

## • Reading Comprehension 6 Level 6

**Directions:** Read the passage. Then answer the questions below.

The Baxter house is located at the end of the street. This house sits farther back from the curb than the other houses. It is almost difficult to see from the road without peering behind the deformed oak tree that has **obscured** it for years. Even so, the Baxter house stands out from the other houses on the street. It is tall and white. However, this white is no longer pristinely white, but a dingy grayish cream color. Long vines hang from the tattered roof. The Baxter house is two stories tall and has a large yard in the back that has never been mowed. The other houses on the street are a mere one story and have been painted a variety of colors. The newer, single story properties all appear to have been built around the same time; the yards mostly being of the same size, and the houses appearing to be clones of one another. Aside from the Baxter house at the end, this street is a perfect slice of middle America. The inhabitants of the other houses wonder who lives in the ancient, **dilapidated** house at the end of the street.

### Questions

- 1) Based on its use in the passage, which of the following statements accurately describes something that has been **obscured**?
  - A. The tall, thick pine trees in Chloe's yard provide shade for her house.
  - B. A sun visor is one of Ken's favorite hats, because it helps protect his face from harsh rays.
  - C. After it stopped raining, the sun was barely visible through the gray clouds.
  - D. Because of his favorite, bright red sweatshirt, Anthony is always easy to spot.
  
- 2) What makes the other houses on the street stand out visually from the Baxter house?
  - A. The other houses have larger families living in them.
  - B. The other houses on the street are a mere one story.
  - C. The Baxter house is at the end of the street.
  - D. The Baxter house is almost difficult to see from the road.
  
- 3) In the middle of the passage, the author writes, "[the Baxter] house is tall and white. However, this white is no longer pristinely white, but a dingy grayish cream color. Long vines hang from the tattered roof. The Baxter house is two stories tall and has a large yard in the back that has never been mowed." Using this information, it can be concluded that the owner
  - A. does not, or cannot, take care of the house
  - B. plans on buying a new house soon
  - C. thinks the other people in the neighborhood do not like him or his house
  - D. cannot afford to care for his or her property
  
- 4) Which characteristic makes it clear that the "newer, single story properties all appear to have been built around the same time"?
  - A. They have all been painted the same color.
  - B. They are all situated next to each other on the street.
  - C. There are no other oak trees on this street.
  - D. The yards are mostly the same size.

- 5) Based on its use in the passage, it can be understood that **dilapidated** belongs to which of the following word groups?
- A. rickety, neglected, run-down
  - B. ancient, old, primitive
  - C. dejected, crushed, melancholy
  - D. discarded, abandoned, discharged
- 6) If this paragraph appeared in a story, it would help develop
- A. character
  - B. setting
  - C. plot
  - D. conflict
- 7) The inhabitants of the other houses
- A. wonder why the owner does not take care of his or her house
  - B. wonder who lives in the ancient, dilapidated house at the end of the street
  - C. wish their houses were more uniquely designed
  - D. wish they had larger yards
- 8) This passage is best described as
- A. argumentative
  - B. descriptive
  - C. informative
  - D. persuasive

