



CHAPTER 4

Synthesis

In Chapter 3 you learned that some questions on the GED Language Arts, Reading Test would require you to draw inferences based upon what you observe and know from your experience. You will use your analysis skills when you draw inferences from *a part* of the passage. When you draw inferences from several parts of the passage, you will be using **synthesis** skills. Synthesis is a way of thinking—a reasoning process that draws multiple inferences from an entire passage or integrates information from outside the passage to reach a new understanding.

Solving synthesis questions is much like solving a puzzle. In a puzzle all of the pieces when linked together give you the full picture. Synthesis requires you to link the pieces you have observed and what you know from your experiences to form a new context.

Synthesis questions will ask you to

- interpret how a passage is organized
- interpret the overall tone, point of view, or purpose of a passage
- link elements of a passage
- integrate information from outside a passage with information from within the passage

This chapter will help you to practice solving synthesis questions.

Interpreting How a Passage is Organized

Writers organize their work in a way that helps the reader to follow the progression of action, the importance of ideas, examples for illustration, or points of comparison or contrast.

Authors of fictional and nonfictional texts organize their works so that the reader can better understand the author's purpose. An author can organize a passage in several different ways, including time order, classification, cause and effect, and comparison and contrast. The purpose of a passage may also be to delve into the mind of the character to show what the character is thinking or how the character is reacting to situations. In Chapter 3 you saw examples of passages organized in time order, classification, and cause and effect. In this chapter, you will look at passages that use comparison and contrast. You will need to understand all four methods of organizing passages in order to synthesize information and draw conclusions.

Comparison and Contrast

One of the seven passages you will see on the GED Language Arts, Reading Test will involve **comparison** or **contrast**. This passage may be any of the literary texts (prose fiction, poetry, drama) or a nonfiction text. You will be expected to recognize when an author is organizing a passage to analyze similarities or differences.

Comparison and contrast passages are organized by an author to balance one feature with another. For example, an author may develop one character by stating this character's traits and comparing them to the traits of another character. In this way the reader sees in what ways the characters are similar. If an author contrasts the characters' traits, readers can see how the characters differ. Writers could choose to compare or contrast

- characters
- settings
- situations
- courses of action
- points of view

You make comparisons and contrasts on a daily basis. In planning a vacation, you may want to examine the benefits of one destination over another. At work you may have to decide which course of action brings the greatest advantage to your company. You may make price comparisons or product comparisons before making a purchase.

Suppose you want to move into a new apartment. After looking at several apartments, you find two that you like. Before you choose which apartment to rent, you might evaluate certain features of each apartment:

Features	Apartment #1	Apartment #2
Monthly rent	\$580.00	\$610.00
Location and neighborhood	Good	Good
Amount of space	5 rooms/ 1 bedroom	4 rooms/ 1 bedroom
Condition of appliances	Fair	New
Maintenance	Good	Fair

Comparing and contrasting Apartment 1 with Apartment 2 would help you make your final decision. The comparison-and-contrast reasoning process would show you why you prefer either the first or the second apartment.

An author uses comparison and contrast to organize a passage for these purposes:

- to judge which of two similar things is better

- to show how two similar things are alike and different

For example, a sportswriter might predict the likely winner of the World Series by comparing and contrasting the strengths and weaknesses of the two baseball teams involved. A movie critic might analyze the similarities and differences between a best-selling novel and the movie version of the book.

EXERCISE 1

Directions: In the following passage, an imaginary psychologist named Dr. Applebaum discusses his opinion of television shows. Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.

"Now," said Applebaum, "have you ever said to a taxi driver, 'Follow that car and don't lose him'?"

"Not really."

"Well, if you had, the driver would have told you to blow it out your ear. No taxi driver is in a mood to follow another car because that means he's going to get involved. But on TV every cabdriver looks as if he'd like nothing better to do than to drive 90 miles an hour through a rain-swept street trying to keep up with a carful of hoods. And the worst thing is that the kids believe it."

"What else have you discovered?"

"Kids have a perverted sense of what emergency wards of hospitals are really like. On TV shows they take a kid to an emergency ward and four doctors come rushing down to bandage his leg. In a real life situation the kid would be sitting on the bench for two hours before he even saw an intern. On TV there always happens to be a hospital bed available when a kid needs it. What the kids in this country don't know is that sometimes you have to wait three days to get a hospital bed and then you have to put a cash deposit of \$500 down before they give it to you."

