Nonfiction Reading Test

Honey Badgers

Directions: Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow. Refer to the text to check your answers when appropriate.

What's fiercer than a lion but smaller than a beagle? The honey badger, one of the toughest mammals in Africa and western Asia. Honey badgers stand less than a foot high. They are only a couple feet long. They weigh just over 20 pounds. Yet they have a reputation for toughness that is far greater than their size. Some honey badgers will chase away lions and take their kills. I guess that goes to show you that size isn't the only thing that matters in a fight.

So what makes the honey badger so tough? They have speed, stamina, and agility, but so do many animals. They aren't stronger than lions, so how do they stop them? The thing that sets the honey badger apart is their skin. Their skin is thick and tough. Arrows, spears, and bites from other animals can rarely pierce it. Small bullets can't even penetrate it. Not only is their skin thick and tough, it is also loose. This allows them to twist and turn to attack while another animal is gripping them. The only safe grip one can get on a honey badger is on the back of their necks.

Honey badgers have long, sharp claws. These claws are good for attacking and even better for digging. Honey badgers are some of nature's most skilled diggers. They can dig a nine-foot tunnel into hard ground in about 10 minutes. They love to catch a meal by digging up the burrows of frogs, rodents, and cobras. They also use their digging skills to create their homes. They live in small chambers in the ground and defend them fiercely. They will attack horses, cows, and even water buffalo if they are foolish enough to poke around a honey badger's den.

You don't get a reputation like the honey badger by running from danger. The honey badger is fearless and a tireless fighter. They will attack any creature that threatens them, man included. Because of the honey badger's reputation, most predators avoid them. Some animals use the honey badger's rep to their advantage. Adult cheetahs have spotted coats, but their kittens have silver manes and look like honey badgers. Some scientists believe that their coloring tricks predators into avoiding them. Wouldn't you walk the other way if you saw a honey badger?

You might be wondering: "If honey badgers are so tough, how did they get a name that makes them sound like a piece of candy?" The answer makes sense. Since honey badgers have such thick skin, bee stings rarely harm them. So honey badgers love to raid beehives. I can't blame them. Who doesn't like free honey? Honey badgers chase after honey aggressively. So much so that beekeepers in Africa have to use electric fencing to hold them back. There's nothing sweet about that.

Beekeepers aren't the only people who have grown to hate honey badgers. Honey badgers may be fun to read about, but they are nasty neighbors. They attack chickens, livestock, and some say children, though they usually leave people alone. But if a honey badger moves in your backyard, there's not a whole lot that you can do about it. I mean, are you going to go and tangle with an animal that eats the bones of its prey? An animal with teeth strong enough to crunch through turtle shells? An animal that never tires, gives up, or backs down? Yeah, I wouldn't either...
1. Which best expresses the main idea of the third paragraph?
   a. Honey badgers have sharp claws that they use for fighting.
   b. Honey badgers digging skills assist them in many ways.
   c. Honey badgers use their claws to defend their homes.
   d. Honey badgers will defend their homes to the death against any animal.

2. Which statement would the author most likely agree with?
   a. What makes the honey badger so tough is their speed and strength.
   b. Honey badgers are large in size and tireless in fighting spirit.
   c. What makes honey badgers so tough is their thick, loose skin.
   d. Honey badgers got their name from the sweet taste of their meat.

3. Which best defines the meaning of the word *burrows* as it is used in the third paragraph?
   a. Lily pads or other seaweeds in which animals hide
   b. Holes or tunnels in which animals live
   c. A nest or animal dwelling in a tree or bush
   d. A water supply where small animals come to drink

4. Which best expresses the main idea of the last paragraph?
   a. Honey badgers are a nuisance to the neighborhood.
   b. Beekeepers and honey badgers do not get along well.
   c. Honey badgers have very strong jaws and teeth.
   d. Honey badgers eat chicken and livestock.

5. Which best describes one of the author's main purposes in writing this text?
   a. To persuade readers to join the efforts to protect honey badgers
   b. To compare and contrast honey badgers with beagles and lions
   c. To describe how honey badgers select their partners
   d. To explain why honey badgers are so tough

6. Which statement would the author most likely disagree with?
   a. Honey badgers like to raid beehives to eat honey.
   b. Honey badgers are not the biggest animals, but they may be the toughest.
   c. Honey badgers disguise their young to look like cheetah kittens.
   d. Honey badgers are not afraid to fight with humans.

