

Unseen Passage

Type –1

Read the passage given below and write the answer you consider the most appropriate in your answer sheet.

Read the following passage and Answer: the question that follows.

The Golden Girl

Ever since she burst into the scene by making it to the 1980 Moscow Olympics as a 16 – year old, P. T. Usha’s tall deeds have exemplified Indian sporting excellence. The spirit queen was so consistent for over a decade that she was truly the flag bearer who helped countrymen live the dream of a rare sporting excellence in the international arena.

Hailing from a remote village called Payyoli, Usha became an icon for sport lovers.

She made the nation swell with pride, every time she stepped on to the track. She gave unalloyed joy to her fAnswer: when she became the first Indian woman to make it to Olympic final.

Usha’s greatest moment was also the most shattering in her life as she was pushed to the fourth place in the 400 meters hurdles final at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics. The Romanian Christina Cojocaru won the bronze medal. Usha lost by an agonising 1/100th of a second. But every Indian household acknowledge the sense of achievement, though it fell short of India’s first Olympic medal from the track. Several girls born during the 1980s were named after the golden girl. It served as an eloquent testimony to the love and affection many people had for Usha.

Usha’s reign as the Asian sprint queen was highlighted by her snapping up five gold medals and a bronze at the 1985 Jakarta Asian track and field meet followed by a sensational four gold medals and one silver haul at the Seoul Asian Games the following year.

1. Answer the following questions.

a. When did Usha capture the imagination of the entire nation?

b. How did she help her countrymen give the dream of a rare sporting excellence?

c. Why were many girls in the mid 80s named after Usha?

d. What was the most shattering moment in the life of Usha?

2. Write the main events that happened in Usha's life in the following years.

1980 _____
1984 _____
1985 _____
1986 _____

Unseen Passage 2

Airplanes have the reputation of being dangerous and even hardened travellers are intimidated by them. They also have the grave disadvantage of being the most expensive form of transport but nothing can match them for speed and comfort, travelling at a height of 30,000 feet, far above the clouds, and at over 500 miles an hour is an exhilarating experience. You do not have to devise ways of taking your mind off the journey, for an airplane gets you to your destination rapidly.

For a few hours, you settle back in a deep armchair to enjoy the flight. The real escapist can watch a free film show and sip a hot or cold drink on some services. But even when such refreshments are not available, there is plenty to keep you occupied. An airplane offers you an unusual breathtaking view of the world. You soar effortlessly over high mountains and deep valleys. You really see the shape of the land.

If the landscape is hidden from view, you can enjoy the extraordinary sight of unbroken clouds, plains that stretch out for miles before your while the sun shines brilliantly in a clear sky. The journey is so smooth that there is nothing to prevent you from reading or sleeping. However you decide to spend your time, one thing is certain: you will arrive at your destination fresh and uncrumpled. You will not have to spend the next few days recovering from a long and arduous journey.

Question 1.

The main disadvantage of an air journey is that:

- (a) it is very dangerous
- (b) it is very expensive
- (c) it is very boring
- (d) it is a fearsome experience

Answer:

- (b) it is very expensive

Question 2.

The best advantage of air journey is that:

- (a) you can watch a free film
- (b) you can sip hot coffee or tea
- (c) you can watch clouds
- (d) you don't feel tired after the journey

Answer:

- (d) you don't feel tired after the journey

Question 3.

Pick out the incorrect statement.

- (a) an airplane moves at more than 500 miles an hour speed
- (b) one arrives crumpled at the destination after air journey
- (c) one can easily read or sleep during air journey
- (d) one can see the shape of land from an aeroplane

Answer:

- (b) one arrives crumpled at the destination after air journey

Question 4.

How can one keep oneself busy during air journey

- (a) by watching movie

- (b) by enjoying the beautiful sights outside
- (c) by reading and sleeping
- (d) all the above

Answer:

- (d) all the above

Question 5.

Which of the following is a synonym for intimidated

- (a) terrified
- (b) excited
- (c) bored
- (d) none of above

Answer:

- (a) terrified

Question 6.

The exhilarating experience that the author talks about is

- (a) travelling at a height of
- (b) travelling above the clouds
- (c) travelling at a speed of more than 500 miles an hour
- (d) all the above

Answer:

- (d) all the above

Question 7.

After an airplane journey, you do not have to spend time recovering because:

- (a) it has been a long and arduous journey
- (b) you travelled above the clouds
- (c) you feel fresh and uncrumpled
- (d) you spent time reading books or sipping coffee

Answer:

- (c) you feel fresh and uncrumpled

Unseen Passage 3

Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow.

1. Without oil the modern world could not exist. Oil is needed for travel, because it powers our motor cars, buses, trains, aeroplanes and ships. Oil helps machines of all kinds, to run easily. Oil also gives us other substances, such as artificial rubber, artificial materials for clothing, and new materials for making things. Yet till a hundred years ago no one used oil for any of these purposes. In fact, no one knew that much oil existed.

2. Men do not make oil; they find it. They look for oil in many ways. They begin by making a map of the land where they are searching. Then they use the map to help them in choosing a site to explore with more care. They start their work by examining the rock from under the surface and come to know whether oil is likely to be underneath the rock.

3. To find out how deeply the oil is buried they need to know how far under the surface the rock is. If everything seems hopeful the men decide to drill down through the rock. In this way they find out whether oil really does lie underneath it. Often this test – well, as it is called, is far away from any town and there is much work to do before any drilling starts. Houses and roads must be built for the people coming to drill the test – well. Then the big derrick that carries the drill must be put up. This derrick is a strong framework of steel about 45 meters high. The drill is raised and lowered from inside the derrick.

4. Drilling for oil often means making a well that goes very deep into the earth. Such deep wells have never been made until modern times. The rate of drilling depends upon the kind of rock being drilled: it can be as fast as 60 meters an hour. Drilling is usually done on dry land, but we can also drill the rock under lakes or seas by putting the derrick on a special platform above the water.

Read the above passage carefully and answer the questions that follow.

1. How is oil useful to machines?
2. How do men go about looking for oil?
3. Drilling for oil often means _____
4. The rate of drilling depends upon _____
5. Drilling is usually done on _____
6. To find out how deeply the oil is buried we need to _____
7. Find the words from the passage which mean:
 - a. make a hole (para 3)
 - b. a kind of crane with a movable pivoted arm. (para 3)

Unseen Passage 4

There was a strong breeze, which is unusual during a winter night in Gujarat. The sugarcane swayed wildly under a moonless sky. I pulled my jacket around me and adjusted my binoculars.

“You won’t need them. It will come right down there, next to the cow,” village leader Hitesh Patel whispered in my ears. I felt like asking him if it was safe on the roof where we were perched, but then Vitthal Vasava signaled from the cow shed below. “It seems

to be coming from the riverside," he said. "You will see it any moment. Stay still and don't make any noise or you'll invite trouble [9]," Hitesh reminded me. Another couple of minutes passed, and then a leopard leaped out from behind the shed and made its way towards a cow that was chained to a tree nearby.

