

TOEFL Reading Sample Paper 05

- 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 Concept of Keystone Species

Paragraph 1: In any given ecosystem, most species have a relatively modest impact on the overall structure of the community. However, certain organisms, known as keystone species, exert a **disproportionate** influence relative to their abundance. The term, coined by zoologist Robert Paine in 1966, describes species whose presence is vital to maintaining the diversity and stability of their environment. Paine's classic experiment involved removing the *Pisaster ochraceus*, a type of sea star, from a section of the rocky intertidal zone. Without the predator to keep them in check, the mussel population exploded, crowding out other species and causing the local diversity to plummet from fifteen species to just eight.

Paragraph 2: [A] Another famous example of a keystone species is the sea otter in the North Pacific. [B] Sea otters prey on sea urchins, which in turn consume kelp. [C] When sea otters were hunted nearly to extinction for their fur, urchin populations grew unchecked and **adversely** affected the kelp forests, grazing them down to the seafloor. [D] These "urchin barrens" lacked the complex habitat necessary to support fish and other marine life.

Paragraph 3: Because the impact of a keystone species is often realized through a complex chain of interactions, the removal of such a species can trigger a trophic cascade that fundamentally alters the physical landscape. While large predators are the most frequently cited examples, keystone species can also be "ecosystem engineers," like beavers. By constructing dams, beavers create wetlands that provide habitats for a vast array of species that would not otherwise survive in a fast-moving stream environment.

1. The word "disproportionate" in Paragraph 1 is closest in meaning to:
- A. Balanced
 - B. Significant
 - C. Hidden
 - D. Unpredictable
2. According to Paragraph 1, what was the result of removing sea stars from the intertidal zone?
- A. The mussel population decreased due to a lack of food.
 - B. Other predator species moved in to take the sea star's place.
 - C. The total number of different species in the area was nearly halved.
 - D. The sea stars eventually returned and restored the balance.
3. The word "adversely" in Paragraph 2 is closest in meaning to:
- A. Negatively
 - B. Quickly
 - C. Occasionally
 - D. Permanently
4. In Paragraph 2, why does the author mention "urchin barrens"?
- A. To describe a new type of ecosystem created by sea otters.
 - B. To illustrate the environmental damage caused by the loss of a keystone species.
 - C. To show that sea urchins are more important than kelp.
 - D. To explain where fish go to hide from predators.
5. Which of the following is NOT mentioned in the passage as a characteristic of keystone species?
- A. They can be large predators that control prey populations.
 - B. They are usually the most numerous species in an ecosystem.
 - C. They can be ecosystem engineers that create new habitats.
 - D. Their removal often leads to a decrease in biodiversity.
6. According to Paragraph 3, beavers are considered keystone species because:
- A. They hunt smaller animals that destroy wetlands.
 - B. Their physical activities create environments for other organisms.
 - C. They are the only animals capable of surviving in fast-moving streams.
 - D. They provide food for a wide variety of wetland predators.
7. Which of the sentences below best expresses the essential information in the highlighted sentence in Paragraph 3?
- A. Trophic cascades only occur when a predator is removed from a simple food chain.
 - B. Removing a keystone species can cause a series of changes that transform an entire environment.
 - C. Landscapes are fundamentally altered by the physical presence of large predators.
 - D. Complex interactions make it impossible to predict the impact of species removal.

8. Look at the four squares [A, B, C, D] in Paragraph 2. Where would the following sentence best fit?

"This discovery highlighted the critical role that a single predator can play in protecting an entire underwater forest."

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

9. What can be inferred from Paragraph 1 about the mussel population?

- A. They are the primary food source for all fifteen species in the zone.
- B. They are highly efficient competitors for space on the rocks.
- C. They are more sensitive to environmental changes than sea stars.
- D. They were introduced to the intertidal zone by Robert Paine.

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

- a. Keystone species are organisms that have an impact on their community much larger than their numbers suggest.
- b. Robert Paine's 1966 experiment proved that mussels are a threat to biodiversity.
- c. The loss of a keystone species can lead to a trophic cascade that ruins habitats like kelp forests.
- d. Ecosystem engineers like beavers act as keystone species by physically modifying their environment.
- e. Mussels and sea urchins are the most common prey for all keystone species.
- f. Most species in an ecosystem are vital for maintaining the physical landscape.

PASSAGE II: The Impact of the Printing Press

Paragraph 1: Before the mid-15th century, books in Europe were painstakingly copied by hand, a process that made them rare and expensive luxuries. This changed **abruptly** with Johannes Gutenberg's invention of the movable-type printing press around 1440. By allowing for the rapid mass production of texts, the printing press **augmented** the spread of knowledge in ways previously unimaginable. By 1500, printing presses were operating throughout Western Europe, producing millions of volumes.

Paragraph 2: [A] The availability of printed material had a profound effect on literacy rates. [B] As books became cheaper, they were no longer restricted to the clergy and the nobility. [C] For the first time, the middle class had access to information on science, philosophy, and politics. [D] This democratization of knowledge was a primary catalyst for the Scientific Revolution and the Protestant Reformation, as individuals could now read and interpret texts for themselves rather than relying on authoritative intermediaries.

