

R 3.4

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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 1-2)

1

How does the *main* setting of the story contribute to the mood of the passage?

- A** The setting of Jameson's dinner table helps the reader see that Jameson needs to learn to respect his father.
- B** The setting of Jameson's paper route helps the reader feel compassionate about the discomfort of an early morning paper route.
- C** The setting of Mrs. Lincolnshire's house helps the reader see that Jameson needs to learn responsibility.
- D** The setting of the alley helps the reader see that Jameson is an animal lover.

2

How does the setting of the story change the mood?

- A** The alley setting makes the story's mood sad.
- B** The dinner table setting makes the story tense.
- C** The setting on the streets of Jameson's bike route makes the mood thoughtful.
- D** The setting on Mrs. Lincolnshire's front porch makes the mood angry.

3

Which of the following explanations *best* shows why setting is important to convey meaning in a story?

- A** The setting provides an environment that may help readers understand the nature of the characters.
- B** The setting may provide a conflict between the protagonist and the antagonist.
- C** The setting provides a sequence of events to help readers follow along.
- D** The setting provides a tone that the author uses to convey particular emotions.

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

Sunny Surprise

After a long, cold winter, Beth was really down in the dumps, so Josh decided to turn her mood around with a surprise trip to the beach. After weeks of planning their great adventure in secret, Josh realized he couldn't get Beth to go without telling her about the vacation he'd set up. At the eleventh hour, Josh revealed all his hard work. He showed her the brochures from the hotel and the airplane tickets, then told her to pack her bags. Beth was so surprised that Josh could have knocked her over with a feather! Despite Beth's apprehension about leaving so quickly and her disbelief at Josh's sneaky ways, she agreed to pack a suitcase so they could fully enjoy five days in the Sun and sand.

The next day, as their airplane approached its landing strip, Beth looked out to see palm trees swaying in the breeze, crystal clear water, and beautiful beaches. As she looked further, Beth realized this island was only one jewel in the necklace. When they got off the plane, Beth gazed out at the smiling faces of the locals waiting to greet them and knew this trip would be wonderful. As she and Josh gathered their belongings, they were presented with flower garlands to wear around their necks. Beth was convinced this must be heaven.

(Question 4)

4

What mood is created once the setting in the story is described?

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| A a gloomy mood | C a confining mood |
| B a suspenseful mood | D a joyous mood |

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

The Sound

"Gee Grandpa, I've never heard that hissing sound before. What is that?" asked Randolph during an evening walk through the forest.

"Legend has it that the hissing began over a hundred years ago," responded Grandpa Luke. As Grandpa Luke began telling the story, Randolph listened intently to every word. He strained to understand the story's relationship to the eerie sound that continued to echo through the trees.

According to Grandpa Luke, this local legend involved a woman named Agatha and her son, Charles, who resided together in a nearby house in the late 1800s.

"Legend has it that Charles and Agatha argued about everything they ever did, whether it was something important or something insignificant. One day, they were so angry that they said appalling things to each other. Angered and frustrated, Agatha left the house to journey through the woods alone. She decided that a walk in the snow would cool her off both inside and out.

When Agatha was nearly a mile from her house, the ground beneath her started to shake tremendously. The volcano, which had not been noticed in thousands of years, had decided to show off its power once again. Agatha ran as fast as a fox in an effort to find Charles, whom she believed was at home feeling as dreadful as she did.

'I'm being punished for the despicable things I said to poor Charles!' she yelled loudly in desperation.

After what seemed like hours, Agatha reached her home, and could not find Charles anywhere. She ran outside in a state of panic and advanced up the mountain where Charles liked to spend his afternoons exploring. Agatha struggled to make her way through the snow, which was like powder. She caught sight of Charles in the distance, holding onto a tree and crying audibly. Just as the words 'I'm sorry' exited both of their mouths, the hissing sound of boiling lava melting the snow overpowered them both. No one has ever seen either one of them again."

"So what does that have to do with the hissing sound we're hearing now?" questioned Randolph.

"It is the sound of Agatha and Charles saying that they are sorry and that they love each other," concluded Grandpa Luke.

As Randolph walked back to Grandpa Luke's cabin, he was unable to speak. His mind was occupied with the thoughts of Agatha and Charles, and of all the mean things Randolph had ever said to Grandpa Luke. "I love you, Grandpa, and...I'm sorry," was all he could vocalize. Grandpa Luke glanced in Randolph's direction and smiled with content.

The Harmful Sting

Without remorse, he decided to flee
After the sting of her tongue
Had hardly begun
To insist he had no right to be. Loneliness arrived and forced her to see
The harm she had done
To her special someone.
Did she not know he would disagree? Several years passed by
Until one faithful moment
When he happened to drift her way. As she tried to justify
What she really had meant
He hugged her and announced he would stay.

(Question 5)

5

How does the forest setting help establish the mood in "The Sound"?

- A** The large trees in the forest create an atmosphere of safety and security.
- B** The snow in the forest produces a sense of fun and recreation.
- C** The hissing sounds in the forest create an eerie, mysterious feeling.
- D** The beauty of the forest provides a calm, relaxing environment.

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

Ode To My Desk

A scuffed, scarred, creaking rectangle
Laden with the evidence of three years of studying,
Myriad late nights of lost slumber,
And undeveloped dreams.