—Excerpted from "Unreality of TV" in *The Buchwald Stops Here*
by Art Buchwald, 1978

1. The purpose of this passage is to compare and contrast _____ with _____
2. In paragraph 3 _____
is compared and contrasted with _____
3. In paragraph 5 _____
is compared and contrasted with _____
4. According to this excerpt, what can you conclude about Dr. Applebaum's opinion of television shows?

EXERCISE 2

Directions: Read the passages and identify the nature of the comparison or contrast.

Ernest Hemingway's books are easier to know, and love, than his life. He wrote, at his early best, a prose of powerful and brilliant simplicity. But his character was not simple. In one of his stories he wrote, "The most complicated subject I know, since I am a man, is a man's life." The most complicated subject that he knew was Ernest Hemingway.

He was a violently cross-grained man. His life belonged as much to the history of publicity as to the history of literature. He was a splendid writer who became his own worst creation, a hoax and a bore. He ended by being one of the most famous men in the world, white-bearded Mr. Papa. He stopped observing and started performing. He sentimentalized and pontificated and lied and bullied.

—Excerpted from "A Quarter-Century Later, the Myth Endures"
by Lance Morrow, *Time*, August 25, 1986

1. In the first paragraph Ernest Hemingway's _____ is contrasted with his _____
2. List two contrasts about Ernest Hemingway contained in paragraph 2.

People, black and white, say that the throngs of upstanding black men at the Million Man March showed a picture of the Black Man different from what the nation is accustomed to. Because this has always been my primary image of the Black Man—the men in my family, my father, his friends, my friends, total strangers at traffic lights, and sometimes even myself—what struck me was not the vast crowd's proud demeanor or the insult that the crowd's peacefulness was a pleasant surprise to most whites and some blacks, but that the black men deserved a message more worthy of their journey than the numerology and self-election of Louis Farrakhan.

It was not a civil rights march or even a march, though a Nation of Islam spokesman said on television that it was a march in Washington rather than a march on Washington. As more than one of the day's speechmakers insisted, they had come neither to demand nor to ask anything of government and whites. They had come for themselves and to ask something of themselves. It was billed as a day of atonement and reconciliation. It was a mass rally, a

religious convocation, a camp revival meeting on a grand scale, with some competition among the speechmakers to see who could blow the emotional lid off the patient multitudes. Perhaps those black men and the women mingling among them—1.5 million, 2 million, 400,000, 870,000?—came to experience what it felt like to be in command of that place where history had been made a few times before. A lot of those present on October 16, 1995, had not been born in 1963.

—Excerpted from “Slouching Toward Washington” by Darryl Pinckney, 1995

3. Identify the paragraph and the sentence(s) in that paragraph where each of these contrasts is found:

(a) The participants in the Million Man March were in the capitol demanding something of themselves rather than something of the government.

paragraph _____, sentence(s) _____

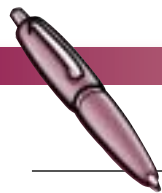
(b) The image of black men taking part in the march differed from the nation’s typical perception of black men.

paragraph _____, sentence(s) _____

(c) Many observers were concerned with the crowd’s behavior; the writer, however, was concerned about the message that the crowd was given.

paragraph _____ sentence(s) _____

Answers are on page 324.



WRITING ACTIVITY 1

Compare and contrast yourself with a close friend. How are your backgrounds, personalities, and physical appearances similar? How are they different? List some of these similarities and differences on a sheet of paper.

Answers will vary.

EXERCISE 3

Directions: Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.

The old lady settled herself comfortably, removing her white cotton gloves and putting them up with her purse on the shelf in front of the back window. The children's mother still had on slacks and still had her head tied up in a green kerchief, but the grandmother had on a navy blue straw sailor hat with a bunch of white violets on the brim and a navy blue dress with a small white dot in the print. Her collar and cuffs were white organdy trimmed with lace and at her neckline she had pinned a purple spray of cloth violets containing a sachet. In case of an accident, anyone seeing her dead on the highway would know at once she was a lady.

