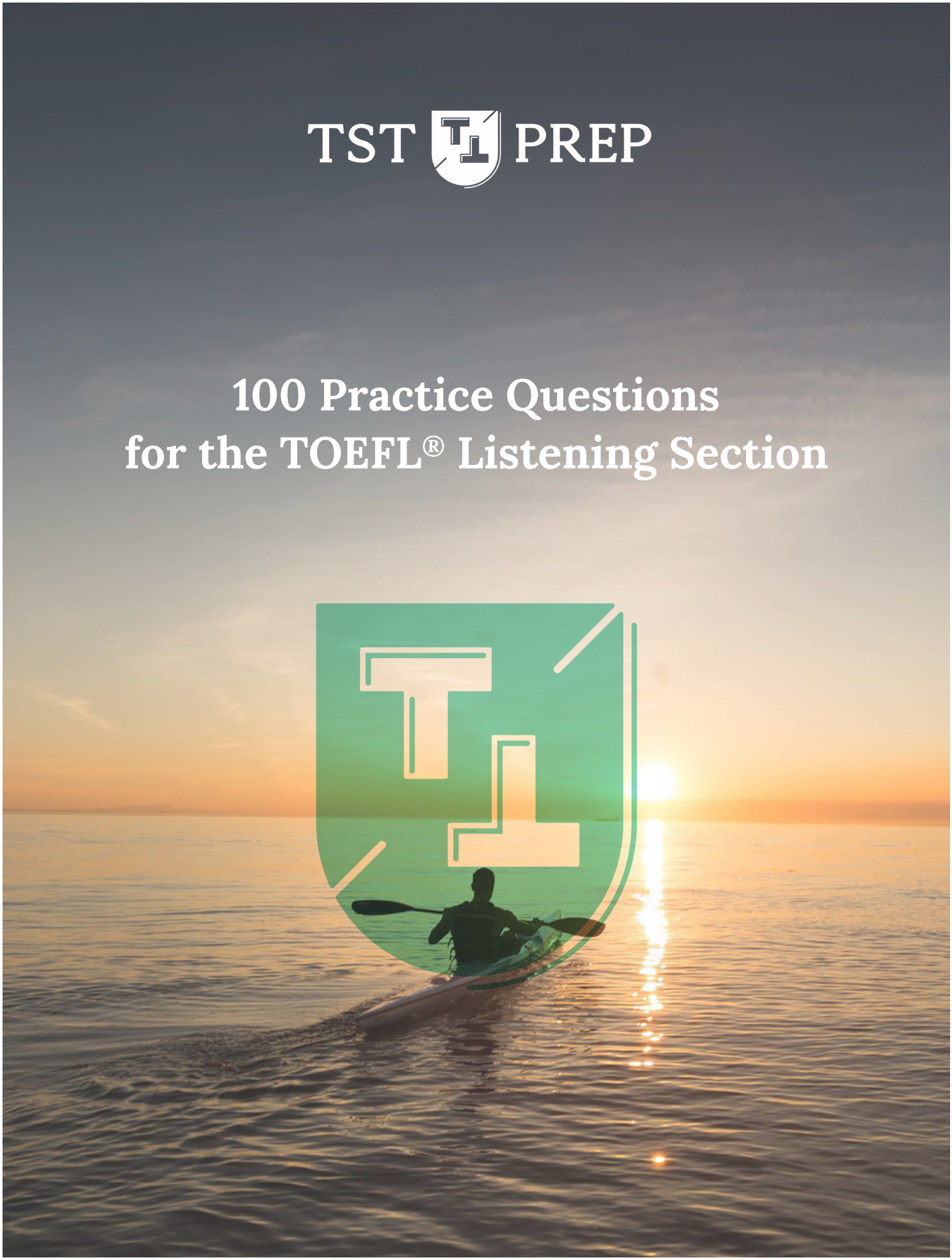
TST PREP

100 Practice Questions for the TOEFL® Listening Section



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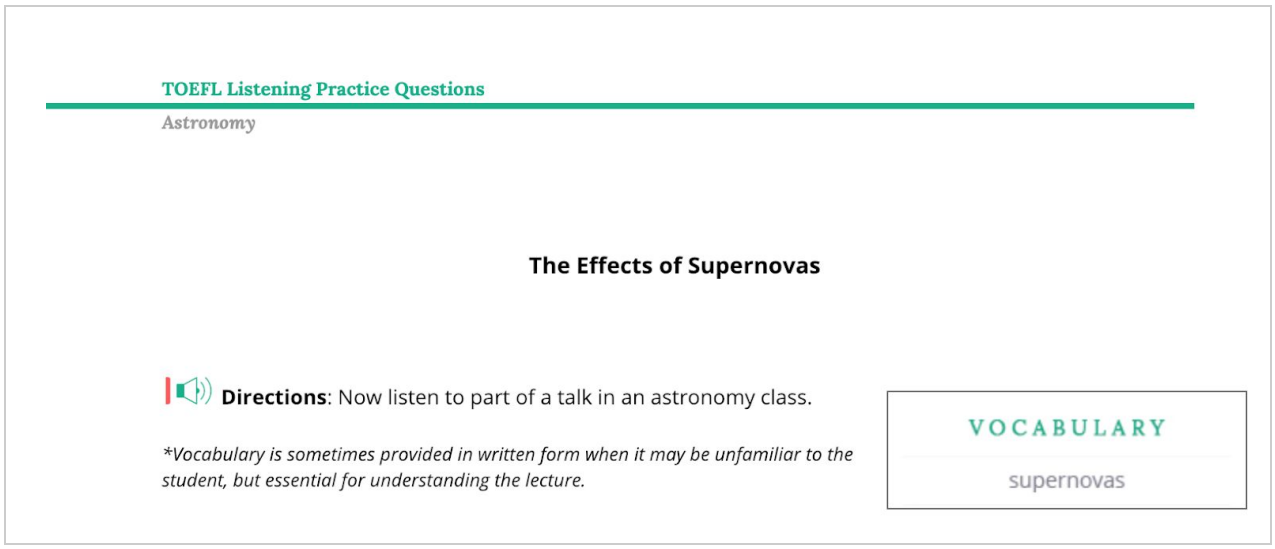
How to Use This Book

This book is a compilation of 50 short listening passages and 100 questions for the TOEFL listening section. Most audio passages last between 1-3 minutes and fall under one of the following topics: ***Astronomy, World History, American History, Anatomy and Physiology, Biology, Psychology, Sociology, Economics, Chemistry, and Physics.***

*****Note that there are only academic passages in this book**. On the TOEFL, you will have to listen to five passages, two conversations, and three lectures, but we have only included lectures here because they are more challenging to understand.

The first thing you may notice is that the layout is different from the TOEFL. Most importantly, the link to the audio passage and the questions about the passage share the same page. **Be sure to set up your screen so that you only see the link and vocabulary first**. Wait until after you listen to the passage to read the questions (if you want to mimic the test conditions). Check the screenshot below to see what I mean.


TOEFL Listening Practice Questions

Astronomy

The Effects of Supernovas

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in an astronomy class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

supernovas

Each passage will be followed by just two questions. On the TOEFL exam, you can expect six questions after each academic lecture. There are eight question types that could possibly show up after a given passage:

- *Gist-Content questions*
- *Gist-Purpose questions*
- *Detail questions*
- *Understanding the Speaker's Attitude questions*
- *Understanding the Function questions*
- *Making Inferences questions*
- *Understanding Organization questions*
- *Connecting Content questions*

We encourage you to study with a timer so you can use this practice to improve your listening comprehension and speed. On test day, after the listening finishes, you will have about 35 seconds to answer each question.

Good luck and thanks for letting us help you on your journey.

Practice Questions for the TOEFL® Listening Section

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Practice for the TOEFL® Listening Section

Anatomy and Physiology

Human Movement

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in an anatomy class.

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. What actions of human movement are made consciously?

a. Contracting muscle cells to focus your vision
b. Coordinating groups of muscles to breathe in and out
c. Moving food through your digestive tract after you have eaten
d. Contracting muscles to move your bones in order to walk

2. What does the lecturer imply when she says this?

a. Reading is tiring because there are so many internal functions working
b. Moving involves not just what you notice on the outside, but also what goes unnoticed on the inside
c. Contracting and relaxing muscle cells is a necessary component of the reading process, along with other internal functions
d. Regulating body functions is a challenging task that requires conscious effort

The Invention of the X-Ray

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in an anatomy class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

Wilhelm Röntgen

electromagnetic radiation

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. What are X-rays best used for?

a. To visualize teeth, bones, and other hard structures of the body
b. To discover cancer in the body
c. To damage cancerous cells
d. To investigate the human body

2. Why does the professor say this?

a. The damaging effects of x-rays were not understood until many years after their introduction
b. X-rays were not appreciated for the first few years after discovery
c. People did not care about the side effects of x-ray use until much later
d. It took several years for side effects to appear

Human Anatomy

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in an anatomy class.

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. What is the lecture mainly about?

- **a.** Dissecting dead human bodies
- **b.** Background information on the study of human bodies
- **c.** What happens when a body is dissected
- **d.** Physicians who learn about the wounds of soldiers and other injuries

2. Why does the professor mention the Greek root of the word *anatomy*?

- **a.** To help explain what it means to study human anatomy
- **b.** To describe where the word *anatomy* comes from
- **c.** To highlight the meaning of *anatomy*
- **d.** To prove that human anatomy involves dissecting humans

The Internal Compartments of the Human Body

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in an anatomy class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

the intestinal tract

cell membrane

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. What is the topic of this lecture?

a. How the human body is organized
b. How cells inside the body are kept separate from what's outside the body
c. The function of cell membranes
d. Human anatomy

2. Why does the professor talk about the intestinal tract?

a. To prove that the body is well organized into compartments
b. To explain the function of body compartments
c. To show how a particular body compartment works to keep out potential threats
d. To demonstrate the importance of the intestinal tract to the organization of the body

CPR

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in an anatomy class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

cardiopulmonary resuscitation
CPR

xiphoid process

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. What does the professor imply about the utility of CPR training?

- **a.** Training is essential to avoid severely hurting a patient
- **b.** Anyone can do CPR
- **c.** CPR should only be done by medical professionals
- **d.** Children should also be trained in CPR

2. What can happen if the hands are placed too low on the sternum when performing CPR?

- **a.** The xiphoid process can get pushed into the liver
- **b.** The heart won't receive enough pressure to increase blood flow
- **c.** The patient's ribs will break
- **d.** The patient will likely die

Anatomy and Physiology Questions
Answer Key

Human Movement

Question 1 - D (detail)

The answer is given in the last sentence of the lecture: "*Consciously, of course, you contract your skeletal muscles to move the bones of your skeleton to get from one place to another, and to carry out all of the activities of your daily life.*"

Question 2 - B (inference)

In this situation, the professor lists a bunch of different functions within the human body that most people are never aware of, which is why **B** makes the most sense. You can eliminate **A** because reading is not the most important point, neither is "*contracting and relaxing muscle cells*" in choice **C**.

Transcript

"Human movement includes not only actions at the joints of the body but also the motion of individual organs and even individual cells. As you read these words, red and white blood cells are moving throughout your body, muscle cells are contracting and relaxing to maintain your posture and to focus your vision, and glands are secreting chemicals to regulate body functions. Your body is coordinating the action of entire muscle groups to enable you to move air into and out of your lungs, to push blood throughout your body, and to propel the food you have eaten through your digestive tract. Consciously, of course, you contract your skeletal muscles to move the bones of your skeleton to get from one place to another, and to carry out all of the activities of your daily life."

The Invention of the X-Ray

Question 1 - A (detail)

Although the lecturer mentions cancer and using the x-ray does give us insight into the human body, the X-ray specifically is good for seeing bones. "*Thus, X-rays are best used to visualize hard body structures such as teeth and bones.*"

Question 2 - A (function)

B seems correct because it uses the same wording as the question (appreciate), but this is not the meaning of the lecturer's sentence. In this case, to appreciate the side effects is explaining that the side effects were not quite understood or well-known.

Transcript

"German physicist Wilhelm Röntgen (1845–1923) was experimenting with electrical current when he discovered that a mysterious and invisible "ray" would pass through his flesh but leave an outline of his bones on a screen coated with a metal compound. In 1895, Röntgen made the first durable record of the internal parts of a living human: an "X-ray" image (as it came to be called) of his wife's hand. Scientists around the world quickly began their own experiments with X-rays, and by 1900, X-rays were widely used to detect a variety of injuries and diseases. In 1901, Röntgen was awarded the first Nobel Prize for physics for his work in this field.

The X-ray is a form of high energy electromagnetic radiation with a short wavelength capable of penetrating solids and ionizing gases. As they are used in medicine, X-rays are emitted from an X-ray machine and directed toward a specially treated metallic plate placed behind the patient's body. The beam of radiation results in darkening of the X-ray plate. X-rays are slightly impeded by soft tissues, which show up as gray on the X-ray plate, whereas hard tissues, such as bone, largely block the rays, producing a light-toned "shadow." Thus, X-rays are best used to visualize hard body structures such as teeth and bones. Like many forms of high energy radiation, however, X-rays are capable of damaging cells and initiating changes that can lead to cancer. This danger of excessive exposure to X-rays was not fully appreciated for many years after their widespread use."

Human Anatomy

Question 1 - B (main idea)

B is the correct answer because the other options are too specific to certain points of the text, whereas B encompasses the entire passage. **A** and **C** are also very similar and therefore we can eliminate them, and **D** is too specific to one point of the passage.

Question 2 - A (organizational why)

This extra bit of information that the lecturer gives is to further explain what it means to study human anatomy. The lecturer is not proving anything, as it is a fact that studying human anatomy means to study the human body and often involves dissecting the body to see the structures within.

Transcript

"Human anatomy is the scientific study of the body's structures. Some of these structures are very small and can only be observed and analyzed with the assistance of a microscope. Other larger structures can readily be seen, manipulated, measured, and weighed.