7. Which person is most likely to be disturbed by a honey badger moving in next door?
   a. A beekeeper
   b. A biologist
   c. A bus driver
   d. A salesman

8. Which animal is the honey badger afraid to attack?
   a. Lion
   b. Water buffalo
   c. Poisonous snake
   d. None of these
9. Which is not one of the honey badger's strengths?
   a. Thick skin  
   b. Powerful jaws and strong teeth  
   c. Poisonous claws  
   d. Tireless fighting spirit

10. Which title best expresses the main idea of this text?
    a. *Battle on the Savannah: Honey Badgers Vs. Lions*  
    b. *Little Badger, Big Fight: One of Nature's Toughest Scrappers*  
    c. *Ace in the Hole: How Honey Badgers Build and Protect Their Homes*  
    d. *Little Game: Interesting Animals That Live in Africa*

1. How do cheetah kittens' silver manes help them to survive? Quote evidence from the text to support your response and explain your answer completely.

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2. What would be the safest thing to do if you encountered a honey badger? Cite evidence from the text to support your argument.

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3. What is the honey badger's greatest asset or quality? Quote evidence from the text to support your response and explain what the text that you are quoting shows.
Did you know that humans aren't the only species that use language? Bees communicate by dancing. Whales talk to each other by singing. And some apes talk to humans by using American Sign Language.

Meet Koko: a female gorilla born at the San Francisco Zoo on July 4th, 1971. Koko learned sign language from her trainer, Dr. Penny Patterson. Patterson began teaching sign language to Koko in 1972, when Koko was one year old. Koko must have been a good student, because two years later she moved onto the Stanford University campus with Dr. Patterson. Koko continued to learn on the campus until 1976. That's when she began living full-time with Patterson's group, the Gorilla Foundation. Patterson and Koko's relationship has blossomed ever since.

Dr. Patterson says that Koko has mastered sign language. She says that Koko knows over 1,000 words, and that Koko makes up new words. For example, Koko didn't know the sign for ring, so she signed the words finger and bracelet. Dr. Patterson thinks that this shows meaningful and constructive use of language.

Not everyone agrees with Dr. Patterson. Some argue that apes like Koko do not understand the meaning of what they are doing. Skeptics say that these apes are just performing complex tricks. For example, if Koko points to an apple and signs red or apple, Dr. Patterson will give her an apple. They argue that Koko does not really know what the sign apple means. She only knows that if she makes the right motion, one which Dr. Patterson has shown her, then she gets an apple. The debate is unresolved, but one thing is for certain: Koko is an extraordinary ape.

Sign language isn't the only unusual thing about Koko. She's also been a pet-owner. In 1983, at the age of 12, researchers said that Koko asked for a cat for Christmas. They gave Koko a stuffed cat. Koko was not happy. She did not play with it, and she continued to sign sad. So for her birthday in 1984, they let her pick a cat out of an abandoned litter. Koko picked a gray cat and named him "All Ball." Dr. Patterson said that Koko loved and nurtured All Ball as though he were a baby gorilla. Sadly, All Ball got out of Koko's cage and was hit by a car. Patterson reported that Koko signed "Bad, sad, bad" and "Frown, cry, frown, sad" when she broke the news to her.

It seems like Patterson and Koko have a good relationship, but not everyone agrees with it. Some critics believe that Patterson is humanizing the ape. They believe that apes should be left in the most natural state possible. Even Dr. Patterson struggles with these feelings. When asked if her findings could be duplicated by another group of scientists, she said, "We don't think that it would be ethical to do again." She went on to argue that animals should not be kept in such unnatural circumstances. Nonetheless, Koko lives in her foundation today.

As for the future, Dr. Patterson and the Gorilla Foundation would love to get Koko to an ape preserve in Maui, but they are having trouble securing the land. So unless you have a few million dollars to spare, Koko's going to be spending her time in Woodland, California with Dr. Patterson. Koko probably doesn't mind that. If she moved to Hawaii, she'd have to give up her Facebook page and Twitter feed, and she's got like 50 thousand "likes." Some may deny that she knows sign language, but nobody says that she doesn't know social networking.
1. Which best expresses the main idea of this article?
   a. Bees, whales, and apes like Koko all use language to communicate.
   b. Koko uses sign language but some think it's just a trick.
   c. It is natural for gorillas and house cats to live together.
   d. If you want a lot of "likes" on Facebook, get a talking gorilla.

