



GRADE 7
Reading

Administered May 2022

RELEASED

READING

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question. Then fill in the answer on your answer document.

Time for a “Digital Diet”

- 1 Young people today rely heavily on digital technology. Text messaging and email allow people to effortlessly stay connected to others. Television and computer screens provide people with constant entertainment. Everywhere you look people are distracted by screens. Technology can be useful, but it is easy for someone to become too dependent on it. In fact, research has shown that the way young people interact with each other and with the world is rapidly changing due to digital overload. Staying connected has become so important that many young people find it stressful to be away from their phones. As a result, people have developed bad habits. They spend less time outside, get less sleep, and develop a shorter attention span. However, it is possible to achieve a more balanced relationship with technology. People should consider going on a “digital diet.”
- 2 When people think of a diet, they usually think about it in relation to food. There are some healthy eating habits you can develop, and there are bad eating habits. A digital diet helps promote developing healthy habits with technology. Developing healthy habits with digital devices looks different for everyone. But overall the main goal is to limit the amount of time we spend using digital devices.
- 3 “The primary use of technology by young people is for entertainment,” states media expert Michael Levine. On average, young people spend over seven hours in front of a screen every day. As a result, children and teenagers today spend as little as four minutes outside per day. Limiting the amount of time young people spend on their screens is one way to establish a healthy digital habit. By taking a break from digital devices, young people have more time to go outside. Collin O’Mara is the head of the National Wildlife Federation. She believes that outdoor free time provides a wide variety of benefits. Some of these benefits include better school performance, more creativity, and higher levels of fitness. Rather than spending several hours in front of a screen, people can gain the benefits from spending time outside instead.
- 4 Another boundary that people can set is avoiding using digital devices before going to sleep. Doctors suggest establishing a specific time of night when all devices must be turned off. Stopping the use of digital devices two hours before bedtime will likely lead to better sleep. Staring at a cell phone, computer, or television screen

right before bedtime is distracting. Researcher Jean Twenge says that “answering texts and scrolling through social media is mentally and emotionally stimulating, which leads to disturbed sleep.” In addition, the blue light that smartphones emit keeps the brain from producing melatonin. Melatonin helps people fall asleep and stay asleep throughout the night.

- 5 Being more mindful of when we use technology allows us to be more present when interacting with others. Doctors and scientists are concerned that the heavy use of electronic devices is creating a generation that is easily distracted. People who depend on technology shift their attention from one media platform to another about 27 times per hour. Additionally, the majority of young people say they would rather text people than speak with them in person. It can be difficult to have a meaningful conversation with friends when everyone is distracted by a cell-phone screen. If you notice that those around you are using their phones too much, speak up. It is much more rewarding to have a conversation with people who are attentive.
- 6 Some people think it is best to cut the use of technology completely. Although this seems like a good solution, eliminating technology is not always possible. The use of digital devices can even be helpful in some instances. For example, a student may want to use a computer to complete schoolwork. A person who is driving to an unfamiliar location may want to look up directions on a phone before making the trip. The goal is to use digital devices when they are needed but to spend some time away from them as well.
- 7 Forming healthier digital habits is possible without having to give up technology completely. Going on a digital diet may not be easy, but it is worth it. Limiting the amount of time spent using digital devices helps us live a more balanced life.



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1 Look at this cartoon from the selection.



What is the most likely reason the author includes the cartoon?

- A To highlight how children have created new ways to use phones for play
- B To indicate that children today should use phones when outside
- C To suggest that children are too attached to phones
- D To emphasize that phones can help children complete activities

2 What does the word attentive mean in paragraph 5?

- F Encouraging
- G Focused
- H Grateful
- J Understanding

- 3** Based on the information throughout the selection, how could a person put a digital diet into practice?
- A** By adjusting the brightness of a screen when using an electronic device at night
 - B** By playing games over the computer with a group of friends
 - C** By memorizing different routes to avoid using a map on the internet
 - D** By putting away the phone when eating lunch with a friend
-

- 4** Which detail from the selection supports the key idea that a digital diet is rewarding?
- F** Television screens offer a good source of entertainment.
 - G** Students can use a computer to help them with homework.
 - H** Mindfulness allows us to be more present with others.
 - J** Reading text messages keeps the mind alert.
-

- 5** The author uses a comparison to present the ideas in paragraph 2 so that the reader will understand that a digital diet —
- A** is a complicated process that requires careful planning
 - B** causes some people to think about food
 - C** solves a number of problems for everyone
 - D** can help people form better habits