The word "anatomy" comes from a Greek root that means "to cut apart." Human anatomy was first studied by observing the exterior of the body and observing the wounds of soldiers and other injuries. Later, physicians were allowed to dissect bodies of the dead to augment their knowledge. When a body is dissected, its structures are cut apart in order to observe their physical attributes and their relationships to one another. Dissection is still used in medical schools, anatomy courses, and in pathology labs."

The Internal Compartments of the Human Body

Question 1 - A (main idea)

A is the correct answer because the topic of the passage is revealed in the first sentence. *"A human body consists of trillions of cells organized in a way that maintains distinct internal compartments."* **B** and **C** are specific to certain points mentioned in the passage and **D** is too broad.

Question 2 - C (organizational why)

The lecturer mentions the intestinal tract to give an example (as the lecturer explicitly says, for example) of how some compartments are meant to separate the body from external threats, mentioned in the sentences directly before. *"These compartments keep body cells separated from external environmental threats and keep the cells moist and nourished. They also separate internal body fluids from the countless microorganisms that grow on body surfaces, including the lining of certain tracts, or passageways."*

Transcript

"A human body consists of trillions of cells organized in a way that maintains distinct internal compartments. These compartments keep body cells separated from external environmental threats and keep the cells moist and nourished. They also separate internal body fluids from the countless microorganisms that grow on body surfaces, including the lining of certain tracts, or passageways. The intestinal tract, for example, is home to even more bacteria cells than the total of all human cells in the body, yet these bacteria are outside the body and cannot be allowed to circulate freely inside the body.

Cells, for example, have a cell membrane (also referred to as the plasma membrane) that keeps the intracellular environment—the fluids and organelles—separate from the extracellular environment. Blood vessels keep blood inside a closed circulatory system, and nerves and muscles are wrapped in connective tissue sheaths that separate them from surrounding structures. In the chest and abdomen, a variety of internal membranes keep major organs such as the lungs, heart, and kidneys separate from others."

CPR

Question 1 - A (inference)

We can eliminate **B** because the professor talks extensively about how dangerous CPR can be without proper training. However, we can also eliminate **D** because the professor never says anything about children. Likewise, **C** is similar to **D** in the sense that it excludes the rest of the population. Instead, A is the correct answer because it implies that anyone can be trained to do CPR and they should be trained in order to avoid hurting someone. The professor says, "*Proper training is essential. This proven life-sustaining technique is so valuable that virtually all medical personnel as well as concerned members of the public should be certified and routinely recertified in its application.*"

Question 2 - A (detail)

The answer to this question is heard near the end of the lecture. The professor says, "*It is also possible, if the hands are placed too low on the sternum, to manually drive the xiphoid process into the liver, a consequence that may prove fatal for the patient.*"

Transcript

"The position of the heart in the chest allows for individuals to apply an emergency technique known as cardiopulmonary resuscitation, commonly referred to as CPR, if the heart of a patient should stop. By applying pressure with the flat portion of one hand on the sternum, it is possible to manually compress the blood within the heart enough to push some of the blood within it into the major arteries. This is particularly critical for the brain, as irreversible damage and death of neurons occur within minutes of loss of blood flow. Current standards call for compression of the chest at least 5 centimeters deep and at a rate of 100 compressions per minute. At this stage, the emphasis is on performing high-quality chest compressions, rather than providing artificial respiration. CPR is generally performed until the patient regains heart activity or is declared dead by an experienced healthcare professional.

When performed by untrained individuals, CPR can result in broken ribs and can inflict additional severe damage on the patient. It is also possible if the hands are placed too low, to manually drive the xiphoid process into the liver, a consequence that may prove fatal for the patient. Proper training is essential. This proven life-sustaining technique is so valuable that virtually all medical personnel as well as concerned members of the public should be certified and routinely recertified in its application."

Practice for the TOEFL® Listening Section

Astronomy

Stellar Associations

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in an astronomy class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY
Orion
O Stars
interstellar

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. What is the professor implying when he says this?

a. Star formations are like newly constructed buildings.
b. A newly constructed building is a useful analogy for stellar associations.
c. New stars have construction materials around them too.
d. We can build stars just like we build buildings.

2. What are O stars?

a. A star that was formed in the last million years or so
b. Stars that are about 100-500 light-years in diameter
c. Stars that are over a million times brighter than the Sun
d. A group of about 50 stars that are often hidden from our view because they are surrounded by gas and dust

Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in an astronomy class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY
Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar
white dwarf stars
Sir Arthur Eddington Henry Norris Russell

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. Why does the professor mention other astronomers such as Sir Arthur Eddington and Henry Norris Russell?

a. To show that Chandra had few supporters
b. To explain why Chandra's theories were incorrect
c. To prove that Chandra's theories were not accepted at the time
d. To introduce the theories of other astronomers

2. Why does the professor say this?

a. To emphasize the importance of Chandra's work
b. To prove that Chandra's theories were correct
c. To show the appreciation the people had for physicists in the 1980s
d. To explain that Chandra's later work wasn't as important

The Effects of Supernovas

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in an astronomy class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

supernova

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. According to the professor, what may have caused the extinction of sea creatures about two million years ago?

a. A supernova approximately 50 light-years from Earth
b. A supernova approximately 100 light-years from Earth
c. A supernova approximately 120 light-years from Earth
d. A supernova, but it is unclear how far it was from the Earth

2. Why does the professor say this?

a. To further explain what happens when a planet happens to be near a supernova
b. To compare a supernova explosion to a violent neighborhood during wartime
c. To prove that supernovas are destructive
d. To highlight the difference between life on Earth and other planets

Supernovas in History

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in an astronomy class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY
supernova
Lupus

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. What is the lecture mainly about?

a. What we can learn from historical records about supernovas
b. Why it's important to study supernova explosions
c. Why we need historical records to find out about supernova explosions
d. Using historical records to figure out where a supernova explosion occurred

2. What is implied by the professor about supernovas?

a. Supernovas are only interesting to see once in a while
b. They only happen once every thousand years
c. It would be unlike anything else we observe in the present-day sky
d. They are almost impossible to see

Black Holes and the Theory of Relativity

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in an astronomy class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

white dwarf
neutron star

Albert Einstein

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. What does the professor imply about black holes?

a. They are mysterious and difficult to understand
b. It is impossible to create an accurate theory to describe them
c. Scientists have given up on trying to learn more about them since 1916
d. We should know more about black holes by now

2. Why does the professor say this?

a. To prove that a star dying is a major event
b. To emphasize the intensity of gravity that causes the star to collapse
c. To show what happens when a star dies
d. To highlight the difference between large and small stars

Astronomy Questions
Answer Key

Stellar Associations

Question 1 - B (inference)

We can eliminate **A**, **C**, and **D** because they are too literal for something to be implied. That leaves us with **B**. Since space can be rather abstract, astronomers often use familiar, earthly examples as analogies to help illustrate ideas about space.

Question 2 - C (detail)

Around the middle of the lecture the professor says, "*Since O stars, stars that are over a million times brighter than our own sun, go through their entire lives in only about a million years, they would not still be around unless star formation has occurred recently.*"

Transcript

"An association is a group of extremely young stars, typically containing 5 to 50 hot, bright stars scattered over a region of space some 100–500 light-years in diameter. As an example, most of the stars in the constellation Orion form one of the nearest stellar associations. Associations also contain hundreds to thousands of low-mass stars, but these are much harder to see. The presence of really hot and bright stars indicates that star formation in the association has occurred in the last million years or so. Since O stars, stars that are over a million times brighter than our own sun, go through their entire lives in only about a million years, they would not still be around unless star formation occurred recently. It is therefore not surprising that associations are found in regions rich in the gas and dust required to form new stars. It's like a brand-new building still surrounded by some of the construction materials used to build it and with the landscape still showing signs of construction."

Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar

Question 1 - C (organization)

It helps to think of the main idea to better answer this question. Thus, we can eliminate **B** and **D** (**B** is just wrong anyway) since they don't fit in with the main idea. **A** and **C** similarly fit in with the main idea. However, **C** is more correct since we are more interested in Chandra's theory than the support he had.

Question 2 - A (function)

The last couple of sentences in the lecture are dedicated to explaining that Chandra's theories actually were correct and contributed to our knowledge today. Thus, we can first eliminate **D**. We can also eliminate **C** because it doesn't have to do with the main idea at all. **B** is not correct, because the fact that he got a Nobel Prize doesn't necessarily prove anything, rather it is a symbol of the importance of his work.

Transcript

"Born in 1910 in India, Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar, known as Chandra to his friends and colleagues, grew up in a home that encouraged scholarship and an interest in science. His uncle, C. V. Raman, was a physicist who won the 1930 Nobel Prize. A precocious student, Chandra tried to read as much as he could about the latest ideas in physics and astronomy, although obtaining technical books was not easy in India at the time. He finished college at age 19 and won a scholarship to study in England. It was during the long boat voyage to get to graduate school that he first began doing calculations about the structure of white dwarf stars.

Chandra developed his ideas during and after his studies as a graduate student, showing that white dwarfs with masses greater than 1.4 times the mass of the Sun cannot exist and that the theory predicts the existence of other kinds of stellar corpses. His calculations soon brought him into conflict with certain distinguished astronomers, including Sir Arthur Eddington, who publicly ridiculed Chandra's ideas. At a number of meetings of astronomers, such leaders in the field as Henry Norris Russell refused to give Chandra the opportunity to defend his ideas, while allowing his more senior critics lots of time to criticize them.

Yet Chandra persevered, writing books and articles about his theories, which turned out not only to be correct but to lay the foundation for much of our modern understanding of the death of stars. In 1983, he received the Nobel Prize in physics for this early work."

The Effects of Supernovas

Question 1 - C (detail)

The professor, while talking about safe distances away from supernovas, directly states that "*One minor extinction of sea creatures about 2 million years ago on Earth may actually have been caused by a supernova at a distance of about 120 light-years.*" This is why **C** is the correct answer.

Question 2 - A (function)

The entire middle section is dedicated to explaining what it would be like to be near a supernova explosion by chance. The professor explains in several different ways, and this particular sentence is one of the professor's explanations. **D** may look correct, but it's wrong because this excerpt is not intended to explain the difference between lives on other planets but just to compare how chance plays a role in survival both on Earth and in space.

Transcript

"A supernova is, basically, when a star explodes. It occurs during the last stage of a star's life, and usually only occurs in large stars like white dwarfs. While these stellar explosions may appear beautiful to spectators on earth, they also have terrible consequences for nearby stars and planets.

Suppose a life form has the misfortune to develop around a star that happens to lie near a massive star destined to become a supernova. Such life forms may find themselves extinct when the harsh radiation and high-energy particles from the neighboring star's explosion reach their world. Life may well have formed around a number of pleasantly stable stars only to be wiped out because a massive nearby star suddenly went supernova. Just as children born in a war zone may find themselves the unjust victims of their violent neighborhood, life too close to a star that goes supernova may fall prey to having been born in the wrong place at the wrong time. What is a safe distance to be from a supernova explosion? A lot depends on the violence of the particular explosion, what type of supernova it is, and what level of destruction we are willing to accept. Calculations suggest that a supernova less than 50 light-years away from us would certainly end all life on Earth and that even one 100 light-years away would have drastic consequences for the radiation levels here. One minor extinction of sea creatures about 2 million years ago on Earth may actually have been caused by a supernova at a distance of about 120 light-years.

The good news is that there are at present no massive stars that promise to become supernova within 50 light-years of the Sun."

Supernovas in History

1. D (main idea)

There is no information about the importance of supernovas, so we can eliminate **B**. **A**, **C**, and **D** all seem like possible correct answers because they all mention something about history and supernovas. **D** is the best answer because the professor discusses how historical records can be used to try to figure out when supernova explosions occurred.

2. C (inference)

The professor says things like "*No one had seen anything like it before*" and "*a few were so spectacular that they were clearly seen and recorded by sky watchers and historians at the time.*" We can eliminate **A** because the professor implies that they are interesting all the time, just that some aren't noticeable. Likewise, we don't know how rare they are, so we can eliminate **B**. **D** isn't true either because we can see some of them very well.

Transcript

"Although many supernova explosions in our own Galaxy have gone unnoticed, a few were so spectacular that they were clearly seen and recorded by sky watchers and historians at the time. We can use these records, going back two thousand years, to help us pinpoint where the exploding stars were and thus where to look for their remnants today.

The most dramatic supernova was observed in the year 1006. It appeared in May as a brilliant point of light visible during the daytime, perhaps 100 times brighter than the planet Venus. It was bright enough to cast shadows on the ground during the night and was recorded with amazement and fear by observers all over Europe and Asia. No one had seen anything like it before.

Astronomers David Clark and Richard Stephenson have looked through records from around the world to find more than 20 reports of the 1006 supernova. This has allowed them to determine with some accuracy where in the sky the explosion occurred. They place it in the modern constellation of Lupus; at roughly the position they have determined, we find a supernova remnant, now quite faint. From the way its materials are expanding, it indeed appears to be about 1000 years old."

Black Holes and the Theory of Relativity

Question 1 - A (inference)

We can understand the answer to this question based on the last couple of sentences in the lecture. First, the professor says, "*A star in which this occurs may become one of the strangest objects ever predicted by theory—a black hole.*" This is followed up by saying that our "*best theory*" is dated all the way back to 1916, so we really don't know that much about black holes. They are strange, mysterious, and difficult to understand. Therefore, unlike anything else.

Question 2 - B (function)

We know that **B** is the correct answer because right after the professor says this, the discussion continues about how great the force of gravity is when a large star collapses and that nothing can stop a star like this from collapsing once it starts.

