Answers for Practice Test #1

Percy Bysshe Shelley, "Ozymandias"

1. B.

   Only choice (B) is correct. The rhyme scheme of the first eight lines falls into the following pattern: ABABACDC. The rhyming words are, "land," "stone," "sand," "frown," "command," "read," "things," and "fed."

2. A.

   The central image of the poem is choice (A), a collapsed statue in the desert. The image is explicitly described in lines 2 through 4: "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone / Stand in the desert. Near them on the sand, / Half sunk, a shattered visage lies." None of the other choices reflect the imagery of the poem.

Excerpt from Sir Philip Sidney, “An Apology for Poetry”

3. A.

   Choice (A), “The philosopher only communicates general, abstract ideas,” is the best answer. In the passage, the author argues that the philosopher’s knowledge “standeth so upon the abstract and general that happy is that man who may understand him.” In other words, the philosopher’s language is difficult to understand because it is abstract. Choice (B) repeats a common criticism of early Greek philosophers, but it does not reflect the idea stated in this passage. Choice (C) reflects a concern of philosophy — "whether knowledge exists that is not filtered through our senses — "but it is not the concern of this passage. Choice (D) is, to some extent, correct. However, the question asks you to consider the author’s primary criticism, which is better expressed in choice (A). Choice (E) is not implied by the passage.

4. C.

   The author’s criticism of the historian is the inverse of his criticism of the philosopher, so the best choice is (A), “The historian only deals with particular events, not general principles.” Choice (B) is not in fitting with the concerns of this passage. Choice (C) is true of the author’s criticism of the philosopher but not that of the historian. Choice (D) does not reflect the author’s point of view. Choice (D), again, is true of the philosopher but not of the historian.

5. B.

   The author praises poets for their ability to combine the best characteristics of the historian and the best of the philosopher. Choice (B), which says the poet uses “both abstract ideas and particular details,” is the best choice. Choice (A) is something the
author might say of the philosopher, but he does not make this statement of the poet. Choice (C) is in one sense true, but it is not the primary point the author makes about the poet. Choice (D) is reminiscent of arguments other philosophers have made about the importance of the poet, but it does not reflect this particular author’s point of view. Choice (E) is not in keeping with the argument in this passage.

6. A.

Choice (A) is the best answer. It states that the “poet can make the philosopher’s wisdom appeal to the imagination of the reader.” This statement provides the closest paraphrase of the final sentence from the passage, which states that the philosopher’s wisdom “lie[s] dark before the imaginative and judging power, if [it] be not illuminated or figured forth by the speaking picture of poesy.” Choice (B) is not true of the passage; it states the opposite of the passage’s main claim. Choice (C) is incorrect because it incorrectly interprets the author’s meaning. Choice (D) also incorrectly interprets the author’s meaning. Choice (E) contradicts the final statement in the passage.

Excerpt from Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*

7. B.

Choice (B), dialogue, is the best answer to the question. The quotation marks that open and close the passage indicate that it is excerpted from dialogue. While choice (A), a novel, may be true, it does not answer the question, as the quotation marks in themselves would not indicate that the passage comes from a novel. Choice (C), the early 1900s, is also true, but likewise has nothing to do with quotation marks. Choice (D), the author’s point of view, risks what some literary critics call the “intentional fallacy;” we can never truly know the author’s point of view unless we have letters or other types of documentation. Choice (E), soliloquy, which is a type of speech given by a character in a play, is unlikely because the passage contains none of the other typography associated with a play--stage directions, for instance.

8. B.

Answer (B) is the best choice. In grammatical terms, the pronoun “it” is singular, and the word it refers to would also have to be singular. This knowledge can help you rule out choices (C) and (E). In best grammatical practice, a singular pronoun should refer back to the nearest singular noun. Choices (A) and (D), then, could both be ruled out because they come before the phrase “mysterious stillness.”

9. C.

Choice (C), personification, is the best answer. The speaker is attributing human characteristics to an abstract idea. Specifically, the speaker says that the abstraction “stillness of life” looks upon him with “a vengeful aspect” (which means a resentful face). Choice (A), metaphor, is not the best choice because personification is a more
precise answer than metaphor. Choice (B), allusion, means that the quotation refers to another work, which it does not. Choice (D), metonym, is not as precise as personification. Choice (E), symbolism, does not apply to this passage because “vengeful aspect” would not be best described as a symbolic image, which refers to an image that that reinforces the themes of the story through some implied meaning.

10. A.

Choice (A) is the best answer because the first sentence of the passage reads, “Going up that river.” Choice (B) would be contradicted by the imagery of the passage, which describes the riverbank in close detail. No evidence from the passage can be found that supports choice (C). While choice (D), an ocean vessel, might be a tempting choice, it is unlikely that an ocean vessel would be used for river travel such as is described here. Choice (E) may also be tempting to students who recognize this passage as an excerpt from Joseph Conrad’s Heart of Darkness and know that the novel begins on the Thames River, but the question asks about the setting of “the story the speaker is telling,” the details of which do not suggest London at all.

