

READING

This section measures your ability to understand academic passages in English.

There are three passages in the section. Give yourself 20 minutes to read each passage and answer the questions about it. The entire section will take 60 minutes to complete.

You may look back at a passage when answering the questions. You can skip questions and go back to them later as long as there is time remaining.

Directions: Read the passage. Then answer the questions. Give yourself 20 minutes to complete this practice set.

WILLIAM SMITH

In 1769 in a little town in Oxfordshire, England, a child with the very ordinary name of William Smith was born into the poor family of a village blacksmith. He received rudimentary village schooling, but mostly he roamed his uncle's farm collecting the fossils that were so abundant in the rocks of the Cotswold hills. When he grew older, William Smith taught himself surveying from books he bought with his small savings, and at the age of eighteen he was apprenticed to a surveyor of the local parish. He then proceeded to teach himself geology, and when he was twenty-four, he went to work for the company that was excavating the Somerset Coal Canal in the south of England.

This was before the steam locomotive, and canal building was at its height. The companies building the canals to transport coal needed surveyors to help them find the coal deposits worth mining as well as to determine the best courses for the canals. This job gave Smith an opportunity to study the fresh rock outcrops created by the newly dug canal. He later worked on similar jobs across the length and breadth of England, all the while studying the newly revealed strata and collecting all the fossils he could find. Smith used mail coaches to travel as much as 10,000 miles per year. In 1815 he published the first modern geological map, "A Map of the Strata of England and Wales with a Part of Scotland," a map so meticulously researched that it can still be used today.

In 1831 when Smith was finally recognized by the Geological Society of London as the "father of English geology," it was not only for his maps but also for something even more important. Ever since people had begun to catalog the strata in particular outcrops, there had been the hope that these could somehow be used to calculate geological time. But as more and more accumulations of strata were cataloged in more and more places, it became clear that the sequences of rocks sometimes differed from region to region and that no rock type was ever going to become a reliable time marker throughout the world. Even without the problem of regional differences, rocks present a difficulty as unique time markers. Quartz is quartz—a silicon ion surrounded by four oxygen ions—there's no difference at all between two-million-year-old Pleistocene quartz and Cambrian quartz created over 500 million years ago.

As he collected fossils from strata throughout England, Smith began to see that the fossils told a different story from the rocks. Particularly in the younger strata, the rocks were often so similar that he had trouble distinguishing the strata, but he never had trouble telling the fossils apart. While rock between two consistent strata might in one place be shale and in another sandstone, the fossils in that shale or sandstone were always the same. Some fossils endured through so many millions of years that they appear in many strata, but others occur only in a few strata, and a few species had their births and extinctions within one particular stratum. Fossils are thus identifying markers for particular periods in Earth's history.

Not only could Smith identify rock strata by the fossils they contained, he could also see a pattern emerging: certain fossils always appear in more ancient sediments, while others begin to be seen as the strata become more recent. By following the fossils, Smith was able to put all the strata of England's earth into relative temporal sequence. About the same time, Georges Cuvier made the same discovery while studying the rocks around Paris. Soon it was realized that this principal of faunal (animal) succession was valid not only in England or France but virtually everywhere. It was actually a principle of floral succession as well, because plants showed the same transformation through time as did fauna. Limestone may be found in the Cambrian or—300 million years later—in the Jurassic strata, but a trilobite—the ubiquitous marine arthropod that had its birth in the Cambrian—will never be found in Jurassic strata, nor a dinosaur in the Cambrian.

Directions: Now answer the questions.

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In 1769 in a little town in Oxfordshire, England, a child with the very ordinary name of William Smith was born into the poor family of a village blacksmith. He received rudimentary village schooling, but mostly he roamed his uncle's farm collecting the fossils that were so abundant in the rocks of the Cotswold hills. When he grew older, William Smith taught himself surveying from books he bought with his small savings, and at the age of eighteen he was apprenticed to a surveyor of the local parish. He then proceeded to teach himself geology, and when he was twenty-four, he went to work for the company that was excavating the Somerset Coal Canal in the south of England.

