

• Reading Comprehension 8 Level 6

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

In this passage, Vinnie and Esmeralda give their opinions about a new painting by Marcello Vasquez.

Vinnie:

The new painting is spectacular! It is certainly the best work ever completed by Marcello Vasquez. I like the new painting for several reasons. First, the painting is large. It almost covers the entire wall! Second, the painting is inexpensive. Normally, a painting like this would cost thousands of dollars. But this painting costs less than \$500. Third, the painting is colorful. Red and green dominate the canvas, peppered with bright spots of yellow.

Esmeralda:

The new painting is horrendous! Marcello Vasquez should be ashamed of his work. I haven't seen a painting this bad in a long time. I dislike the new painting for several reasons. First, the painting is far too large. It almost covers the entire wall! I think small paintings are better than large ones. Second, the painting is inexpensive. This tells me that Vasquez must have been unable to sell the painting for a higher price. Now he is **desperate**. As a result, it appears he is trying to give the painting away. Third, the painting is colorful. Although I usually like a painting to be colorful, I strongly dislike the colors Vasquez uses. To put it plainly, the combination of red, green, and yellow is ugly.

Questions

1) With respect to how they like the new painting, Vinnie and Esmeralda

- A. agree
- B. strongly agree
- C. disagree
- D. strongly disagree

2) The cost of the new painting could be

- I. \$49
 - II. \$499
 - III. \$500
- A. I only
 - B. I and II only
 - C. II and III only
 - D. I, II, and III

- 3) Vinnie and Esmeralda both view the new painting as
- I. large
 - II. inexpensive
 - III. colorful
- A. I only
 - B. I and II only
 - C. II and III only
 - D. I, II, and III
- 4) Based on its use by Esmeralda, it can be understood that **desperate** belongs to which of the following word groups?
- A. passionate, enthusiastic, excited
 - B. idiotic, silly, foolish
 - C. anxious, worried, troubled
 - D. impoverished, broke, poor
- 5) As used in the passage, which of the following words always has/have a negative meaning?
- I. spectacular
 - II. horrendous
 - III. inexpensive
- A. I only
 - B. II only
 - C. II and III only
 - D. I, II, and III
- 6) Vinnie and Esmeralda go to see another painting. The painting is small, expensive, and colorful. Who would probably like this painting?
- A. Vinnie
 - B. Esmeralda
 - C. Both Vinnie and Esmeralda
 - D. Neither Vinnie nor Esmeralda

Answers and Explanations

1) **D**

By looking at both Vinnie and Esmeralda's opinions, we can determine whether or not, and to what extent, they agree about the painting. Vinnie says, "The new painting is spectacular!" This means that Vinnie does not just like the painting, he thinks it is really amazing. Since he thinks the painting is spectacular, he must really like it. In contrast, Esmeralda says, "The new painting is horrendous!" This means she really dislikes the painting. The exclamation point at the end of each of their statements strongly emphasizes the emotion with which they each like or dislike the painting. Using this information, we can see that with respect to how they like the new painting, Vinnie and Esmeralda strongly disagree. Therefore **(D)** is correct. Using the above information, we can tell that Vinnie thinks Vasquez's painting is "spectacular," whereas Esmeralda finds it "horrendous." Since these descriptive words express opposite opinions, we would not say that with respect to how they like the new painting, Vinnie and Esmeralda agree. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. Using the above information, we can tell that Vinnie thinks Vasquez's painting is "spectacular," whereas Esmeralda finds it "horrendous." Since these descriptive words express opposite opinions, we would not say that with respect to how they like the new painting, Vinnie and Esmeralda strongly agree. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect. While it's true, using the above information, that Vinnie and Esmeralda disagree about Vasquez's painting, we can see that this is not the best choice. Because the words "spectacular" and "horrendous" express very strong feelings about something, to simply say that Vinnie and Esmeralda disagree is not quite strong enough. Also, the exclamation points at the end of each of their statements show just how strongly they feel about the painting. Because it is more accurate to say they strongly disagree, we would not say that with respect to how they like the new painting, Vinnie and Esmeralda disagree. This means **(C)** is incorrect.

2) **B**

Vinnie says that "this painting costs less than \$500." Since the painting costs less than \$500, and \$49 is less than \$500, the cost of the new painting could be \$49. This supports **option (I)**. Vinnie says that "this painting costs less than \$500." Since the painting costs less than \$500, and \$499 is less than \$500, the cost of the new painting could be \$499. This supports **option (II)**. Vinnie says that "this painting costs less than \$500." Since the painting costs less than \$500, and \$500 is not less than \$500 (it is actually the same price), the cost of the new painting could not be \$500. This eliminates **option (III)**. Therefore **(B)** is correct.

3) **D**

Vinnie says, "the painting is large." Esmeralda sees the painting as so big that she believes, "the painting is far too large." Using this information, we can tell that both Vinnie and Esmeralda view the new painting as large. This supports **option (I)**. Vinnie says, "the painting is inexpensive." Esmeralda also says, "the painting is inexpensive." Using this information, we can tell that both Vinnie and Esmeralda view the new painting as inexpensive. This supports **option (II)**. Vinnie says, "the painting is colorful." Esmeralda also notes that, "the painting is colorful." Using this information, we can tell that both Vinnie and Esmeralda view the new painting as colorful. This supports **option (III)**. Therefore **(D)** is correct.