As the leopard closed to within ten metres, it seemed there would be no escape for the cow. However, what I saw was something else – totally baffling. As if enacting a character from Rudyard Kipling's *Jungle Book*, the cat ducked under the cow's neck, stretched out lazily and began to purr. At first the cow ignored its companion but eventually gave in to the feline's playful nudges[16] and started licking its fur as if it was one of its calves. It started pushing the cow's belly and after a while, crept under her neck and lay there as if resting. Then it stood up and slowly walked back to the riverside.

What could have caused this extraordinary behaviour[20]? It turned out that, about three years ago, a female leopard had given birth to two cubs in a sugarcane field. The villagers had spotted the family and had brought it to the Notice of the forest officials. A few months later, a female leopard was captured in the area and taken to the zoo. There was no report of the cubs. The people believed the leopard that has been frequenting the village every night and playing with the cow might be one of the two cubs. "It's possible that this leopard cub would have seen the cow, and became imprinted on it," Hitesh Patel suggested.

Question 1.

What were the men doing on the roof?

- (a) They were enjoying the winter night in Gujarat
- (b) They wanted to have a good view of Vitthal Vasava
- (c) They wanted to keep a safe distance from the leopard.
- (d) They wanted to look at the leopard from a safe distance.

Answer:

- (d) They wanted to look at the leopard from a safe distance.

Question 2.

What kind of "trouble" (line 9) was Hitesh referring to?

- (a) The men falling from the roof
- (b) The leopard attacking the cow
- (c) The men being attacked by the leopard
- (d) The leopard ducking under the cow's neck.

Answer:

- (c) The men being attacked by the leopard

Question 3.

Why was the writer puzzled?

- (a) The leopard purred like a cat
- (b) The leopard did not kill the cow
- (c) The cow licked the leopard's fur
- (d) The leopard pushed the cow's belly

Answer:

- (b) The leopard did not kill the cow

Question 4.

What was the cow's reaction to the leopard's "playful nudges" in line 16?

- (a) The cow was loving
- (b) The cow was pleased
- (c) The cow was irritated
- (d) The cow was terrified

Answer:

- (a) The cow was loving

Question 5.

What do you think caused the leopard to behave in such an "extraordinary behavior"?

- (a) The leopard had seen the cow before.
- (b) The leopard enjoyed playing with the cow
- (c) The leopard treated the cow like its own kind Boere:
- (d) The leopard had been frequenting the village every night.

Answer:

- (c) The leopard treated the cow like its own kind Boere:

Unseen Passage 5

Water Wonders Try the following experiment showing condensation.

You will need

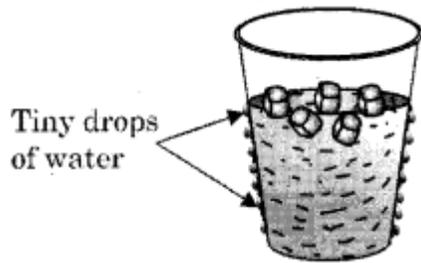
- a transparent drinking glass
- some ice-cubes

Step 1: Fill the glass three-quarters full with water.

Step 2: Add the ice-cubes to the water until the water level is close to the top.



Step 3: Leves the glass until water droplets form on the outside of the glass.



Explanation: The water droplets on the outside of the glass come from the air. As the air outside the glass. cools, the water vapour in the air condenses and water droplets are formed.

Question 1.

In the experiment, you will need a _____ glass.

- (a) clear
- (b) tinted
- (c) opaque
- (d) patterned

Answer:

- (a) clear

Question 2.

The glass should be three-quarters full so that _____.

- (a) water can disappear from the glass
- (b) the ice cubes can float on the surface of the water
- (c) water will not overflow when the ice cubes are added
- (d) water droplets can be formed on the outside of the glass

Answer:

- (c) water will not overflow when the ice cubes are added

Question 3.

The diagrams have been included with the instructions so that the reader _____.

- (a) knows the order of the steps
- (b) knows the goals of the experiment
- (c) can prepare the materials needed
- (d) is clear and understands the steps easily

Answer:

- (d) is clear and understands the steps easily

Question 4.

The list of materials in the instructions helps to _____.

- (a) fill the page

- (b) test our reading skills
- (c) prepare for the experiment
- (d) give us the aim of the experiment

Answer:

- (c) prepare for the experiment

Question 5.

The text is written using mainly the _____.

- (a) verbs in the imperative nouns
- (b) action verbs...adjectives
- (c) simple present tense...first person pronoun
- (d) simple past tense...third person pronoun

Answer:

- (a) verbs in the imperative. nouns

Unseen Passage 6

Read the following poem carefully and answer the questions that follow.

The Why Of Books

*Books are not a lie but true,
they give you the knowledge
of honesty and cruelty.
They tell you about history,
in which there is always a mystery.
They can make your career,
which will not lead to any failure.
They give you a way and never say to away!
They are the oceans of wisdom,
which will make you one day
the master of kingdom.
Knowledge is big, like the sky,
which always goes high and high.
So books always lead to a right way,
and will never take you on a wrong way.
'Coz they are your true friends.*

Choose the most appropriate option.

- (a) What do books provide us?
 - (i) knowledge of honesty
 - (ii) knowledge of cruelty

- (iii) both (1) & (2)
- (iv) neither (1) nor (2)

(b) What do books tell us about?

- (i) History
- (ii) Geography
- (iii) Mathematics (iv). English

(c) Books are the vast

- (i) oceans of evil
- (ii) oceans of wisdom
- (iii) oceans to do wrong deeds
- (iv) oceans of cruelty

(d) Books lead us to

- (i) a wrong path
- (ii) a right path
- (iii) a crooked path
- (iv) a thorny path

(e) According to the poet books are our

- (i) true enemies
- (ii) false enemies
- (iii) true friends
- (iv) false friends

Unseen Passage 7

Homeopathy is a form of alternative medicine, first proposed by German physician Samuel Hahnemann in 1796, that attempts to treat patients with heavily diluted medicines. Homeopathic remedies are prepared by serial dilution with shaking by forceful striking, which homeopaths term succession after each dilution under the assumption that this increases the effect of the treatment. Homeopaths call this process potentization. Dilution often continues until none of the original substance remains. Homeopathic reference books known as repertories are then consulted, and a remedy is selected based on the totality of symptoms.

Homeopathic remedies are considered safe, but are criticized for putting patients at risk due to advice against conventional medicine such as vaccinations, anti-malarial drugs, and antibiotics. Depending on the dilution, homeopathic remedies may not contain any pharmacologically active molecules, and for such remedies to have a pharmacological effect would violate fundamental principles of science.

Modern homeopaths have proposed that water has a memory that allows homeopathic preparations to work without any of the original substance; however, there are no verified observations or scientifically plausible physical mechanisms for such a phenomenon. The lack of convincing scientific evidence supporting homeopathy's efficacy and its use of remedies lacking active ingredients have caused homeopathy to be described as pseudoscience.

Unseen Passage Multiple Choice Questions

Question 1.

Homeopathy treats patients with:

- (a) Heavy medicine
- (b) strong medicine
- (c) diluted medicine
- (d) concentrated medicine

Answer:

- (c) diluted medicine

Question 2.

