



“Europe”

Reading Comprehension – Informational Passages



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

Europe is the second smallest continent, after Australia. Surprisingly, there are 44 countries in Europe. Over 700 million people live in Europe. European ideas are everywhere in the world. You can see examples of European culture, language, and buildings all around the world.

In sports, European soccer is very popular. Soccer teams from Europe have gone to the World Cup finals every year except 1930 and 1950. Many people say that the British, Italian, and Spanish soccer leagues are the world’s best. Cycling is also very popular in Europe – especially in France. The Tour de France is the biggest bicycle race in the world. In 1903, when the race first began, racers had to ride along the *entire* border of France. That’s a long distance!

In *industry*, Germany makes the most cars in Europe. In fact, if you visit Germany, you can go on a tour of the BMW factory. You can also go on a tour of the Porsche factory in Stuttgart, Germany. England is famous for china and pottery. Of course, the Champagne region in France is famous for its wine. Only a certain famous, bubbly wine from this area can be called by the name “*champagne*.” Flower farming is an important industry in Holland. Holland is famous for its tulips.

Europe is also famous for its food. The oldest cookbook in Europe was called *De Re Coquinaria*, or, “The Art of Cooking”. It was written in Latin. There is much *controversy* over the identity of the book’s author. Some people think the book was written by a very good cook named Marcus Gavius Apicus. Others don’t think that this book came from him. The book does not tell how to prepare the dishes, but it does tell what to put in each dish.

European historical architecture are among the most well-known in the world. One example of a famous architectural structure is called “Stonehenge,” in England. Stonehenge has many, very large stones set up in circles. No one knows why the stones were set up that way, because it was at a time before history was recorded. Many people think Stonehenge is holy. In addition to Stonehenge, The “Acropolis” in Athens, Greece is also very famous for its architectural structures. The Acropolis is a flat-topped hill, which lies about 150 meters above sea level. Many historical temples and other buildings were built on the Acropolis. The Acropolis is a huge tourist *site*. About 14 million people visit this location each year.

Modern European buildings are also tourist sites. The Eiffel Tower is the fifth tallest building in France. When it was built in 1889, it was the world’s tallest building. More than 200,000,000 people have visited the Eiffel Tower since it was built. It was named after Gustave Eiffel, who designed it. It is now a symbol of France. The year 2009 marks the 150th birthday of another famous tourist site in Europe: Big Ben. Big Ben is located atop the Westminster Palace in London, England. Big Ben is the largest four-faced chiming clock in the world. Chiming clocks are clocks that use bells to make their sound. Big Ben is a universal symbol of the United Kingdom.

Many European cities are famous for their churches and castles. The Sistine Chapel in the Vatican is the place where cardinals, very high Catholic bishops, meet to pick a new pope. The ceiling of the Sistine Chapel was painted by the artist Michelangelo. The Cathedral of Seville, Spain, is also very *magnificent*. This grand cathedral is beautifully decorated with outstanding colors. It is also the place where Christopher Columbus is buried.

England is now getting ready for the 2012 Olympics. About 4,000 companies and 15,000 workers are working to get the city of Stratford ready. The workers are building a new shopping center and many new hotels, with about 2,000 hotel rooms just for Olympics visitors! Since so many people live in Europe, they *expect* many visitors. As the Olympic planners say, London, England is less than a 3-hour flight away for more than 300 million people.



Questions:

1) What is the name of the famous European bicycle race?

- A. The French Open
- B. The Tour de France
- C. The French Excursion
- D. The Tour of the World
- E. The World Cup of France

2) Champagne is...

- A. a street in France.
- B. bubbly wine from Champagne, France.
- C. a famous type of French wine.
- D. Both A and B are correct
- E. Both B and C are correct

3) What was left out of the oldest European cookbook?

- A. What to put in the dishes
- B. Who wrote the cookbook
- C. What the dishes are called
- D. How to prepare the dishes
- E. Both B and D are correct
- F. Both B and C are correct

4) What is the Acropolis?

- A. A tourist site on the ocean
- B. A tourist site on a mountain
- C. A tourist site in a temple
- D. A tourist site in the sky
- E. None of the above are correct

5) What has its 150th birthday in the year 2009?

- A. Big Ben
- B. Stonehenge
- C. The Vatican
- D. The Eiffel Tower
- E. Westminster Palace

6) Why are the people in England so busy?

- A. They are repairing Big Ben.
- B. They are working on Stonehenge.
- C. They are building a new shopping center.
- D. They are getting ready for the 2012 Olympics.
- E. None of the above are correct
- F. Both C and D are correct

Vocabulary:

1) The best synonym for *entire* is...

- A. hole
- B. partial
- C. limited
- D. whole
- E. basic

2) *Industry* involves...

- A. power.
- B. monopoly.
- C. compensation.
- D. discipline.
- E. manufacturing.

3) The best synonym for *controversy* is...

- A. disdain.
- B. destruction.
- C. despair.
- D. disagreement.
- E. disrespect.

4) What is a *site*?

- A. A mile
- B. A location
- C. A tourist
- D. A symbol
- A. A designer

5) *Magnificent* means...

- A. grand.
- B. outstanding.
- C. beautiful.
- D. Both A and B are correct.
- E. Both A and C are correct.
- F. All of the above.

6) If you *expect* something to happen, you...

- A. understand it.
- B. anticipate it.
- C. contemplate it.
- D. decide upon it.
- E. disapprove of it.
- F. denounce it.