

CHAPTER 22

Literature Passages

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- Draw inferences about characters' motivations and relationships
- Identify the tone of a partial or full Literature passage

How Much Do You Know?

Directions: In this chapter, you'll learn to apply the SAT Reading strategies you've learned to Literature passages. Take 10 minutes to actively read this passage and answer the five accompanying questions. Pay close attention to the relationships between characters as you read. When you're finished, compare your work to the explanations on the following pages.

Questions 1–5 refer to the following passage.

This passage is adapted from a short story titled "The Doorman" that takes place in New York City in the early 2000s.

Wallace's grandchildren liked it when his hand shook. They'd grab at it, a twin on each knee. "Me!" Fiona would squeal when she won. "You!" Henry would squeal along with her.

5 Wallace wondered how the submissive boy had come out so unlike his father. Then again, Simon himself was so unlike Wallace. Was there a gene that coded an unfamiliar son?

10 "You can tell them to stop, Dad," Simon would offer, but why would Wallace do that?

"Dad," Simon would sigh, "just retire," meaning Simon would take care of Wallace's rent and bologna and Listerine. But of course Wallace couldn't abandon the residents of the building where he was doorman. His son didn't think he was of any use anymore, but he was wrong. The new girl in 33A, for example—who would she talk to after midnight, when she got her rumblings? And Simon clearly did not recall the time Wallace helped get that delivery man arrested, the one who swiped Mr. Harrington's wallet straight from his back pocket, and how ever since Mr. Harrington had given Wallace a crisp hundred every Veterans Day.

25 "It has to bother people that you can't carry anything," Simon insisted a few days before the incident.

"They don't mind." Wallace plunged his right hand into the pocket of his slacks to hide its quaking, which just made his whole pant leg tremble from top to bottom.

"Doesn't it bother you, then?"

Wallace didn't answer. He didn't say to his son, *I'm not a dog or a mule. My job isn't about how fast I can fetch or how much weight my old back can take. I am respected, too.* Simon didn't get that intangibles mattered. Performance had always been too important to him, even as a kid, but being a lawyer had made him more that way.

The day after Simon had the heart attack, when he was still hospitalized but stable, Wallace headed to work. The 7 train wasn't running from Queens, and the R held a new crowd—two dozen or so teenagers armed with band instruments.

Stiff backpacks pressed in on him as Wallace made his way through flutes and trumpets and clarinets and one tuba. His hearing aid amplified their squeals into shrieks, and he covered his ears as he charted a squiggly path to the open tip of a bench next to a slumbering woman in nurse shoes. How anyone could sleep in such a circus he didn't know. He lowered himself next to her.

Wallace didn't mind the kids on the train. That was another difference between him and Simon—Wallace could appreciate people, generally speaking.

60 Once, Simon had said, "Dad, why have you never said you were proud of me? Not once?"

"That's foolish," Wallace said. "I'm sure I have," though he couldn't remember if he had or not.

65 The boy had started going to see a psychologist because he had anxieties, and the doctor had told his son that the reason he was anxious was because he felt he didn't deserve abundance.

"Let me get this straight," Wallace had teased, "I screwed you up because I taught you to be happy with less?" Simon had said no, he wasn't suggesting Wallace had messed up, just that maybe the reason why Simon had a hard time accepting affluence was because he didn't

75 grow up with it himself.
 “I did the best I could,” Wallace had said.
 “Do you look down on us for the way we live
 now?” asked Simon. He had always been a serious
 person, even as a child, but law had made him
 80 more that way. The gulf between them held
 more than just seriousness, though. His wife
 wore the kind of jewelry that attracts scamming
 thieves, handsome fellows in suits catered
 Thanksgiving at their condo, and their
 85 children, who already had passports, ate baby food
 from a farm.

Of course not, Wallace thought, but he said
 instead, “I wish I’d been able to afford to buy you
 more things,” because Simon seemed
 90 hungry for him to express some kind of regret.

Simon was a good person and a good son, but
 Wallace just hadn’t known how to relate to him
 lately. He hoped he would have another chance to try.

1. In the passage, Wallace is mainly presented as someone who
 - A) feels anger toward his adult son, whose demeanor and life choices conflict with his own personality and values.
 - B) focuses on his commute to his job as a doorman, which he suspects he will need to quit soon.
 - C) identifies as a grandfather whose relationship with his grandchildren is the most important part of his life.
 - D) hopes that his adult son will survive a present crisis but is conflicted about their ability to communicate.

2. The main purpose of the sentence in lines 19–24 (“And Simon . . . Veterans Day”) is to
 - A) introduce the detail that Wallace served in the military.
 - B) provide an example of why Wallace thinks he is still important at his job.
 - C) depict a fundamental way in which Simon and Wallace differ.
 - D) lead into the description of the impact of Wallace’s physical condition.

3. Which statement best describes a technique the narrator uses in lines 56–64 to represent the relationship between Wallace and Simon?
 - A) The narrator demonstrates the hostility in their relationship by quoting an insult Wallace directs toward Simon.
 - B) The narrator hints at the fragility of their relationship by indicating that Wallace is starting to become more forgetful.
 - C) The narrator underscores the disappointment in their relationship by suggesting that Wallace is more proud of the teens than of Simon.
 - D) The narrator highlights the tension in their relationship by revealing an inconsistency in Wallace’s character.

4. In terms of their material wealth, as compared with Simon, Wallace is portrayed as
 - A) unable to afford a car.
 - B) less well off financially.
 - C) feeling guilty about how he raised his children.
 - D) more worried about finances.

5. Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?
 - A) Lines 13–15 (“But of course . . . doorman”)
 - B) Lines 41–46 (“The day . . . instruments”)
 - C) Lines 80–86 (“The gulf . . . farm”)
 - D) Lines 91–93 (“Simon . . . try”)

Check Your Work

Suggested passage notes:

- ¶1: W & S = not alike
- ¶2–3: S wants W to retire; W feels useful as doorman
- ¶4–7: S focuses on W's hand/performance; W feels respected at work
- ¶8–10: S heart attack; W likes kids on train
- ¶11–12: W never expressed pride for S?
- ¶13–17: S not affluent as child but rich now; S wants W to feel regret
- ¶18: W wants to relate to S

1. D

Difficulty: Medium

Category: Global

Strategic Advice: Since the question is asking about the main character of the entire passage, this is a Global question. Review your passage map to make a prediction about the narrator's overall presentation of Wallace.

Getting to the Answer: The passage describes several tense situations between Wallace and his son, Simon. Predict that Wallace is mainly portrayed as having a difficult relationship with his son. Choice (D) matches the prediction and is correct: line 41 identifies Simon as having had a heart attack (a “present crisis”), and the final lines of the passage state, “Wallace just hadn't known how to relate to him lately. He hoped he would have another chance to try.”

Choice (A) is extreme; although there are many differences between Wallace and Simon, nothing in the text indicates that Wallace is angry. Rather, he hopes to improve their relationship. Choice (B) is incorrect because there is no indication that Wallace plans to quit anytime soon. Choice (C) isn't supported; although the passage opens with Wallace playing with his grandchildren, there isn't anything that suggests they're the most important thing to him.

2. B

Difficulty: Medium

Category: Function

Strategic Advice: Function questions ask about the purpose of a specific element of the passage. Think about the author's larger purpose for including the cited element; ask yourself, “Why is this here and what does it accomplish?”

Getting to the Answer: The cited sentence describes an incident in which a resident showed appreciation for Wallace's help in his service as a doorman. The paragraph is about why Wallace believes Simon is wrong to think Wallace is not “of any use anymore” at his job. Since the cited sentence supports the main idea of the paragraph by giving a reason why Wallace *is* of use, (B) is correct.

Though Wallace's military service is implied by the sentence, this is a minor detail and not the reason the sentence is included in the passage, so (A) is incorrect. Choice (C) is incorrect because, although Simon and Wallace disagree about Wallace retiring, this difference is introduced earlier in the paragraph, and the cited sentence only addresses Wallace's view. Choice (D) is incorrect because the sentence doesn't closely tie into the discussion of Wallace's hand that follows.

3. D

Difficulty: Hard

Category: Function

Strategic Advice: The reference to “a technique the narrator uses” indicates that this is a Function question. Think about how the author uses the cited lines in the context of the passage.

Getting to the Answer: Getting to the Answer: The lines describe how Wallace may appreciate people “generally speaking,” but he doesn't appreciate (or at least has never expressed appreciation for) the specific accomplishments of Simon. This inconsistency in Wallace is one example of the strained relationship between Wallace and Simon that the narrator presents throughout the passage, so (D) is correct.

Although Wallace says, “That's foolish,” (A) is incorrect because the comment is not meant to insult Simon, but to indicate Wallace's rejection of the idea that he hasn't expressed pride in Simon. Further, the passage doesn't go so far as to indicate hostility between the father and son. Choice (B) is incorrect because Wallace's inability to remember saying he's proud of his son reflects the nature of their relationship, not his aging; his memory is never called into question. Choice (C) distorts details from the passage, which doesn't indicate that Wallace is disappointed in his son; rather, he's sure he has vocalized his pride.

4. B

Difficulty: Medium

Category: Inference

Strategic Advice: Since the question asks about how a character is “portrayed,” this is an Inference question. The correct answer will be supported, though not directly stated, in the passage, so you can still make a prediction.

Getting to the Answer: Use your passage notes to help you identify the difference between Simon and Wallace in terms of their wealth. In the middle of the passage, the characters experience tension related to money: a therapist says Simon has difficulty accepting his current wealth since Wallace wasn’t affluent when Simon was a child. Simon then asks if Wallace looks down on the affluent way Simon’s family lives. Wallace is thus portrayed as having less than Simon, so **(B)** is correct.

Although Wallace rides the train to work, the passage never implies he can’t afford a car, so (A) can be eliminated. Wallace says he wishes he’d been able to buy more for Simon because Simon seemed to want him to “express some kind of regret,” not because he actually feels guilty, so (C) is incorrect. Wallace never expresses worry about finances; rather, he thinks “intangibles” are important and wants to keep working because it makes him feel helpful, so (D) is incorrect.

5. C

Difficulty: Medium

Category: Command of Evidence

Strategic Advice: The keywords “provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question” indicate a Command of Evidence question. When you see one of these questions coming, locate the lines you used to answer the preceding question.

Getting to the Answer: The correct answer will provide evidence that Wallace is less wealthy than Simon. The middle portion of the passage contains the discussion of their tensions about money, so check quotes from that section first. Choice **(C)** is correct: it identifies that there is a “gulf” between Wallace and Simon, and it describes that gulf by listing aspects of the more lavish lifestyle of Simon’s family (expensive jewelry, catered dinners, and fancy baby food).

None of the other answer choices address the disparity in the characters’ wealth. Choice (A) asserts that Wallace does not want to leave the people he helps at his job, (B) includes the details about Simon’s heart attack and Wallace riding the bus to work, and (D) reflects Wallace’s thoughts about his overall relationship with his son.