2. Which best describes how the second paragraph is organized?
   a. Chronological order
   b. Cause and effect
   c. Compare and contrast
   d. Problem and solution

3. Which best expresses the author's purpose in writing the second paragraph?
   a. The author is describing the environment in which Koko lives.
   b. The author is informing readers how Dr. Patterson developed her skills.
   c. The author is persuading readers that Koko should be freed.
   d. The author is telling readers about Koko and Dr. Patterson's background.

4. Which happened last?
   a. Koko got a stuffed cat for Christmas.
   b. Koko lost All Ball.
   c. Koko began living with the Gorilla Foundation.
   d. Dr. Patterson began teaching Koko to sign.

5. Which statement would the author most likely agree with?
   a. Koko has mastered sign language without a doubt.
   b. Everybody likes how Dr. Patterson has raised Koko.
   c. Koko doesn't really know sign language.
   d. Some people are troubled by how Koko was raised.

6. Which best defines the word duplicated as it is used in the sixth paragraph?
   a. To dispute a fact or disagree with someone
   b. To lie to someone or to fool them
   c. To copy or recreate something
   d. To be disproven through debate

7. Which event happened first?
   a. Koko moved onto the Stanford University campus.
   b. Koko picked All Ball out for her birthday.
   c. Koko began living with the Gorilla Foundation.
   d. Koko got a stuffed cat for Christmas.
8. Which best describes the main idea of the sixth paragraph?
   a. Dr. Patterson has treated Koko very cruelly.
   b. Dr. Patterson and Koko have a beautiful, pure, and unconflicted relationship.
   c. Some people think that Koko should not have been treated like a human.
   d. Some people are working very hard to prove that Dr. Patterson is wrong.

9. Which statement would the author most likely disagree with?
   a. Dr. Patterson has worked hard to teach Koko sign language.
   b. Some people think that Koko only signs to get food.
   c. The Gorilla Foundation would like to move Koko to an ape preserve.
   d. Dr. Patterson has no regrets about working with Koko.

10. If a book were being written about Koko and All Ball, which title would best summarize their story?
    a. Long Wanted, Short Lived: A Tale of Strong Loves Lost
    b. Happy Ending: The Gorilla Who Got What She Wanted
    c. A Tale of Two Kitties: A Stuffed Cat Versus a Real One
    d. Plushy Love: How A Gorilla Fell in Love with a Stuffed Cat

Long-Response Questions

1. Does Koko really understand sign language? Support your position with quotes from the text. Explain your quotes clearly. Argue your point thoroughly.
2. What lesson can readers learn from this text? Use evidence from the text to support your position. Explain what your evidence shows.

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TV

Directions: Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow. Refer to the text to check your answers when appropriate.

Televisions show sounds and pictures. They get data from cables, discs, or over-the-air signals. They turn this data into sounds and images. People watch news and shows on them. You probably call them TVs.

John Baird made the first TV in 1925. It had one color. It could only show 30 lines. This was just enough room for a face. It didn't work well, but it was a start.

The first TV station was set up in 1928. It was in New York. Few people had TVs. The broadcasts were not meant to be watched. They showed a Felix the Cat doll for two hours a day. The doll spun around on a record player. They were experimenting. It took many years to get it right.

By the end of the 1930s, TVs were working well. America got its first taste at the 1939 World's Fair. This was one of the biggest events ever. There were 200 small, black and white TVs set up around the fair. The U.S. President gave a speech over the TVs. The TVs were only five inches big but the people loved it.

They wanted TVs. But World War II was going on during this time. Factories were busy making guns and bombs. When the war was over, TV spread across the country.

By 1948 there were 4 big TV networks in America. They aired their shows from 8 to 11 each night. Local shows were aired at other times. Most of the time, nothing was shown at all. TV was not "always on" like it is now.

Color TVs came out in 1953. They cost too much money for most. Also, shows were aired in black and white. By 1965, color TVs were cheaper. TV stations started airing shows in color. People had to switch if they wanted to see the shows.

Now most TVs are high-def. This means that they have many lines on them. This makes the image clear. TVs have come a long way since Baird's 30 line set. High-def TVs have 1080 lines. There are state of the art sets called 4K TVs. These TVs have 3,840 lines. Some people watch TV in 3D. I wonder what they will come up with next. Smell-o-vision anyone?
1. When did color TVs come out?
   a. 1925  
   c. 1939  
   b. 1953  
   d. 1965

2. Which was not true about the first TV?
   a. It could only show one color.  
   c. It did not have sound.  
   b. It only had 30 lines.  
   d. It did not work well.

