

Questions 1–10 are based on the following passage.

Norse Passage Map

This passage, about the decline of the Norse colonies that once existed in Greenland, is from a comprehensive 2015 research report examining this anthropological mystery.

In 1721, the Norwegian missionary Hans Egede discovered that the two known Norse settlements on Greenland were completely deserted. Ever since, the reasons behind the decline and eventual disappearance of these people have been greatly debated. Greenland, established by the charismatic outlaw Erik the Red in about 986 c.e., was a colony of Norway by 1000 c.e., complete with a church hierarchy and trading community. After several relatively prosperous centuries, the colony had fallen on hard times and was not heard from in Europe, but it wasn't until Egede's discovery that the complete downfall of the settlement was confirmed.

Throughout the nineteenth century, researchers attributed the demise of the Norse colonies to war between the colonies and Inuit groups. This

GL colony
gone by
1721—
reasons
debated

1800s
research-
ers said
cause was
war w/
Inuits

is based largely on evidence from
the work *Description of Greenland*,
25 written by Norse settler Ivar Bardarson
around 1364, which describes strained
relationships between the Norse settlers
and the Inuits who had recently come
to Greenland. However, because there is
30 no archaeological evidence of a war or
a massacre, and the extensive body of
Inuit oral history tells of no such event,
modern scholars give little credence to
these theories.
35 New theories about the reason
for the decline of the Norse colonies
are being proposed partially because
the amount of information available
is rapidly increasing. Advances in
40 paleoclimatology, for example, have
increased the breadth and clarity of
our picture of the region. Most notably,
recent analyses of the central Greenland
ice core, coupled with data obtained
45 from plant material and sea sediments,
have indicated severe climate changes
in the region that some are now calling
a "mini ice age." Such studies point
toward a particularly warm period
50 for Greenland that occurred between
the years 800 c.e. and 1300 c.e., which

but no arch.
evid.

much new
info

climate
data

big climate
change
b/4 colony
decline

was then followed—unfortunately
for those inhabiting even the most
temperate portions of the island—by a
55 steady decline in overall temperatures
that lasted for nearly 600 years. The
rise and fall of the Norse colonies in
Greenland, not surprisingly, roughly
mirrors this climate-based chronology.
60 Researchers have also found useful
data in a most surprising place—fly
remains. The insect, not native to the
island, was brought over inadvertently
on Norse ships. Flies survived in the
65 warm and unsanitary conditions of the
Norse dwellings and barns and died out
when these were no longer inhabited.
By carbon dating the fly remains,
researchers have tracked the occupation
70 of the settlements and confirmed that
the human population began to decline
around 1350 c.e. fly remains
dating
shows
human
decline
~1350

Changing economic conditions econ prob-
lems, too
likely also conspired against the
75 settlers. The colonies had founded a
moderately successful trading economy
based on exporting whale ivory,
especially important given their need
for the imported wood and iron that
80 were in short supply on the island.
Unfortunately, inexpensive and plentiful
Asian and African elephant ivory
flooded the European market during
the fourteenth century, destroying ivory
market ↓
85 Greenland's standing in the European
economy. At the same time, the trading
fleet of the German Hanseatic League

supplanted the previously dominant Norwegian shipping fleets. Because the German merchants had little interest in the Norse colonists, Greenland soon found itself visited by fewer and fewer ships each year until its inhabitants were completely isolated by 1480 c.e.

95 Cultural and sociological factors may have also contributed to the demise of the Norse settlements. The Inuit tribes, while recent immigrants to Greenland, had come from nearby areas to the west and had time-tested strategies to cope with the severe environment. The Norse settlers, however, seem to have viewed themselves as fundamentally European and did not adopt Inuit techniques. Inuit apparel, for example, was far more appropriate for the cold, damp environment; the remains from even the last surviving Norse settlements indicate a costume that

100 was undeniably European in design. Likewise, the Norse settlers failed to adopt Inuit hunting techniques and tools, such as the toggle harpoon, which made it possible to capture calorie-rich seal meat. Instead, the Norse relied on the farming styles that had been so successful for their European ancestors, albeit in a radically different climate. It seems likely that this stubborn cultural inflexibility prevented the Norse civilization in Greenland from adapting to increasingly severe environmental and economic conditions.

