Reading Comprehension Questions for XAT

Instructions

At the heart of the enormous boom in wine consumption that has taken place in the English speaking world over the last two decades or so is a fascinating, happy paradox. In the days when wine was exclusively the preserve of a narrow cultural elite, bought either at auctions or from gentleman wine merchants in wing collars and bow-ties, to be stored in rambling cellars and decanted to order by one's butler, the ordinary drinker didn't get a look-in. Wine was considered a highly technical subject, in which anybody without the necessary ability could only fall flat on his or her face in embarrassment. It wasn't just that you needed a refined aesthetic sensibility for the stuff if it wasn't to be hopelessly wasted on you. It required an intimate knowledge of what came from where, and what it was supposed to taste like.

Those were times, however, when wine appreciation essentially meant a familiarity with the great French classics, with perhaps a smattering of other wines — like sherry and port. That was what the wine trade dealt in. These days, wine is bought daily in supermarkets and high-street chains to be consumed that evening, hardly anybody has a cellar to store it in and most don't even possess a decanter. Above all, the wines of literally dozens of countries are available on our market. When a supermarket offers its customers a couple of fruity little numbers from Brazil, we scarcely raise an eyebrow.

It seems, in other words, that the commercial jungle that wine has now become has not in the slightest deterred people from plunging adventurously into the thickets in order to taste and see. Consumers are no longer intimidated by the thought of needing to know their Pouilly-Fume from their Pouilly-Fuisse, just at the very moment when there is more to know than ever before.

The reason for this new mood of confidence is not hard to find. It is on every wine label from Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and the United States: the name of the grape from which the wine is made. At one time that might have sounded like a fairly technical approach in itself. Why should native English-speakers know what Cabernet Sauvignon or Chardonnay were? The answer lies in the popularity that wines made from those grape varieties now enjoy. Consumer effectively recognize them as brand names, and have acquired a basic lexicon of wine that can serve them even when confronted with those Brazilian upstarts.

In the wine heartlands of France, they are scared to death of that trend—not because they think their wine isn't as good as the best from California or South Australia (what French winemaker will ever admit that?) but because they don't traditionally call their wines Cabernet Saucignon or Chardonnay. They call them Chateau Ducru Beaucaillou or Corton-Charlemagne, and they aren't about the change. Some areas, in the middle of southern France, have now produced a generation of growers using the varietal names on their labels and are tempting consumers back to French wine. It will be an uphill struggle, but there is probably no other way if France is to avoid simply becoming a specialty source of old-fashioned wines for old fashioned connoisseurs.

Wine consumption was also given a significant boost in the early 1990s by the work of Dr. Serge Renaud, who has spent many years investigating the reasons for the uncannily low incidence of coronary heart disease in the south of France. One of his major findings is that the fat-derived cholesterol that builds up in the arteries and can eventually lead to heart trouble, can be dispersed by the tannins in wine. Tannin is derived from the skins of grapes, and is therefore present in higher levels in red wines, because they have to be infused with their skins to attain the red colour. That news caused a huge upsurge in red wine consumption in the United States. It has not been accorded the prominence it deserves in the UK, largely because the medical profession still sees all alcohol as a menace to health, and is constantly calling for it to be made prohibitively expensive. Certainly, the manufacturers of anticoagulant drugs might have something to lose if we all got the message that we would do just as well by our hearts by taking half a bottle of red wine every day!

Question 1

The tone that the author uses while asking "what French winemaker will ever admit that?" is best described as

A caustic

B satirical

C critical

D hypocritical

Answer: B

Explanation:
The tone which author uses while asking "what French winemaker will ever admit that? is not at all harsh , so option a) is out . Also the author doesn't criticize while asking the question ,so Option c) is clearly not the answer. We don't find any author professing any feelings which he doesn't have , hence the tone is not hypocritical. Option b ,suits the best i.e. his tone is satirical.

Question 2

The development which has created fear among winemakers in the wine heartland of France is the

A tendency not to name wines after the grape varieties that are used in the wines

B 'education' that consumers have derived from wine labels from English speaking countries.

C new generation of local winegrowers who use labels that show names of grape varieties

D ability of consumers to understand a wine's qualities when confronted with "Brazilian upstarts".

