

GMAT RC Practice Test 9

Question 1

Adapted from “Birds in Retreat” in “Animal Defences—Active Defence” in Volume Four of *The Natural History of Animals: The Animal Life of the World in Its Various Aspects and Relations* by James Richard Ainsworth Davis (1903)

Among the large running birds are forms, like the African ostrich, in which the absence of powers of flight is largely compensated by the specialization of the legs for the purpose of rapid movement on the ground. For straightforward retreat in open country nothing could be more effective; but another kind of adaptation is required in birds like rails, which are deficient in powers of flight, and yet are able to run through thickly-growing vegetation with such rapidity as to commonly elude their enemies. This is rendered possible by the shape of their bodies, which are relatively narrow and flattened from side to side, so as to easily slip between the stems of grasses, rushes, and similar plants. Anyone who has pursued our native land-rail or corn-crake with intent to capture will have noted how extremely difficult it is even to get within sight of a bird of this sort.

Certain birds, unfortunately for themselves, have lost the power of flight without correspondingly increased powers of running, and have paid the penalty of extinction. Such an arrangement, as might be anticipated, was the result of evolution in islands devoid of any predatory ground-animals, and a classic example of it is afforded by the dodo and its allies, birds related to the pigeons. The dodo itself was a large and clumsy-looking species that at one time abounded in the island of Mauritius, which, like oceanic islands generally, possessed no native mammals, while its indigenous reptiles were only represented by lizards. The ubiquitous sailor, however, and the animals (especially swine) which he introduced, brought about the extinction of this helpless bird in less than a century after its first discovery in 1598. Its memory is now only kept green by a few contemporary drawings and descriptions, certain museum remains, and the proverb “as extinct as a dodo.” A similar fate must overtake any organism suddenly exposed to new and unfavorable conditions, if devoid of sufficient plasticity to rapidly accommodate itself to the altered environment.

Which of the following best describes the tone the author employs throughout the passage?

Possible Answers:

Despondent

None of the other answers

Furious

Carefree

Oversensitive

Question 2

Adapted from Volume Four of *The Natural History of Animals: The Animal Life of the World in Its Various Aspects and Relations* by James Richard Ainsworth Davis (1903)

The examples of protective resemblance so far quoted are mostly permanent adaptations to one particular sort of surrounding. There are, however, numerous animals which possess the power of adjusting their color more or less rapidly so as to harmonize with a changing environment.

Some of the best known of these cases are found among those mammals and birds that inhabit countries more or less covered with snow during a part of the year. A good instance is afforded by the Irish or variable hare, which is chiefly found in Ireland and Scotland. In summer, this looks very much like an ordinary hare, though rather grayer in tint and smaller in size, but in winter it becomes white with the exception of the black tips to the ears. Investigations that have been made on the closely allied American hare seem to show that the phenomenon is due to the growth of new hairs of white hue.

The common stoat is subject to similar color change in the northern parts of its range. In summer it is of a bright reddish brown color with the exception of the under parts, which are yellowish white, and the end of the tail, which is black. But in winter, the entire coat, save only the tip of the tail, becomes white, and in that condition the animal is known as an ermine. A similar example is afforded by the weasel. The seasonal change in the vegetarian Irish hare is purely of protective character, but in such an actively carnivorous creature as a stoat or weasel, it is aggressive as well, rendering the animal inconspicuous to its prey.

The tone of this passage is best described as _____.

Possible Answers:

judgmental

objective

angry

optimistic

considerate

Question 3

Passage adapted from *Animal Sanctuaries in Labrador* (1911) by W. Wood

A sanctuary may be defined as a place where Man is passive and the rest of Nature active. Till quite recently Nature had her own sanctuaries, where man either did not go at all or only as a tool-using animal in comparatively small numbers. But now, in this machinery age, there is no place left where man cannot go with overwhelming forces at his command. He can strangle to

death all the nobler wild life in the world to-day. To-morrow he certainly will have done so, unless he exercises due foresight and self-control in the mean time.

There is not the slightest doubt that birds and mammals are now being killed off much faster than they can breed. And it is always the largest and noblest forms of life that suffer most. The whales and elephants, lions and eagles, go. The rats and flies, and all mean parasites, remain. This is inevitable in certain cases. But it is wanton killing off that I am speaking of to-night. Civilized man begins by destroying the very forms of wild life he learns to appreciate most when he becomes still more civilized. The obvious remedy is to begin conservation at an earlier stage, when it is easier and better in every way, by enforcing laws for close seasons, game preserves, the selective protection of certain species, and sanctuaries.

I have just defined a sanctuary as a place where man is passive and the rest of Nature active. But this general definition is too absolute for any special case. The mere fact that man has to protect a sanctuary does away with his purely passive attitude. Then, he can be beneficially active by destroying pests and parasites, like bot-flies or mosquitoes, and by finding antidotes for diseases like the epidemic which periodically kills off the rabbits and thus starves many of the carnivora to death. But, except in cases where experiment has proved his intervention to be beneficial, the less he upsets the balance of Nature the better, even when he tries to be an earthly Providence.

It can be inferred that the passage is _____.

Possible Answers:

extracted from an incisive editorial column

an argument delivered to a court of law

taken from the newsletter of a nature club

an excerpt from a lecture to an educated audience

from an article published in a scientific journal