



# GED-SECTION-4<sup>Q&As</sup>

Section Four Language Arts - Reading

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## QUESTION 1

How Are Robots Different from Humans?

[Helena is talking to Domain, the general manager of Rossums Universal Robots factory.]

DOMAIN: Well, any one whos looked into anatomy will have seen at once that man is too complicated, and that a good engineer could make him more simply. So young Rossum began to overhaul anatomy and tried to see what could be left

out or simplified. In short but this isnt boring you, Miss Glory?

HELENA: No; on the contrary, its awfully interesting.

DOMAIN: So young Rossum said to himself: A man is something that, for instance, feels happy, plays the fiddle, likes going for walks, and, in fact, wants to do a whole lot of things that are really unnecessary.

HELENA: Oh!

DOMAIN: Wait a bit. That are unnecessary when hes wanted, let us say, to weave or to count. Do you play the fiddle?

HELENA: No.

DOMAIN: Thats a pity. But a working machine must not want to play the fiddle, must not feel happy, must not do a whole lot of other things. A petrol motor must not have tassels or ornaments, Miss Glory. And to manufacture artificial workers

is the same thing as to manufacture motors. The process must be of the simplest, and the product of the best from a practical point of view. What sort of worker do you think is the best from a practical point of view?

HELENA: The best? Perhaps the one who is most honest and hard-working.

DOMAIN: No, the cheapest. The one whose needs are the smallest. Young Rossum invented a worker with the minimum amount of requirements. He had to simplify him. He rejected everything that did not contribute directly to the progress of

work. In this way he rejected everything that made man more expensive. In fact, he rejected man and made the Robot. My dear Miss Glory, the Robots are not people. Mechanically they are more perfect than we are, they have an enormously

developed intelligence, but they have no soul. Have you ever seen what a Robot looks like inside? HELENA: Good gracious, no!

DOMAIN: Very neat, very simple. Really a beautiful piece of work. Not much in it, but everything in flawless order. The product of an engineer is technically at a higher pitch of perfection than a product of nature.

HELENA: Man is supposed to be the product of nature.

DOMAIN: So much the worse.

Karel C apek,

from R.U.R. (1923, translated by P. Selver)

Rossum created robots because



- A. humans are complicated and inefficient.
- B. humans are not honest enough.
- C. robots are always happy.
- D. he wanted to see if he could.
- E. there weren't enough people to do the work.

Correct Answer: A

Domain tells us that Rossum "began to overhaul anatomy and tried to see what could be left out or simplified" (lines 4

## QUESTION 2

Whats Wrong with Commercial Television?

Kids who watch much commercial television ought to develop into whizzes at the dialect; you have to keep so much in your mind at once because a series of artificially short attention spans has been created. But this in itself means that the

experience of watching the commercial channels is a more informal one, curiously more homely than watching BBC [British Broadcasting Corporation].

This is because the commercial breaks are constant reminders that the medium itself is artificial, isn't, in fact, "real," even if the gesticulating heads, unlike the giants of the movie screen, are life-size. There is a kind of built-in alienation effect.

Everything you see is false, as Tristan Tzara gnomically opined. And the young lady in the St. Bruno tobacco ads who currently concludes her spiel by stating categorically: "And if you believe that, you'll believe anything," is saying no more

than the truth. The long-term effect of habitually watching commercial television is probably an erosion of trust in the television medium itself.

Since joy is the message of all commercials, it is as well they breed skepticism. Every story has a happy ending, gratification is guaranteed by the conventions of the commercial form, which contributes no end to the pervasive unreality of it

all. Indeed, it is the chronic bliss of everybody in the commercials that creates their final divorce from effective life as we know it.

Grumpy mum, frowning dad, are soon all smiles again after the ingestion of some pill or potion; minimal concessions are made to mild frustration (as they are, occasionally, to lust), but none at all to despair or consummation. In fact, if the form

is reminiscent of the limerick and the presentation of the music-hall, the overall mood in its absolute and unruffled decorum is that of the uplift fables in the Sunday school picture books of my childhood.

Angela Carter, from *Shaking a Leg* (1997)

According to the author, what is the main thing that makes commercials unrealistic?

- A. Everyone in commercials always ends up happy.



- B. The background music is distracting.
- C. Commercials are so short.
- D. The people in commercials are always sick.
- E. The claims commercials make are unrealistic.

