

TOEFL Reading Sample Paper 10

- 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 Domestication of the Dog

Paragraph 1: The dog (*Canis lupus familiaris*) was the first species to be domesticated by humans, a process that began at least 15,000 years ago, long before the advent of agriculture. While it is widely accepted that dogs descended from a now-extinct species of Pleistocene wolf, the exact mechanism of this transformation remains **conjectural**. Some scientists argue that early humans captured wolf pups and raised them, while others propose the "self-domestication" hypothesis. In this scenario, less aggressive wolves scavenged for food scraps near human camps, eventually forming a symbiotic relationship with humans that favored **docile** traits.

Paragraph 2: [A] Domestication resulted in significant morphological changes in dogs, a phenomenon known as "domestication syndrome." [B] These changes include smaller skulls, reduced tooth size, and, in many breeds, floppy ears and curly tails. [C] These physical traits are thought to be a byproduct of selection for reduced fear and aggression, which affects the development of the neural crest cells during embryonic growth. [D]

Paragraph 3: Beyond physical alterations, dogs evolved a specialized social intelligence that allows them to interpret human communicative gestures, such as pointing or glancing, more effectively than any other non-human species. Research has shown that even puppies with minimal human contact can follow a human's pointing gesture to find food, a task that chimpanzees—our closest living relatives—struggle to perform. This suggests that the ability to bond with humans is an **integral** part of the canine genetic makeup.

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

- A. Proven
- B. Theoretical
- C. Obvious
- D. Ancient

2. According to Paragraph 1, how does the "self-domestication" theory explain the origin of dogs?

- A. Humans actively hunted wolves until they became submissive.
- B. Wolves that were less afraid of humans gained a survival advantage by scavenging.
- C. Wolves and humans competed for the same prey until wolves were defeated.
- D. Early farmers bred wolves to protect their livestock from other predators.

3. The word "docile" in Paragraph 1 is closest in meaning to:

- A. Brave
- B. Obedient
- C. Intelligent
- D. Wild

4. What can be inferred from Paragraph 2 about "floppy ears" in dogs?

- A. They were deliberately selected by humans to make dogs look more attractive.
- B. They are a physical consequence of breeding for calmer temperaments.
- C. They help dogs hear human commands more clearly than wolves can.
- D. They only appear in breeds that were domesticated after the Ice Age.

5. Why does the author mention "chimpanzees" in Paragraph 3?

- A. To argue that chimpanzees are more intelligent than dogs in most tasks.
- B. To emphasize the unique ability of dogs to understand human communication.
- C. To show that all domesticated animals share similar social traits.
- D. To provide an example of another species that was almost domesticated.

6. The word "integral" in Paragraph 3 is closest in meaning to:

- A. Essential
- B. Accidental
- C. Recent
- D. Beneficial

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

- A. Dogs are the only species that can be trained to follow complex human instructions.
- B. Because of their evolution, dogs have a unique capacity to understand human social cues.
- C. Human gestures like pointing are more important for dog survival than physical traits.
- D. Chimpanzees and dogs have evolved similar social intelligence through human contact.

8. According to the passage, all of the following are morphological changes associated with domestication EXCEPT:

- A. Decreased skull size
- B. Smaller teeth
- C. Curly tails

D. Increased brain volume

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

"Archaeological evidence has confirmed that these traits began to appear shortly after the first permanent human-canine bonds were formed."

A. [A]

B. [B]

C. [C]

D. [D]

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

- a. Dogs likely evolved from wolves through a combination of human interaction and self-domestication.
- b. Domestication led to a variety of physical changes, including smaller size and unique ear shapes.
- c. Canine evolution resulted in a superior ability to interpret and respond to human social gestures.
- d. Pleistocene wolves are the ancestors of both modern dogs and modern African wild dogs.
- e. Neural crest cells are the primary reason why dogs are more aggressive than wolves.
- f. Chimpanzees struggle to find food when humans point at it because they lack canine DNA.

PASSAGE II: The Engineering of Roman Roads

Paragraph 1: The Roman road system was one of the greatest engineering feats of the ancient world, spanning over 400,000 kilometers at its peak. These roads were not merely dirt paths but **meticulously** constructed highways designed for durability and speed. A standard Roman road consisted of several layers: a foundation of heavy stones, a layer of gravel or sand, and a surface of large, flat paving stones. To ensure proper drainage, the roads were built with a slight curve, allowing rainwater to run off into ditches on either side.

Paragraph 2: [A] The primary purpose of this vast network was military. [B] The *viae* (roads) allowed Roman legions to move quickly across the empire to suppress rebellions or defend borders. [C] However, the roads also became vital conduits for trade and communication. [D] The *Cursus Publicus*, the state-run courier service, used the road system to deliver messages across thousands of miles in a matter of days, keeping the central government in Rome informed of events in distant provinces.

