

• Beginning Critical Reading – The Sun

The sun is a star. The sun is at the center of the solar system. The sun is the largest object in the solar system. It is more than 99.8% of the mass of the solar system. More than one million earths could fit inside the sun!

5 From earth, the sun looks like a yellow ball in the sky. A long time ago, people didn't know what the sun was. Many people told stories about the sun. People in many countries told stories about the sun. In some stories, people said the sun was a god. Some people gave names to the sun. The Greeks named it Helios. The Romans named it Sol. The name *Solar System* comes from the Roman name Sol.

10 The sun is very hot. On the surface, it is about 5,510 ° Celsius. That's equal to about 11,000 ° Fahrenheit. The inside of the sun is even hotter. The core of the sun is 15,000,000 °C! That's 27,000,000 °F!

The light from the sun is very bright. People must not look directly at the sun. Looking directly at the sun will hurt your eyes.

15 People need the sun's heat and light to live. Animals need the sun's heat and light to live. Plants need the sun's heat and light to live. Plants make food with sunlight. People and animals eat the plants. Plants also use the sun to make oxygen. People and animals need to breathe oxygen.

20 Today people do not tell stories about the sun. Today people do not think the sun is a god. But, people know that the sun is necessary for life on earth.

Questions

1. According to the passage, which of the following statements is/are true?

- I) The sun is over a million times brighter than the earth.
- II) Some people used to think the sun was a god.
- III) The sun's surface is cooler than its core.

- A) I only
- B) II only
- C) III only
- D) I and II only
- E) II and III only

2. The main idea of the second paragraph is to explain

- A) what the sun is.
- B) what the sun looks like.
- C) how people reacted to the sun.
- D) who the Greeks and Romans were.
- E) who did not know what the sun was.

3. In line 10, *core* most closely means

- A) center
- B) gas
- C) oxygen
- D) surface
- E) temperature

Answers and Explanations

1. The correct answer is **E**.

- I)** Incorrect. While lines 2-3 state that more than a million earths could fit inside the sun, there is **no** mention there that the sun is a million times brighter than the earth. And while line 12 states that the light from the sun is very bright, it does **not** compare the brightness of the sun to the brightness of the earth. So while the sun may be a million times brighter than the earth, there is no such statement in the passage.
- II)** Correct. Line 6 states that in some stories, people said the sun was a god.
- III)** Correct. Lines 9-11 state that the surface temperature is 5510 °C or 11,000 °F, whereas the core, or inside of the sun is 15,000,000 °C or 27,000,000 °F. So the surface of the sun is much cooler than its core.

- A) I only
- B) II only
- C) III only
- D) I and II only
- E) II and III only

2. The correct answer is **C**.

- A)** Incorrect. While lines 4-5 state that a long time ago, people didn't know what the sun was, there is **no** explanation in paragraph 2 of what the sun is.
- B)** Incorrect. While line 4 states that from earth, the sun looks like a yellow ball in the sky, this information is given only as background information, **not** as the main idea of the paragraph.
- C)** Correct. The first sentence of the paragraph tells what the sun looks like. The remainder of the paragraph tells about people's *reactions* to the sun – that they didn't know what it was, that they told stories about it; also that some people thought it was a god, and that some people named it.
- D)** Incorrect. While line 6 states “The Greeks named it Helios. The Romans named it Sol,” there is **no** explanation of who the Greeks and Romans were.
- E)** Incorrect. While lines 4-5 state that a long time ago, people did not know what the sun was, there is **no** mention of the specific people who did not know what it was. While lines 6-7 state that the Greeks and Romans gave names to the sun, the passage does **not** specify that they did not know what the sun was.

3. The correct answer is **A**.

- A)** Correct. Lines 9 and 10 compare the surface temperature of the sun with the temperature of its *core*: “The inside of the sun is even hotter. The *core* of the sun is 15,000,000 °C!”
- B)** Incorrect. While the sun is made of gas, in this passage, the *gas* is **not** mentioned. Instead, this section compares the surface of the sun to the core of the sun. Since both the surface and the *core* would be made of the same material, the meaning *gas* would **not** make sense for the word *core*.

- C) Incorrect. Lines 9 and 10 compare the surface temperature of the sun with the temperature of its *core*. Lines 16-17 state that plants use sunlight to make *oxygen*, **not** that the sun itself is made of *oxygen*.
- D) Incorrect. Lines 9-10 compare the temperature of the surface of the sun with the temperature of the core. Since the comparison is made between the surface and the *core*, the word *core* could **not** mean *surface*.
- E) Incorrect. Lines 9-10 compare the heat level (which is the *temperature*) of the surface of the sun with the heat level of the *core* of the sun. Since the comparison is being made of the *temperature* of the surface and the temperature of the *core*, the word *core* could **not** mean *temperature*.