Homeopathic remedies are prepared by serial dilution with shaking by forceful striking, the procedure is known as

- (a) succession
- (b) potentization
- (c) dilution
- (d) convention

Answer:

- (a) succession

Question 3.

A report of UK states that homeopathy is not more useful than a placebo because after dilution the medicine don't contain any.

- (a) chemical
- (b) acid
- (c) pharmacologically active substance
- (d) vaccine against diseases

Answer:

- (c) pharmacologically active substance

Question 4.

Homeopathy is also termed as pseudoscience because:

- (a) it is based on false notions effectiveness
- (b) it lacks scientific evidence on its
- (c) it has side effects

(d) it is a slow treatment

Answer:

(b) it lacks scientific evidence on its

Question 5.

The word in the passage which means the same as the facts /objects that make you believe that something is true:

(a) pharmacology

(b) placebo

(c) accredited

(d) evidence

Answer:

(d) evidence

Unseen Passage 8

I lay in sorrow, in deep distress;
My grief a proud man heard;
His looks were cold, he gave me gold,
But not a kindly word
My sorrow passed – I paid him back
The gold he gave to me;
Then stood erect and spoke my thanks
And blessed his charity.

I lay in want, and grief and pain;
A poor man passed my way,
He bound my head, he gave me bread,
He watched me night and day.
How shall I pay him back again
For all he did to me?
Oh, gold is great, but greater far
Is heavenly sympathy.

Question 1.

How did the proud man help the poet when he was in deep distress'?

(a) He gave him jewels

(b) He took him home

(c) He gave some money

(d) He pitied the poet

Answer:

(c) He gave some money

Question 2.

What was it he did not give the poet?

- (a) money
- (b) gold
- (c) food
- (d) sympathy.

Answer:

- (d) sympathy.

Question 3.

How did the poor man take care of the poet?

- (a) The poor man gave him some money and food
- (b) The poor man gave gold and kind words
- (c) The poor man gave food to the poet and took care of him day and night
- (d) He took the poet home and bound his head which was hurt

Answer:

- (c) The poor man gave food to the poet and took care of him day and night

Question 4.

Which of the following statements is not true?

- (a) The poet repaid his debt to the proud man by thanking him
- (b) The poor man blessed the charity of the poet
- (c) When the poet was in sorrow he was given money
- (d) The poet says he cannot repay the poor man for his sympathy

Answer:

- (b) The poor man blessed the charity of the poet

Question 5.

Which word in the poem means “giving money to a person who is in need”?

- (a) charity
- (b) sympathy
- (c) kindness
- (d) distress

Answer:

- (a) charity

Unseen Passage 9

Weavers, weaving at break of day,
Why do you weave a garment so gay?
Blue as the wing of a bluebird wild,
We weave the robes of a new-born child.
Weavers, weaving at fall of night,
Why do you weave a garment so bright?

Like the plumes of a peacock, purple and green,
We weave the marriage-veils of a queen.
Weavers, weaving solemn and still,
What do you weave in the moonlight chill?
White as a feather and white as a cloud,
We weave a dead man's funeral shroud.

Question 1.

What do the weavers weave in the early morning?

- (a) a bright blue cloth
- (b) a dull grey cloth
- (c) a soft white cloth
- (d) a red coloured veil

Answer:

- (a) a bright blue cloth

Question 2.

The _____ is purple and green coloured. .

- (a) dress of the weavers
- (b) dress of a newborn child
- (c) the queen's marriage veil
- (d) the robe of a king

Answer:

- (c) the queen's marriage veil

Question 3.

Whom does the poet address in the poem?

- (a) weavers
- (b) children
- (c) queens
- (d) all the above

Answer:

- (a) weavers

Question 4.

What do the weavers weave in the chilly moonlight?

- (a) a garment light as a feather
- (b) a garment meant to cover a dead man
- (c) a garment to keep away the chill
- (d) a garment to wrap a newborn child in

Answer:

- (b) a garment meant to cover a dead man

Question 5.

The three stages of life mentioned in the poem are _____

- (a) infancy, childhood and senility
- (b) infancy, youth and death
- (c) infancy, adolescence, middle age
- (d) childhood, adulthood and senility

Answer:

- (b) infancy, youth and death

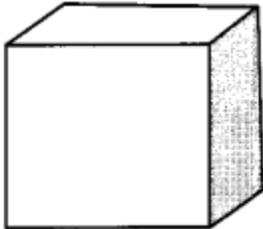
Type – II

Read the passage given below and write the answer you consider the most appropriate in your answer sheet.

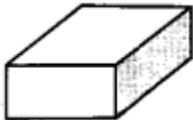
Unseen Passage 1

You may have heard of 3-D movies. You may have even seen one. The D in 3-D stands for dimensional. A dimension is a direction that something can be measured. Flat things can be measured in two ways. They can be measured by length and by width. That's why flat things are sometimes called 2-D or two-dimensional. Three-dimensional things can be measured in three ways. They can be measured by length and width like flat things. They can also be measured by their height. Height is what lets them come up off the paper or the screen. Three-dimensional shapes in math are called solids. Let's look at some of the most common solids.

A cube has six square sides. The sides are called faces



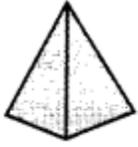
A rectangular prism has six sides that are all shaped like rectangles.



A sphere is shaped like Earth. It is also like a playground ball.



A square pyramid has a square on the bottom, and four triangle-shaped sides.



Answer the following questions based on the reading passage.

1. What is a dimension?
2. How can flat, two-dimensional things be measured?
3. What are three-dimensional shapes called in math?
4. What shape are the sides of a cube?
5. What does a sphere look like?

Answer:

1. The direction something can be measured
2. length and Width
3. solids
4. Squares
5. like the earth or a ball

Unseen Passage 2

People moan about poverty as a great evil and it seems to be an accepted belief that if people had plenty of money, they would be happy, and get more out of life. As a rule there is more genuine satisfaction in life and more is obtained from life in the humble cottage of the poor man than in the palace of rich men, who are attended by servants and governesses at a later stage. At the same time I am glad to think they do not know what they have missed.

It is because I know how sweet and happy and pure the home of honest poverty is, how free from perplexing care and social envies and jealousies, how loving and united the members are in the common interest of supporting the family that I sympathies with the rich man's boy and congratulate the poor man's son. It is for these reasons that from the ranks of the poor so many strong eminent self-reliant men have sprung. If you read the list of the "Immortals who were not born to die" you will find that most of them have been poor.

Answer the following questions based on the reading passage.

1. What is the popular notion about poverty?
2. Where can one get more genuine satisfaction in life?
3. Why does the author pity the rich man's boy?
4. Find two other words in the passage with similar meanings to 'confusing and self-dependent'.
5. How has the author compared rich with the poor? What is his conclusion?