15. The word "rudimentary" in the passage is closest in meaning to
- (A) thorough
 - (B) strict
 - (C) basic
 - (D) occasional
16. According to paragraph 1, which of the following statements about William Smith is NOT true?
- (A) Smith learned surveying by reading and by apprenticing for a local surveyor.
 - (B) Smith's family lived in a small English town and possessed little wealth.
 - (C) Smith learned about fossils from books he borrowed from his uncle.
 - (D) Smith eventually left his village to work on the excavation of an English canal.

This was before the steam locomotive, and canal building was at its height. The companies building the canals to transport coal needed surveyors to help them find the coal deposits worth mining as well as to determine the best courses for the canals. This job gave Smith an opportunity to study the fresh rock outcrops created by the newly dug canal. He later worked on similar jobs across the length and breadth of England, all the while studying the newly revealed strata and collecting all the fossils he could find. Smith used mail coaches to travel as much as 10,000 miles per year. In 1815 he published the first modern geological map, "A Map of the Strata of England and Wales with a Part of Scotland," a map so meticulously researched that it can still be used today.

17. Which of the following can be inferred from paragraph 2 about canal building?
- Ⓐ Canals were built primarily in the south of England rather than in other regions.
 - Ⓑ Canal building decreased after the steam locomotive was invented.
 - Ⓒ Canal building made it difficult to study rock strata which often became damaged in the process.
 - Ⓓ Canal builders hired surveyors like Smith to examine exposed rock strata.
18. According to paragraph 2, which of the following is true of the map published by William Smith?
- Ⓐ It indicates the locations of England's major canals.
 - Ⓑ It became most valuable when the steam locomotive made rail travel possible.
 - Ⓒ The data for the map were collected during Smith's work on canals.
 - Ⓓ It is no longer regarded as a geological masterpiece.
19. The word "meticulously" in the passage is closest in meaning to
- Ⓐ carefully
 - Ⓑ quickly
 - Ⓒ frequently
 - Ⓓ obviously

In 1831 when Smith was finally recognized by the Geological Society of London as the “father of English geology,” it was not only for his maps but also for something even more important. Ever since people had begun to catalog the strata in particular outcrops, there had been the hope that these could somehow be used to calculate geological time. But as more and more accumulations of strata were cataloged in more and more places, it became clear that the sequences of rocks sometimes differed from region to region and that no rock type was ever going to become a reliable time marker throughout the world. Even without the problem of regional differences, rocks present a difficulty as unique time markers. Quartz is quartz—a silicon ion surrounded by four oxygen ions—there’s no difference at all between two-million-year-old Pleistocene quartz and Cambrian quartz created over 500 million years ago.

20. Which of the sentences below best expresses the essential information in the highlighted sentence in paragraph 3? Incorrect choices change the meaning in important ways or leave out essential information.
- (A) The discovery of regional differences in the sequences of rocks led geologists to believe that rock types could some day become reliable time markers.
 - (B) Careful analysis of strata revealed that rocks cannot establish geological time because the pattern of rock layers varies from place to place.
 - (C) Smith’s catalogs of rock strata indicated that the sequences of rocks are different from place to place and from region to region.
 - (D) Because people did not catalog regional differences in sequences of rocks, it was believed that rocks could never be reliable time markers.
21. Why does the author use the phrase “Quartz is quartz”?
- (A) To describe how the differences between Pleistocene and Cambrian quartz reveal information about dating rocks
 - (B) To point out that the chemical composition of quartz makes it more difficult to date than other rocks
 - (C) To provide an example of how regional differences in rock sequences can make a particular rock difficult to date
 - (D) To explain that rocks are difficult to use for dating because their chemical compositions always remain the same over time

As he collected fossils from strata throughout England, Smith began to see that the fossils told a different story from the rocks. Particularly in the younger strata, the rocks were often so similar that he had trouble distinguishing the strata, but he never had trouble telling the fossils apart. While rock between two consistent strata might in one place be shale and in another sandstone, the fossils in that shale or sandstone were always the same. Some fossils **endured** through so many millions of years that they appear in many strata, but others occur only in a few strata, and a few species had their births and extinctions within one particular stratum. Fossils are thus identifying markers for particular periods in Earth's history.