- 6** What is the best summary of the selection?
- F** Technology is an important part of people’s lives, but the time spent with digital devices needs to be balanced with other activities. A digital diet would help people limit screen time and reverse some bad habits from too much digital use. This balance could mean more time outside, more sleep, and longer attention spans. A digital diet would be worth the effort.
- G** Young people depend on technology for almost everything, but too much technology can be bad. Everyone who uses digital devices needs to restrict the hours they spend with screens. People can limit their time on a screen by spending more time outside or reading a book before they go to bed. Even though computers are still needed for homework, people would benefit from less screen time.
- H** Most people rely on technology to communicate with others through text and email, but too much time looking at a screen creates bad habits. Instead, everyone should try to go outside during their free time so that they can get better grades in school and develop their creativity. Although a digital diet would be hard at first, it would help people in the end.
- J** Although electronic devices can help people, they can also be bad for people’s health. Digital overload should be replaced with a digital diet. Most people know that a food diet helps people get rid of poor eating habits, and the same is true with a digital diet. Going on a digital diet would prevent people from developing poor habits with their digital devices.
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- 7** What is the most likely reason the author includes the phrase “Everywhere you look” in paragraph 1?
- A** To suggest that people want to ignore a critical issue
- B** To show how society has only recently changed
- C** To explain that people are fascinated by trends
- D** To emphasize a problem that is widespread

- 8** What primary claim does the author make in this selection?
- F** Electronic devices are the main reason why people have meaningless conversations.
 - G** Children and teenagers should give up their digital devices completely.
 - H** People would benefit greatly by limiting their time with technology.
 - J** Individuals are spending more time indoors using screens than ever before.
-

- 9** What is the most likely reason the author includes a quotation in paragraph 4?
- A** To explain what can happen when people do not take a break from technology
 - B** To show that people must be able to send information at all times
 - C** To highlight a typical routine of someone who regularly uses technology
 - D** To suggest that people do not know how to give up their devices

10 Read this sentence from paragraph 5.

If you notice that those around you are using their phones too much, speak up.

What is the most likely reason the author uses direct address in this sentence?

- F** To show the reader that texting is enjoyable
- G** To suggest that the reader take action
- H** To encourage the reader to be more observant
- J** To help the reader develop better friendships

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question.
Then fill in the answer on your answer document.

Silas and Caleb, soldiers in the Continental army, are standing guard at Valley Forge. They are watching for spies. Caleb exits, leaving Silas alone.

Martha Washington's Spy

by Earl J. Dias

Characters

GENERAL GEORGE WASHINGTON

MARTHA WASHINGTON

SILAS WEGG: *Young soldier*

CALEB JENKINS: *Young soldier*

BETSY: *A young woman*

SAM HOWARD: *Young soldier*

TIME: *A cold night in January, 1777.*

SETTING: *A sentry outpost at Valley Forge.*

- 1 *(Silas begins pacing. There is a sudden noise offstage left, followed by an exclamation. Silas advances cautiously toward exit. He exits. Silas returns holding Betsy by the collar. She wears a man's coat and hat. Silas points at his captive, who huddles, shivering and afraid.)*
- 2 **SILAS:** *Now, my sly fellow, just what is your business here? (Silas advances toward captive, examines the face closely, and then whistles in surprise.) You're a girl!*
- 3 **BETSY:** *Y-yes. My name is Betsy.*
- 4 **SILAS:** *So the British are using females now to do their nasty work!*
- 5 **BETSY:** *(With spirit.) What do you mean?*
- 6 **SILAS:** *My meaning should be clear. Here you are, creeping about the camp on a night as cold as King George's heart, and dressed as a man, too! It's as plain as a dish of beans that you're bent on mischief.*
- 7 **BETSY:** *That's not true.*