My desk—the home of an unseeing Cyclops
Called my computer.

My desk—
An altar for burning that proverbial, but all-too-real midnight oil,
Sweating it out at 2 a.m.
About seven hours before the essay is due.

My desk—
A holding cell for half-eaten apples, their rotting cores lying limply on
Inches of dust
That smother long-forgotten paperbacks.

My desk—
My haven after school,
My captive friend who has no choice but to listen
To my off-tune singing, quiet mutterings to myself,
While I crunch numbers, potato chips, pen lids, and rough drafts
That finally come to rest in an overflowing round file.

My desk—the epicenter of my pie-in-the-sky aspirations,
Private and deep miseries,
Quiet victories, and
Happy correspondences.

(Questions 6-7)

6

Which pair of words correctly describes the setting and the tone of "Ode To My Desk"?

- | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| A isolated and angry | C alone and disorganized |
| B alienated and lonely | D solitary and reflective |

7

How does the setting of "Ode To My Desk" affect the poem's mood?

- A** The solitary setting makes the narrator seem very lonely and mournful.
- B** The noisy setting in a computer lab makes the mood seem conflicted or confused.
- C** The quiet setting in a room makes the mood of the poem thoughtful.
- D** The bedroom setting makes the mood relaxed and the speaker seem sleepy.

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

The Kimono



Keiko was ashamed of the kimono. Aunt Fumika had presented it to her tonight after dinner. This visit from Aunt Fumika had been long awaited by the family. Keiko's parents had sacrificed much to arrange for Aunt Fumika's journey, and now Aunt Fumika would be here for six weeks. Now, the kimono from faraway Japan hung forlornly in the closet. It seemed to wonder if Keiko would ever wear it. Its intricate embroidery of red and pink floral design was embarrassing to Keiko. She was distressed by her inner rejection of something that represented her ethnic heritage.

The kimono was traditional. Its flowery brightness was perfectly suited for spring and summer. Summer vacation had just begun and her aunt was delighted to have given her special niece such an appropriate present. Now all of her niece's friends would know that Keiko's people came from Japan. The red and pink blossoms and green bamboo on her kimono were sure to bring her good fortune. Aunt Fumika had expressed these things that night at dinner, her ink-black eyes shining as Keiko had unfolded the kimono from its musty box.

Now Keiko lay in bed, agonizing. How would her friends react to seeing her in traditional Japanese dress instead of her usual California summer attire of a tank top, shorts, and sandals? Would her friends mock her or appreciate her ethnic pride? Each night for the next week, Keiko lay in bed staring at the moonlit patterns on the kimono in the closet. It seemed to reproach her.

Eight nights after Aunt Fumika's arrival, Keiko served a traditional Japanese dessert of *ohagi*. As the family savored the rich warmth of the sweet rice balls, Aunt Fumika began to talk of life in Japan. Aunt Fumika spoke perfect English, though accented. Keiko could understand every precise word. Keiko listened intently to the cadences of her aunt's sentences. They seemed to be swept along by a tide of emotion. In Aunt Fumika's voice, she could hear fierce pride, deep homesickness, and bittersweet nostalgia.

Keiko pictured the kimono in her closet, smothered behind a thick section of tank tops, sundresses, shorts, and swimsuits. Suddenly, the shame burning in Keiko's throat became painful.

Pushing away her plate of half-eaten *ohagi*, she jumped up and ran from the room, tears streaking her cheeks. She pounded up the stairs, ignoring her aunt's confused cries and her mother's worried questions. In her bedroom, she gently took the kimono from the closet, slipped it off its hanger, and pulled it on. Her tears of shame became tears of pride, the same pride she'd heard in Aunt Fumika's voice.

Smiling, she emerged from her bedroom, and walked triumphantly down the stairs into the dining room. Aunt Fumika stood with a gasp of pleasure and came toward her, arms outstretched.

"Beautiful, Keiko," she murmured, her voice catching as she clasped her niece to her in a warm embrace. In that moment, Keiko knew she had done exactly the right thing.

(Question 8)

8

How is the setting of Keiko's bedroom related to the mood of the story?

- A** When the kimono reproaches Keiko, the mood of the story is frightening.
- B** When Keiko is alone in her room, the mood of the story is thoughtful.
- C** When Keiko looks at her clothes at night, the mood of the story is tense.
- D** When Keiko thinks about her aunt, the mood of the story is angry.

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.



(Question 9)

9

How does the social atmosphere of the story's setting alter the author's tone?

- A** The social atmosphere is low income so the author describes the cottage in a positive way so the reader feels better about the situation.
- B** The social atmosphere is troubled because people are losing their homes, so the author's upbeat tone is ironic.
- C** The social atmosphere is tense because the developers are destroying homes, so the author is trying to be positive.
- D** The social atmosphere is anxious because the family is leaving their home, so the author's tone is sensitive.

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.

(Question 10)

10

How does the setting add to the meaning of the text?

- A** It is centered in a math classroom during test time, which explains the author's fears.
- B** It is centered at the author's home, which helps to depict his relationship with his mother.
- C** It is centered around a school setting, which allows the reader to relate to the passage.
- D** It is centered in the author's art class, which shows how well he is able to draw.