Transcript

"Most stars end their lives as stars known as white dwarfs or neutron stars. When a very massive star ends its life, not even the repulsion between densely packed neutrons can support the core against its own weight. If the remaining mass of the star's core is more than about three times that of the Sun, scientific theory predicts that no known force can stop it from collapsing forever. Gravity simply overwhelms all other forces and crushes the middle of the star until it occupies a small area. A star in which this occurs may become one of the strangest objects ever predicted by theory—a black hole.

To understand what a black hole is like and how it influences its surroundings, we need a theory that can describe the action of gravity under such extreme circumstances. To date, our best theory of gravity is the general theory of relativity, which was put forward in 1916 by Albert Einstein."

Practice for the TOEFL® Listening Section

Chemistry

Vaporization and Condensation

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in a chemistry class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

gas phase
condensed phase

condensation
vaporization

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. What is the lecture mainly about?

- **a.** How vaporization and condensation function in equilibrium
- **b.** Characteristics of equilibriums
- **c.** The difference between condensation and vaporization
- **d.** The effects of vapor pressure on equilibrium

2. What is the definition of condensation?

- **a.** The process of gas molecules colliding in a closed container
- **b.** The process in which molecules change from the gas phase to the liquid phase
- **c.** The process in which vapor finds equilibrium in a closed container
- **d.** The process of continual exchange between gaseous molecules

Decompression Sickness or "The Bends"

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in a chemistry class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

decompression sickness

the bends

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. What is the lecture mainly about?

a. How to avoid decompression sickness
b. The pressure changes and possible effects one might experience while diving
c. Which gases are soluble in water
d. Scuba diving and the effects of changing depths at a rapid pace

2. What happens if a diver ascends to the water's surface too rapidly?

a. The diver will die
b. Gasses dissolve in the diver's blood
c. Gasses leave the diver's blood quickly and may form bubbles
d. The diver inhales too many air bubbles, which can lead to death

Culinary Aspects of Chemistry

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in a chemistry class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

acid-base
volatile amines

pickling
brine solution

lactic acid
fermentation

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. Why does the professor discuss putting lemon or vinegar on fish?

- **a.** To explain what happens in a chemical reaction
- **b.** To describe the pickling process
- **c.** To provide an example of how we can use acids in cooking
- **d.** To show that lemon or vinegar makes fish taste better

2. What is implied about pickling from the lecture?

- **a.** Pickling is a complicated process
- **b.** Pickling is a useful way to make vegetables last longer
- **c.** Pickling makes vegetables taste much better
- **d.** Pickling sometimes ruins vegetables

Chemical Dissolution

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in a chemistry class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

soluble ionic solids
aqueous solution

calcium
lactic acid

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. Why does the professor discuss tooth decay?

- **a.** To describe how to prevent tooth decay
- **b.** To explain why it's important to follow a healthy diet
- **c.** To discuss the importance of taking care of your teeth
- **d.** To provide an example of how we can control a certain type of equilibrium

2. Why does the professor say this?

- **a.** To explain different types of equilibriums between an ionic solid and an aqueous solution of its ions
- **b.** To prove that there are many instances in which an ionic solid is in equilibrium with an aqueous solution of its ions
- **c.** To give examples of what the students can do with the information in this lecture
- **d.** To highlight the relevance of the lecture to the real world

The Role of Fluoride

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in a chemistry class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

skeletal fluorosis
thyroid gland

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. What is the professor mainly discussing?

a. The negative effects of consuming excess fluoride
b. The different levels of fluoride in water among different countries
c. Why the US has a limit on fluoride in drinking water
d. The negative effects of under-fluoridated water in other countries

2. What does the professor imply about fluoride?

a. Skeletal fluorosis is rare, so we don't have to worry too much about excess fluoride
b. We should avoid drinking groundwater unless the fluoride levels are regulated
c. Exposure to excess fluoride comes with much more negative effects than benefits
d. Fluoride should be regulated in all countries

Chemistry Questions
Answer Key

Vaporization and Condensation

Question 1 - A (main idea)

Although the professor defines what condensation and vaporization are, there is never a comparison of the two, so we can eliminate **C**. Vapor pressure is never mentioned, eliminating **D**. Likewise, for **B**, equilibriums are mentioned about halfway through, but this is merely to describe the situation that is going on. Thus, **A** is the correct answer.

Question 2 - B (detail)

To answer this question, you have to recall a specific statement in the passage, around the middle, when the professor states that, *"The change from the gas phase to the liquid is called condensation."*

Transcript

"When a liquid vaporizes in a closed container, gas molecules cannot escape. As these gas phase molecules move randomly about, they will occasionally collide with the surface of molecules of the condensed phase, and in some cases, these collisions will result in the molecules re-entering the condensed phase. The change from the gas phase to the liquid is called condensation. When the rate of condensation becomes equal to the rate of vaporization, neither the amount of the liquid nor the amount of the vapor in the container changes. The vapor in the container is then said to be in equilibrium with the liquid. Keep in mind that this is not a static situation, as molecules are continually exchanged between the condensed and gaseous phases."

Decompression Sickness or "The Bends"

Question 1 - B (main idea)

A and **D** seem like plausible answers, but **B** more accurately explains the purpose of the whole lecture. **A** and **D** are more like smaller parts to the whole lecture whereas **B** portrays the entire story.

Question 2 - C (detail)

The professor describes what happens in this situation in the second half of the lecture. The professor says, *"As the diver ascends to the surface of the water, the pressure of the water decreases. If the ascent is too rapid, the gases escaping from the diver's blood may form bubbles that can cause a variety of symptoms ranging from rashes and joint pain to paralysis and death."*

Transcript

"Decompression sickness, or "the bends," is an effect of the increased pressure of the air inhaled by scuba divers when swimming underwater at considerable depths. In addition to the pressure exerted by the atmosphere, divers are subjected to additional pressure due to the water above them. Therefore, the air inhaled by a diver while submerged contains gases that exist at higher levels of pressure within the water, and these gases dissolve into the diver's blood.

As the diver ascends to the surface of the water, the pressure of the water decreases. If the ascent is too rapid, the gases escaping from the diver's blood may form bubbles that can cause a variety of symptoms ranging from rashes and joint pain to paralysis and death. To avoid decompression sickness, divers must ascend from depths at relatively slow speeds, about 10 or 20 meters per minute, or otherwise make several decompression stops, pausing for several minutes at given depths during the ascent."

Culinary Aspects of Chemistry

Question 1 - C (organization)

It's important to think about the main idea of the lecture in order to answer this question. The main idea of the lecture is to discuss how chemistry can be used in cooking, and in particular acid-base chemistry. The professor discusses putting lemon or vinegar on fish because this is an example of acid-base chemistry in cooking.

Question 2 - B (inference)

Although the professor says pickling makes vegetables taste sour, this doesn't necessarily imply that they taste better, so we can eliminate **C**. In addition, we can eliminate **D** because there is no indication that pickling does harm to vegetables, rather it kills the harmful bacteria that may be on the vegetables. Based on the professor's description, pickling actually seems like a simple process, and instead, the professor mentions a couple of times that pickling preserves vegetables and removes harmful bacteria that contribute to the degradation or rotting of vegetables.

Transcript

"Cooking is essentially synthetic chemistry that happens to be safe to eat. There are a number of examples of acid-base chemistry in the culinary world. One example is putting lemon juice or vinegar, both of which are acids, on cooked fish. It turns out that fish have volatile amines in their systems, which are neutralized by the acidic lemon or vinegar. This reduces the odor of the fish, and also adds a "sour" taste that we seem to enjoy.

Pickling is a method of preserving vegetables using a naturally produced acidic environment. The vegetable, such as a cucumber, is placed in a sealed jar submerged in a brine solution. The brine solution favors the growth of beneficial bacteria and suppresses the growth of harmful bacteria. The beneficial bacteria feed on starches in the cucumber and produce lactic acid as a waste product in a process called fermentation. The lactic acid eventually increases the acidity of the brine to a level that kills any harmful bacteria. Without the harmful bacteria consuming the cucumbers they are able to last much longer than if they were unprotected. The pickling process ultimately changes the flavor of the vegetables, making them taste sour."

Chemical Dissolution

Question 1 - D (organization)

If you consider the main idea of the lecture, you can probably answer this question fairly quickly. **A**, **B**, and **C** all have nothing to do with the main idea. **D** is the only possible answer that relates back to the main idea.

Question 2 - D (function)

It's important to consider when the professor says this in the lecture. It is actually the very first thing the professor says, so we can eliminate **C** and **B**. This is because **B** and **C** would make more sense if other information had come before this bit that the professor said. We can also eliminate **A** because the professor is not explaining anything, rather just listing different types of examples.

Transcript

"The mining of seawater for magnesium, formulation of over-the-counter medicines such as antacids, and treating the presence of minerals in your home's water supply are just a few of the many tasks that involve controlling the equilibrium between a slightly soluble ionic solid and an aqueous solution of its ions.

Now, I know that sounds rather complicated, but let me explain:

In some cases, we want to prevent dissolution from occurring. Tooth decay, for example, occurs when the calcium in our teeth dissolves. The dissolution process is aided when bacteria in our mouth feasts on the sugars in our diets to produce lactic acid, which reacts with calcium. Preventing this dissolution prevents tooth decay. On the other hand, sometimes we want a substance to dissolve. We want the calcium carbonate in a chewable antacid, the kind you may take when you have a stomachache, we want this antacid to dissolve because the ions produced in this process help soothe an upset stomach."

The Role of Fluoride

Question 1 - A (main idea)

We can eliminate **D** because there is no mention of what happens in countries with under-fluoridated water. We can also eliminate **B** and **C** because they are very specific to aspects of the lecture, but **A** is the only answer that encompasses the whole discussion.

Question 2 - C (inference)

We can eliminate **A** because the professor mentions that 2.7 million people suffer from skeletal fluorosis. We can eliminate **B** and **D** because the professor mentions that fluoride is only regulated in the US and that some places have excessive fluoride in the groundwater, but the professor does not imply that all countries should regulate fluoride or that it's entirely unsafe to drink excessively fluoridated water.

Transcript

"Scientists discovered that naturally fluorinated water could be beneficial to your teeth, and so it became common practice to add fluoride to drinking water. Toothpastes and mouthwashes also contain amounts of fluoride.

Unfortunately, excess fluoride can negate its advantages. Natural sources of drinking water in various parts of the world have varying concentrations of fluoride, and places, where that concentration is high, are prone to certain health risks when there is no other source of drinking water. The most serious side effect of excess fluoride is the bone disease, skeletal fluorosis. When excess fluoride is in the body, it can cause the joints to stiffen and the bones to thicken. It can severely impact mobility and can negatively affect the thyroid gland. Skeletal fluorosis is a condition that over 2.7 million people suffer from across the world."

Practice for the TOEFL® Listening Section

Psychology

What is Cognitive Dissonance?

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in a psychology class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

Leon Festinger
cognitive dissonance

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. Why does the professor discuss people from the United States?

- **a.** To describe the concept of cognitive dissonance using a relevant sample population
- **b.** To give an example of a positive motivator of human behavior
- **c.** To prove that people in the United States think highly of themselves
- **d.** To describe what happens when we experience conflict in our beliefs

2. Why does the professor say this?

- **a.** To further explain the concept of cognitive dissonance
- **b.** To prove that cognitive dissonance exists
- **c.** To prove that cognitive dissonance causes discomfort
- **d.** To show what happens if you smoke

Foot-in-the-door Technique

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in a psychology class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

foot-in-the-door technique

Freedman and Fraser
1960s

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. How did Freedman and Fraser demonstrate the foot-in-the-door technique?

- **a.** By observing teens asking for something small, then later making a larger request
- **b.** By observing that participants who would agree to place a small sign in their yard who would later agree to put a larger sign in their yard
- **c.** By convincing people to buy additional features when purchasing a car
- **d.** By suggesting people buy more expensive data plans for their new phones

2. Why does the professor say this?

- **a.** To ask the students if they know how to sell an expensive product
- **b.** To emphasize that the foot-in-the-door technique is used to sell expensive products
- **c.** To show the students he is not completely sure how to use the technique
- **d.** To introduce a relevant example of the foot-in-the-door technique

Types of Social Influence

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in a psychology class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

normative social influence
informational social influence

Asch conformity studies

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. Why does the professor mention the Asch conformity studies?

- **a.** To provide an example of what normative social influence is
- **b.** To prove that normative social influence is stronger than informational
- **c.** To change the topic to research studies
- **d.** To show what happens when both normative and informational social influence exists

2. Based on the information from the listening, indicate which characteristic on the left belongs to either Normative Social Influence or Informational Social Influence.

	Normative Social Influence	Informational Social Influence
People conform because they believe the group is correct		
Asch conformity studies		
People conform to fit in		

Aggression

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in a psychology class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

hostile aggression
instrumental aggression

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. Based on the information from the listening, indicate which characteristic on the left belongs to either hostile aggression or instrumental aggression.

	Hostile Aggression	Instrumental Aggression
Motivated by achieving a goal		
There is usually intent to cause pain		
Typical in women		

2. What is implied when the professor says this?

a. There is not just correct one theory to explain the existence of aggression
b. Aggression has evolved over time
c. Researchers often argue on the correct theory
d. Most researchers would agree that aggression has an evolutionary function

Cyberbullying

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in a psychology class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

cyberbullying

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. What is the professor's opinion of cyberbullying?

- **a.** Cyberbullying is cowardly because the bully is anonymous
- **b.** Cyberbullying difficult to deal with
- **c.** Cyberbullying can be more dangerous than regular bullying
- **d.** Girls should be more concerned than boys about cyberbullying

2. Why are girls more likely to engage in cyberbullying?

- **a.** Because it gives them power
- **b.** It is nonphysical
- **c.** Girls insult, laugh at or tease others more often
- **d.** Because it instills fear in victims

Psychology Questions
Answer Key

What is Cognitive Dissonance?