She said she thought it was going to be a good day for driving, neither too hot nor too cold, and she cautioned Bailey that the speed limit was fifty-five miles an hour and that the patrolmen hid themselves behind billboards and small clumps of trees and sped out after you before you had a chance to slow down. She pointed out interesting details of the scenery: Stone Mountain; the blue granite that in some places came up to both sides of the highway; the brilliant red clay banks slightly streaked with purple; and the various crops that made rows of green lace-work on the ground. The trees were full of silver-white sunlight and the meanest of them sparkled. The children were reading comic magazines and their mother had gone back to sleep.

"Let's go through Georgia fast so we won't have to look at it much," John Wesley said.

"If I were a little boy," said the grandmother, "I wouldn't talk about my native state that way. Tennessee has the mountains and Georgia has the hills."

"Tennessee is just a hillbilly dumping ground," John Wesley said, "and Georgia is a lousy state too."

"You said it," June Star said.

"In my time," said the grandmother, folding her thin veined fingers, "children were more respectful of their native states and their parents and everything else."

—Excerpted from "A Good Man Is Hard To Find" by Flannery O'Connor, 1953

1. The contrast in the passage is primarily between _____ and _____
2. What does the women's choice of clothing say about each woman?

3. Which choice best expresses the main differences between the two women?
- (1) youth and age
 - (2) fear and confidence
 - (3) respect and indulgence
 - (4) north and south
 - (5) refinement and vulgarity

Answers are on page 324.

Interpreting the Tone, Point of View, or Purpose of a Passage

Tone

As a reader you will be expected to look at an entire passage in order to reach conclusions about the author's intent or techniques. In Chapter 3 you learned to analyze tone in short sentences and paragraphs. On the GED Language Arts, Reading Test, you will also be asked to look at the tone of an entire passage.

Read the following passage. Observe the organizational pattern used by the author, and try to determine the author's tone toward her subject.

I refuse to be upset by this. In fact, I feel good about it. Oh, yeah. Because what I did was fair, probably even an inalienable right or something.

Still, it was my first time, so naturally I'm a little shaken.

I was sitting here about to pick up the phone to call Al, the appliance repair guy. Because the washing machine broke again, just froze up in mid-rinse, leaving my delicate darks stranded in a tubful of suds. Fortunately, Al had left a little sticker on my washer with his phone number in case I ever needed him again. And according to the sticker, his shop was open only till 5, which was about five minutes away, and, really, I just wanted to get this situation handled so I could move on with my life.

So I reached for the phone and *bleep, bleep*, it rang.

"Hello?" I answered.

"Hello," said a young man. "May I speak with Miss, um Je-Anne, um Lake-us?"

Oh, brother. The only people who call my house looking for Miss Um Je-Anne Um Lake-us are telemarketers. I was not in the mood. Not that I have ever been. I have never once agreed to anything offered by any telemarketer, ever. I should, I thought, just say this. I should explain to this guy that I am a big waste of his time.

"I'm not interested in anything," was the way it came out.

"Well, Miss Je-Anne Um Lake-us, what long distance service are you using now?"

Oh, brother. He was not going to go down easy. "I don't know," I said. "That's sort of my husband's domain." Now why was I lying? Not that I think this is exactly wrong. Lying to an intruder is sort of in the same category as killing someone in self-defense, isn't it?

"You *don't know*?" he said, serving up some attitude.

"Look, this really isn't a good time," I said. "Why don't you call some other time?" And why did I say that? Now I was going to get on some list where they'd call me on, like every shift or something, until finally I'd just have to snap and use that line my friend Sara once used: "Why don't you give me *your* home number and I'll call you back to discuss this offer during *your* dinnertime, okay?"

—Excerpted from "Invasive Procedure" by Jeanne Marie Laskas,
The Washington Post Magazine, August 20, 2000

1. What is the author's problem?

2. The author uses two techniques to organize this passage. Identify them.

3. Which choice best represents the tone of the author in this passage?

- (1) delighted
- (2) satirical
- (3) solemn
- (4) embarrassed
- (5) confident

1. The author addresses the nuisance of telemarketers who call at the most inopportune times. However, the author uses humor and exaggeration throughout the passage as she describes her dealing with the telemarketer.