- 8 **SILAS:** (*He whistles loudly.*) That will bring somebody here who'll take you to General Washington.
- 9 **BETSY:** (*Cringing.*) I swear to you that I'm not a spy!
- 10 **CALEB:** What's wrong, Silas? I heard your signal. (*Looking at Betsy.*) And who is this?
- 11 **SILAS:** A female dressed as a man, Caleb.
- 12 **CALEB:** (*Going to Betsy and examining her closely.*) I told you the countryside was swarming with spies. I'll bring the General to her. He's not far from here now. And his wife is with him.
- 13 (*Caleb exits.*)
- 14 **BETSY:** I wish he'd hurry, then.
- 15 (*Caleb enters, followed by General Washington and Martha Washington.*)
- 16 **WASHINGTON:** (*Looking at Betsy.*) And who is this? Is this war now being fought by women?
- 17 **SILAS:** She's a spy, sir.
- 18 **WASHINGTON:** Hm-m. (*To Betsy.*) And what have you to say for yourself, young woman?
- 19 **BETSY:** I am not a spy, sir.
- 20 **MARTHA:** You certainly don't look like a spy.
- 21 **WASHINGTON:** If you're not a spy, what are you? And what are you doing here?
- 22 **BETSY:** (*Defiantly.*) I can't say, sir.
- 23 **WASHINGTON:** (*A bit impatiently.*) Surely, if your presence here is entirely innocent, you can tell us about it. (*More gently.*) I don't bite, child.
- 24 **BETSY:** (*Beginning to cry.*) I—I can't say.
- 25 **MARTHA:** (*Gently.*) Why can't you tell us why you are here?
- 26 **BETSY:** Because—well, because someone would get into trouble if I did.

- 27 **MARTHA:** But can't you see that you're in even greater trouble yourself?
- 28 **WASHINGTON:** Please—let's get to the business at hand. You had better come with us, young woman.
- 29 **MARTHA:** Wait, George. (*Leading Betsy right.*) Let's go over here, and you can whisper your secret to me.
- 30 **BETSY:** (*Obviously relieved.*) I will! (*She starts whispering to Martha, who smiles and nods with increasing signs of approval.*)
- 31 **WASHINGTON:** Do you know anything of a soldier named Sam Howard? He's missing from his quarters.
- 32 **SILAS:** (*Hesitating.*) W-well, sir—
- 33 **WASHINGTON:** I see. He has deserted, and you don't want to give him away.
- 34 **CALEB:** Sam has gone back to his farm, sir. It's only a few miles from here.
- 35 **WASHINGTON:** (*Shaking his head.*) If only we can get through this bitter winter. It does things to a man, weakens the very moral fiber of him.
- 36 (*Martha and Betsy walk to center.*)
- 37 **MARTHA:** George—this young woman is no spy.
- 38 **WASHINGTON:** Indeed—then what is she?
- 39 **MARTHA:** I'll tell you privately, George. There is no reason for her secret to be shared by the entire army.
- 40 **WASHINGTON:** (*Dubiously.*) But, surely—
- 41 **MARTHA:** (*Irritated.*) George, certainly you don't doubt the word of your own wife.
- 42 **WASHINGTON:** (*To Silas and Caleb.*) Give her something warm to drink.
- 43 (*Silas, Caleb and Betsy go toward right. Before they exit, Betsy speaks.*)
- 44 **BETSY:** Thank you with all my heart. (*The three exit.*)

- 45 (Sam Howard *enters quietly and pauses hesitantly.*)
- 46 **WASHINGTON:** Who goes there? (Sam *goes center, surprised at the sight of Washington.*) Your face is familiar.
- 47 **SAM:** (*Saluting.*) Sam Howard, sir.
- 48 **WASHINGTON:** I heard you had gone back to your farm.
- 49 **SAM:** I couldn't do it, sir.
- 50 **WASHINGTON:** Good lad!
- 51 **SAM:** You see, sir, I have been worried about my wife. She hasn't been well, and then there is the baby to care for.
- 52 **MARTHA:** Your Betsy is here. She came near to being taken as a spy.
- 53 **SAM:** What is she doing so far from home?
- 54 **WASHINGTON:** You're not the only one who would like to solve that mystery.
- 55 **MARTHA:** (*To Sam.*) When Betsy received your last letter, Sam—
- 56 **SAM:** (*Sighing, ruefully.*) I said a lot of foolish things in that letter.
- 57 **MARTHA:** When Betsy received it, she had a suspicion you might be planning to desert the army. So she walked a good eight or ten miles to see you tonight.
- 58 **SAM:** Poor Betsy—in all this cold.
- 59 **MARTHA:** She wanted to persuade you to stay. She says that she is over her sickness, and that she can manage things on the farm. Her mother and father have come to stay with her.
- 60 **WASHINGTON:** (*Thoughtfully.*) So that is why young Betsy attempted to break through the lines tonight. I see now why she was reluctant to discuss her mission.