Answer: B

Explanation:
Consider the following part of the passage ' .. Consumer effectively recognize them as brand names, and have acquired a basic lexicon of wine .... with those Brazilian upstarts. In the wine heartlands of France, they are scared to death of that trend.. '. So, above all, French winemakers fear the knowledge or education that the consumers have derived from wine labels from the English speaking countries. Option b) is the correct answer.

Question 3

Which one of the following, if true, would provide most support for Dr. Renaud's findings about the effect of tannins?

A A survey showed that film celebrities based in France have a low incidence of coronary heart disease.

B Measurements carries out in southern France showed red wine drinkers had significantly higher levels of coronary heart incidence than white wine drinkers did.

C Data showed a positive association between sales of red wine and incidence of coronary heart disease.

D Long-term surveys in southern France showed that the incidence of coronary heart disease was significantly lower in red wine drinkers than in those who did not drink red wine.

Answer: D

Explanation:
Dr. Renaud findings suggest that fat-derived cholesterol can be dispersed by the tannins in wine. So, a survey that validates this finding would provide the most support. The survey in option d) is precisely one such survey. Option d) is the correct answer.

Question 4

The tone that the author uses while asking "what French winemaker will ever admit that?" is best described as

CAT [2003(L)]

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Answer: B

Explanation:
The tone which author uses while asking "what French winemaker will ever admit that? is not at all harsh , so option a) is out . Also the author doesn't criticize while asking the question ,so Option c) is clearly not the answer. We don't find any author professing any feelings which he doesn't have , hence the tone is not hypocritical. Option b ,suits the best i.e. his tone is satirical.

Question 5

The development which has created fear among winemakers in the wine heartland of France is the

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B 'education' that consumers have derived from wine labels from English speaking countries.

C new generation of local winegrowers who use labels that show names of grape varieties

D ability of consumers to understand a wine's qualities when confronted with "Brazilian upstarts".

Answer: B

Explanation:
We can clearly conclude from following part of the passage ' .. Consumer effectively recognize them as brand names, and have acquired a basic lexicon of wine .... with those Brazilian upstarts. In the wine heartlands of France, they are scared to death of that trend.. ' ..' that answer to this qustion is education' that consumers have derived from wine labels from English speaking countries.Hence option B.

Instructions

Modern science, exclusive of geometry, is a comparatively recent creation and can be said to have originated with Galileo and Newton. Galileo was the first scientist to recognize clearly that the only way to further our understanding of the physical world was to resort to experiment. However obvious Galileo's contention may appear in the light of our present knowledge, it remains a fact that the Greeks, in spite of their proficiency in geometry, never seem to have realized the importance of experiment. To a certain extent this may be attributed to the crudeness of their instruments of measurement. Still an excuse of this sort can scarcely be put forward when the elementary nature of Galileo's experiments and observations is recalled. Watching a lamp oscillate in the cathedral of Pisa, dropping bodies from the leaning tower of Pisa, rolling balls down inclined planes, noticing the magnifying effect of water in a spherical glass vase, such was the nature of Galileo's experiments and observations. As can be seen, they might just as well have been performed by the Greeks. At any rate, it was thanks to such experiments that Galileo discovered the fundamental law of dynamics, according to which the acceleration imparted to a body is proportional to the force acting upon it.

The next advance was due to Newton, the greatest scientist of all time if account be taken of his joint contributions to mathematics and physics. As a physicist, he was of course an ardent adherent of the empirical method, but his greatest title to fame lies in another direction. Prior to Newton, mathematics, chiefly in the form of geometry, had been studied as a fine art without any view to its physical applications other than in very trivial cases. But with Newton all the resources of mathematics were turned to advantage in the solution of physical problems. Thenceforth mathematics appeared as an instrument of discovery, the most powerful one known to man, multiplying the power of thought just as in the mechanical domain the lever multiplied our physical action. It is this application of mathematics to the solution of physical problems, this combination of two separate fields of investigation, which constitutes the essential characteristic of the Newtonian method. Thus problems of physics were metamorphosed into problems of mathematics.

