

TASC Test Reading Practice Items

Use these items to practice for the TASC Reading subtest. Once you reach the end of the test, check your responses against the answer key provided. Take the time to read the information preceding the answers to understand what you'll need to know and be able to do to prepare yourself to pass the TASC test. In the following multiple-choice questions, please circle the correct answer.

Good luck preparing for the TASC test!

Read this text and answer the questions.

How to Shop Safely Online

What is the best way to save parking charges and avoid crowds at the mall? You can shop online. More and more consumers are finding online shopping the most convenient way to make purchases. In 2010, online sales on the day after Thanksgiving were 15.9 percent higher than they were in 2009. New technology even makes it possible to shop from mobile devices. However, there is a downside to this new and easy shopping access. Not every online site is safe from hackers, and some sites deliberately try to mislead consumers.

Spoofing and Phishing

Some websites use web addresses that are formatted to look almost the same as legitimate sites. This tactic is called spoofing. The site may also use icons and trademarks similar to those on safe sites. A spoofed website often engages in another illegitimate activity called phishing. The object of phishing is to obtain credit card, bank account, or Social Security numbers from an unsuspecting consumer. On one of these sites, you might believe you are charging a pair of hiking boots, when you are actually providing some stranger with the information needed to book a flight to Acapulco on your credit card.

There are some commonsense ways to recognize a spoofed site. Check the web address carefully to make sure the domain name is in bold type. Make sure there are no typographical errors in the name. Spoofers often use a name that is just a few letters different from a legitimate site. Pay careful attention to any warnings from your web browser saying that a site is potentially unsafe. Keep your browser updated so you have the latest available protection.

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Checking Site Safety

Most Internet browsers offer some way of checking site security. You can learn what safety options your browser offers by clicking “Tools” on the toolbar. Browser safety options usually tell you whether the information sent and received from the site is encrypted—that is, put into code. The safest sites use technology that scrambles your personal information when you make a purchase so that only your credit card company and the merchandiser can read it.

When you are buying something from a site and reach the screen that asks for your credit card information, check to make sure that the address begins with “HTTPS” rather than “HTTP.” HTTPS stands for “Secure HyperText Transfer Protocol” and means that the site uses enhanced security.

Other Resources

Certain companies, such as the Better Business Bureau, have seals of approval for sites that meet their standards. The American Bar Association sponsors a site called “safeshopping.org” with extensive information about safety and privacy concerns. For instance, they recommend paying online with a credit card because legal liability for unauthorized credit card charges is a maximum of \$50. If you learn about safety issues and use what you have learned effectively, you can feel as safe shopping online as you do buying things at a store. And you will not have to search for a parking place or walk in the rain. Happy shopping!

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- 1** Which conclusion could most likely be drawn about shopping online?
- A** Online shopping offers consumers both risks and convenience.
 - B** Consumers are limited by shipping charges when shopping online.
 - C** Online shopping is less expensive than shopping in traditional stores.
 - D** Items found while shopping online are of better quality than store products.
- 2** Which detail from the text best helps to develop the idea that there are things a consumer can do to shop safely online?
- A** More and more consumers are finding online shopping the most convenient way to make purchases.
 - B** Some websites use web addresses that are formatted to look almost the same as legitimate sites.
 - C** The site may also use icons and trademarks similar to those on safe sites.
 - D** Keep your browser updated so you have the latest available protection.

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Read this sentence from the passage.

On one of these sites, you might believe you are charging a pair of hiking boots, when you are actually providing some stranger with the information needed to book a flight to Acapulco on your credit card.

- 3** The author most likely included this sentence to
- A** show that security systems are ineffective
 - B** dramatize how tricky some websites can be
 - C** suggest that irresponsible websites are on the rise
 - D** explain how easy it is to purchase something online

Read this sentence from the passage.

Spoofers often use a name that is just a few letters different from a legitimate site.