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- 11** What is significant about Martha’s approach to talking with Betsy?
- A** It causes George Washington to change the way he speaks to others.
 - B** It allows Martha to show Betsy that her presence at the camp is unnecessary.
 - C** It allows Betsy to keep her motive hidden from George Washington.
 - D** It causes Betsy to feel comfortable sharing her reason for being near the camp.
-

- 12** In line 6, the playwright uses the comparison “it’s as plain as a dish of beans” most likely to emphasize that —
- F** Betsy is dressed like a common farmer
 - G** Betsy appears weary and hungry from her journey
 - H** Betsy is obviously doing something suspicious
 - J** Betsy’s presence is insignificant
-

- 13** How does the historical time period affect the plot?
- A** By making Sam regret what he wrote to Betsy in a letter
 - B** By forcing Silas to ask for help in dealing with a problem
 - C** By leading Martha to need to speak to George away from others
 - D** By causing Betsy to have to travel in order to communicate with Sam

14 What is a central message in this play?

- F** Sometimes it is difficult to correct a mistake.
 - G** It is important to rely on others for help.
 - H** Understanding a situation may take time and patience.
 - J** Ignoring advice from others can have harsh consequences.
-

15 How does the playwright develop George Washington's character through the dialogue in lines 37 through 42?

- A** By revealing that Washington does not believe in keeping secrets from his soldiers
- B** By demonstrating that Washington considers the opinion of his wife
- C** By suggesting that Washington is suspicious of anyone unfamiliar to him
- D** By showing that Washington depends on his wife to identify spies

Read the next two selections and choose the best answer to each question. Then fill in the answer on your answer document.

Last Dance

- 1 Every evening before my older sister Becca and I went to sleep, we would take five minutes to have a full-blown dance party. We took turns each night picking which song to dance to, and no matter what had gone on that day or how mad we would be at each other, we would dance.
- 2 It was a tradition my dad helped establish when we were little. One day Becca and I were having a huge argument over who got to play with Olivia the doll. A few minutes in time-out had not been enough for us to stop being angry at each other, so before bedtime our dad took us to the living room and turned on his favorite song.
- 3 “You two are going to dance!” he exclaimed with a huge smile. “For a full five minutes. No talking, only rhythmic movement. Then you’re going to bed.”
- 4 My sister and I shared the same expression as we stared back at my dad. *He had gone crazy.*
- 5 Nonetheless, he replayed the song until we both agreed to start dancing. Becca went first—making a sarcastic, jerky movement—but it was all I needed to break out my best moves. Becca and I both started laughing and continued to dance as our anger crept out of the living room. After the five minutes were over, we were laughing so hard that neither of us remembered Olivia or why we had been angry.
- 6 Since that night, and up until recently, our five-minute dance party was something we returned to every evening; it was a refuge in the midst of our petty arguments and silly misunderstandings.
- 7 Now it was the night before Becca moved across the country to attend college, and it had been a whole month since our last dance party. We were older now, and I understood that Becca had things to do and was preoccupied with spending her final days of high school with her friends. I never realized how much I had cherished those nightly dance parties with my sister. I couldn’t shake the feeling of how upset I would be if we didn’t get to have one last dance party.

- 8 Becca and I sat with my parents at the dinner table as we had so many nights before. It was sad to think this would be the last time we all ate together for a while.
- 9 My mom had made Becca’s favorite meal, but Becca seemed more distracted than usual. She quickly ate her meal and asked to be excused.
- 10 “I just want to go say bye to Alex and Jeanie one more time!” she exclaimed.
- 11 My mom sighed but agreed. I stared at the empty chair at the table and started to reminisce about times with Becca as I finished my meal. I thought about the days when our biggest problems involved Olivia the doll.
- 12 Some hours passed, and I began to get ready for bed, giving up on the notion that a last dance party would be happening. I felt childish worrying about it in the first place. Maybe it was time to grow up.
- 13 Suddenly I heard a slight knock on my door.
- 14 “Are you still up?” Becca whispered and tiptoed in.
- 15 “Yes, I’m still awake. What are you doing?”
- 16 Becca chuckled and flicked on the light. “Julie, you didn’t seriously think I was going to leave tomorrow without us dancing it out one more time, did you?”
- 17 I tried to fight the smile from forming on my lips and threw a pillow at her.
- 18 “I think it’s only appropriate that I get to pick the departing song,” she declared.
- 19 I stood waiting, assuming she’d pick a song by one of those weird groups she had been listening to lately. I was surprised when the melody of Dad’s favorite song—the one that had started it all—began playing. Becca jerked her arm and started dancing, and I laughed, following her lead. We didn’t even notice when Dad stepped into the doorway, watching us with the same smile he had on that first night.
- 20 I basked in the bittersweet, realizing that these were the moments to cherish. Things would always be changing, and though I hated to think of my sister leaving, the fact that this last dance was as important to her as it was to me made the moment even more

special. I pushed the thought of Becca leaving tomorrow out of my head, and we danced.

