

Study Guide

Field 202: Academic Literacy Skills Test (ALST)

Sample Constructed-Response Items

Competency 0002
Writing to Sources

Passage A

Bob Dinneen
from "Should Congress Reassess the Renewable Fuel Standard in the
Energy Independence and Security Act? Con: Renewable Fuels Association (RFA)"

Promoting the U.S. Economy and Energy Independence

1 Expansion of the domestic biofuels industry will provide significant economic benefits in terms of a larger and more robust economy, increased income, new job creation in all sectors of the economy, and enhanced tax revenues at both the Federal and State levels. Increased biofuels production and use stimulated by the RFS¹ will also enhance America's energy security by displacing imported crude oil. Specifically, expansion of the U.S. biofuels industry will:

- Add more than \$1.7 trillion (2008 dollars) to the U.S. economy between 2008 and 2022.
- Generate an additional \$366 billion (2008 dollars) of household income for all Americans over the next 15 years.
- Support the creation of as many as 987,000 new jobs in all sectors of the economy by 2022.
- Generate \$353 billion (2008 dollars) in new Federal tax receipts.
- Improve America's energy security by displacing 11.2 billion barrels of crude oil over the next 15 years and reduce the outflow of dollars to foreign oil producers by \$1.1 trillion (2008 dollars).

Benefits to the Consumer

2 With the ever-increasing price of oil, ethanol is helping to give consumers some relief. Using ethanol in the U.S. transportation fuel market helps lower gasoline prices by expanding gasoline supplies and reducing the need for importing expensive, high-octane, petroleum-based gasoline components or more crude oil from unstable parts of the world.

3 Recently, ethanol has received harsh criticism for allegedly driving up the price of corn and contributing to a rise in food prices. However, the evidence does not support that conclusion. A host of reasons play a role in driving food prices higher, including, for example, record oil prices,

soaring global demand for commodities from oil to grains, poor weather conditions, a collapsing dollar, and restrictive agricultural policies around the world.

4 In fact, energy prices are a large component of the retail food dollar. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service estimates direct energy and transportation costs account for 7.5 percent of the overall average retail food dollar. "This suggests that for every 10 percent increase in energy costs, the retail food prices could increase by 0.75 percent if fully passed on to consumers." In fact, oil prices have twice the impact on rising consumer food prices than does the price of corn.

5 Ethanol production also provides highly valuable feed coproducts, keeping food production costs down. A modern dry-mill ethanol refinery produces approximately 2.8 gallons of ethanol and 17 pounds of distillers grains from one bushel of corn. The distillers grains are a protein-rich animal feed that can be supplemented by low-cost bulk foods like alfalfa, keeping the farmer's costs down.

¹**RFS:** Renewable Fuel Standard

Dinneen, Bob. "Should Congress Reassess the Renewable Fuel Standard in the Energy Independence and Security Act?" *Congressional Digest*. June 2008. Vol. 87. No. 6.

Passage B

Gawain Kripke from "Should Congress Reassess the Renewable Fuel Standard in the Energy Independence and Security Act? Pro: Oxfam America"

1 Diversion of corn to ethanol is playing a significant role in reducing corn supplies for food and feed. In 2008, the USDA estimates that 3.1 million bushels of U.S. corn will be used to produce biofuels. That's an increase of nearly 50 percent over 2.1 million bushels last year and close to twice the 1.6 million bushels of 2006. What do these figures mean? It means that in 2008 the United States will convert approximately one-quarter (23.7 percent) of our corn production into biofuels. That's an increase from 20 percent last year and 14 percent the year before. In short, we're rapidly diverting larger portions of our corn supply to fuel, leaving less for food.

2 This conversion of corn to fuel appears to be having an impact, not just in the United States, but globally. For about 1.2 billion people around the world, corn is the preferred staple cereal. Consider that the United States produces more than 40 percent of the world's corn supply. Dedicating 3.1 million bushels of corn for ethanol this year will take more than one-tenth of the global corn supply off the market for food and feed.

3 It's important to recognize that the United States is a massive exporter of corn, the largest supplier in the world. We export nearly twice as much corn as all the other exporters combined.

So, reduced supply and/or higher prices in the U.S. corn market have significant implications for the rest of the world.

4 Although ethanol mandates and subsidies directly impact on corn prices, they also have cascading impacts on other agricultural commodities. This is because higher corn prices are encouraging farmers to commit more acreage and agricultural inputs to corn production. This leaves less acreage and agricultural inputs available for other crops, especially soybeans, which are often planted in alternate years with corn. As a result, production for other commodities like soybeans is lower and prices are higher.