## Answers and Explanations

1) **C**

**obscure** (*verb*): to keep from being seen clearly, conceal.

The author writes that the Baxter house, “is almost difficult to see from the road without peering behind the deformed oak tree that has obscured it for years.” We can use context clues—hints from known words or phrases around the unknown word or phrase—to help us figure out what obscure most nearly means. Since the author says that the Baxter house is “difficult to see...without peering behind the deformed oak tree,” and the tree has obscured it for years, we can conclude that obscure must mean something like to keep from being seen clearly. If, after it had stopped raining, the sun was barely visible through the gray clouds, we can tell that the gray clouds have obscured the sun from being seen clearly. This means that the description of the sun after the rain can be accurately described as something that has been obscured. Therefore **(C)** is correct. Using the above information, we can tell that we are looking for the scenario that accurately describes something that has been kept from being seen clearly. If the tall, thick pine trees in Chloe’s yard provide shade for her house, they do not necessarily keep the house from being seen clearly. This means that the pine trees do not obscure the house. Since this does not accurately describe something that has been obscured, **(A)** is incorrect. Using the above information, we can tell that we are looking for the scenario that accurately describes something that has been kept from being seen clearly. If a sun visor is one of Ken’s favorite hats, because it helps protect his face from harsh rays, we can tell that although it might provide shade, the sun visor does not necessarily obscure Ken’s face. This means this does not accurately describe something that has been obscured. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect. Using the above information, we can tell that we are looking for the scenario that accurately describes something that has been kept from being seen clearly. If, because of his favorite, bright red sweatshirt, Anthony is always easy to spot, we can tell that the sweatshirt does not necessarily obscure him. If the bright, red sweatshirt makes Anthony easier to spot, it actually works to do the opposite of obscure. This lets us know that this does not accurately describe something that has been obscured, so **(D)** is incorrect.

2) **B**

The author writes, “The Baxter house is two stories tall and has a large yard in the back that has never been mowed. The other houses on the street are a mere one story...” From this, we can tell that the Baxter house stands out visually from the other houses, which are a mere one story. This means **(B)** is correct. The author does not provide information to support choice **(A)**. Therefore it is incorrect. While the author writes, “The Baxter house is located at the end of the street,” this fact does not differentiate it from the other houses on the street. This means that the other houses on the street do not stand out visually from the Baxter house simply because it is at the end of the street. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect. While the author mentions that the Baxter house is “almost difficult to see from the road,” he or she never mentions that this characteristic makes it stand out visually from the other houses on the street. This lets us know that the other houses on the street do not stand out visually from the Baxter house, which is almost difficult to see from the road. This means **(D)** is incorrect.

3) **A**

The author writes, “[the Baxter] house is tall and white. However, this white is no longer pristinely white, but a dingy grayish cream color. Long vines hang from the tattered roof. The Baxter house is two stories tall and has a large yard in the back that has never been mowed.” Based on the information in this selection, we can tell that the owner does not, or cannot (it is never made clear which is the case) take care of the house. Various aspects of the house make this clear. For instance: the paint has faded, “long vines hang from the tattered roof,” and the “yard in the back...has never been mowed.” All of these characteristics are examples of how the house has not been taken care of. Using this information, it can be concluded that the owner does not, or cannot, take care of the house. Therefore **(A)** is correct. The author does not provide information to support choices **(B)**, **(C)**, or **(D)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

4) **D**

The author writes, “The newer, single story properties all appear to have been built around the same time; the yards mostly being of the same size...” The semi-colon after the first sentence in this selection lets us know that the next sentence is reliant on the sentence that precedes it. Using this information, we can tell that the fact that the yards are mostly the same size makes it clear that the newer, single story properties all appear to have been built around the same time. This means **(D)** is correct. The author writes, “The other houses on the street are a mere one story and have been painted a variety of colors.” This lets us know that the other houses have not all been painted the same color, which means that this cannot be a characteristic that makes it clear that the newer homes all appear to have been built around the same time. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. While the newer houses may be situated next to each other on the street, this fact alone does not describe a specific characteristic that differentiates them from the Baxter house. This lets us know that **(B)** is incorrect. The author does not mention whether or not there are any other oak trees on this street. This lets us know that this characteristic does not make it clear that the newer homes all appear to have been built around the same time. This means **(C)** is incorrect.