The Tree

by William Virgil Davis

Each evening for a full five minutes,
when the light is right, the elm
across the street casts its shadow
upon my neighbor's house.

5 The tree
seems to grow into the house, its shadow
alive in the solid stucco. The leaves
dance within the windows, filled,
fractured, by the wind, the twilight.

10 For years I never noticed. Then,
one morning, the saws awakened me.
That evening the tree was gone,
cut up and carted off in trucks.

The gap it left created a silence,
15 an emptiness, along the street:
the presence of the absence of the tree.

That evening, before the darkness fell,
the sky burned brilliant red and gold
and the shadow of the outline of the tree
20 fell full against my neighbor's house.

Used with permission.

16 Use *Last Dance* to answer the following question.

What does the word reminisce mean in paragraph 11 of the story “Last Dance”?

- F** To remember past events
 - G** To have doubts
 - H** To judge someone’s actions
 - J** To resolve an issue
-

17 Use *Last Dance* to answer the following question.

What can the reader infer about the narrator based on paragraph 7 of the story “Last Dance”?

- A** She is angry that Becca has spent the last month busy with friends.
- B** She wonders if her relationship with Becca will change after the move.
- C** She thinks that Becca is happy about leaving home to go to college.
- D** She fears that the nightly tradition is no longer important to Becca.

18 Use *Last Dance* to answer the following question.

Read this sentence from paragraph 5 of the story “Last Dance.”

Becca and I both started laughing and continued to dance as our anger crept out of the living room.

What is the most likely reason the author uses personification in this sentence?

- F** To suggest that the girls appreciate their dad’s suggestion
 - G** To show that the girls have forgotten about their argument
 - H** To highlight the bond the girls have with each other
 - J** To emphasize the girls’ willingness to work together
-

19 Use *Last Dance* to answer the following question.

Which sentence from the story “Last Dance” best conveys the theme?

- A** *We took turns each night picking which song to dance to, and no matter what had gone on that day or how mad we would be at each other, we would dance.* (paragraph 1)
- B** *A few minutes in time-out had not been enough for us to stop being angry at each other, so before bedtime our dad took us to the living room and turned on his favorite song.* (paragraph 2)
- C** *Some hours passed, and I began to get ready for bed, giving up on the notion that a last dance party would be happening.* (paragraph 12)
- D** *I basked in the bittersweet, realizing that these were the moments to cherish.* (paragraph 20)

20 Use *The Tree* to answer the following question.

What is a message in the poem “The Tree”?

- F** Some things in life are not fully appreciated until they are gone.
 - G** The world is sometimes beyond our own understanding.
 - H** Home is where people feel most comfortable to be themselves.
 - J** It is difficult to predict the actions of our neighbors.
-

21 Use *The Tree* to answer the following question.

Which line from the poem “The Tree” best helps the reader understand that the speaker is experiencing regret?

- A** Each evening for a full five minutes, (line 1)
- B** upon my neighbor’s house. (line 4)
- C** That evening the tree was gone, (line 12)
- D** an emptiness, along the street: (line 15)

22 Use *The Tree* to answer the following question.

How does the author's use of language in lines 14 through 16 contribute to the mood of the poem "The Tree"?

- F** By explaining that the speaker is surprised by feelings of disappointment
 - G** By highlighting how the speaker is frustrated with the current situation
 - H** By suggesting that the speaker is uncertain about what will happen next
 - J** By showing that the speaker is experiencing a sense of abandonment
-

23 Use *The Tree* to answer the following question.

Based on lines 10 and 11 of the poem "The Tree," what can the reader infer about the speaker?

- A** The speaker pays little attention to the nearby environment.
- B** The speaker has suddenly become mindful of the tree.
- C** The speaker prefers to sleep when it is completely silent.
- D** The speaker fears the tree has accidentally been cut down.

24 Use *Last Dance* and *The Tree* to answer the following question.

Which idea do **BOTH** the story “Last Dance” and the poem “The Tree” emphasize?

- F** A need for help
 - G** A fascination with time
 - H** A noticeable loss
 - J** A longing for something new
-

25 Use *Last Dance* and *The Tree* to answer the following question.

In what way is the narrator in the story “Last Dance” **UNLIKE** the speaker of the poem “The Tree”?