2. The passage is organized in chronological order to show the experience to the reader. The author uses dialogue and records her own thoughts to exaggerate her humorous view of the incident.
3. Answer (2), satirical, best conveys the author’s humorous portrayal of a common experience.

Point of View

As you read a passage, observe who is telling the story. In some passages writers may choose to have an individual *outside* the event tell the story. For other passages a person *who is part of the event* will tell you what happens. On pages 176–179 in Chapter 6 of this book, you will find more information on determining the point of view.

EXERCISE 4

Directions: As you read the following brief excerpts, determine the point of view chosen by the writer to tell the story. Use *O* for an outside narrator and use *I* for a narrator who is part of the story.

- _____ 1. Now that she knew how many people from her past were sitting here, Maggie wished she’d have given more thought to her appearance.
—Excerpted from *Breathing Lessons* by Anne Tyler
- _____ 2. Of Angela Vicaro, on the other hand, I was always receiving periodic news that inspired an idealized image in me.
—Excerpted from *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* by Gabriel García Márquez
- _____ 3. “The whole family” means the Kwongs and the Louies. The Kwongs are Auntie Helen, Uncle Henry, Mary, Frank, and Bao-bao. And these days “the Louies” really refers only to my mother and me, since my father is dead and my brother Samuel lives in New Jersey.
—Excerpted from *The Kitchen God’s Wife* by Amy Tan
- _____ 4. They met in Vesper County, Virginia, under a walnut tree. She had been working in the fields like everybody else, and stayed past picking time to live with a family twenty miles away from her own.
—Excerpted from *Jazz* by Toni Morrison
- _____ 5. In the meantime he had sold his store; he couldn’t spend time in it; he was mainly occupied now with sitting around town on rainy days smoking and ‘gassin’ with the boys,’ or in riding to and from his farms.
—Excerpted from “Under the Lion’s Paw” by Hamlin Garland

Answers are on page 324.

GED PRACTICE

EXERCISE 5

Directions: Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.

WHO IS THE NARRATOR?

In my younger and more vulnerable years my father gave me some advice that I've been turning over in my mind ever since.

5 "Whenever you feel like criticizing anyone," he told me, "just remember that all the people in this world haven't had the advantages that you've had."

He didn't say any more but we've always
10 been unusually communicative in a reserved way and I understood that he meant a great deal more than that. In consequence I'm inclined to reserve all judgements, a habit that has opened up many curious natures to
15 me and also made me the victim of not a few veteran bores. The abnormal mind is quick to detect and attach itself to this quality when it appears in a normal person, and so it came about in college I was
20 unjustly accused of being a politician, because I was privy to the secret griefs of wild, unknown men. Most of the confidences were unsought—frequently I have feigned sleep, preoccupation or a hostile levity when
25 I realized by some unmistakable sign that an intimate revelation was quivering on the horizon—for the intimate revelations of young men or at least the terms in which they express them are usually plagiaristic and marred by obvious suppressions.
30 Reserving judgements is a matter of infinite hope. I am still a little afraid of missing something if I forget that, as my father snobbishly suggested and I snobbishly repeat, a sense of the fundamental
35 decencies is parcelled out unequally at birth.

—Excerpted from *The Great Gatsby*
by F. Scott Fitzgerald

1. According to the passage, which of these descriptions best matches the speaker?
 - (1) a character who takes part in the action of the story
 - (2) a troubled young person
 - (3) an all-knowing storyteller outside the story
 - (4) a teenager
 - (5) a politician
2. What does the narrator state is his most important quality?
 - (1) He is sought out for his wisdom.
 - (2) He is not a person who makes enemies.
 - (3) He finds the misery of others a delight.
 - (4) He had a good relationship with his father.
 - (5) He does not judge people.
3. Which of these terms best describes the tone of the passage?
 - (1) light-hearted
 - (2) sarcastic
 - (3) thoughtful
 - (4) angry
 - (5) desperate
4. At the end of the novel, the narrator must pass judgement on the main character. What can you expect the narrator to do before making his announcement?
 - (1) consult his father
 - (2) listen to the man's enemies
 - (3) consider all relevant details
 - (4) follow his impulses
 - (5) prejudge the man on hearsay

Purpose

When you are asked for the main idea or purpose of a multi-paragraph passage, you must look for the idea that ties together *all* of the details from the passage. Don't confuse the purpose of a single paragraph with the purpose of the passage as a whole. As you saw when studying the organizational pattern of a passage, paragraphs are links that lead you to the overall purpose.