22. According to paragraph 4, it was difficult for Smith to distinguish rock strata because

- (A) the rocks from different strata closely resembled each other
- (B) he was often unable to find fossils in the younger rock strata
- (C) their similarity to each other made it difficult for him to distinguish one rock type from another
- (D) the type of rock between two consistent strata was always the same

23. The word "endured" in the passage is closest in meaning to

- (A) vanished
- (B) developed
- (C) varied
- (D) survived

Not only could Smith identify rock strata by the fossils they contained, he could also see a pattern emerging: certain fossils always appear in more ancient sediments, while others begin to be seen as the strata become more recent. By following the fossils, Smith was able to put all the strata of England's earth into relative temporal sequence. About the same time, Georges Cuvier made the same discovery while studying the rocks around Paris. Soon it was realized that this principal of faunal (animal) succession was valid not only in England or France but **virtually** everywhere. It was actually a principle of floral succession as well, because plants showed the same transformation through time as did fauna. Limestone may be found in the Cambrian or—300 million years later—in the Jurassic strata, but a **trilobite**—the ubiquitous marine arthropod that had its birth in the Cambrian—will never be found in Jurassic strata, nor a dinosaur in the Cambrian.

24. The word "virtually" in the passage is closest in meaning to

- (A) possibly
- (B) absolutely
- (C) surprisingly
- (D) nearly

25. Select the TWO answer choices that are true statements based upon the discussion of the principle of faunal succession in paragraph 5. To receive credit, you must select TWO answers.
- A It was a principle that applied to fauna but not to flora.
 - B It was discovered independently by two different geologists.
 - C It describes how fossils are distributed in rock strata.
 - D It explains why plants and animals undergo transformations through time.
26. In mentioning “trilobite,” the author is making which of the following points?
- A Fossils cannot be found in more than one rock stratum.
 - B Faunal succession can help put rock layers in relative temporal sequence.
 - C Faunal succession cannot be applied to different strata composed of the same kind of rock.
 - D The presence of trilobite fossils makes it difficult to date a rock.

Not only could Smith identify rock strata by the fossils they contained, he could also see a pattern emerging: certain fossils always appear in more ancient sediments, while others begin to be seen as the strata become more recent. ■ By following the fossils, Smith was able to put all the strata of England’s earth into relative temporal sequence. ■ About the same time, Georges Cuvier made the same discovery while studying the rocks around Paris. ■ Soon it was realized that this principal of faunal (animal) succession was valid not only in England or France but virtually everywhere. ■ It was actually a principle of floral succession as well, because plants showed the same transformation through time as did fauna. Limestone may be found in the Cambrian or—300 million years later—in the Jurassic strata, but a trilobite—the ubiquitous marine arthropod that had its birth in the Cambrian—will never be found in Jurassic strata, nor a dinosaur in the Cambrian.

27. Look at the four squares [■] that indicate where the following sentence can be added to the passage.

The findings of these geologists inspired others to examine the rock and fossil records in different parts of the world.

Where would the sentence best fit?

- A Not only could Smith identify rock strata by the fossils they contained, he could also see a pattern emerging: certain fossils always appear in more ancient sediments, while others begin to be seen as the strata become more recent. **The findings of these geologists inspired others to examine the rock and fossil records in different parts of the world.** By following the fossils, Smith was able to put all the strata of England’s earth into relative temporal sequence. ■ About the same time, Georges Cuvier made the same discovery while studying the rocks around Paris. ■ Soon it was realized that this principal of faunal (animal) succession was valid not only in England or France but virtually everywhere. ■ It was actually a principle of floral

succession as well, because plants showed the same transformation through time as did fauna. Limestone may be found in the Cambrian or—300 million years later—in the Jurassic strata, but a trilobite—the ubiquitous marine arthropod that had its birth in the Cambrian—will never be found in Jurassic strata, nor a dinosaur in the Cambrian.

