

SAT Reading Sample Paper 2

Reading Passage 1

"You were very sound, Sydney, in the matter of those crown witnesses today. Every question told." "I always am sound; am I not?" Line "I don't gainsay it. What has roughened your 5 temper? Put some punch to it and smooth it again." With a deprecatory grunt, Carton complied. "The old Sydney Carton of old Shrewsbury School," said Stryver, nodding his head over him as he reviewed him in the present and the past, "the old seesaw 10 Sydney. Up one minute and down the next; now in spirits and now in despondency!" "Ah!" returned the other, sighing : "Yes! The same Sydney, with the same luck. Even then, I did exercises for other boys, and seldom did my own." "And why not?" 15 "God knows. It was my way, I suppose." "Carton," said his friend, squaring himself at him with a bullying air, as if the fire-grate had been the furnace in which sustained endeavour was forged, and 20 the one delicate thing to be done for the old Sydney Carton of old Shrewsbury School was to shoulder him into it, "your way is, and always was, a lame way. You summon no energy and purpose. Look at me." "Oh, botheration!" returned Sydney, with a lighter 25 and more good-humoured laugh, "don't you be moral!" "How have I done what I have done?" said Stryver; "how do I do what I do?" "Partly through paying me to help you, I suppose. But it's not worth your while to apostrophise me, or 30 the air, about it; what you want to do, you do. You were always in the front rank, and I was always behind." "I had to get into the front rank; I was not born there, was I?" "I was not present at the ceremony; but my opinion 35 is you were," said Carton. At this, he laughed again, and they both laughed. "Before Shrewsbury, and at Shrewsbury, and ever since Shrewsbury," pursued Carton, "you have fallen into your rank, and I have fallen into mine. You were 40 always somewhere, and I was always nowhere." "And whose fault was that?" "Upon my soul, I am not sure that it was not yours. You were always driving and shouldering and passing, to that restless degree that I had no chance for my life 45 but in rust and repose. It's a gloomy thing, however, to talk about one's own past, with the day breaking. Turn me in some other direction before I go." "Well then! Pledge me to the pretty witness," said Stryver, holding up his glass. "Are you turned in a 50 pleasant direction?" 55 "Pretty witness," he muttered, looking down into his glass. "I have had enough of witnesses today and tonight; who's your pretty witness?" "The picturesque doctor's daughter, Miss Manette." "She pretty?" "Is she not?" "No." "Why, man alive, she was the admiration of the whole Court!" "Rot the admiration of the whole Court! Who made the Old Bailey a judge of beauty? She was a golden haired doll!" "Do you know, Sydney," said Mr. Stryver, looking at him with sharp eyes, and slowly drawing a hand across 65 his florid face : "do you know, I rather thought, at the time, that you sympathized with the golden-haired doll, and were quick to see what happened to the golden-haired doll?" "Quick to see what happened! If a girl, doll or no 70 doll, swoons within a yard or two of a man's nose, he can see it without a perspective-glass. I pledge you, but I deny the beauty. And now I'll have no more drink; I'll get to bed. When his host followed him out on the staircase 75 with a candle, to light him down the stairs, the day was coldly looking in through its grimy windows. When he got out of the house, the air was cold and sad, the dull sky overcast, the river dark and dim, the whole scene like a lifeless desert. And wreaths of dust were spinning 80 round and round before the morning blast, as if the desert-sand had risen far away, and the first spray of it in its advance had begun to overwhelm the city. Climbing to a high chamber in a well of houses, he threw himself down in his clothes on a neglected bed, 85 and its pillow was wet with wasted tears. Sadly, sadly, the sun rose; it rose upon no sadder sight than the man of good abilities and

good emotions, incapable of their directed exercise, incapable of his own help and his own happiness, sensible of the blight on him, and 90 resigning himself to let it eat him away.

1. The primary purpose of the passage as a whole is to

- A. describe the history between Carton and Stryver.
- B. characterize life at the Shrewsbury School.
- C. reveal Carton's character.
- D. show that Stryver has been exploiting Carton.

2. Based on the information in the passage, Carton is best characterized as

- A. unsound.
- B. mercurial.
- C. unlucky.
- D. imperceptive.

3. Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?

- A. Lines 10-11 ("Up...despondency")
- B. Lines 13-14 ("Even...own")
- C. Lines 35-36 ("At this...laughed")
- D. Lines 45-46 ("It's a...breaking")

4. As used in line 11, "spirits" most nearly means

- A. soul.
- B. liquor.
- C. essence.
- D. jubilation.

5. Based on lines 17-22 ("squaring himself....shoulder him into it"), it can be reasonably inferred that

- A. Stryver is frustrated with Carton's behavior.
- B. Stryver is planning to push Carton into the fireplace.
- C. Stryver believes Carton to be comparatively older.
- D. Stryver wishes to bully Carton as he did at Shrewsbury.