Answer:

1. The popular notion about poverty is that it is a great evil.
2. One can get more genuine satisfaction in life in the humble cottage of the poor man.
3. The author pities the rich man's boy because he does not know the sweetness, happiness and purity of honest poverty.
4. The word 'perplexed' means 'confusing' and the word 'self-reliant' means self-dependent.
5. The author feels that more genuine satisfaction is obtained from life in the humble cottage of the poor man than in the palace of rich men who are attended by servants and governesses. He knows first hand how sweet and happy and pure the home of honest poverty is. The poor man is free from social envies. The members of a poor family are united, loving and share a common interest in being supportive to each other. The rich boy does not know these pleasures.

Unseen Passage 3

Character is destiny. Character is that on which the destiny of a nation is built. One cannot have a great nation with men of small character. We must have young men and women who look upon others as the living image of themselves as our Shastras have so often declared. But whether in public life or student life, we cannot reach great heights, if we are lacking in character. We cannot climb the mountain when the ground at our feet is crumbling.

When the very basis of our structure is shaky how can we reach the heights we have set before ourselves? We must all have humility. Here is a country in which we are all interested in building up for whatever service we take up, we should not care for what we receive. We should know how much we can put into that service. That should be the principle that should animate our young men and women. Ours is a great country, we have had for centuries a great history. The whole of the East reflects our culture.

Answer the following questions based on the reading passage.

1. What is the passage about?
2. What kind of young men and women must we have?
3. How can we reach the great heights we have set before ourselves?
4. Why is ours a great country?
5. Find the synonyms for the words/phrases from the above passage.
(a) break a fall apart into small fragments
(b) the quality of a modest view

Answer:

1. This passage deals with the importance of character formation in moulding the destiny of our nation.
2. We must have young men and women who look upon others as the living images of

themselves as our Shastras have so often declared.

3. We can reach the great heights we have set before ourselves if our character is built on a strong foundation of sterling qualities.

4. Ours is a great country with a history that goes back for centuries. Its rich cultural heritage makes it unique. It has also contributed a great deal to the world of knowledge and culture.

5. (a) crumbling (b) humility

Unseen Passage 4

From Rameswaram to the Rashtrapati Bhavan, it's been a long journey. Taking to Nona Walia on the eve of Teacher's Day, President Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam talks about life's toughest lessons learnt and his mission being a teacher to the Indian youth. "A proper education would help nurture a sense of dignity and self-respect among our youth," says President Kalam. There's still a child in him though, and he's still curious about learning new things. Life's a mission for President Kalam. Nonetheless, he remembers his first lesson in life and how it changed his destiny.

"I was studying in Standard V and must have been all of 10. My teacher, Sri Sivasubramania Iyer was telling how birds fly. He drew a diagram of a bird on the blackboard, depicting the wings, tail and the body with the head and then explained how birds soar to the sky. At the end of the class, I said I didn't understand. Then he asked the other students if they had understood, but nobody had understood how birds fly," he recalls.

"That evening, the entire class was taken to Rameshwaram shore," the President continues, "My teacher showed us sea birds. We saw marvellous formations of them flying and how their wings flapped. Then my teacher asked us, 'Where is the bird's engine and how is it powered?' I knew then that birds are powered by their own life and motivation. I understood all about birds' dynamics."

Answer the following questions based on the reading passage.

1. When did Nona Walia talk to the President Dr. A. P.J. Abdul Kalam?

2. What did the teacher draw on the blackboard?

3. What did Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam learn when the entire class was taken to the Rameswaram shore?

4. (a) Give the antonyms of:

(i) remembers

(ii) toughest.

- (b) Which words in the passage mean the following
(i) fate
(ii) forces that produce movement.

5. What inspiration do you gain after reading about Dr. Kalam's experiences as a student?

Answer:

1. Nona Walia spoke to the President Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam on the eve of Teacher's Day.
2. The teacher drew a detailed diagram of a bird on the blackboard showing the wings, tail and the body with the head.
3. He learnt that birds were powered by their own life and motivation.
4. (a) (i) forgets
(ii) easiest.

- (b) (i) destiny
(ii) motivation.

5. This passage teaches us that one must have a craving to learn more and more in life. I also learnt that by asking questions we can learn more. If we don't understand a particular concept, we must ask the teacher and not keep the doubts to ourselves.

Unseen Passage 5

There is something disarming about Maria Sharapova, something at odds with her ready smile and glamorous attire. And that something in her lifted her on Monday, 22 August 2005 to the world number one position in women's tennis. All this happened in almost no time. Poised beyond her years, the Siberian born teenager took just four years as a professional to reach the pinnacle. However, the rapid ascent in a fiercely competitive world began nine years before with a level of sacrifice few children would be prepared to endure.

Little Maria had not yet celebrated her tenth birthday when she was packed off to train in the United States. That trip to Florida with her father Yuri launched her on the path to success and stardom. But it also required a heart wrenching two-year separation from her mother Yelena. The latter was compelled to stay back in Siberia because of visa restrictions. The nine-year-old girl had already learnt an important lesson in life—that tennis excellence would only come at a price.

"I used to be so lonely," Maria Sharapova recalls. "I missed my mother terribly. My father was working as much as he could to keep my tennis-training going. So, he couldn't see me either". "Because I was so young, I used to go to bed at 8 p.m. The other tennis

pupils would come in at 11 p.m. and wake me up and order me to tidy up the room and clean it.” “Instead of letting that depress me, I became more quietly determined and mentally tough. I learnt how to take care of myself.

I never thought of quitting because I knew what I wanted. When you come from nothing and you have nothing, then it makes you very hungry and determined... I would have put up with much more humiliation and insults than that to steadfastly pursue my dream.”

Answer the following questions based on the reading passage.

1. How many year did Sharapova take to reach the pinnacle as a professional?
2. Whom did Maria Sharapova miss terribly? Why?
3. What penalty did Maria Sharapova have to pay, being younger than the other players?
4. What qualities of Maria Sharapova would you like to see inculcated by every sportsman in the competitive world of sports? Answer:
 1. Sharapova took just four years to reach the pinnacle.
 2. Sharapova missed her mother Yelena terribly as she could not accompany her during her training phase in the United States due to visa restrictions.
 3. Being younger than the other players, Maria Sharapova had to face humiliation and insults from the senior players in the form of cleaning the rooms.
 4. Every sportsman must inculcate certain qualities in order to reach the pinnacle of success. He must be very brave and tough as there is cut-throat competition. He must be hungry for success and must possess the 3 Ds – dedication, determination and devotion. And last but not the least must have a ‘never say die’ attitude.

Unseen Passage 6

Nicholas Chorier is not your usual photographer. He is a kite aerial photographer. He uses a kite to hoist his camera into the skies and clicks photographs while the camera dangles precariously mid-air. As a teenager, Nicholas had two passions – photography and kite flying. During a trip to India to make a photo report on kite making, he learnt about this unique style of photography. Fascinated, he literally tied his two hobbies together for a living. Nicholas learnt to make strong kites modelled on the Japanese kites, Rokkaku that could endure harsh winds. A novice in his chosen field, he then set out to train himself.