Question 1 - A (organization)

The professor begins the lecture by explaining that feeling good about ourselves is a "*powerful motivator of human behavior.*" Then the professor uses people in the United States as an example to explain further the concept of cognitive dissonance, because the professor describes the general culture of the people in the country this lecture is taking place in. This creates a relevant example for the students to help understand the concept.

Question 2 - A (function)

Often when the professor says, "*for example*" this literally means the professor is giving an example of something, but it also usually means the professor is trying to explain something in a different way to help the students understand the concept.

Transcript

"Social psychologists have documented that feeling good about ourselves and maintaining positive self-esteem is a powerful motivator of human behavior. In the United States, members of the predominant culture typically think very highly of themselves and view themselves as good people who are above average on many desirable traits. Often, our behavior, attitudes, and beliefs are affected when we experience a threat to our self-esteem or positive self-image. Back in the 1950s, psychologist Leon Festinger defined cognitive dissonance as psychological discomfort arising from holding two or more inconsistent attitudes, thoughts, beliefs, or opinions. Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance states that when we experience a conflict in our behaviors, attitudes, or beliefs that runs counter to our positive self-perceptions, we experience psychological discomfort. For example, if you believe smoking is bad for your health but you continue to smoke, you experience conflict between your belief and behavior."

Foot-in-the-door Technique

Question 1 - B (detail)

The professor says, "*foot-in-the-door technique was demonstrated in a study by Freedman and Fraser in the 1960s in which participants who agreed to post a small sign in their yard or sign a petition were more likely to agree to put a large sign in their yard than people who declined the first request.*"

Question 2 - D (function)

Since this is not a discussion lecture, we know this is a rhetorical question and is not meant to be answered so we can eliminate **A**. Also, **C** is incorrect because the professor would not typically ask a question to show doubt or a lack of knowledge, at least in a TOEFL context. **B** is incorrect because the foot-in-the-door technique isn't just for expensive products.

Transcript

"Researchers have tested many persuasion strategies that are effective in selling products and changing people's attitude, ideas, and behaviors. One effective strategy is the foot-in-the-door technique. Using the foot-in-the-door technique, the persuader gets a person to agree to a small favor or to buy a small item, only to later request a larger favor or purchase of a bigger item. The foot-in-the-door technique was demonstrated in a study by Freedman and Fraser in the 1960s in which participants who agreed to post a small sign in their yard or sign a petition were more likely to agree to put a large sign in their yard than people who declined the first request. Research on this technique also illustrates the principle of consistency: Our past behavior often directs our future behavior, and we have a desire to maintain consistency once we have committed to a behavior.

A common application of foot-in-the-door is when teens ask their parents for a small permission and then asking them for something larger. Having granted the smaller request increases the likelihood that parents will acquiesce with the later, larger request.

How would a store owner use the foot-in-the-door technique to sell you an expensive product? For example, say that you are buying the latest model smartphone, and the salesperson suggests you purchase the best data plan. You agree to this. The salesperson then suggests a bigger purchase—the three-year extended warranty. After agreeing to the smaller request, you are more likely to also agree to the larger request. You may have encountered this if you have bought a car. When salespeople realize that a buyer intends to purchase a certain model, they might try to get the customer to pay for many additional features like leather seating."

Types of Social Influence

Question 1 - A (organization)

The professor organizes the lecture into two sections, the first is to discuss normative social influence and the second informational. In the discussion or normative influence, the professor brings up the Asch conformity studies because they are an example of this type of influence.

Question 2 - (organizational chart)

	Normative Social Influence	Informational Social Influence
People conform because they believe the group is correct		**X**
Asch conformity studies	**X**	
People conform to fit in	**X**	

Transcript

"In normative social influence, people conform to the group norm to fit in, to feel good, and to be accepted by the group. However, with informational social influence, people conform because they believe the group is competent and has the correct information, particularly when the task or situation is ambiguous. In one famous study, known as the Asch conformity studies, participants were placed together in a room and asked to look at a drawing of clear and simple straight line. The participants in the study did not have to rely on the group for information, anyone who saw the picture knew it was a straight line. So, when the other participants, who were secretly researchers taking part of the study, all agreed that the line was a curved line and not a straight line, the one studied participant actually agreed with the other people in the group, even though it was clear that they were wrong. In other words, participants complied to fit in and avoid ridicule, an instance of normative social influence.
An example of informational social influence may be what to do in an emergency situation. Imagine that you are in a movie theater watching a film and what seems to be smoke comes in the theater from under the emergency exit door. You are not certain that it is smoke—it might be a special effect for the movie, such as a fog machine. When you are uncertain you will tend to look at the behavior of others in the theater. If other people show concern and get up to leave, you are likely to do the same. However, if others seem unconcerned, you are likely to stay put and continue watching the movie."

Aggression

Question 1 - (organizational chart)

	Hostile Aggression	Instrumental Aggression
Motivated by achieving a goal		**X**
There is usually intent to cause pain	**X**	
Typical in women		**X**

Question 2 - A (inference)

We have no sense of the number of researchers, so we can eliminate **D**. We can eliminate **B** since the subject is not how aggression has changed or evolved over time. **C** is generalizing the statement too much. We don't know if there is a correct theory. **A** makes the most sense, because if researchers are arguing on a theory, then there likely isn't currently one accepted theory of the evolutionary function of aggression.

Transcript

"*Humans engage in aggression when they seek to cause harm or pain to another person. Aggression takes two forms depending on one's motives: hostile or instrumental. Hostile aggression is motivated by feelings of anger with intent to cause pain; a fight in a bar with a stranger is an example of hostile aggression. In contrast, instrumental aggression is motivated by achieving a goal and does not necessarily involve intent to cause pain; a contract killer who murders for hire displays instrumental aggression. Now, there are many different theories as to why aggression exists in the first place.*

Some researchers argue that aggression serves an evolutionary function. Men are more likely than women to show aggression. From the perspective of evolutionary psychology, human male aggression, like that in nonhuman primates, likely serves to display dominance over other males, both to protect a mate and to perpetuate the male's genes. Sexual jealousy is part of male aggression; males endeavor to make sure their mates are not copulating with other males, thus ensuring their own paternity of the female's offspring. Although aggression provides an obvious evolutionary advantage for men, women also engage in aggression. Women typically display instrumental forms of aggression, with their aggression serving as a means to an end. For example, women may express their aggression covertly, for example, by communication that impairs the social standing of another person."

Cyberbullying

Question 1 - C (speaker stance)

The professor often compares cyberbullying to be very similar to regular bullying, however, at the end of the lecture the professor also says, "*Furthermore, recent research suggests that both cyberbullying victims and perpetrators are more likely to have ideas of suicide, and they are more likely to attempt suicide than individuals who have no experience with cyberbullying.*"

Question 2 - B (detail)

The professor says, "*In cyberbullying, it is more common for girls to be the bullies and victims because cyberbullying is non-physical and is a less direct form of bullying.*"

Transcript

"With the rapid growth of technology, and widely available mobile technology and social networking media, a new form of bullying has emerged: cyberbullying. Cyberbullying, like bullying, is repeated behavior that is intended to cause psychological or emotional harm to another person. What is unique about cyberbullying is that it is typically covert, concealed, done in private, and the bully can remain anonymous. This anonymity gives the bully power, and the victim may feel helpless, unable to escape the harassment, and unable to retaliate.

Cyberbullying can take many forms, including harassing a victim by spreading rumors, creating a website defaming the victim, and ignoring, insulting, laughing at, or teasing the victim. In cyberbullying, it is more common for girls to be the bullies and victims because cyberbullying is non-physical and is a less direct form of bullying. Interestingly, girls who become cyberbullies often have been the victims of cyberbullying at one time. The effects of cyberbullying are just as harmful as traditional bullying and include the victim feeling frustration, anger, sadness, helplessness, powerlessness, and fear. Victims will also experience lower self-esteem. Furthermore, recent research suggests that both cyberbullying victims and perpetrators are more likely to have ideas of suicide, and they are more likely to attempt suicide than individuals who have no experience with cyberbullying."

Practice for the TOEFL® Listening Section

Sociology

The Caste System

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in a sociology class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

caste systems

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. Which is considered part of the Hindu caste tradition?

- **a.** Merit-based careers and employment
- **b.** Marrying above your social standing
- **c.** Individual freedom is not valued but a person may choose their own path
- **d.** People's lives are fated and they are born into specific social roles

2. What is the professor's attitude towards the caste tradition?

- **a.** The professor thinks that caste systems have merit in some societies
- **b.** The professor feels negatively towards caste systems
- **c.** The professor believes that the caste tradition should not be allowed to continue
- **d.** The professor finds that caste systems can have some positive effects

The Growth of Ageism

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in a sociology class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

ageism

gerontocracy

agrarian society

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. What is the lecture mainly about?

a. Changes over time in the way we view the elderly
b. The difference between agrarian and industrialized societies
c. Why the elderly are not respected like they used to be
d. Why people no longer live with their aging parents

2. What was the role of the elderly in agrarian societies?

a. They were taken care of by their children and helped around the house
b. They held most of the community's power
c. They would be sought out for their knowledge
d. They were the majority of the workforce

One Partner or Many?

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in a sociology class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

monogamy
polygamy

polygyny
polyandry

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. Why does the professor say this?

- **a.** To define monogamy as it pertains to the lecture
- **b.** To explain why the students are only familiar with monogamy
- **c.** To introduce the lecture in a way that's likely relevant to a majority of the students
- **d.** To make sure the students know what monogamy is

2. Why does the professor discuss the difference between polygyny and polyandry?

- **a.** To further explain the details of polygamy
- **b.** To show that polygamy is mostly just men with multiple wives
- **c.** To prove that polygyny is more common
- **d.** To emphasize the importance of polygyny versus polyandry

The Sociological Approach to Religion

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in a sociology class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

social institution

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. What is the lecture mainly about?

- **a.** The similarities among some religions
- **b.** Why religion is more public than individual
- **c.** Aspects of funeral rituals that are similar among religions
- **d.** How religion can be examined from a social perspective

2. Why does the professor discuss funeral rites?

- **a.** To prove that many cultures are actually very similar
- **b.** To highlight the importance of funerals among many cultures
- **c.** To explain how funerals are religious ceremonies
- **d.** To provide an example of a common event among cultures despite differences in practices and religion

Formal and Informal Education

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in a sociology class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

formal education
informal education

Industrial Revolution

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. What is the professor's opinion of informal education?

a. It is just as important as formal education
b. Informal education is the most traditional form of education
c. Everyone should have access to informal education
d. Informal education isn't actually necessary

2. What is implied about informal education from the lecture?

a. Informal education prepares students to do well in formal education settings
b. It is needed to learn basic knowledge about life
c. The US education system focuses too much on formal education
d. Informal education should also be taught in schools

Sociology Questions
Answer Key

The Caste System

Question 1 - D (detail)

The entire middle section of the lecture is devoted to describing the answer to this question. The professor says, *"In the Hindu caste tradition, people were expected to work in the occupation of their caste and to enter into marriage according to their caste. Accepting this social standing was considered a moral duty. Cultural values reinforced the system. Caste systems promote beliefs in fate, destiny, and the will of a higher power, rather than promoting individual freedom as a value. A person who lived in a caste society was socialized to accept his or her social standing."*

Question 2 - B (speaker stance)

From the first third of the lecture we can really get a sense of how the professor feels about the caste tradition. For example, the professor says, "*People are assigned occupations regardless of their talents, interests, or potential. There are virtually no opportunities to improve one's social position." In addition, near the end of the lecture, the professor speaks more positively about India's larger cities where merit-based hiring and the ability to choose one's own career path has replaced a caste system."*

Transcript

"Caste systems are closed stratification systems in which people can do little or nothing to change their social standing. People are born into their social standing and will remain in it their whole lives. Individuals are assigned occupations regardless of their talents, interests, or potential. There are virtually no opportunities to improve one's social position.

In the Hindu caste tradition, people were expected to work in the occupation of their caste and to enter into marriage according to their caste. Accepting this social standing was considered a moral duty. Cultural values reinforced the system. Caste systems promote beliefs in fate, destiny, and the will of a higher power, rather than promoting individual freedom as a value. A person who lived in a caste society was raised to accept his or her social standing.

Although the caste system in India has been officially dismantled, its residual presence in Indian society is deeply embedded. In rural areas, aspects of the tradition are more likely to remain, while urban centers show less evidence of this past. In India's larger cities, people now have more opportunities to choose their own career paths and marriage partners. As a global center of employment, corporations have introduced merit-based hiring and employment to the nation."

The Growth of Ageism

Question 1 - A (main idea)

B, **C**, and **D** are all valid points, however, they all fall under the umbrella of **A**. As the professor describes the way our opinions of the elderly have changed over time, all of these things get mentioned along the way.

Question 2 - A (detail)

The professor quite plainly explains the answer to this question, *"In agrarian societies, a married couple cared for their aging parents. The oldest members of the family contributed to the household by doing chores, cooking, and helping with child care."*

Transcript

"Ageism is discrimination based on age. Ageist attitudes and biases based on stereotypes reduce elderly people to inferior or limited positions. When ageism is reflected in the workplace, in health care, and in assisted-living facilities, the effects of discrimination can be more severe. Ageism can make older people fear losing a job, feel dismissed by a doctor, or feel a lack of power and control in their daily living situations.

In early societies, the elderly were respected and revered. Many preindustrial societies observed gerontocracy, a type of social structure wherein the power is held by a society's oldest members. In some countries today, the elderly still have influence and power and their vast knowledge is respected.

In many modern nations, however, industrialization contributed to the diminished social standing of the elderly. In agrarian societies, a married couple cared for their aging parents. The oldest members of the family contributed to the household by doing chores, cooking, and helping with child care. As economies shifted from agrarian to industrial, younger generations moved to cities to work in factories. The elderly began to be seen as an expensive burden. They did not have the strength and stamina to work outside the home. What began during

industrialization, a trend toward older people living apart from their grown children, has become commonplace."