5 Higher corn prices also lead consumers to choose other, cheaper cereals to substitute for food or feed. Over time, this increased demand increases the prices for other commodities.

6 While the current situation around corn-based ethanol raises concerns about the impact on food prices and poor people, there are more ominous clouds on the horizon. The 2005 Energy Policy Act mandated 7.5 billion gallons of renewable fuels to be mixed into gasoline by 2012. Actual ethanol production is at least four years ahead of that schedule, with expected production of more than 7 billion gallons this year. But this is just the beginning of the planned expansion of corn ethanol.

7 The 2007 Energy Independence and Security Act mandates 36 billion gallons of biofuels by 2022. While the majority of this amount is meant to be "advanced biofuels," 15 billion gallons would be corn ethanol. This would double current corn ethanol production and implies a much larger diversion of corn from food and feed. The potential for truly disastrous shortages in food supply with accompanying price inflation is very real.

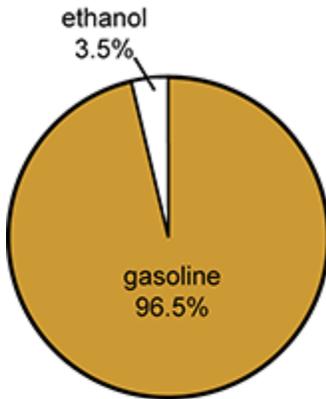
Kripke, Gawain. "Should Congress Reassess the Renewable Fuel Standard in the Energy Independence and Security Act?" *Congressional Digest*. June 2008. Vol. 87. No. 6.

Graphic

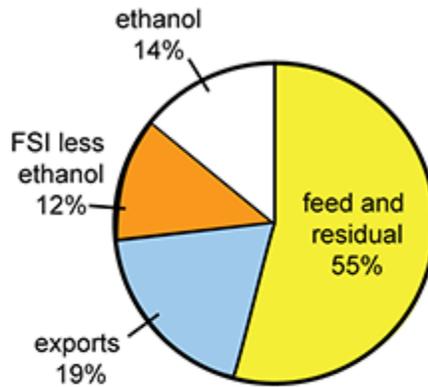
**United States Department of Agriculture
Ethanol's Role in Gasoline and Corn Markets**

2005/2006 Relationships

Ethanol use is small relative to overall gasoline use.

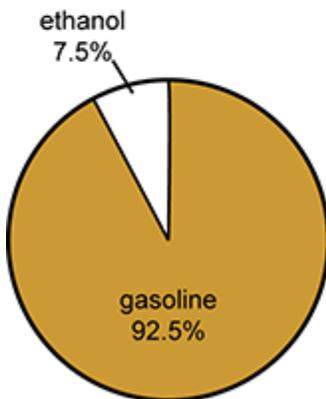


Ethanol accounts for a large and growing share of corn use.

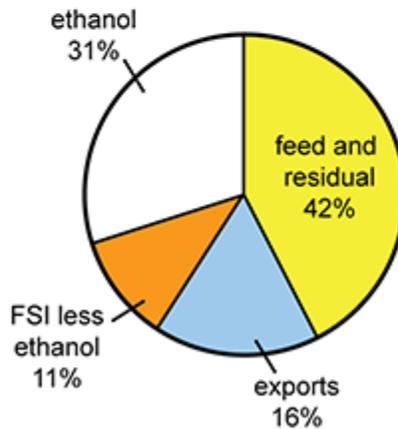


2016/2017 Relationships (projected)

Ethanol use is still small relative to overall gasoline use.



Ethanol accounts for over 30 percent of corn use.



Note: FSI = food, seed, and industrial

Westcott, P. C. (2007). *Ethanol expansion in the United States: How will the agricultural sector adjust?* (USDA Outlook No. FDS-07D01). Washington, DC: U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Assignment 1: Use Passages A and B to respond to the following assignment.

In a response of approximately 100–200 words, identify which author presents a more compelling argument. Your response must:

- outline the specific claims made in each passage;
- evaluate the validity, relevance, and sufficiency of evidence used to support each claim; and
- include examples from both passages to support your evaluation.

Your response should be written for an audience of educated adults. With the exception of appropriately identified quotations and paraphrases from the sources provided, your writing must be your own. The final version of your response should conform to the conventions of edited American English.

Sample Response to Assignment 1 (200 words)

The author of Passage A contends that increased ethanol production promotes economic growth and makes the United States more energy independent. He projects the likely effects of increased biofuels production on the economy and oil imports but does not furnish any information to support these estimates. The claim that increased ethanol production will lower fuel prices is more persuasive, but the contention that diverting corn to ethanol production will have little effect on the price of corn is not persuasive. Although the author lists other factors that influence corn prices and shows how reduced fuel prices lower production costs for corn growers, this evidence is not sufficient.

