

**Directions:** Read the paragraph/passage. Then read the questions that follow it. Choose the letter that corresponds to your answer.

**For questions 1 – 7:**

**“The Witness Tree”**

A Story from Kazakhstan

Two men came before a judge in his court. “Give me justice! My neighbor has robbed me!” said one man.

“He’s lying,” the other protested. “I’ve done nothing wrong.” “Let me hear what you both have to say,” the judge said.

The first man began. “A while ago I went on a journey. I left my life savings – a pot of gold coins – with my neighbor, he promised to guard the money while I was away. When I returned, he denied that he had ever seen my gold coins. He says I gave him nothing!”

“My neighbor is lying!” the second man said. “I know nothing about any pot of gold coins. He never gave me anything!”

“Before you left, did you tell anyone about leaving the coins with your neighbor? Did anyone see you give them to him?” the judge asked the first man.

The man replied, “For secrecy, I told no one. No one saw us because I asked my neighbor to meet me at night by a tree in the forest. There, in the dark, I gave him the coins.”

The judge frowned. “It is best to have a human witness. Since there is none, we will have to ask the tree. Go to the forest. Ask the tree if it saw you give a pot of coins to your neighbor. My clerk will go with you to write down the tree’s testimony.”

The man and the clerk set off for the forest. Meanwhile, the judge invited the neighbor to sit down.

After a while he asked the neighbor, "Do you think they've reached the tree yet?" The neighbor shook his head. "Not yet."

Time passed. The judge asked again, "Do you think they're there now?" "No, not yet," the neighbor answered.

More time passed. The judge asked again, "Shouldn't they be there by now?" The neighbor nodded. "Yes, they're probably there."

"Oh?" said the judge. "Didn't you say your neighbor never gave you anything? How do you know where he's going? How do you know how long it would take to arrive there if you've never been there? Bring back the gold you stole, or you'll be in serious trouble."

When the first man returned, the judge gave back his missing money.

"What did the tree say?" the judge asked. "Nothing!" the bewildered man replied. "But it revealed the truth anyway," said the judge.

1. What was the man asked to do with his neighbor's money?

- A. Protect it
- B. Bury it
- C. Spend it
- D. Divide it up

2. The judge invited the neighbor to sit and wait because the judge –

- A. knew the man was tired
- B. wanted to find out where the tree was
- C. had a plan to discover the truth
- D. wanted to talk to someone

3. People like the judge in this story can be described as –

- A. dishonest
- B. shrewd
- C. generous
- D. proud

4. The story tells the reader –

- A. how the neighbor was punished
- B. why the man had trusted his neighbor
- C. which man was lying
- D. how far the man and the clerk walked

5. A clue to predicting the outcome of the story occurs when the –

- A. neighbor denies that he robbed the first man
- B. judge is asked to settle the matter
- C. clerk goes with the man who was robbed
- D. judge says, “Oh?”

6. Why would the robber assume that no one would find out his secret?

- A. He thought that the judge was dishonest.
- B. He thought that he was smarter than the judge.
- C. He thought his neighbor would not be able to find the tree.
- D. He knew that trees cannot talk.

7. This story was probably told in order to –

- A. share a true experience
- B. help the reader settle disagreements
- C. help the reader become rich
- D. teach a lesson



## UPCAT Reading Comprehension Practice Questions

Set 1

**For questions 8 – 12:**

Julia Morgan was born in 1872 and grew up in Oakland, California. At a time when it was uncommon for women to pursue higher education and full-time careers, she became one of the most successful and well-known architects in the United States.

As a child and teenager, Morgan spent most of her time in California, but she also made several trips to New York to visit her extended family. She became close with an older cousin and her cousin's husband, Pierre LeBrun, who was an architect in New York City. Sensing Morgan's fascination with engineering and design, LeBrun and his wife encouraged Morgan to continue her education. While most young women her age were planning large parties to celebrate their entrance into society, Morgan asked her parents if she could attend college instead. Impressed with their daughter's ambition, they agreed, and Morgan enrolled at the University of California in Berkeley to study civil engineering.