4) **C**

desperate (*adjective*): tried when everything else has failed.

Esmeralda says, "Now he is desperate." We can use context clues—hints from known words or phrases around the unknown word or phrase—to help us figure out what desperate most nearly means. Before her statement that Vasquez is desperate, Esmeralda says, "Second, the painting is inexpensive. This tells me that Vasquez must have been unable to sell the painting for a higher price." If Esmeralda feels that Vasquez is desperate, and "he is trying to give the painting away," because he was unable to sell it for a higher price, desperate must describe how someone feels when they have tried everything else and failed. It must be a bad feeling, that causes someone to feel despair, since they have been unsuccessful. Using this information, we can tell that *anxious*, *worried*, and *troubled* equally describe bad feelings that arise when someone is worried about being unsuccessful. This means that desperate belongs to the word group containing anxious, worried, and troubled. Therefore **(C)** is correct. Using the above information, we can tell that we are looking for the word group that contains words that most nearly mean tried when everything else has failed. *Passionate*, *enthusiastic*, and *excited* are all words that describe things in a positive way. If Esmeralda feels that Vasquez is desperate, and "he is trying to give the painting away," because he was unable to sell it for a higher price, desperate must describe how someone feels when they have tried everything else and failed. Since we can see that the sort of frustration experienced from being desperate is negative, we can tell that desperate does not belong to the word group containing passionate, enthusiastic, and excited. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. Using the above information, we can tell that we are looking for the word group that contains words that most nearly mean tried when everything else has failed. Based on Esmeralda's use of the word, we can tell that it is not a very good thing to be or appear to be desperate. Even though *idiotic*, *silly*, and *foolish* are all words that describe something in a negative way, they are too specific and mean something different than tried when everything else has failed. Also, these words are usually applied to describe a person, rather than a person's actions. Desperate typically describes a person's actions; in this case Vasquez's selling the painting for cheap. This lets us know that desperate does not belong to the word group containing idiotic, silly, and foolish. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect. Using the above information, we can tell that we are looking for the word group that contains words that most nearly mean tried when everything else has failed. *Impoverished*, *broke*, and *poor* all describe the state of not having much money. This means something different from tried when everything else has failed. This lets us know that desperate does not belong to the word group containing impoverished, broke, and poor. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.

5) **B**

spectacular (*adjective*): beautiful in a dramatic and eye-catching way.

horrendous (*adjective*): extremely unpleasant, horrifying, or terrible.

ugly (*adjective*): unpleasant or repulsive in appearance.

Vinnie says, "The new painting is spectacular!" We can use context clues—hints from known words or phrases around the unknown word or phrase—to help us figure out what spectacular most nearly means. After Vinnie makes this exclamation, he says, "It is certainly the best work ever completed by Marcello Vasquez." If the painting is both spectacular and Vasquez's best work, we can conclude that spectacular must mean something good. Therefore it must have a positive meaning. This lets us know that based on

its use in the passage, spectacular does not always have a negative meaning. This eliminates **option (I)**. Esmeralda says, "The new painting is horrendous!" We can use context clues—hints from known words or phrases around the unknown word or phrase—to help us figure out what horrendous most nearly means. After Esmeralda makes this exclamation, she says, "Marcello Vasquez should be ashamed of his work." If Vasquez's work—his new painting—is both horrendous and something he should be ashamed of, we can conclude that something horrendous must not be good. This lets us know that based on its use in the passage, the word horrendous always has a negative meaning, and it supports **option (II)**. Both Vinnie and Esmeralda say, "the painting is inexpensive." We can use context clues—hints from known words or phrases around the unknown word or phrase—to help us figure out what inexpensive most nearly means. Using the above information, we can tell that Vinnie likes the painting, so he must think it a good thing that Vasquez's work is inexpensive. Using the above information, we can tell that Esmeralda does not like Vasquez's work, so she must think it a bad thing that the painting is inexpensive. For this reason, it is unclear whether the word inexpensive describes a positive or a negative attribute of Vasquez's new work. Based on its use in the passage, the word inexpensive does not always have a negative meaning. This eliminates **option (III)**. Therefore **(B)** is correct.

6) **B**

Esmeralda says, "I think small paintings are better than large ones." This means she likes small paintings. In addition, she criticizes the inexpensive price of Vasquez's new painting because according to her "he is trying to give the painting away." Therefore, she must like expensive paintings. Finally Esmeralda says, "I usually like a painting to be colorful." Using this information, we can conclude that if Vinnie and Esmeralda go to see another painting that is small, expensive, and colorful, Esmeralda would probably like it since these are qualities of paintings she likes. Therefore **(B)** is correct. Although Vinnie likes colorful paintings, he also likes large, inexpensive paintings like Vasquez's new work. This lets us know that if Vinnie and Esmeralda go to see another painting that is small, expensive, and colorful, Vinnie would probably not like it. This means **(A)** is incorrect. Using the above information, we can tell that Vinnie would probably not like the painting, since he likes large, inexpensive paintings. This means that if Vinnie and Esmeralda go to see another painting that is small, expensive, and colorful, it is not likely that both of them would like it. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect. Using the above information, we can tell that Esmeralda would probably like a small, expensive, and colorful painting. This means that if Vinnie and Esmeralda go to see another painting that is small, expensive, and colorful, it is not likely that neither of them would like it. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.