How to Read Literature for the SAT

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After this lesson, you will be able to:

- Draw inferences about characters' motivations and relationships
- Identify the tone of a partial or full Literature passage

Exactly one passage in each SAT Reading section is a Literature passage: an excerpt from a novel or short story. The Literature passage is typically the first passage in the section, but that doesn't mean you have to tackle it first. Some test takers may find fiction engaging and feel comfortable reading dialogue and interpreting an author's descriptions of characters and settings. Others may find their strengths lie in nonfiction passages on science and social studies. Don't make a snap judgment based on how you feel now, though. Practice all of the passage types to give yourself an honest, informed assessment. You'll find more tips and strategies on how best to approach the section in the chapter on SAT Reading section management.

To answer a question like this:

The following passage is an excerpt from English novelist Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, published in 1848. The excerpt is part of a letter the narrator, Gilbert, has written.

My father, as you know, was a sort of gentleman farmer in —shire; and I, by his express desire, succeeded him in the same quiet occupation, not very willingly, for ambition
 5 urged me to higher aims, and self-conceit assured me that, in disregarding its voice, I was burying my talent in the earth, and hiding my light under a bushel. My mother had done her utmost to persuade me that I was capable of
 10 great achievements; but my father, who thought ambition was the surest road to ruin, and change but another word for destruction, would listen to no scheme for bettering either my own condition, or that of my fellow mortals. He assured me it
 15 was all rubbish, and exhorted me, with his dying breath, to continue in the good old way, to follow his steps, and those of his father before him, and let my highest ambition be, to walk honestly through the world, looking neither to the right
 20 hand nor to the left, and to transmit the paternal acres to my children in, at least, as flourishing a condition as he left them to me.

“Well!—an honest and industrious farmer is one of the most useful members of society; and
 25 if I devote my talents to the cultivation of my farm, and the improvement of agriculture in general, I shall thereby benefit, not only my own immediate connections and dependents, but in some degree, mankind at large:—hence I shall
 30 not have lived in vain.” With such reflections as these, I was endeavouring to console myself, as I plodded home from the fields, one cold, damp, cloudy evening towards the close of October. But the gleam of a bright red fire through the parlour
 35 window, had more effect in cheering my spirits, and rebuking my thankless repinings, than all the sage reflections and good resolutions I had

40 forced my mind to frame;—for I was young then, remember—only four and twenty—and had not acquired half the rule over my own spirit, that I now possess—trifling as that may be.

1. The narrator's attitude about becoming a farmer, as expressed in lines 23–38 (“Well!—an honest . . . mind to frame”), seems to be one of
 - A) bitter resentment.
 - B) detached reflection.
 - C) forced optimism.
 - D) hearty good cheer.

You need to know this:

The SAT does not generally test symbolism, but it does test your ability to draw inferences about characters' relationships and attitudes and to recognize how the author creates a specific tone or effect.

Unpack the Pre-Passage Blurb Effectively

Be sure to read the little blurb that precedes an SAT Reading passage; this can be especially helpful on Literature passages. The blurb will always give you the author's name, the title of the book or short story from which the passage was adapted, and the original publication date. When necessary, it may provide information about the main characters and setting.

The author. If you happen to know the author, great, but don't expect to. If the name rings a bell that helps you identify the time frame or setting of the passage, take advantage of that, but otherwise, let it go. No questions will ask about the author's identity or biographical information.

Title. A book's title may help you identify its genre—tragedy, romance, coming-of-age story, etc. It may also give you clues about the setting or theme of the passage.

Publication date. The SAT has used Literature passages drawn from various time periods over the last 200 years or so. Obviously, language use and references will be different in passages from the 1850s than those from the 1950s, and you can use that information to provide context about social conditions and historical events, or even about unusual vocabulary.

Characters and setting. When the test adds any information beyond author, title, and date, pay close attention. The people writing the test questions felt this information was essential for test takers to know, and it will always give you a head start in interpreting the passage and anticipating where the story is likely to go. Knowing, for example, that the main character is an adolescent or a mother, or knowing that a story takes place in a coal-mining town or an aristocratic palace, will change your understanding of the passage from the outset.

Tune In to the Narrator's "Voice"

Within the first few lines, you will be able to distinguish a passage written in first person (the narrator as the main character, knowing only what that character knows) from one written in third person (the narrator is separate from the characters and has an omniscient point of view). Keeping this in mind as you read will help you spot the purpose of each paragraph and will help you later with Inference questions ("With which of the following would the narrator/character most likely agree?").

In addition, take note of language that indicates the narrator's or a character's point of view. In a standard science or social studies passage, Opinion and Emphasis keywords help you keep track of an author's ideas about a topic. In Literature passages, the author may put these ideas in the mind or the mouth of a character or in the way a scene or object is described. Take note of the passage's tone (e.g., joyful, nostalgic, anxious, angry, hopeful, ironic, or satirical, etc.), especially if an event or conversation brings about a change in tone. Typically, one or more of the questions will reward your attention to the passage's tone and characters' points of view.

Track What Happens and the Main Character's Reaction or Response

In a standard SAT Reading passage on science or social studies, you can use an author's purpose to anticipate where the passage will go. When the author says there is a debate over a recent theory, you expect the next couple of paragraphs to lay out one side and then the other. If the author introduces a new idea, there will probably be an example to illustrate it. Literature passages unfold a little differently, but if you are reading actively, you can still anticipate and track the development of the story. Use what you know about a character to anticipate the action and to interpret the character's reactions. If an older worker who is concerned about

having enough money for retirement has a conversation with her boss, you can understand what she's after, even if she is using language that talks around the subject. If a studious young man absorbed in a book is interrupted by a boisterous group of revelers, you can expect some annoyance or judgment in his reaction, even if he doesn't say anything to the newcomers. Keeping track of these things will help you jot down good paragraph summaries, just as you would in nonfiction passages.

