

• Reading Comprehension 5 Level 6

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

To Whom it May Concern:

On March 5, 2010, I bought a Perfect Muffin Kit from your store at Midfield Mall. The cashier who assisted me was George. George was very friendly and assured me that the Perfect Muffin Kit would live up to the **guarantee** on the box: "Perfect Muffins Every Time!"

Unfortunately, this product did not live up to its claim. Although the box promised, as I stated above, to provide "Perfect Muffins Every Time," the muffins I made were far from perfect. I followed the directions included in the package very carefully. First, I removed the bag of mix from the box. Then, I poured it into a bowl. Next, I added the correct amount of water to the mix and stirred it. The directions said that after stirring the mixture, I could, and I quote, "add half a cup of raisins, nuts, berries, or another favorite ingredient." My favorite ingredient happens to be hot sauce. I find that a dash of hot sauce makes pizza, pasta, and soup taste very delicious. So, continuing to follow the directions, I added half a cup of hot sauce to the mix and stirred it. Finally, I poured the mix into muffin tins and baked it in the oven at 350 degrees for exactly 20 minutes.

When the muffins finished baking, I was very excited to eat the "Perfect Muffins" as promised on the box. You can imagine my disappointment when, upon tasting the muffins, I discovered that they were not perfect. These muffins were, in fact, **absolutely terrible**. Not even my dog was interested in eating these supposedly "perfect" muffins.

I would appreciate a full refund (\$3.99) for this product as soon as possible. Enclosed are the receipt, the empty box, and one of the un-perfect muffins so that you can experience it for yourself. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,
Michelle Bauer

Questions

- 1) This letter is most likely addressed to
 - A. the owner of the muffin mix company
 - B. a local storeowner
 - C. the clerk at a local muffin bakery
 - D. George, the cashier who sold Michelle the muffin mix

- 2) The tone of the author can best be described as
 - A. furious
 - B. disgusted
 - C. embarrassed
 - D. frustrated

- 3) As used in paragraph 1, which is the best synonym for **guarantee**?
 - A. lie
 - B. warning
 - C. promise
 - D. sentence

- 4) Which of the following best describes the organization of paragraph 2?
- A. The paragraph follows chronological order, in which events are presented in the sequence that they occur.
 - B. The author explains a problem and then proposes a solution to that problem.
 - C. The author makes an argument and then provides evidence to support that argument.
 - D. The paragraph follows a cause-and-effect order, in which a series of causes are given, followed by their effects.
- 5) It can be understood that the author is disappointed by the product because
- A. it was worth less money than she paid for it
 - B. it did not fulfill the promise made on the box
 - C. the directions included with the product contained a mistake
 - D. the directions included with the product were too difficult to follow
- 6) It can be understood that the author put hot sauce in the muffins because she
- A. wanted to get a full refund
 - B. did not read the directions carefully
 - C. was out of raisins, nuts, and berries
 - D. considered it one of her favorite ingredients
- 7) The author's main purpose in writing this letter is to
- A. complain about how bad the muffins tasted
 - B. obtain a full refund for her money
 - C. prevent others from making the same mistake she did
 - D. persuade the company to change the wording on their box
- 8) Which of the following words best describes the author?
- A. shrewd
 - B. senseless
 - C. unreasonable
 - D. careful
- 9) Instead of hot sauce, which of the following ingredients might the author have reasonably added to enhance the flavor of the muffins?
- I. raspberries
 - II. banana nuts
 - III. chocolate chips
- A. I only
 - B. I and II only
 - C. II and III only
 - D. I, II, and III
- 10) According to the author, the muffins tasted "absolutely terrible." This is the result of
- A. misinterpretation
 - B. negligence
 - C. forgetfulness
 - D. recklessness

Answers and Explanations

1) **B**

In the first paragraph, the author writes that she “bought a Perfect Muffin Kit from your store at Midfield Mall.” This lets us know that the author is most likely addressing the owner of the store from which she bought the muffin mix. Therefore **(B)** is correct. The passage does not provide information to support choices **(A)**, **(C)**, and **(D)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

2) **D**

In this passage, the author requests a refund for her product. In writing this request, she seems annoyed, or irritated, that the muffins did not live up to their expectations, even though she took extra care to follow the directions included in the package “very carefully.” In paragraph 3, the author expresses excitement about eating the “Perfect Muffins” as promised on the box. However, upon trying them, she notices that they taste terrible. Given that she took special care to ensure that she made them correctly, yet still found them to taste terrible, we can understand that she feels disappointed or thwarted. The word *frustrated* accurately captures this sentiment. Therefore **(D)** is correct. Although she is upset, it is wrong to think the author is *angry*. This is too strongly negative. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. In paragraph 3 the author says that the muffins tasted “absolutely terrible.” Although the muffins may have tasted disgusting, this is different than saying that the author was disgusted. If someone is *disgusted*, he or she is offended or revolted. This is too strongly negative. What is more, this does not capture the idea that the author feels thwarted, as her careful efforts were not properly rewarded. This means **(B)** is incorrect. **(C)** is incorrect because the author is very explicit, or clear and forthright, in her explanation of why she deserves a refund. Since she holds no reservations in telling the letter’s recipient her exact thoughts, we can understand that her tone is not *embarrassed*.

3) **C**

guarantee (*noun*): a promise of quality; something that assures a specific outcome.

