusion, his mother smiled and sat down to explain.

"In the first pot, the carrot went in hard and now has completely softened, while in the second pot, the egg went in soft and has become hard. In both cases, the boiling water changed them. However, in the third pot, it is the coffee beans that changed the water into something else. What I want you to understand from this is that sometimes, like the item in the boiling water, when we are in the heart of a situation, we can either let the situation change us, making us into a tough or a weak person, or we can change the situation itself. In your case, you are in a dilemma with yourself and that is affecting the environment around you. I am not saying that your peers aren't at fault, but by retaliating negatively, you aren't improving the situation either. I suggest you try out everything with your peers until you know what you actually want to do and if they trouble you again, rather than react to it, walk away and distract yourself."

Jacob contemplated on his mother's advice and figured that it was worth a shot. A week later, Jacob came home all smiles and when his mother asked him for the reason, he told her all about how his peers had challenged him to a game and how he had not only accepted their challenge but also won the game, impressing his peers, and how their attitude toward him had completely changed since that moment.

Is the struggle with the self an archetypal theme that can be associated with Jacob's character?

- ☐ A. Yes, because Jacob does not know whether he likes his peers or not.
- ☐ B. Yes, because Jacob does not know where his true interests lie.
- ☐ C. No, because Jacob knows exactly what his mother tries to convey.
- ☐ D. No, because Jacob is confident about his talent and skills.

# Answers

1. C
2. D
3. --
4. A
5. C
6. A
7. A
8. C
9. --
10. B
11. --
12. A
13. C
14. C
15. D
16. D
17. C
18. B
19. D
20. B

# Explanations

1. A passage can have more than one theme. One of the themes in this passage is reflected by the effects of technological progress on the city. The city of Abuja appears to be more urbanize and modern. The city now lacks the natural landmarks it once possessed in Chiba's memory.
2. In this passage, Alejandro is not accustomed to dealing with injury. He contemplates the advice of Dr. Mike, who tells him that he should accept the limitations of his body. At the end of the passage, Alejandro nods respectfully at an old man who is smiling despite his slowness. The reader can infer that Alejandro will learn from the old man's example.
3. The theme is the central subject or topic of a written work. In the poem, "Life on the Ocean Wave," the theme is the longing the poet feels for the sea. The two lines that best convey this theme are "Like an eagle caged, I pine" and "Oh! give me the flashing brine."
4. An archetype is a character, action, or situation that is a universal pattern of human life. The passage shows Jacob taking his mother's advice to handle bad situations more maturely, and as a result, growing wiser in dealing with his problem. This is an example of the archetypal theme of growing wise and more mature.
5. In this story, Micawber admits a mistake to his boss even though he is afraid of being fired. His boss praises his honesty and states, "I think I can give you even more responsibility now that you've proven yourself trustworthy." The theme of this story is that telling the truth, even when it's difficult, is the best option.
6. An archetype is a character, action, or situation that is a universal pattern of human life. The power of love is an archetypal theme in which the characters share a strong bond and rely on each other for support. In the passage, Emmett immediately knows that Emily is in trouble. Also, Emily feels grateful to her brother when Emmett rescues her from the old woman. These incidents signify their strong bond.
7. A central theme of this passage is patience. Alejandro is frustrated because he misses the train and has to wait for the next one. His injury prevents him from doing things he normally does, and he does not have the patience to perform the prescribed stretches. However, Dr. Mike tells Alejandro that he should learn how to take the time to recover.
8. In this poem, the speaker is contemplating a list of New Year's resolutions that he/she failed to keep. Instead of giving up on his/her resolutions, the speaker decides to "resolve again, to give my old ambitions a refreshed try." One theme of this poem is that the failures of the past should inspire people to accomplish more in the future.
9. The theme of a passage is its central subject or topic. The theme of "The Gift of the Magi" is love. Jim and Della love each other so much that they are willing to give up anything for each other's happiness. The lines that best convey this theme are "Maybe the hairs of my head were numbered," she went on with sudden sweetness, "but nobody could ever count my love for you" and "I don't think there's anything in the way of a haircut or a shave or a shampoo that could make me like my girl any less."
10. In this passage, Sasha is stranded in the desert. Sasha's wounds become even more painful with the grains of sand sticking to them. The desert provides no comfort to Sasha. The story reflects a universal idea that nature's relationship with people can be unkind.
11. The poem's theme is "The unique harmony of elements within one's soul are how that person is recognized." The author compares the expressions of one's soul to both music—notes forming a recognizable whole—and to nature—various elements have their own characteristics.

- 12.**In the story, Micawber initially wanted to make up a story about how the flowers were ruined, because he was afraid of the consequences. However, he eventually finds out that it was a power failure that ruined the flowers, and he was not at fault. This shows that it would have been foolish of him to make up a story without knowing all the facts.
- 13.**In this story, Beth and her sister, Paula, return home for their grandfather's funeral where Paula reveals that she is pregnant. These events—death and birth—help develop the passage's theme. The passage reflects the universal idea that life and death is a continuous cycle.
- 14.**Remember that a passage can have more than one theme. Although this passage is about the success of a hard-working character, the given line only focuses on the parents of Devas Patel. This excerpt shows Devas' parents, who come from a non-Western culture, feeling proud of their son. People taking pride in the kids' achievement is a universal theme reflected in the excerpt.
- 15.**An archetype is a character, action, or situation that is a universal pattern of human life. The passage shows Emmett rescuing Emily from the evil old woman, and ruining the woman's plan. This is an example of the archetypal theme of victory of good over evil.
- 16.**Authors use many devices to create the theme of a passage. In this story, the plot or the events that happen determine the theme. Antonio practices and works hard to win the chess tournament. However, the events that unfold seem to work against Antonio. The theme of this passage is made clearer through the series of events that happen.
- 17.**The major theme for the story is that harming others, even by accident, can come back to harm you.
- For example in the story, the animals have been harmed by the humans living in the nearby village. When the traveler asks for their help, they all refuse because they think he's like the humans from the village who have trapped the tigers, killed the oxen, and cut down the trees. Only the rabbit shares something in common with the villager since many of its kind have probably been killed by the tigers, so its more than eager to help the traveler escape from the tiger.
- The point of the story is that if the villagers had respected the animals and nature, the animals and nature wouldn't have turned on the traveler, and if the tigers had respected the rabbits, the rabbit wouldn't have helped to trap the tiger.
- 18.**A theme in the passage is that a person must learn how to adjust to a new environment. In the passage, Michelle is shocked by how different Texas is. She learns that she needs to adapt to her new school, so she seizes the opportunity to make a friend.
- 19.**In this play, Simmy experiences heartache and expresses her feelings of disillusionment. Her mother tells of her own disappointments to show Simmy that most people become disillusioned with their lives at some point.
- 20.**An archetype is a character, action, or situation that is a universal pattern of human life. The struggle with the self is an archetypal theme in which characters are engaged in a conflict with themselves or are facing an emotional dilemma. In the passage, Jacob is engaged in an inner struggle over the activities he wants to be involved in with his peers at school.