As you read the following passage, think about what ideas link the paragraphs.

EXERCISE 6

Directions: Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.

When the short days of winter came dusk fell before we had well eaten our dinners. When we met in the street the houses had grown sombre. The space of sky above us was the colour of ever-changing violet and towards it the lamps of the street lifted their feeble lanterns. The cold air stung us and we played till our bodies glowed. Our shouts echoed in the silent street. The career of our play brought us through the dark muddy lanes behind the houses where we ran the gauntlet of the rough tribes from the cottages to the back doors of the dark dripping gardens where odours arose from the ash-pits, to the dark odorous stables where a coachman smoothed and combed the horse or shook music from the buckled harness. When we returned to the street, light from the kitchen windows had filled the areas. If my uncle was seen turning the corner we hid in the shadow until we had seen him safely housed. Or if Mangan's sister came out on the doorstep to call her brother in to his tea we watched her from our shadows peer up and down the street. We waited to see whether she would remain or go in and, if she remained, we left our shadow and walked up to Mangan's steps resignedly. She was waiting for us, her figure defined by the light from the half-opened door. Her brother always teased her before he obeyed and I stood by the railings looking at her. Her dress swung as she moved her body and the soft rope of her hair tossed from side to side.

Every morning I lay on the floor in the front parlour watching her door. The blind was pulled down to within an inch of the sash so that I could not be seen. When she came out on the doorstep my heart leaped. I ran to the hall, seized my books and followed her. I kept her brown figure always in my eye and, when we came near the point at which our ways diverged, I quickened my pace and passed her. This happened morning after morning. I had never spoken to her, except for a few casual words, and yet her name was like a summons to all my foolish blood.

—Excerpted from "Araby" by James Joyce

1. How old does the narrator appear to be?
 - (1) 8
 - (2) 21
 - (3) 13
 - (4) 10
 - (5) 25
2. What term would best describe the entire passage?
 - (1) a reminiscence
 - (2) a diary entry
 - (3) a love letter
 - (4) a fairy tale
 - (5) an adventure tale
3. What is the purpose of the passage?
 - (1) to describe the poor section of town
 - (2) to tell how the children used their time
 - (3) to convey the speaker's friendship with Mangan
 - (4) to recall the speaker's first secret love
 - (5) to list the typical routine in the speaker's day

Answers are on page 324.

Linking Elements of a Passage

Paragraphs are the building blocks of writing. An author's task is to skillfully link the ideas of the paragraphs so that they logically build to the intended purpose.

Read the following passage and think about the ways the paragraphs are linked together.

EXERCISE 7

Directions: Read the passage about events after the sinking of the *Titanic* and answer the questions that follow.

Most of all they talked of getting rescued. Lightoller soon discovered Harold Bride, the junior wireless operator, at the stern of the boat, and from his position in the bow he asked what ships were on the way. Bride shouted back: the *Baltic*, the *Olympic*, the *Carpathia*. Lightoller figured the *Carpathia* should arrive at daybreak . . . passed the word around, to buck up the sagging spirits.

From then on they scanned the horizon searching for any sign. From time to time they were cheered by the green flares lit by Boxhall in Boat 2. Even Lightoller thought they must have come from another ship.

Slowly the night passed. Toward dawn a slight breeze sprang up. The air seemed even more frigid. The sea grew choppy. Bitter-cold waves splashed over the feet, the shins, the knees of the men on Boat B. The spray stabbed their bodies and blinded their eyes. One man, then another, then another rolled off the stern and disappeared from sight. The rest fell silent, completely absorbed in the battle to stay alive.

The sea was silent too. No one saw a trace of life in the waves that rippled the smooth Atlantic as the first light of dawn streaked the sky.