- 4** What does the word **legitimate** mean as it is used in this sentence?
- A** accurate
 - B** believable
 - C** genuine
 - D** working

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Read this text and answer the questions.

Excerpt from Main Street
by Sinclair Lewis

Main Street is a novel about a girl who grew up in the big city. She has married a physician who moves them to the small town in the Midwest in which he grew up. She is reluctant to move from the city she knows, but goes along with her husband thinking that perhaps she can bring big-city life to the small town.

That one word—home—it terrified her. Had she really bound herself to live, inescapably, in this town called Gopher Prairie? And this thick man beside her, who dared to define her future, he was a stranger! She turned in her seat, stared at him. Who was he? Why was he sitting with her? He wasn't of her kind! His neck was heavy; his speech was heavy; he was twelve or thirteen years older than she; and about him was none of the magic of shared adventures and eagerness. She could not believe that she had ever slept in his arms. That was one of the dreams which you had but did not officially admit.

She told herself how good he was, how dependable and understanding. She touched his ear, smoothed the plane of his solid jaw, and, turning away again, concentrated upon liking his town. It wouldn't be like these barren settlements. It couldn't be! Why, it had three thousand population. That was a great many people. There would be six hundred houses or more. And—The lakes near it would be so lovely. She'd seen them in the photographs. They had looked charming . . . hadn't they?

A mile from Gopher Prairie the track mounts a curving low ridge, and she could see the town as a whole. With a passionate jerk she pushed up the window, looked out, the arched fingers of her left hand trembling on the sill, her right hand at her breast. *(Continued on next page)*

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And she saw that Gopher Prairie was merely an enlargement of all the hamlets which they had been passing. Only to the eyes of a Kennicott was it exceptional. The huddled low wooden houses broke the plains scarcely more than would a hazel thicket. The fields swept up to it, past it. It was unprotected and unprotecting; there was no dignity in it nor any hope of greatness. Only the tall red grain-elevator and a few tinny church-steeple rose from the mass. It was a frontier camp. It was not a place to live in, not possibly, not conceivably.

The people—they'd be as drab as their houses, as flat as their fields. She couldn't stay here. She would have to wrench loose from this man, and flee.

She peeped at him. She was at once helpless before his mature fixity, and touched by his excitement as he sent his magazine skittering along the aisle, stooped for their bags, came up with flushed face, and gloated, "Here we are!"

She smiled loyally, and looked away. The train was entering town. The houses on the outskirts were dusky old red mansions with wooden frills, or gaunt frame shelters like grocery boxes, or new bungalows with concrete foundations imitating stone.

Now the train was passing the elevator, the grim storage-tanks for oil, a creamery, a lumber-yard, a stockyard muddy and trampled and stinking. Now they were stopping at a squat red frame station, the platform crowded with unshaven farmers and with loafers—unadventurous people with dead eyes. She was here. She could not go on. It was the end—the end of the world. She sat with closed eyes, longing to push past Kennicott, hide somewhere in the train, flee on toward the Pacific.

Something large arose in her soul and commanded, "Stop it! Stop being a whining baby!" She stood up quickly; she said, "Isn't it wonderful to be here at last!"

He trusted her so. She would make herself like the place. And she was going to do tremendous things –

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5 Which sentence from the text best emphasizes the difference between the character's expectations of Gopher Prairie and reality?

- A** It was unprotected and unprotecting; there was no dignity in it nor any hope of greatness.
- B** She smiled loyally, and looked away.
- C** "Stop it! Stop being a whining baby!"
- D** She stood up quickly; she said, "Isn't it wonderful to be here at last!"

Read the excerpt from the text.

It wouldn't be like these barren settlements. It couldn't be! Why, it had three thousand population. That was a great many people. There would be six hundred houses or more. And—The lakes near it would be so lovely. She'd seen them in the photographs. They had looked charming . . . hadn't they?

