

Reading and Composing Skills Test: Grades 9/10

Directions for items 1-15: Each passage below is followed by questions based on its content. Answer all questions following a passage on the basis of what is stated or implied in that passage.

Questions 1-4 are based on the following passage (adapted from “Why Hip Hop Continues to Thrive,” by Michael Eric Dyson).

I don't despise civil rights; I take it so seriously that I evaluate it rigorously, and I have concluded that Dr. Martin Luther King is the greatest American produced on our native soil. The goals and ideals of the civil rights movement are so important that I work feverishly to bring those concepts to bear on the debates happening in this country today. Rather than relegate our past leaders to the pages of history, I want to see what their teachings and examples can tell us about our current condition. It's not blasphemy to consult Dr. King when talking about Tupac and hip hop; rather, it is an admission that Dr. King's message still has consequence even though times are different and the culture has evolved. The study of hip hop is not a denial of the importance of the civil rights movement. It is an effort to bridge the gap between then and now. It is an attempt to offer the insight of past icons to the younger generation while paying attention to young folks' criticisms of their elders.

1. The author of this passage claims that the Civil Rights movement
 - (A) was important in the past but is now out of date.
 - (B) grew out of the work of hip hop musicians like Tupac.
 - (C) has little to offer the young people of today.
 - (D) can offer insights into contemporary problems.
2. The word “consequence” in line 7 of this passage means
 - (A) an impact
 - (B) a penalty
 - (C) a cause
 - (D) an objective
3. From this passage, we can conclude that the author believes that
 - (A) the goals and ideals of the civil rights movement are irrelevant to current problems.
 - (B) the study of hip hop needs to move beyond the message of Dr. Martin Luther King.
 - (C) it is insulting to link Dr. Martin Luther King with a hip hop artist like Tupac.
 - (D) the study of hip hop can link past civil rights ideals with a current art form.
4. The tone of this passage is
 - (A) passive.
 - (B) assertive.
 - (C) humorous.
 - (D) angry.

Questions 5-8 are based on the following passage (adapted from <http://www.metroactive.com/papers/sonoma/04.17.97/latin-rock-9716.html>).

"I think that rock can serve as a tool for social change," says guerrilla artist and rock documentarian Ruben Guevara. "I mean, I've been a rocker all my life. Aesthetically, rock is to me a form to communicate confrontation and challenge the status quo. I've held to that credo all my life." For Guevara, that perspective provided the driving force behind his latest project, *Reconquista! The Latin Rock Invasion* (Zyanya/Rhino), a vibrant compilation of defiant Spanish-language anthems designed to ignite, shake, and rattle the psychic core of society. "I think it's time to be a little more adventurous, a little more courageous."

5. According to the artist in the passage, "rock can serve as a tool for social change" (line 1) because it
 - (A) causes us to accept the way things are.
 - (B) makes us question the way we think.
 - (C) is pleasing from an artistic point of view.
 - (D) is written in Spanish.

6. What does the author of this passage state Guevara's music is designed to do?
 - (A) to communicate the positive side of Latin life.
 - (B) to serve as the Spanish national anthem.
 - (C) to inform people about Latin society.
 - (D) to bring about change within Latin society.

7. In the passage, the statement by the artist Guevara, "I think it's time to be a little more adventurous," (line 10) implies that he believes that Latin rock has
 - (A) usually questioned authority.
 - (B) often avoided taking risks.
 - (C) been a challenging style of music to perform.
 - (D) generally been a force for social change.

8. In the passage, the word "credo" means
 - (A) trust
 - (B) slogan
 - (C) belief
 - (D) outlook

Questions 9-11 are based on the following passage (adapted from www.pbs.org/independentlens/strangefruit/protest.html).

