

Practice

Skim each passage. Read the question. Then read the passage and answer the question.

1.

Only limited statistical data exist concerning the safety of American mills and factories prior to 1870. What is known is that employers tended to have only minimal interest in workplace safety. Because of that, American industry developed production methods that were both highly profitable and often extremely hazardous. Following the Civil War, with its great loss of life, many young and very inexperienced workers entered the job market. The factories where they found work were filled with dangerous machines driven by a jumble of overhead belts, pulleys, and gears. The air workers breathed was filled with toxic substances, and tragic fires were a frequent occurrence. Reports from various state labor bureaus in the 1870s described workplace tragedies, some quite grisly, which led early social reformers to call for state governments to enact factory safety and health laws. In 1877, Massachusetts became the first state to pass a factory inspection law which required guarding belts, shafts, and gears; protection on elevators; and adequate fire exits. Other states followed suit.

What can be inferred about the reasons for an inexperienced workforce following the Civil War?

- (A) Many of the experienced workers had died during the war.
- (B) Workers lacked experience because of military duty during the war.
- (C) Experienced workers did not want to work with dangerous machines.
- (D) Employers did not want to pay the higher wages demanded by experienced workers.

2.

The Navajos (who also refer to themselves as Diné) use sand painting in extensive rituals called “sings”. Sings are ceremonies that involve many relatives and friends and are intended to bless, protect, or heal the individual for whom they are held. Sand painting plays a central role in the ceremony, but singing and dancing are also included. A design specific to the particular ritual is painted with sand, charcoal, pollen, and clay on the ground inside the hogan. The images portray mountains and other features of the region, the gods who created them, and legends and stories from the past. The sand painting is considered a living being: when the “patient” lies on the image, the power of the gods is absorbed, and harmony is restored within his or her life. When the ritual is completed, the sand and other elements are returned to the earth.

What can be inferred about the Navajos’ sand painting designs?

- (A) Most are bright and colorful.
- (B) They always depict dancing and singing.
- (C) The same designs are used repeatedly.
- (D) The sand paintings are kept and reused.

3.

When O'Neill started writing plays, the American stage was dominated by farce, a few European dramas, and melodrama. Melodrama is a genre characterized by emotional characters, exciting action-filled scenes, and a moralistic tone, and O'Neill's first plays were written in this style. However, they focused on unsavory situations and characters (destitute women, derelicts, lonely sailors) that had never been considered proper subjects for the stage. O'Neill did not really feel at home with the melodramatic style of writing, which he came to see as pandering to the audience. After having experimented with this genre, O'Neill turned his back on its conventions and embraced the naturalism of European playwrights, such as Henrik Ibsen and Émile Zola, who strove to depict "real" life situations, complex characterization, and psychological realism.

O'Neill's early plays, which include the Pulitzer Prize-winner *Anna Christie*, are often called the "sea plays" because most are set near or on the sea. Eschewing melodramatic conventions, O'Neill asked audiences to identify with desperate people and other morally ambiguous characters. Often, good characters ended badly; not only had O'Neill created a new kind of American naturalism, he had created America's first tragedies.

Which of the following can be inferred about O'Neill's writing?

- (A) He followed the conventions of his times.
- (B) He preferred realism to melodrama.
- (C) His plays generally had happy endings.
- (D) His characters had high morals.

4.

Mining his unhappy childhood for themes and characters, he wrote his most autobiographical plays: *Long Day's Journey into Night*, *The Iceman Cometh*, and *Moon for the Misbegotten*. These plays are notable for their length and repetition of themes and ideas.

These plays show O'Neill bringing together his previous themes in powerful and haunting ways. *Long Day's Journey into Night*, generally regarded as his best play, brings together several lost souls in the same family. As in previous plays, these characters' pipe dreams are the only way they can sustain themselves in a hostile world. The mother is a drug addict, the father is a failed actor who has spent his life compromising his ideals in favor of gratifying the audience's tastes, the older son is a bitter alcoholic, and the younger son is a disillusioned invalid. Over the course of one day, the members of the family lose their pipe dreams and struggle to find some sense of purpose in their lives. It is in these later plays, and especially *Long Day's Journey into Night*, that O'Neill finally found the dramatic form that expressed his inner vision.

