

GMAT Verbal

Reading Comprehension

Passage 1

Literature in the second half of the twentieth century in the United States bears only a faint resemblance to the writing accomplished between 1900 and 1950. Early in the century, arguments as to what distinguished American literature from British led to the emphasis on plain character and plain language that marked the writing done in both realism and naturalism. Then, with the modernist sweep to overthrow most existing literary traditions (always using Ezra Pound's rationale that making it new was to be primary), the innovation that made American poetry, fiction, and drama of keen interest to the world settled in. By 1950, however, traditional aesthetic innovation was wearing thin. The United States had endured the Great Depression, a long decade of hardship that not only dampened the promise of the American dream but changed literary methods to a surprising extent. The amalgam of cryptic modernist innovation and almost sentimental proselytizing that characterized the collective, proletarian novel and the speech-lined poems of the Depression gave rise to incredible variety: despite the paper shortages of World War II, published writing in the United States continued to be influential. It is in the aftermath of the war, once people had righted their perceptions about causation and blame, and had admitted again the atrocity of war itself (as well as of the Holocaust and the atomic bomb), that literature — whether called contemporary or postmodern — began to change. A History of American Literature, 1950 to the Present by Linda Wagner-Martin

496. Which of the following statements most accurately captures the main point of the passage?

- (A) By the middle of the 20th century, American literature needed to change.
- (B) Literature in the United States changed dramatically in the second half of the 20th century.
- (C) American literature was considerably better in the second half of the 20th century.
- (D) World War II profoundly affected American literature.
- (E) The style of American literature is not as standardized as some many think.

497. In the last sentence of the passage, to what does the author attribute the turning point for the change in literature?

- (A) The aftermath of the war
- (B) People had righted the perceptions about causation and blame.
- (C) People admitted the atrocity of war.
- (D) People admitted the horrors of the atomic bomb.

(E) People recognized the horrors of the Holocaust.

498. According to the passage, in what ways was American literature distinguished from British literature in the first part of the century?

(A) World War I

(B) The way the Holocaust was incorporated

(C) The way true aesthetic innovation was wearing thin

(D) An emphasis on plain character and plain language

(E) The arrival of the Great Depression

499. It can be inferred that American and British literature diverged after the mid-part of the century because ...?

(A) ... historical events in each country radically changed their writers in non-analogous ways.

(B) ... America suffered a paper shortage after World War II.

(C) ... World War II was not fought on American soil

(D) ... the United Kingdom was no longer the former colonizer of America.

(E) ... American and British writers felt differently about the second half of the 20 century.

500. Which of the following definitions most closely resembles how distinguished is used in the passage (first paragraph)?

(A) Elite, commanding respect

(B) Native-born

(C) Snuffed out, ended

(D) Made conspicuous, usually by achievement

(E) To recognize as different or unique

501. The second paragraph plays what role in the passage?

(A) It provides further information to back up the thesis of the first paragraph.

(B) It reverses the premise of the first paragraph, to prove why it is not true.

(C) It introduces the topic of the passage.

(D) It provides a turn from the topic of the first paragraph, clarifying what the purpose of the passage will be.

(E) It is an anecdote, used to prove the first paragraph.

Passage 2

Incandescent lamps, like the sun, produce light by burning; the light they emit is a by-product of heat. Only a tiny percentage — 5 percent or less — of the energy used by an incandescent lamp produces light. The balance of the energy used produces heat, so incandescent lamps are supremely inefficient. But, like the sun, incandescent sources emit the visible wavelengths as a continuous band. Candlelight, firelight, and incandescent lamplight are sensed as familiar and comforting because they provide light in the same way the sun does. The apparent whiteness of the light given off by an incandescent lamp depends on the temperature at which it burns, called its color temperature. *Understanding Color: An Introduction for Designers* by Linda Holtzschue

502. What can be inferred about incandescent lamplight from the passage?

- (A) So far, humanity has not been able to develop an electric source of light that is more efficient than lamplight.
- (B) While incandescent lamps may produce heat, many people will continue use them because the www.ztcprep.com light is familiar and comforting.
- (C) Incandescent lights burn energy in the same way the sun does.
- (D) Incandescent lamplight, a fire, and candlelight produce virtually the same emotional response.
- (E) It would be beneficial to find a way to harvest and keep the heat produced by incandescent lamplight.

503. Which role does the final sentence in the passage play?

- (A) It concludes the passage by restating the main idea.
- (B) It gives a hint as to why incandescent light sources remain popular, despite their inefficiency.
- (C) It provides anecdotal proof of the main assertion of the passage.
- (D) It provides additional factual information about the topic of the passage.
- (E) It reveals the author's opinion of the topic of the passage.

504. How much is the energy of an incandescent lamp spent on tasks other than giving off light?

- (A) About 5 percent
- (B) About 10 percent
- (C) About 95 percent
- (D) About half
- (E) About 85 percent

505. Which of the following statements most clearly captures the main idea of the passage?

- (A) Incandescent lamps should be replaced because they are hugely inefficient.
- (B) Incandescent lamps give off a very white light.
- (C) Despite their inefficiencies, there are reasons why incandescent lamps remain popular.
- (D) If you use incandescent lamps, you like to waste energy.
- (E) Incandescent lamps are hiding a dirty little secret.

506. Which of the following is the best definition for the word “apparent” as used in the passage (last sentence)?

- (A) Visible, obvious
- (B) False, misleading
- (C) Incorrectly perceived
- (D) Lifelike, realistic
- (E) As father to child