+ German traders didn't visit GL

also cultural factors

Euro. clothes

hunting vs. farming

BIG PICTURE

Main Idea: New information shows that factors such as climate, economy, and culture may have caused the collapse of the Norse colonies in Greenland.

Author's Purpose: To describe current theories (and evidence for them) of what happened to the Norse in Greenland

1. The main purpose of the passage is to

- A. discuss possible theories explaining a historical event.
- B. refute a commonly held belief about a group of people.

- C. chronicle the conflict between immigrant settlers and a region' s indigenous people.
- D. analyze the motivations behind a number of conflicting explanations.
2. The author implies that, during the period in which the Norse settlements were initially founded, the climate in the region was
- A. uncharacteristically mild.
- B. typically inhospitable.
- C. unusually harsh.
- D. increasingly cold.
3. Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?
- A. Lines 42–47 ("Most... region")
- B. Lines 48–51 ("Such... 1300 c.e.")
- C. Lines 56–59 ("The rise... chronology")
- D. Lines 64–67 ("Flies... inhabited")
4. In line 63, the word "inadvertently" most nearly means
- A. secretly.
- B. distractedly.
- C. unintentionally.
- D. deliberately.
5. The passage indicates that the Inuit people on Greenland
- A. were responsible for the collapse of the Norse settlements.
- B. shared their knowledge with the Norse settlers.
- C. struggled with the difficult local climate.
- D. were recent immigrants, like the Norse themselves.
6. What function does the discussion of the trade in whale and elephant ivory serve in the passage as a whole?
- A. It is evidence that strengthens the traditional view introduced in the second paragraph.
- B. It is an example that challenges the theory introduced in the fourth paragraph.
- C. It provides additional support for the main idea of the third paragraph.
- D. It contradicts the central argument of the whole passage.
7. What can reasonably be inferred from the passage about the relationship between the shipping fleets of nations in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and the colonies established by those nations?
- A. Ships never traded with colonies not founded by the same country.
- B. Colonies were dependent upon deliveries by ships from their own country.
- C. Colonies would surely fail without regular deliveries by ships.
- D. Shipping fleets may not have prioritized deliveries to foreign colonies.

8. The author claims the Norse settlers did not adopt the successful survival tactics of the Inuit because
- A. the Norse settlers had strained relations with the Inuit.
 - B. the Inuit did not share their knowledge with the Norse settlers.
 - C. the Norse settlers believed those tactics were incompatible with their culture.
 - D. after attempting them, the Norse settlers found the tactics to be unsuccessful.
9. Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?
- A. Lines 22–29 (“This is... Greenland”)
 - B. Lines 111–115 (“Likewise... meat”)
 - C. Lines 115–118 (“Instead... climate”)
 - D. Lines 118–123 (“It seems... conditions”)
10. Which of the following best summarizes the organization of the passage?
- A. An unusual event is described, the possible causes of the event are evaluated, and the most likely cause is determined.
 - B. A mystery is presented, an accepted explanation is proposed but challenged, and alternative explanations are introduced.
 - C. An anomaly is noted, the traditional interpretation of the anomaly is reported, and more recent evidence is cited to support that interpretation.
 - D. A paradox is reported, the historical solution is proven to be false, and a more modern resolution is proven to be correct.

Questions 11–20 refer to the following passage.

Infant Language Passage Map

This passage, about infant language acquisition, is adapted from a research paper written in 2017 that explored early childhood development.

Infants are born as scientists,
constantly interacting with and
questioning the world around them.
However, as any good scientist
5 knows, simply making observations
is not sufficient; a large part of
learning is dependent on being able
to communicate ideas, observations,
and feelings with others. Though most
10 infants do not produce discernible
words until around age one or one-and-
a-half, they begin gaining proficiency
in their native languages long before
that. In fact, many linguists agree that a
15 newborn baby's brain is already pre-
programmed for language acquisition,
meaning that it's as natural for a baby
to talk as it is for a dog to dig.