Today he is one of the most well-known kite aerial photographers in the world. The technique is to tie a cradle containing the photography equipment to the string of the kite and then fly it, thus launching the camera into air. From the ground, Nicholas manipulates the angles of the camera with a remote. An air-to-ground video link enables him to see the view from the kite’s vantage point. Once satisfied with the frame, he clicks a picture. However, the job does have its pitfalls too.

Once, his kite disappeared in the Yamuna river, with his expensive camera in tow. He is especially fond of India, having made a couple of trips and taken many spectacular photos. "India is too vast and beautiful a country to be captured through the lenses in one life" he says. He recently released a book, Kite's Eye View: India between Earth and Sky. Though it includes photographs of off taken sites like the Taj Mahal, it shows them from a totally different perspective.

Answer the following questions based on the reading passage.

1. What were Nicholas's two passions?
2. How does Nicholas take aerial photographs?
3. What is 'Rokkaku'?
4. (a) India is too vast a country to be captured through the lenses. (Remove too and rewrite)
(b) Nicholas learnt to make strong kites. (Rewrite using past perfect tenses)
5. What risks do aerial photographers face?

Answer:

1. Nicholas's two passions are photography and kite flying.
2. Nicholas takes aerial photographs by tying a cradle containing the camera to the string of a kite and flying it, manipulating the angles of the camera with a remote and uses air to ground video link to see the view and then clicks the picture.
3. Rokkaku is a Japanese kite that could endure harsh winds.
4. (a) India is so vast a country that it cannot be captured through the lenses.
(b) Nicholas had learnt to make strong kites.
5. The risk of losing their expensive camera or other photographic equipments is faced by aerial photographers.

Unseen Passage 7

Maria Montessori was born in Chiaravalle, in Italy on 31st August 1870. In spite of discouragement from all quarters, Maria became the first woman medical graduate from the University of Rome. In those days women were not enrolled at medical colleges. After her medical education she was made in charge of an Institute for mentally retarded children. In those days people believed that mentally retarded should not learn anything. So, no one taught them anything even simple things like attending to their needs and changing their dresses.

During her work in the institution, Maria observed these children very carefully and saw that these children seemed to find out for themselves about many things. They would reach out for anything they found, turn it around, see its shape, etc. She concluded that, given proper training and attention, these children could be taught to take care of basic needs and also some of them could pass the reading and writing test as ordinary children. Maria taught the children to distinguish between colours, sound, smells and

tastes. She made frames with button holes and buttons to teach children how to tie shoe laces.

Her methods worked well and soon the children were able to do many things on their own. Maria thought that her method could be extended to be useful to ordinary children too. So, Maria opened the first school in the slums of Rome for children between three and six years. She called her school "Casa Di Bambini" (Italian for "Children's House"). She applied her medical and psychological knowledge and experience for proper training of normal children.

She noted that when a child is really interested in the exercise he had chosen, he would become completely absorbed and could not be distracted. The child, thus, learnt from actually what it was doing. Dr. Maria found that children were ready for different tasks at different stages and that they needed the right exercise at the right state. A Montessori teacher's job was not to tell children what to do but to recognise in what state the child was and to guide him.

Also, children should be free to move about. They should not be pinned to their seats. Children became self-reliant and independent with this method. The children were not given any punishment in a Montessori School because even if a child behaved badly at first, when he became engrossed in the activity of his choice, he would be quiet and settle down. Maria believed that all human beings passed through certain set stages of psychological development. Differences were mainly because of the opportunities offered by the environment in which they were brought up as a child.

Answer the following questions based on the reading passage.

1. Where was Maria Montessori born?(Choose the correct answer and rewrite it)
2. Where did Maria open the first school for normal children?
3. What does "Casa Di Bambini" mean in the passage?
4. When is a child completely absorbed in learning things, according to Maria?
5. How did her method of teaching become effective on children?
6. Why are the children not given punishment?

Answer:

1. Maria Montessori was born in Chiaravalle, in Italy.
2. Maria opened the first school for normal children in the slums of Rome.
3. "Casa Di Bambini" in the passage means Children's House
4. A child is completely absorbed in learning things when it is really interested in the exercise it had chosen.
5. Her method of teaching made children become self-reliant and independent. 6. The children are not given punishment because even if they behaved badly at first, when they became engrossed in the activity of their choice, they would be quiet and settle down.

Unseen Passage 8

It was a hot day. The sun scorched down and everywhere you looked, you could see the heat waves rippling above the sand. John groaned and rolled over, realizing that half of his body was well and truly burnt. He had not meant to doze off in the sun but the heat and late nights studying for his examinations has just crept up on him. Stretching, he got to his feet, picked up his boogie board and looked around. The beach, which earlier had been—jam-packed with people the sun, was now comparatively empty. Seagulls swooped down to clean up the remnants of people’s picnic lunches.

The ice-cream van had vanished, as had the lifeguards. John looked up to where the sun was and estimated it was about five o’clock. Time to head home. It was ‘Mum’s Kitchen Rule’ that had him moving homewards. If he did not get home in time for dinner, he would go hungry. Wandering along the water’s edge, kicking at the foam, he happened to glance out to sea. What made him look up at that particular moment, he never knew, but it was the right time for the swimmer he spotted. His hand was up, signaling distress and he was calling out something,

Quickly John glanced around the beach – no one else was close enough to help the man. Cupping his hands to his mouth, he shouted “Help” to get the attention of other people on the beach. Someone waved back to him and John pointed to the swimmer. “Get help,” he shouted. Then without hesitation, he plunged into the sea with his boogie board trailing behind him. John was a strong swimmer and had a good stamina for distance swimming. His coach had tried hard to persuade him to go into competitions but he was not interested.

Now he was swimming for more than enjoyment or medals... he was swimming to save someone’s life. His strokes were strong as he cut through the water. “I must be close to him now,” he thought. Then he heard the man cry. “Help me, I’ve got cramp.” As John reached him, he started to reassure him, “It’s OK, mister. I’ll get you to shore.” “Easier said than done,” John thought to himself. “This man’s big.” He helped the man get on his board. The man was exhausted and weak but he clung to the front of the boogie board and that was all he seemed capable of doing. “His leg must still be cramped.

Fortunately, the sea is not rough and there’s no wave,” John thought as he started swimming back to shore, towing the board behind him. As he reached the shallow water, willing hands appeared to help carry the man ashore. He sat down and began to recover his breath. A small crowd had gathered around the swimmer. “They must know what they are doing,” John thought, reaching for his board and standing up. Feeling tired. but better than he had ever felt in his life before, he figured that since no one needed him, he had better get home before he missed out on his dinner. No one noticed him leave.

Answer the following questions based on the reading passage.

1. Why was John sun burnt at the beach that day?
2. From the passage, what were two things the people who went to the beach did?
3. What kitchen rule do you think John's mother set for John?
4. How do we know that John was not wearing a watch then?
5. Why did John look around the beach after sporting the swimmer in trouble?

Answer:

1. He fell asleep under the hot sun. / He had dozed off in the sun.
2. They sunbathed/picnicked/swam/ate ice-cream.
3. He had to be home at/by a certain time.
4. He had to look at where the sun was to estimate the time.
5. He wanted to see if there was anyone who might help save the swimmer.