6 What do the character's thoughts as she nears Gopher Prairie indicate about how she is feeling?

- A** that she is eager but doubtful
- B** that she is reluctant and angry
- C** that she is excited and optimistic
- D** that she is calm but unhappy

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Read the excerpt from the text.

Had she really bound herself to live, inescapably, in this town called Gopher Prairie?

- 7** Which feeling of the character in the text does the phrase “bound herself” best capture in the question she asks herself?
- A** that she already feels tied to this town
 - B** that she recognizes the mistake she has made
 - C** that she feels destined to live in this small town
 - D** that she acknowledges that she decides her own fate

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Answer Key

After taking these practice tests, you can check your answers with the following answer key. For your added benefit, answers come with explanations to help you understand why they're right. If you do well on the practice test, then you know you may be prepared to take the official TASC Readiness Test. If you struggle on the practice test, then you know you may still have more work to do to get prepared.

1. This selected-response item requires you to infer the most logical conclusion that can be drawn by identifying the central ideas of the text. You must read the text closely to determine the most salient points, then classify that information into an explicit main idea.

Answer: A

Explanation for Correct Response:

Choice A speaks to the text as a whole, summarizing the central ideas that online shopping can be both risky and convenient.

2. This selected-response item requires you to identify details that support key ideas. The correct answer requires a re-reading of the text to compare each detail, determining which one best develops the idea stated in the item stem.

Answer: D

Explanation for Correct Response:

Keeping your browser updated is the only example of what a consumer can do to shop safely online.

3. This selected-response item requires you to analyze the effect of a sentence on the development of claims within a text. You must read the text closely in order to determine the idea the author is trying to develop, then identify how the target sentence contributes to this idea.

Answer Key: B

Explanation for Correct Response:

Only choice B correctly interprets the excerpt as having a dramatic effect in order to emphasize the trickiness of some websites, contributing to a key idea of the text as a whole.

4. This selected-response item will provide evidence regarding your proficiency in using context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

The answer choices refer to possible meanings of the target word, but you must understand the full meaning of the passage in order to determine the precise meaning in context.

Answer: C

Explanation for Correct Response:

In context, "legitimate" describes the opposite of a false or "spoofing" website: the genuine website.

5. This selected-response item will provide evidence regarding your proficiency in analyzing a theme in a literary text, as well as identifying specific details supporting the development of the theme. For this item, you will identify the appropriate supporting evidence of the theme, but will also have to analyze the text as a whole in order to determine where this theme is apparent. In what ways does the author illustrate the separation between expectations and reality, and how is this made apparent in the thoughts and actions of the main character in the story?

Answer: A

Explanation for Correct Response:

Only choice A emphasizes that the character was expecting something other than what she sees. The language the author uses: "unprotected and unprotecting" and "no dignity" is the reality. Her seeing "no dignity...nor any hope of greatness" suggests that she had higher expectations.

Answer Key (cont'd)

6. This selected-response item will provide evidence of your ability to analyze how an author introduces and develops characters in a story. The item requires you to analyze word choice in order to correctly identify what an author is trying to evoke through description of a character's thoughts and actions. Each of the answer choices reflects the main character's feelings at points within the passage, so you must be able to relate the quotation in the item to the passage as a whole in order to determine the correct answer.

Answer: A

Explanation for Correct Response:

Only choice A accurately describes the character in a way that is supported by the text. Her eagerness can be seen in phrases like "a great many people" and "would be so lovely." Her doubt is seen in her questioning of her own memories of what she had seen: "hadn't they?"

7. This selected-response item will provide evidence regarding your proficiency in using context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the connotative meaning of a word or phrase. You must analyze the composite meaning of a phrase in the context of a sentence. What is the underlying principle that is revealed through the author's use of the phrase? How can strict literal interpretation of words lead to misinterpretation?

Answer: D

Explanation for Correct Response:

Only choice D is supported by the whole text. The character will do what is necessary and make that become the right choice. Deciding her own fate is suggested by the phrase "bound herself."