Morgan was the only woman in her engineering program, and she excelled in her classes. She dreamed of a career in architecture and decided to apply to the Paris School of Fine Arts to continue her studies. Though it took her several years to gain acceptance to this competitive school, she never stopped trying. She was eventually admitted and quickly became successful at the institution. In fact, she graduated with her architecture degree in three years instead of the usual five.

Morgan then returned home to California and began her career as an architect in a large design firm. Among her many well-known clients was newspaper publisher William Randolph Hearst. He hired Morgan to design several buildings, including his largest estate, Hearst Castle. During these years, Morgan developed her signature architectural style. She designed buildings using a variety of historic techniques while ensuring that they remained true to their Californian roots. She loved using redwood from Northern California and incorporating local pottery and ceramics into her designs.

Working for Hearst helped Morgan make a name for herself, and she soon had enough clients to open her own architectural practice. Her services were in high demand following the San Francisco earthquake of 1906. Thanks to her training as an engineer, Morgan understood how to construct buildings that could resist forceful movement in the event of another earthquake. She provided her services to many wealthy clients during these years.



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*To God be the glory!*

But the projects dearest to Morgan's heart were those that promoted the education of women. She designed a series of buildings for the YWCA, an organization that provided classes and gathering spaces for young women. She also oversaw the master plan of Mills College, a women's college outside of her hometown of Oakland, and contributed six buildings to its campus.

8. Which sentence BEST states the main idea of the text?

- A. Although it was unusual for the time, Julia Morgan attended a university and then became a successful architect.
- B. Julia Morgan began her career in a large design firm and had many well-known clients.
- C. Julia Morgan's early journeys to New York and Paris helped her develop a lifelong love of travel.
- D. Through her work with the YWCA, Julia Morgan showed her commitment to the education of young women.

9. Why does the author write, "In fact, she graduated with her architecture degree in three years instead of the usual five" in paragraph 3?

- A. to give an example of how quickly Morgan could design buildings
- B. to help explain why people wanted to hire Morgan as an architect
- C. to support the statement that Morgan was a strong student
- D. to help illustrate Morgan's desire to return to California

10. What does the word "they" refer to in paragraph 4?

- A. years
- B. buildings
- C. techniques
- D. roots

11. What phrase is closest in meaning to make a name for herself in paragraph 5?

- A. grow closer to her family
- B. focus on her strengths
- C. explore new interests
- D. become well known

12. Why does the author begin paragraph 6 with the word “But”?

- A. to build suspense around an important moment in Morgan’s career
- B. to show how people’s views of Morgan’s work have changed over time
- C. to contrast two areas of Morgan’s architectural work
- D. to introduce an unexpected effect of one of Morgan’s projects

**For questions 13 – 18:**

As Jay walked toward the beach that beautiful morning, the sun sparkled across the blue water, and the sand already felt warm under his toes. There was a slight breeze, but even in shorts and a T-shirt, Jay didn’t feel the least bit cold. Yet despite the gorgeous scenery and the perfect temperature, Jay couldn’t help feeling a bit disappointed. After all, it was December, and as far as Jay was concerned, this was not how December should feel.

It had been over six months since Jay’s family had relocated from their small mountain town in Colorado to this bustling beach community in southern California. It had been a time of adjustments: a new neighborhood, a new school, and new friends. Surprisingly, Jay had adapted far better than he would have expected. The one thing he had not been able to get used to was the seasons here. He still missed the mild spring, the hot summer, the crisp fall, and especially the cold winter of Colorado.

For Jay, winter had always been the perfect season. He enjoyed hearing boots crunch on fresh snow and drinking a mug of hot chocolate when it was freezing outside. Then, there was sledding, Jay’s favorite winter activity. He’d eagerly climb to the top of the hill. Then, sitting on his wooden sled, he’d push off with his feet, flying downhill, steering

with the rope, and grinning as he glided through the icy snow. Recently, his friends had been sending pictures of their sledding exploits. Jay couldn't help feeling jealous. Living in this mild climate just wasn't the same.

In an attempt to persuade Jay that beach life wasn't all bad, his friend Miguel invited Jay to his first surfing lesson. Miguel was already waiting, standing next to two large surfboards and wearing a wet suit.