Paragraph 3: Because the roads were constructed with such precision and high-quality materials, many of them remained in use for centuries after the fall of the Western Roman Empire. In fact, the routes of many modern European highways still follow the original paths laid down by Roman engineers. The **stark** contrast

between the Roman infrastructure and the poorly maintained roads of the Middle Ages highlights the technical decline that followed the empire's collapse.

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

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| A. Rapidly | C. Thoroughly |
| B. Carelessly | D. Secretly |

12. According to Paragraph 1, why did Roman engineers build roads with a "slight curve"?

- A. To make the roads appear more visually impressive.
- B. To prevent water from collecting on the surface.
- C. To allow wagons to turn more easily at high speeds.
- D. To follow the natural shape of the hilly terrain.

13. In Paragraph 2, the word "conduits" is closest in meaning to:

- | | |
|-------------|------------|
| A. Barriers | C. Markets |
| B. Channels | D. Limits |

14. What was the "Cursus Publicus" mentioned in Paragraph 2?

- A. A type of paving stone used for high-speed roads.
- B. A military legion specialized in road construction.
- C. A system for transporting government information.
- D. A tax collected from merchants who used the roads.

15. According to the passage, the most immediate reason for building the road system was:

- A. To increase the profits of Roman merchants.
- B. To facilitate the movement of the Roman army.
- C. To provide employment for citizens in Rome.
- D. To encourage tourism between different provinces.

16. The word "stark" in Paragraph 3 is closest in meaning to:

- | | |
|-----------|-------------|
| A. Slight | C. Positive |
| B. Sharp | D. Useful |

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

- A. Roman roads were abandoned immediately after the empire fell because they were too difficult to maintain.
- B. The high quality of Roman road construction allowed these highways to survive and be used for a long time.
- C. Modern engineers prefer using Roman materials because they are more durable than 21st-century stones.

D. The Western Roman Empire collapsed primarily because it spent too much money on road maintenance.

18. What can be inferred from the passage about the Middle Ages?

- A. It was a period of continued advancement in road engineering.
- B. Communication between regions likely became slower than during the Roman era.
- C. Roman roads were completely destroyed by the new governments.
- D. Most people moved to areas where there were no existing Roman roads.

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

"By facilitating the transit of goods like grain and silk, the roads helped create a unified imperial economy."

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

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

- a. Roman roads were advanced, multi-layered structures designed for longevity and water drainage.
- b. The network was primarily a military tool but evolved into a vital system for trade and communication.
- c. The enduring quality of Roman roads influenced the location and development of modern infrastructure.
- d. The Cursus Publicus only delivered messages within the city limits of Rome.
- e. Heavy stones were always placed at the top of the road to prevent them from sinking into the foundation.
- f. Roman legions were forced to build roads because they were not allowed to engage in combat during the winter.

Solutions - Section I

1. **(B)** "Conjectural" means based on or involving guesswork; "theoretical" is the best fit for an unproven scientific mechanism.
2. **(B)** Paragraph 1 describes wolves scavenging scraps and forming a relationship that favored docile traits, which is a survival advantage.
3. **(B)** "Docile" means ready to accept control or instruction; "obedient" is the most accurate synonym.
4. **(B)** The text states these changes are a "byproduct of selection for reduced fear," implying they are unintentional physical consequences.
5. **(B)** The author uses chimpanzees (closest relatives) to show that even they cannot do what dogs (non-relatives) can do, highlighting the dog's uniqueness.
6. **(A)** In genetics, "integral" means necessary to make a whole complete; "essential" is the correct fit.
7. **(B)** The highlighted sentence states dogs have "specialized social intelligence" for human cues. Option B summarizes this evolutionary capacity.
8. **(D)** Paragraph 2 mentions smaller skulls, reduced teeth, and ears/tails. It does *not* mention increased brain volume (in fact, skulls became smaller).
9. **(B)** Square [B] is the best fit as it follows the introduction of morphological changes and precedes the specific list of those changes.
10. **(a, b, c)** These summarize the origin theories (a), the physical effects (b), and the cognitive/social evolution (c).

Solutions - Section II

11. **(C)** "Meticulously" means in a way that shows great attention to detail; "thoroughly" is the best synonym.
12. **(B)** The text explains the curve allowed "rainwater to run off into ditches," which is the definition of drainage.
13. **(B)** "Conduits" are means of transmitting or distributing something; "channels" is the direct synonym.
14. **(C)** The text defines it as a "state-run courier service" used to "deliver messages."
15. **(B)** Paragraph 2 explicitly states that the "primary purpose... was military."
16. **(B)** "Stark" is used to describe a clear or "sharp" difference between two things.
17. **(B)** The original sentence links high-quality construction to the longevity of the roads. Option B reflects this relationship perfectly.

18. **(B)** If the Roman courier service could deliver messages in days, and the Middle Ages saw a "technical decline" and "poorly maintained roads," communication would logically slow down.
19. **(D)** Square [D] follows the mention of "trade and communication" and the courier service, adding detail about the economic impact.
20. **(a, b, c)** These summarize the engineering quality (a), the dual military/economic purpose (b), and the historical legacy (c).