Name_____
Date_____

• Reading Comprehension 1 Level 8

Directions: *Read the passage. Then answer the questions below.*

Right now, I am looking at a shelf full of relics, a collection of has-beens, old-timers, antiques, fossils. Right now I am looking at a shelf full of books. Yes, that's right. If you have some spare cash (the going rate is about $89) and are looking to enhance your reading experience, then I highly suggest you consider purchasing an e-reader. E-readers are replacing the books of old, and I welcome them with open arms (as you should).

If you haven't heard of an e-reader and don't know what it is, then please permit the following explanation. An e-reader is a device that allows you to read e-books. An e-book is a book-length publication in digital form, consisting of text, images, or both, and produced on, published through, and readable on computers or other electronic devices. Sometimes the equivalent of a conventional printed book, e-books can also be born digital. The Oxford Dictionary of English defines the e-book as "an electronic version of a printed book," but e-books can and do exist without any printed equivalent.

So now you know what an e-reader is. But you still may be wondering why they put printed books to shame. E-readers are superior to printed books because they save space, are environmentally friendly, and provide helpful reading tips and tools that printed books do not.

E-readers are superior to printed books because they save space. The average e-reader can store thousands of digital books, providing a veritable library at your fingertips. What is more, being the size and weight of a thin hardback, the e-reader itself is relatively petite. It is easy to hold and can fit in a pocketbook or briefcase easily. This makes handling ponderous behemoths such as *War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina*, and *Les Misérables* a breeze. Perhaps the only drawback to the space-saving aspect of an e-reader is that it requires you to find new things to put on your shelves.

In addition, e-readers are superior to books because they are environmentally friendly. The average novel is about 300 pages long. So, if a novel is printed 1000 times, it will use 300,000 pieces of paper. That's a lot of paper! If there are about 80,000 pieces of paper in a tree, this means it takes almost 4 trees to make these 1000 books. Now, we know that the average bestseller sells about 20,000 copies per week. That means that it takes over 300 trees each month to sustain this rate. And for the super bestsellers, these figures increase dramatically. For example, the Harry Potter book series has sold over 450 million copies. That's about 2 million trees! Upon viewing these figures, it is not hard to grasp the severe impact of printed books on the environment. Since e-readers use no trees, they represent a significant amount of preservation in terms of the environment and its resources.

Finally, e-readers are superior to books because they provide helpful reading tips and tools that printed books do not. The typical e-reader allows its user to customize letter size, font, and line spacing. It also allows highlighting and electronic bookmarking. Furthermore, it grants users the ability to get an overview of a book and then jump to a specific location based on that overview. While these are all nice features, perhaps the most helpful of all is the ability to get dictionary definitions at the touch of a finger. On even the most basic e-reader, users can conjure instant definitions without having to hunt through a physical dictionary.

It can be seen that e-readers are superior to printed books. They save space, are environmentally friendly, and provide helpful reading tips and tools that printed books do not. So what good are printed books? Well, they certainly make nice decorations.

Questions

1) As used in paragraph 1, it can be inferred that "relics," "has-beens, old-timers, antiques, fossils" are all words that describe something

    A. ancient
    B. useless
    C. outdated
    D. pathetic

2) The tone of the author can best be described as

    A. shrewd
    B. conniving
    C. persuasive
    D. authoritative

3) According to the author, e-books

    I.   were all once printed books
    II. may be "born digital"
    III. are able to display images

    A. I only
    B. I and II only
    C. II and III only
    D. I, II, and III

4) As used in paragraph 3, which of the following describes something that has been "put to shame"?

    A. A dog is left outside on a frigid, dreary winter night.
    B. Team A defeats Team B in a humiliating rout.
    C. Martha is caught stealing at the mall and is arrested in front of a crowd of curious bystanders.
    D. The machine has countless moving parts and Dustin has trouble assembling it.

5) A *thesis statement* is a sentence that clearly describes what the author plans to discuss. Based on this information, which of the following sentences from the passage is the thesis statement?

    A. If you have some spare cash (the going rate is about $89) and are looking to enhance your reading experience, then I highly suggest you consider purchasing an e-reader.
    B. E-readers are replacing the books of old, and I welcome them with open arms (as you should).
    C. An e-reader is a device that allows you to read e-books. An e-book is a book-length publication in digital form, consisting of text, images, or both, and produced on, published through, and readable on computers or other electronic devices.
    D. E-readers are superior to printed books because they save space, are environmentally friendly, and provide helpful reading tips and tools that printed books do not.