- Ⓐ Not only could Smith identify rock strata by the fossils they contained, he could also see a pattern emerging: certain fossils always appear in more ancient sediments, while others begin to be seen as the strata become more recent. ■ By following the fossils, Smith was able to put all the strata of England's earth into relative temporal sequence. **The findings of these geologists inspired others to examine the rock and fossil records in different parts of the world.** About the same time, Georges Cuvier made the same discovery while studying the rocks around Paris. ■ Soon it was realized that this principal of faunal (animal) succession was valid not only in England or France but virtually everywhere. ■ It was actually a principle of floral succession as well, because plants showed the same transformation through time as did fauna. Limestone may be found in the Cambrian or—300 million years later—in the Jurassic strata, but a trilobite—the ubiquitous marine arthropod that had its birth in the Cambrian—will never be found in Jurassic strata, nor a dinosaur in the Cambrian.
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records in different parts of the world. It was actually a principle of floral succession as well, because plants showed the same transformation through time as did fauna. Limestone may be found in the Cambrian or—300 million years later—in the Jurassic strata, but a trilobite—the ubiquitous marine arthropod that had its birth in the Cambrian—will never be found in Jurassic strata, nor a dinosaur in the Cambrian.

28. **Directions:** An introductory sentence for a brief summary of the passage is provided below. Complete the summary by selecting the THREE answer choices that express the most important ideas in the passage. Some sentences do not belong in the summary because they express ideas that are not presented in the passage or are minor ideas in the passage.

Write your answer choices in the spaces where they belong. You can either write the letter of your answer choice or you can copy the sentence.

William Smith’s contributions to geology have increased our knowledge of the Earth’s history.

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Answer Choices


- A Smith found success easily in his profession because he came from a family of geologists and surveyors.
- B Smith’s work on canals allowed him to collect fossils and study rock layers all over England.
- C Smith found that fossils are much more reliable indicators of geological time than rock strata are.
- D Smith was named “the father of English geology” for his maps rather than for his other contributions to the field.
- E Smith and Cuvier discovered that fossil patterns are easier to observe in ancient rock strata than in younger rock strata.
- F The discovery of the principle of faunal succession allowed geologists to establish the relative age of Earth’s rock layers.

LISTENING

This section measures your ability to understand conversations and lectures in English.


Listen to each conversation and lecture only one time. After each conversation and lecture, you will answer some questions about it. Answer each question based on what is stated or implied by the speakers.

You may take notes while you listen and use your notes to help you answer the questions. Your notes will **not** be scored.

In some questions, you will see this icon: . This means that you will hear, but not see, the question.

Answer each question before moving on. Do not return to previous questions.

It will take about 60 minutes to listen to the conversations and lectures and answer the questions about them.

Directions: Listen to Track 45. 

Biology



Nightcap Oak



Directions: Now answer the questions.


12. What topics related to the Nightcap Oak does the professor mainly discuss?

Choose 2 answers.

- A Factors that relate to the size of the area in which it grows
- B The size of its population over the last few centuries
- C Whether anything can be done to ensure its survival
- D Why it did not change much over the last one hundred million years

13. According to the professor, what led scientists to characterize the Nightcap Oak as primitive?

- A It has no evolutionary connection to other trees growing in Australia today.
- B It has an inefficient reproductive system.
- C Its flowers are located at the bases of the leaves.
- D It is similar to some ancient fossils.

14. What point does the professor make about the Nightcap Oak's habitat?
- Ⓐ It is stable despite its limited size.
 - Ⓑ Unlike the habitats of many plants, it is expanding.
 - Ⓒ Its recent changes have left the Nightcap Oak struggling to adapt.
 - Ⓓ Its size is much larger than the area where the Nightcap Oak grows.
15. According to the professor, what are two factors that prevent the Nightcap Oak population from spreading? *Choose 2 answers.*
- Ⓐ The complex conditions required for the trees to produce fruit
 - Ⓑ The fact that the seed cannot germinate while locked inside the shell
 - Ⓒ The limited time the seed retains the ability to germinate
 - Ⓓ Competition with tree species that evolved more recently
16. Why does the professor mention the size of the Nightcap Oak population over the last few hundred years?
- Ⓐ To explain why it is likely that the Nightcap Oak population will increase in the future
 - Ⓑ To point out that the Nightcap Oak's limited reproductive success has not led to a decrease in its population
 - Ⓒ To present evidence that the Nightcap Oak is able to tolerate major changes in its environment
 - Ⓓ To point out that the Nightcap Oak is able to resist diseases that have destroyed other tree species
17. Listen to Track 46. 
- Ⓐ She wants the students to think about a possible connection.
 - Ⓑ She wants to know if the students have any questions.
 - Ⓒ She is implying that researchers have been asking the wrong questions.
 - Ⓓ She is implying that there may be no connection between the questions.