—Excerpted from *A Night To Remember* by Walter Lord

1. What are some of the phrases that link the paragraphs together?

2. What ideas are listed in the first paragraph?

3. What ideas are listed in the second paragraph?

4. What ideas are listed in the third paragraph?

5. What is the purpose of this passage?

- (1) to list the actions taken by the survivors
- (2) to describe the cold, icy surroundings
- (3) to reveal how the leader established order
- (4) to suggest the dangers of ocean travel
- (5) to reveal the survivors' growing fear of death at sea

Answers are on page 324.

Integrating Information from Outside a Passage with Information from Within the Passage

Some synthesis questions will contain additional information not found in the excerpt, and you will have to integrate that information with your understanding of the passage. There are two or three of these *expanded synthesis* questions on the test. Sometimes the new information will be something that happened before or after the selection; it may be a critical comment on the passage; or it may be information about the author.

Read the following excerpt and answer the expanded synthesis question.

By the time Krebs returned to his home town in Oklahoma the greeting of heroes was over. He came back much too late. The men from the town who had been drafted had all been welcomed elaborately on their return. There had been a great deal of hysteria. Now the reaction had set in. People seemed to think it was rather ridiculous for Krebs to be getting back so late, years after the war was over.

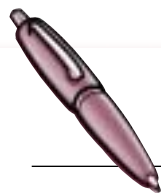
—Excerpted from “Soldier’s Home” by Ernest Hemingway, 1925

Later in the story, we learn that Krebs is having a great deal of difficulty in readjusting to normal town life after World War I.

Based on this information and the excerpt, what was Krebs’ reaction to his reception on returning home from the war?

- (1) joy
- (2) sadness
- (3) fear
- (4) resentment
- (5) acceptance

The first sentence of the question provides information that unfolds as the story develops. The excerpt states that years had passed since the war’s end, and all of the celebrations for the returning soldiers were long over. When you integrate those two pieces of information, you can conclude that Krebs felt (4) resentment because he did not participate in the celebrations and the honors given to other returning soldiers.



WRITING ACTIVITY 2

Read the review in your local newspaper or a magazine of a movie or play you saw, a book you read, a new TV program, a new CD or video, or a concert you attended. List the points made by the reviewer.

On a separate sheet of paper, write a reply to the reviewer in which you compare or contrast the reviewer’s comments with your reactions.

GED PRACTICE

Chapter Review

Directions: Read each passage below and choose the best answer to each question that follows.

Questions 1–7 refer to the following excerpt from a short story.

WHO IS CONNIE?

Her name was Connie. She was fifteen and had a quick nervous giggling habit of craning her neck to glance into mirrors, or checking other people's faces to make sure her own was all right. Her mother, who noticed everything and knew everything and who hadn't much reason any longer to look at her own face, always scolded Connie about it. 'Stop gawking at yourself, who are you? You think you're so pretty?' she would say. Connie would raise her eyebrows at these familiar complaints and look right through her mother, into a shadowy vision of herself as she was right at that moment: she knew she was pretty and that was everything. Her mother had been pretty once too, if you could believe those old snapshots in the album, but now her looks were gone and that was why she was always after Connie.

"Why don't you keep your room clean like your sister? How've you got your hair fixed—what the hell stinks? Hair spray? You don't see your sister using that junk."

Her sister June was twenty-four and still lived at home. She was a secretary in the high school Connie attended, and if that wasn't bad enough—with her in the same building—she was so plain and chunky and steady that Connie had to hear her praised all the time by her mother and her mother's sisters. June did this, June did that, she saved money and helped clean the house and cooked and Connie couldn't do a thing, her mind was filled with trashy daydreams. Their father was away at work most of the time and when he came home he wanted

supper and he read the newspaper at supper and after supper he went to bed.

—Excerpted from "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" by Joyce Carol Oates, 1970

1. How does the mother feel about Connie?

- (1) jealous
- (2) embarrassed
- (3) admiring
- (4) sympathetic
- (5) concerned

2. In lines 14–16 the author describes Connie as follows: "She knew she was pretty and that was everything." Why does the author include that description?

To show that Connie

- (1) wants to be a fashion model
- (2) needs to attract teenage boys
- (3) is conceited about her looks
- (4) plans to enter a beauty contest
- (5) fears that her beauty will fade

3. Which of the following statements best describes the mother's opinion of June?

- (1) June should get married.
- (2) June should go back to school.
- (3) June should be more concerned about her looks.
- (4) June is a capable secretary.
- (5) June has her priorities in order.

