

TOEFL Reading Sample Paper 01

- A) **Subject:** Reading Comprehension
- B) **Total Questions:** 20 Questions (2 Passages — 10 Questions per Passage)
- C) **Marking Scheme & Rules:**
- **Standard Questions:** 1 Point (Multiple Choice, Insert Text, etc.)
 - **Prose Summary:** 2 Points. This is the final question of each set.
 - **Partial Credit:** Awarded for the Prose Summary (usually 1 point if 2 out of 3 choices are correct).
 - **Negative Marking:** None. 0 points for incorrect answers.
 - **Timing:** Recommended 35 minutes for the entire section.

PASSAGE I: The Role of Mangrove Forests

Paragraph 1: Mangrove forests are among the most productive and complex ecosystems on Earth. Found along tropical and subtropical coastlines, these salt-tolerant trees have evolved unique adaptations to **thrive** in harsh conditions where most plants would perish. The soil in these areas is often waterlogged and anaerobic (lacking oxygen), and the trees are regularly submerged by saline tides. To survive, mangroves have developed specialized root systems, such as pneumatophores, which grow upward to "breathe" oxygen from the air.

Paragraph 2: [A] Beyond their biological uniqueness, mangroves provide vital coastal protection. [B] Their dense root networks act as a natural buffer, absorbing the energy of storm surges and reducing the impact of tsunamis. [C] Furthermore, they prevent soil erosion by trapping sediment that would otherwise be washed out to sea. [D] This sediment-trapping ability also helps protect offshore coral reefs from being smothered by silt.

Paragraph 3: Mangroves are also significant carbon sinks, meaning they sequester much more carbon dioxide from the atmosphere than most terrestrial forests, storing it in their thick peat-like soil for millennia. This makes them essential in the global effort to mitigate climate change. However, despite their value, mangroves are highly **vulnerable** to human activity. Shrimp farming, coastal development, and pollution have led to the loss of nearly 35% of the world's mangroves in the last several decades.

1. The word "thrive" in Paragraph 1 is closest in meaning to:
- A. Recover
 - B. Flourish
 - C. Adapt
 - D. Remain
2. According to Paragraph 1, why do mangroves need pneumatophores?
- A. To filter out excess salt from the seawater.
 - B. To anchor the tree more firmly in the sandy soil.
 - C. To obtain oxygen in an environment where the soil lacks it.
 - D. To absorb nutrients from the water during high tide.
3. Which of the following is NOT mentioned in Paragraph 2 as a benefit of mangroves?
- A. Protecting coral reefs from silt accumulation.
 - B. Reducing the destructive force of tsunamis.
 - C. Providing timber for local coastal communities.
 - D. Decreasing the rate of coastal soil erosion.
4. Why does the author mention "Shrimp farming" in Paragraph 3?
- A. To provide an example of a sustainable use of mangrove resources.
 - B. To illustrate one of the human activities causing mangrove destruction.
 - C. To explain how local economies rely on mangrove ecosystems.
 - D. To compare the carbon footprint of farming with that of forests.
5. What can be inferred from Paragraph 2 about areas without mangrove forests?
- A. They are more likely to experience severe damage from storm surges.
 - B. They have higher levels of oxygen in their coastal soil.
 - C. They are better suited for coral reef development.
 - D. They generally have more stable tropical climates.
6. The word "vulnerable" in Paragraph 3 is closest in meaning to:
- A. Resistant
 - B. Susceptible
 - C. Valuable
 - D. Beneficial
7. Which of the sentences below best expresses the essential information in the highlighted sentence in Paragraph 3?
- A. Terrestrial forests store carbon for longer periods than mangroves do.
 - B. Mangroves are more effective at removing and storing carbon than other forests.
 - C. Carbon dioxide is trapped in peat soil for thousands of years.
 - D. Global climate change makes it difficult for mangroves to sequester carbon.
8. Look at the four squares [A, B, C, D] in Paragraph 2. Where would the following sentence best fit?
- "This structural complexity also creates a nursery for young fish and crustaceans."*

A. [A]

B. [B]

C. [C]

D. [D]

9. According to the passage, mangroves protect coral reefs by:

- A. Regulating the temperature of the surrounding ocean water.
- B. Filtering toxins produced by nearby shrimp farms.
- C. Capturing sediment before it reaches the reef.
- D. Providing oxygen to the underwater environment.