6) Based on its use in paragraph 4, it can be inferred that **petite** belongs to which of the following word families?

    A. jubilant, euphoric, playful
    B. compact, diminutive, little
    C. cute, attractive, charming
    D. light, airy, spacious

7) Based on information in the passage, it can be inferred that *War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina*, and *Les Misérables* are all

    A. authored by Europeans
    B. dense and impenetrable
    C. timeless classics
    D. awkward or unwieldy

8) As used in paragraph 5, which is the best <u>synonym</u> for **sustain**?

    A. maintain
    B. allow
    C. enforce
    D. yield

9) Which of the following, if true, would present the biggest challenge to the author's argument set forth in paragraph 5?

    A. Books are not made only from whole trees, but from wood chips and forest waste as well.
    B. The natural resources required to read an e-book on an e-reader are greater than the natural resources required to make a printed book.
    C. The results of a recent survey show that people who read e-books are more likely to be distracted during their reading and remember less of the book.
    D. Although the printing of the extremely popular Harry Potter book series had significant environmental impact, the Harry Potter movie series cost almost no trees to make and was also very well-liked.

10) According to the author, which of the following reading tips and tools are offered by the e-reader?

    I. line spacing customization
    II. the ability to quickly jump to the end of a book
    III. access to an online thesaurus at the touch of a finger

    A. I only
    B. I and II only
    C. II and III only
    D. I, II, and III

11) Which of the following best describes the organization of this passage?

    A. introduction, thesis statement, supporting paragraphs, conclusion
    B. history, thesis statement, supporting paragraphs, conclusion
    C. advertisement, background, introduction, supporting paragraphs, examples, conclusion
    D. introduction, background, thesis statement, supporting paragraphs, conclusion

Answers and Explanations

1) **C**

In paragraph 1, the author describes a shelf full of books as a shelf full of "relics," "has-beens, old-timers, antiques, fossils." From this we can understand that the author believes that books share some quality with "relics," "has-beens, old-timers, antiques," and "fossils." Later in paragraph 1, the author claims that "e-readers are replacing the books of old." We can infer that the author believes that e-readers are replacing books because books are outdated. Books are no longer the best way to read, in the author's opinion. Being outdated is the quality books share with "relics," "has-beens, old-timers, antiques," and "fossils." So in this context, all of these terms refer to things which have been replaced in some way, or are no longer useful, and thus are outdated. This means that **(C)** is correct. Something *ancient* is very old. Although "relics," "has-beens, old-timers, antiques," and "fossils" all can refer to something very old, in this context the author wants to highlight the fact that they have all been replaced, just as e-readers are replacing books, and thus now they are outdated. The quality these things all share with books cannot be old age, because many books are new. The author is not arguing that books are old, but that they are outdated. This means **(A)** is incorrect. Something *useless* no longer has any relevant function or use. Although "relics," "has-beens, old-timers, antiques," and "fossils" are things that are outdated, they are not all necessarily useless. For instance, a typewriter is a relic when compared to a new computer, but a typewriter can still function and be used. It is not useless. Books themselves are not useless, either, since they still function fine. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect. Something *pathetic* is something that is miserably inadequate. "Relics," "has-beens, old-timers, antiques," and "fossils" are things that are outdated, but they are not necessarily inadequate. Books themselves are not inadequate, either, as they still function fine. This means **(D)** is incorrect.

2) **C**

The author presents a clear opinion in paragraph 1: "E-readers are replacing the books of old, and I welcome them with open arms (as you should)." Not only does the author embrace e-readers, he or she attempts to persuade readers that they should too. In paragraph 3, the author continues to argue that e-readers "put printed books to shame." In paragraph 7, the author reiterates that "e-readers are superior to printed books." Because the author has a clear opinion that e-readers are better than books, attempts to persuade readers, and presents reasons why readers should agree with him or her, we can understand the author's tone as persuasive. Therefore **(C)** is correct. *Shrewd* means keenly aware or intelligent. The author does not present any insight about e-readers to make us think he or she is more keenly aware or intelligent than the average observer. This makes **(A)** incorrect. *Conniving* means conspiring to do something immoral or illegal. Although the author is attempting to persuade readers, he or she is straightforward and does not conspire with the readers or anyone else. This means **(B)** is incorrect. *Authoritative* means exercising authority or commanding. While it is true the author presents information about e-readers with authority, he or she is not commanding. The author tries to convince readers, not command them, to choose e-readers over books. We must also consider the purpose of the essay. The author's overall purpose is to persuade, not to command. This means that the tone is more persuasive than it is authoritative, so **(D)** is incorrect.