Unseen Passage

He drank. When he could not drink anymore, they forced his mouth and stuck the tube in it, and he was forced to drink or drown. He could hear the cries of a man and the screams of another man nearby. He himself could not scream. He writhed in pain and thought he would explode. Blacking out was the best thing he could do. My family was silent after my uncle spoke. I remembered my uncle before he was taken away. A well-built man with a big hug and hearty laugh, he was an amateur pilot and loved to play with radios. I was told that was a crime to the Japanese and so he was taken away. He survived one and a half months in torture, but it left its terrible scar on him.

I went forward and held his calloused hand. My uncle has large hands— he was a very good tennis player— these hands now shook even as he held a glass of water. His once smiley face had aged ten years. And again, I caught him staring at nothing. As my mother pulled me back beside her, a thought occurred to me. "Is making toys a crime?" I whispered to mother. We has no toys to play with, and I made my own out of yellow mud near our house. "Shush," Mother said. "Do you really want to stay in Singapore?" my uncle asked Father. You're a wanted man.

It's very dangerous here for you and your family. Once they get word that the legal adviser to the Chinese government is here, they'd come and get you." "I know," said Father. "But we have decided to stay. Gary needs treatment. We cannot go." A month ago, Father told my sister, two brothers and I that we were going on a cruise to India or Australia. That was before the Japanese came. Then my eldest brother broke his leg in a cycling accident.

"Don't worry about us," said Father. "We were never removed from the ship's passenger list. On record we're on board the ship towards India. The chief clerk to the Kempeitai (Secret Police) is a friend of mine and he has shown them that we'd left the country and got my name deleted from the wanted list. The Japanese thinks we've left Singapore."

“But if someone knew about you and went to them...” My uncle faltered. “In fact, someone does know. I’ve paid him his price.” “It’d never stop! You’d be found out!” my uncle grasped Father’s arm.

Answer the following questions based on the reading passage.

1. Who are “they’ in paragraph one?
2. Which phrase in paragraph one has the same meaning as losing consciousness?
3. Why was the author’s uncle arrested?
4. What does “it” in paragraph 3 refer to?
5. How do we know that the torture had greatly weakened the author’s uncle?

Answer:

1. It refers to the Japanese soldiers.
2. The phrase is ‘Blacking Out
3. He played with radios which was a crime to the Japanese
4. The word “it’ refers to the torture of the authors’ uncle.
5. His hands shook even as he held a glass of water

Unseen Passage 10

Each year, between May and September, more than a thousand leatherback turtles make the arduous journey across the Pacific to lay their eggs along the stretch of beach near Kuala Trengganu at the Malaysia. Throngs of tourists make a pilgrimage there to witness this awesome ritual.

In the murkiness of midnight, people huddle together on the coold sand. They speak in whispers. Suddenly, their guide raises a hand and everyone understands the cue. In total silence, they wait and when he points in a direction, their gazes follow. About a hundred metres away from the congregation, in the dim light of half moon, a massive form emerges from the water and lurches across the sand. With monumental effort, the creature heaves itself up towards the dunes, halthing now and then in exhaustion. Then, twenty metres away from them, the plodding thumps cease.

The creature is a giant leatherback turtle, drawn by some strange instinct to deposit her eggs along this particular stretch of beach. She emerges from the sea, nervous and excitable. She is now wholly engrossed in the preparation. She sweeps the sand with her powerful front flippers. Then she positions her tail over the narrow crevice and begins to lay her eggs. People touch the smooth black skin and children pose for pictures on her back. Oblivious to all these, the creature continues depositing her eggs while her eyes stream with tears. The leatherback is becoming an endangered species.

Sea creatures pose danger to the population. Some of the hatchlings fall prey to them but humans are deadlier. With them, the eggs do not even get to become hatchlings. It

is not unheard of to have an entire nest wiped out of its eggs. At Pantai Penyu (Turtle Beach) the Malaysian government maintains a hatchery to protect them. A quota system limits the number of eggs which local residents may collect. The rest are guarded at the hatchery until they become hatchlings and are ready to return to where they belong. The giant leatherback is still dropping eggs into the hole.

Two employees of the hatchery now join the circle of tourists. When the great creature has deposited the last of her ninety-odd eggs, she lunges aside, covering the hole with a few scoops of sand. Then she turns towards the water and labours once again across the sand in agonizing thrists. The crowd trails her to the surf while the two men start work. Then, the leatherback, regaining her grace, disappears into the water.

Answer the following questions based on the reading passage.

1. Who are the people who “huddle” (line 5) together?
2. In the sentence “Suddenly, their guide raises a hand and everyone understands the cue” (line 6 – 7), what do they understand?
3. What does the phrase “with monumental effort” (line 11) tell you about the way the turtle moves along the sand.
4. Does the author know why the turtles choose to lay their eggs along the beach at Kuala Trengganu? Which phrase tells you that?
5. Who does the word “them” in line 23 refer to?

Answer:

1. They are the people who want to witness the turtles lay their eggs
2. They understand that they have to keep quiet.
3. It tells me that the turtle moves with great difficulty.
4. No, the author does not know. The phrase is “by some strange instinct”.
5. It refers to humans

Unseen Passage 11

Even as a child, Dr William Tan refused to be the victim. He was struck by polio when he was two and could not walk or run. In kindergarten, the bullies started hitting him. “They were very nasty to me. They would hit me on the head and run away. And I couldn’t go after them,” he recalled.

Dr Tan’s make-the-most-of-what-you-have attitude explains why he is what he is today: a doctor, a neuroscientist, a Frulbright scholar, a Raffles scholar and also the first paraplegic to complete 10 marathons in 7 continents in 70 days.

This latest feat – which he is submitting to the Guinness World Records for consideration – is all the more amazing since he travelled alone, often staying in small travel lodges without facilities for the disabled. There were obstacles aplenty. In

Antartica, he got stuck in mud; in Arizona, he nearly broke his hand when it got caught in the wheel; in Amsterdam, he injured his right chest going over cobblestone; and in Bangkok, he nearly missed the start due to traffic jam.

Dr Tan said candidly, "There were moments when I thought of giving up because it was too tough. And then other things came to my mind. I had trained very hard for each race – 450 push ups a day, going to the gymnasium – there was too much to lose." Another thought kept him going, "I recalled that I started this challenge to raise money for cancer." In 1980, he became the first Singaporean to complete a Marathon in a wheelchair. Since then, he has been in many marathons, won numerous medals and raised \$14 million for charity.

He became a wheelchair athlete only in the late 1970s after meeting with Mr Wahid Baba, an ex-police officer who pioneered wheelchair sports in Singapore. "That opened a whole new horizon in my life. I loved it. I loved having to push and push and push," Dr Tan said. Still, the marathon veteran admits his latest feat is the toughest thing he has ever done. "Previously, I was able to pick which marathons I wanted to do, but for the world record attempt, I just had to take whichever fit into my schedule," he said.

He is also keeping mum about his next world record attempt next month. "If I announce it, someone in the United States or United Kingdom might do it next week and then it will be gone."

Answer the following questions based on the reading passage.