10. [Summary] Select 3 sentences that summarize the most important ideas of the passage.

- a. Mangroves evolved specialized biological traits to survive in salty water.
- b. Pneumatophores are the most important part of the mangrove's system.
- c. Mangrove forests play a critical role in coastal defense and habitat protection.
- d. Pollution from nearby cities is the leading cause of mangrove decline.
- e. Because they store massive amounts of carbon, mangroves are vital for climate regulation.
- f. Many tropical trees are unable to survive in the peat-like soil.

PASSAGE II: The Maya Water Management System

Paragraph 1: The Classic Maya civilization, which flourished in the rainforests of Mesoamerica between 250 and 900 CE, faced a significant environmental challenge: a highly **erratic** water supply. Although the region received heavy rainfall during the summer, it suffered from a severe dry season lasting several months. Because the limestone bedrock of the Yucatan Peninsula is porous, rainwater quickly drained underground, leaving the surface parched and making traditional agriculture difficult.

Paragraph 2: To combat this, the Maya developed sophisticated engineering techniques to harvest and store water. In cities like Tikal, they constructed massive reservoirs by paving natural depressions with stones and plaster. **These reservoirs were designed with a slight incline to allow gravity to direct runoff from plaza surfaces and temple roofs into the central storage areas.** Additionally, they utilized "chultuns"—underground cisterns carved into the soft limestone—to store smaller quantities of water for individual households.

Paragraph 3: Water was not only a physical necessity but also a **prevalent** symbol of political power. Maya kings, known as "K'uhul Ajaw" (Divine Lords), claimed the ability to control the rains through rituals. By managing the city's water supply, the ruling elite maintained the loyalty of their subjects. The appearance of water lilies in Maya art often symbolized clean, standing water, and kings were frequently depicted with these flowers to emphasize their role as providers of life-sustaining resources.

11. The word "erratic" in Paragraph 1 is closest in meaning to:
- A. Abundant
 - B. Unpredictable
 - C. Frequent
 - D. Dangerous
12. According to Paragraph 1, what was the problem with the Yucatan Peninsula's bedrock?
- A. It was too hard for the Maya to carve chultuns into it.
 - B. It released toxic chemicals into the water supply.
 - C. It allowed water to sink into the ground rather than stay on the surface.
 - D. It prevented the growth of large rainforest trees.
13. In Paragraph 2, what is a "chultun"?
- A. A natural depression used as a large-scale reservoir.
 - B. A type of stone used to pave city plazas.
 - C. A subterranean storage tank for water.
 - D. A religious temple used for rain-making rituals.
14. Which of the following is NOT mentioned in Paragraph 2 as a part of the water system?
- A. Plaster-lined depressions.
 - B. Tunnels to transport water from distant rivers.
 - C. Sloped plaza surfaces.
 - D. Underground cisterns.
15. Which of the sentences below best expresses the essential information in the highlighted sentence in Paragraph 2?
- A. Maya reservoirs were built on high ground to let water flow to plazas.
 - B. Water was collected from roofs and plazas and moved into reservoirs via gravity.
 - C. Architects designed the temples to be waterproof so water wouldn't damage stone.
 - D. Gravity caused the reservoirs to leak water into the storage areas.
16. The word "prevalent" in Paragraph 3 is closest in meaning to:
- A. Rare
 - B. Widespread
 - C. Ancient
 - D. Hidden
17. What is the "Rhetorical Purpose" of mentioning the "water lily" in Paragraph 3?
- A. To describe a specific plant used to purify drinking water.
 - B. To illustrate how water was used as a symbol of the power of kings.
 - C. To argue that the Maya had deep knowledge of tropical botany.
 - D. To explain why the Maya preferred standing water over running water.
18. It can be inferred from Paragraph 3 that if a Maya king failed to provide water:
- A. He would lose his status as a divine provider.
 - B. He would move the population to southern rainforests.

- C. He would be forced to abandon the use of water lily symbols.
- D. He would rely on the chultuns of individual households.