The main argument in Passage B is that increased diversion of corn to ethanol production will drive up the price of corn. The author contends that the diversion of corn to fuel has already reduced corn supplies for food and fuel with a corresponding increase in corn prices. Also, because the United States is the world's largest corn supplier, these developments are having a negative global impact. To support these claims, the author provides analysis and relevant data from authoritative government sources. Although one might question the author's fears, the argument appears sound.

Assignment 2: Use Passage B and the Graphic to respond to the following assignment.

In a response of approximately 100–200 words, explain how the information presented in the pie charts can be integrated with the author's central argument about the impact of converting corn to ethanol in Passage B. Your response must:

- explain how specific information presented in the pie charts either supports or counters the author's claims, reasoning, and evidence with regard to the conversion of corn to ethanol; and
- include examples from the passage and the pie charts to support your explanation.

Your response should be written for an audience of educated adults. With the exception of appropriately identified quotations and paraphrases from the sources provided, your writing must

be your own. The final version of your response should conform to the conventions of edited American English.

Sample Response to Assignment 2 (150 words)

Information presented in the pie charts provides strong support for the argument presented in Passage B. It shows that, in 2005/2006, about one-seventh of the corn grown in the United States was already being devoted to ethanol production; it further estimates that the amount of corn diverted to fuel will more than double by 2016/2017, at which time nearly a third of all U.S. corn will be turned into ethanol. Should this projection prove accurate, and the amount of corn devoted to food, seed, industrial, and residual purposes decline from 67% to 53% of the total crop, corn prices will, as the author argues, almost certainly rise. Although the charts show that the decline in corn exports is not likely to be as great as the author suggests in the passage, it will nevertheless have a negative impact on countries dependent on the United States for this widely consumed commodity.

Assignment 3: Use Passages A and B and the Graphic to respond to the following assignment.

Should the production of corn ethanol in the United States be expanded or reduced?

In an essay in your own words of approximately 400–600 words, present a fully developed argument that introduces and supports a claim assessing the benefits and risks of U.S. corn ethanol production. Your argument must:

- include a knowledgeable claim that demonstrates an understanding of the topic;
- use valid reasoning that draws on and extends the arguments in the sources provided;
- support your claim with relevant and sufficient evidence from all three sources; and
- anticipate and address at least one counterclaim.

Your essay should be written for an audience of educated adults. You must maintain an appropriate style and tone and use clear and precise language throughout. With the exception of appropriately identified quotations and paraphrases from the sources provided, your writing must be your own. The final version of your essay should conform to the conventions of edited American English.

Sample Response to Assignment 3 (566 words)

Devoting an ever larger percentage of our nation's corn harvest to the production of ethanol will do very little to address our long-term needs for energy security. The effects of such a decision on food prices, however, could be nothing short of disastrous.

As enthusiastic as many supporters are about the development of ethanol as a gasoline additive, the projected benefits of increased ethanol production are minimal. In 2007, the U.S. Department of Agriculture estimated that the amount of ethanol use relative to overall gasoline use would increase from its 2006 level of 3.5% to only 7.5% by 2017, despite what the study expected to be a massive diversion of corn from food to fuel production. This slight increase in ethanol use is

unlikely to have a significant effect on gasoline prices. It will, however, result in a rise in the price of corn, due to increased demand.

This elevation of the price of corn would have a negative impact on consumers, who would find themselves paying more for corn. As Garwain Kripke explains in a 2008 article, however, higher prices for corn are only the beginning. Kripke points out that increases in ethanol production "have cascading impacts on other agricultural commodities" as well. With more farm acreage devoted to corn for ethanol, for example, less will be available for other food crops. In addition, the diversion of corn to fuel production leaves less available for animal feed, raising the cost of livestock production, and, subsequently, the cost to consumers of meat.

The effect on those who depend on U.S. exports could be even more dire. Kripke notes that corn is a crucial staple food for some 1.2 billion people worldwide. Furthermore, the United States accounts for over 40 percent of global corn production. A rise in price would painfully stretch budgets of people all over the planet. Energy companies are likely to be able to pay more per bushel for corn than people who need corn simply to eat.

Proponents of increased corn ethanol production minimize the impact it would have on the cost of food. In a 2008 article, for example, Bob Dinneen acknowledges climbing food prices but argues that higher fuel prices are the primary cause. Furthermore, Dinneen predicts that production of ethanol and other biofuels will yield benefits including "a larger and more robust economy, increased income, new job creation in all sectors of the economy, and enhanced tax revenues at both the Federal and State levels."