According to psycholinguist Anne
20 Cutler, an infant's language acquisition
actually begins well before birth. At
only one day old, newborns
have demonstrated the ability to
recognize the voices and rhythms heard
25 during their last trimester in the
muffled confines of the womb.
In general, infants are more likely to
attend to a specific voice stream if they
perceive it as more familiar than other
30 streams. Newborns tend to be especially
partial to their mother's voice and her
native language, as opposed to another
woman or another language. For
example, when an infant is presented
35 with a voice stream spoken by his

babies
start
learning
lang. b/4
they can
talk

"pre-pro-
grammed"

Cutler:
learn lang.
b/4 birth

support

mother and a background stream delivered by an unfamiliar voice, he will effortlessly attend to his mother while ignoring the background stream.

40 Therefore, by using these simple yet important cues, and others like them, infants can easily learn the essential characteristics and rules of their native language.

45 However, it is important to note that an infant's ability to learn from the nuances of her mother's speech is predicated upon her ability to separate that speech from the sounds of the dishwasher, the family dog, the bus stopping on the street outside, and, quite possibly, other streams of speech, like a newscaster on the television down the hall or siblings playing in

55 an adjacent room. Infants are better able to accomplish this task when the voice of interest is louder than any of the competing background noises.

need
mom's
voice sep.
from bkgd

+ louder
than
other
voices

Conversely, when two voices are of equal amplitude, infants typically demonstrate little preference for one stream over the other. Researchers have hypothesized that because an infant's ability to selectively pay attention to one voice or sound, even in a mix of others, has not fully developed yet, the infant is actually interpreting competing voice streams that are equally loud as one single stream with unfamiliar patterns and sounds.

70 During the first few months after birth, infants will subconsciously study the language being used around them, taking note of the rhythmic patterns, the sequences of sounds, and the intonation of the language.

newborns
learn
patterns

Newborns will also start to actively process how things like differences in pitch or accented syllables further affect meaning. Interestingly, up until six months of age, they can still recognize and discriminate between the phonemes (single units of sound in a language like “ba” or “pa”) of other languages. Though infants do display a preference for the language they heard in utero, most infants are not biased towards the specific phonemes of that language.

This ability to recognize and discriminate between all phonemes comes to an end by the middle of their first year, at which point infants start displaying a preference for phonemes in their native language, culminating at age one, when they stop responding to foreign phonemes altogether. This is part of what is known as the critical period, which begins at birth and lasts until puberty. During this period, as the brain continues to grow and change, language acquisition is instinctual, explaining why young children seem to pick up languages so easily.

<6 mos.:
“hear”
other
lang. too

~1 yr.:
prefer
their own
lang.

crit. pd.:
still easier
to learn
other
lang.

BIG PICTURE

Main Idea: Infants listen to voices in their environments to acquire language instinctually, possibly starting before they are even born.

Author’s Purpose: To explain the abilities and limitations of infants in acquiring language

11. The primary purpose of the passage is to
 - A. present the background of a recent medical discovery.
 - B. trace the history of a scientific inquiry.
 - C. explain the research that led to a new breakthrough.
 - D. describe an aspect of early childhood development.
12. According to the passage, when children begin to acquire their native language they
 - A. are in about the middle of their first year.
 - B. are at least one year old.

- C. are not yet able to speak.
- D. start to imitate the phonemes of that language.

13. Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?

- A. Lines 9–14 (“Though most... that”)
- B. Lines 80–85 (“Interestingly... languages”)
- C. Lines 90–97 (“This ability... altogether”)
- D. Lines 97–100 (“This is... puberty”)

14. As used in line 48, “predicated” most nearly means

- A. predicted.
- B. expressed.
- C. replaced.
- D. built.

15. The main purpose of the third paragraph (lines 45–70) is to

- A. illustrate how distinct speech streams increase the speed of language acquisition.
- B. discuss the mechanism by which louder volumes of speech impede language acquisition.
- C. explain the role of the relative volumes of sounds on an infant’s ability to learn to process language.
- D. provide scientific data that measure the improvement in language acquisition as the volume of the speech stream increases.

16. As used in line 82, “discriminate” most nearly means

- A. differentiate.
- B. perceive.
- C. prefer.
- D. persecute.