When a character's reaction or response to an event surprises you, consider whether this signals a change in the tone of the passage or indicates that you've glossed over or misunderstood something about the character or situation. In either case, it's always valuable to track not only the plot but also the character's reactions to and interpretations of what is happening.

Use What You Already Know about SAT Reading Strategies and Question Types

While Literature passages have a distinct look and feel, the questions that accompany them are of the same types as those that follow standard science and social studies passages. Thus, while the best test takers apply a few unique reading strategies tailored to Literature, their overall approach remains similar to what they use for all passages. In every case, SAT experts read actively to prepare themselves for the question set. To do that, they read for the big picture, for the author's (or in this case, narrator's or characters') opinions and point of view, and for the passage's structure by noting the purpose and main idea of each paragraph.

For the most part, the questions that accompany Literature passages are worded similarly to those for Science or Social Studies passages. However, in Literature passages, you may also see questions that ask the following:

- For the passage's theme (which corresponds to its main idea)
- About a shift in the narrator's focus
- How the author creates a certain effect
- What is going on in a character's mind

As long as you read actively for tone and characters' motivations, you'll be ready for questions like these.

You need to do this:

- Use the pre-passage blurb to identify all that you can about the following:
 - The author's identity
 - The time frame and location
 - The passage's main character or characters
- Quickly recognize whether the passage is in first person or third person.
- Focus on the main character's defining characteristics: demographics (such as age, social position, occupation, race, and gender) and mental traits (attitudes, opinions, desires, and conflicts).
- Anticipate the character's responses to events or interactions with other characters.
- Note the purpose of each paragraph as you read.

Explanation:

This is an Inference question: you need to infer the narrator's attitude from clues in the text. The narrator says explicitly in line 4 that he became a farmer "not very willingly" and that he had the "ambition" to pursue "higher aims." This earlier context is important for understanding the tone of lines 23–38; without it, the second paragraph sounds very positive, even cheerful. Against the backdrop of the narrator's unwillingness to become a farmer, however, the second paragraph sounds as if he were trying to talk himself into cheerfully accepting his occupation. Then, in line 31, the narrator states that he is "endeavouring to console [himself]." This is equivalent to "forced optimism." Choice (C) is correct.

Try on Your Own

Directions: Actively read this Literature passage and answer the questions that follow. Remember to note the tone of the story as you read and pay close attention to characters' attitudes and relationships.

Questions 1–7 refer to the following passage.

This passage is an excerpt from Sherwood Anderson's short story "Unlighted Lamps." Published 1921. Mary Cochran contemplates how her father's impending death could lead her to leave Huntersburg, the small town where she grew up and now lives.

Pushing her way in among the weeds, many of which were covered with blossoms, Mary found herself a seat on a rock that had been rolled against the trunk of an old apple tree. The weeds half concealed her and from the road only her head was visible. Buried away thus in the weeds she looked like a quail that runs in the tall grass and that on hearing some unusual sound, stops, throws up its head and looks sharply about.

The doctor's daughter had been to the decayed old orchard many times before. At the foot of the hill on which it stood the streets of the town began, and as she sat on the rock she could hear faint shouts and cries coming out of Wilmott Street. A hedge separated the orchard from the fields on the hillside. Mary intended to sit by the tree until darkness came creeping over the land and to try to think out some plan regarding her future. The notion that her father was soon to die seemed both true and untrue, but her mind was unable to take hold of the thought of him as physically dead. For the moment death in relation to her father did not take the form of a cold inanimate body that was to be buried in the ground, instead it seemed to her that her father was not to die but to go away somewhere on a journey. Long ago her mother had done that. There was a strange hesitating sense of relief in the thought.

"Well," she told herself, "when the time comes I also shall be setting out, I shall get out of here and into the world." On several occasions Mary had gone to spend a day with her father in Chicago and she was fascinated by the thought that soon she might be going there to live. Before her mind's eye floated a vision of long streets filled with thousands of people all strangers to herself. To go into such streets and to live her life among strangers would be like coming out of a waterless desert and into a cool forest carpeted with tender young grass.

In Huntersburg she had always lived under a cloud and now she was becoming a woman and the close stuffy atmosphere she had always breathed was becoming constantly more and more oppressive. It was true no direct question had ever been raised touching her own standing in the community life, but she felt that a kind of prejudice against her existed. While she was still a baby there had been a scandal involving her father and mother. The town of Huntersburg had rocked with it and when she was a child people had sometimes looked at her with mocking sympathetic eyes. "Poor child! It's too bad," they said. . . .

For ten or fifteen minutes Mary sat on the stone beneath the tree in the orchard and thought of the attitude of the town toward herself and her father. "It should have drawn us together," she told herself, and wondered if the approach of death would do what the cloud that had for years hung over them had not done. It did not at the moment seem to her cruel that the figure of death was soon to visit her father. In a way Death had become for her and for the time a lovely and gracious figure intent upon good. The hand of death was to open the door out of her father's house and into life. With the cruelty of youth she thought first of the adventurous possibilities of the new life.