3) **C**

In paragraph 2, we learn that "the Oxford Dictionary of English defines the e-book as 'an electronic version of a printed book,' but e-books can and do exist without any printed equivalent." From this we can understand that some e-books were not ever printed books. Instead they only exist in electronic form. This eliminates **option (I)**. Also in paragraph 2, we learn that "e-books can…be born digital." Since "can" and "may" are words with similar meanings, we can infer that e-books may be "born digital." This supports **option (II)**. In paragraph 2, the author defines an e-book as "a book-length publication in digital form, consisting of text, images, or both." From this we can understand that e-books must be able to display images. This supports **option (III)**. Therefore **(C)** is correct.

4) **B**

put to shame *(idiom):* to prove superiority over something else.

In paragraph 3, the author claims that e-readers "put printed books to shame" and are "superior" for three reasons. From this information, we can understand that to put something to shame is to prove one's superiority over it. When Team A defeats Team B in a humiliating rout, Team A has proved its superiority over Team B. This makes **(B)** correct. A dog left outside on a frigid, dreary winter night does not prove its superiority over anything else. It may be a cause for shame, or it may have been done in order to shame the dog, but these interpretations draw on the literal meaning of *shame* rather than the meaning of the idiom "put to shame." Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. Martha, arrested for stealing in front of a crowd, may feel ashamed, but she is not proving her superiority over anything else. This interpretation also draws on the literal meaning of *shame* rather than the meaning of the idiom "put to shame." This makes **(C)** incorrect. If Dustin has trouble assembling a machine with countless moving parts, he may feel frustrated by the machine, but neither he nor the machine has been proven superior. This makes **(D)** incorrect.

5) **D**

Since a thesis statement is a sentence that clearly describes what the author plans to discuss, a thesis statement must lay out the main ideas of an argument. In paragraph 3, the author states, "E-readers are superior to printed books because they save space, are environmentally friendly, and provide helpful reading tips and tools that printed books do not." In this sentence, the author clearly states his or her argument (that e-readers are superior to books). The author also lays out the three main ideas, or reasons, why he or she believes this to be so: "they save space, are environmentally friendly, and provide helpful reading tips and tools." Because this sentence clearly describes what the author plans to discuss, including the main ideas of his or her argument, this sentence must be the thesis statement. This means **(D)** is correct. The sentence "If you have some spare cash (the going rate is about $89) and are looking to enhance your reading experience, then I highly suggest you consider purchasing an e-reader" indicates the opinion of the author, but it does not describe the main ideas or reasons that the author plans to discuss. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. The sentence "E-readers are replacing the books of old, and I welcome them with open arms (as you should)" also gives the author's opinion. However, this sentence does not describe the main ideas or reasons that the author plans to discuss, either. This makes **(B)** incorrect. A definition is not a description of what the author plans to discuss, but rather background information. The sentences "An e-reader is a device that allows you to read e-books. An e-book is a book-length publication in digital form, consisting of text,

images, or both, and produced on, published through, and readable on computers or other electronic devices" are a definition, not a thesis statement. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect.

6) **B**
petite *(adjective):* small, slender, and trim.
In paragraph 4, we learn that "being the size and weight of a thin hardback, the e-reader itself is relatively petite. It is easy to hold and can fit in a pocketbook or briefcase easily." From this information, we can understand that being "petite" means being "thin," "easy to hold" and being able to "fit in a pocketbook or briefcase easily." All of these descriptions refer to a small size or shape. Something petite is something small, slender and trim. This meaning fits best in the word family *compact, diminutive, little*. Therefore **(B)** is correct. *Jubilant, euphoric, playful* is a word family that refers to feelings, not to size, so petite does not fit. This means **(A)** is incorrect. *Cute, attractive, charming* is a word family that refers to a favorable appearance or attribute, not to size, so petite does not fit. This means **(C)** is incorrect. *Light, airy, spacious* is a word family that refers to lightness or roominess. While roominess and spaciousness refer to size, they refer to something large, and petite means small. This means **(D)** is incorrect.