If Dinneen's predictions are accurate, the benefits of ethanol production would outweigh any increase in the prices consumers pay for food. Because he offers no evidence to support these claims, however, they remain merely optimistic predictions. Meanwhile, food costs are climbing in the United States and abroad. The certainty of higher prices for staple foods on which people rely is not an acceptable trade-off for economic advantages that might never materialize.

Energy security is a worthy goal, especially given U.S. reliance on petroleum imports. The costs that increased ethanol production would impose on consumers, however, is unacceptably high. Instead of diverting needed food to fuel production, scientists and energy companies should focus on seeking out alternatives to petroleum and other fossil fuels for meeting the nation's energy needs. New, as yet undiscovered, energy technologies could have economic and environmental benefits far greater than those of ethanol. No such alternative technologies are available for food production.

Performance Characteristics for Extended-Response Item

The following characteristics guide the scoring of responses to the extended-response assignment.

CONTENT AND ANALYSIS The extent to which the response conveys complex ideas and information clearly and accurately in order to support claims in an analysis of topics and sources

COMMAND OF EVIDENCE	The extent to which the response presents evidence from the provided sources to support analysis and synthesis
COHERENCE, ORGANIZATION, AND STYLE	The extent to which the response logically organizes complex ideas, concepts, and information using formal style and precise language
CONTROL OF CONVENTIONS	The extent to which the response demonstrates command of the conventions of standard written English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling

Score Scale for Extended-Response Item

Scores will be assigned to the response to the extended-response item according to the following score scale.

Score Point	Score Point Description
4	The "4" response demonstrates a strong command of argumentative writing skills.
3	The "3" response demonstrates a satisfactory command of argumentative writing skills.
2	The "2" response demonstrates limited argumentative writing skills.
1	The "1" response demonstrates a lack of argumentative writing skills.
U	The response is unscorable because it is unrelated to the assigned topic or off-task, unreadable, written in a language other than English, or contains an insufficient amount of original work to score.
B	No response.

Performance Characteristics for Focused-Response Items

The following characteristics guide the scoring of responses to each focused-response assignment.

CONTENT	The extent to which the response meets the requirements of the assignment
ANALYSIS, EVALUATION, AND INTEGRATION	The extent to which the response demonstrates understanding of and engagement with the provided sources
COMMAND OF EVIDENCE	The extent to which the response presents evidence from the provided sources to support analysis and synthesis
COHERENCE AND CLARITY	The extent to which the response is focused and clear

Score Scale for Focused-Response Items

Scores will be assigned to each response to the focused-response items according to the following score scale.

Score Point	Score Point Description
4	The "4" response demonstrates a strong command of relevant skills.
3	The "3" response demonstrates a satisfactory command of relevant skills.
2	The "2" response demonstrates limited relevant skills.
1	The "1" response demonstrates a lack of relevant skills.
U	The response is unscorable because it is unrelated to the assigned topic or off-task, unreadable, written in a language other than English, or contains an insufficient amount of original work to score.
B	No response.

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Sample Selected-Response Questions

Competency 0001
Reading

Read the passage below; then answer the eight questions that follow.

Joshua Cooper Ramo
from *The Age of the Unthinkable: Why the New World Disorder Constantly Surprises Us and What We Can Do About It*

1 Gertrude Stein was born in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, on February 3, 1874. Her father, Daniel, was a German Jewish immigrant who had made a fortune in the American railway boom of the nineteenth century but held, somewhere, the idea and hope of the kind of polish a feeling for European life might give his children. When Gertrude was a girl, he moved the family briefly back across the Atlantic before finally settling in Oakland, California, where Gertrude spent her teen years. It was a well-rounded, prosperous, comfortable beginning, one intended to produce a well-rounded, prosperous life with all the usual accoutrements of family, stability, and friends. In fact, however, it produced a woman who was to become one of the most important aesthetic

arbiters of her day. Stein caught a taste for Europe early and realized quickly that she would never be at home in the United States. "America is my birthplace," she later observed, "but Paris is my home town." It wasn't only that the puritanical traditions of American life chafed against her modern sensibility and bohemian habits; it was also that Europe was where she was most likely to see what interested her most: a collision between old and new.

