

• Reading Comprehension 7 Level 7

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

Washington D.C., March 4th, 1865—the Inauguration Day of President re-elect Abraham Lincoln was cold and windy, just as it had been four years earlier. But the U.S. capital building was now complete; its great iron dome now in place, crowned by a bronze liberty. Just before the president began to speak, the clouds parted, flooding the stands with brilliant sunlight. Lincoln rose and gave his speech.

"I'm a tired man," Lincoln said afterwards. "Sometimes I think I'm the tiredest **sic** man on earth."

In the crowd just a few yards from Lincoln was the young actor, John Wilkes Booth. His vantage point on the balcony, Booth said afterwards, had offered an excellent chance to kill the president, "If [he] had wished."

John Wilkes booth was a **fervent** believer in slavery and white supremacy. He enthusiastically supported the confederate notion that African Americans were unequal to whites and should remain slaves. But during the four years of war, he had not been able to bring himself to actually fight for the southern cause. "I have begun to deem myself a coward, and to despise my own existence," he wrote. His mind fixed on Lincoln as the tyrant responsible for all the country's troubles and his own. Booth hatched a scheme to kidnap Lincoln, and he gathered a worshipful band of **dubious** conspirators willing to help out. This included: Lewis Paine, a wounded confederate who had recently sworn allegiance to the union; David E. Herold, a druggist clerk who was thought by some to be intellectually challenged; George Atzerodt, a German born wagon painter, barely able to make himself understood in English; and John H. Surratt, a sometime confederate spy, whose widowed mother, Mary, kept a Washington boarding house where Booth and his admirers sometimes met.

Questions

- 1) In paragraph 1, the author writes, "Washington D.C., March 4th, 1865—the Inauguration Day of President re-elect Abraham Lincoln was cold and windy, just as it had been four years earlier." Using this information, the reader can understand that
- I. this was not Lincoln's first term as president
 - II. it was cold and windy in Washington D.C. on March 4th, 1861
 - III. Lincoln did not know that John Wilkes Booth was in the crowd
- A. I only
 - B. I and II only
 - C. II and III only
 - D. I, II, and III

- 2) In paragraph 2, the author uses the term "[sic]." This is used to show the reader that a word or phrase was used incorrectly by the speaker, but that the author still wishes to preserve the speaker's actual language. In this case, the author writes "[sic]" after the word "tiredest" to show that it is used incorrectly (the correct form is "more tired"). Using this information, which of the following quotations should the term "[sic]" be applied to?
- A. "Tommy bought a new bike down at the new bicycle shop."
 - B. "Some plants require a great deal of light in order to grow."
 - C. "No one knows this town like I do."
 - D. "Jessica Hampton is my bestest friend."
- 3) According to the author, what was John Wilkes Booth's profession?
- A. writer
 - B. soldier
 - C. politician
 - D. actor
- 4) Marco is a **fervent** believer in animal rights. One day, Marco learns that the animals in a nearby zoo are being mistreated. Which of the following sentences describes how Marco would most likely react after learning this information?
- A. Marco sighs and continues playing video games.
 - B. Marco does internet research with the hope of learning more.
 - C. Marco monitors updates on a local news channel.
 - D. Marco joins a protest outside the zoo entrance.
- 5) John Wilkes Booth can best be described as
- A. *treacherous*, meaning unfaithful or disloyal
 - B. *patriotic*, meaning devoted to one's country
 - C. *amicable*, meaning friendly or agreeable
 - D. *idiotic*, meaning senselessly foolish or stupid
- 6) As used in the final paragraph, **dubious** most nearly means
- A. questionable
 - B. uneducated
 - C. evil
 - D. greedy