The term "American roots music" may not be a familiar one, and requires some explanation. At the beginning of the 20th Century, the term "folk music" was used by scholars to describe music made by whites of European ancestry, often in the relatively isolated rural South. As the century progressed, the definition of folk music expanded to include the song styles - particularly the blues - of Southern blacks as well. In general, folk music was viewed as a window into the cultural life of these groups. Folk songs communicated the hopes, sorrows and convictions of ordinary people's everyday lives. Increasingly, music made by other groups

of Americans such as Native Americans, Mexican-Americans, and Cajuns came under the umbrella of "folk music." It was sung in churches, on front porches, in the fields and other workplaces, while rocking children to sleep, and at parties. The melodies and words were passed down from parent to child, though songs - and their meanings - often changed to reflect changing times. All these varieties of music are considered "roots music" because they were the basis of music later developed in the United States, including rock and roll, rhythm and blues, and jazz.

9. According to the passage, the term "roots music"

- (A) excludes the music of Southern blacks, Native Americans, Mexican-Americans and Cajuns.
- (B) is used to suggest that folk music was the source of later musical developments.
- (C) refers only to music that was composed by people who immigrated to the United States from Europe.
- (D) describes fewer types of American music than the term "folk music"

10. According to the author, folk music has

- (A) remained isolated in the Southern United States.
- (B) become out of touch with modern life.
- (C) evolved as people's lives have changed.
- (D) excluded many ethnic groups

11. The use of the word "umbrella" to describe "folk music" implies that folk music

- (A) includes various kinds of music created by different ethnic groups.
- (B) has spread gradually throughout the United States.
- (C) is a uniquely American form of music.
- (D) is limited to the music of whites of European descent.

Questions 12-15 are based on the following passage (adapted from <http://www.blackpast.org/?q=perspectives/tupac-sarajevo-rise-rebellion-rap-eastern-europe>).

Among the regions of the world touched by hip hop are the recently war torn nations of Southeastern Europe, including Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia. In the 1990's rap and hip hop emerged as major tools to express the anger and outrage of the people of the Balkans. Ethnic conflict among Orthodox Christians, Catholics, and Muslims had led to war and economic catastrophe, but after the war the young members of society used rap to tackle poverty and political challenges just as African-Americans had in the U.S. Despite economic depression and political instability, urban youth in the region hoped for a better future and rap became an expression of that hope.

12. The passage makes a comparison between

- (A) the popularity of rap in Bosnia and in Southeastern Europe.
- (B) the message of hip hop in central Europe and in the U.S.
- (C) the music of the ethnic groups and religious groups in the Balkans.
- (D) the uses of music in times of war and of financial crisis.

13. The author of the passage believes that hip hop
- (A) can be used to express outrage about political and economic problems in other countries.
 - (B) contributes to ethnic and religious conflict in places like the Balkans.
 - (C) cannot effectively respond to poverty and political problems outside the U.S.
 - (D) is primarily a phenomenon of urban African American youth.
14. The use of the word “tackle” in this passage suggests that young people in the Balkans responded to economic and social problems by
- (A) watching hopefully.
 - (B) passively waiting.
 - (C) taking action.
 - (D) resorting to violence.
15. We can infer that the author of this passage believes that hip hop and rap can
- (A) lead to international conflict and anger.
 - (B) be a tool for positive social change.
 - (C) provide entertainment for war torn countries.
 - (D) contribute to depression and instability.

Directions for items 16-18: For each of the following questions, choose the best word or phrase to substitute for the underlined portion containing gliff, a nonsense word.

Example:

Though Mr. Rivera is a gliff man and could live anywhere he chooses, he still lives in the small house in which he was born.

- (A) an unhappy
- (B) a wealthy**
- (C) an ambitious
- (D) a strong

16. Art is supposed to get in our faces and not simply soothe or gliff us.
- (A) criticize
 - (B) energize
 - (C) anger
 - (D) reassure
17. Hip hop calls on its listeners to gliff the emotion and beauty, angst and anger in youth culture.
- (A) portray
 - (B) suppress
 - (C) recognize
 - (D) manage

18. Newly emerging rappers in Bosnia have been greatly glified by the music and protest lyrics of the legendary African American rapper, Tupac Shakur.