17. According to the passage, children begin to learn the rhythms, pitches, and accents of speech

- A. before birth.
- B. in the first months of life.
- C. after the middle of the first year.
- D. at around one year of age.

18. The passage most strongly suggests that a mother who wants to assist her child in language acquisition should

- A. expose her child to as many spoken languages as possible.
- B. use short words composed of the basic phonemes of her native language.
- C. be sure her voice is louder than other background noises.
- D. use as large a vocabulary as possible when speaking to her child.

19. Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?

- A. Lines 14–18 (“In fact... dig”)

- B. Lines 45–55 (“However... room”)
- C. Lines 55–58 (“Infants... noises”)
- D. Lines 85–89 (“Though... language”)

20. The most likely purpose of the discussion of phonemes is to

- A. identify important stages in the process of language acquisition in children.
- B. emphasize the importance of children acquiring only one language at a time.
- C. show how children gradually build larger words from the primary sounds around them.
- D. illustrate the importance of volume in the language acquisition of children.

Answers and Explanations

1. A

Difficulty: Medium

Category: Global

Strategic Advice: Use your big picture summary to make a prediction on a Global question like this. For this question, you can simply use your summary of the author's purpose.

Getting to the Answer: The author discusses the disappearance of a group of Norse settlers and offers a number of explanations for this occurrence, but doesn't advocate for any one of them in particular. Thus, the primary purpose is to introduce readers to a number of possible explanations, as suggested in correct choice **(A)**.

(B) and (C) are too narrow. The belief that there was a conflict between the Inuit and the Norse settlers is refuted in the second paragraph, and the passage continues for three more paragraphs, so (B) isn't the main purpose. The passage mentions "strained relations" between the groups at the start of the second paragraph, but does not go on to "chronicle the conflict," as (C) suggests. The motivations behind the explanations are never discussed, nor is it clear that the explanations are in conflict (climatological, economic, and cultural factors could all be partial causes of the collapse), so (D) is also incorrect.

2. A

Difficulty: Medium

Category: Inference

Strategic Advice: This question requires you to put together details from different parts of the passage to arrive at the appropriate inference.

Getting to the Answer: The important clues in the question are "the period in which the Norse settlements were initially founded" and "climate." The beginning of the passage states that the colony was founded around the year 1000 c.e. However, climate is not discussed until the third paragraph, where the author writes, "a particularly warm period for Greenland... occurred between the years 800 c.e. and 1300 c.e." (lines 49–51). In fact, "particularly warm" is not bad for a prediction. Choice **(A)** matches and is correct. The "mild," warm weather was uncharacteristic of the usually cold, harsh climate.

All of the incorrect choices are misused details that are mentioned in the passage; they apply to the years after 1300 c.e., not to the specific time period indicated in the question stem.

3. B

Difficulty: Medium

Category: Command of Evidence

Strategic Advice: If you used a line reference to answer the previous question, use that as your prediction and start by seeing whether that line reference is one of the answer choices.

Getting to the Answer: In answering the previous question, it emerges that the climate during the initial founding of the Norse settlements was “uncharacteristically mild.” This strange, “particularly warm” weather is mentioned in line 49, making choice **(B)** correct.

(A) and (C) mention the change in climate, but do not specifically mention the warmer years in the answer to the previous question. (D) connects the disappearance of the flies to that of the settlers, but does not address the climate change.

4. **C**

Difficulty: Easy

Category: Vocab-in-Context

Strategic Advice: Use surrounding information to figure out the meaning of a challenging word. If you can’t think of a single word to use as a prediction, a short phrase is also fine.

Getting to the Answer: Return to line 63, mentioned in the question, and read a little above and a little below the line. The flies were not on the island until the Norse ships arrived, and “inadvertently” is an adverb describing how the flies were brought to the island. The suggestion there is that the flies were not brought on purpose, so “by accident” is a good prediction. Choice **(C)** matches and is thus correct.

The remaining choices are incorrect because they don’t fit the context. It makes little sense that the ships would hide the flies in secret as (A) suggests. (B) almost suggests that the flies somehow diverted the attention of the colonists to bring themselves on board, which also seems implausible. Finally, (D) presents the opposite of the intended meaning.

