Name_____
Date_____

•Intermediate Critical Reading – The Robin

The North American Robin is usually called the "robin." The robin is a bird. The male robin has a bright red breast. The robin has a cheerful song.

Robins live throughout North America. They live in Canada. They live in Alaska. They live in the 48 lower states. In the winter, robins go south. In the winter, some robins go to central
5   Mexico. Some robins go to the Pacific coast.

Robins eat during the day. Robins eat beetles. Robins eat berries. Robins eat fruits. Robins eat about 40% invertebrates like beetles and grubs. Robins eat about 60% fruits and berries. Mother robins find food for baby robins. Father robins find food for baby robins. Baby robins eat worms. Baby robins eat other soft-bodied animals too.
10   Squirrels prey on robin eggs and baby robins. Snakes prey on baby robins and robin eggs. Some other birds prey on baby robins and robin eggs. Blue jays prey on baby robins and robin eggs. Crows prey on baby robins and robin eggs. Hawks prey on adult robins. Cats prey on adult robins. Snakes prey on adult robins.

To stay safe, robins stay vigilant. Robins pay close attention to their surroundings. When
15   they gather in groups, they watch other robins for signs of danger. Robins give loud warning calls when a dangerous predator approaches. Although robins are territorial, they band together for protection from predators.

The robin is a sign a spring. Some people think that seeing the first robin of springtime brings good luck.

Questions

1. According to the passage, which of the following statements is/are true?

   I)   Some robins go to South America during the winter.
   II)   The female robin has a bright red breast.
   III) Cats hunt adult robins.

   A) I only
   B) II only
   C) III only
   D) I and II only
   E) II and III only

2. What is the main idea of the fourth paragraph?

   A) Squirrels hunt baby robins.
   B) Other animals prey on robins.
   C) Adult robins do not care for their young.
   D) Crows and hawks hunt adult robins.
   E) Other birds steal robin eggs.

3. In line 14, *vigilant* most closely means

   A) attentive
   B) dangerous
   C) noisy
   D) safe
   E) territorial

Answers and Explanations

1. The correct answer is **C**.

    I)   Incorrect. Lines 4-5 state that "In the winter some robins go to central Mexico. Some robins go to the Pacific coast." While some robins **may** go to Central America during the winter, there is **no** information *in the passage* about Central America.

    II) Incorrect. Lines 1-2 state that "The *male* robin has a bright red breast." There is **no** mention of the coloring of the *female* robin.

    III) Correct. Line 13 states that "Cats prey on adult robins." To *prey on* means to *hunt*, so it is **true** that *cats hunt adult robins*.

    A) I only
    B) II only
    C) III only
    D) I and II only
    E) II and III only

2. The correct answer is **B**.

    A) Incorrect. While line 10 states that "Squirrels prey on robin eggs and baby robins," the paragraph goes on to list other animals which prey on, or hunt, robins and their eggs. So the *main idea* does **not** center on *squirrels*, but rather on animals which prey on robins and their eggs.

    B) Correct. Lines 10-12 list the animals which prey on baby robins and robin eggs. Lines 12-13 list animals which prey on adult robins. Therefore, the entire paragraph is centered on *animals which prey on robins*.

    C) Incorrect. While lines 10-12 list animals which prey on *baby robins and robin eggs*, and lines 12-13 list animals which prey on *adult* robins, there is **no** mention that the **adult** *robins do not care for their young*.

    D) Incorrect. Lines 12-13 state that "Crows prey on baby robins and robin eggs. Hawks prey on adult robins." However, there is **no** mention that *crows prey on adult robins or that hawks prey on baby robins and robin eggs.*

    E) Incorrect. While lines 10-12 state that some animals prey on baby robins and robin eggs, the main idea does **not** center on the *robin eggs*, but rather on the animals which prey on robins.

3. The correct answer is **A**.

    A) Correct. According to line 14, "To stay safe, robins are *vigilant*. Robins pay close attention to their surroundings." *Vigilant* robins are robins which pay close *attention* to their surroundings. To pay *attention* means to be *attentive*. Therefore, *vigilant* must mean *attentive*.

    B) Incorrect. According to lines 14-16, "To stay safe, robins are *vigilant*. Robins pay close attention to their surroundings. When they gather in groups, they watch other robins for signs of *danger*." Since *vigilant* robins watch for signs of *danger*, it stands to reason that the word *vigilant* does **not** mean *dangerous*.

    C) Incorrect. According to lines 14-16, "To stay safe, robins are *vigilant*. Robins pay close attention to their surroundings. When they gather in groups, they watch other robins for

signs of danger. Robins give *loud warning calls* when a dangerous predator approaches."
Although vigilant robins do give *loud or noisy* warning calls in when there is a dangerous
predator in the area, the other sentences in the paragraph center on the attentiveness, the
watchfulness, and the awareness of danger that robins possess. So their *noisiness* seems
to stem from their *vigilance*, but *noisy* does **not** mean the same as *vigilant*.

D) Incorrect. According to line 14, "To stay *safe*, robins are *vigilant*." While *vigilance* and
safety seem to **go together**, they do **not** have the same meaning. So the word *safe* does
not mean the same as *vigilant*.

E) Incorrect. The paragraph states, "To stay safe, robins are *vigilant*. … Although robins are
territorial, they band together for protection from predators." While banding together for
protection is a way of staying safe or to find protection from predators, robins are also
said to be *territorial*. Being *territorial* seems to mean something **very different** from
banding together. Therefore, if birds are *vigilant* for safety and if they also band together
for safety, *vigilant* cannot mean the same as *territorial*.