3. When did networks start showing programs in color?
   a. 1948  
   c. 1965  
   b. 1953  
   d. 1939

4. Why did the first TV station only show Felix the Cat for two hours a day?
   a. They were running tests.  
   d. Felix the Cat was the only show that they had.  
   b. Felix the Cat was really popular.  
   c. Felix the Cat had been a big radio star.

5. Which of these events slowed the spread of TVs?
   a. The World's Fair of 1939  
   c. The election of the U.S. President.  
   b. The Civil War  
   d. World War II

6. What is the author's main purpose in writing this?
   a. He is trying to explain how a TV works.  
   c. He is describing the history of the TV.  
   b. He is telling readers how TVs became popular.  
   d. He is trying to get people to watch more TV.

7. Why did many families switch to color TVs in 1965?
   a. Color TVs cost a lot of money.  
   c. Color TVs came out in 1965.  
   b. Many shows were only shown in color.  
   d. World War II ended and troops returned home.

8. Why was 1939 an important year for TV?
   a. Many Americans were introduced to TV.  
   c. The first TV station began broadcasting.  
   b. The first color TV was released.  
   d. John Baird created the first TV.

9. How many lines does a 4K TV have?
   a. 30  
   b. 1,080  
   c. 4,000  
   d. 3,840
10. Which happened first?
  a. The 1939 World's Fair  
  b. The release of high-def TVs  
  c. The end of World War II  
  d. The release of color TVs

Why would watching TV have been boring in 1928?

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Why did the 5 inch black-and-white TVs at the World's Fair impress people?

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Why would it have been a bad idea to buy a color TV when they first were released?

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Figurative Language Poem

The Dawn’s Awake
By Otto Leland Bohanan

The Dawn's awake!
A flash of smoldering flame and fire
Ignites the East. Then, higher, higher,
O'er all the sky so gray, forlorn,¹
The torch of gold is borne.

The Dawn's awake!
The dawn of a thousand dreams and thrills.
And music singing in the hills
A paean² of eternal spring
Voices the new awakening.

The Dawn's awake!
Whispers of pent-up harmonies,
With the mingled fragrance of the trees;
Faint snatches of half-forgotten song--
Fathers! torn and numb,--
The boon of light we craved, awaited long.
Has come, has come!

¹ Pitifully sad and abandoned or lonely:
² A song of praise or triumph.

Review Questions

Directions: Respond to these questions to the best of your ability. Answer the questions completely. If you need more space, use the back or a separate sheet.

1. Identify two examples of personification: explain what is being personified & how in each example.

2. Identify an example of hyperbole: explain how it is exaggerated.

3. Identify an example of metaphor: explain which two things are being compared.
4. Find three examples of **imagery** in the poem that access three different senses. Explain which senses are called on by the speaker for each example.

5. Contrast the **tone** of this line “Fathers! torn and numb,—” with the **tone** of the rest of the poem. How is this line different and why do you think that it is?

6. This poem was written by an African American poet during the Harlem Renaissance. Knowing this, how might one interpret the “Dawn” beyond its literal meaning? What might the “Dawn” represent?
Figurative Language Poem 3

*From The Grave*
By Robert Blair

Dull Grave!—thou spoil'st the dance of youthful blood,
Strik' st out the dimple from the cheek of mirth,
And every smirking feature from the face;
Branding our laughter with the name of madness.
Where are the jesters now? the men of health
Complexionally pleasant? Where the droll,
Whose every look and gesture was a joke
To clapping theatres and shouting crowds,
And made even thick-lipp'd musing Melancholy
To gather up her face into a smile
Before she was aware? Ah! sullen now,
And dumb as the green turf that covers them.

Review Questions

**Directions:** Respond to these questions to the best of your ability. Answer the questions completely. If you need more space, use the back or a separate sheet.

1. Identify two examples of **personification**: explain what is being personified & how in each example.

2. Identify an example of **hyperbole**: explain how it is exaggerated.

3. Identify an example of **metaphor**: explain which two things are being compared.
4. Identify and example of simile: explain which two things are being compared.

5. What is the tone of this poem? How does the speaker feel about the subject(s) of the poem? Use evidence from the text to explain your answer.

6. In line four of the poem, the speaker says that “[the Dull Grave brands] our laughter with the name of madness.” What does the speaker mean by this line? Explain your answer.

7. What is the thematic message of the poem? In other words, what lesson is the author attempting to express with this poem?