One Partner or Many?

Question 1 - C (function)

Since this lecture is from a North American class, using Americans as an example or to introduce something is a way for the professor to discuss something in a way that is likely relevant to many students in the classroom, which typically makes a concept easier to understand.

Question 2 - A (organization)

The professor discusses polygyny and polyandry in order to explain the definition of polygamy. The professor explains that it is possible on the one hand for men to have multiple wives, and on the other, for women to have multiple husbands. However, when thinking of polygamy, most people think of polygyny because this is vastly more common.

Transcript

"Americans typically equate marriage with monogamy, when someone is married to only one person at a time. In many countries and cultures around the world, however, having one spouse is not the only form of marriage. In a majority of cultures (78 percent, actually), polygamy, or being married to more than one person at a time, is accepted, with most polygamous societies existing in northern Africa and east Asia. Instances of polygamy are almost exclusively in the form of polygyny. Polygyny refers to a man being married to more than one woman at the same time. The reverse, when a woman is married to more than one man at the same time, is called polyandry. It is far less common and only occurs in about one percent of the world's cultures. The reasons for the overwhelming prevalence of polygamous societies are varied but they often include issues of population growth, religious ideologies, and social status."

The Sociological Approach to Religion

1. D (main idea)

B is simply an incorrect statement based on the lecture so we can eliminate that. **A** and **C** are facts taken from the lecture but don't actually describe the topic of the whole lecture. Thus, **D** is correct.

2. D (organization)

We can eliminate **B** and **C** because they don't relate back to the main idea at all. **A** is incorrect because the professor doesn't say that cultures are similar, but rather sometimes they have similar rituals, even if those rituals are carried out in drastically different ways. Thus, **D** is the correct answer.

Transcript

"Throughout history, and in societies across the world, leaders have used religious narratives, symbols, and traditions in an attempt to give more meaning to life and understand the universe. Some form of religion is found in every known culture, and it is usually practiced in a public way by a group.

While some people think of religion as something individual because religious beliefs can be highly personal, religion is also a social institution. Social scientists recognize that religion exists as an organized and integrated set of beliefs, behaviors, and norms centered on basic social needs and values. Moreover, religion is a cultural universal found in all social groups. For instance, in every culture, funeral rites are practiced in some way, although these customs vary between cultures and within religious affiliations. Despite differences, there are common elements in a ceremony marking a person's death, such as announcement of the death, care of the deceased, and ceremony or ritual. These universals, and the differences in how societies and individuals experience religion, provide rich material for sociological study."

Formal and Informal Education

Question 1 - A (speaker stance)

Although the professor doesn't say that informal education should be taught in school, the professor basically says that it is just as important as formal education because it is a basic part of society. The professor emphasizes the importance of informal education so we can eliminate **D**. **C** is incorrect because everyone inherently has access to it just by being a part of a society. **B** is never mentioned or hinted at.

Question 2 - B (inference)

The professor implies that being part of a society includes informal education and that with informal education we learn things that are basic to living, such as how to dress, act, personal hygiene, etc. The professor doesn't necessarily compare informal to formal education, or that they must go together. The professor also doesn't say that informal education should be taught in schools, and answers **C** and **D** are fairly redundant in this case.

Transcript

"As already mentioned, education is not solely concerned with the basic academic concepts that a student learns in the classroom. Societies also educate their children, outside of the school system, in matters of everyday practical living. These two types of learning are referred to as formal education and informal education.

Formal education describes the learning of academic facts and concepts through a formal curriculum. Arising from the tutelage of ancient Greek thinkers, centuries of scholars have examined topics through formalized methods of learning. Education in earlier times was only available to the higher classes; they had the means for access to scholarly materials, plus the luxury of leisure time that could be used for learning. The Industrial Revolution and its accompanying social changes made education more accessible to the general population. Many families in the emerging middle class found new opportunities for schooling.

The modern U.S. educational system is the result of this progression. Today, basic education is considered a right and responsibility for all citizens. Expectations of this system focus on formal education, with curricula and testing designed to ensure that students learn the facts and concepts that society believes are basic knowledge. In contrast, informal education describes learning about cultural values, norms, and expected behaviors by participating in a society. This type of learning occurs both through the formal education system and at home. Our earliest learning experiences generally happen via parents, relatives, and others in our community. Through informal education, we learn how to dress for different occasions, how to perform regular life routines like shopping for and preparing food, and how to keep our bodies clean."

Practice for the TOEFL® Listening Section

Biology

Energy and Metabolism

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in a biology class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

bioenergetics

cell metabolism

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. What is the professor mainly discussing?

- **a.** How energy is utilized within cells as a result of cell metabolism
- **b.** Different types of chemical reactions that take place in the body
- **c.** Why consuming food leads to an increase in energy
- **d.** The building up and breaking down of molecules

2. What is referred to as the cell's metabolism?

- **a.** Chemical reactions that release energy in a cell
- **b.** Chemical reactions that are released inside a cell
- **c.** Chemical reactions that consume energy in a cell
- **d.** The breaking down of complex molecules

Plant Adaptations to Life on Land

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in a biology class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

gametes

terrestrial environment
aquatic environment

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. What does the professor imply about supporting plant life on land?

- **a.** It is much more difficult for plants to survive on land if they are not near water
- **b.** Plants will dry out if they grow on land
- **c.** Earth has many environments that are too dry for plants
- **d.** Only water can provide buoyancy and lift

2. Why does the professor say this?

- **a.** To help explain why water is so important to living organisms
- **b.** To prove that water is necessary to survive
- **c.** To make sure the students understand what is being said
- **d.** To describe why small molecules dissolve in water

Homeostasis

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in a biology class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY
homeostasis set point
glucose
feedback mechanism

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. What is the lecture mainly about?

- **a.** The interaction between a stimulus and response center
- **b.** Maintaining equilibrium in the body
- **c.** Abnormal fluctuations in the human body
- **d.** Interpreting signals from a stimulus

2. Why does the professor mention glucose levels in the blood?

- **a.** To describe what happens when you eat too much
- **b.** To provide a relevant example of the body responding to a stimulus
- **c.** To prove that the body responds to external stimuli
- **d.** To cast doubt on the idea that the body reacts when there is a stimulus

Community Dynamics

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in a biology class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

disturbance
succession

primary succession
secondary succession

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. **What is the lecture mainly about?**

   a. How communities may change or stay the same over time
   b. The different ways that species may appear or disappear in a community
   c. How succession affects community dynamics
   d. The difference between primary and secondary succession

2. **Based on the information from the listening, indicate which characteristic on the left belongs to either primary succession or secondary succession.**

	Primary succession	Secondary succession
An ecosystem is disturbed but part of the community remains		
Newly formed rock is colonized by living organisms		
Has a sequential change in species until a permanent community develops		

Adaptive Immunity

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in a biology class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

adaptive immunity
pathogens

specificity
memory

chickenpox

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. Why is a secondary response faster and stronger than a primary response?

- **a.** Because pathogens weaken over time
- **b.** Because specificity and memory are working together to combat the pathogen
- **c.** Because pathogens are not able to overcome the power of human memory
- **d.** Because specificity has already weakened pathogens during the primary response

2. Why does the professor say this?

- **a.** To prove that secondary responses are faster and stronger than primary ones
- **b.** To explain why vaccines are crucial for individuals who suffer from the chickenpox
- **c.** To show that other viruses are more harmful than the chickenpox
- **d.** To emphasize that specificity and memory only work after exposure

Biology Questions
Answer Key

Energy and Metabolism

Question 1 - A (main idea)

We can eliminate **C** because this just relates to one sentence the professor says in the entire lecture. **D** is incorrect because the lecture is more concerned with speaking about chemical reactions. **B** is not the correct answer because although it's somewhat true, **A** is a better answer and more representative of the purpose of the lecture.

Question 2 - B (detail)

The very last sentence of the lecture gives us the answer to this question. The professor says, "*Together, all of the chemical reactions that take place inside cells, including those that consume or generate energy, are referred to as the cell's metabolism.*" **A** and **C** are incorrect because they only include one aspect of the cell's metabolism, they both "*consume*" and "*generate*" energy.

Transcript

"Scientists use the term bioenergetics to describe the concept of energy flow through living systems, such as cells. Cellular processes such as the building and breaking down of complex molecules occur through stepwise chemical reactions. Some of these chemical reactions are spontaneous and release energy, whereas others require energy to proceed. Just as living things must continually consume food to replenish their energy supplies, cells must continually produce more energy to replenish that which is used by the energy-requiring chemical reactions that constantly take place. Together, all of the chemical reactions that take place inside cells, including those that consume or generate energy, are referred to as the cell's metabolism."

Plant Adaptations to Life on Land

Question 1 - A (inference)

Throughout the lecture, we get an understanding of the answer here, but we can take a closer look at the end of the lecture to see why A is the correct answer. The professor says, "*The successful land plants developed strategies to deal with all of these challenges. Not all adaptations appeared at once. Some species never moved very far from the aquatic environment, whereas others went on to conquer the driest environments on Earth.*" The professor is implying that it is difficult to survive on dry land and even more so when there is little water.

Question 2 - A (function)

After the professor says this, the professor continues to explain why water is so important to organisms. Thus, we can conclude that **A** is the correct answer. Although **B** seems like a possible answer, the professor isn't providing evidence here to prove anything.

Transcript

As organisms adapted to life on land, they had to contend with several challenges in the terrestrial environment. Water has been described as "the stuff of life." The cell's interior is a watery soup: in this medium, most small molecules dissolve, and the majority of the chemical reactions of metabolism take place. Drying out is a constant danger for an organism exposed to air. Even when parts of a plant are close to a source of water, the aerial structures are likely to dry out. Water also provides buoyancy to organisms. On land, plants need to develop structural support in a medium that does not give the same lift as water.

The organism is also subject to radiation because air does not filter out ultraviolet rays of sunlight. Additionally, the male gametes, a male cell that is able to unite with the opposite sex in sexual reproduction, must reach the female gametes using new strategies, because swimming is no longer possible. The successful land plants developed strategies to deal with all of these challenges. Not all adaptations appeared at once. Some species never moved very far from the aquatic environment, whereas others went on to conquer the driest environments on Earth."

Homeostasis

Question 1 - B (main idea)

All of these possible answers have something to do with the lecture, however, **B** is the only one that accurately represents the entire lecture. **A**, **C**, and **D** are all things that fall under **B**.

Question 2 - B (organization)

The professor mentions glucose levels in the blood as an example to help describe the relationship between a stimulus and the resulting response. The professor says, "*For instance, if the body becomes too warm, adjustments are made to cool the animal. If glucose levels in the blood rise after a meal, adjustments are made to lower them and to get the nutrient into tissues that need it or to store it for later use.*"

Transcript

" The goal of homeostasis is the maintenance of equilibrium around a specific value of some aspect of the body or its cells called a set point. While there are normal fluctuations from the set-point, the body's systems will usually attempt to go back to this point. A change in the internal or external environment is called a stimulus and is detected by a receptor; the response of the system is to adjust the activities of the system so the value moves back toward the set point. For instance, if the body becomes too warm, adjustments are made to cool the animal. If glucose levels in the blood rise after a meal, adjustments are made to lower them and to get the nutrient into tissues that need it.

When a change occurs in an animal's environment, an adjustment must be made so that the internal environment of the body and cells remains stable. The receptor that senses the change in the environment is part of a feedback mechanism. The stimulus—temperature, glucose, or calcium levels—is detected by the receptor. The receptor sends information to a control center, often the brain, which relays appropriate signals to an organ that is able to cause an appropriate change, either up or down, depending on the information the sensor was sending."

Community Dynamics

Question 1 - A (main idea)

We can immediately eliminate **C** and **D** because succession is mentioned only in the second half of the lecture. Between **A** and **B** we can choose **A** because although **B** seems like a possible answer, it's not as accurate as A in terms of describing the purpose of the lecture.

2. (organizational chart)

	Primary succession	Secondary succession
An ecosystem is disturbed but part of the community remains		**X**
Newly formed rock is colonized by living organisms	**X**	
Has a sequential change in species until a permanent community develops	**X**	**X**

Transcript

"Community dynamics are the changes in community structure and composition over time, often following environmental disturbances such as volcanoes, earthquakes, storms, fires, and climate change. Communities with a relatively constant number of species are said to be at equilibrium. The equilibrium between species identities and relationships changes over time, but maintains a relatively constant number. Following a disturbance, the community may or may not return to the equilibrium state.

Succession describes the sequential appearance and disappearance of species in a community over time after a severe disturbance. In primary succession, newly exposed or newly formed rock is colonized by living organisms; in secondary succession, a part of an ecosystem is disturbed and remnants of the previous community remain. In both cases, there is a sequential change in species until a more or less permanent community develops."

Adaptive Immunity

1. B (detail)

B is the correct choice because, even though it is not stated directly, specificity is used in a primary response and memory in a secondary, so we can safely assume that both work together to combat a pathogen. **D** seems like a correct answer, but the lecture never mentions whether or not the pathogen is weakened.

2. D (function)

A is not correct because if you look at the content of the sentence, *"For example, exposure to one virus, like the chickenpox, will not provide protection against other viral diseases,"* it's talking about immune defenses that will NOT provide protection. **C** is incorrect because the focus is not on other diseases, but on the systems of protection within the body. **B** is incorrect because it was never mentioned in the passage.

Transcript

"Adaptive immunity is defined by two important characteristics: specificity and memory. Specificity refers to the adaptive immune system's ability to target specific pathogens, and memory refers to its ability to quickly respond to pathogens to which it has previously been exposed. For example, when an individual recovers from chickenpox, the body develops a memory of the infection that will specifically protect it from the virus if it is exposed to it again later.