1. What did the bullies do to Dr William Tan when he was in kindergarten?
2. What made Dr William Tan's latest feat the toughest?
3. How does Dr William Tan prepare himself before every marathon?
4. Which word in the passage aptly describes Dr William Tan as an experienced marathon paraplegic?
5. Would you consider Dr William Tan an outstanding sportsman? State one reason to support your answer.

Answer:

1. They hit Dr William Tan on the head and ran away.
2. Dr William Tan travelled alone and often stayed in small travel lodges without facilities for the disabled.
3. He would do 450 pushups a day and go to the gymnasium.
4. The word is "veteran".
5. Yes, I would consider Dr William Tan an outstanding sportsman. He was on a wheelchair but he still competed on many marathons.

Unseen Passage Practice Questions

Unseen Passage 1

Native American Indian groups in North America lived in different cultural regions, each of which developed its own customs and traditions. A custom is the specific way in which a group of people does something. This, can include how foods are prepared, what clothing is worn, the kinds of celebrations and much more. The set of customs developed and shared by a culture over time is a tradition. A culture's customs are often determined by the natural resources found in their environment. In the Desert Southwest region, cloth weaving developed as a custom. The area has fewer large animals whose skins can be used for making clothing or blankets.

Cloth weaving, was a way of meeting the need for clothing without using animal skins. In the Eastern Woodlands area, however, hunting and fishing were daily activities. Since it was easy to get animal skins, developing skills like weaving were less important. The traditional roles of men and women in the native tribes varied as well. In hunting cultures, men were often away from home during the day to hunt animals for food. Women did many chores around the village while they were gone. In cultures where crops were grown, it was usually the men who tended them.

Folklore was an important part of all Native American cultures. They had no written language. Telling the tribe's stories orally was the way they preserved them from generation to generation so they would not be lost. The tribe used chanting, storytelling and singing as a way to remember the tribe's folklore. The stories told the tribe's history, funny adventures and accomplishments. Folklore also helped unite the people of the tribe. Religion was an important part of Native American cultures.

The celebration of the tribe's faith and worship often involved special ceremonies. Harvest ceremonies were a common way to give thanks to the tribe's gods for a good crop. Other ceremonies combined religious songs and dances with social activities. The ceremonies reinforced the people's trust in their leaders' ability to provide for their needs.

Answer the following questions based on the reading passage.

1. What is a custom?
2. What are the ways that Native Americans told their stories?
3. In your own words, explain the importance of folklore.
4. Explain why some tribes developed weaving.
5. Write the suitable word meaning for
 - (a) necessary duty
 - (b) traditional belief (para 2)

Unseen Passage 2

In the 1600s large farms called plantations flourished in the southern colonies of America. The soil there was rich. The warm climate created excellent conditions for successfully growing crops for profit. Two favorite crops of the times were tobacco and rice. They were later joined by indigo, a plant used to make a deep blue dye for coloring ink and cloth. Traditional family farms were relatively small. Families were large, depending on all members of the family to do the work on the farm. Often, the farm raised only enough to meet the family's needs.

This included a small surplus to be used for the next year's seed. In particularly good times, an abundance of any crop would be canned and preserved for the winter. There was less fresh food available in the winter. Additional small amounts might be traded with other farmers for crops of another kind. This would increase the variety of food available. Rarely would any crops be sold for profit. Running large plantation created a new problem.

The members of a single family, or even several together, were not enough people to do all the necessary work on the plantation. Land owners brought workers over from England. Often, working class people who wanted a new start in the Americas would sign a contract and become an indentured servant. Their passage on a ship from England to America was paid by the landowner. The indentured servants were given food, clothing and shelter.

They would work an agreed-upon number of years in the service of the landowner. At the end of their contracted time, they were free to leave the plantation and pursue their new lives in America. Some indentured servants were treated quite fairly. Others were treated with the same disregard as slaves. For all intents and purposes, indentured servants could be considered slaves with the hope of freedom in the future. Their time of servitude would eventually end. For the increasing number of slaves who began arriving from African and the Caribbean, there was no such promise.

Answer the following questions based on the reading passage.

1. What distinguished an indentured servant from a slave?
2. Why did plantations need so many workers?
3. What did indentured servants receive for their work?
4. What motivation might working class people in England have had to sign a contract to work as an indentured servant?
5. Find the suitable word meaning from the above passage
 - (a) bind as an apprentice
 - (b) the state of being a slave

Unseen Passage 3

"I'm in for it now," muttered Kelly to herself as she saw her teacher glaring at her. The day had begun badly for Kelly and it seemed to go from bad to worse! She had been growled at in front of the whole class for being late and was not allowed to say why she was late. Then there was the Maths test! Maths, Kelly decided, was just not her best subject. At recess, the children teased her for being put on detention because she was late. Then lunch time came and she had no lunch. To top it all off, she had to deliver newspapers after school in the dark.

Kelly moaned – sometimes it was so hard to stay happy. The last of her papers had been delivered. Pushing her bicycle up the hill towards her house, she was just too tired, cold and hungry to hum a happy tune. She still had her homework to do. As she came in the door, Dad said, "Kelly, you had a visitor while you were out, a 'Mrs. Johnson'. She left this for you." Kelly raised her head and stared at her father in surprise. "Who's Mrs Johnson? I don't know any Johnsons."

"Well this letter and parcel have your name on them, so she must know you," Dad said. "What does it say?" Kelly opened the envelope and took out the letter. She read it in silence, her eyes widening in surprise and pleasure. "It's a letter of thanks, Dad. I helped a little girl called Jamie this morning on the way to school. She had a bad fall. That's why I was late for school and then got a detention for that. This is a letter from her mother to say 'thanks'.

It's a really nice letter." "Wow!" exclaimed Dad as he finished reading the letter. Kelly unwrapped the small parcel. Inside the wrapping was the handkerchief she had used to bandage Jamie's knee, all cleaned and ironed. Under her hanky was a little, old-looking, black velvet box. Carefully, Kelly opened the box. Inside lay a gold chain with a heart-shaped locket. Engraved on it was the inscription, "I am special". Kelly stared at it with tears in her eyes. She lightly fingered the little golden locket. In future, she decided, "Whenever I feel 'ugly', I'll just touch this locket and remember its message...I am special."

Answer the following questions based on the reading passage.

1. Why was Kelly late for school that morning?
2. Why was Kelly hungry and tired when she got home that evening?
3. What was the surprise waiting for Kelly when she got home?
4. How do you think Kelly felt as she stared at the locket?
5. How did the heart-shaped locket help lift Kelly's spirit?