1. Which choice best describes a major theme from the passage?
 - A) The bitter grief inevitably produced by death
 - B) The difficulty of thinking clearly in nature
 - C) A community uprising against an individual
 - D) The passage from childhood into adulthood
2. Mary's comment to herself in lines 31–33 (“Well . . . world”) most nearly implies that
 - A) when her father dies, Mary is going to leave Huntersburg.
 - B) Mary is going to leave the decayed orchard and return to the town.
 - C) now that her mother has left, Mary is going to move to Chicago.
 - D) Mary thinks of her own death as a journey to another world.
3. In line 37, the word “floated” most nearly means
 - A) bobbed.
 - B) appeared.
 - C) glimpsed.
 - D) rested.
4. Based on the passage, which answer choice best represents how Mary would describe her father's death?
 - A) Unlikely and metaphorical
 - B) Appealing and freeing
 - C) Vicious but advantageous
 - D) Depressing but manageable
5. Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?
 - A) Lines 23–28 (“For the moment . . . journey”)
 - B) Lines 33–37 (“On several . . . to live”)
 - C) Lines 67–70 (“In a way . . . into life”)
 - D) Lines 70–72 (“With the cruelty . . . new life”)
6. The dialogue in lines 56–57 (“Poor child! It's too bad”) mainly serves to
 - A) characterize the townspeople's subtle ostracism of Mary.
 - B) contradict the previous statement that the townspeople had mocking sympathy for Mary.
 - C) reveal the concern that townspeople had about Mary's family's financial situation.
 - D) highlight the townspeople's lack of involvement with Mary.
7. Mary indicates that she believes that she and her father should have been brought closer together by
 - A) her mother's absence.
 - B) her father's approaching death.
 - C) their mutual love of Chicago.
 - D) the town's shared feelings for them.

How Much Have You Learned?

Directions: Now try a full-length Literature passage and question set under timed conditions. Take 13 minutes to read the passage and answer the accompanying questions.

Questions 8–17 refer to the following passage.

The following passage is adapted from Jules Verne, *Around the World in Eighty Days*, first published in 1873.

Phileas Fogg, having shut the door of his house at half-past eleven, and having put his right foot before his left five hundred and seventy-five times, and his left foot before
5 his right five hundred and seventy-six times, reached the Reform Club. He repaired at once to the dining-room and took his place at the habitual table, the cover of which had already been laid for him. A flunkey handed him
10 an uncut *Times*, which he proceeded to cut with a skill which betrayed familiarity with this delicate operation. The perusal of this paper absorbed Phileas Fogg until a quarter before four, whilst the *Standard*, his next task,
15 occupied him till the dinner hour. Dinner passed as breakfast had done, and Mr. Fogg re-appeared in the reading-room and sat down to the *Pall Mall*¹ at twenty minutes before six. Half an hour later several members of the
20 Reform came in and drew up to the fireplace. They were Mr. Fogg's usual partners at whist:² Andrew Stuart, an engineer; John Sullivan and Samuel Fallentin, bankers; Thomas Flanagan, a brewer; and Gauthier Ralph, one of the
25 Directors of the Bank of England.

"Well, Ralph," said Thomas Flanagan, "what about that robbery?"

"Oh," replied Stuart, "the Bank will lose the money."

30 "On the contrary," broke in Ralph, "I hope we may put our hands on the robber. Skillful detectives have been sent to all the principal ports of America and the Continent, and he'll be a clever fellow if he slips through their
35 fingers."

"But have you got the robber's description?" asked Stuart.

"In the first place, he is no robber at all," returned Ralph, positively.

40 "What! a fellow who makes off with fifty-five thousand pounds, no robber?"

"No."

"Perhaps he's a manufacturer, then."

45 "The *Daily Telegraph* says that he is a gentleman."

It was Phileas Fogg, whose head now emerged from behind his newspapers, who made this remark. A package of banknotes, to the value of fifty-five thousand pounds, had
50 been taken from the principal cashier's table, that functionary being at the moment engaged in registering the receipt of three shillings and sixpence. Let it be observed that the Bank of England reposes a touching confidence in the
55 honesty of the public. There are neither guards nor gratings to protect its treasures; gold, silver, banknotes are freely exposed, at the mercy of the first comer. A keen observer of English customs relates that, being in one of the rooms
60 of the Bank one day, he had the curiosity to examine a gold ingot weighing some seven or eight pounds. He took it up, scrutinized it, passed it to his neighbour, he to the next man, and so on until the ingot, going from hand
65 to hand, was transferred to the end of a dark entry; nor did it return to its place for half an hour. Meanwhile, the cashier had not so much as raised his head. But in the present instance things had not gone so smoothly. The package
70 of notes not being found when five o'clock sounded from the ponderous clock in the "drawing office," the amount was passed to the account of profit and loss.

¹ *Pall Mall*: an evening newspaper (the *Pall Mall Gazette*) founded in London in 1865

² whist: a trick-taking card game; modern derivatives include hearts and spades

75 There were real grounds for supposing, as the *Daily Telegraph* said, that the thief did not belong to a professional band. On the day of the robbery a well-dressed gentleman of polished manners, and with a well-to-do air, had been observed going to and fro in the
80 paying room where the crime was committed. A description of him was easily procured and sent to the detectives; and some hopeful spirits, of whom Ralph was one, did not despair of his apprehension. The papers and clubs were
85 full of the affair, and everywhere people were discussing the probabilities of a successful pursuit; and the Reform Club was especially agitated, several of its members being Bank officials.

90 Ralph would not concede that the work of the detectives was likely to be in vain, for he thought that the prize offered would greatly stimulate their zeal and activity. But Stuart was far from sharing this confidence; and, as
95 they placed themselves at the whist-table, they continued to argue the matter. "I maintain," said Stuart, "that the chances are in favour of the thief, who must be a shrewd fellow."

"Well, but where can he fly to?" asked
100 Ralph. "No country is safe for him."
"Pshaw!"

"Where could he go, then?"

"Oh, I don't know that. The world is big enough."

105 "It was once," said Phileas Fogg, in a low tone.