5. **D**

Difficulty: Medium

Category: Detail

Strategic Advice: When an open-ended question makes prediction difficult, use elimination. Match information in the passage to the choices and eliminate choices as you go.

Getting to the Answer: The Inuit people are mentioned in the second and final paragraphs. The second paragraph states in lines 28–29 that “Inuits... had recently come to Greenland.” In lines 97–98, in the final paragraph, this point is repeated,

indicating that the Norse colonists were not the only recent settlers of Greenland. **(D)** is therefore correct.

(A) is incorrect because the author dismisses the view that the Inuit are responsible for the Norse colony collapse (lines 29–34). (B) is incorrect because the author suggests in the final paragraph that the Norse were unwilling to abandon their European ways, so there's no evidence that the Inuit successfully shared knowledge with them. (C) is incorrect because, in the final paragraph, the Inuit are said to have had "time-tested strategies to cope with the severe environment" (lines 100–101), suggesting they did not struggle with the climate.

6. **C**

Difficulty: Medium

Category: Function

Strategic Advice: If your prediction ends up being more specific than the answer choices, try to fill in the generic descriptions with actual details from the passage to better assess which choice is a match. For example, if a choice mentions the main idea of a particular paragraph, then rephrase the choice in your mind to include that actual main idea.

Getting to the Answer: At the beginning of the third paragraph, the author notes that new information is leading to novel theories that explain the Norse colonies' decline. The author then goes on to provide some examples of these new theories and the evidence that supports them. The fourth paragraph continues this line of thought by turning to economic factors such as the changing ivory trade. Because that discussion provides additional support for the main idea of paragraph 3, **(C)** is correct.

(A) is incorrect because the traditional view, that the colony was destroyed by war with the Inuits, is dismissed later in paragraph 2, not supported. (B) is incorrect because the discussion of the ivory trade supports, not challenges, the theory in paragraph 4 about economic factors of collapse. (D) is incorrect because the shift in the ivory trade away from whale ivory strengthens the author's claim that new explanations are emerging, which is the central idea of the passage.

7. **D**

Difficulty: Hard

Category: Inference

Strategic Advice: Inference questions may require you to put together pieces from different parts of the passage before arriving at a prediction.

Getting to the Answer: The shipping fleets of Norway and Germany are part of the economic discussion in the fourth paragraph. Lines 86–94 indicate that the German fleets took over the trade routes from the Norse and lost interest in the Norse colony. The suggestion is that a country's fleets are generally more interested in transacting with that country's colonies than with foreign colonies. Choice **(D)** is thus correct.

(A) is too extreme and contradicted by the passage, which suggests that at least a few non-Norwegian ships visited the colonies. (B) is incorrect because the colony was able to survive for a time even after the Norwegian fleets were supplanted, suggesting that essential deliveries could come from foreign sources. (C) is incorrect because the author presents another possibility in the last paragraph: the colonists could have adopted more of the well-adapted customs of the Inuit and learned to survive in Greenland's natural environment, instead of sticking with European practices that didn't suit the climate.

8. **C**

Difficulty: Medium

Category: Detail

Strategic Advice: Follow the clue in the question stem to discover the relevant detail from the passage. For Detail questions, it's fine to use phrases or sentences directly from the passage as predictions.

Getting to the Answer: The discussion of the Norse colonists refusing to adapt to the changing climate occurs in the fifth paragraph. Lines 101–104 attribute this refusal to the Norse colonists thinking of themselves as European and clinging to European traditions. The author even concludes the passage by suggesting that the Norse colonists were likely guilty of a “stubborn cultural inflexibility” (lines 119–120) that led to their collapse. Choice **(C)** is therefore correct.

(A) is a misused detail from the second paragraph. Although there were strained relations between the two groups, the text does not cite this poor relationship as the reason why the Norse did not adopt Inuit ways. (B) and (D) are not mentioned in the passage, making them incorrect as well.

9. **D**

Difficulty: Medium

Category: Command of Evidence

Strategic Advice: Use your work on the previous question to make a prediction: wherever you went for research will likely be correct.