- A** The narrator spends most of her time alone, but the speaker is surrounded by others.
- B** The narrator has a lot of time to sit and think, but the speaker is too busy to take time for reflection.
- C** The narrator knows her sister has not permanently left home yet, but the speaker sees that the tree is already gone.
- D** The narrator has spent her whole life with her sister, but the speaker has only lived by the tree for a short amount of time.

26 Use *Last Dance* and *The Tree* to answer the following question.

What is a theme that is present in **BOTH** the story “Last Dance” and the poem “The Tree”?

- F** Have the courage to live life to its fullest.
 - G** Always be prepared to confide in loved ones.
 - H** Have patience when striving to reach a goal.
 - J** Never take for granted the small wonders of daily life.
-

27 Use *Last Dance* and *The Tree* to answer the following question.

One major **DIFFERENCE** between the story “Last Dance” and the poem “The Tree” is that only the story ends with a sense of —

- A** adventure
- B** fulfillment
- C** sympathy
- D** concern

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question. Then fill in the answer on your answer document.

Brittany has been training for a gymnastics competition for several months. Her best friend Alix has been coming to every practice and cheering her on, but also critiquing Brittany's performance—and with the competition only a week away, Brittany is tiring of Alix's suggestions.

A Dose of Support

- 1 “Brittany, your routine looks great—the judges will be so impressed!” Alix shouted and greeted Brittany with a hug after an excruciating practice. “But tomorrow, it might help if you reduce the number of flips toward the end of the routine so that it can look a bit more polished—then you’re sure to get a perfect score.”
- 2 “Look, Alix,” Brittany interrupted, unable to hide her feelings. “I know what’s best for my routine—I’ve been perfecting it for months—and I can figure out what needs to be fixed, if anything. I’ve got it from here.”
- 3 Alix frowned, clearly perturbed by Brittany’s response.
- 4 “I’m sorry, Brittany, I know you’re great at gymnastics, but I was just trying to offer some advice. I just thought . . . never mind. I’ll give you some space.” With that, Alix turned and headed toward the exit.
- 5 Brittany felt a dark cloud above her, realizing she had driven her friend away, but she refused to let her feelings distract her. *It’ll be easier to focus without the constant critiquing*, Brittany convinced herself.
- 6 Five days had passed since Brittany had confronted Alix—and just two days were left until the competition.
- 7 “Come on, Brittany—watch that somersault!” Coach Jen yelled from the sidelines as Brittany rehearsed her routine. Brittany grunted with pain and frustration; her muscles were strained, and sweat from her brow stung her eyes. Brittany looked into the stands and saw the empty seat beside Coach Jen and tried to ignore the pang she felt from her friend’s absence.
- 8 Coach Jen approached Brittany after practice. “You seem off your game, Brit—and you need to get it together by Saturday morning.

I'd hate to see all your hard work go to waste." Coach Jen walked off with a look of disappointment, leaving Brittany feeling alone.

- 9 Brittany sat on the tumbling mat, her hands holding her head as if it were a weighty boulder. Alix always nitpicked her performance too, but she always had something supportive to say as well. Brittany missed the encouragement Alix gave her when she was doubting herself—like now. Brittany stared at the empty stands, imagining how she must have made Alix feel.
- 10 When the day of the competition finally arrived, Brittany was plagued with nerves. Her parents were in the stands, and Coach Jen was in the front row beside other coaches. Brittany practiced her moves and, although she had memorized the routine, she felt clumsy and insecure. Brittany stood with a solemn expression, concerned that this was about to be a disaster.
- 11 "You're going to be great!" Brittany heard suddenly. She turned toward the familiar voice and was stunned to see Alix walking toward her.
- 12 Brittany stood with her mouth hanging open. "I really didn't think you were going to show up. I'm sorry—you were just trying to help me, and I didn't want to take the time to listen to what you had to say."
- 13 Alix enveloped Brittany in a hug. "I know how important this competition is to you, Brit. There's no way I was going to miss this—you're my best friend! I know you needed your space, but that doesn't mean I was going to abandon you."
- 14 Alix placed her hands on Brittany's shoulders and gave her a little shake. "You've got this, Brit; and no matter what happens, I'll be cheering you on." Brittany gave Alix a warm embrace before Alix went to sit in the stands beside Brittany's parents.
- 15 After a few moments, the judges announced the beginning of the event and called Brittany's name first. Brittany approached the edge of the mat with her head held high. She saw Alix, giving two thumbs up, and Brittany envisioned the judges giving her the same gesture after her routine. She felt a weight lift from her shoulders, now buoyed by a dose of support from her friend.

28 Read this sentence from paragraph 15.

She felt a weight lift from her shoulders, now buoyed by a dose of support from her friend.