8. What is the primary purpose of the passage?
- A) To illustrate the problems with theft at the Bank of England
 - B) To examine the lives of wealthy men in England
 - C) To introduce Phileas Fogg and his social circle at the Reform Club
 - D) To parody the social customs of the upper class
9. The passage suggests that Phileas Fogg is a man who
- A) focuses on cultural activities.
 - B) lives beyond his means.
 - C) enjoys routine.
 - D) keeps to himself.
10. Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?
- A) Lines 6–9 ("He repaired . . . for him")
 - B) Lines 9–12 ("A flunkey . . . operation")
 - C) Lines 15–19 ("Dinner . . . six")
 - D) Lines 31–35 ("Skillful . . . fingers")
11. As used in line 6, "repaired" most nearly means
- A) fixed.
 - B) returned.
 - C) stormed.
 - D) proceeded.
12. One impression created by the narrator's description of Phileas Fogg in the first paragraph is that he
- A) keeps abreast of current events.
 - B) is a political reformer.
 - C) has strong opinions about crime.
 - D) makes his living as a banker.

13. Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?
- A) Lines 9–12 (“A flunkey . . . operation”)
 - B) Lines 19–20 (“Half . . . fireplace”)
 - C) Lines 31–35 (“Skillful . . . fingers”)
 - D) Lines 44–48 (“The *Daily* . . . remark”)
14. As used in line 51, “functionary” most nearly means
- A) official.
 - B) money.
 - C) servant.
 - D) criminal.
15. According to the passage, which statement about the Bank of England is true?
- A) The public has faith in the integrity of the Bank.
 - B) The Bank has taken few precautions to guard against theft.
 - C) The Bank has a history of money being stolen.
 - D) The Bank has carefully managed public relations.
16. The passage suggests that the thief was not part of a professional crime ring because
- A) the suspect acted alone.
 - B) the Bank had never been burglarized before.
 - C) the suspect was described as a gentleman.
 - D) the Bank carefully screens its customers.
17. The purpose of lines 105–106 (“‘It was once,’ . . . a low tone”) is to
- A) create an ominous atmosphere at the table.
 - B) foreshadow Fogg’s ideas about the world.
 - C) illustrate Fogg’s proper demeanor and social skills.
 - D) introduce the conflict of the plot.

Reflect

Directions: Take a few minutes to recall what you've learned and what you've been practicing in this chapter. Consider the following questions, jot down your best answer for each one, and then compare your reflections to the expert responses on the following page. Use your level of confidence to determine what to do next.

What are SAT Reading Literature passages? How do expert test takers adjust their active reading to tackle Literature passages most effectively?

How are the questions that accompany Literature passages different than those accompanying standard Science and Social Studies passages?

How confident do you feel with Literature passages? What can you do in practice to improve your performance and gain even more confidence with these types of passages?

Expert Responses

What are SAT Reading Literature passages? How do expert test takers adjust their active reading to tackle Literature passages most effectively?

On each SAT test, one reading stimulus is taken from a work of fiction such as a novel or short story. Expert test takers actively read Literature passages by paying attention to what happens to the main character and how he or she responds to these events.

How are the questions that accompany Literature passages different than those accompanying standard Science and Social Studies passages?

For the most part, questions accompanying Literature passages are similar to those from standard nonfiction passages, but in literature, you may see 1) Global questions that focus on a change in the passage's tone, 2) Inference questions that ask what the passage's narrator (as opposed to its author) would agree with, or 3) Function questions that ask how or why a character (as opposed to the author) used a detail or reference from the text.

How confident do you feel with Literature passages? What can you do in practice to improve your performance and gain even more confidence with these types of passages?

There is no one-size-fits-all answer for this question. Give yourself honest self-assessment. If you feel that Literature passages are a strength, that's great. Continue to practice them so that you'll be able to rack up the points associated with these passages on test day. If you feel less confident about Literature passages, review the strategies in this chapter and try to consistently apply the expert approaches outlined here whenever you practice passages in this format.

Next Steps

If you answered most questions correctly in the “How Much Have You Learned?” section, and if your responses to the Reflect questions were similar to those of the SAT expert, then consider Literature passages an area of strength and move on to the next chapter. Come back to this topic periodically to prevent yourself from getting rusty.

If you don't yet feel confident, review the instructional text in this chapter, especially the sections on characters' responses and points of view. Then try the questions you missed again. As always, be sure to review the explanations closely.

Answers and Explanations

Suggested passage notes:

- ¶1: Mary finds a quiet place to think
- ¶2: M considers her father's death and moving to Chicago
- ¶3: M never accepted in hometown (Huntersburg)
- ¶4: father's death will create possibilities for M

1. D

Difficulty: Medium

Category: Global

Getting to the Answer: It is difficult to make a specific prediction for an open-ended question such as this one; however, state the author's purpose in the passage in your own words to help prepare evaluating each answer choice. One purpose of the passage is to describe Mary's thoughts about her future, which she hopes is leaving her small hometown for a big city, where she will seek a new life.

(A) is incorrect because Mary's feelings about death are ambivalent. She cannot conceive of her father's death as a physical reality (lines 20–23), and Death itself is represented as the source of new beginnings (lines 67–72). (B) is the opposite of what is expressed in the first paragraph and the first half of the second paragraph. Mary finds a quiet spot on a rock under an apple tree, away from the noise of Wilmott street, to think about her future. (C) is too extreme. While the town was never kind toward Mary and Mary always felt stifled by the town, “uprising” suggests an intensity that is not present in the passage, which instead describes the town's antagonism toward Mary as a “cloud” (lines 45 and 63). (D) is correct because Mary is “becoming a woman” (line 45) and is contemplating a major change in her life, leaving her small hometown after her father's death to seek new possibilities and adventures.