6. The use of italics in line 55 primarily serves to emphasize Carton's

- A. incredulity.
- B. confusion.
- C. annoyance.
- D. affection.

7. The passage suggests which of the following about Stryver?

- A. He is in love with Miss Manette.
- B. He believes that Carton lacks the intelligence required to be successful.
- C. He does not believe that Carton finds Miss Manette unattractive.
- D. He was born into a wealthy family.

8. Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?

- A. Lines 32-33 ("I had...was I")
- B. Line 41 ("And whose...that")
- C. Lines 58-59 ("Why...Court")
- D. Lines 63-68 ("Do you...doll")

9. In context, "desert" in line 79 refers to

- A. Styver's cold demeanor.
- B. London's landscape.
- C. Carton's windows.
- D. sunlit dunes.

10. The "tears" referred to in line 85 are "wasted" because

- A. Miss Manette will never love Carton.
- B. Carton is unlikely to change his ways.
- C. Carton's home is one of squalor.
- D. Stryver will continue to exploit Carton's labor.

Reading Passage 2

I think that I love society as much as most, and am ready enough to fasten myself like a bloodsucker for the time to any full-blooded man that comes in my way. I am naturally no hermit, (5) but might possibly sit out the sturdiest frequenter for the bar-room, if my business called me thither.

I had three chairs in my house; one for solitude, two for friendship, three for society. When visitors come in larger and unexpected (10) numbers there was but the third chair for them all, but they generally economized the room by standing up. It is surprising how many great men and women a small house will contain. I have had twenty-five or thirty souls, with their bodies, (15) at once under my roof, and yet we often parted without being aware that we had come very near to one another.

One inconvenience I sometimes experienced in so small a house, the difficulty of getting to a (20) sufficient distance from my guest when we began to utter the big thoughts in big words. You want room for your thoughts to get into sailing trim and run a course or two before they make their port. The bullet of your thought must have (25) overcome its lateral and ricochet motion and fallen into its last and steady course before it reaches the ear of the hearer, else it may plow out again through the side of his head. Also our sentences wanted room to unfold and form (30) their columns in the interval. Individuals, like nations, must have suitable broad and natural boundaries, even a considerable neutral ground,

between them. I have found it a singular luxury to talk across the pond to a companion on the (35) opposite side. In my house we were so near that we could not begin to hear—we could not speak low enough to be heard; as when you throw two stones into calm water so near that they break each other's undulations. As the conversation (40) began to assume a loftier and grander tone, we gradually shoved our chairs farther apart till they touched the wall in opposite corners and then commonly there was not room enough.

My "best" room, however, my withdrawing (45) room, always ready for company, on whose carpet the sun rarely fell, was the pine wood behind my house. Thither in summer days, when distinguished guests came, I took them, and a priceless domestic swept the floor and dusted the (50) furniture and kept the things in order.

If one guest came he sometimes partook of my frugal meal, and it was no interruption to conversation to be stirring a hasty-pudding or watching the rising and maturing of a loaf of (55) bread in the ashes, in the meanwhile. But if twenty came and sat in my house there was nothing said about dinner, though there might be bread enough for two, more than if eating were a forsaken habit; but we naturally practised (60) abstinence; and this was never felt to be an offence against hospitality, but the most proper and considerate course. The waste and decay of physical life, which so often needs repair, seemed miraculously retarded in such a case, and the vital (65) vigor stood its ground. I could entertain thus a thousand as well as twenty; and if any ever went away disappointed or hungry from my house when they found me at home, they may depend upon it that I sympathized with them at least. So (70) easy it is, though many housekeepers doubt it, to establish new and better customs in the place of the old. You need not rest your reputation on the dinners you give.

As for men, they will hardly fail one (75) anywhere. I had more visitors while I lived in the woods than at any other period in my life; I mean that I had some. I met several there under more favorable circumstances than I could anywhere else. But fewer came to see me on trivial business. (80) In this respect, my company was winnowed by my mere distance from town. I had withdrawn so far within the great ocean of solitude, into which the rivers of society empty, that for the most part, so far as my needs were concerned, only the finest (85) sediment was deposited around me.

1. The main narrative point of view in the passage is of

- (A) a man adjusting to life in a big city after growing up on a farm.
- (B) a discussion of visitors to a small house away from city life.
- (C) a sailor discussing the pond on which he grew up and how it affected his friendships.
- (D) a man discussing the potential of big thoughts and their need to be expressed.

2. In the context of the passage, the phrase "as when you throw two stones into calm water so near they break each other's undulations," (lines 37–39) is best described as

- (A) a reference to the author's childhood days when he threw stones into a lake.
- (B) an analogy used to elaborate on a previous statement.
- (C) a way to expand on the reasons national boundaries are always changing.
- (D) a reason that the author and his companion had to continually move their chairs to be heard.

3. As used in line 27, "plow" most nearly means

- (A) push.
- (B) furrow.
- (C) cultivate.
- (D) walk.