Specificity and memory are achieved by essentially programming certain cells involved in the immune system to respond rapidly to subsequent exposures of the pathogen. This programming occurs as a result of the first exposure to a pathogen, which triggers a primary response. Later exposures result in a secondary response that is faster and stronger as a result of the body's memory of the first exposure. This secondary response, however, is specific to the pathogen in question. For example, exposure to one virus, like the chickenpox, will not provide protection against other viral diseases."

Practice for the TOEFL® Listening Section

Economics

Calories and Economic Growth

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in an economics class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

macroeconomic policy

Amartya Sen

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. What is the lecture mainly about?

a. Problems with food distribution in the past few years
b. The relationship between caloric consumption and economic growth
c. Amartya Sen's work on inequality, poverty, and food distribution problems
d. Why people were able to eat more as the economy grew

2. According to the lecture, what would create a better distribution of food?

a. If the government gives food directly to the poor
b. If the government does more research
c. If policies are made to support employment and economic stability
d. If more women are given jobs

Introduction to Unemployment

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in an economics class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

opportunity cost

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. What is the professor's opinion of unemployment?

- **a.** The consequences of unemployment are worse than a serious car accident
- **b.** Unemployment has devastating consequences
- **c.** Unemployment causes physical pain similar to a car accident
- **d.** Unemployment is a huge issue in our economy

2. What is implied when the professor says this?

- **a.** Unemployment should definitely be a priority of public policy
- **b.** Unemployment isn't a public policy priority
- **c.** Unemployment used to be a public policy priority
- **d.** There is no reason to make unemployment a priority of public policy

The Natural Rate of Unemployment

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in an economics class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

booming economy
recession economy

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. What is the lecture mainly about?

- **a.** A description of the rate of unemployment in a stable economy
- **b.** Economic, social, and political factors that affect the rate of unemployment
- **c.** Why the rate of unemployment is not considered natural
- **d.** Public policies that affect the labor market

2. What would most likely happen to unemployment during a recession?

- **a.** It would be a natural unemployment rate
- **b.** It would rise
- **c.** It would decrease
- **d.** It is never mentioned or implied in the passage how unemployment would be affected by a recession

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Are Trade Surpluses Always Beneficial?

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in an economics class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

surplus
recession

gross domestic product

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. Why are Japan's large trade surpluses not representative of its economy?

- **a.** Japan exports a lot of products, but it can't afford to import anything
- **b.** There has only been a 10% gross domestic product growth
- **c.** The economy is actually very slow and unemployment is rising
- **d.** The economy has been in a recession ever since 1990

2. Why does the professor say this?

- **a.** To highlight the strength of Japan's economy
- **b.** To prove that Japan has the strongest economy
- **c.** To explain the economic situation in Japan
- **d.** To emphasize that Japan is a good example to use for the lecture

The Balance of Trade

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in an economics class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY
trade balance
surplus deficit
Asian Financial Crisis

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. Why does the professor mention the Asian Financial Crisis?

a. To prove that a recession typically occurs in Asian countries from unbalanced trade and financial crises
b. To emphasize that problems result from unbalanced trade
c. To explain what happens when a country has several financial crises in times of unbalanced trade
d. To introduce the topic of the next lecture

2. What is the example the professor uses when discussing Germany?

a. A situation in which exports greatly exceeded imports
b. A situation in which imports greatly exceeded exports
c. A situation in which foreign investors moved their money to other countries
d. A situation in which there was a trade balance

Economics Questions
Answer Key

Calories and Economic Growth

Question 1 - B (main idea)

C is too specific so we can eliminate that. Although the professor discusses problems with food distribution, this is a minor point in the overall lecture. **D** is fairly accurate; however, **B** gives a better representation of what the lecture is about.

Question 2 - C (detail)

The answer to this is found in the last sentence of the lecture. "*Macroeconomic policies that strive toward stable inflation, full employment, education of women, and preservation of property rights are more likely to eliminate starvation and provide for a more even distribution of food.*"

Transcript

"The story of modern economic growth can be told by looking at calorie consumption over time. The dramatic rise in incomes allowed the average person to eat better and consume more calories. How did these incomes increase? The period of modern economic growth came about because of the way in which technological progress combined with physical and human capital rapidly expanded. Although distribution of income is still an issue, it is clear that the average worker can afford more calories in 2014 than in 1875.

Aside from increases in income, there is another reason why the average person can afford more food. Modern agriculture has allowed many countries to produce more food than they need. Despite having more than enough food, however, many governments and agencies have not solved the food distribution problem. In fact, food shortages, famine, or general food insecurity are caused more often by the failure of government macroeconomic policy, according to the Nobel Prize-winning economist Amartya Sen.

Sen has conducted extensive research into issues of inequality, poverty, and the role of government in improving standards of living. Macroeconomic policies that strive toward stable inflation, full employment, education of women, and preservation of property rights are more likely to eliminate starvation and provide for a more even distribution of food."

Introduction to Unemployment

Question 1 - B (speaker stance)

The professor says unemployment can be related to a serious car accident, not that it is worse, so we can eliminate **A**. **C** is incorrect because the professor doesn't discuss physical pain, but rather the troubles caused in general by unemployment, eliminating **C**. **D** is incorrect because there is no mention of what the current state of unemployment is in our economy.

Question 2 - A (inference)

Here the professor is saying that unemployment has such terrible consequences for people that a priority of public policy should be finding ways to lower levels of unemployment. The government should not need more reasons than that to make it a priority.

Transcript

"Unemployment can be a terrible life experience—like a serious automobile accident or a messy divorce—whose consequences can be fully understood only by someone who has gone through it. For unemployed individuals and their families, there is the day-to-day financial stress of not knowing where the next paycheck is coming from. There are painful adjustments, like watching your savings account decrease, selling a car and buying a cheaper one, or moving to a less expensive place to live. Even when the unemployed person finds a new job, it may pay less than the previous one. For many people, their job is an important part of their self-worth. When unemployment separates people from the workforce, it can affect family relationships as well as mental and physical health.

The human costs of unemployment alone would justify making a low level of unemployment an important public policy priority. But unemployment also includes economic costs to the broader society. When millions of unemployed but willing workers cannot find jobs, an economic resource is going unused. An economy with high unemployment is like a company operating with a functional but unused factory. The opportunity cost of unemployment is the output that could have been produced by the unemployed workers."

The Natural Rate of Unemployment

Question 1 - A (main idea)

The professor doesn't mention what specifically affects the rate of unemployment (in terms of economic, social, and political factors) so we can eliminate **B** and also **D**. **C** is incorrect because the professor is actually describing what a natural rate of unemployment is.

Question 2 - B (detail)

B is the correct answer because during a recession there is less money and, therefore fewer jobs. A is incorrect because a 'natural' economic state is when the economy is stable. **B** is false and **D** is wrong because the professor states the answer when she states " *These forces include the usual pattern of companies expanding their workforce, as they would in a booming economy, or contracting it, as they would during a recession."*

Transcript

"The natural rate of unemployment is not "natural" in the sense that water freezes at 32 degrees Fahrenheit or boils at 212 degrees Fahrenheit. It is not a physical and unchanging law of nature. Instead, it is only the "natural" rate because it is the unemployment rate that would result from the combination of economic, social, and political factors that exist at a given time—assuming the economy was neither booming nor in recession. These forces include the usual pattern of companies expanding their workforce, as they would in a booming economy, or contracting it, as they would during a recession. Also, keep in mind the social and economic forces that affect the labor market, or the public policies that affect either the eagerness of people to work or the willingness of businesses to hire."

Are Trade Surpluses Always Beneficial?

Question 1 - C (detail)

A is wrong because the professor does say that Japan imports products, just not as many as it exports. **B** is incorrect because the professor says Japan has real gross domestic product growth averaging only about 1% per year. **D** is incorrect because the professor says Japan has been in and out of recession since 1990.

Question 2 - D (function)

Here the professor is basically saying that there is no better country than Japan to discuss trade surpluses. **A** and **B** we know are incorrect because the professor discusses how the economy of Japan actually isn't in a good place. **C** is incorrect because this statement doesn't give us any insight into the economic situation in Japan.

Transcript

"Perhaps no economy around the world is better known for its trade surpluses than Japan. Since 1990, the size of these surpluses has often been near $100 billion per year. When Japan's economy was growing vigorously in the 1960s and 1970s, its large trade surpluses were often described, especially by non-economists, as either a cause or a result of its economic health. But from a standpoint of economic growth, Japan's economy has been in and out of recession since 1990, with real gross domestic product growth averaging only about 1% per year, and an unemployment rate that has been creeping higher. Clearly, a trade surplus is no guarantee of economic good health.

Instead, Japan's trade surplus reflects that Japan has a very high rate of domestic savings, more than the Japanese economy can invest in domestically, and so the extra funds are invested abroad. In Japan's slow economy, the growth of consumption is relatively low, which also means that consumption of imports is relatively low. Thus, Japan's exports continually exceed its imports, leaving the trade surplus continually high."

The Balance of Trade

Question 1 - B (organization)

The professor mentions the Asian Financial Crisis when talking about what happens when there is unbalanced trade, specifically when unbalanced trade triggers financial crises and negatively affects the economy. Here the professor is showing the students that problems can happen, in fact, it led to several different financial crises in the past.

Question 2 - A (detail)

In the middle of the lecture, the professor says *"Germany, for example, has had substantial trade surpluses in recent decades, in which exports have greatly exceeded imports."*

Transcript

"*The balance of trade, or trade balance, is any gap between a nation's value of its exports, or what its producers sell abroad, and its total dollar value of imports, or the foreign-made products and services that households and businesses purchase. If exports exceed imports, the economy is said to have a trade surplus. If imports exceed exports, the economy is said to have a trade deficit. If exports and imports are equal, then trade is balanced. But what happens when trade is out of balance and large trade surpluses or deficits exist?*

Germany, for example, has had substantial trade surpluses in recent decades, in which exports have greatly exceeded imports. Germany ran a trade surplus of $260 billion. In contrast, the U.S. economy in recent decades has experienced large trade deficits, in which imports have considerably exceeded exports. In 2014, for example, U.S. imports exceeded exports by $539 billion.

A series of financial crises triggered by unbalanced trade can lead economies into deep recessions. These crises begin with large trade deficits. At some point, foreign investors become pessimistic about the economy and move their money to other countries. The economy then drops into deep recession. This happened to Mexico in 1995. A number of countries in East Asia—Thailand, South Korea, Malaysia, and Indonesia—came down with the same economic illness in 1997, which was referred to as the Asian Financial Crisis."

Practice for the TOEFL® Listening Section

US History

The First Americans: The Olmec

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in a US history class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

Mesoamerica

polytheistic

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. What is the lecture mainly about?

- **a.** Why we know so much about Mesoamerica
- **b.** The dominant religion of Mesoamerica
- **c.** A description of the Mesoamerican civilization
- **d.** The only known written language at the time

2. What does the professor imply about Mesoamericans?

- **a.** They were the first to discover written language
- **b.** They were very religious people
- **c.** They were a group of similar and complex civilizations
- **d.** They were good traders

Electric Lighting

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in a US history class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

Thomas Edison
Nikola Tesla

Westinghouse Electric
and Manufacturing Company

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. What is the lecture mainly about?

- **a.** Why the demand for workers increased with the increased use of electricity
- **b.** How the invention of the light bulb and use of electricity transformed cities
- **c.** How Nikola Tesla changed the lives of many Americans
- **d.** The spread of electricity from cities to rural areas

2. Why did electricity help bring more people to cities?

- **a.** It increased demand for workers in factories that were now open twenty-four hours a day
- **b.** It was difficult to get electricity to rural areas
- **c.** Only cities would be lit up at night
- **d.** The pace of life was much faster in cities

The American Progressive Era

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in a US history class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

The Progressive Era
late 1800s

activists
reformers

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. What is the professor mainly discussing?

- **a.** Challenges that reformers and activists attempted to overcome during The Progressive Era
- **b.** Why some progressive campaigns were more successful than others
- **c.** The importance of taking action against challenges in your country
- **d.** The goals of the reformers and activists

2. Why does the professor mention investigative journalists?

- **a.** To explain what life was like back then
- **b.** To give an example of a type of reformer reacting to challenges that the country faced during the time
- **c.** To prove that the country had a lot of challenges to deal with
- **d.** To show the ways in which reformers were successful

The Roots of Empire

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in a US history class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY
isolationism
late 1800s

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. Why does the professor mention the Civil War?

- **a.** To show why the country moved towards expansion after the Civil War
- **b.** To explain why the country originally wanted to remain isolated from the world
- **c.** To prove that the country was too weak to expand its influence
- **d.** To emphasize the need for isolationism at the time

2. What is the professor's attitude towards the expansion of American influence?

- **a.** The professor believes that the country should have moved past isolationism earlier
- **b.** The professor feels that the country may have tried to expand its reach too quickly
- **c.** The professor thinks the country's attitude changed from isolation to expansion rather quickly
- **d.** The professor thinks that expansion was merely a religious movement

World War One Propaganda

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in a US history class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

Woodrow Willson

George Bellows

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. Why did the US government want to get involved in the war in Europe?

a. Because of George Bellows' paintings
b. Because of anti-German sentiments among Americans
c. Because the Europeans asked for help
d. Because of the war's interference with trade routes

2. What does the lecture imply about the people's support of American involvement in the war?

a. Bellows' paintings weren't actually that effective at changing people's minds
b. The government makes decisions regardless of whether the people are supportive or not
c. Their opinions on the war changed over time
d. They are easily manipulated by propaganda

US History Questions
Answer Key

The First Americans: The Olmec

Question 1 - C (main idea)

B and **D**, we can first eliminate because they are too specific to particular facts brought up during the lecture and they don't include information from the whole lecture. **A** is incorrect because although the professor mentions why we know so much about Mesoamerica, the purpose of the lecture is that the professor is describing what Mesoamerica was like.