2. A

Difficulty: Medium

Category: Inference

Getting to the Answer: Reread several lines before and after the quoted sentence to focus on the context, and keep the overall purpose of the passage in mind, too. The narrator mentions Mary's thoughts about her

father's impending death, Mary's mother's passing, and Mary's desire to move to Chicago. The overall purpose of the passage is to show Mary's father's death as an impetus for Mary to move out of Huntersburg and create a new life for herself.

Evaluate each answer choice. (A) is likely correct because “when the time comes” refers to Mary's father's death, and “get out of here” refers to leaving Mary's hometown, Huntersburg. Check the other choices to be sure. (B) is incorrect because Mary wants to leave the town, not return to it. (C) is incorrect because it is the prospect of her father's death that is causing her to consider moving to Chicago, not her mother's absence. (D) is incorrect because Mary thinks of her father's death, not her own, as a journey. (A) is confirmed as the correct answer.

3. B

Difficulty: Easy

Category: Vocab-in-Context

Getting to the Answer: Reread the sentence containing “floated” that begins in line 37. Predict another word that could be substituted for “floated” and give the sentence the same meaning as the original one. Mary is imagining a scene in Chicago of long streets filled with lots of people she doesn't know. The image came into her mind, so “arose” or “materialized” would be good predictions. (B) matches and is correct.

The vision that “floated” before Mary's mind's eye is not literally floating, so (A) and (D) are incorrect. The term “mind's eye” refers to Mary's imagination, not a literal eye that is seeing the imagined vision; therefore, (C) is also incorrect.

4. B

Difficulty: Hard

Category: Inference

Strategic Advice: Notice that the next question after this one is a Command of Evidence question. When you find the correct answer for this question, keep your finger on the part of the passage where you found it so you'll be able to use it for the Command of Evidence question that follows.

Getting to the Answer: Use your passage map to focus on paragraph 2 and paragraph 4, where the passage mentions Mary’s father’s death explicitly. While evaluating the answer choices, keep in mind the main idea of the passage, which is how Mary’s father’s death will enable her to move away from her hometown.

Even though Mary does think of her father’s death less as a physical event and more of a journey, (A) is incorrect because her father’s death is not unlikely. Rather, Mary is aware that her father’s death will come soon. (B) is correct because for Mary, death has become “lovely and gracious” and is going to liberate her from Huntersburg (lines 67–70). Although Mary does see an advantage in the prospect of being able to move to Chicago after her father’s death, (C) is incorrect because the death itself is not vicious. Instead, it is Mary’s youthful focus on her own benefit that is “cruel” (lines 70–72). Finally, (D) is incorrect because the passage does not suggest that Mary feels depressed by the thought of her father’s death.

5. C

Difficulty: Hard

Category: Command of Evidence

Getting to the Answer: Keep your finger on the lines where you found the answer to the previous question, lines 67–70, and match that section of the passage to the choices. (C) is correct.

(A) is incorrect because it says the only way that Mary can understand her father’s death is through metaphor, not that it is appealing and freeing. (B) is incorrect because it does not mention her father’s death. (D) is incorrect because it does not express the fact that Mary finds her father’s death appealing.

6. A

Difficulty: Medium

Category: Function

Getting to the Answer: Read a little above and a little below lines 56–57 and predict what the author intended in using the phrase. Also, consult your passage map for paragraph 3 to see that its central idea is that the townspeople of Huntersburg did not accept Mary. Predict that the dialogue shows a way that the townspeople expressed their mocking sympathy and made Mary feel oppressed. (A) is a good match and is correct.

(B) is incorrect because the dialogue is an example of the townspeople’s mocking sympathy, not a contradiction of it. (C) is incorrect because “poor” is not used literally as a marker of poverty. (D) is incorrect because the townspeople do not ignore Mary; instead, they have a negative attitude toward her.

7. D

Difficulty: Hard

Category: Detail

Getting to the Answer: Find the relevant text in the passage. In lines 61–62, Mary says to herself, “It should have drawn us together.” The previous sentence states what it is that she believes should have brought her and her father and closer together: “the attitude of the town toward herself and her father” (lines 58–61). Thus, (D) is correct.

(A), (B), and (C) are all mentioned in the passage, but Mary never says that any of them should have brought her and her father closer together.

Suggested passage notes:

- ¶1: F’s daily routine
- ¶1: cont: F’s friends
- ¶2–10: recent robbery
- ¶11: lack of security at bank
- ¶12: thief not a professional robber
- ¶13–19: disagree whether thief will be caught

8. C

Difficulty: Hard

Category: Global

Getting to the Answer: Think about the passage as a whole and use one sentence to predict the purpose of this passage. Make sure the tone of the answer choice matches the tone of the passage. The excerpt provides a brief character sketch of Phileas Fogg and establishes the dynamics of his friendships at the Reform Club. (C) is correct; it accurately identifies the purpose of the excerpt.

Choice (A) addresses only a narrow aspect of the passage and ignores the author’s careful and extended description of Phileas Fogg. (B) is too broad: the passage describes the life of Fogg, not wealthy English men in general. (D) is extreme. The passage has a neutral tone; there is no evidence of parody.

9. C

Difficulty: Medium

Category: Inference

Getting to the Answer: Review the descriptions of Phileas Fogg and his actions in your passage map. Summarize what the beginning of the passage says about Fogg. Paragraph 1 describes Fogg counting out his steps on his way to the club. Upon arriving at the club, Fogg goes to his “habitual table” (line 8) and performs a routine series of actions. Choice (C) is correct, as the details in paragraph 1 depict a man who likes to keep to a set routine.