What does the author's use of figurative language in this sentence help the reader understand?

- F** The burden Brittany feels about winning the competition
 - G** The sense of relief Brittany feels from Alix's presence
 - H** The mutual respect Brittany and Alix have for each other
 - J** The challenges in gymnastics that Brittany has had to overcome
-

29 In paragraph 10, what does the word solemn mean?

- A** Serious
- B** Confused
- C** Shocked
- D** Annoyed

- 30** Which sentence supports the idea that Brittany is concerned about her friendship with Alix?
- F** *With that, Alix turned and headed toward the exit.* (paragraph 4)
 - G** *Brittany stared at the empty stands, imagining how she must have made Alix feel.* (paragraph 9)
 - H** *Alix placed her hands on Brittany’s shoulders and gave her a little shake.* (paragraph 14)
 - J** *She saw Alix, giving two thumbs up, and Brittany envisioned the judges giving her the same gesture after her routine.* (paragraph 15)
-

- 31** Which sentence suggests that Brittany’s performance suffers because of Alix’s absence?
- A** *“I’m sorry, Brittany, I know you’re great at gymnastics, but I was just trying to offer some advice.”* (paragraph 4)
 - B** *Five days had passed since Brittany had confronted Alix—and just two days were left until the competition.* (paragraph 6)
 - C** *“You seem off your game, Brit—and you need to get it together by Saturday morning.”* (paragraph 8)
 - D** *Brittany approached the edge of the mat with her head held high.* (paragraph 15)

- 32** How does the change of setting in paragraph 10 of the story contribute to the plot?
- F** By causing Brittany to believe that Alix will not come to support her
 - G** By increasing the pressure Brittany feels about her performance
 - H** By revealing that Brittany has practiced as much as she can for the competition
 - J** By highlighting the reason Brittany needed time apart from Alix
-

- 33** Read this sentence from paragraph 14.

"You've got this, Brit; and no matter what happens, I'll be cheering you on."

How does this sentence support a primary theme of the story?

- A** By explaining that it is important to be honest with others
- B** By revealing that achieving a goal often requires eliminating distractions
- C** By suggesting that participating in athletic competitions can be stressful
- D** By showing that good relationships can withstand minor disagreements

34 In paragraph 15, the author's choice of language creates a mood of —

F fondness

G admiration

H hopefulness

J amusement

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question. Then fill in the answer on your answer document.

Ready, Set, Walk!

- 1 Most people know that exercise is important. When people think of exercise, they probably envision someone muscular lifting hundreds of pounds on a barbell or swift and strong sprinters speeding along a racetrack. It is daunting to think about exerting this kind of energy. However, you don't have to be like the professional athletes who push their bodies to the limit to get in a good workout. Luckily there is a much easier form of exercise that is just as beneficial as an intense sport. If you are looking to incorporate exercise into your routine, then you should consider walking.

Easing into Exercise

- 2 The American Heart Association recommends that people get 150 minutes of exercise a week. That means that a person should exercise for about 30 minutes a day, five days a week. A half hour of brisk walking can easily help someone meet that goal. Simply increasing your normal walking speed from a slothlike pace to a quick-step movement counts as a moderate form of exercise. You don't need to walk 30 minutes all at one time to start either. A professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School, Dr. I-Min Lee, recommends that beginners start with three short 10-minute walks. Eventually longer walks will become easier. Who knew that such a small change in something we already do counts as exercise?
- 3 Some people believe that exercise requires certain equipment or gear. For this reason people are discouraged to exercise because they do not believe they have what they need. One great benefit to walking is that you do not need special equipment. You do not even need to have access to a special area like a racetrack. You can begin walking toward better health as early as today. Don't have workout clothes to wear? You're in luck, because what you're wearing right now is probably perfect for walking. Anywhere you can walk at a quick pace is a suitable way to get in your daily steps. Once you are finished, you can have the satisfaction of knowing you have done something good for your health. All you need to do is walk quickly enough to raise your heart rate.

It Does a Body Good

- 4 Many studies stress the values of walking and its benefits for our health and fitness. According to a Harvard Medical School study,

research has shown that briskly walking for 30 minutes can burn over 100 calories. Walking also builds muscle in your legs and core. Although it may not seem like it, walking is weight training because your legs carry the weight of your upper body whenever you walk. Walking does not cause the same strain on your bones that running or other high-impact exercises do. As a result, walking helps your leg bones become stronger and resist the bone loss that typically happens as people get older.