2 Stein returned to Europe in her twenties, settled in Paris, and quickly became a sort of den mother to the most successful artists and writers and dancers of her age. They were, she recognized, moving right along the fault line that riveted her, the one that separated the classical European way of life, with its balls, carriages, and Victorian sensibilities, from what she spotted around her: the dances of Nijinsky, the sentences of Joyce, the paintings of Braque. This new world obsessed her. She loved the speed of its trains, the way the Renault factories in Croissy worked around the clock, the hustle of immigrants on the Paris streets. Almost like a collector of great art, she began to collect great talent: Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Pablo Picasso, and a dozen other great names of the revolution that became known as modernism. What made Stein so successful in this endeavor wasn't only her ambition or her intellect or the strength of her own talent (which was debatable). It was that her way of thinking and seeing, her curiosity about the collision of old and new, was perfectly tuned for a moment when Europe was, cataclysmically, struggling with that collision. She was a woman alive to the great theme of her day, the at once violent, at once beautiful movement from one way of living to another.

3 If there was a single moment when she felt a sense of the harmony between her instincts and her environment most clearly, it might have been on a Paris street in the sixth arrondissement one night shortly after the start of World War I. Stein and Picasso were walking home from a dinner, when a French military convoy rolled past them. But this convoy was different. It *looked* different: the sides of the trucks and the cabs had been splashed unevenly with different colors of paint. The two of them froze. Stein wrote later, "I very well remember being with Picasso on the Boulevard Raspail when the first camouflaged truck passed. It was at night, we had heard of camouflage but we had not yet seen it and Picasso amazed looked at it and then cried out, yes it is we who made it, that is Cubism!"¹

4 This is quite a scene—the saturnine Stein, forty years old, and the diminutive thirty-three-year-old Spanish genius, exulting together in a fresh aesthetic surprise of the Great War. That war became for Stein the defining moment of her sense of aesthetics and history. For her, 1914 marked a pivot between radically different sensibilities. It wasn't simply that the war destroyed so many lives; it was also that it destroyed an older idea of order. "You are, all of you, a lost generation," Stein told Hemingway when he showed up in Paris after the war. It was that same confused geography she had in mind when marking out the way the war had been fought, the way it looked, and the landscape it left behind. "The composition of this war," Stein wrote, "was not a composition in which there was one man in the center surrounded by many others but a composition that had neither a beginning nor an end, a composition in which one corner was as important as another corner, in fact the composition of Cubism."

5 What Stein was sensing, marked out on those trucks or the paintings on the walls of her apartment, was, for its age, very much like what we are feeling now, a violent change in the way the world appears to work. In her case, the world really *looked* different. (If you've ever stared at

a great Cubist painting, you know that the movement proposed a radically different way of seeing.) But there are important similarities between her historical moment and ours: a sense of new complexities, fresh interactions, and a speed that bedraggles old language and confuses old ideas. Statesmen of World War I lamented afterward that if only the negotiations in the days before the first mobilization had *not* been conducted by telegraph, the war might have been avoided. The problem, they said, was that none of the kings or foreign ministers of Europe had accustomed themselves to the speed of information, to the quantity of it that became available when telegraphs replaced letters. And in their confusion, they felt they had to act and decide at the (then-blistering) speed of a telegraph machine. It destroyed their judgment.

6 Every important historical moment is marked by these sorts of shifts to new models of living, which expand in velocity and complexity well past what the current ways of thinking can handle. Our moment is no exception. And usually the source of the greatest historical disasters is that so few people at the time either recognize or understand the shift. Artists, with their tuned instincts for the new, often do.

¹**Cubism:** visual art style of the early twentieth century in which images were generally fractured into geometric facets

From: THE AGE OF THE UNTHINKABLE by Joshua Cooper Ramo. Copyright © 2009 by Joshua Cooper Ramo. By permission of Little, Brown and Company. All rights reserved.

1. In Paragraph 1, the repetition of the phrase "well-rounded, prosperous" emphasizes

1. the sophistication of Stein's family
2. the predictability of the life Stein rejected
3. the flowering of Stein's creative powers
4. the contempt for convention Stein embodied

Answer

Correct Response: B. This item requires examinees to analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone. In Paragraph 1, the author's repetition of the phrase "well-rounded, prosperous" focuses attention on the stable, orderly world that Stein left behind when she decided to pursue her fascination with the "collision between old and new" models of living in Europe.

2. In Paragraph 2, the author develops the idea that "Europe was where [Stein] was most likely to see what interested her most" primarily by

1. contrasting "the classical European way of life" with "the dances of Nijinsky, the sentences of Joyce, the paintings of Braque"
2. describing Paris in terms of "the speed of its trains" and "the hustle of immigrants"

3. stating that Stein "began to collect great talent: Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Pablo Picasso"
4. identifying Stein as "a woman alive to the great theme of her day"

Answer

Correct Response: A. This item requires examinees to determine the central ideas of a text and analyze their development. What most interested Stein was the "collision between old and new" models of living. By juxtaposing the "balls, carriages, and Victorian sensibilities" of old Europe with the cultural innovation of modernist artists and writers such as Nijinsky, Joyce, and Braque, the author develops the idea that Europe was the epicenter of this collision.