5) **A**

**dilapidated** (*adjective*): in a state of disrepair or ruin.

The author writes, “The inhabitants of the other houses wonder who lives in the ancient, dilapidated house at the end of the street.” We can use context clues—hints from known words or phrases around the unknown word or phrase—to help us figure out what dilapidated most nearly means. We know that the “dilapidated house” that the author references is the Baxter house. We can go back to an earlier description of the Baxter house to help figure out what the author means by the summarizing adjective, dilapidated, here. Earlier, the author writes that the house’s, “white is no longer pristinely white, but a dingy grayish cream color. Long vines hang from the tattered roof. The Baxter house is two stories tall and has a large yard in the back that has never been mowed.” Based on this description, we can tell that the Baxter house is in a state of disrepair or ruin. This lets us know that dilapidated must mean something like in a state of disrepair or ruin. *Rickety*, *neglected*, and *run-down* all mean something like in a state of disrepair or ruin. This lets us know that dilapidated belongs to the word group containing rickety, neglected, and run-down. Therefore **(A)** is correct. Using the above information, we can tell that we are looking for the word group that contains words that

mean something like in a state of disrepair or ruin. *Ancient, old, and primitive* all have to do with age, not a state of disrepair. This lets us know that dilapidated does not belong to the word group containing ancient, old, and primitive. This means **(B)** is incorrect. Using the above information, we can tell that we are looking for the word group that contains words that mean something like in a state of disrepair or ruin. *Dejected, crushed, and melancholy* all relate to mood, not the state of something's condition. This lets us know that dilapidated does not belong to the word group containing dejected, crushed, and melancholy. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect. Using the above information, we can tell that we are looking for the word group that contains words that mean something like in a state of disrepair or ruin. *Discarded, abandoned, and discharged* all mean something like thrown away, left, or sent away. These words do not mean the same thing as in a state of disrepair or ruin. This lets us know that dilapidated does not belong to the word group containing discarded, abandoned, and discharged. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.

6) **B**

At the beginning of the paragraph, the author writes, "The Baxter house is located at the end of the street. This house sits farther back from the curb than the other houses." The author continues, describing the Baxter house in relation to the other houses. This shows that the Baxter house and the other houses on the same street will be described. Since we know that houses are places where people live, and settings describe where a story takes place, we can tell that if this paragraph appeared in a story, it would help develop setting. This means **(B)** is correct. Characters are the people in a story. In this paragraph, no people are mentioned. Instead, a place is described. The author describes the Baxter house in relation to other houses on the street. This lets us know that if this paragraph appeared in a story, it would not help develop character. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. Plot is what happens in a story. Since nothing happens in this paragraph, we can tell that if this paragraph appeared in a story, it would not help develop plot. Instead, the author describes the Baxter house in relation to other houses on the street. This means **(C)** is incorrect. Conflict is the problem in a story. In this paragraph, there is no problem. Instead, the author describes the Baxter house in relation to other houses on the street. Since there is no problem in this paragraph, we can tell that if this paragraph appeared in a story, it would not help develop conflict. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.

7) **B**

The author writes, "The inhabitants of the other houses wonder who lives in the ancient, dilapidated house at the end of the street." This lets us know that the inhabitants of the other houses wonder who lives in the ancient, dilapidated house at the end of the street. Therefore **(B)** is correct. The passage does not provide information to support choices **(A)**, **(C)**, or **(D)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

8) **B**

The author describes the Baxter house's paint as "white [that] is no longer pristinely white, but a dingy grayish cream color." In addition, the author notes that "long vines hang from the tattered roof," and that the Baxter house is "two stories tall and has a large yard in the back that has never been mowed." All of these characteristics help us visualize the house because they describe it in such detail. Because the author describes the Baxter house in such detail in this passage, we can tell that this passage is best described as descriptive, and **(B)** is correct. An argumentative passage would put forth a claim or argument that could be defended. In this passage, the author never puts forth a claim or argument, but instead describes houses—particularly the Baxter house—on a street. This lets us know that this passage is not best described as argumentative. This means **(A)** is incorrect. In informative passage teaches, or informs, us about a particular topic. In this passage, we never learn about any specific topic, rather the author describes the Baxter house and other houses on a street. This lets us know that this passage is not best described as informative. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect. A persuasive passage tries to persuade us to follow the author's opinion about a topic. Here, the author simply describes the Baxter house and other houses on the street. He or she is not attempting to persuade us about anything. This lets us know that this passage is not best described as persuasive, so **(D)** is incorrect.