

• Reading Comprehension 5 Level 7

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

It is easy to make a delicious-looking hamburger at home. But would this hamburger still look delicious after it sat on your kitchen table under very bright lights for six or seven hours? If someone took a picture or made a video of this hamburger after the seventh hour, would anyone want to eat it? More importantly, do you think you could get millions of people to pay money for this hamburger?

These are the questions that fast food companies worry about when they produce commercials or print ads for their products. Video and photo shoots often last many hours. The lights that the photographers use can be extremely hot. These conditions can cause the food to look quite unappealing to potential consumers. Because of this, the menu items that you see in fast food commercials are probably not actually **edible**.

Let's use the hamburger as an example. The first step towards building the perfect commercial hamburger is the bun. The food stylist—a person employed by the company to make sure the products look perfect—sorts through hundreds of buns until he or she finds one with no wrinkles. Next, the stylist carefully rearranges the sesame seeds on the bun using glue and tweezers for maximum visual appeal. The bun is then sprayed with a waterproofing solution so that it will not get soggy from contact with other ingredients, the lights, or the humidity in the room.

Next, the food stylist shapes a meat patty into a perfect circle. Only the outside of the meat gets cooked—the inside is left raw so that the meat remains moist. The food stylist then paints the outside of the meat patty with a mixture of oil, molasses, and brown food coloring. Grill marks are either painted on or seared into the meat using hot metal skewers.

Finally, the food stylist searches through dozens of tomatoes and heads of lettuce to find the best-looking produce. One leaf of the crispest lettuce and one center slice of the reddest tomato are selected and then sprayed with glycerin to keep them looking fresh.

So the next time you see a **delectable** hamburger in a fast food commercial, remember: you're actually looking at glue, paint, raw meat, and glycerin! Are you still hungry?

Questions

- 1) The author's primary purpose is to
 - A. convince readers not to eat at fast food restaurants
 - B. explain how fast food companies make their food look delicious in commercials
 - C. teach readers how to make delicious-looking food at home
 - D. criticize fast food companies for lying about their products in commercials

- 2) According to the passage, fast food companies use things like glue and glycerin on hamburgers that appear in advertisements because
 - I. no one actually has to eat the food used in the commercial
 - II. it is important that people who see these advertisements would pay for the food being advertised
 - III. filming a commercial or a print ad can take a very long time
 - A. I only
 - B. I and II only
 - C. II and III only
 - D. I, II, and III

- 3) As used in paragraph 2, something is **edible** if it
- A. can safely be eaten
 - B. looks very delicious
 - C. seems much smaller in real life
 - D. tastes good
- 4) According to the passage, a food stylist working on a hamburger commercial might use glue to
- A. make sure the meat patty stays attached to the bun
 - B. keep the sesame seeds on the bun in perfect order
 - C. arrange the lettuce on the tomato
 - D. hold the entire hamburger together
- 5) Based on information in the passage, it is most important for the lettuce and tomato used in a fast food hamburger commercial to
- A. have a great taste
 - B. be the perfect shape and size
 - C. appear natural
 - D. look fresh
- 6) Imagine that the author decides to change this passage so that it talks about a cheeseburger instead of a hamburger. Assume that the cheese goes directly on top of the hamburger patty. If the author wants to include a paragraph about how the food stylist designs the cheese and places it on the meat patty, this new paragraph would best fit into the passage
- A. between paragraph 2 and paragraph 3
 - B. between paragraph 3 and paragraph 4
 - C. between paragraph 4 and paragraph 5
 - D. between paragraph 5 and paragraph 6
- 7) As used in the final paragraph, which is the best synonym for **delectable**?
- A. disgusting
 - B. familiar
 - C. fake
 - D. delicious

Answers and Explanations

1) **B**

In paragraph 1, the author poses a series of questions about how to keep a hamburger looking delicious for hours under hot lights. In paragraph 2, the author suggests that this problem is exactly what fast food companies must worry about when they make advertisements for their food. The author explains that the conditions used during photo shoots “can cause the food to look quite unappealing to potential consumers. Because of this, the menu items that you see in fast food commercials are probably not actually edible.” In paragraphs 3-5, the author gives a step-by-step explanation of what the food stylist does to keep a hamburger looking delicious for hours. Since the author poses a question and then delivers an explanation, we can understand that the author’s purpose is to explain how fast food companies make their food look delicious in commercials. Therefore **(B)** is correct. The author does not use a persuasive tone or try in other ways to convince people not to eat at fast food restaurants. This means **(A)** is incorrect. Although a reader might be able to use the information presented in the passage to make similar food at home, the primary purpose is to explain, not to teach. This means **(C)** is incorrect. The author does not use a harsh tone to criticize fast food companies; instead, he or she explains the facts about how food commercials are made. This means **(D)** is incorrect.