Answers and Explanations

1) **B**

In paragraph 1, the author writes, “the Inauguration Day of President re-elect Abraham Lincoln was cold and windy, just as it had been four years earlier.” Several clues in this selection let us know that this was not Lincoln’s first term as president. First, Lincoln is referred to as “President re-elect,” which lets us know that he had been president before. Also, the day “four years earlier” is mentioned. Since we know that presidential elections, and as a result Inauguration Days, take place every four years, we can conclude that Lincoln had been inaugurated four years earlier. Using this information, we can tell that this was not Lincoln’s first term as president. This supports **option (I)**. In paragraph 1, the author writes, “Washington D.C., March 4, 1865—the Inauguration Day of President re-elect Abraham Lincoln was cold and windy, just as it had been four years earlier.” Since the author notes that it was “cold and windy...four years earlier,” and March 4th, 1861 is exactly four years earlier, we can conclude that it was cold and windy in Washington D.C. on March 4th, 1861. This supports **option (II)**. The author does not provide any information for us to conclude that Lincoln did not know that John Wilkes Booth was in the crowd. This means we can eliminate **option (III)**. Therefore **(B)** is correct.

2) **D**

Using the information above, we can tell that we are looking for the quotation that contains a word or phrase that is used incorrectly. Since the author writes “[sic]” after Lincoln’s use of “tireddest” because it should read more tired, we can tell that “tireddest” must be used incorrectly. In the quotation, “Jessica Hampton is my bestest friend,” the word “bestest” is used in the same incorrect way as Lincoln’s use of “tireddest.” This lets us know that the quotation, “Jessica Hampton is my bestest friend” should have the term “[sic]” applied to it. Therefore **(D)** is correct. While the quotation, “Tommy bought a new bike down at the new bicycle chop” is repetitive, it does not contain a word or phrase that is misused by the speaker. We can tell that in both instances where the speaker uses the word new, he is using the adjective correctly. Although it sounds repetitive, the quotation does not misuse a word or phrase. This means **(A)** is incorrect. While the quotation, “Some plants require a great deal of light in order to grow,” might technically need a comma between the word “light” and the phrase “in order to grow,” the speaker does not misuse a word or phrase here. This lets us know that this quotation does not need to have the term “[sic]” applied to it. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect. The quotation, “No one knows this town like I do,” does not misuse a word or phrase. This means that it does not need to have the term “[sic]” applied to it, and **(C)** is incorrect.

3) **D**

In paragraph 3, the author writes, “In the crowd just a few yards from Lincoln was the young actor, John Wilkes Booth.” This lets us know that John Wilkes Booth was an actor. Therefore **(D)** is correct. The author does not provide information to support choices **(A)**, **(B)**, or **(C)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

4) **D**

fervent (*adjective*): having or displaying a passionate intensity.

In paragraph 4, the author writes, “John Wilkes booth was a fervent believer in slavery and white supremacy.” We can use context clues—hints from known words or phrases around the unknown word or phrase—to help us figure out what fervent most nearly means. In the next sentence, the author writes, “He enthusiastically supported the confederate notion that African Americans were unequal to whites and should remain slaves.” We can tell that these two sentences are parallel—or similar in structure—because we know that “slavery and white supremacy” in the first sentence aligns with the “notion that African Americans were unequal to whites and should remain slaves” in the second sentence. This means that the phrase “fervent believer” at the beginning of the first sentence must align with the phrase “enthusiastically supported” at the beginning of the second sentence. Using this information, we can tell that fervent must mean something like having or displaying an enthusiastic, passionate intensity. If Marco has an enthusiastic and passionately intense belief in animal rights, and he learned that animals were being mistreated, we can tell that he would most likely react by joining a protest outside the zoo entrance. This is because people protest when they feel passionately about something. Therefore **(D)** is correct. Using the above information, we can tell that we are looking for the reaction that reflects an enthusiastic or passionate intensity for animal rights. If Marco sighs and continues playing video games, this would not reflect an enthusiastic, passionate intensity, because it hardly reflects a response at all. Marco’s sigh is merely a small acknowledgement of the mistreatment of animals described in the scenario. This lets us know that the sentence, Marco sighs and continues playing video games, does not describe how Marco—a fervent believer in animal rights—would most likely react after learning that animals were mistreated. This means **(A)** is incorrect. Using the above information, we can tell that we are looking for the reaction that reflects an enthusiastic or passionate intensity for animal rights. If, in reaction to hearing about the mistreatment of animals, Marco does internet research with the hope of learning more, this would not reflect an enthusiastic, passionate intensity. This is because internet research is a relatively passive response for a fervent believer of animal rights to take, after hearing about the mistreatment of animals. This lets us know that the sentence, Marco does internet research with the hope of learning more, does not describe how Marco—a fervent believer in animal rights—would most likely react after learning that animals were mistreated. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect. Using the above information, we can tell that we are looking for the reaction that reflects an enthusiastic or passionate intensity for animal rights. If, in reaction to hearing about the mistreatment of animals, Marco monitors updates on a local news channel, this would not reflect an enthusiastic, passionate intensity, because monitoring the news on TV is a relatively passive response for a fervent believer of animal rights to take, upon hearing about the mistreatment of animals. This lets us know that the sentence, Marco monitors updates on a local news channel, does not describe how Marco—a fervent believer in animal rights—would most likely react after learning that animals were mistreated. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect.