Unseen Passage 4

Few people ever took Notice of Mr. Jimmy Tan whenever he entered a room. He was a shy, quiet and simple man who preferred to keep to himself in public. However, people

who had met him would realise that he is actually a very remarkable person who had achieved many spectacular results in scientific experiments. On the other hand, Mr. Thomas Kim, a fellow scientist, was a man everyone would notice on the streets. He, wore bright outfits with huge flower prints, spoke with a booming voice, and his laughter could be heard from all corners of a room. In addition to the differences in their characters,

Mr. Kim and Mr. Tan were also great rivals at work in the Institute of Future Science. On Christmas Eve, everyone left work early to celebrate the special occasion, except for Mr. Tan and Mr. Kim. They were in their laboratory analyzing the results of their latest experiments. Mr. Tan realized that something special was taking place in his experiment – the bacteria he had cultured were growing extremely quickly under high pressure and at a very low temperature. After noting down the findings in his notebook, he left the room to prepare for another round of tests. Shortly after, Mr. Kim entered. “Hey Jimmy,” Mr. Kim called out, “do you have an extra copy of the laboratory booking form?”

There was no reply, so Mr. Kim ruffled through Mr. Tan’s things. He soon found Mr. Tan’s notebook and was horrified to see that Mr. Tan had managed to make one of the most important discoveries in modern science. “Oh no, this cannot be! He will become very famous if he publishes this finding. Soon, he may even be promoted to be Head of Research and I will have to work under him! I cannot let this happen,” Mr. Kim thought to himself.,

Mr. Kim in to the deep-freeze cabinet where the Petri dish containing the – bacteria was kept He removed the dish, slotted them into his pocket, and returned to his own laboratory. Mr. Tan came back an hour later to find his notebook and the Petri dish missing He knew that Mr. Kim had taken them and went to Mr. Kim’s laboratory to confront him. When Mr. Tan opened the door to Mr. Kim’s laboratory, he found Mr. Kim lying on the floor motionless. His face was pale and his skin had turned black. The deadly bacteria had been handled improperly and had infected Mr. Kim. Mr. Tan shook his head and left.

Answer the following questions based on the reading passage.

1. What was Mr. Tan’s occupation?
2. Which sentence tells you why Mr. Kim was someone who was easily recognised by people?
3. Where did Mr. Tan and Mr. Kim work?
4. Why did Mr. Tan and Mr. Kim not get along?
5. What did Mr. Tan discover in the experiment he conducted on Christmas Eve?

Unseen Passage 5

“As you can see,” the ferry captain said over his bullhorn, “a plane has crashed into the World Trade Centre.” It was 8:48 and our commuter boat had just left Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey, for New York City. It was the kind of morning pilots call “severe clear”. We could see the skyscrapers of lower Manhattan – still 40 minutes away – with aching clarity. Like everyone else, I watched in horror as smoke spewed from the upper floors of the north tower. Metal strips that had encased the building began to unfurl like cans of tuna fish. Then it dawned on me: My brother, Michael, was somewhere inside that 110 storey building.

A week earlier, Mike had joined one of his best friends, Spike Tucker, or “Tuck’ at Cantor Fitzgerald, an international brokerage firm. Before that, Mike had worked at Prudential Bache for 18 years. Mike and Tuck traded over-the-counter stocks and rode the same boat each morning, reaching their desks by 7:30 without fail. I knew they would be in their office, just did not know what floor it was on. I tried to phone Mike then his wife, Lynn and then my brother, Nick. No answer anywhere. Just as I looked up, a second plane sliced through the upper floors of the south tower.

Everyone gasped. That ruthless smack knocked the wind out of all of us. This was no accident. America, we realized, was under attack. Still we sailed on. We passed the Sandy Hook Lighthouse, the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, all eyes on those twin towers. Orange and yellow fireballs, the size of zeppelins, rang the other. We watched in disbelief as shards of glass and paper rained down on the streets below. I tried to imagine Mike and Tuck running down the stairs to safety. As we approached New York Harbour, the captain announced that no one could disembark. Instead, we would pick up those who had fled office buildings near the trade centre. Black soot and ash now cloaked much of the sky.

The smell of burning plastic and rubber soured the air. Already, thousands of people had crammed the pier. Knowing better, I looked for Mike’s face in the crowd. As we headed back to Atlantic Highlands; I went up to the top deck. Lower Manhattan looked ghastly. However, nothing could prepare me for what came next: the collapse of the south tower. Within seconds it seemed, a huge swirl of ash and debris took down the once soaring skyscraper, changing a landscape I had known and loved since childhood.

Answer the following questions based on the reading passage.

1. What did the passengers on the ferry witness when they first set sail that morning?
2. How do we know that the weather was fine that morning?
3. Explain why the writer was sure that Mike was in the building when the incident occurred.
4. What did the writer do when she realised her brother was in the building?
5. Explain clearly how the writer knew that “this was no accident”?

Unseen Passage 6

As soon as I tasted the prawn curry and chopped beans tossed with shredded coconut, I called the waitress and asked, "Does the chef look like me?" Wilting in Kerala's April heat, Bindhu, the waitress, thought I was mad. But she checked anyway, and returned to report no chance of my discovering a long lost cousin in the kitchen. Well, I could have sworn my mother cooked that prawn theyal and long beans thoran.

I wondered if this, at last, might be the spot my grandparents left for Malaya more than a century ago. I returned from my first trip to India suitably ashamed for the years I had put off going. I learnt what it meant to be taken into the warm embrace of strangers when people would come up and say, "Your face is Malayalee, where are you from?" "Singapore," I would reply, and they would try again, "Before that? Your forefathers?". The link established, I became a brother instantly.

My wife and I chose the gentleness introduction to India, flying to Kerala, cruising the famed Backwaters on a houseboat and staying at a resort by wonderful Lake Vembanad. Still I did not count on people being so disarmingly friendly. On morning walks through the village behind our hotel, well-scrubbed kids were up and playing at 7 am, calling out, "How are you? What is your name?" Women washed pots and pans or whacked their laundry on the side of the fresh water canal. Men were waist-deep, going through their elaborate bath rituals.

A fisherman sporting the brightest grin told me his name was Thamby and displayed a meagre catch of small fish good for frying. His cheerfulness was hard for me to comprehend. On short car trips through small towns, I would catch myself wondering if my grandparents had come from this place or the one just gone by. I left the family mystery unsolved and headed for the hotel's ayurvedic centre. First they made me wear this skimpy thong. Then they dripped a ton of warm medicated oil on me and slathered it all over till I was slipping and sliding.

Next, two masseurs got to work simultaneously. I went back three days in a row. Since we got home, my wife has been casting muldly concerned looks in my direction, half expecting me to break out in one of those dreamy Malayalam love songs we kept hearing everywhere. After a week in withdrawal, I called a number I found on the Internet and began telling the man on the telephone that I had just come back from Kerala and the ayurvedic massage had been very nice, but he would not let me finish.

Uttering a rude word, he attacked the commercialisation of ancient tradition in Kerala. To him, the nice massage was a trap for tourists. For the real thing, I would need at least an hour of consultation at his centre. He would decide what was wrong with me, prescribe the right medicines and diet and only if my ailments called for a massage, would he recommend the right sort. It was so much simpler in Kerala. I would just have to go back for more.

Answer the following questions based on the reading passage.

1. Which word in the first paragraph indicates clearly that the ingredients were finally sliced?
2. Describe the weather in Kerala at that time.
3. Where did the writer's grandparents emigrate to?
4. How did the writer establish the link with the strangers he had met?
5. In the third paragraph, who showed that they were friendly people?