7) **D**
In paragraph 4, the author claims that e-readers "save space." The author explains that because an e-reader is "the size and weight of a thin hardback," it "is relatively petite. It is easy to hold and can fit in a pocketbook or briefcase easily." From this information we can understand that one of the benefits of an e-reader is its relatively small size, which makes it more convenient to carry around than heavy books. In contrast, the author describes *War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina*, and *Les Misérables* as "ponderous behemoths." They are all much harder to carry as physical books than they would be on an e-reader. From this we can understand that these books are all the opposite of petite: physically heavy, *awkward or unwieldy* due to their length. This means **(D)** is correct. Although it is true that these books were all authored by Europeans, there is no information in the passage on which to infer this knowledge. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. *Dense and impenetrable* are words which refer to the language of a book that is difficult to understand. The author is concerned with the length and thus the size of these books, not with the language of these books. This makes **(B)** incorrect. Many people would consider these books to be *timeless classics*, but there is no information in the passage on which to base this knowledge. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect.

8) **A**
sustain *(verb):* to keep in existence; to maintain.
In paragraph 5, the author describes the amount of paper contained in a tree, and how many trees it takes to print books. The author claims that a bestseller sells 20,000 copies each week. Then the author states, "That means that it takes over 300 trees each month to sustain this rate." Without these trees, this rate of production could not exist. 300 trees is the number of trees it takes to keep this rate of production in existence, or to maintain it. Therefore **(A)** is the best answer. *Allow* means to permit. The 300 trees do not grant permission to the rate; rather, they keep it in existence. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect. *Enforce* means to obtain by force or compulsion. The 300 trees do not compel or force the rate. This means **(C)** is incorrect. *Yield* means to produce. The 300 trees do not just produce this rate; rather, they keep it in existence and maintain it over time. This makes **(D)** incorrect.

9) **B**
In paragraph 5, the author argues that "e-readers are superior to books because they are environmentally friendly." The author claims that printing books on paper wastes trees, a natural resource, whereas e-readers do not use paper, and therefore trees, at all. The author is comparing the use of the primary natural resource of printed books (paper) to the same use in e-readers, which makes it appear that printed books waste resources and e-readers do not. However, the author does not include any information about the natural resources required to make and read an e-book. If it were true, the fact that "the natural resources required to read an e-book on an e-reader are greater than the natural resources required to make a printed book" would present the biggest challenge to the author's argument. This fact would mean that e-readers are actually more wasteful of natural resources than printed books, and thus not more environmentally friendly. Therefore **(B)** is correct. If books were "not made only from whole trees, but from wood chips and forest waste as well," the process of printing books would be less wasteful than the author implies. However, this fact would not necessarily mean that e-readers are less environmentally friendly than printed books. This makes **(A)** incorrect. The argument that people who read e-books "are more likely to be distracted during their reading and remember less of the book" does not have anything to do with environmental friendliness, so it does not challenge the author's argument in paragraph 5. This means **(C)** is incorrect. The argument that the Harry Potter movie series "cost almost no trees to make and was also very well-liked" does not dispute the author's main point in paragraph 5, which is that a book series like Harry Potter is environmentally wasteful when produced in printed form. This means **(D)** is incorrect.

10) **B**
In paragraph 6, we learn that "the typical e-reader allows its user to customize letter size, font, and line spacing." This means that the e-reader offers line spacing customization. This supports **option (I)**. Also in paragraph 6, we learn that an e-reader "grants users the ability to get an overview of a book and then jump to a specific location based on that overview." This means a reader has the ability to quickly jump to the end of the book. This supports **option (II)**. In paragraph 6, we learn that the e-reader provides readers with "the ability to get dictionary definitions at the touch of a finger." However, it does not mention any access to an online thesaurus. This eliminates **option (III)**. Therefore **(B)** is correct.

11) **D**
This passage consists of 7 paragraphs. Paragraph 1 introduces the topic of e-readers and gives the author's opinion that "e-readers are replacing the books of old." Paragraph 2 provides background information and a definition of an e-reader. Paragraph 3 sets forth the author's argument that e-readers are superior and outlines three reasons why this is the case. This description of the author's main ideas is known as a thesis statement. Paragraphs 4, 5, and 6 give supporting information about each of these three reasons. Paragraph 7 offers a conclusion and summary of the author's point-of-view. This means the organization of the passage is: introduction, background, thesis statement, supporting paragraphs, and conclusion. Therefore **(D)** is correct. Choices **(A)**, **(B)**, and **(C)** do not include all of the parts of the essay's organizational structure. Therefore they are incorrect.