- (A) influenced
- (B) connected
- (C) glorified
- (D) expressed

Directions for items 19-22: In each of the following questions, the two underlined sentences have an implied logical relationship. Read each pair of sentences and the question that follows, and then choose the answer that identifies the relationship.

19. Critics dismiss hip hop as adolescent “ghetto minstrelsy” that is unworthy of academic study.

Scholars of hip hop claim that it is a powerful art form deserving of serious investigation.

In relation to the first sentence, what does the second sentence do?

- (A) It provides a solution.
- (B) It suggests an explanation.
- (C) It makes a contrast.
- (D) It gives additional information.

20. Although hip hop was born in American ghettos, soon Southeastern European nations became incorporated into its growing musical and cultural world.

Serbia is one of the better known rap states.

In relationship to the first sentence, what does the second sentence do?

- (A) It suggests a cause.
- (B) It draws a conclusion.
- (C) It offers an example.
- (D) It makes a clarification.

21. Few people outside the Latin community knew the enormous extent of Selena’s popularity within that community.

That’s a real good commentary on U.S. society in general, because it just shows how compartmentalized we are and how afraid we are to listen to stuff that’s in our own backyard.

In relation to the first sentence, what does the second sentence do?

- (A) It confirms a fact.
- (B) It suggests an explanation.
- (C) It makes a comparison.
- (D) It provides an example.

22. Hip hop was viewed in its early years as artistically rich but impoverished economically.

It has now been transformed into a form that is artistically impoverished but backed by huge corporate dollars.

In relationship to the first sentence, what does the second sentence do?

- (A) It makes a prediction.
- (B) It gives a reason.
- (C) It provides an example.
- (D) It makes a contrast.

(I reordered questions so the two with the answer "contrast" were not side by side.)

Directions for items 23-26: The following questions require you to rewrite sentences in your head. Each question tells you exactly how to begin your new sentence. You should then select the answer choice that allows you to complete the best new sentence. Your new sentence should be clear and concise; it should have the same meaning and contain the same information as the original sentence.

Example:

The student senate debated the issue for two hours and finally voted down the resolution.

Rewrite, beginning with

Having debated the issue for two hours, . . .

The next word or words will be

- (A) the issue
- (B) it
- (C) the student senate**
- (D) a vote

23. Light is shed on contemporary politics, history, and race by hip hop music, giving a voice to youth who would otherwise not be heard.

Rewrite, beginning with Hip hop music . . .

The next word or words will be

- (A) shedding
- (B) sheds
- (C) being heard
- (D) having been given

24. Young people want to know that with regard to their culture, it has neither been blanketed by contempt nor smothered by enthusiasm.

Rewrite beginning with Young people want to know that their culture . . .

The next word or words will be

- (A) regarding which
- (B) has
- (C) not being blanketed
- (D) having neither been

25. Rappers in the U.S. and the Balkans point out the consequences of political indifference and by doing this contribute to social change.

Rewrite, beginning with Pointing out the consequences of political indifference,

The next word or words will be

- (A) social change
- (B) doing this
- (C) contributing
- (D) rappers

26. Rappers in Bosnia are like American rappers because they criticize government's failure to address political and economic problems.

Rewrite, beginning with Like rappers in America, Bosnian rappers

The next word will be

- (A) addressing
- (B) criticize
- (C) criticizing
- (D) failure

Directions for items 27-29: In each of the following questions, select the best version of the underlined part of the sentence. Choice (A) is the same as the underlined portion of the original sentence. If you think the original sentence is best, choose answer (A).

Example:

Ancient Greeks ate with their fingers, wiped them on pieces of bread, and tossed them to the dogs lying under the table.

