

CTBS Reading Practice #2

Use the following passage to answer the questions provided, look up any unfamiliar words, and go over your answers.

Passage 1

(The passage comes from *How the Snake Got Poison* told by Zora Neale Hurston)

Well, when God made the snake he put him in the bushes to ornament the ground. But things didn't suit the snake so one day he got on the ladder and went up to see God.

"Good mawnin', God."

"How do you do, Snake?"

"I ain't so many, God, you put me down there on my belly in the dust and everything trods upon me and kills off my generations. I ain't got no kind of protection at all."

God looked off toward immensity and thought about the subject for awhile. Then he said, "I didn't mean for nothin' to be stompin' you snakes like that. You got to have some kind of protection. Here, take this poison and put it in your mouth and when they tromps on you, protect yourself."

So the snake took the poison in his mouth and went on back.

So after a while all the other varmints went up to God.

"Good evenin', God."

"How you makin' it, varmints?"

"God, please do somethin' 'bout that snake. He's layin' in the bushes there with poison in his mouth he's strikin' everything that shakes the bush. He's killin' up our generations. We're scared to walk the earth."

So God sent for the snake and told him:

"Snake, when I give you that poison, I didn't mean for you to be hittin' and killin' everything that shakes the bush. I give you that poison and told you to protect yourself when they tromples on you. But you killin' everything that moves. I didn't mean for you to do that."

The snake says, " Lord, you know I'm down here in the dust. I ain't got no feet to get me out the way. All I can see is feet comin' to tromple me. I can't tell who my enemy is and who is my friend. You give me this protection in my mouth and I use it."

God thought it over for a while then he says:

"Well, Snake, I don't want you generations all stomped out and I don't want you killin' everything else that moves. Here, take this bell and tie it to your tail. When you hear the feet comin' you ring your bell and it's your friend, he'll be careful. If it's your enemy, it's you and him."

1. Which of these best describes the point of the passage?
 - a. a lesson for children
 - b. a folktale to explain the nature of snakes
 - c. a poem about life
 - d. a snake's interpretation of how it got its powers
2. What kind of attitude does the story take about snakes?
 - a. Snakes are bad and evil beings.
 - b. Snakes are dumb and deserve to be trampled.
 - c. Snakes have disadvantages and weapons to protect them.
 - d. Snakes are nice and loving.
3. The author describes the snake as having a bell as a signal for communication. What might the bell represent?
 - a. the snake's poison
 - b. the snake's rattle
 - c. the snake's hiss
 - d. the snake's eyes

Passage 2

**Whenever Richard Cory went downtown,
We people on the pavement looked at him.
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
Clean favored and imperially slim**

**And he was always quietly arrayed,
And he was always human when he talked;
But still he flutter pulses when he said,
"Good morning," and he glittered when he walked.**

**And he was rich – yes, richer than a king-
And admirably schooled in every grace:
In fine, we thought that he was everything
To make us wish that we were in his place**

**And so we worked and waited for the light,
And went without the meat and cursed the bread;
And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,
Went home and put a bullet through his head.**

1. The life of Richard Cory would be a good example of the statement
 - a. there is no progress without pain
 - b. without commitment, there is no achievement
 - c. all that glitters is not gold
 - d. he climbed the rocky road to success
 - e. happiness is just a sometime thing
2. What kind of person was Richard Cory?
 - a. kind, considerate, and courteous
 - b. rich, well educated, and well dressed
 - c. intelligent, gentle, and beautiful
 - d. hopeless, sad, and funny
 - e. all of the above
3. Which of the following did Richard Cory probably lack?
 - a. friends and family
 - b. humility and kindness
 - c. true happiness
 - d. riches and prosperity
 - e. all of the above
4. Which of the following lines represents a metaphor from the poem.
 - a. And he glittered when he walked.
 - b. And he was rich- yes, richer than a king-
 - c. And Richard Cory, one calm summer night put a bullet through his head
 - d. I don't know what a metaphor is.

Passage 3

(From Lash, Joseph P. Eleanor and Franklin. Ed. Franklin G. Myers.)

The first Roosevelt, Claes Martenszen van Rosenvelt, arrived from Holland in the 1640s when New Amsterdam was a tiny settlement of 800 huddled in some eighty houses at the foot of Manhattan. Who Claes Martenszen was, whether solid Dutch burgher in search of larger opportunities or solemn rogue "two leaps ahead of the bailiff," as his witty descendant Alice Roosevelt Longworth has suggested, is not known. In either case, by the eve of the American Revolution when New York had

become a bustling port of 25,000, there were fifty Roosevelt families, and Claes's descendants were already showing an "uncanny knack" of associating themselves with the forces of boom and expansion in American economic life.

In the Roosevelt third generation two of the brothers, Johannes and Jacobus, took the family into real estate with the purchase of the Beekman swamp, a venture that was to have "a lasting effect on the city and their own family fortunes." It was these two brothers, also, who started the branches that led ultimately to Oyster Bay (Johannes) and to Hyde Park (Jacobus). The pre- Revolutionary Roosevelts were prosperous burghers but not of the highest gentry, and in civic affairs they were aligned with the popular faction against the aristocrats.

The first Roosevelt to achieve gentility and distinction was Isaac, the great-great-great-grandfather of Franklin, who for his services to the American cause was called "Isaac the Patriot." Isaac was a trader in sugar and rum but ended his business career as president of New York's first bank. At his death Philip Hone, the diarist, spoke of him as "proud and aristocratical," part of the "only nobility" the country had ever had.

1. According to this passage the first Roosevelt to achieve gentility made his trade in?
 - a. Real estate
 - b. Doctor
 - c. Banking
 - d. Stealing

2. The statement Philip Hone makes about Isaac Roosevelt being proud and aristocratical is ironic due to what earlier statement.
 - a. The first Roosevelts arrived in 1640.
 - b. Claes's descendants were associating themselves with the forces of boom and expansion in American economic life.
 - c. The pre-Revolutionary Roosevelts were prosperous burghers but not of the highest gentry, and in civic affairs were against the aristocrats.
 - d. Isaac was a trader in sugar and rum.

3. Which of these statements would the author be likely to endorse?
 - a. The Roosevelts climbed the social ladder through humor and publicity.
 - b. The Roosevelts gained their "nobility" through intelligent business sense.
 - c. Social consciousness was a large concern for the Roosevelts, and helped build their new identity in America.
 - d. The revolutionary Roosevelts introduced a political agenda that put them on the forefront of American economics.