But in Newton's day the mathematical instrument was still in a very backward state of development. In this field again Newton showed the mark of genius by inventing the integral calculus. As a result of this remarkable discovery, problems, which would have baffled Archimedes, were solved with ease. We know that in Newton's hands this new departure in scientific method led to the discovery of the law of gravitation. But here again the real significance of Newton's achievement lay not so much in the exact quantitative formulation of the law of attraction, as in his having established the presence of law and order at least in one important realm of nature, namely, in the motions of heavenly bodies. Nature thus exhibited rationality and was not mere blind chaos and uncertainty. To be sure, Newton's investigations had been concerned with but a small group of natural phenomena, but it appeared unlikely that this mathematical law and order should turn out to be restricted to certain special phenomena; and the feeling was general that all the physical processes of nature would prove to be unfolding themselves according to rigorous mathematical laws.

When Einstein, in 1905, published his celebrated paper on the electrodynamics of moving bodies, he remarked that the difficulties, which surrouned the equations of electrodynamics, together with the negative experiments of Michelson and others, would be obviated if we extended the validity of the Newtonian principle of the relativity of Galilean motion, which applies solely to mechanical phenomena, so as to include all manner of phenomena: electrodynamics, optical etc. When extended in this way the Newtonian principle of relativity became Einstein's special principle of relativity. Its significance lay in its assertion that absolute Galilean motion or absolute velocity must ever escape all experimental detection. Henceforth absolute velocity should be conceived of as physically meaningless, not only in the particular ream of mechanics, as in Newton's day, but in the entire realm of physical phenomena. Einstein's special principle, by adding increased emphasis to this relativity of velocity, making absolute velocity metaphysically meaningless, created a still more profound distinction between velocity and accelerated or rotational motion. This latter type of motion remained

absolute and real as before. It is most important to understand this point and to realize that Einstein's special principle is merely an extension of the validity of the classical Newtonian principle to all classes of phenomena.

Question 6

According to the author, why did the Greeks NOT conduct experiments to understand the physical world?

A Apparently they did not think it necessary to experiment.

B They focused exclusively on geometry.

C Their instruments of measurement were very crude.

D The Greeks considered the application of geometry to the physical world more important.

Answer: A

Explanation:
Options B and D negate the information given in the passage => B and D are incorrect.

C is stated in the passage but does not answer the question.

Option A is the correct answer.

Question 7

The statement "Nature thus exhibited rationality and was not mere blind chaos and uncertainty" suggests that

A problems that had baffled scientists like Archimedes were not really problems.

B only a small group of natural phenomena was chaotic.

C physical phenomena conformed to mathematical laws.

D natural phenomena were evolving towards a less chaotic future.

Answer: C

Explanation:
In the second line after the line mentioned in the question, the author says that "the feeling was general that all the physical processes of nature would prove to be unfolding themselves according to the rigourous mathematic laws".

Option C is the answer.

Question 8

Newton may be considered one of the greatest scientists of all time because he

A discovered the law of gravitation.

B married physics with mathematics.

C invented integral calculus.

D started the use of the empirical method in science.

Answer: B

Explanation:
The author says that "The next advance was due to Newton, the greatest scientist of all time if account be taken of his joint contributions to mathematics and physics."

Joint contributions is metaphorically said as married in option B. Hence, option B is the answer.

Question 9

Which of the following statements about modern science best captures the theme of the passage?

A Modern science rests firmly on the platform built by the Greeks.

B We need to go back to the method of enquiry used by the Greeks to better understand the lawsof dynamics.

C Disciplines like Mathematics and Physics function best when integrated into one.

D New knowledge about natural phenomena builds on existing knowledge.

Answer: D

Explanation:
The author says that Einstein's principle is merely an extension of classical Newtonian principle.

Option D agrees with this saying that new knowledge about natural phenomena builds on existing knowledge.

Hence, option D is the answer.

Question 10

The significant implication of Einstein's special principle of relativity is that

A absolute velocity was meaningless in the realm of mechanics.

B Newton's principle of relativity needs to be modified.

C there are limits to which experimentation can be used to understand some physical phenomena.

D it is meaningless to try to understand the distinction between velocity and accelerated or rotational motion.

Answer: C

Explanation:
The author says that "Its SIGNIFICANCE lay in its assertion that absolute Galilean motion or absolute velocity must ever escape all experimental detection."

Here, "it" refers to Einstein's principle.

The meaning of the sentence is that it is not always possible to experiment.

Option C gives a similar meaning. Hence, C is the answer.

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