Question 2 - C (inference)

A is incorrect because we don't know if this statement is true or not. We simply know that Mesoamericans have the only known written language in the Western hemisphere during that time. We can also eliminate **B** and **D** because the professor mentions that they had religions and that they traded, but we don't know to the extent (i.e. were they very religious or were they, good traders?).

Transcript

"Mesoamerica is the geographic area stretching from north of Panama up to the desert of central Mexico. Although marked by great diversity, this region cradled a number of civilizations with similar characteristics. Mesoamericans were polytheistic, which means they worshipped several gods, and these gods possessed both male and female traits and demanded blood sacrifices of enemies taken in battle or ritual bloodletting. Corn, or maize, domesticated by 5000 BCE, formed the basis of their diet. They developed a mathematical system, built huge edifices, and devised a calendar that accurately predicted eclipses and solstices and that priest-astronomers used to direct the planting and harvesting of crops. We are able to learn so much about these people because they created the only known written language in the Western Hemisphere; researchers have made much progress in interpreting the inscriptions on their temples and pyramids. Though the area had no overarching political structure, trade over long distances helped diffuse the culture."

Electric Lighting

Question 1 - B (main idea)

A, **C**, and **D** are all ideas that are present in the lecture, however, they are only specific pieces of all the information given in the lecture. Thus, B is the best answer.

Question 2 - A (detail)

The professor says almost word for word, *"In the factories, electric lights permitted operations to run twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. This increase in production required additional workers, and this demand brought more people to cities."*

Transcript

"Thomas Edison patented the light bulb in 1879. This development quickly became common in homes as well as factories, transforming how even lower and middle-class Americans lived. Although slow to arrive in rural areas of the country, electric power became readily available in cities when the first commercial power plants began to open in 1882. When Nikola Tesla developed the alternating current system for the Westinghouse Electric & Manufacturing Company, power supplies for lights and other factory equipment could extend for miles from the power source. Alternating current power transformed the use of electricity, allowing urban centers to physically cover greater areas. In the factories, electric lights permitted operations to run twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. This increase in production required additional workers, and this demand brought more people to cities.

Gradually, cities began to illuminate the streets with electric lamps to allow the city to remain alight throughout the night. No longer did the pace of life and economic activity slow substantially at sunset, the way it had in smaller towns. The cities, following the factories that drew people there, stayed open all the time."

The American Progressive Era

Question 1 - A (main idea)

B is not discussed at all so we can eliminate it. Likewise, we can eliminate **D** because the professor only mentions some of their goals towards the end of the talk. **C** is incorrect because although it may be something implied by the lecture, it does not tell us the purpose of the information given.

Question 2 - B (organization)

Consider the main idea when answering this question. The professor talks about different kinds of movements the reformers and activists were working on at the time, and the professor brings up investigative journalists to give an example of a type of reformer(s) attempting to bring about change.

Transcript

"The Progressive Era was a time of wide-ranging causes and varied movements, where activists and reformers from diverse backgrounds and with very different agendas pursued their goals of a better America. These reformers were reacting to the challenges that faced the country at the end of the nineteenth century: rapid urban growth, immigration, corruption, industrial working conditions, the growth of large corporations, women's rights, and surging anti-black violence in the South. Investigative journalists of the day uncovered social inequality and encouraged Americans to take action. While different causes shared some underlying elements, each movement largely focused on its own goals, be it the right of women to vote, the removal of alcohol from communities, or the desire for a more democratic voting process. Over time, some progressive campaigns proved more successful than others."

The Roots of Empire

Question 1 - B (organization)

The professor explains that the US had "*deep scars*" from the Civil War, which led to isolationism for a couple of reasons. That is why **B** is correct.

Question 2 - C (speaker stance)

The very last sentence of the lecture gives us the clue we need to answer this question. The professor says, *"The country moved quickly to ready itself for the creation of an American empire."* There is no indication in the lecture that **A** is correct. Also, **B** is negative and the professor doesn't mention anything negative about the expansion. Lastly, **D** is not true because the professor mentions the expansion of businesses and trades as well.

Transcript

"In the last decades of the nineteenth century, after the Civil War, the United States changed from a country that wanted to stay isolated from the rest of the world to one that wanted to expand American influence. The nation's earlier isolationism originated from the deep scars left by the Civil War and its need to recover both economically and mentally from that event. But as the industrial revolution changed the way the country worked and the American West reached its farthest point, American attitudes toward foreign expansion shifted. Businesses were looking for new markets to export their factory-built goods, oil, and tobacco products, as well as generous trade agreements to secure access to raw materials. Early social reformers saw opportunities to spread Christianity and the benefits of American life to those in less developed nations. The country moved quickly to ready itself for the creation of an American empire."

World War One Propaganda

Question 1 - D (detail)

Although the answer doesn't seem explicitly stated, we find the answer to this question at the beginning of the lecture when the professor says, "*But as the war continued in Europe and as some of the powers in the war began to target commerce and travel across the Atlantic Ocean, it became clear that the United States would not be able to maintain its position of neutrality*."

Question 2 - C (inference)

We can guess **C** is the answer because at first, the Americans did not want the US to get involved. The lecturer later says, "*In the end, it appears that some of this propaganda paid off; America officially announced its involvement on the sides of the British and French in April 1917 and would eventually send over two million American soldiers to join in the war effort.*" Note the phrasal verb "*paid off*" means that something you did was effective.

Transcript

"On the eve of World War One, the U.S. government under President Woodrow Wilson opposed any involvement in international military conflicts. But as the war continued in Europe and as some of the powers in the war began to target commerce and travel across the Atlantic Ocean, it became clear that the United States would not be able to maintain its position of neutrality. Still, the American public was of mixed opinion; many resisted the idea of American intervention and American lives lost, no matter how bad the circumstances.

In 1918, artist George Bellows created a series of paintings intended to strengthen public support for the war effort. His paintings depicted German war atrocities in detail, from children run through with bayonets to torturers happily resting while their victims suffered. One image shows Germans unloading sick or disabled labor camp prisoners from a boxcar. These paintings were typical for anti-German propaganda at the time. The U.S. government sponsored much of this propaganda out of concern that many American immigrants sympathized with the Central powers and would not support the U.S. war effort.

In the end, it appears that some of this propaganda paid off; America officially announced its involvement on the sides of the British and French in April 1917 and would eventually send over two million American soldiers to join in the war effort."

Practice for the TOEFL® Listening Section

World History

The Agricultural Revolution

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in a world history class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

Pleistocene
Holocene

megafauna

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. What encouraged humans to plant and cultivate seeds?

a. The changes brought about by the warming trend of the Holocene
b. Megafauna was too difficult to hunt at times
c. The lack of rainfall during the Holocene
d. They could not depend on hunting for food

2. Why does the professor mention the Pleistocene period?

a. To show the difference in climate in various areas of the Earth at that time
b. To help explain why the Holocene period led to the production of agriculture
c. To highlight the differences between the Pleistocene and Holocene
d. To prove that agriculture was impossible during the Pleistocene

Confucius

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in a world history class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

Warring States Period
551 to 479 BCE

Analects

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. What is the lecture mainly about?

- **a.** Teachers from China before the Warring States Period
- **b.** How the Chinese remember Confucius
- **c.** Confucius' guidance from heaven
- **d.** What we know about Confucius' life, based on the Analects

2. What does the professor imply about Confucius?

- **a.** Contrary to popular belief, Confucius had many different sides to his personality
- **b.** He was actually a very religious man
- **c.** He tricked people into thinking he was guided by Heaven to bring peace to the world
- **d.** He had his conversations recorded in the Analects by one of his students

The Expansion of Islam

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in a world history class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

Umayyad Clan
Quraysh Tribe

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. Why does the professor discuss the Umayyad Clan?

a. To highlight the differences between Muhammad and the Umayyad Clan
b. To further explain why Muhammad had a difficult time gaining followers
c. To describe an obstacle that impeded the expansion of Islam
d. To prove that Muhammad was unsuccessful in spreading Islam

2. What does the professor mean when she says this?

a. Muslim ideas were so different from a more powerful group at the time
b. The Muslims were a threat to most members of society
c. Politics were threatening the Muslim influence on society
d. If there were too many Muslims, they would have a negative impact on politics

Growth of Towns and Trade

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in a world history class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY
re-urbanization
Western Roman Empire
aristorcracy

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. What is the professor's opinion of Western Europe in the eleventh century?

- **a.** It was actually a difficult but important time
- **b.** Western Europe struggled to grow as a nation
- **c.** Most of the development at this time wouldn't last long
- **d.** Western Europe experienced its greatest growth in history

2. Why does the professor mention the Irish city of Dublin?

- **a.** To narrow down the topic from Western Europe to Ireland
- **b.** To give an example of a Viking-founded market
- **c.** To prove that Viking-founded markets were typically the center of new towns
- **d.** To emphasize the importance of Viking-founded trading posts

Magna Carta

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in a world history class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

Magna Carta

assemblies
parliaments

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. What is the professor mainly discussing?

- **a.** The pros and cons of parliament
- **b.** The differences between the governments in England and Spain
- **c.** What the Magna Carta is
- **d.** The creation of a representative government in England

2. What does the professor imply about the Magna Carta treaty?

- **a.** It brought about unpopular changes to the English government
- **b.** It was not unique to England
- **c.** It is an extremely important part of England's history
- **d.** It almost led to a civil war

World History Questions
Answer Key

The Agricultural Revolution

Question 1 - A (detail)

The answer to this question comes from the very last part of the lecture. The professor says, *"The warming trend of the Holocene, by contrast, resulted in consistent rainfall amounts and more predictable temperatures. The warming also altered the habitats of the megafauna that humans hunted, alterations that in some cases contributed to their extinction. Therefore, as animal populations declined, humans were further encouraged to plant and cultivate seeds in newly-thawed soil."*

Question 2 - B (organization)

First, think of the main idea of the lecture to help you answer this question. The main idea is that the lecture is discussing what brought about the agricultural revolution, and what led to the production of agriculture. This helps us select **B** as the correct answer. **D** seems like it could be correct, but **B** is the most correct answer in this case.

Transcript

"Most scholars agree that the Ice Age played a fundamental role in the rise of agriculture. It was impossible during the much colder and often ice-covered period of the Pleistocene, but inevitable during the Holocene thawing. Only 4,000 years before the origins of agriculture, the planting of anything would have been extremely difficult. Not only were today's fertile farmlands of Spain or the North American Great Plains covered in ice but also other areas around the world could not depend on constant temperatures or rainfall from year to year. Pleistocene foragers had to be flexible. The warming trend of the Holocene, by contrast, resulted in consistent rainfall amounts and more predictable temperatures. This alteration in habitat could have led to the extinction of megafauna, like mammoths. In the Pleistocene age, humans hunted these large beasts and relied on them for food. Therefore, as animal populations declined, humans were further encouraged to plant and cultivate seeds in newly-thawed soil."

Confucius

Question 1 - D (main idea)

We can eliminate **A** because the professor only talks about Confucius the entire lecture. **B** and **C** are too specific to parts of the lecture and don't encompass everything the professor talks about. That leaves us with **D**.

Question 2 - A (inference)

The professor spends the last half of the lecture describing Confucius and his personality. Based on what the professor says, we can conclude A is the correct answer. Review this part of the lecture, *"However, in the context of his time, Confucius was anything but stiff, and rather a dynamic individual who believed he was mandated by Heaven to return the world to a more socially and politically harmonious time. The Analects not only shows a serious and learned man, but also someone capable in archery and horsemanship, who loved music and ritual, and who untiringly traveled the feudal states in the hopes of serving as an aide to various landowners."*

Transcript

"Confucius lived just prior to the Warring States Period, from 551 to 479 BCE. What little we know about his life comes primarily from the Analects, a record of conversations Confucius held with his students compiled after he died. In later centuries, in China, Confucius was revered as a sage, and even today outside of China some people might think of him as a strict teacher. However, in the context of his time, Confucius was anything but stiff, and rather a dynamic individual who believed he was mandated by Heaven to return the world to a more socially and politically harmonious time. The Analects not only shows a serious and learned man, but also someone capable in archery and horsemanship, who loved music and ritual, and who untiringly traveled the feudal states in the hopes of serving as an aide to various landowners."

The Expansion of Islam

Question 1 - C (organization)

First, consider the main idea of the lecture. The main idea is to describe how the Prophet Muhammad tried to expand the reach of Islam. This allows us to eliminate **A** because it does not fit in with the main idea. **B** and **D** however, somewhat relate to the main idea, making the selection even harder. We can eliminate **D** because the professor does not mention that Muhammed was unsuccessful. Likewise, with **B**, there is no indication that Muhammad had a hard time gaining followers, rather he was met with resistance. Thus, **C** is the correct answer.

Question 2 - A (function)

We can eliminate **D** because it is never mentioned whether Muslims would have a positive or negative impact on society at that time. **C** is sort of a backwards statement, to be true, it should say that Muslim influence on society was threatening the current politics. **B** can also be eliminated because they never discuss most members of society, only the elite Umayyad Clan.

Transcript

"The Prophet Muhammad started publicly preaching his strict brand of monotheism in the year 613, by reciting the Quran, quickly convincing some of the commoners of Mecca to believe in him. Most of his early converts belonged to groups of people who had failed to achieve any significant social mobility, which, of course, included many of the poor. His followers memorized his recitations and overall message, which was that the powerful should take care of the weak, a message that resonated with many of these economically and socially marginalized. Islam served as a binding force, replacing tribal solidarity.

Muhammad's message challenged the Umayyad Clan's leadership of society. The most powerful branch of the Quraysh Tribe, the Umayyads had been enriching themselves from the lucrative caravan trade while, at the same time, ignoring the hardships of the needy.

The political implications were clear. The Muslims threatened to disrupt a delicate equilibrium. The Prophet's message jeopardized the social and economic standing of the elite members of society."

