

Opportunity Class Placement Test

Reading

Explained answers for the sample test

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Nhamo goes for firewood

- 1 The correct answer is **A**. Although at first we're told that Nhamo didn't expect to meet elephants or a buffalo, we are also given an explanation of why she might possibly encounter these frightening animals. So even though it's unlikely that she'll meet them, they're still a possible threat.
- 2 The correct answer is **C**. We're told that Nhamo couldn't swim, and when she was wading across the stream she always felt 'a moment of panic' in the middle, but she 'struggled on' to get to the other side.
- 3 The correct answer is **D**. Nhamo followed the trail to a clearing in the trees where there were the remains of a village. This was a place where 'the wood was easy to find' and she collected a bundle of wood quickly.
- 4 The correct answer is **B**. Although some of the objects Nhamo has collected are old or broken, we're told that to her they are 'treasures', and she handles them carefully, smoothing out the cloth and placing the utensils on it.
- 5 The correct answer is **B**. We're told that although few people can read, they enjoy hearing stories from magazines of life outside the village, and they are interested in what the pictures show about people's lifestyles – 'clothes and houses, gardens and cars'.
- 6 The correct answer is **C**. We're told that the woman in the photograph smiled at the little girl 'in the kindest way' as she prepares food for her. This is the sort of relationship Nhamo dreams of having with her mother. The extract also mentions angry reactions from Nhamo's aunt and uncle, suggesting that she may not receive much love from them.

Observing the Mute Cat

- 7 The correct answer is **C**. The title refers to 'Observing', which is linked to the sense of sight, and 'Mute', which is linked to the idea of sound, and so to hearing. The poem describes the man's observations of the cat's appearance and behaviour, and the way that the mute cat communicates and 'finds a voice'.
- 8 The correct answer is **B**. The cat 'hates to be picked up' and 'His human friend' (that is, the poet) never does this. It's also suggested that the man lets the cat in when he hears him rattling the flyscreen and serves the cat his food rather than leaving the cat to get this himself.
- 9 The correct answer is **D**. The cat 'finds a voice' in the flyscreen, climbing up on it and rattling it to let the man know that he wants to be let into the house.

- 10 The correct answer is **A**. In the final verse, we're told the cat carries off a few birds.
- 11 The correct answer is **C**. Although the cat could have clean water provided for him in the house, he chooses to drink the water in puddles in the earth outside.

Drumming Cockatoos

- 12 The correct answer is **D**. The previous sentence tells us that the first stage in a cockatoo drumming performance is the making of the musical instrument. 'This' in sentence D refers back to the first stage in instrument fashioning. The sentence after the gap continues the idea of the strength required by the bird (to break off a hefty stick) and cleverness (to trim it to about the length of a pencil).
- 13 The correct answer is **F**. This paragraph describes the drumming behaviour of the cockatoo. In the sentence before the gap, we're told that this basically involves tapping a beat on the branch where the bird is perched. Sentence F tells us about other sounds that the bird may mix in to accompany the drumming. The final sentence in the paragraph describes the movements of the cockatoo that also accompany the drumming.
- 14 The correct answer is **C**. This paragraph is about the locations where palm cockatoos live, and the locations where the drumming behaviour has been observed. In C, 'here' and 'in the area' refer back to the place mentioned in the previous sentence – Australia's Cape York Peninsula.
- 15 The correct answer is **A**. This sentence tells us that the birds are difficult to study as they are shy. In the sentence following the gap, 'they' refers back to the researchers. We are told that they had to search 'painstakingly' as the palm cockatoos were 'hidden away', which is linked to the ideas of difficulty and shyness in sentence A.
- 16 The correct answer is **G**. This sentence makes a generalisation about the differences observed in individual cockatoos' drumming styles. The sentence following the gap illustrates this by referring to 'One' (cockatoo) and describing the features of its drumming style.
- 17 The correct answer is **E**. The sentence before the gap describes how a female cockatoo may react to a good performance by a male by mirroring his movements. 'The birds' in sentence E refers back to the male and female previously mentioned; the sentence gives more detail about how they interact and prepare for breeding.

The Sea

- 18 The correct answer is **B**. This extract tells us that the water in the Black Sea contains large amounts of hydrogen sulphide, which is 'one of the deadliest substances in the natural world'.
- 19 The correct answer is **A**. In the first paragraph, the writer refers to man's insignificance in a 'huge, swirling ocean'. In the final paragraph, the writer says that it is important to know your limits and respect the ocean.
- 20 The correct answer is **C**. The writer says that knowing the correct terminology may make it easier for someone like her to interact with other surfers and less likely that she will act in a way that annoys them.
- 21 The correct answer is **B**. The second paragraph refers to the 'abundance' of the Black Sea in the past, and the fact that the water 'boiled with life', with large numbers of fish such as salmon and sturgeon.
- 22 The correct answer is **A**. The writer describes how problems and anxiety seem to be less important ('occupy less headspace') after an ocean swim.
- 23 The correct answer is **D**. The writer says that their family would 'live a lie' when they went to the beach in Adelaide because they pretended to be 'proper outdoor-loving, sun-baking Australians' – they were not successful at typical outdoor activities and not used to being outside in the sun.
- 24 The correct answer is **A**. The writer refers to his fear of what might be in the ocean, and to the advice an expert gave him that he should feel privileged to be in the same space as wild creatures, which was a comforting thought for him.
- 25 The correct answer is **C**. The writer describes how she memorised special terms used by surfers such as *rails*, *mushy*, *goofy* and *drop in*.

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