Paragraph 3: Standardization was another significant outcome, as the mass production of books led to the stabilization of national languages and the uniformization of spelling and grammar. Previously, regional dialects and varied

spellings made communication between distant areas difficult. With the rise of the printing industry, publishers began to favor specific dialects, such as the German used in Luther's Bible, which eventually became the linguistic standard for the entire region.

11. The word "abruptly" in Paragraph 1 is closest in meaning to:

- | | |
|--------------|----------------|
| A. Gradually | C. Finally |
| B. Suddenly | D. Predictably |

12. According to Paragraph 1, what was the primary difference between books before and after Gutenberg's invention?

- A. The language in which the books were written.
- B. The speed and cost at which books could be produced.
- C. The types of materials used to make book covers.
- D. The religious importance of the information inside.

13. The word "augmented" in Paragraph 1 is closest in meaning to:

- | | |
|--------------|---------------|
| A. Increased | C. Challenged |
| B. Created | D. Limited |

14. In Paragraph 2, why does the author mention "authoritative intermediaries"?

- A. To describe the people who operated the first printing presses.
- B. To refer to the people who used to be the sole sources of information.
- C. To explain who was responsible for the Scientific Revolution.
- D. To argue that the nobility were the best teachers of literacy.

15. According to the passage, the Scientific Revolution was aided by:

- A. The translation of books into Latin.
- B. The wider availability of information to the public.
- C. The decrease in the number of publishers in Europe.
- D. The invention of hand-copied manuscripts.

16. Which of the following is NOT mentioned in the passage as an effect of the printing press?

- A. A rise in literacy among the middle class.
- B. The standardization of national languages.
- C. A decrease in the power of traditional authorities.
- D. The invention of new languages for trade.

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

- A. Spelling and grammar became more varied because so many books were being printed.
- B. Mass production helped create consistent national languages and linguistic rules.

- C. Publishers preferred printing books in national languages rather than regional dialects.
- D. Standardization was only possible once the middle class started buying books.

18. Look at the four squares [A, B, C, D] in Paragraph 2. Where would the following sentence best fit?

"This shift also encouraged authors to write in the vernacular, or everyday language of the people, rather than in Latin."

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

19. What can be inferred from Paragraph 3 about Luther's Bible?

- A. It was the only book printed in Germany in the 15th century.
- B. It helped determine which version of German became the standard.
- C. It was difficult to read because of non-standard spelling.
- D. It was commissioned by publishers to increase their profits.

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

- a. Gutenberg's invention replaced hand-copying and allowed for the mass production of books.
- b. The printing press decreased the influence of regional dialects in Western Europe.
- c. The availability of cheaper books led to higher literacy and the questioning of traditional authority.
- d. Printers in the 15th century were mostly members of the middle class.
- e. Mass production led to the standardization of language, spelling, and grammar across nations.
- f. The Scientific Revolution was the main reason the printing press was invented.

Solutions - Section I

1. (B) "Disproportionate" means out of proportion in size or amount. In ecology, it refers to a "significant" impact that is much larger than one would expect given the species' small population size.
2. (C) The passage states that diversity plummeted from fifteen species to eight, which is nearly a 50% (halved) reduction.
3. (A) In the context of the kelp forest being grazed down and destroyed, "adversely" means in a way that is "negative" or harmful.
4. (B) The author uses the term to describe the end state of a habitat after the loss of sea otters, highlighting the "destructive impact" mentioned in the question.
5. (B) Paragraph 1 specifically says they exert influence "relative to their abundance," meaning they are often *not* the most numerous species.
6. (B) Paragraph 3 explains that beavers are "ecosystem engineers" because they construct dams and create wetlands, thereby creating new habitats.
7. (B) The original sentence links species removal to a trophic cascade and landscape alteration. Option B accurately summarizes this chain of transformative changes.
8. (D) Square [D] is the correct placement as it follows the description of the "urchin barrens" and the loss of habitat, concluding the sea otter example with a summarizing thought.
9. (B) The text says that without the sea star, mussels "crowded out other species," which implies they are very aggressive competitors for limited space.
10. (a, c, d) These three options represent the definition (a), the trophic cascade effect (c), and the role of ecosystem engineers (d), which are the main points.

Solutions - Section II

11. (B) "Abruptly" refers to a change that happens very quickly or without warning; "suddenly" is the best synonym.
12. (B) Paragraph 1 contrasts the "rare and expensive luxuries" (hand-copied) with "rapid mass production" (printing press).
13. (A) To "augment" is to make something greater by adding to it; in this context, it means the press "increased" the spread of knowledge.
14. (B) In the context of people reading for themselves, "authoritative intermediaries" refers to the clergy or nobility who previously controlled and filtered information.
15. (B) Paragraph 2 states that the "democratization of knowledge" (wider availability) was a primary catalyst for the Scientific Revolution.

16. **(D)** While the passage mentions standardization and literacy, it never suggests that printing presses led to the "invention of new languages."
17. **(B)** The original sentence emphasizes that mass production caused languages to stabilize and rules to become uniform. Option B captures this essence perfectly.
18. **(C)** Square [C] is the best fit because the preceding sentence mentions the middle class gaining access to information, and writing in everyday language would facilitate that access.
19. **(B)** The text mentions that publishers favored the dialect used in Luther's Bible, which "became the linguistic standard."
20. **(a, c, e)** These summarize the technological shift (a), the social impact on literacy and authority (c), and the linguistic impact of standardization (e).