- (A) tossed them
- (B) tossing them

(C) tossed the bread

(D) they tossed

27. Young people read about hip hop because they want to understand their life and that this music matters in the way it does.
- (A) and that this music matters
 - (B) why this music matters
 - (C) and why this music matters
 - (D) and this music mattering
28. Black and white rappers have in common to challenge their listeners to make their world a better place.
- (A) to challenge
 - (B) the desire to challenge
 - (C) desiring to challenge
 - (D) challenging
29. In nations throughout the world, hip hop has provided youth a means for coping with society's inequalities and a mechanism for expressing discontent.
- (A) a mechanism
 - (B) offering a mechanism
 - (C) by offering a mechanism
 - (D) a mechanism by which to offer

Directions for items 30-32: Each of the following questions presents a passage with a missing sentence indicated by a series of dashes. Read each passage and the four sentences that follow it. Then choose the sentence that can best be inserted in place of the dashes.

30. The arguments of many of hip hop's critics demand little engagement with hip hop. Their views don't require much beyond noticing the surface symptoms of a culture that offers far more depth and color when it's taken seriously and criticized thoughtfully. _____
_____ Critics of hip hop seem afraid of the complex truths they might find if they took the risk of plunging deeply into the culture on which they comment.
- (A) It is strange that observers of hip hop question the harmful effects that it has on its young fans.
 - (B) It is sad that hip hop artists aren't concerned about communicating a positive message.
 - (C) It is odd that so many gifted intellectuals stick to superficial observations about hip hop.
 - (D) It is useful to note that many forms of popular music criticize contemporary culture.

31. _____ .Spirituals sung by African-American slaves; protest songs sung by 1960s youth; Texas-Mexicans singing the *corrido*; and "union songs" sung by labor organizers all suggest how music has been both an intrinsic response to historical and cultural conflict and an expressive vehicle that encouraged collective action.

- (A) Oppressed communities have often confronted challenging social conditions through song.
- (B) Music is an important part of our everyday life as well as a popular form of entertainment.
- (C) Instead of writing books, some artists choose to express their inner feelings through music.
- (D) "Corrido" songs were performed during the time of Cesar Chavez.

32. Major historical events had significant impact on both the nature and the popularity of roots music in America. For example, the social and economic changes brought about by WWII had an enormous effect on Blues and white Country music. Before the war, both had been largely regional, developing different styles in different areas, and reaching mainly local audiences. _____ .

- (A) After the war, huge shifts of population combined with economic changes driven by technology and mass media made this music popular with broader audiences.
- (B) After the war, the United States experienced dramatic changes brought on by industrialization and increasing globalization.
- (C) After the war, scholars such as John Lomax were interested in the connection between African American music and the national folk music tradition.
- (D) After the war, American roots music drew on the experience of ordinary men and women but failed to become a commercial success.

Directions for item 33-34: Each of the following questions presents a topic and four sentences. Select the sentence that provides the best support for the topic presented.

Example:

Many people who have extensive collections become extremely knowledgeable about what is in them.

- (A) Collecting sculptures and paintings can be an expensive hobby, even for very wealthy people.
- (B) Chester Nakamura became an expert on samurai swords by researching his own collection.**
- (C) Sara Johnson's private collection of rare books is so extensive that she had to add a large library to her home.
- (D) Doing something and knowing about it are two different things.

33. Hip hop has become a dominant African American institution.

- (A) The church and civil rights organizations are the most important forces in African American life.
- (B) Contemporary African Americans turn to spirituals, gospel music, and street talk to express their concerns.
- (C) Rap music is a powerful way for African Americans to communicate the struggle of growing up black and poor.
- (D) Popular music fails to express the frustrations and hopes of the new generation of young African Americans.

34. Music scholars in the 1960's began to look for new ways to describe the diverse styles of folk music being played in communities across America.

- (A) Folk musicians sang and played different styles of music even though their music was seldom heard on radios.
- (B) Folk musicians began to use various kinds of music such as country and zydeco as a source for their own music.
- (C) They listened to music and got to know musicians as they traveled across the country.
- (D) They created the term "roots" music to refer to different kinds of music ranging from jazz to tejano and native American music.