"So, you miss the cold?" Miguel smiled, greeting Jay. "Well, around here, nothing compares to a surf in the Pacific." He tossed a wet suit at Jay. "Better put this on."

As Jay pulled on the wet suit, Miguel quickly went over some basic surfing techniques, clearly eager to get straight into the water. Jay scrambled after him.

The first time an ocean wave hit Jay, it completely took his breath away. By the time he was waist-deep, he could barely feel his toes. His cold fingers struggled to grip the surfboard as he pulled himself on top. As another wave crashed over him, he could hardly hear Miguel shouting directions to him. Paddling with his arms, he turned toward shore as a giant wave approached. Suddenly, he felt the surfboard being lifted by the wave, and he was flying toward the beach. He held on tight, forgetting Miguel's instructions about how to stand. Soon, Jay heard a crunch as his board hit the shore, and he slid off onto the sand.

Although it had been a short ride, Jay felt a rush of excitement. The biting cold, the sudden speed, the struggle for control; for a moment, it had felt a lot like sledding, but even better.

Then, Miguel was standing over him, looking amused.

"Hey are you okay?" he asked. "Anytime you want to stop, we can go back to my house and have a hot chocolate. It's the best way to warm up."

"No. I want to give it another try!" Jay sputtered, smiling. Maybe he could learn to like it here after all.

13. What is the story mainly about?

A. playing a team sport

- B. visiting an old friend
- C. adjusting to a new place
- D. learning to swim in the ocean

14. Which of the following is Jay's favorite thing about winter?

- A. the cold temperature
- B. the sound of the snow
- C. drinking hot chocolate
- D. sledding with his friends

15. What does exploits MOST LIKELY mean in paragraph 3?

- A. slopes
- B. trips
- C. adventures
- D. partners

16. What does went over MOST LIKELY mean as it is used in paragraph 6?

- A. crossed
- B. explained
- C. passed by
- D. read through

17. What is probably true about Jay's first surfing experience?

- A. It was too cold for him.
- B. It was too difficult for him.
- C. It was just as he had expected it to be.
- D. It was more enjoyable than sledding.



18. What is the BEST title for the story?

- A. Going Home
- B. A Surprising Day
- C. The Best Vacation
- D. Summers at the Beach

***For questions 19 – 23:***

**“Fortune Tellers”**

A young couple entered the restaurant in Andy’s view. They were holding hands. Andy sat back down in his chair. He felt sick. He turned and faced his father, who was eating xôi.

“What’s the matter, son?” asked his father. “I thought you were going to the birthday party.”

“It’s too late.”

“Are you sure?”

Andy nodded. He looked at the plate of xôi. He wanted to bury his face in it.

“Hi, Andy.” A voice came from behind.

Andy looked up. He recognized the beautiful face, and he refused to meet her eyes. “Hi, Jennifer,” muttered Andy, looking at the floor.

“You didn’t miss much, Andy. The party was dead. I was looking for you, hoping you could give me a ride home. Then I met Tim, and he was bored like me. And he said he’d take me home.... Andy, do you want to eat with us? I’ll introduce you to Tim.”

Andy said, “No, I’m eating xôi with my father.”

“Well, I’ll see you in school then, okay?”

“Yeah.” And Andy watched her socks move away from his view.

Andy grabbed a chunk of xôi. The rice and beans stuck to his fingernails. He placed the chunk in his mouth and pulled it away from his fingers with his teeth. There was a dry bitter taste. But nothing could be as bitter as he was, so he chewed some more. The bitterness faded as the xôi became softer in his mouth, but it was still tasteless. He could hear the young couple talk and giggle. Their words and laughter and the sounds of his own chewing mixed into a sticky mess. The words were bitter and the laughter was tasteless, and once he began to understand this, he tasted the sweetness of xôi. Andy enjoyed swallowing the sticky mess down. Andy swallowed everything down—sweetness and bitterness and nothingness and what he thought was love.