5) **A**

In paragraph 4, the author writes, “[John Wilkes Booth] enthusiastically supported the confederate notion that African Americans were unequal to whites and should remain slaves. But during the four years of war, he had not been able to bring himself to actually fight for the southern cause.” This lets us know that even though Booth supported the ideas behind confederate cause, he was disloyal or unfaithful to the confederacy because “he had not been able to bring himself to actually fight for the southern cause.” Because of this unfaithfulness and disloyalty, the author writes that Booth even began to consider himself a “coward.” Also,

“hatch[ing] a scheme” to kidnap the president of your own country is unfaithful and disloyal. Using this information, we can tell that John Wilkes Booth can best be described as *treacherous*, meaning unfaithful or disloyal. Therefore **(A)** is correct. The author writes that John Wilkes Booth and his gang were planning to kidnap the president of the United States. We know that the president is the figurehead of the United States. Therefore, John Wilkes Booth cannot best be described as *patriotic*, meaning devoted to one’s country, since he wanted to kidnap his country’s president. This means **(B)** is incorrect. The author writes, “John Wilkes booth was a fervent believer in slavery and white supremacy. He enthusiastically supported the confederate notion that African Americans were unequal to whites and should remain slaves.” Since we would not describe proponents of enslaving others as “friendly or agreeable,” it would not be accurate to say that John Wilkes Booth can best be described as *amicable*, meaning friendly or agreeable. This means **(C)** is incorrect. The author writes, “Booth hatched a scheme to kidnap Lincoln, and he gathered a worshipful band of dubious conspirators willing to help out.” While this scheme might be in poor taste, given that Lincoln worked to end slavery, it would be much too strong to say that John Wilkes Booth can best be described as *idiotic*, meaning senselessly foolish or stupid. Although immoral, John Wilkes Booth rationale for disliking the president makes sense given Booth’s beliefs about slavery in comparison to Lincoln’s. This means it would not be accurate to say that John Wilkes Booth can best be described as *idiotic*, meaning senselessly foolish or stupid. Because this word is too strong, **(D)** is correct.

6) **A**

dubious (*adjective*): questionable; hesitating or doubting.

In paragraph 4, the author writes, “Booth hatched a scheme to kidnap Lincoln, and he gathered a worshipful band of dubious conspirators willing to help out.” We can use context clues—hints from known words or phrases around the unknown word or phrase—to help us figure out what dubious most nearly means. After this selection, the author lists the conspirators, each with a brief description. By looking closely at the common aspects of the descriptions of the conspirators, we can figure out what dubious most nearly means. The conspirators included a “wounded confederate,” an “intellectually challenged” clerk, a painter who spoke poor English, and a spy. All of these attributes make the candidates unlikely, questionable choices for the type of team necessary to complete a mentally and physically complicated task like kidnapping the president. This lets us know that dubious most nearly means questionable. Therefore **(A)** is correct. The author does not provide information to supports choices **(B)**, **(C)**, or **(D)**. Therefore they are incorrect.