Getting to the Answer: The author suggests in the concluding sentence that the Norse colonists died out because of their refusal to take on better-adapted cultural norms, which directly supports the previous question's answer. **(D)** is thus correct.

(A) is the line that supports the misused detail (from choice (A) in the previous question) in the second paragraph. There is no evidence that the difficult relations between the two groups led to the colonists' refusal to adopt Inuit practices. (B) and (C) identify two of the Inuit's survival tactics, but do not provide a reason these tactics were not adopted by the Norse.

10. **B**

Difficulty: Hard

Category: Global

Strategic Advice: For a question about the organization of the passage, review the marginal notes of your passage map and try to construct a story of how the passage moves from one paragraph to the next, using this as your prediction. The correct answer will best reflect the story you’ve constructed.

Getting to the Answer: The first paragraph introduces the topic of the unexplained disappearance of the Norse colonies and the second paragraph presents and refutes one historical explanation. In the remainder of the passage, the author presents a number of alternative explanations, but never advocates for one of them over the others. Rather, the author seems to suggest the theories are somewhat compatible, all representing factors that led to the colonies’ collapse. This structure is best reflected in **(B)**, the correct answer.

(A) is incorrect because no single cause is definitively determined. (C) is incorrect because the traditional view, war between the Norse colonists and the Inuit, is discredited, not supported. (D) is too extreme; the disappearance of the colonies is not really a “paradox” so much as a mystery, and the author doesn’t attempt to “prove” anything, but just offers possible explanations.

11. **D**

Difficulty: Easy

Category: Global

Strategic Advice: Research the answer to a Global question in your big picture summary, and keep the author’s tone in mind.

Getting to the Answer: The author presented a factual description of several aspects of infant language acquisition, which matches choice **(D)**.

(A) and (C) are incorrect because the passage doesn’t identify a “recent medical discovery” or “new breakthrough.” (B) is incorrect because, although some of the steps in the process of language acquisition are described in the text, the history of the research into this process is not.

12. **C**

Difficulty: Medium

Category: Detail

Getting to the Answer: The important context clue in this question is “begin to acquire their native language.” Although the entire passage is describing language acquisition, the context clue tells you to focus your research on the first paragraph. Lines 9–14 state that babies start to learn their native language before they can speak, and this prediction matches **(C)**, the correct answer.

(A) and (B) are ages mentioned in the passage, but (A) gives the age when babies begin to produce recognizable words and (B) gives the age when babies begin to prefer the phonemes of their native languages. (D) is a distortion of information

presented in the last paragraph. Although the passage says that babies prefer the phonemes of their native language, it does not say that babies imitate these phonemes, nor that this preference is evident at the beginning of the language acquisition process.

13. **A**

Difficulty: Medium

Category: Command of Evidence

Getting to the Answer: Good research on the previous question pays off in efficient, correct answers to Command of Evidence questions. Since the answer to the previous question is found in lines 9–14, **(A)** is correct.

(B) describes the age at which infants still discriminate among phonemes, (C) describes the age when children begin to prefer the phonemes of their native languages, and (D) defines the “critical period.” None of these incorrect choices identify the age when children *begin* to acquire their native languages.

14. **D**

Difficulty: Medium

Category: Vocab-in-Context

Getting to the Answer: The word “predicated” connects the “ability to learn from... mother’s speech” to the “ability to separate that speech” from other sounds. Logically, it would not be possible to learn from something (mother’s speech) if you can’t even recognize that thing in the first place, so the noted word must mean something like “dependent.” **(D)** comes closest to this prediction, making it correct.

(A) is incorrect because the ability to learn from a stream of speech comes after the ability to distinguish that speech, but “predicted” seems to reverse the chronology. (B) is incorrect because it suggests the two abilities are the same, that one is only the expression of another, but the author is clear to distinguish them. (C) is incorrect because the two abilities work together; the second doesn’t simply take the place of the first.

15. **C**

Difficulty: Hard

Category: Function

Getting to the Answer: Keep the purpose of the passage in mind, then review the passage map and predict a reason the author included the third paragraph. Within the discussion of language acquisition in infants, the third paragraph describes the importance of the volume of the mother’s voice over the other background sounds. This prediction matches **(C)**, the correct answer.