3. The sentence below appears in Paragraph 2:

It was that her way of thinking and seeing, her curiosity about the collision of old and new, was perfectly tuned for a moment when Europe was, cataclysmically, struggling with that collision.

Which phrase is closest in meaning to the word "cataclysmically" as it is used in the sentence above?

1. with furious upheaval
2. with unrelenting violence
3. with reckless abandon
4. with shocking suddenness

Answer

Correct Response: A. This item requires examinees to interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text. As it is used in this sentence, the word cataclysmically refers to the cultural upheaval resulting from the clash between a traditional way of life and the new sensibilities that found expression in the work of modernist writers and artists.

4. The author's assertion in Paragraph 3 that the encounter with a military convoy was the moment Stein "felt a sense of the harmony between her instincts and her environment most clearly" is best supported by which excerpt from the passage?

1. It *looked* different: the sides of the trucks and the cabs had been splotched unevenly with different colors of paint.
2. The two of them froze. Stein wrote later, "I very well remember being with Picasso on the Boulevard Raspail when the first camouflaged truck passed."
3. "It was at night, we had heard of camouflage but we had not yet seen it and Picasso amazed looked at it and then cried out, yes it is we who made it, that is Cubism!"
4. This is quite a scene—the saturnine Stein, forty years old, and the diminutive thirty-three-year-old Spanish genius, exulting together in a fresh aesthetic surprise of the Great War.

Answer

Correct Response: C. This item requires examinees to determine the central ideas of a text and analyze their development. World War I was the defining event of Stein's historical moment. When she recognized Cubism—a cultural expression that epitomized modernism—in the instruments of the war, Stein had reason to feel "a sense of the harmony between her instincts and her environment."

5. The sentence below appears in Paragraph 4:

"You are, all of you, a lost generation," Stein told Hemingway when he showed up in Paris after the war.

The quotation in this sentence is most closely connected with which idea in Paragraph 4?

1. the emergence of an aesthetic associated with World War I
2. the convergence of expatriates in postwar Paris
3. the staggering casualties among young men during World War I
4. the complete rupture of the prewar social order

Answer

Correct Response: D. This item requires examinees to analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text relate to each other and the whole. The author uses Stein's famous declaration that Hemingway's was "a lost generation" to underscore the idea, also expressed in Paragraph 4, that World War I had forced asunder the social order that had defined the prewar period. In Stein's view, the rupture left Hemingway and other people his age adrift.

6. The sentence below appears in Paragraph 4:

"The composition of this war," Stein wrote, "was not a composition in which there was one man in the center surrounded by many others but a composition that had neither a beginning nor an end, a composition in which one corner was as important as another corner, in fact the composition of Cubism."

In this sentence, Stein's comparison of World War I and Cubism conveys

1. the political realignment and upheaval caused by the war
2. the change in European cultural values as a result of the war
3. the impact that the war had on artists and writers
4. the effect that this war had on class structures

Answer

Correct Response: B. This item requires examinees to interpret words or phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative meanings. By comparing World War I and Cubism in this sentence, Stein emphasizes the absence of traditional notions of order that characterized the war. Much as Cubism stripped order and perspective from visual art, the comparison suggests, the war changed and perhaps undermined the traditional values of European society.

7. The discussion of Gertrude Stein and her experiences before and during World War I in Paragraphs 2 through 4 develops the passage's central idea by

1. suggesting that artists are the creators of sweeping social change
2. demonstrating how artistic movements take shape around universal themes
3. illustrating how artists are able to perceive social transformations as they unfold
4. establishing a link between artistic movements and advances in technology

Answer

Correct Response: C. This item requires examinees to analyze how and why individuals and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text. In Paragraphs 2 through 4, the author describes Stein's witnessing of the tumultuous birth of modernism; her perception of a connection between modernism and World War I; and her use of modernism as a lens to understand the disruption of traditional social orders. This discussion introduces the author's central idea, that artists such as Stein have a unique capacity for recognizing social transformation as they are happening.

8. Which of the following is the best analysis of how the discussion in Paragraph 5 of the telegraph's impact on World War I relates to the rest of the passage?

