

TOEFL Reading Sample Paper 02

- 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 Rise of Teotihuacán

Paragraph 1: The city of Teotihuacán, located northeast of modern-day Mexico City, began its growth by 200–100 B.C. At its height, it probably had a population of more than 125,000 people. [A] It featured over 2,000 apartment complexes, a great market, and a regular grid pattern of streets. [B] Clearly, much planning and central control were involved in the expansion of this metropolis. [C] Moreover, the city had economic and religious contacts with most parts of Mesoamerica. [D]

Paragraph 2: Several factors explain Teotihuacán's development. Its geographic location on a natural trade route was vital. Additionally, the valley possessed the **ingenuity** to utilize extensive irrigation and obsidian resources. Obsidian, a volcanic glass used for tools, was in high demand. The city elite's ability to recognize this potential gave the city a "competitive edge over its neighbors." Prior to 200 B.C., Cuicuilco was a rival center, but it was eliminated after a volcanic eruption covered its agricultural land with lava.

Paragraph 3: The picture of Teotihuacán that emerges is a classic positive feedback cycle. **The thriving obsidian operation necessitated more miners, additional manufacturers, and traders to carry goods to new markets.** This led to increased wealth, which in turn attracted more immigrants. The elite, who controlled the economy, gained the power to physically coerce people to move to the city, serving as additions to the labor force.

1. In Paragraph 1, each of the following is mentioned as a feature of Teotihuacán EXCEPT:
 - A. Regularly arranged streets
 - B. Several administrative centers
 - C. Many manufacturing workshops
 - D. Apartment complexes
2. The word "ingenuity" in Paragraph 2 is closest in meaning to:

- A. Ambition
- B. Sincerity

- C. Faith
- D. Cleverness

3. Which of the following is NOT mentioned in Paragraph 2 as a main factor in the city's development?

- A. The presence of obsidian
- B. Potential for irrigation
- C. A long period of volcanic inactivity
- D. Location on a trade route

4. What can be inferred from Paragraph 2 about Cuicuilco prior to 200 B.C.?

- A. It was a small, insignificant village.
- B. It relied heavily on agriculture for its success.
- C. It was located outside the Valley of Mexico.
- D. It was the only city to use obsidian tools.

5. Why does the author mention a "competitive edge over its neighbors" in Paragraph 2?

- A. To explain why Teotihuacán was able to dominate its rivals.
- B. To suggest that Teotihuacán had a larger army.
- C. To show that other cities lacked natural resources.
- D. To argue that the elite class was unstable.

6. According to Paragraph 3, how did the elite gain a larger labor force?

- A. By paying higher wages than neighboring cities.
- B. By using economic power to force people to relocate.
- C. By offering religious freedom to immigrants.
- D. By automating the obsidian mining process.

7. Which of the sentences below best expresses the essential information in the highlighted sentence in Paragraph 3?

- A. The obsidian industry failed because there were not enough miners or traders.
- B. Mining and trading obsidian were the only ways for people to find work.
- C. The growth of the obsidian industry created a need for more workers in various roles.
- D. New markets were difficult to find despite the thriving obsidian operation.

8. Look at the four squares [A, B, C, D] in Paragraph 1. Where would the following sentence best fit?

"In fact, artifacts and pottery from the city have been discovered in sites as far away as the Mayan lowlands."

- A. [A]
- B. [B]
- C. [C]
- D. [D]

9. The author discusses the "positive feedback cycle" in Paragraph 3 in order to:

- A. Criticize the elite for their treatment of the labor force.

- B. Illustrate how different factors worked together to increase the city's power.
- C. Explain why manufacturing eventually declined.
- D. Show that the city's growth was accidental.

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

- a. Centralized planning and sophisticated features indicate a highly controlled society.
- b. Teotihuacán's rise was caused by geography, resources, and the misfortune of rivals.
- c. The obsidian industry and religious tourism created a self-reinforcing cycle of prosperity.
- d. Most inhabitants of the city lived in large apartment complexes.
- e. The volcanic eruption of Cuicuilco was the only reason Teotihuacán grew.
- f. Artifacts show that the city traded with the Mayan lowlands and Gulf Coast.

PASSAGE II: The Geologic History of the Mediterranean

Paragraph 1: In 1970, geologists Kenneth Hsu and William Ryan were investigating the floor of the Mediterranean aboard the research vessel *Glomar Challenger*. They sought to resolve why the invertebrate fauna of the sea had changed abruptly about 6 million years ago. Most older organisms were wiped out, while a few survived by migrating to the Atlantic. Later, new species returned. What caused this near extinction?

Paragraph 2: The researchers recovered samples of hardened sediment and granules of gypsum. **Not a single pebble was found that might have indicated that the pebbles came from the nearby continent.** Furthermore, the gypsum suggested it had formed on desert flats. In the deepest part of the basin, the scientists found solid, crystalline salt. These findings led to a startling hypothesis: the Mediterranean was once a vast desert.

Paragraph 3: The investigators theorized that about 20 million years ago, the Mediterranean was a broad seaway linked to the Atlantic. Crustal movements closed the straits, and the landlocked sea began to evaporate. Increasing salinity resulted in the extermination of **scores** of species. Then, about 5.5 million years ago, came the **deluge**. The Strait of Gibraltar opened, and water cascaded back into the basin, refilling it and allowing marine life to return.