Choice (A) is incorrect because no cultural activities are described in the passage. (B) is incorrect because although the club, with its servants, fireplace, and dining room, may seem to be luxurious, there is no evidence in the passage that Fogg cannot comfortably pay for these services. (D) is contradicted in the passage starting in line 21, where Fogg’s card-playing partners are introduced, and in line 44, where Fogg inserts himself into his friends’ conversation. People who keep to themselves do not play cards or enter others’ conversations.

10. A

Difficulty: Medium

Category: Command of Evidence

Getting to the Answer: Review your answer to the previous question. Locate the answer choice that directly supports the conclusion you drew. (A) is correct. It provides the best support for the idea that Phileas Fogg is a man of habit and routine. The word “habitual” (line 8) and the fact that his table was prepared ahead of time for him suggest that Fogg followed this routine regularly.

None of the incorrect choices addresses Fogg’s fondness for routine. Choice (B) supports the idea that Fogg is skilled in cutting open his newspaper, not that he enjoys routine. (C) describes the routine passing of the time but does not mention Fogg. (D) describes the bank robber and does not mention Fogg at all.

11. D

Difficulty: Medium

Category: Vocab-in-Context

Getting to the Answer: Locate context clues to help determine the meaning of the word. Predict a meaning for the word and then match it to the closest answer

choice. The sentence describes Fogg arriving at the club and going to his usual table. A good prediction is simply the word “went.” Look for the nearest match in the answers. (D) fits the tone and context of the sentence and is correct.

Choice (A) is a common definition for “repaired” but does not make sense in the context. You cannot *fixed* to the dining-room. (B) subtly changes the meaning of the sentence. Although you may think Fogg is returning to his table since it’s his “habitual” table, the text is describing events as they occur and not referring to what may have happened earlier. (C) is not supported by the passage; there is no evidence that Fogg is moving with great force or anger.

12. A

Difficulty: Medium

Category: Inference

Getting to the Answer: Review the first paragraph of the passage before choosing an answer. Fogg is very methodical, he walks to the club, reads two newspapers, has dinner, reads another newspaper, and is joined by the men with whom he plays cards. (A) is correct because not only does Fogg read three newspapers daily, but he also later chimes in with a comment on the robbery the other men are discussing based on the information he learned in the paper.

There is no mention of politics, so (B) is incorrect. Although Fogg does comment on the bank robbery, his comment is a neutral observation about the description of the perpetrator, not “strong opinions about crime,” so (C) is incorrect. (D) is incorrect because Fogg’s occupation is not mentioned in the excerpt.

13. D

Difficulty: Easy

Category: Command of Evidence

Getting to the Answer: Review your answer to the previous question. Decide which lines of text show Fogg’s knowledge of current events. (D) is correct. In these lines, Fogg interjects with additional information from the newspaper about a crime that is a current event.

Choice (A) simply describes Fogg receiving and preparing one of his papers. (B) describes his partners gathering in the reading room and says nothing about Fogg himself. (C) is describing the bank robber, not Fogg.

14. A

Difficulty: Easy**Category:** Vocab-in-Context

Getting to the Answer: Find context clues in the target sentence. Predict the meaning of the word and look for a match among the answer choices. “Functionary” (line 51) refers back to the “principal cashier” (line 50) mentioned earlier in the sentence. When you see two related answer choices, such as “official” and “servant,” pay attention to the tone and specific context clues to help you choose. **(A)** is correct; if substituted back into the sentence, the meaning of the sentence is unchanged.

Choice (B) is incorrect because you cannot refer to a “cashier” as “money.” (C), “servant,” is incorrect because it implies a hierarchy that is not present in the passage. Similarly, there is no evidence in the passage that the “cashier” is a “criminal,” so (D) is incorrect.

15. B

Difficulty: Medium**Category:** Detail

Getting to the Answer: Locate the portion of the text that discusses the bank. Your passage map for paragraph 11 should note a lack of security at the bank. This paragraph describes the lack of security measures at the bank that led to a theft in broad daylight; lines 55–58 note a lack of guards or protective gratings. **(B)** is correct.

Choice (A) is a distortion of information in the excerpt. Lines 53–55 state that the bank had faith in its customers, not that the customers have faith in the bank. (C) and (D) are not mentioned in the passage at all.

16. C

Difficulty: Medium**Category:** Inference

Getting to the Answer: Find the part of the passage that describes the thief. Locate sentences that focus on a description of the suspect. Summarize the details in a one-sentence description. Lines 76–80 (“On the day . . . crime was committed”) describe the suspect as a gentleman. **(C)** is correct because the passage suggests that the police do not believe the man to be a professional thief due to the description of his appearance and demeanor.

Choice (A) may be true but is not presented as a reason the thief was not professional. (B) and (D) are not mentioned in the passage at all.

17. B

Difficulty: Medium**Category:** Function

Getting to the Answer: Reread the cited line. Concentrate on how the sentence affects the text surrounding it. Examining the surrounding text shows that this comment occurs during a discussion about the thief being on the run. Fogg has silently listened to the conversation to this point, but now quietly interjects. This suggests that Fogg will have more to say about the topic; **(B)** is correct.

(A) is extreme. “Ominous” foreshadows a bad or unpleasant event, and the text simply provides Fogg’s view without any negative connotations. (C) is a misused detail. The passage does describe Fogg’s demeanor, but the statement in the line reference for the question does not. (D) may be tempting if you’re familiar with the plot of the book from which this excerpt is drawn, but remember, your answers on the SAT must be based only on the given passage. Since the line reference is the last line in the passage, it cannot be introducing the conflict of the plot of this excerpt.