

## Critical Reading Practice Test 3

**Directions:** Questions follow the two passages below. Using only the stated or implied information in each passage and in its introduction, if any, answer the questions.

Questions 1-15 are based on the following passages.

The two passages that follow are taken from recent historical studies of Christopher Columbus.

### Passage 1

In his history published in 1552, Francisco Lopez de Gomara wrote: "The greatest event since the creation of the world (excluding the incarnation and death of Him who created it) (5) is the discovery of the Indies." On the strength of this realization, Columbus emerged from the shadows, reincarnated not so much as a man and historical figure as he was as a myth and symbol. He came to epitomize (10) the explorer and discoverer, the man of vision and audacity, the hero who overcame opposition and adversity to change history. By the end of the sixteenth century, English explorers and writers acknowledged (15) the primacy and inspiration of Columbus. He was celebrated in poetry and plays, especially by the Italians. Even Spain was coming around. In a popular play, Lope de Vega in 1614 portrayed Columbus as a dreamer up (20) against the stolid forces of entrenched tradition, a man of singular purpose who triumphed, the embodiment of that spirit driving humans to explore and discover. Historians cannot control the popularizers of (25) history, mythmakers, or propagandists, and in post-Revolutionary America the few historians who studied Columbus were probably not disposed to try. Even if they had been, there was little information available (30) on which to assess the real Columbus and distinguish the man from the myth. With the

(70) after the voyages of discovery had created the Columbus they wanted to believe in and were quite satisfied with their creation. But scholars were already finding grounds for a major reassessment of (75) Columbus's reputation in history.

### Passage 2

Why should one suppose that a culture like Europe's, steeped as it was in the ardor of wealth, the habit of violence, and the pride of intolerance, dispirited and adrift after a (80) century and more of disease and famine and death beyond experience, would be able to come upon new societies in a fertile world, innocent and defenseless, and not displace and subdue, if necessary destroy, (85) them? Why should one suppose such a culture would pause there to observe, to learn, to borrow the wisdom and the ways of a foreign, heathen people, half naked and befeathered, ignorant of cities and (90) kings and metal and laws, and unschooled in all that the Ancients held virtuous? Was not Europe in its groping era of discovery in the fifteenth century in fact in search of salvation, as its morbid sonnets said, or of (95) that regeneration which new lands and new peoples and of course new riches would be presumed to provide? And there was salvation there, in the New World, though it was not of a kind the (100) Europeans then understood. They thought first that exploitation was salvation, and they went at that with a vengeance, and found new foods and medicines and treasures, but that proved not to be; that colonization

discovery and publication of new Columbus documents by Martin Fernandez de Navarrete in 1825, this was less of an excuse, (35) and yet the material only provided more ammunition to those who would embellish the symbolic Columbus through the nineteenth century. Washington Irving mined the new documents (40) to create a hero in the romantic mold favored in the century's literature. Irving's Columbus was "a man of great and inventive genius" and his "ambition was lofty and noble, inspiring him with high thoughts, and (45) an anxiety to distinguish himself by great achievements." Perhaps. But an effusive Irving got carried away. He said that Columbus's "conduct was characterized by the grandeur of his views and the magnanimity (50) of his spirit . . . . Instead of ravaging the newly found countries . . . he sought to colonize and cultivate them, to civilize the natives." Irving acknowledged that Columbus may have had some faults, such (55) as his part in enslaving and killing people, but offered the palliating explanation that these were "errors of the times." William H. Prescott, a leading American historian of the conquest period, said of (60) Columbus that "the finger of the historian will find it difficult to point to a single blemish in his moral character." Writers and orators of the nineteenth century ascribed to Columbus all the human virtues that were (65) most prized in that time of geographic and industrial expansion, heady optimism, and an unquestioning belief in progress as the dynamic of history. Most people living in America four centuries

(105) and settlement was salvation, and they peopled both continents with conquerors, and it was not that either. The salvation there, had the Europeans known where and how to look for it, was obviously (110) in the integrative tribal ways, the nurturant communitarian values, the rich interplay with nature that made up the Indian cultures — as it made up, for that matter, the cultures of ancient peoples (115) everywhere, not excluding Europe. It was there especially in the Indian consciousness, in what Calvin Martin has termed "the biological outlook on life," in which patterns and concepts and the large teleological (120) constructs of culture are not human-centered but come from the sense of being at one with nature, biocentric, ecocentric. However one may cast it, an opportunity (125) there certainly was once, a chance for the people of Europe to find a new anchorage in a new country, in what they dimly realized was the land of Paradise, and thus find finally the way to redeem the world. (130) But all they ever found was half a world of nature's treasures and nature's peoples that could be taken, and they took them, never knowing, never learning the true regenerative power there, and that opportunity was (135) lost. Theirs was indeed a conquest of Paradise, but as is inevitable with any war against the world of nature, those who win will have lost — once again lost, and this time perhaps forever.

**1. In lines 18–23 of the first paragraph, the reference to the play by Lope de Vega serves to**

- I. give an example of Columbus's reputation in Spain.
- II. demonstrate how widespread Columbus's reputation had become.
- III. exemplify how Columbus was already a myth and symbol of the discoverer.

- A. I only
- B. II only

- C. I and III only
- D. II and III only
- E. I, II, and III

Answer: \_\_\_\_

**2. In Passage 1 (line 28), the word “disposed” means**

- A. arranged.
- B. employed.
- C. settled.
- D. inclined.
- E. given away.

Answer: \_\_\_\_

**3. In Passage 1 (line 40), the phrase “romantic mold” most nearly means**

- A. pattern concerned with love.
- B. idealized manner.
- C. visionary model.
- D. fictitious shape.
- E. escapist style.

Answer: \_\_\_\_

**4. Of the following words used in the third paragraph of Passage 1, which most clearly reveals a judgment of the modern author as opposed to that of Washington Irving?**

- A. “mined” (line 39)
- B. “ambition” (line 43)
- C. “Perhaps” (line 46)
- D. “magnanimity” (lines 49–50)
- E. “palliating” (line 56)

Answer: \_\_\_\_

**5. The major purpose of Passage 1 is to**

- A. praise the daring and accomplishments of Columbus.
- B. survey the reputation of Columbus from the sixteenth through the nineteenth century.
- C. contrast the real Columbus of history with the mythic Columbus of the nineteenth century.
- D. describe the benefits and the damage of Columbus’s voyages.
- E. reveal the unforeseen and harmful consequences of Columbus’s voyages.

Answer: \_\_\_\_

**6. With which of the following generalizations would the author of Passage 1 be most likely to agree?**

- I. The values of a historical period are usually reflected by the heroes people of that time choose to idolize.
- II. What people believe about historical figures is usually what they want to believe.
- III. Written history is usually a record of the truth as it is known at the time of writing.

- A. I only
- B. I and II only
- C. I and III only

- D. II and III only
- E. I, II, and III

Answer: \_\_\_\_

**7. The questions of the first paragraph of Passage 2 (lines 76–97) serve chiefly to**

- A. raise doubts about issues that cannot be explained.
- B. defend and justify the actions of Europeans in the age of discovery.
- C. suggest areas that future historians might profitably explore.
- D. show how much easier it is to understand issues of the distant past with the objectivity given by time.
- E. reveal the author’s ideas about the nature of Europeans at the time of Columbus’s voyages.

Answer: \_\_\_\_

**8. In Passage 2 (lines 90–91), the phrase “unschooled in all that the Ancients held virtuous” is used to**

- I. reflect the European view of the American natives.
- II. reveal a significant foundation of European culture in the period.
- III. give a reason for the European contempt for the native Americans.

- A. III only
- B. I and II only
- C. I and III only
- D. II and III only
- E. I, II, and III

Answer: \_\_\_\_

**9. Which of the following does Passage 2 present as discovered and understood by the Europeans in America?**

- A. Human-centered cultures
- B. New foods and medicines
- C. Communitarian values
- D. An Indian consciousness
- E. An ecocentric culture

Answer: \_\_\_\_

**10. According to Passage 2, a “biological outlook on life” would be best defined as one in which**

- A. the interdependence of all life forms is understood.
- B. humans are the measure of all things.
- C. the needs of rich and poor are equally considered.
- D. the economic well-being of all races is emphasized.
- E. the primary motivation is survival of the species.

Answer: \_\_\_\_

**11. The major purpose of Passage 2 is to**

- A. describe the benefits and damage of Columbus’s discovery.
- B. present Columbus’s discovery as a tragically missed opportunity to regenerate Europe.
- C. attack the greed and cruelty that inspired the European colonization of America.

- D. defend the European colonization of America as historically determined and unavoidable.
- E. evaluate as objectively as possible the meaning of the European incursion into the Americas.

Answer: \_\_\_\_

**12. Of the five paragraphs in Passage 1, which one best prepares the reader for the contents of Passage 2?**

- A. The first (lines 1–23)
- B. The second (lines 24–38)
- C. The third (lines 39–57)
- D. The fourth (lines 58–68)
- E. The fifth (lines 69–75)

Answer: \_\_\_\_

**13. Compared to Passage 1, Passage 2 may be described by all the following EXCEPT**

- A. more personal
- B. more philosophical
- C. more judgmental
- D. more historical
- E. more emotional

Answer: \_\_\_\_

**14. Compared to that of Passage 1, the prose of Passage 2 makes greater use of all the following EXCEPT**

- A. words in series
- B. rhetorical questions
- C. understatements
- D. repetitions
- E. parallel phrases

Answer: \_\_\_\_

**15. Which of the following aptly describes a relationship between Passage 1 and Passage 2?**

- I. Passage 1 predicts a reevaluation of Columbus's accomplishments, and Passage 2 makes that reevaluation.
- II. Passage 1 calls attention to the way the image of Columbus in each period reflects the values of that period, and Passage 2 presents an image that reflects late twentieth-century ideas.
- III. Passage 1 focuses on the reputation of Columbus, and Passage 2 emphasizes his unique character.
- A. III only
  - B. I and II only
  - C. I and III only
  - D. II and III only
  - E. I, II, and III

Answer: \_\_\_\_

**Answer Keys and Explanation Link**

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