11. Which of the following is NOT mentioned in Paragraph 1 as a change in the fauna?

- A. A mass extinction of invertebrate species.
- B. Hardy species wiping out more sensitive organisms.
- C. Migration of some species to the Atlantic.

- D. The arrival of new species when migrants returned.
- 12. What does the author imply by the sentence: "Not a single pebble was found..." in Paragraph 2?**
- A. The geologists expected to find pebbles from the nearby land.
 - B. The most obvious explanation for the pebbles was not supported by evidence.
 - C. The pebbles were too small to be identified correctly.
 - D. The continent was too far away to provide any geological samples.
- 13. According to Paragraph 2, what identified the deepest part of the Mediterranean basin?**
- A. Soft, deep-sea mud
 - B. Volcanic rock fragments
 - C. Crystalline salt
 - D. Remains of ancient mammals
- 14. The word "scores" in Paragraph 3 is closest in meaning to:**
- A. Members
 - B. Large numbers
 - C. Populations
 - D. Different types
- 15. What was responsible for the initial evaporation of the Mediterranean?**
- A. A global increase in temperature.
 - B. The closing of straits due to crustal movements.
 - C. The accumulation of thick sediment layers.
 - D. A decrease in rainfall over the seaway.
- 16. The word "deluge" in Paragraph 3 is closest in meaning to:**
- A. Drought
 - B. Flood
 - C. Earthquake
 - D. Expansion
- 17. According to Paragraph 3, why did the invertebrate species become extinct?**
- A. They were crushed by crustal adjustments.
 - B. They were unable to tolerate the rising salt content.
 - C. They were eaten by new species from the Atlantic.
 - D. They were buried under layers of windblown silt.
- 18. What is the main purpose of Paragraph 3?**
- A. To describe the physical tools used by the geologists.
 - B. To present a hypothesis that explains the geological and biological data.
 - C. To argue that the Atlantic Ocean was once part of the Mediterranean.
 - D. To explain why salt domes are common in the United States.
- 19. The author mentions "windblown silt" in Paragraph 2 to suggest that:**
- A. The basin was once exposed to the air like a desert.
 - B. Heavy storms frequently occurred while the basin was full.

- C. The salt was carried into the sea by the wind.
- D. The *Glomar Challenger* samples were contaminated.

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

- a. The *Glomar Challenger* investigated changes in fauna and unusual salt deposits.
- b. Geologists discovered that the Mediterranean was once a deep, dry desert basin.
- c. The opening and closing of the Strait of Gibraltar dictated the sea's history.
- d. Crystalline salt is much more soluble than sodium chloride.
- e. Kenneth Hsu and William Ryan were the first to use echo-sounding.
- f. The Atlantic Ocean provided the water that refilled the Mediterranean.

Solutions - Section I

1. (B) Paragraph 1 mentions grid patterns, manufacturing workshops, and apartment complexes, but it does not mention "several" administrative centers; it mentions one "administrative center" in the singular.
2. (D) "Ingenuity" refers to the quality of being clever, original, and inventive. In the context of developing complex irrigation and resource management, "cleverness" is the best fit.
3. (C) Paragraph 2 mentions the obsidian, irrigation, and trade routes. It specifically mentions a volcanic *eruption* (activity), not a long period of *inactivity*.
4. (B) The text states that Cuicuilco was eliminated when its "agricultural land was covered by lava," implying its economy and success were heavily dependent on that land.
5. (A) The "competitive edge" refers to the advantages Teotihuacán had over other cities, allowing it to become the predominant force in the area.
6. (B) Paragraph 3 explicitly states the elite had the "means to physically coerce people to move... and serve as additions to the labor force" through their control of the economy.
7. (C) The original sentence describes how the obsidian operation required more workers in different sectors (miners, makers, traders). Option C captures this cause-and-effect relationship.
8. (D) Square [D] is the correct placement as it follows the sentence about "economic and religious contacts with most parts of Mesoamerica," providing specific evidence for that claim.
9. (B) The author uses the feedback cycle to show how mining, trade, and population growth influenced each other to build a powerful city.
10. (a, b, c) These summarize the three main points: the evidence of planning (a), the external factors of development (b), and the economic feedback cycle (c).

Solutions - Section II

11. (B) Paragraph 1 says older organisms were "wiped out," but it does not say they were wiped out *by* the hardy species; rather, the hardy species were simply the ones that survived the environmental change.
12. (B) By stating that no pebbles from the "nearby continent" were found, the author implies that the expected source of the sediment (the land) was not the actual source, supporting the "desert" theory.
13. (C) The text states that as they drilled into the "central and deepest part... the scientists took solid, shiny, crystalline salt."

14. **(B)** "Scores" is a term meaning groups of twenty, used idiomatically here to mean "large numbers."
15. **(B)** Paragraph 3 explains that "crustal movements closed the straits," which led to the sea becoming landlocked and starting to evaporate.
16. **(B)** In the context of water "cascading spectacularly back," a "deluge" refers to a severe flood or overwhelming amount of water.
17. **(D)** The text says "Increasing salinity caused by the evaporation resulted in the extermination of scores of invertebrate species." This means they couldn't survive the salt levels.
18. **(B)** Paragraph 3 pulls all the evidence together to explain *how* the Mediterranean changed from a seaway to a desert and back again.
19. **(A)** Silt is usually carried by wind on land. Finding it interbedded with salt at the bottom of the sea suggests the area was once dry land (a desert).
20. **(a, b, c)** These capture the expedition's goal (a), the primary discovery of the desert state (b), and the mechanism of the refilling (c).