What does the author imply about O'Neill's family?

- (A) O'Neill's relatives shared many of his ideas.
- (B) Drug and alcohol problems plagued the O'Neill family.
- (C) Many of O'Neill's relatives were involved in the theater.
- (D) The family was extremely supportive of O'Neill's work.

Skill 5 Purpose

Each passage has from zero to two purpose questions. A purpose question asks you to determine *why* information was included in the passage.

Examples

The author of the passage details planting methods because

Why does the author mention the Great Lakes?

The author discusses new technology in paragraph 3 so that

Be careful about words that introduce reasons, such as *to provide*, *to argue*, *to criticize*, *to note*. These may be used in the answer choices to distract you. Read carefully and look throughout the passage for statements that provide a reason.

Tip

This type of question can be challenging because the reasons are not expressly stated in the passage. You may have to analyze information in multiple sentences in order to arrive at the purpose.

Practice

Skim each passage. Read the question. Then read the passage and answer the question.

1.

Only two years later, New York became the first state to enact a Workmen's Compensation Law. Rather than requiring injured workers to sue their employers and prove the employer was at fault, the law automatically compensated all injuries at predetermined rates. Samuel Gompers, the head of the American Federation of Labor, had studied a similar compensation law in Germany. The law appealed to American businesses because it made costs predictable and reduced labor issues. It appealed to unions and other industry reformers because it promised more predictable benefits. Between 1911 and 1921, forty-four states passed similar laws.

The author mentions that Samuel Gompers studied a German law in order to

- (A) illustrate how well-educated labor leaders were
- (B) contrast German labor laws with American labor laws
- (C) argue that Germany was ahead of the United States in safety standards
- (D) show that labor unions supported the new Workmen's Compensation Law

2.

By 1968, safety standards were again slipping. Each year more than 14,000 workers were killed and 2.2 million were injured on the job. President Lyndon Johnson cited inadequate standards, lagging research, and a patchwork of ineffective federal laws when he called on Congress to enact a comprehensive new job-safety and health program. The proposed legislation failed in committee, however, and never came to a vote.

Why does the author mention the numbers of workers killed and injured?

- (A) To support the statement that safety standards were getting worse
- (B) To compare safety standards in 1968 to previous years
- (C) To show how many workers were benefiting from federal laws
- (D) To explain why President Johnson's legislation failed in committee

3.

Aboriginal art is rooted in Dreamtime, the time when ancestor spirits dreamed the earth and its inhabitants into being. Dreamtime, unlike ordinary chronological time, exists simultaneously in the past, present, and future. Aboriginal clans in Australia employ ritual activities to access Dreamtime and the power found in specific places. Ground art, songs, and dance enact and bring into present-day experience the ancestral spirits who created the local animals, plants, and rock formations, as well as events in the clan's past, such as successful hunts and the discovery of water sources.

Why does the author discuss the aboriginal concept of Dreamtime?

- (A) To contrast it with everyday aboriginal life
- (B) To give an example of a traditional aboriginal belief
- (C) To explain the reasons behind certain aboriginal rituals
- (D) To describe an important time in the aboriginal calendar

4.

If two plates run into each other, then somewhere else, plates must move away from each other. The second type of volcano occurs as a result of spreading along the middle of the ocean floors. As the crust thins when the plates separate, new, molten rock rises to the surface, and it often forms volcanoes. Much of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge is a series of vents and volcanoes under the ocean. The ridge is entirely underwater, except for the volcanoes of Iceland. The north-south axis of Iceland is marked by cracks, called vents or fissures, where the nearly constant volcanic activity is visible on the surface.

Why does the author mention the Mid-Atlantic Ridge?

- (A) To explain how Iceland was formed
- (B) To contrast its volcanoes with those of Iceland
- (C) To describe what is beneath the Atlantic Ocean
- (D) To give an example of what results when plates separate

Skill 6 Reference

Each passage has from zero to two reference questions. A reference question asks you to determine the noun or noun phrase that a pronoun refers to. The pronoun will be highlighted in the passage.

Examples

The word **them** in paragraph 3 refers to

Which in paragraph 2 refers to