*Adapted from Nguyen Duc Minh, “Fortune Tellers.” in the collection American Eyes. ©1994 by H. Holt*

19. Who is telling this story?

- A. Jennifer
- B. Andy
- C. Tim
- D. An unnamed narrator

20. What is the most reasonable conclusion to make from the statement in the first paragraph, “He felt sick.”?

- A. Eating xoi with his father gave Andy a stomachache.
- B. Andy was upset when he saw Jennifer holding hands with Tim.
- C. Andy was unhappy about the restaurant his father had selected.
- D. Andy was upset with Jennifer for making him miss the party.

21. According to the passage, Tim would most likely describe the party as:

- A. mysterious.
- B. lively.
- C. dull.
- D. upsetting.

22. Based on the last paragraph, it can be most reasonably inferred that Andy's increasing enjoyment of eating xôi was related to:

- A. hearing Tim and Jennifer laughing and talking.
- B. the fact that it stuck to his fingernails.
- C. sitting at a table with Tim and Jennifer while he ate.
- D. the fact that his father made the xôi.

23. This passage is mainly about the relationship between:

- A. Andy and his father.
- B. Andy and Tim.
- C. Andy's father and Tim.
- D. Jennifer and Andy

***For questions 24 – 31:***

In the 1930s, why did author Zora Neale Hurston choose Eatonville, Florida, to be the first source for her collection of folklore?

I was glad when somebody told me, "You may go and collect Negro folklore." In a way, it would not be a new experience for me.

When I pitched headforemost into the world I landed in the crib of Negroism. It was fitting me like a tight chemise. I couldn't see it for wearing it. It was only when I was off in college, away from my native surroundings, that I could stand off and look at my garment. Then I had to have the spy-glass of anthropology to look through.

I was asked where I wanted to work and I said, "Florida. It's a place that draws people—Negroes from every Southern state and some from the North and West." So I knew that it was possible for me to get a cross section of the Negro South in one state. And then I realized that I felt new myself, so it looked sensible for me to choose familiar ground.

I started in Eatonville, Florida, because I knew that the town was full of material and that I could get it without causing any hurt or harm. As early as I could remember, it was the habit of the men particularly to gather on the store porch in the evenings and swap stories. Even the women would stop and break a breath with them at times. As a child when I was sent down to the store, I'd drag out my leaving to hear more.

Folklore is not as easy to collect as it sounds. The ideal source is where there are the fewest outside influences, but these people are reluctant at times to reveal that which the soul lives by. I knew that even I would have some hindrance among strangers. But here in Eatonville I knew everybody was going to help me.

*Adapted from Zora Neale Hurston, Mules and Men. ©1935 by J.B. Lippincott Company.*

24. Which of the following does the author use as a metaphor for the culture in which she was born?

- A. College
- B. Garment
- C. Southern state
- D. Spy-glass

25. Based on the first paragraph, it is most reasonable to conclude that while in college the author:

- A. decided to become a professor of anthropology.
- B. decided that she did not want to live permanently in Eatonville, Florida.
- C. felt that her teachers prevented her from studying what she wanted.
- D. understood her own culture in new and different ways.

26. As it is used in the passage, the highlighted word material most nearly means:

- A. diversity.
- B. fabric.
- C. information.
- D. money.

27. In the second paragraph, the author indicates that one reason she chose to work in Florida was that she wanted to collect folklore:

- A. from people of different geographical backgrounds.
- B. where her teachers suggested she do so.
- C. from a place she had never visited.
- D. in a state far from where she grew up.

28. In the first paragraph, the author's claim, "In a way, it would not be a new experience for me," refers to the fact that:

- A. she had already attended college in Florida.
- B. she had already collected folklore in Florida for a college course.
- C. she had already experienced new cultures by leaving home.
- D. she was already familiar with the folklore she was to collect.

29. Based on information in the third paragraph, which of the following statements about the interactions on the porch can be most reasonably inferred?

- A. The adults encouraged the author (as a child) to stay and tell stories.
- B. Men were more frequent participants than were women.
- C. Most of the storytellers had not grown up in Eatonville.
- D. The author's parents sent her to the porch to hear the stories.
- E. One man in particular told most of the stories.