1. The suggestion that "the war might have been avoided" if "negotiations ... had *not* been conducted by telegraph" underscores the pointless destruction of the era.
2. The reference to "the speed of information" and "the quantity of it that became available" with the telegraph connects the modernist era to the present.
3. The reference to acting "at the (then-blistering) speed of a telegraph machine" connects the conduct of the war to the writing and art of the modernists.
4. The suggestion that the telegraph "destroyed their judgment" develops a critique of the ignorance and belligerence of political elites.

Answer

Correct Response: B. This item requires examinees to analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text relate to each other and the whole. By emphasizing "the speed of information" and "the quantity of it that became available" with the advance of the telegraph, the author creates a parallel between the modernist era and

the present-day age of information. This parallel underscores the passage's central point about moments of historic social transformation.

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from *The Age of the Unthinkable: Why the New World Disorder Constantly Surprises Us and What We Can Do About It*

1 Gertrude Stein was born in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, on February 3, 1874. Her father, Daniel, was a German Jewish immigrant who had made a fortune in the American railway boom of the nineteenth century but held, somewhere, the idea and hope of the kind of polish a feeling for European life might give his children. When Gertrude was a girl, he moved the family briefly back across the Atlantic before finally settling in Oakland, California, where Gertrude spent her teen years. It was a well-rounded, prosperous, comfortable beginning, one intended to produce a well-rounded, prosperous life with all the usual accoutrements of family, stability, and friends. In fact, however, it produced a woman who was to become one of the most important aesthetic arbiters of her day. Stein caught a taste for Europe early and realized quickly that she would never be at home in the United States. "America is my birthplace," she later observed, "but Paris is my home town." It wasn't only that the puritanical traditions of American life chafed against her modern sensibility and bohemian habits; it was also that Europe was where she was most likely to see what interested her most: a collision between old and new.

2 Stein returned to Europe in her twenties, settled in Paris, and quickly became a sort of den mother to the most successful artists and writers and dancers of her age. They were, she recognized, moving right along the fault line that riveted her, the one that separated the classical European way of life, with its balls, carriages, and Victorian sensibilities, from what she spotted around her: the dances of Nijinsky, the sentences of Joyce, the paintings of Braque. This new world obsessed her. She loved the speed of its trains, the way the Renault factories in Croissy worked around the clock, the hustle of immigrants on the Paris streets. Almost like a collector of great art, she began to collect great talent: Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Pablo Picasso, and a dozen other great names of the revolution that became known as modernism. What made Stein so successful in this endeavor wasn't only her ambition or her intellect or the strength of her own talent (which was debatable). It was that her way of thinking and seeing, her curiosity about the collision of old and new, was perfectly tuned for a moment when Europe was, cataclysmically, struggling with that collision. She was a woman alive to the great theme of her day, the at once violent, at once beautiful movement from one way of living to another.

3 If there was a single moment when she felt a sense of the harmony between her instincts and her environment most clearly, it might have been on a Paris street in the sixth arrondissement

one night shortly after the start of World War I. Stein and Picasso were walking home from a dinner, when a French military convoy rolled past them. But this convoy was different. It *looked* different: the sides of the trucks and the cabs had been splotched unevenly with different colors of paint. The two of them froze. Stein wrote later, "I very well remember being with Picasso on the Boulevard Raspail when the first camouflaged truck passed. It was at night, we had heard of camouflage but we had not yet seen it and Picasso amazed looked at it and then cried out, yes it is we who made it, that is Cubism!"¹

4 This is quite a scene—the saturnine Stein, forty years old, and the diminutive thirty-three-year-old Spanish genius, exulting together in a fresh aesthetic surprise of the Great War. That war became for Stein the defining moment of her sense of aesthetics and history. For her, 1914 marked a pivot between radically different sensibilities. It wasn't simply that the war destroyed so many lives; it was also that it destroyed an older idea of order. "You are, all of you, a lost generation," Stein told Hemingway when he showed up in Paris after the war. It was that same confused geography she had in mind when marking out the way the war had been fought, the way it looked, and the landscape it left behind. "The composition of this war," Stein wrote, "was not a composition in which there was one man in the center surrounded by many others but a composition that had neither a beginning nor an end, a composition in which one corner was as important as another corner, in fact the composition of Cubism."

5 What Stein was sensing, marked out on those trucks or the paintings on the walls of her apartment, was, for its age, very much like what we are feeling now, a violent change in the way the world appears to work. In her case, the world really *looked* different. (If you've ever stared at a great Cubist painting, you know that the movement proposed a radically different way of seeing.) But there are important similarities between her historical moment and ours: a sense of new complexities, fresh interactions, and a speed that bedraggles old language and confuses old ideas. Statesmen of World War I lamented afterward that if only the negotiations in the days before the first mobilization had *not* been conducted by telegraph, the war might have been avoided. The problem, they said, was that none of the kings or foreign ministers of Europe had accustomed themselves to the speed of information, to the quantity of it that became available when telegraphs replaced letters. And in their confusion, they felt they had to act and decide at the (then-blistering) speed of a telegraph machine. It destroyed their judgment.