19. The author mentions "temple roofs" in Paragraph 2 to show that:

- A. Religious buildings were the only places with clean water.
- B. Every structure in a Maya city played a role in water collection.
- C. Maya architecture was designed primarily for religious purposes.
- D. Plaster was used only on the most important buildings.

20. [Summary] Select 3 sentences that summarize the most important ideas of the passage.

- a. The Maya relied on stone plazas and roofs to stay dry in summer.
- b. Environmental conditions required the Maya to find ways to store rainfall.
- c. The Maya used advanced engineering, like reservoirs, to manage water.
- d. Chultuns were more effective than reservoirs because they were underground.
- e. Water management was deeply connected to political and religious authority.
- f. The Maya civilization collapsed because the bedrock became too porous.

Solutions - Section I

1. **(B)** The passage describes mangroves as being highly productive and having evolved to survive in harsh conditions. "Flourish" is the best synonym for "thrive," as it describes the ability to grow or develop in a healthy or vigorous way.
2. **(C)** Paragraph 1 explains that because the soil in these areas is "waterlogged and anaerobic (lacking oxygen)," mangroves developed pneumatophores to "breathe" oxygen from the air above the water.
3. **(C)** While the passage mentions coastal protection, reduction of tsunami impact, and protection of coral reefs, it never mentions that mangroves provide "timber" for local communities.
4. **(B)** The author mentions shrimp farming as one of the human activities, along with coastal development and pollution, that has "led to the loss of nearly 35% of the world's mangroves," illustrating its destructive nature.
5. **(A)** The passage states that mangrove root networks act as a "natural buffer" against storm surges. Therefore, it can be logically inferred that areas without these forests lack this buffer and are more susceptible to surge damage.
6. **(B)** "Vulnerable" is used to describe mangroves in relation to the negative impacts of human activity. "Susceptible" is a direct synonym meaning likely to be influenced or harmed by a particular thing.
7. **(B)** The original sentence emphasizes that mangroves are significant carbon sinks that sequester much more carbon than terrestrial forests. Option B captures this essential comparison regarding efficiency and storage.
8. **(A)** Square [A] is the correct placement because the following sentence discusses "coastal protection" and "root networks," and the inserted sentence refers to "structural complexity," which matches the description of the roots.
9. **(C)** Paragraph 2 explicitly mentions that mangroves prevent erosion by "trapping sediment," which "helps protect offshore coral reefs from being smothered by silt."
10. **(a, c, e)** These three options represent the biological adaptations (a), the coastal protection role (c), and the carbon sequestration/climate role (e) which are the main pillars of the text.

Solutions - Section II

11. **(B)** In the context of a water supply that is heavy in summer but absent in winter, "erratic" describes something that is not even or regular in pattern; "unpredictable" fits this context best.
12. **(C)** The passage states that because the bedrock is "porous," rainwater "quickly drained underground," leaving the surface dry. This identifies the sink-and-drain issue as the primary problem.

13. **(C)** The text defines "chultuns" as "underground cisterns carved into the soft limestone" used to store water for households.
14. **(B)** The passage mentions reservoirs, plaster-lined depressions, sloped plazas, and cisterns (chultuns), but it makes no mention of "tunnels to transport water from distant rivers."
15. **(B)** The essential information in the highlighted sentence is that the design (inclines and roofs) used gravity to funnel rainwater into storage. Option B accurately summarizes this engineering mechanism.
16. **(B)** The word "prevalent" describes the status of water as a symbol of power in the culture. "Widespread" is the most accurate synonym, meaning found or distributed over a large area.
17. **(B)** The author mentions that water lilies symbolize clean water and that kings were depicted with them to "emphasize their role as providers," showing how the flower served as a symbol of authority.
18. **(A)** Paragraph 3 notes that kings claimed divine ability to control rains. If they failed to provide water, it logically follows that they would lose the divine status that was the basis of their loyalty.
19. **(B)** By mentioning plaza surfaces and temple roofs as sources for runoff, the author illustrates that the entire city was engineered as a massive collection system.
20. **(b, c, e)** These sentences summarize the environmental need for water (b), the engineering solutions (c), and the socio-political importance of water (e).