

Reading Test

60 MINUTES, 47 QUESTIONS

Turn to Section 1 of your answer sheet to answer the questions in this section.

DIRECTIONS

Each passage or pair of passages below is followed by a number of questions. After reading each passage or pair, choose the best answer to each question based on what is stated or implied in the passage or passages and in any accompanying graphics (such as a table or graph).

Questions 1-9 are based on the following passage.

This passage is adapted from Zia Haider Rahman, *In the Light of What We Know*. ©2014 by Zia Haider Rahman. The narrator, a Bangladeshi immigrant in London, has been describing a job he had as a teenager, working as an assistant to carpenters.

I warmed to Bill and Dave quickly. I remember that both of them always said “thanks” or “cheers, mate,” even to each other. Such words did not seem to figure in the vocabulary of Sylheti, a language in which, rather than saying thank you, one balanced the whole sentence on terms of deference to age or class. This had the effect, I had noticed, that those who were senior in age or higher in class weren’t required by the language to indicate deference and were therefore saved from stooping for the tools to express gratitude.

My mother had always winced when I said please and thank you. Thank you, I’d say when she gave me a second helping of rice and curry. Or thank you when she handed me a lightbulb as I stood on a chair to change the ceiling light. Thank you was an English phrase that ruptured my spoken Sylheti. My mother would grimace and insist that I stop saying it. Because we never had that kind of relationship, I could never ask her why. I have thought that she couldn’t bear to hear me say thank you because it signified how far away I’d moved from the culture and values she had inherited, even then. But over the years that have passed since boyhood, I have come to regard such explanations, where mere cultural difference is invoked at every turn, as facile and unilluminating. I now consider her distaste as having

had a quality of depth I had not attributed to it before. I think the woman who had raised me, who had provided a family for me, however flawed that family was, was offended that I had turned the web of duties, which bound a family together, into the mere exchange of favors, thank you and please standing for reciprocation. In her mind, I believe, a network of duty and service, tightened under centuries of evolution, had been reduced by my thank you to the trading culture of the West. It was duty and obligation, not measured gains, that reinforced the bonds within the extended family to make something stronger than there would have been otherwise, strong enough and large enough to endure hardships. My understanding came much later, though. But in the summer before college, when I heard Bill and Dave say please and thank you, occasioned at every turn and gesture, I was charmed.

Above all, I liked Bill and Dave because of the banter between them. The two of them talked incessantly about the work in a language that was new to me. A carpenter’s world is steeped in a vocabulary of its own, and Bill and Dave were masters of that vocabulary. It was never just a hammer but a cross pein pin hammer, never just a plane but a rebate plane, never a mere clamp but a three-way edging clamp or a G or an F clamp. Each tool had a specific function, and Bill and Dave would never make do with one tool where another was better suited to the job. I fetched the tools as need arose, and very quickly I came to know each tool’s name and function.

60 By the way, Bill said, you may think knowing the names of tools and hardware is about identifying them, but if that's all you think then you'd be wrong. You see, calling things by their proper names is the beginning of wisdom. That's a Chinese proverb and
65 they invented writing. The wisdom, in case you're wondering, is that when you get names right, you narrow the gap between you and the thing. The most important tool is your hand and you'd be in serious trouble if there were a gap between you and your
70 hand. So names are important. Unless you're talking about roses, that is. But only roses.

1

Over the course of the passage, the focus of the narrator shifts from

- A) reflecting on certain interactions with his mother to describing an insight he gained at work.
- B) introducing individuals who influenced his childhood to examining why those individuals had such an impact.
- C) determining the source of his mother's discontent to comparing his mother with other people.
- D) describing a time in which he sought direction to explaining how a particular profession helped him find that direction.

2

In the context of the passage, the use of the word "ruptured" (line 17) serves mainly to

- A) foreshadow the permanent breach that will occur between the narrator and his country of birth.
- B) indicate the difficulty that the narrator has communicating in his native language.
- C) highlight the state of distrust that has developed between the narrator and his family.
- D) emphasize the extent to which the narrator's adoption of Western ways is incompatible with the culture he grew up in.

3

The passage suggests that working with Bill and Dave had which effect on the narrator?

- A) It caused him to view his mother's habits as quaint and unsophisticated.
- B) It led him eventually to appreciate the complexity of familial relationships in his native culture.
- C) It demonstrated how thoughtless he had always been toward his mother.
- D) It helped him to feel more confident about his language skills in unfamiliar settings.

4

Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?

- A) Lines 3-11 ("Such . . . gratitude")
- B) Lines 34-42 ("In her . . . hardships")
- C) Lines 43-45 ("But in . . . charmed")
- D) Lines 49-51 ("A carpenter's . . . vocabulary")

5

As used in line 36, "reduced" most nearly means

- A) converted.
- B) conquered.
- C) subjugated.
- D) degraded.

6

The passage suggests that the narrator most enjoyed which aspect of carpentry?

- A) The opportunity to practice his spoken English
- B) The experience of learning new jargon
- C) The chance to impress others with his knowledge
- D) The physicality of working with his hands

7

Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?

- A) Lines 46-49 (“Above . . . me”)
- B) Lines 51-54 (“It was . . . F clamp”)
- C) Lines 55-57 (“Each . . . job”)
- D) Lines 67-70 (“The most . . . hand”)

8

The last paragraph serves primarily to

- A) introduce a way of thinking that opposes the point of view of the narrator’s mother.
- B) question the fundamental relationship between names and the things they designate.
- C) allow insight into the narrator’s way of thinking.
- D) provide a further reflection on the deeper significance of language.

9

In the last paragraph, Bill is characterized primarily as a

- A) strict disciplinarian.
- B) loyal confidant.
- C) thoughtful mentor.
- D) lovable fraud.