30. In the last paragraph, the author writes that folklore collecting:

- A. is less difficult than it appears.
- B. is easiest to accomplish in isolated places because people there freely reveal their innermost thoughts.
- C. can be difficult in isolated places, even though the people there are the best sources.
- D. is more difficult than publishing what has been collected.

31. Which of the following is NOT among the reasons the author gives for her decision to collect folklore in Eatonville?

- A. The people of Eatonville would be grateful that she published their stories.
- B. The people of Eatonville would have many stories for her collection.
- C. Eatonville and its people are familiar to her.
- D. She believes that she can collect stories without doing harm

**For questions 32 – 35:**

**“What Methods Do Andean Farmers Use?”**

Public debate around climate change and its effects on agriculture tends to focus on the large-scale industrial farms of the North. Farmers who work on a small scale and use traditional methods have largely been ignored. However, as the world slowly comes to terms with the threat of climate change, Native farming traditions will warrant greater attention.

In the industrial model of agriculture, one or two crop varieties are grown over vast areas. Instead of trying to use local resources of soil and water optimally and sustainably, the natural environment is all but ignored and uniform growing conditions are fabricated through large-scale irrigation and the intensive use of artificial fertilizers and pesticides. For example, a handful of basically similar potato varieties, all of which require nearly identical soil conditions, temperature, rainfall, and growing seasons, account for almost all global production. When these global crops are no longer suited to the environment in which they are grown, when their resistance to disease and pests begins to fail, or the climate itself changes, the best way to rejuvenate the breeding stock will be to introduce new genetic material from the vast diversity of crop varieties still maintained by indigenous peoples.

In contrast to the industrial model, Andean potatoes and other Andean crops such as squash and beans grown by Quechuan farmers exhibit extraordinary genetic diversity, driven by the need to adapt crops to the extraordinary climatic diversity of the region. Along the two axes of latitude and altitude, the Andes encompasses fully two-thirds of all possible combinations of climate and geography found on Earth. The Andean potato has been adapted to every environment except the depth of the rainforest or the frozen peaks of the mountains. Today, facing the likelihood of major disruptions to the climatic conditions for agriculture worldwide, indigenous farmers provide a dramatic example of crop adaptation in an increasingly extreme environment. More importantly, Native farmers have also safeguarded the crop diversity essential for the future adaptations.

*Adapted from Craig Benjamin, “The Machu Picchu Model: Climate Change and Agricultural Diversity.” © 1999 by Craig Benjamin.*

32. What is the main idea of the first paragraph?

- A. Attention to Native farming practices will lead to greater awareness of the threat of climate change.
- B. Popularity of small-scale farming in the North will lead to greater attention to Native farming practices.
- C. Global demand for food will lead to increasing efficiency of large-scale farming in the North.
- D. It will be worthwhile to include a greater focus on Native farming practices in public discussions concerning the threat of climate change.

33. In the second paragraph, the information about potato-growing practices in the industrial model of agriculture serves to:

- A. give an example of a potential problem that Native farming practices could help to alleviate.
- B. show the likely global consequences of a possible food shortage caused by industrial farming practices.
- C. show how pests and disease are less effectively resisted by crops grown in the industrial farming model.
- D. give an example of how public debate has had little effect on the agricultural practices of the North

34. The passage states that which of the following is true of the small number of potato varieties that account for most of the potatoes produced on Earth currently?

- A. They are grown in the Andean region.
- B. They all require very similar soil and climate conditions.
- C. They are no longer suited to their environment.
- D. They are based on genetic material from crops developed by indigenous peoples



35. As it is used in the passage, the underlined word fabricated most nearly means:

- A. woven.
- B. falsely stated.
- C. fully clothed.
- D. manufactured

***For questions 36 – 45:***

**The following passage is adapted from John F. Kennedy’s Inaugural address delivered Friday, January 20, 1961.**

So let us begin a new remembering on both sides that civility is not a sign of weakness, and sincerity is always subject to proof. Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate. And if a beachhead of cooperation may push back the jungle of suspicion, let both sides join in creating a new endeavor, not a new balance of power, but a new world of law, where the strong are just and the weak secure and the peace preserved.

All this will not be finished in the first one hundred days. Nor will it be finished in the first one thousand days, nor in the life of this Administration, nor even perhaps in our lifetime on this planet. But let us begin.

In your hands, my fellow citizens, more than mine, will rest the final success or failure of our course. Since this country was founded, each generation of Americans has been summoned to give testimony to its national loyalty. The graves of young Americans who answered the call to service surround the globe.

Now the trumpet summons us again; not as a call to bear arms, though arms we need; not as a call to battle, though embattled we are; but a call to bear the burden of a long twilight struggle, year in and year out, “rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation”—a struggle against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease and war itself. Can we forge against these enemies a grand and global alliance, North and South, East and West, that can assure a more fruitful life for all mankind? Will you join in that historic effort?

In the long history of the world, only a few generations have been granted the role of defending freedom in its hour of maximum danger. I do not shrink from this responsibility; I welcome it. I do not believe that any of us would exchange places with any other people or any other generation. The energy, the faith, the devotion which we bring to this endeavor will light our country and all who serve it—and the glow from that fire can truly light the world.

And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country. My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man.

Finally, whether you are citizens of America or citizens of the world, ask of us here the same high standards of strength and sacrifice which we ask of you. With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on Earth God's work must truly be our own.

**36. The central idea that Kennedy expresses in the speech is that Americans**

- A. are better off now than they have been in any other generation.
- B. have lost their faith and should renew it.
- C. are selfish and should do more for the benefit of mankind.
- D. should defend freedom and fight tyranny.

**37. Kennedy uses the metaphor of a “beachhead” and “jungle” in the first paragraph mainly to**

- A. paint a visual presentation to entertain his audience.
- B. emphasize the difficulty of the battle he wants people to fight in a memorable way.
- C. compare politics to ecology.
- D. suggest that jungles are more prevalent than beaches.

38. The second paragraph serves mainly to
- A. urge a call to arms.
  - B. set realistic expectations.
  - C. reveal criticism for the prior generation.
  - D. detail Kennedy's own personal opinion.
39. In paragraph 4, "common" most nearly means
- A. universal.
  - B. ordinary.
  - C. unimportant.
  - D. unnecessary.
40. The question marks that end the final sentences of paragraph 4 have primarily which effect?
- A. They invite the readers to see themselves as active participants in the fight against tyranny.
  - B. They are placed there to soften the message that Americans cannot independently fight wars.
  - C. They allude to the idea that some questions, such as how Americans should behave, have no concrete answers.
  - D. They help to criticize previous generations for leaving the work of freedom unfinished.
41. According to Kennedy, which of the following is somewhat unique to this generation of Americans?
- A. The opportunity to defend their freedom by fighting abroad.
  - B. Their ability to have a clean conscience.
  - C. The opportunity to defend freedom at a time when it is most severely threatened.
  - D. Their ability to fight tyranny.

42. Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?
- A. "Can we forge against these enemies a grand and global alliance, North and South, East and West, that can assure a more fruitful life for all mankind?" (Paragraph 4, Sentence 2)
  - B. "In the long history of the world, only a few generations have been granted the role of defending freedom in its hour of maximum danger." (Paragraph 5, Sentence 1)
  - C. "I do not believe that any of us would exchange places with any other people or any other generation" (Paragraph 5, Sentence 3)
  - D. "My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man." (Paragraph 6, Sentence 2)
43. In paragraph 6, the use of the phrase "my fellow Americans" is likely intended to
- A. unite the audience with Kennedy in a fight towards a common goal.
  - B. recruit the audience to vote for Kennedy for president.
  - C. to highlight the differences between Kennedy and the audience.
  - D. encourage the audience to join the military to fight for freedom.
44. What idea does Kennedy mention in the final paragraph that is not discussed elsewhere in the passage?
- A. Citizenship
  - B. The world outside America
  - C. Religion
  - D. Justice
45. Overall, the tone of the passage can BEST be described as
- A. logical and calculated.
  - B. emotional and esoteric.
  - C. desperate and intellectual.
  - D. moralistic and impassioned.