6 Every important historical moment is marked by these sorts of shifts to new models of living, which expand in velocity and complexity well past what the current ways of thinking can handle. Our moment is no exception. And usually the source of the greatest historical disasters is that so few people at the time either recognize or understand the shift. Artists, with their tuned instincts for the new, often do.

¹**Cubism:** visual art style of the early twentieth century in which images were generally fractured into geometric facets

1. In Paragraph 1, the repetition of the phrase "well-rounded, prosperous" emphasizes

1. the sophistication of Stein's family
2. the predictability of the life Stein rejected
3. the flowering of Stein's creative powers
4. the contempt for convention Stein embodied

Answer

2. In Paragraph 2, the author develops the idea that "Europe was where [Stein] was most likely to see what interested her most" primarily by

1. contrasting "the classical European way of life" with "the dances of Nijinsky, the sentences of Joyce, the paintings of Braque"
2. describing Paris in terms of "the speed of its trains" and "the hustle of immigrants"
3. stating that Stein "began to collect great talent: Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Pablo Picasso"
4. identifying Stein as "a woman alive to the great theme of her day"

Answer

3. The sentence below appears in Paragraph 2:

It was that her way of thinking and seeing, her curiosity about the collision of old and new, was perfectly tuned for a moment when Europe was, cataclysmically, struggling with that collision.

Which phrase is closest in meaning to the word "cataclysmically" as it is used in the sentence above?

1. with furious upheaval
2. with unrelenting violence
3. with reckless abandon
4. with shocking suddenness

Answer

4. The author's assertion in Paragraph 3 that the encounter with a military convoy was the moment Stein "felt a sense of the harmony between her instincts and her environment most clearly" is best supported by which excerpt from the passage?

1. It *looked* different: the sides of the trucks and the cabs had been splotted unevenly with different colors of paint.

2. The two of them froze. Stein wrote later, "I very well remember being with Picasso on the Boulevard Raspail when the first camouflaged truck passed."
3. "It was at night, we had heard of camouflage but we had not yet seen it and Picasso amazed looked at it and then cried out, yes it is we who made it, that is Cubism!"
4. This is quite a scene—the saturnine Stein, forty years old, and the diminutive thirty-three-year-old Spanish genius, exulting together in a fresh aesthetic surprise of the Great War.

Answer

5. The sentence below appears in Paragraph 4:

"You are, all of you, a lost generation," Stein told Hemingway when he showed up in Paris after the war.

The quotation in this sentence is most closely connected with which idea in Paragraph 4?

1. the emergence of an aesthetic associated with World War I
2. the convergence of expatriates in postwar Paris
3. the staggering casualties among young men during World War I
4. the complete rupture of the prewar social order

Answer

6. The sentence below appears in Paragraph 4:

"The composition of this war," Stein wrote, "was not a composition in which there was one man in the center surrounded by many others but a composition that had neither a beginning nor an end, a composition in which one corner was as important as another corner, in fact the composition of Cubism."

In this sentence, Stein's comparison of World War I and Cubism conveys

1. the political realignment and upheaval caused by the war
2. the change in European cultural values as a result of the war
3. the impact that the war had on artists and writers
4. the effect that this war had on class structures

Answer

7. The discussion of Gertrude Stein and her experiences before and during World War I in Paragraphs 2 through 4 develops the passage's central idea by

1. suggesting that artists are the creators of sweeping social change

2. demonstrating how artistic movements take shape around universal themes
3. illustrating how artists are able to perceive social transformations as they unfold
4. establishing a link between artistic movements and advances in technology

Answer

8. Which of the following is the best analysis of how the discussion in Paragraph 5 of the telegraph's impact on World War I relates to the rest of the passage?

1. The suggestion that "the war might have been avoided" if "negotiations ... had *not* been conducted by telegraph" underscores the pointless destruction of the era.
2. The reference to "the speed of information" and "the quantity of it that became available" with the telegraph connects the modernist era to the present.
3. The reference to acting "at the (then-blistering) speed of a telegraph machine" connects the conduct of the war to the writing and art of the modernists.
4. The suggestion that the telegraph "destroyed their judgment" develops a critique of the ignorance and belligerence of political elites.

Answer

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