

1) C. tangential

Tangential conveys a sense of not being essential or central to the play. Essential (necessary) is the opposite of what's needed here, and neither incisive (perceptive) nor predominant (main, principal) fits the context. Scenes could be concurrent (happening at the same time), but this wouldn't convey the sense that the scenes are of less importance.

2) E. obviated

You know that the speaker made the need for further clarification either necessary or unnecessary; the note that he "supported" the case tells you that his speech was sound and that clarification was unnecessary. Obviated means something along the lines of "made unnecessary." Precluded (prevented) and prohibited (banned) are too strong, and although the speaker anticipated the questions, that would not anticipate the need for clarification. Adjourned doesn't work, because you adjourn a meeting, but you don't adjourn a need.

3) B. libertine, D. stygian

A libertine (morally unrestrained) existence could conceivably lead to a loss of self-discipline, but a Spartan (simple) or ascetic (puritan) lifestyle would tend to make someone more disciplined. For the second blank, you'd expect something opposite to "hedonistic paradise," making stygian (hellish) the only choice. Quixotic means idealistic, and utopian means perfect (in a good way).

4) C. dichotomy, F. bisected

This passage is all about twos — the body and soul — so filling the first blank is relatively easy: Dichotomy is a separation into two. A paradox is an apparent contradiction that may be true, and irony is the use of words to express the opposite of what the words mean. Finding the right match for the second blank is more challenging because all the words have two or separation in their meaning. Bisected (divided in two) is the best choice. Bifurcated is divided but more like a fork in a road, and dissected is more along the lines of dividing into several parts.

5) C. intransigence, E. precipitate

Intransigence is inflexibility, and precipitate means to bring about. Tractability (compliance) is the opposite of what's needed for the first blank, and indolence means laziness. For the second blank, expedite (hasten) would make a decent second choice, but precipitate is more fitting. Motivate (provide with a motive) doesn't work, because you may motivate individuals but not actions such as conflict.

6) B. elicit, D. prevaricate, I. efficacy

During an interrogation, you want to elicit (extract) information, not dissemble (mislead) or disseminate (spread) it. To stop interrogations without giving in, suspects may prevaricate (mislead, lie), not prognosticate (predict) or adjudicate (mediate). The prevaricating would call into question the efficacy (effectiveness) of such methods, not their efficiency (ability to accomplish something with minimal effort) or alacrity (speed).

7) B. impede, D. endemic, G. quiescent

High winds and large waves would occur if nothing was in their way to impede (slow) them, not debilitate (incapacitate) them. Disperse (scatter) would make a good second choice. These high winds and large waves would be endemic (characteristic of) rather than pandemic (epidemic) or intrinsic (fundamental). Plankton would gather in pools, which tend to be more quiescent (calm) than a wavy ocean, not dormant (sleeping) and definitely not truculent (hostile).

8) E. Fifth sentence: "What Rose calls a 'state of welfare' emerged to provide basic forms of social insurance, child welfare, health, mental hygiene, universal education, and similar services that both 'civilized' the working class and joined citizens to the State and to each other through formalized 'solidarities and dependencies.'" Several other sentences explain the purpose of welfare, but this sentence does so in the greatest detail.

9) A. Compare and contrast nighttime in the modern world with the dark nights of centuries past.

Compare and contrast, explain, and describe reflect the author's purpose, but lament and argue imply more emotion on the part of the author than is displayed in the passage, so eliminate Choices (C) and (E). Worker productivity has nothing to do with showing how our ancestors perceived night differently, so you can eliminate Choice (B). Choice (D) is simply wrong; the author doesn't maintain that the moon is actually getting darker, just that it's become outshone by electric lights

10) A. Piles of light-colored stones or trees with the bark stripped off; B. The moon or a torch

This specific information exception question asks you to refer to the text to eliminate answers that are ways in the passage that travelers can find a path at night. The second paragraph specifically mentions Choice (A), light-colored stones or trees with bark stripped off, and Choice (B), the moon or a torch. Railings aren't mentioned anywhere in the passage.

11) A. Brain scans show activity in all regions of the brain, even during sleep.

Choice (B) is wrong because although the passage implies that brain cells shrivel and die when not in use, it provides no scientific evidence to support this claim. Choice (C) is wrong because cause and effect are flipped; although a 10 to 20 percent loss of neurons may occur in Alzheimer's, the passage doesn't state that a 10 to 20 percent loss of neurons causes Alzheimer's.

12) D. Television's drive to entertain is incompatible with serious discussion of complex issues.

The other choices go too far, saying that TV cannot instead of that it does not. The passage doesn't criticize television itself but how it's used

13) D. The Tasman Sea, separating Australia from New Zealand, is home to sharks that prey on snakes.

To weaken the argument, find a reason for the absence of snakes other than that they can't swim. Choice (D) suggests that maybe the snakes can swim, but they get eaten by sharks before reaching New Zealand.

14) D. Several countries that provide universal healthcare and free education rank much lower in happiness than Denmark.

If other countries provide the same social services as Denmark but rank lower in happiness, then something other than social services is boosting Denmark to the number one position.

15) B. Higher taxes are essential to providing for the needs of citizens.

The passage focuses on taxes and how Denmark uses them to provide for the needs of its citizens. Choice (C) is a reasonable candidate, but the phrase more to life extends its reach outside the scope of the passage.

16) A. complaisant, D. conciliatory

Complaisant and conciliatory mean inclined to please. Incendiary (provocative) means the opposite, and beguiling means deceiving with trickery. Apprehensive means anxious, and complacent, which is included to trip you up with its similarity to complaisant, means satisfied, content.

17) D. invective, F. diatribe

Invective and diatribe refer to bitter, abusive language, something you'd want to avoid if your goal was to foster bipartisanship and cooperation. None of the other choices are good matches: supplication (plea), vernacular (dialect), malapropism (confusion of words with similar sounds), and hyperbole (exaggeration).

18) A. fawning, D. obsequious

Fawning and obsequious refer to agreeably showing favor, which would incline people to act as cheerleaders instead of players. Assertive and aggressive mean the opposite of what's required here. Timorous means shy, which would make a good second choice, but it has no match. Indignant is more along the lines of being annoyed.

19) B. duplicitous, D. disingenuous

Duplicitous and disingenuous mean deceitful. Erroneous means false. Mendacious is more along the lines of being a compulsive liar. Sagacious means wise, and pretentious describes someone who's phony.

20) C. salubrious, E. wholesome

Salubrious and wholesome are both good for you. Salacious (scandalous), specious (unsupported), and pernicious (malicious) aren't. Propitious (favorable) could be good for you but doesn't express the meaning of being healthy, which is what's needed here.