

R 3.6

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Read the passage and answer the following question(s).

The Math Tunnel

This school year is moving along much better than last year. My parents sat me down and talked to me about some changes they had seen in me that were starting to worry them. A part of me felt defensive, and I started to argue with them. However, I also felt relieved after we talked because the results of our conversation changed my school year and how I feel about myself.

Mostly we discussed school grades. While my quarter and semester grades were fine, the grades for my individual assignments varied widely, from an A to an occasional F. I had no explanation for this except that some days I felt so overwhelmed by all the homework I was given that it made me want to stay in my room and not do anything. I added that I often wanted to run away from it all and hang out at the mall with my friends. In math, especially, it did not seem to matter if I studied hard or not; I usually earned no higher than a C minus on the tests.

It was pretty easy to get discouraged, but during our discussion, my mom suggested different strategies she believed would help me. Some of these strategies included making flashcards, taking time every night to review what I had learned that day, and writing down questions to ask the math teacher. She also insisted that I go to my math teacher's "After-School Tutoring Session" on Wednesdays. I tried this for a whole year; however, because this math teacher was the only teacher that offered tutoring, students from all the math teachers' classes attended. This meant there wasn't time to focus on the problems that I did not understand. Usually, the older students monopolized the teacher's time. I would leave the sessions as mystified and frustrated as when I went into the room.

This year, my parents contacted the math teacher and arranged for me to get individual tutoring. Since I've been getting this extra help, I'm not as stressed out. I still have a lot of homework to do, but I feel smart enough to tackle math. In addition, a flame inside me rekindled my desire to draw. Last year, I didn't do much in my drawing class; I know my art teacher and my parents were disappointed.

The efforts I have put into this year's work have taught me a lot about myself. My pride in myself is now stronger than my fear of failure once was. I submitted one of my art masterpieces into the school art contest. I like the drawing; I feel—no, I know—I did the best I could. I am starting to understand that I can take the same approach to math. I don't think I'll be the next Einstein, although it can still be my goal to know I have done the best I can.

(Questions 1-2)

1

In the 3rd paragraph of "The Math Tunnel," the sentence "I would leave the sessions as mystified and frustrated as when I went into the room" means that the speaker feels

- A** utterly confused as he did before he received any tutoring.
- B** angry by the lack of compassion his parents had shown him.
- C** proud of what he had accomplished in a short amount of time.
- D** embarrassed by the fact that he was attending tutoring.

2

Read this sentence from the last paragraph of the passage.

My pride in myself is now stronger than my fear of failure once was.

The author uses this comparison to illustrate that his pride was

- A** surprisingly lower than before he completed tutoring.
- B** growing smaller than his fear of failure was.
- C** just as large as his fear of failure was.
- D** unexpectedly greater than his fear of failure was.

3

The phrase "steady as a rock" is an example of what type of figurative language?

- A** simile
- B** idiom
- C** metaphor
- D** hyperbole

Read the passage and answer the following question(s).

The Cottage

"In life, you can reject change or go with the flow, and you'll be content if you can learn to roll with it, Francisco," his grandmother had always advised.

"Easier said than done," Francisco muttered to himself as he stopped his bike with a gentle pat of his foot against the dirt path that led to the cottage.

He was stopping to sit back on the seat of his bike and just look at the cottage. He tried to look without seeing the "For Sale" sign that his father had just driven into the rose garden last night. Watching Pops drive the sign into the ground was like having a cold knife driven into his back. The prospect of leaving the cottage made Francisco feel like he'd been slapped down by a cold wave on a hot beach; this little house by the sea had been his home since he was two.

His family had moved to this seaside town twelve years ago when it had still just been a village. Now, developers were slowly encroaching on the town's limits. Francisco thought the developers were monsters, greedily devouring the wide stretches of unsoiled beaches and empty, grassy meadows. The thing that seemed so wrong to him was that they were only going to fill these beautiful, clean spaces with malls, grocery stores, gas stations, and fancy hotels. Why such destruction, and not even to give people homes? He knew that because he'd been listening furtively at his door as his parents and grandmother had talked late into the night. He should've been sleeping, but he had to know, had to listen to the plans, the reasons, to try to make some sense of this senseless farewell.

"I want to get out before the developers knock on the door," his mother had said, "and I don't want to be here when I see the bulldozers come into town."

There had been a note of despair in her voice, oddly mixed with a smile. She always smiled when she was worried about something. Francisco wished he could be as positive about the sale of the cottage. After a few minutes of just looking at the cottage, memorizing its smallness, its brown roof, white sides, red door, and brass knocker, he pedaled off toward the beach. He'd brought a bucket and spade with him. Digging on the beach had been a favorite pastime for all the years he'd been living at the cottage, for as far back as he could remember. His grandmother told him it was childish. He didn't care. It comforted him. The sea always gave him something from its depths. It wouldn't fail him today.

An hour later he'd found a brimming bucketful of treasures, including an enormous purple-gray conch that spoke in ocean waves to him every time he held it to his ear. The conch would go with him, he'd already decided. When they... left... yes, left the cottage behind forever, the conch would be his reminder of all those joyful, sun-filled days of his childhood by the sea.

(Questions 4-5)



4

Read these lines from the passage.

Watching Pops drive the sign into the ground was like having a cold knife driven into his back.

The underlined phrase is an example of which kind of literary device?