2) **C**

Although it is likely that no one actually has to eat the food used in commercials, the author does not state this in the passage. This eliminates **option (I)**. In paragraph 1, the author asks readers to imagine making a hamburger and letting it sit under hot lights for six or seven hours. The author then asks: “If someone took a picture or made a video of this hamburger after the seventh hour, would anyone want to eat it? More importantly, do you think you could get millions of people to pay money for this hamburger?” Then, in paragraph 2, the author states that fast food companies have to worry about these questions. These sentences suggest that fast food companies think that it is important that people would pay for the food being advertised, so they must make the food look very good. Glue and glycerin are some of the things they use to make the food look good. This supports **option (II)**. In paragraph 2, the author states, “Video and photo shoots often last many hours.” Since these photo shoots can take a very long time, the food stylist uses things like glue and glycerin to keep the food looking fresh. This supports **option (III)**. Therefore **(C)** is correct.

3) **A**

edible (*adjective*): suitable for a human being to eat; eatable.

In paragraph 2, the author states that “the menu items that you see in fast food commercials are probably not actually edible.” In the rest of the passage, the author explains that the food used in fast food commercials contains things like glue, paint, and raw meat, which are not things that people should eat. From the context, we can understand that the food used in commercials is probably not suitable to be eaten. This means that if something is *edible*, you can eat it safely. Therefore **(A)** is correct. The food in fast food commercials looks delicious, but it is not actually edible. This means that edible cannot mean to look very delicious. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect. The passage does not contain any information about the size of the food in commercials versus real life, so **(C)** is incorrect. Since the food contains glue and paint, it probably does not taste good, but more importantly it is not safe to eat. The big question when considering whether something is edible is one of safety, not a question of taste. This means **(D)** is not the best answer.

4) **B**

In paragraph 3, the author notes that a food stylist uses glue and tweezers to carefully rearrange “the sesame seeds on the bun...for maximum visual appeal.” Therefore **(B)** is correct. The passage does not contain information to support answer choices **(A)**, **(C)**, and **(D)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

5) **D**

In paragraph 3, the author claims that a food stylist looking for the perfect lettuce and tomato searches for the “crispest lettuce” and “the reddest tomato.” The food stylist then sprays the lettuce and tomato with glycerin “to keep them looking fresh.” From these sentences, we can understand that freshness is the most important quality when the food stylist deals with lettuce and tomatoes. Therefore **(D)** is correct. There is no information in the passage to make us think the lettuce and tomato should have a great taste; in fact, if they are sprayed with glycerin, they probably do not taste good at all. This eliminates **(A)**. Although the food stylist may choose produce based on shape and size, and he or she may want the food to appear natural, the passage suggests that the most important quality is that the lettuce and tomato look fresh. This rules out **(B)** and **(C)**.

6) **C**

After paragraphs 1 and 2, which introduce the main idea, this passage is organized according to the steps one generally follows in making a hamburger: first the bun (paragraph 3), then the meat (paragraph 4), and finally the lettuce and tomatoes (paragraph 5). If the author wanted to include a paragraph about cheese, which goes directly on top of the meat, but beneath the lettuce and tomatoes, it would likely come between paragraphs 4 and 5. Therefore **(C)** is correct. It would not make sense to talk about putting the cheese on the hamburger before you explain how the hamburger patty is made, so this rules out **(A)** and **(B)**. Putting the paragraph about cheese after the paragraph about the lettuce and tomato would indicate that the lettuce and tomato are put on the hamburger, then the cheese on top of the lettuce and tomato. But the question tells us that the cheese goes on top of the hamburger patty, not on top of the produce. This means **(D)** is incorrect.

7) **D**

delectable (*adjective*): greatly pleasing to the taste; delicious.

The question asks us to find the best synonym. Synonyms are words that have nearly the same meanings. In the final paragraph, the author writes: “So the next time you see a delectable hamburger in a fast food commercial, remember: you’re actually looking at a glue, paint, raw meat, and glycerin! Are you still hungry?” We understand that the hamburgers in fast food commercials are designed to look delicious, because in paragraph 1 the author discusses the problem of making “a delicious-looking hamburger” that people would pay money for. According to the rest of the passage, however, the hamburger in a fast food commercial is not actually

delicious, because it is made of things like glue and paint. While it looks *delectable*, or delicious, it is not good to eat. Therefore **(D)** is correct. It does not make sense to say “the next time you see a disgusting hamburger in a fast food commercial,” because we have learned in the passage that the food stylist works very hard to make the hamburger look like it tastes good. This means **(A)** is incorrect. A hamburger in a commercial would look familiar whether it tastes good or not. But the meaning of the final sentence is that while the hamburger looks good, it actually would taste terrible. This means **(B)** is incorrect. A hamburger in a commercial does not look fake, as we have learned from the passage that the food stylist works to make it look fresh and appetizing. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect.