

GRE Reading Comprehension Practice Test 3

In the United States the per capita costs of schooling have risen almost as fast as the cost of medical treatment. But increased treatment by both doctors and teachers has shown steadily declining results. Medical expenses concentrated on those above forty-five have doubled several times over a period of forty years with a resulting 3 percent increase in the life expectancy of men. The increase in educational expenditures has produced even stranger results; otherwise President Nixon could not have been moved this spring to promise that every child shall soon have the "Right to Read" before leaving school.

In the United States it would take eighty billion dollars per year to provide what educators regard as equal treatment for all in grammar and high school. This is well over twice the \$36 billion now being spent. Independent cost projections prepared at HEW and at the University of Florida indicate that by 1974 the comparable figures will be \$107 billion as against the \$45 billion now projected, and these figures wholly omit the enormous costs of what is called "higher education," for which demand is growing even faster. The United States, which spent nearly eighty billion dollars in 1969 for "defense," including its deployment in Vietnam, is obviously too poor to provide equal schooling. The President's committee for the study of school finance should ask not how to support or how to trim such increasing costs, but how they can be avoided.

Equal obligatory schooling must be recognized as at least economically unfeasible. In Latin America the amount of public money spent on each graduate student is between 350 and 1,500 times the amount spent on the median citizen (that is, the citizen who holds the middle ground between the poorest and the richest). In the United States the discrepancy is smaller, but the discrimination is keener. The richest parents, some 10 percent, can afford private education for their children and help them to benefit from foundation grants. But in addition they obtain ten times the per capita amount of public funds if this is compared with the per capita expenditure made on the children of the 10 percent who are poorest. The principal reasons for this are that rich children stay longer in school, that a year in a university is disproportionately more expensive than a year in high school, and that most private universities depend—at least indirectly—on tax-derived finances.

Obligatory schooling inevitably polarizes a society; it also grades the nations of the world according to an international caste system. Countries are rated like castes whose educational dignity is determined by the average years of schooling of its citizens, a rating which is closely related to per capita gross national product, and much more painful.

1. Which one of the following best expresses the main idea of the passage?
 - (A) The educational shortcomings of the United States, in contrast to those of Latin America, are merely the result of poor allocation of available resources.
 - (B) Both education and medical care are severely underfunded.
 - (C) Defense spending is sapping funds which would be better spent in education.
 - (D) Obligatory schooling must be scrapped if the goal of educational equality is to be realized.
 - (E) Obligatory education does not and cannot provide equal education.
2. Consider each of the three choices and select all that apply. The author most likely would agree with which one of the following solutions to the problems presented by obligatory education?
 - (A) Education should not be obligatory at all.
 - (B) Education should not be obligatory for those who cannot afford it.
 - (C) More money should be diverted to education for the poorest.
3. According to the passage, education is like health care in all of the following ways EXCEPT:
 - (A) It has reached a point of diminishing returns, increased spending no longer results in significant improvement.
 - (B) It has an inappropriate “more is better” philosophy.
 - (C) It is unfairly distributed between rich and poor.
 - (D) The amount of money being spent on older students is increasing.
 - (E) Its cost has increased nearly as fast.
4. Why does the author consider the results from increased educational expenditures to be “even stranger” than those from increased medical expenditures?
 - (A) The aging of the population should have had an impact only on medical care, not on education.
 - (B) The “Right to Read” should be a bare minimum, not a Presidential ideal.
 - (C) Educational spending has shown even poorer results than spending on health care, despite greater increases.
 - (D) Education has become even more discriminatory than health care.
 - (E) It inevitably polarizes society.
5. Which one of the following most accurately characterizes the author’s attitude with respect to obligatory schooling?
 - (A) qualified admiration
 - (B) critical
 - (C) neutral
 - (D) ambivalent
 - (E) resentful

6. The highlighted portions of the passage imply that
- (A) equal education is possible in the United States but not in Latin America.
 - (B) equal education for all at the graduate level is an unrealistic ideal.
 - (C) educational spending is more efficient in the United States.
 - (D) higher education is more expensive than lower education both in Latin America and in the United States, but more so in Latin America.
 - (E) underfunding of lower education is a worldwide problem.