A alliteration

B personification

C metaphor

D simile

5

How does the symbolism of the conch help the reader understand the meaning of the passage?

- A** The conch represents Francisco's happy childhood, so the reader can see that even though people sometimes have to say goodbye, memories stay forever.
- B** The conch represents Francisco's denial about leaving, so the reader can understand that people should not always accept change.
- C** The conch represents the sound of the ocean waves, so the reader can appreciate the beauty that Francisco will miss.
- D** The conch represents Francisco's inner conflict, so the reader realizes that it's best not to live in a seaside village.

Read the passage and answer the following question(s).

Paper Route

Jameson decided that he despised his newspaper route and always would. It was piercingly cold that morning and a winter storm rumbled threateningly overhead.

"It's like I'm stuck in Dad's generation! Who delivers newspapers anymore, and why do I have to get up at four in the morning just because he says it builds character?!" he raged for the hundredth time that morning. He flung a paper, angrily, much too hard, and it glanced off Mrs. Lincolnshire's porch, striking one of her terra cotta planters. It shattered, scattering the rich, dark soil around a thriving miniature rosebush.

"Great," fumed Jameson sarcastically, "there goes part of my measly paycheck for this route."

"When I was your age, I had a paper route. It did me good, and besides, it gave me an appreciation for the miracles that happen in nature so early in the morning. Take a look around you between deliveries, Jameson, and you'll see what I mean," his father had advised just last night at dinner.

"Pass the green beans," Jameson had muttered back, with a surly expression.

It was five o'clock now and there was no miracle in sight. He sighed, wishing that he hadn't thrown that paper so hard and broken Mrs. Lincolnshire's pot. It would be like getting water from the moon, if she didn't hold him responsible for it.

Steering his bicycle into Larchmont Alley, the shortcut to the last street on his route, Jameson rubbed his sleepy eyes with one hand and yawned immensely. He'd give his right hand to be back in his warm bed right now, beneath the quiet comfort of his goose-down comforter. A small meow from a dark corner of the alley jerked him from his reverie. Stopping his bicycle, Jameson peered into the early morning gloom and watched as a greasy cardboard box shifted slightly in the corner. Suddenly curious, Jameson parked his bike and moved toward the box. Looking inside, he saw a scrawny, damp mother cat and a full litter of newborn kittens nestling blindly and anxiously beside her. She opened her mouth, her jaw shivering, and cried out to him piteously. Her eyes pleaded with him, and Jameson suddenly realized that he had just encountered his first paper route miracle.

"It's amazing you're alive," he murmured reassuringly at the mother cat, "but, I'll be back in a few minutes with milk and blankets for you and your kittens."

Bicycling home after delivering papers to the last street on his route, Jameson thought about the mother cat's plight. His heart filled with an odd mixture of shame, relief, and gratitude; he decided then that he would ask his parents if he could bring the cat family home with him later after he'd fed and blanketed them. He pedaled faster, realizing that he'd need to hurry before the storm broke. The mother cat, with her perseverance and sense of responsibility, had just taught Jameson an important lesson.

(Questions 6-7)

6

Read these lines from the passage.

Her eyes pleaded with him, and Jameson suddenly realized that he had just encountered his first paper route miracle.

The underlined phrase is an example of personification that shows

- A** the dangerous look in the cat's eyes.
- B** the human quality of helplessness in the cat's eyes.
- C** the redness of the cat's eyes.
- D** the puffiness of the cat's eyes.

7

Read this summary of "Paper Route."

"Paper Route" is about the character Jameson who cannot stand his paper route and wishes he were home under a warm blanket. He comes upon a helpless mother cat that is in need of keeping her new kittens warm, and as it turns out, he bicycles home as fast as he can to get some blankets and milk for the kittens.

From reading the summary, you can tell that the author uses a particular literary device throughout the story. What kind of literary device does the author use?

- A** hyperbole
- B** irony
- C** dialect
- D** metaphor

Read the passage and answer the following question(s).

Flying High in the Spring

This passage may contain errors.

1) Kites are flags of brilliant color, tatters of rainbows against an azure March sky. 2) They plunge, skip, and shudder in March winds that are sometimes strong. 3) Kites seem to represent the desire of many humans—to enjoy the empowering freedom of defying gravity. 4) Kite flying is a springtime tradition in almost any city in North America that enjoys mild springtime weather. 5) Legend has it that Benjamin Franklin once flew a kite to perform an experiment of monumental significance. 6) In 1752, after some French electricians had already confirmed Franklin's electrifying theory! 7) For many people, kite flying seems to represent the beginning of spring. 8) Benjamin Franklin's experiment with this very old symbol of spring included a key tied to the end of the kite string. 9) A time when people celebrate warm weather and sometimes fierce winds, perfect for the pastime. 10) As a Northern California resident, I like kite flying best in early April when the weather is really warm and fragrant with early flowers.

11) In some cities, kite flying contests are held. 12) In some places, children create their own kites and enter them in contests to win prizes for design, shape, color, and being able to fly. 13) In some American cities, kite flying festivals start the beginning of everyone's favorite season. 14) Then it happens. 15) It is the sudden strike of that mysterious annual illness—spring fever! 16) Do you feel it yet?

(Question 10)

10

What literary device is used in sentence 2 of "Flying High in Spring"?

A alliteration

B metaphor

C personification

D simile