

## **TSI Reading Assessment**

The Texas Success Initiative (TSI) Reading test contains questions that measure proficiency in four content areas. The four content areas are as follows:

**Literary Analysis** — Topics covered in this category include:

- Identifying and analyzing ideas in and elements of literary texts

**Main Idea and Supporting Details** — Topics covered in this category include:

- Identifying the main idea of a passage
- Comprehending explicit textual information in a passage

**Inferences in a Text or Texts** — Topics covered in this category include:

- Synthesizing ideas by making a connection or comparison between two passages
- Making an appropriate inference about single passages

**Author's Use of Language** — Topics covered in this category include:

- Identifying an author's purpose, tone and organization or rhetorical strategies and use of evidence
- Determining the meaning of words in context

*Read the passage and then choose the best answer to the question. Answer the question on the basis of what is stated or implied in the passage.*

1. The main authors of The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution are usually thought of as America's "Founding Fathers." Other, less known personages also deserve the title, however, and Noah Webster was one of these. Through his writings, which include the still influential dictionary that bears his name, Webster sought to legitimize an "American English" that was independent of British spelling and pronunciation. For instance, Webster removed the "u" from "colour," creating the distinct American version of the word.

What is the main purpose of this passage?

- A. To praise the Founding Fathers
- B. To present information about an important American
- C. To define and explain "American English"
- D. To distinguish

2. Television has been the primary source of information and entertainment for most Americans over the last 50 years. However, with Internet use on the rise year after year, some may wonder if surfing the net will soon surpass watching television as Americans' primary leisure activity. Indeed, some recent surveys show that time spent on the Internet is now greater than time spent in front of the television. However, this statistic may not tell the whole story, as 59% of Americans say they multitask, using the Internet and watching TV simultaneously.

The main idea of the passage is that television

- A. is only one of many information sources
- B. may have become less popular than the Internet
- C. is watched by more people now than ever before
- D. focuses more on entertainment than on news

*Read the passage below and then choose the best answer to each question. Answer the questions on the basis of what is stated or implied in the passage.*

*The narrator of this passage from a short story describes the cabin where her father worked.*

I wasn't sure what this work involved, but it must have been exciting because the Lab itself was exciting.

Anywhere we didn't go often was exciting. We would get there in a heavy wooden rowboat, built in the five-house village half a mile away—our mother would row, she was quite good at it—or by following a twisty, winding footpath, over fallen trees and stumps and around boulders and across wet patches where a few slippery planks were laid across the sphagnum moss, breathing in the mildew smell of damp wood and slowly decaying leaves. It was too far for us to walk, our legs were too short, so mostly we went in the rowboat.

The Lab was made of logs; it seemed enormous, though in the two photographs of it that survive it looks like a shack. It did however have a screened porch, with log railings. Inside it there were things we weren't allowed to touch—bottles containing a dangerous liquid in which white grubs floated, their six tiny front legs clasped together like praying fingers, and corks that smelled like poison and were poison, and trays with dried insects pinned to them with long, thin pins, each with a tiny, alluring black knob for a head. All of this was so forbidden it made us dizzy.

At the Lab we could hide in the ice house, a dim and mysterious place that was always bigger on the inside than it was on the outside, and where there was a hush, and a lot of sawdust to keep the blocks of ice cool. Sometimes there would be a tin of evaporated milk with holes punched in the top and wax paper stuck over them; sometimes there would be a carefully hoarded stub of butter or an end of bacon; sometimes there would be a fish or two, pickerel or lake

trout, already filleted, laid out on a chipped enamel pie plate.

What did we do in there? There was nothing to actually do. We'd pretend we had vanished—that nobody knew where we were. This in itself was strangely energizing. Then we'd come out, away from the silence, back into the pine-needle scent and the sound of waves plocking against the shore, and our mother's voice calling us, because it was time to get back into the rowboat and row home.\*

3. In line 1, "this work" clearly refers to

- A. writing
- B. food science
- C. photography
- D. insect research

4. Details in the passage suggest that the narrator is

- A. an adult remembering a recent incident
- B. an elderly person remembering middle age
- C. an adult recalling a location from childhood
- D. a child describing a frightening place

5. The descriptions of the Lab and of the ice house are similar in that both descriptions

- A. emphasize cheerful and light-filled surroundings
- B. contain images of hiding and concealment
- C. highlight the narrator's misconception of size
- D. contrast with descriptions of the narrator's home

6. When the narrator repeatedly uses the pronouns "we" and "us," she is most likely speaking of herself and

- A. a sibling
- B. her mother
- C. her father
- D. the reader

## TSI Reading Assessment Answers

1. B

Choice (B) is correct. The author discusses Noah Webster and the idea that he deserves the title of Founding Father. The author clearly considers Webster important, citing his “still-influential dictionary” and his attempt to “legitimize an ‘American English.’” DSRE 0301

2. B

Choice (B) is correct. The main idea of the passage is that television may have become less popular than the Internet. The author points out that “Internet use” is “on the rise,” and that some people wonder if using the Internet will soon become “Americans’ primary leisure activity.” The author points out that surfing the net *might* already be more popular than watching television, as “recent surveys show that time spent on the Internet is now greater than time spent in front of the television”—though some people use the Internet and watch TV at the same time. DSRE 0301

3. D

Choice (D) is correct. In the first part of the passage, the narrator refers to “this work,” saying that “it must have been exciting because the Lab itself was exciting.” While she isn’t “sure what this work involved,” she describes the Lab very fully: the mysterious journey to get to it, its exterior, then its contents (“bottles containing a dangerous liquid in which white grubs floated . . . trays with dried insects”) and other aspects of her father’s work. The narrator never directly states what “this work” is, but these and other elements of the passage imply that it involves scientific research with such insects as the grubs. DSRE 0300

4. C

Choice (C) is correct. The narrator uses the past tense throughout the passage, signaling to the reader that the events described occurred in the past. And the passage contains numerous hints that the narrator is describing her childhood self: “our mother would row” and “our legs were too short,” for example. It is reasonable to assume that the narrator is an adult recalling a location (and events) from childhood. DSRE 0300

5. C

Choice (C) is correct. When describing the Lab, the narrator states that “it seemed enormous, though in the two photographs of it that survive it looks like a shack.” When describing the ice house, she states that it “was always bigger on the inside than it was on the outside.” Both these descriptions emphasize misconceptions about the size of a place. The first misconception occurs because of a child’s natural perception that a place is larger than it is in reality, and is corrected by an adult viewing of photographs; the second plays on a child’s mistaken perception of the size of a place based on its exterior. DSRE 0301

6 A.

Choice (A) is correct. In lines 3-4, when referring to the journey to the Lab, the narrator states, “our mother would row.” At the end of the passage—after she has described repeated adventures at the Lab while accompanied by at least one other person—she recalls hearing “our mother’s voice calling us, because it was time to get back into the rowboat and row home.” It is clear that the narrator’s companion shared a mother and a home with the narrator—in other words, the other person is the narrator’s sibling. DSRE 0301