The question asks us to find the best synonym. Synonyms are words that have nearly the same meanings. In the first paragraph, the author states that the Perfect Muffin Kit had a “guarantee on the box: ‘Perfect Muffins Every Time!’” Using the context in paragraph 2, we can figure out the meaning of this word. In paragraph 2, the author writes: “Unfortunately, this product did not live up to this claim. Although the box promised, as I stated above, to provide ‘Perfect Muffins Every Time,’ the muffins I produced were far from perfect.” The words “claim” and “promise” should help readers understand that a “guarantee” is a promise. This lets us know that **(C)** is correct. The passage does not provide information to support choices **(A)**, **(B)**, and **(D)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

4) **A**

In paragraph 2, the author explains the steps she followed in making the muffin using the words “First,” “Then,” “Next,” and “Finally.” Since these words all are used to describe the order of events in time, this lets us know that the author is using a chronological order. Therefore **(A)** is correct. The passage does not provide information to support choices **(B)**, **(C)**, and **(D)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

5) **B**

According to the author, the Perfect Muffin Kit box guarantees, or promises, that the product will produce “Perfect Muffins Every Time!” The author’s muffins are not perfect, as they turn out to be “absolutely terrible.” Since this qualifies (in the author’s opinion) a violation of the product’s guarantee, we can understand that **(B)** is correct. **(A)** is incorrect because although the author requests a refund in her letter, this does not mean that she thinks the product was worth less money than she paid for it. Rather, she requests a refund for the product. This means that she would like the full amount paid for the product to be returned to her. Her disappointment does not result from anything involving the actual price of the product. It may seem like the directions that came with the product contained a mistake. After all, the author did follow them perfectly as they were written. However, this is not actually the case. Using the passage as a guide, it can be understood that directions were written with the understanding that their reader is able to reasonably conclude that “one of your favorite ingredients” does not include something as extreme as hot sauce. Rather, as the directions suggests, something like raisins, nuts, or berries would be more suitable. Although hot sauce may indeed be one of the author’s favorite ingredients, it is unreasonable to believe that it could be a tasty ingredient in muffins. In any case, one does not have to be a chef to understand that hot sauce does not go well with muffins. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect. Although the author did fail to follow the directions properly, she is unaware of this fact. Therefore, she could not be disappointed by this. This means **(D)** is incorrect.

6) **D**

In paragraph 2, the author states that the directions for the muffin mix tell her to add “half a cup of raisins, nuts, berries, or another favorite ingredient.” Because the author’s favorite ingredient is hot sauce (and she wants to follow the instructions “very carefully”), she puts half a cup of hot sauce into the mix. This lets us know that **(D)** is correct. The passage does not provide information to support choices **(A)**, **(B)**, and **(C)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

7) **B**

Paragraphs 1-3 in the author’s letter are all intended to provide reasoning behind why the author should be eligible for a “full refund,” which she asks for in the final paragraph. Given that the majority of the letter is reserved for this purpose, we can understand that it is the main purpose. This lets us know that **(B)** is correct. Although the author complains about how bad the muffins tasted, probably does not want others to make the same mistake as she did, and suggests that the wording on the box was misleading, her main purpose for writing this letter is to get her money back. Therefore **(A)**, **(C)**, and **(D)** are incorrect.

8) **C**

The author lacks the common sense necessary to realize that hot sauce would not be a good ingredient in muffins. Given that the vast majority of people know that these two foods do not mix well, it is *unreasonable* of her to request a “full refund” simply because

she fails to understand this. Choice **(C)** is correct. Although the author may seem *shrewd* in her willingness to write a letter requesting monetary compensation for her own mistake, this is not as defining an aspect of her character as her inability to reason properly. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. **(B)** is incorrect because *senseless* is too strongly negative. We know that the author has some sense (albeit very little), otherwise she wouldn't have come to the conclusion that hot sauce and muffins don't mix well. While the author follows the instructions on the box "very carefully," she misses the larger idea that some ingredients simply do not mix well with others. The failure of her to see this larger idea is a more defining aspect of her character than her desire to follow the instructions carefully, as it results in her writing of the letter. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.

9) **D**

In paragraph 2, we learn that the directions on the box say to "add half a cup of raisins, nuts, berries, or another favorite ingredient." Since raspberries are a kind of berry, it is reasonable to think they would enhance the flavor of the muffins. This supports **option (I)**. Since banana nuts are a kind of nut, it is reasonable to think they would enhance the flavor of the muffins. This supports **option (II)**. Since chocolate chips are a common favorite, and they are a reasonable ingredient to add to muffins, we can understand that they would enhance their flavor. This supports **option (III)**. Therefore **(D)** is correct.

10) **A**

In paragraph 2, we learn that the directions say to "add half a cup of raisins, nuts, berries, or another favorite ingredient." The author reads these directions literally, meaning she reads them following the strict meaning of the words. She does not think for herself about what they may actually mean. So, she does not reason that, although it is one of her favorite ingredients, hot sauce would be a bad ingredient to add to muffins. Since the author fails to interpret these directions properly, we can understand that they muffins tasted terrible as a result of a *misinterpretation*. Choice **(A)** is correct. The author does not make any careless errors. Actually, her error comes from following the directions too carefully. Since *negligence* is carelessness, we can understand that **(B)** is incorrect. **(C)** is incorrect because the author does not *forget* anything while making the muffins. **(D)** is incorrect because the author is never *reckless*, or wild and irresponsible.