Choice (A) subtly distorts the information in the paragraph. The ability of a baby to identify a specific speech stream is not connected to the *speed* of language acquisition. (B) is an opposite choice; louder volumes of speech assist, not impede, language acquisition. (D) is not discussed in the passage; no data is supplied to connect the improvement in language acquisition to different volumes of speech.

16. **A**

Difficulty: Medium

Category: Vocab-in-Context

Getting to the Answer: Read the sentence without “discriminate” and ask what the author is trying to communicate. Because the sentence is about infants distinguishing sounds as belonging to one or another language, *separate* or *tell the difference* are good predictions. Choice **(A)** is correct because it matches.

(B) is incorrect because it is synonymous with “recognize,” which the author combines with “discriminate,” so it would be redundant and lose the connotation of distinguishing between multiple phonemes. (C) is incorrect because it contradicts what the author says in the following sentence (lines 85–89) about the lack of preference toward specific phonemes. (D) is incorrect because “persecute” is a common meaning of “discriminate” that doesn’t fit the context.

17. **B**

Difficulty: Medium

Category: Detail

Getting to the Answer: The clues in the question stem point to paragraph 4, where the author mentions “rhythmic patterns” and “differences in pitch or accented syllables.” That paragraph begins, “During the first few months after birth,” which directly matches with correct choice **(B)**.

(A), (C), and (D), the incorrect answers, all contain different ages of children that are mentioned in the passage, but each is associated with a different phase of language acquisition, not the stage mentioned in the question.

18. **C**

Difficulty: Hard

Category: Inference

Getting to the Answer: Paragraph 3 discusses how infants have difficulty separating voice streams that have equal volumes, as well as how important it is for infants to recognize their mother’s speech in order to learn from it. Thus, it makes sense that a mother would aid her infant’s language acquisition by speaking louder than any background sounds, which makes **(C)** correct.

(A) and (B) are distortions of information in the passage, making them incorrect. Although the passage mentions that young children learn languages easily, the text

never recommends exposing children to multiple languages. Similarly, phonemes are discussed, but using phonemes to assist children in learning to speak is not. (D), using a large vocabulary, is never mentioned in the text, and so is incorrect.

19. **C**

Difficulty: Medium

Category: Command of Evidence

Getting to the Answer: Since the support for the previous answer came from the third paragraph, return to that paragraph and identify the line numbers that most directly state that volume helps children to learn language. Lines 55–58, choice **(C)**, are correct.

You can eliminate (A) and (D) quickly because neither comes from the third paragraph. (A) and (D) are indeed incorrect because they identify different stages in the language acquisition process, not a specific action a mother could take to assist this process. (B) is incorrect because, although it identifies the need for babies to be able to differentiate the targeted speech stream from background noises, it does not suggest how this could be done by using a louder volume.

20. **A**

Difficulty: Medium

Category: Function

Getting to the Answer: The author discusses phonemes in the fourth and fifth paragraphs, identifying two distinct ways that infants respond to phonemes. In paragraph 4, the author notes that infants can recognize phonemes from other languages until six months of age, while in paragraph 5, infants stop responding to foreign phonemes altogether in the “critical period.” Thus, the purpose of this discussion is to highlight some important stages in the process of language acquisition, as in correct choice **(A)**.

(B) and (C) are not mentioned in the text, and so are incorrect. (D) is incorrect because volume is discussed earlier in the passage where phonemes are not the topic.

PSAT Resource Links

PSAT Online Practice Tests: <https://www.crackpsat.net/psat/>

❖ PSAT Reading Practice Tests:

<https://www.crackpsat.net/psat/reading/>

❖ PSAT Writing and Language Tests:

<https://www.crackpsat.net/psat/writing-language/>

❖ PSAT Math Practice Tests:

<https://www.crackpsat.net/psat/math/>

PSAT Real Past Papers Download:

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New SAT Practice Tests:

<https://www.cracksat.net>

ACT Practice Tests:

<https://www.crackacc.com>

AP Exams Practice Tests:

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