11. A.

Choice (A) is the best answer because the only consistent underlying pattern of organization in this passage is association, or the process by which one idea triggers another. Choice (B) may be tempting, since the passage does refer to a main idea, but the passage is not organized by stating the main idea first and presenting supporting evidence. Answer (C), chronological order, is not the strongest choice because the passage seems to recount events and impressions from multiple occasions, and the reader is not told which came first and which after. Choice (D), cause and effect, most often isolates a single cause and looks at its effects one-by-one. This passage, however, does not evidence a pattern of cause and effect. Choice (E), comparison and contrast, looks at the similarities and differences of two things, but this passage does not do so.

Katherine Mansfield, "Mrs. Brill."

12. C.

The boy refers to Mrs. Brill as an "old thing," so choice (C) is the best answer. Choice (A) is incorrect because the context of the quotation makes it clear that the boy is speaking to the girl about the "old thing," so he cannot be referring to the girl. Choice (B), the band members, is also improbable. Choice (D) is incorrect because the baker is not present during the scene in the park. Choice (E) is incorrect because at no point is a cat mentioned.

13. A.

Mrs. Brill felt connected to the other people on the benches; therefore, choice (A) is the best choice. The narrator describes Mrs. Brill's thoughts, saying, "Yes, we understand, we
understand, she thought—though what they understood she didn't know." From this description of Mrs. Brill's thoughts, the reader can sense her feeling of unity with the other people in the park. The other choices are incorrect because the narrator does not indicate any feelings of disorientation, frustration, hurt, or impatience at the beginning of the passage.

14. B.

Though the narrator does not explicitly state Mrs. Brill's feelings, the most likely interpretation is choice (B). We can deduce that the boy's harsh words at the park must have hurt her. We know that she skips her usual stop at the baker's, she sits silently for a long time in her chair, and she thinks she hears the sound of something crying inside a box. Each of these details implies that she was hurt by the boy's comment. None of the other interpretations is supported by the passage; it gives no indication that she feels furious, nervous, cheerful, or short-tempered.

15. A.

Choice (A) is the best choice. The narrator describes a band and benches, from which we can deduce that Mrs. Brill sits in a park. No evidence from the passage supports the remaining choices.

16. A.

Choice (A) is correct. The passage refers to Mrs. Brill in the third person, yet the narrator has access to her thoughts. The narrator does not have access to the thoughts of any other characters, which makes third person limited omniscience the best choice for point of view. Choice (B), first person, is incorrect because Mrs. Brill does not narrate the passage from her own perspective, referring to herself as "I." Choice (C) is incorrect because "omniscient narrator" implies that the narrator can read the thoughts of all characters, yet this narrator can read only Mrs. Brill's thoughts. Choice (D) is incorrect because an objective narrator cannot penetrate the thoughts of any of the characters, but the narrator of this story has access to Mrs. Brill's thoughts. Choice (E), second person, is incorrect; if the passage were written in second person, it would refer to the characters as "you."

**John Donne, "Death be not proud"

17. B.

Choice (B), sonnet, is the best answer because "Death be not proud" is a fourteen-line poem with a strong sense of meter and rhyme, which are characteristics of a sonnet form. Choice (B), villanelle, is incorrect because a villanelle has stanzas with repeating lines at the end of each stanza. Choice (C), epic, is incorrect because an epic is a long work, commonly composed in rhymed heroic couplets. Choice (D), sestina, is incorrect because a sestina has six-line stanzas, and each one repeats the same six words, one at the end of
each line. Choice (E), haiku, is not the best choice because it is a short poetic form with three lines and a fixed number of syllables.

18. A.

Choice (A) is the best answer because the poem speaks directly to death; see, for example, the final line: "death, thou shalt die." "Thou" is a pronoun of direct address, and it clearly refers to "death." None of the other answers can be supported with examples from the text.

19. C.

Choice (C), personification, is the best answer because the poem talks to death as though it were a human being. Choice (A), litany, is incorrect because the term litany is most often used to refer to poems that resemble lists. Choice (B), metaphor, is not the best answer to the question. Though the poem does contain some implicit comparisons, the main literary device used is personification. Choice (D), internal rhyme, refers to words within a line that rhyme with each other, and the poem does not make extensive use of this technique. Choice (E), alliteration, is used when the poet repeats a consonant sound at the beginning of several words in a line; although the lines in this poem do contain some repeated sounds, choice (E) is not as precise a choice as (C).

20. B.

Choice (B) is the best answer because interpretations I and II both reflect the central idea of the poem. The speaker argues that we shall "wake eternally" from death, and therefore "death shall be no more." Interpretation III claims that death must be faced humbly, a reading that can be contradicted by lines such as "death, thou shalt die," which takes an aggressive stance toward death, the opposite of a humble stance.