Directions: Listen to Track 47. 



Directions: Now answer the questions.

18. Why does the student go to see the professor?
- (A) She is having trouble finding a topic for her term paper.
 - (B) She needs his help to find resource materials.
 - (C) She wants to ask him for an extension on a term paper.
 - (D) She wants him to approve her plans for a term paper.
19. Why is the student interested in learning more about dialects?
- (A) She often has trouble understanding what other students are saying.
 - (B) She is trying to change the way she speaks.
 - (C) She is aware that her own dialect differs from those of her roommates.
 - (D) She spent her childhood in various places where different dialects are spoken.
20. Based on the conversation, what can be concluded about “dialect accommodation”? *Choose 2 answers.*
- (A) It is a largely subconscious process.
 - (B) It is a process that applies only to some dialects.
 - (C) It is a very common phenomenon.
 - (D) It is a topic that has not been explored extensively.
21. What does the professor want the student to do next?
- (A) Read some articles he has recommended
 - (B) Present her proposal before the entire class
 - (C) Submit a design plan for the project
 - (D) Listen to recordings of different dialects

22. Listen to Track 48. 


- Ⓐ He thinks the topic goes beyond his expertise.
- Ⓑ He thinks the topic is too broad for the student to manage.
- Ⓒ He thinks the topic is not relevant for a linguistics class.
- Ⓓ He thinks other students may have chosen the same topic.

SPEAKING

This section measures your ability to speak in English about a variety of topics.

There are six questions in this section. For each question, you will be given a short time to prepare your response. When the preparation time is up, answer the question as completely as possible in the time indicated for that question. You should record your responses so that you can review them later and compare them with the answer key and scoring rubrics.

3. You will now read a short passage and listen to a conversation on the same topic. You will then be asked a question about them. After you hear the question, give yourself 30 seconds to prepare your response. Then record yourself speaking for 60 seconds.

Listen to Track 55. 

Reading Time: 50 seconds

History Seminars Should Be Shorter

Currently, all of the seminar classes in the history department are three hours long. I would like to propose that history seminars be shortened to two hours. I make this proposal for two reasons. First, most students just cannot concentrate for three hours straight. I myself have taken these three-hour seminars and found them tiring and sometimes boring. Also, when a seminar lasts that long, people stop concentrating and stop learning, so the third hour of a three-hour seminar is a waste of everyone's time. Two-hour seminars would be much more efficient.

Sincerely,

Tim Lawson

Listen to Track 56. 



The woman expresses her opinion about the proposal described in the letter. Briefly summarize the proposal. Then state her opinion about the proposal and explain the reasons she gives for holding that opinion.

Preparation Time: 30 seconds

Response Time: 60 seconds

WRITING

This section measures your ability to write in English to communicate in an academic environment.

There are two writing questions in this section.

For question 1, you will read a passage and listen to a lecture about the same topic. You may take notes while you read and listen. Then you will write a response to a question based on what you have read and heard. You may look back at the passage when answering the question. You may use your notes to help you answer the question. You have 20 minutes to plan and write your response.

For question 2, you will write an essay based on your own knowledge and experience. You have 30 minutes to plan and complete your essay.

- 2. **Directions:** Read the question below. You have 30 minutes to plan, write, and revise your essay. Typically, an effective response will contain a minimum of 300 words.

Response Time: 30 minutes

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

Life today is easier and more comfortable than it was when your grandparents were children.

Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.