4. Why does the author use the phrase "trashy daydreams" (line 35)?

- (1) to compare Connie's daydreams to her messy room
- (2) to contrast Connie's mind with a garbage can
- (3) to imply that the mother doesn't have those kinds of daydreams
- (4) to suggest that Connie's mother thinks Connie's inner thoughts are worthless
- (5) to explain why Connie doesn't enjoy housework

5. From the description of the father (lines 36–39), what can you conclude about him?

- (1) He is irritable from working long hours.
- (2) He does not spend much time with his family.
- (3) He takes pride in supporting his family.
- (4) He likes to read about current events.
- (5) He enjoys being with his wife and daughters.

6. In this passage Connie’s family is described by a fiction writer. From what other person’s point of view could Connie’s home life also be analyzed?

- (1) housekeeper
- (2) family counselor
- (3) hairstylist
- (4) scientist
- (5) historian

7. The author commented that the mysterious man who confronts and terrorizes Connie later in the story is the Demon Lover Death who has come to claim her.

Based on that information, which choice best represents the author’s purpose for the story?

- (1) to comment on Connie’s relationship with her sister
- (2) to criticize Connie’s poor treatment of her mother
- (3) to suggest that an attractive appearance doesn’t guarantee happiness
- (4) to reprimand Connie’s parents for failing to correct her selfishness
- (5) to portray Connie as a victim of the envy of her sister and mother

Questions 8–12 refer to the excerpt from a novel.

WHAT DOES EDNA FEEL IS HER ROLE IN LIFE?

Her marriage to Leoncé Pontellier was purely an accident, in this respect resembling many other marriages which masquerade as the decrees of Fate. It was in
 5 the midst of her secret great passion that she met him. He fell in love, as men are in the habit of doing, and pressed his suit with an earnestness and an ardor which left nothing to be desired. He pleased her; his
 10 absolute devotion flattered her. She fancied there was a sympathy of thought and taste between them, in which fancy she was mistaken. Add to this the violent opposition of her father and her sister Margaret to her
 15 marriage with a Catholic, and we need seek no further for the motives which led her to accept Mr. Pontellier for her husband.

The acme of this bliss, which would have been a marriage with the tragedian, was not
 20 for her in this world. As the devoted wife of a man who worshipped her, she felt she would take her place with a certain dignity in the world of reality, closing the portals forever behind her upon the realm of
 25 romance and dreams.

But it was not long before the tragedian had gone to join the cavalry officer and the engaged young man and a few others; Edna found herself face to face with the realities.
 30 She grew fond of her husband, realizing with some unaccountable satisfaction that no trace of passion or excessive and fictitious warmth colored her affection, thereby threatening its dissolution.

—Excerpted from “The Awakening”
 by Kate Chopin, 1899

8. According to the excerpt, what does Edna expect as the outcome of her marriage to Leoncé Pontellier ?

- (1) total happiness
- (2) peace within her father's family
- (3) lifelong sorrow in a loveless marriage
- (4) an end to youthful notions of love
- (5) children of her own

9. Which choice best describes Edna's feeling for Leoncé?

- (1) resentment
- (2) affection
- (3) love
- (4) jealousy
- (5) indifference

10. Who were the "tragedian, the cavalry officer, and the engaged young man"?

- (1) friends of Leoncé's
- (2) characters in a story
- (3) imaginary lovers
- (4) Edna's brothers
- (5) former love interests

11. What is the purpose of the third paragraph?

- (1) to convey that Edna was not in love with Leoncé
- (2) to reveal Edna's disillusionment with the marriage
- (3) to express her concern about having children
- (4) to suggest that Leoncé no longer loves Edna
- (5) to relate Edna's past fears of marriage

12. Later in the story, Edna says, "I am no longer one of Mr. Pontellier's possessions to dispose of or not."

What change in Edna does this later comment indicate?

- (1) an awareness that she is her own person
- (2) her refusal to be a mother to Leoncé's children
- (3) her following of the role assigned to her
- (4) an acceptance of society's standards for women
- (5) her rejection of both her father and her husband

Answers are on page 325.