Growth of Towns and Trade

Question 1 - A (speaker stance)

The professor starts off by saying the eleventh century was not the best for Western Europe, but then continues the lecture on a positive note, describing how there was much growth and urbanization. **B** and **C** are never mentioned in the passage. **D** is incorrect because the 11th century is never compared to any other time in history, so we can't infer that's correct, leaving **A**.

Question 2 - B (organization)

Right before the professor mentions Dublin, the professor says that "*Viking-founded markets served as the center of new towns.*" When the professor mentions Dublin right after, we hear the words "*for example*," which then leads us to consider **B**. However, **C** also seems somewhat correct. **C** is not correct because we don't know that Dublin was not urbanized or that it was a new town when the Viking trading post was established, such as the professor suggested was typical of Viking-founded markets.

Transcript

"Although the eleventh century was in many ways Western Europe's lowest point, it would also see the beginnings of Western Europe's re-urbanization. One reason for these beginnings was that in those lands that had been part of the Western Roman Empire, city walls often remained, even if these cities had largely emptied of people. During the chaos and mayhem of the tenth and eleventh centuries, people often gathered in walled settlements for protection. Many of these old walled cities thus came to be re-occupied.

Another reason for the growth of towns came with a revival of trade in the eleventh century. This revival of trade can be traced to several causes. In the first place, Europe's knights, as a warrior aristocracy, had a strong demand for luxury goods, both locally manufactured products and imported goods such as silks and spices from Asia. Bishops, the great lords of the Church, had a similar demand. As such, markets grew up in the areas around castles and churches, and thus caused the formation of towns that served as market centers. Moreover, Viking raids had also led to a greater sea-borne trade in the North Sea and Atlantic. Often, Viking-founded markets served as the center of new towns, especially in those lands where the Romans had never established a state and which were not urbanized at all. The Irish city of Dublin, for example, had begun as a Viking trading post."

Magna Carta

Question 1 - D (main idea)

The Magna Carta is introduced briefly at the beginning of the lecture so we can eliminate **C**. The professor does not compare the governments in England and Spain, so we can eliminate **B**. Lastly, we can eliminate **A** because the professor does not say anything negative about parliament.

Question 2 - C (inference)

If you paid close attention to the beginning of the lecture, you may remember the professor saying, "*One temporary treaty of this civil war, a treaty known as Magna Carta would have a much further-reaching impact than anyone who had drafted it could have foreseen.*" This sentence in itself tells us that the Magna Carta was extremely important. Then the professor continues to discuss how this treaty actually changed the government system in England.

Transcript

"*When England's King John lost to Philip Augustus, his outraged nobles rebelled, resulting in a civil war from 1215 to 1217. One temporary treaty of this civil war, a treaty known as Magna Carta would have a much further-reaching impact than anyone who had drafted it could have foreseen. One particular provision of Magna Carta was that if the king wanted to raise new taxes on the people of England, then he needed to get the consent of the community by convening a council. The convening of such councils, known as parliaments, would come to be systematized over the course of the thirteenth century.*

*Parliaments were not unique to England, however. Most Spanish kings would consult with representatives of both Spain's towns and nobility, and the Scandinavian kings had assemblies. England's parliaments, however, would gradually evolve from meetings assembled when a king wanted to raise taxes to a regular assembly that gave representative voice to the people of England.***"**

Practice for the TOEFL® Listening Section

Physics

What is a Fluid?

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in a physics class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

shearing forces

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. What is the lecture mainly about?

- **a.** How fluids differ from solids
- **b.** The difference between liquids, solids, and gases
- **c.** What happens when shearing forces are applied to liquids, solids, and gases
- **d.** How liquids, solids, and gases fit into different containers

2. Based on the information from the listening, indicate which characteristic on the left belongs to either solid, liquid, or gas.

	Solid	Liquid	Gas
Susceptible to shearing forces			
Atoms can be separated by large distances			
Resists all types of stress			

Pascal's Principle

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in a physics class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

Blaise Pascal
17th century

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. What is the professor's opinion of Pascal's principle?

- **a.** Pascal's principle is only true experimentally
- **b.** Pascal's principle doesn't accurately define liquid behavior in all situations
- **c.** Pascal's principle is an important finding regarding pressure and fluids
- **d.** Pascal's principle is the strongest theory we have of liquids

2. Why does the professor mention the heart?

- **a.** To highlight the difference between a closed system and Pascal's principle
- **b.** To give an example of the effect of increased pressure on liquid in an enclosed chamber
- **c.** To prove that the behavior of liquid changes when pressure is applied in open systems
- **d.** To introduce the idea of the behavior of liquid in enclosed spaces

Temperature

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in a physics class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

tepid water
thermometer

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. Why does the professor say this?

a. To clarify the definition of temperature
b. To emphasize the importance of temperature
c. To relate the topic to a previous concept
d. To show how this information relates to the information the students already know

2. What is the professor's attitude towards thermometers?

a. The professor thinks thermometers are the most important invention
b. The professor believes there are too many types of thermometers
c. The professor thinks thermometers can be confusing because many physical properties depend on temperature
d. The professor finds the diversity of thermometers to be fascinating

Sound Waves

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in a physics class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

ultrasound

periodic wave
harmonic motion

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. What is the professor's opinion towards sound?

a. The professor finds the concept of hearing sound to be an interesting topic
b. The professor believes sound is mostly subjective perception
c. The professor thinks that the phenomenon of sound is disturbing
d. The professor finds sound to be an abnormal concept

2. Why does the professor mention ultrasound?

a. To prove that sound is everywhere
b. To describe a type of sound that doesn't have to do with hearing
c. To give an example of a sound we can't hear
d. To show that sound is important to the medical field

Electric Hazards and the Human Body

Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in a physics class.

**Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student, but essential for understanding the lecture.*

VOCABULARY

thermal hazard
shock hazard

Listen to the audio file before you read the questions!

1. What is the lecture mainly about?

- **a.** The different ways a shock hazard can affect the human body
- **b.** The dangers of shock hazards
- **c.** The two types of electrical hazards
- **d.** The paths taken by currents in the body

2. Why does the professor say this?

- **a.** To explain a historical example of a thermal hazard
- **b.** To give the students an example they are likely familiar with
- **c.** To prove that thermal hazards are relevant
- **d.** To highlight the dangers of thermal hazards

Physics Questions
Answer Key

What is a Fluid?

Question 1 - A (main idea)

Consider the structure of the lecture. The professor begins the lecture by defining what a fluid is and then continues to talk about how fluids are different from solids. Although it appears that the professor is really saying the differences between all three: solid, liquid, and gas, the point is that liquid and gas both fall under the fluid category and the professor is comparing the two of those to solids, not to each other.

Question 2 - (organizational chart)

	Solid	Liquid	Gas
Susceptible to shearing forces		X	X
Atoms can be separated by large distances			X
Resists all types of stress	X		

Transcript

"Much of what we value in life is fluid: a breath of fresh winter air; the hot blue flame in our gas cooker; the water we drink, swim in, and bathe in; the blood in our veins. So, what exactly is a fluid?

Matter most commonly exists as a solid, liquid, or gas; these states are known as the three common phases of matter. Solids have a definite shape and a specific volume, liquids have a definite volume but their shape changes depending on the container in which they are held, and gases have neither a definite shape nor a specific volume as their molecules move to fill the container in which they are held. Liquids and gases are considered to be fluids because they yield to shearing forces, whereas solids resist them. A container, for

example, is a shearing force, since it forces liquids and gases to change shape based on its dimensions. Solids don't change based on their container.

Atoms in solids are in close contact, with forces between them that allow the atoms to vibrate but not to change positions with neighboring atoms. Thus a solid resists all types of stress.

In contrast, liquids change easily when stressed and do not spring back to their original shape once the force is removed because the atoms are free to slide about and change neighbors—that is, they flow with the molecules held together by their mutual attraction.

Atoms in gases are separated by distances that are large compared with the size of the atoms. The forces between gas atoms are therefore very weak, except when the atoms collide with one another. Gases thus not only flow but they are relatively easy to compress because there is much space and little force between atoms."

Pascal's Principle

Question 1 - C (speaker stance)

If you have difficulty answering this question, it is best to eliminate all of the answers that are likely wrong. A doesn't necessarily make sense so we can eliminate that. Just because something was verified experimentally, doesn't mean it's "*only true experimentally*." We can eliminate **B** because the professor doesn't discuss other situations with liquids, the professor only discusses the effect of pressure on liquids in enclosed spaces. We can also eliminate **D** because it is too extreme. The professor's opinion is subtle and this theory is not compared to others.

Question 2 - B (organization)

When the professor mentions the heart, the professor begins with "*for example*," so typically we can assume that's exactly what the professor is doing—giving an example of what is being discussed. In this case, the professor is discussing the nature of liquid in an enclosed chamber. **A** is incorrect because, at this point in the lecture, Pascal's principle hasn't been mentioned yet. **C** is incorrect because the heart example is of a closed system, not an open one. **D** is incorrect because, at this point in the lecture, the professor has already introduced the topic.

Transcript

"Pressure is defined as force per unit area. Can pressure be increased in a fluid by pushing directly on the fluid? Yes, but it is much easier if the fluid is enclosed. The heart, for example, increases blood pressure by pushing directly on the blood in an enclosed system. If you try to push on a fluid in an open system, such as a river, the fluid flows away. An enclosed fluid cannot flow away, and so pressure is more easily increased by an applied force.

What happens to a pressure in an enclosed fluid? Since atoms in a fluid are free to move about, they transmit the pressure to all parts of the fluid and to the walls of the container. Remarkably, the pressure is transmitted undiminished. This phenomenon is called Pascal's principle, because it was first clearly stated by the 17th century French philosopher and scientist Blaise Pascal: A change in pressure applied to an enclosed fluid is transmitted undiminished to all portions of the fluid and to the walls of its container.

Pascal's principle is what makes pressure so important in fluids. Since a change in pressure is transmitted undiminished in an enclosed fluid, we often know more about pressure than other physical quantities in fluids."

Temperature

Question 1 - A (function)

The professor says "*again*" and "*to reiterate*," both of which are keywords that let us know the professor is repeating something, and usually, this is to emphasize an important point or to clarify something, to make sure the students understand. In this case, A is the correct answer because the professor is defining temperature, thus clarifying the definition.

Question 2 - D (speaker stance)

The professor finds it very interesting that there can be so many different types of thermometers because many physical properties depend on temperature. Recall that the professor says, *"Because many physical properties depend on temperature, the variety of thermometers is remarkable."*

Transcript

"The concept of temperature has evolved from the common concepts of hot and cold. Human perception of what feels hot or cold is a relative one. For example, if you place one hand in hot water and the other in cold water, and then place both hands in tepid water, the tepid water will feel cool to the hand that was in hot water, and warm to the one that was in cold water. The scientific definition of temperature is less ambiguous than your senses of hot and cold. Temperature is operationally defined to be what we measure with a thermometer. Two accurate thermometers, one placed in hot water and the other in cold water, will show the hot water to have a higher temperature. If they are then placed in the tepid water, both will give identical readings. Again, just to reiterate, temperature is the quantity measured by a thermometer.

Any physical property that depends on temperature, and whose response to temperature is reproducible, can be used as the basis of a thermometer. Because many physical properties depend on temperature, the variety of thermometers is remarkable. For example, volume increases with temperature for most substances. This property is the basis for the common alcohol thermometer, the old mercury thermometer, and the bimetallic strip. Other properties used to measure temperature include electrical resistance and color, and the emission of infrared radiation."

Sound Waves

Question 1 - A (speaker stance)

The professor reveals an opinion towards sound to the students at the very beginning of the lecture. The professor says, "*Sound can be used as a familiar illustration of waves. Because hearing is one of our most important senses, it is interesting to see how the physical properties of sound correspond to our perceptions of it.*"

Question 2 - B (organization)

Right before the professor mentions ultrasound, the professor states that sound isn't just limited to hearing or sounds we can hear. Thus **B** is the correct answer because the professor uses ultrasound as an example of a sound that is not necessarily related to hearing.

Transcript

"Sound can be used as a familiar illustration of waves. Because hearing is one of our most important senses, it is interesting to see how the physical properties of sound correspond to our perceptions of it. Hearing is the perception of sound, just as vision is the perception of visible light. But sound has important applications beyond hearing. Ultrasound, for example, is not heard but can be employed to form medical images and is also used in treatment.

The physical phenomenon of sound is defined to be a disturbance of matter that is transmitted from its source outward. Sound is a wave. On the atomic scale, it is a disturbance of atoms that is far more ordered than their thermal motions. In many instances, sound is a periodic wave, and the atoms undergo simple harmonic motion."

Electric Hazards and the Human Body

Question 1 - C (main idea)

Consider the organization of the lecture. The professor begins the lecture by introducing the two known hazards of electricity. Then the professor gives examples of the first, then examples of the second. Thus **C** is the correct answer.

Question 2 - B (function)

By saying *"a classic example*," the professor is not referring to something related to history. Instead, this is meant to suggest that it is a typical example of something the students have likely heard before. Remember, the professor is trying to make the information relevant to the students, which is why the professor gives this "*classic example"* of a short circuit. Thus **B** is the correct answer.

Transcript

"There are two known hazards of electricity—thermal and shock. A thermal hazard is one where excessive electric power causes undesired thermal effects. A classic example of this is the short circuit, insulation on wires leading to an appliance has worn through allowing the two wires to come into contact. This could start a fire in the wall of a house.

A shock hazard occurs when electric current passes through a person. Electrical currents through people produce tremendously varied effects. An electrical current can even be used for positive effects like to block back pain. The possibility of using electrical current to stimulate muscle action in paralyzed limbs, perhaps allowing paraplegics to walk, is also under study. Still, many in the general public think of electric current running through the body as both dangerous and potentially fatal. The major factors upon which the effects of electrical shock depend are the amount of current, the path taken by the current, the duration of the current, and the strength of the current."

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