- 5 Even your immune system benefits when you walk. A report from Harvard noted one study involving over 1,000 participants. It showed that “those who walked at least 20 minutes a day, at least five days a week, had 43% fewer sick days than those who exercised once a week or less. And if they did get sick, it was for a shorter duration, and their symptoms were milder.” Beyond reducing your chances of catching the common cold, walking has been shown to reduce your risk of developing several severe diseases such as diabetes, cancer, and heart disease.

Clear Your Mind

- 6 If the physical perks of walking aren’t enough to motivate you, know that walking also has positive effects on your mood. Walks can be taken in peaceful places such as nature trails or parks. Walking in these areas can help a person feel calm. Going on a daily walk gives your mind a break from the busyness of each day as well. A good walk lets you clear your mind. The exercise causes your brain to produce chemicals that improve your mood. As a bonus, walking with a friend provides a bonding opportunity to strengthen your relationships and enjoy the company of others.



A Walking Trail

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Join the Crowd

- 7 Walking has long been valued as a way to stay fit. It has also been a way for people to engage in healthy competition. It is believed that hieroglyphics in ancient Egypt document walking contests dating over 4,000 years ago! A competitive sport known as racewalking officially began in England when the Amateur Athletics Association (AAA) held the AAA Championships in 1880. Since then racewalking has gone on to become an Olympic event.
- 8 Walking for exercise is increasing in popularity with the arrival of new technologies too. Fitness trackers and step counters on smartphones and wristbands are becoming commonplace. People can set goals on these trackers to help themselves reach the numbers of steps they hope to walk each day. It is clear that people everywhere are embracing this great activity.
- 9 If you are looking for a simple exercise that comes with several benefits, then walking may be the activity for you. Lace up your shoes, and take a walk!

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- 35** What is the most likely reason the author uses a cause-and-effect organizational structure in the selection?
- A** To help the reader understand the common misunderstandings associated with exercising
 - B** To help the reader understand the steps to follow when beginning a new exercise program
 - C** To help the reader understand the ways to introduce a variety of exercises into daily life
 - D** To help the reader understand the advantages of adopting a regular exercise routine
-

- 36** Which inference about walking is supported by the information in paragraph 2?
- F** Skilled athletes can complete their daily walk in a few minutes.
 - G** People have trouble finding time in their day to walk.
 - H** Longer walks may be difficult for beginners to complete.
 - J** Moving at a fast pace makes walking a more enjoyable experience.

37 Read this sentence from paragraph 1.

When people think of exercise, they probably envision someone muscular lifting hundreds of pounds on a barbell or swift and strong sprinters speeding along a racetrack.

Which key idea is suggested by this sentence?

- A** Most exercise routines require an advanced level of skill.
 - B** Proper equipment is often needed for certain exercise programs.
 - C** Anyone can take part in exercise with the right amount of training.
 - D** People avoid exercise because they think it is beyond their capabilities.
-

38 Which sentence states the author's main claim in the selection?

- F** *If you are looking to incorporate exercise into your routine, then you should consider walking. (paragraph 1)*
- G** *You're in luck, because what you're wearing right now is probably perfect for walking. (paragraph 3)*
- H** *As a result, walking helps your leg bones become stronger and resist the bone loss that typically happens as people get older. (paragraph 4)*
- J** *As a bonus, walking with a friend provides a bonding opportunity to strengthen your relationships and enjoy the company of others. (paragraph 6)*

- 39** In paragraph 5, in what way does the information about the findings in the Harvard study support the author's argument?
- A** The findings confirm that many people appreciate walking.
 - B** The findings explain why people choose to take walks.
 - C** The findings prove that walking has desirable results.
 - D** The findings show how often people go for a walk.
-

- 40** Which phrase in paragraph 8 helps the reader understand the meaning of commonplace?
- F** *increasing in popularity*
 - G** *arrival of new technologies*
 - H** *can set goals*
 - J** *help themselves reach*
-

- 41** Who is the intended audience of the selection?
- A** People who participate in sports on a daily basis
 - B** People who have prepared for athletic competitions in the past
 - C** People who are familiar with the best ways to exercise
 - D** People who are interested in starting an exercise routine

42 Look at this photograph from the selection.



A Walking Trail

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What is the most likely reason the author includes this photograph?

- F** To show how walking produces chemicals in the brain that can improve a person's mood
- G** To indicate that walking can be done in places that bring feelings of peace
- H** To emphasize that walking gets easier once it becomes a habit
- J** To highlight how walking provides countless physical advantages to a person's well-being



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