

• Beginning Critical Reading – The White House

The White House is the home and office of the President of the United States. The White House is located at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C. The first president to live in the White House was John Adams. He moved into the White House in 1800. Now President Barack Obama lives in the White House.

5 An architect named James Hoban made the plans for the White House. Hoban won a design contest held by Pierre Charles L’Enfant. L’Enfant was the main architect for the capital city of Washington, D.C. The White House was built between 1792 and 1800. It was built of limestone and painted white.

10 During the War of 1812, the British Army set fire to the White House. President James Madison moved out while the house was rebuilt. In 1817, James Monroe moved into the White House.

15 At first, people called the building the “President’s Palace.” However, because kings and queens live in palaces, “President’s Palace” was not a good name for the house. President Theodore Roosevelt gave the building the name it has today – The White House.

Questions

1. According to the passage, which of the following statements is/are true?
 - I) All the Presidents of the United States have lived in the White House.
 - II) The White House was painted white to cover up marks left from the fire.
 - III) James Madison was President of the United States during the War of 1812.
 - A) I only
 - B) II only
 - C) III only
 - D) I and II only
 - E) II and III only
2. What is the main idea of the second paragraph?
 - A) The main architect of the capital city
 - B) The design and construction of the White House
 - C) The building materials and color of the White House
 - D) The years of White House construction
 - E) The reasons for building the White House
3. In line 12, *palace* most closely means
 - A) office
 - B) castle
 - C) home
 - D) building
 - E) tower

Answers and Explanations

1. The correct answer is **C**.

- D) Incorrect. Lines 2-4 state that “The first president to live in the White House was *John Adams*. He moved into the White House in 1800. Now President *Barack Obama* lives in the White House. Lines 9-11 state that “During the War of 1812, the British Army set fire to the White House. President *James Madison* moved out while the house was rebuilt. In 1817, *James Monroe* moved into the White House. While *other Presidents* **may** have lived in the White House, *only these four Presidents* are said *in the passage* to live or have lived there.
- II) Incorrect. Line 8 states that “The house was built of limestone and painted white.” Line 9 states that “During the War of 1812, the British Army set fire to the White House.” While the House *may* have been repainted to cover the marks of the fire, there is **no** mention of this idea *in the passage*.
- III) Correct. Lines 9-10 state that “During the War of 1812, the British Army set fire to the White House. President James Madison moved out while the house was rebuilt.”

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

2. The correct answer is **B**.

- A) Incorrect. While lines 6-7 explain that Pierre Charles L’Enfant was the main architect of the capital city, this information is *background information* to explain the selection of Hoban as the White House architect; it is **not** the *main idea*.
- B) Correct. The entire paragraph is about the design and construction of the White House. The **only** sentence which is **not** directly about the design and construction of the White House is in lines 6-7: “L’Enfant was the main architect for the capital city of Washington, D.C.” This sentence is *background information* to explain the selection of the White House architect.
- C) Incorrect. While line 8 states that “The house was built of limestone and painted white,” this information is **only part** of the *main idea* of the paragraph, which is the *design and construction of the White House*.
- D) Incorrect. While lines 7-8 state that “The White House was built between 1792 and 1800,” this information is **only part** of the *main idea* of the paragraph, which is the *design and construction of the White House*.
- E) Incorrect. While lines 5-6 explain the reason that James Hoban was selected as the White House architect, there is **no** mention in the paragraph of the *reason for building the White House*.

3. The correct answer is **B**.

- A) Incorrect. While line 1 states that “The White House is the home and office of the President of the United States,” the word *palace* **cannot** mean *office*. A phrase in line 13

states that “kings and queens live in palaces.” Since kings and queens do **not** live in *offices*, this **cannot** be the correct response.

- B) Correct. A phrase in line 13 states that “kings and queens live in palaces.” Since kings and queens live in *castles*, it stands to reason that *palaces* are the same as *castles*.
- C) Incorrect. While line 1 states that “The White House is the home and office of the President of the United States,” the word *palace* probably does **not** mean *home*. A phrase in line 13 states that “kings and queens live in palaces.” Since kings and queens usually do **not** live in typical *homes*, this is probably **not** the correct response.
- D) Incorrect. The word *palace* probably does **not** mean *building*. A phrase in line 13 states that “kings and queens live in palaces.” Since kings and queens do **not** live in generic *buildings*, this is probably **not** the correct response.
- E) Incorrect. The word *palace* probably does **not** mean *tower*. A phrase in line 13 states that “kings and queens live in palaces.” Since kings and queens do **not** live in *towers*, this is probably **not** the correct response.