Correct Answer: A

The author writes that "Every story has a happy ending . . . which contributes no end to the pervasive unreality of it all" (lines 25

### QUESTION 3

What Happened When He Came to America? My parents lost friends, lost family ties and patterns of mutual assistance, lost rituals and habits and favorite foods, lost any link to an ongoing social milieu, lost a good part of the sense they had of themselves. We lost a house, several towns, various landscapes. We lost documents and pictures and heirlooms, as well as most of our breakable belongings, smashed in the nine packing cases that we took with us to America. We lost connection to a thing larger than ourselves, and as a family failed to make any significant new connection in exchange, so that we were left aground on a sandbar barely big enough for our feet. I lost friends and relatives and stories and familiar comforts and a sense of continuity between home and outside and any sense that I was normal. I lost half a language through want of use and eventually, in my late teens, even lost French as the language of my internal monologue. And I lost a whole network of routes through life that I had just barely glimpsed. Hastening on toward some idea of a future, I only half-realized these losses, and when I did realize I didn't disapprove, and sometimes I actively colluded. At some point, though, I was bound to notice that there was a gulf inside me, with a blanketed form on the other side that hadn't been uncovered in decades. My project of self-invention had been successful, so much so that I had become a sort of hydroponic vegetable, growing soil-free. But I had been formed in another world; everything in me that was essential was owed to immersion in that place, and that time, that I had so effectively renounced. [ . . . ] Like it or not, each of us is made, less by blood or genes than by a process that is largely accidental, the impact of things seen and heard and smelled and tasted and endured in those few years before our clay hardens. Offhand remarks, things glimpsed in passing, jokes and commonplaces, shop displays and climate and flickering light and textures of walls are all consumed by us and become part of our fiber, just as much as the more obvious effects of upbringing and socialization and intimacy and learning. Every human being is an archeological site. Luc Sante, from *The Factory of Facts* (1998) According to the author, our personalities are formed mostly by

- A. our genes.
- B. our education.
- C. our environment.
- D. our parents and caregivers.
- E. our peers.

Correct Answer: C

The author states, "Like it or not, each of us is made, less by blood or genes than by a process that is largely accidental, the impact of things seen and heard and smelled and tasted and endured . . ." The entire third paragraph lists things in our environment that contribute to who we are. The first sentence in the paragraph contradicts choices a and d. There is no mention of education (choice b) or peers (choice e).



#### QUESTION 4

Whats Wrong with Biff and Happy?

[Biff is talking with his brother, Happy. They are together with their parents in the home where they grew up.]

BIFF: [with rising agitation] Hap, Ive had twenty or thirty different kinds of jobs since I left home before the war, and it always turns out the same. I just realized it lately. In Nebraska, when I herded cattle, and the Dakotas, and Arizona, and

now in Texas. Its why I came home now, I guess, because I realized it.

This farm I work on, its spring there now, see? And theyve got about fifteen new colts. Theres nothing more inspiring or beautiful than the sight of a mare and a new colt. And its cool there now, see? Texas is cool now, and its spring. And

whenever spring comes to where I am, I suddenly get the feeling, my God, Im not gettin anywhere! What the hell am I doing, playing around with horses, twenty-eight dollars a week! Im thirty-four years old, I oughta be makin my future.

Thats when I come running home. And now, I get here, and I dont know what to do with myself. [After a pause] Ive always made a point of not wasting my life, and every time I come back here I know that all Ive done is to waste my life.

HAPPY: Youre a poet, you know that, Biff?

Youre a youre an idealist! BIFF: No, Im mixed up very bad. Maybe I oughta get married. Maybe I oughta get stuck into something. Maybe thats my trouble.

Im like a boy. Im not married, Im not in business, I just Im like a boy. Are you content, Hap? Youre a success, arent you? Are you content?

HAPPY: Hell, no!

BIFF: Why? Youre making money, arent you?

HAPPY: [moving about with energy, expressiveness] All I can do now is wait for the merchandise manager to die. And suppose I get to be merchandise manager?

Hes a good friend of mine, and he just built a terrific estate on Long Island. And he lived there about two months and sold it, and now hes building another one.

He cant enjoy it once its finished. And I know thats just what I would do. I dont know what the hell Im workin for. Sometimes I sit in my apartment all alone.

And I think of the rent Im paying. And its crazy. But then, its what I always wanted. My own apartment, a car, and plenty of women. And still, goddammit, Im lonely.

Arthur Miller, from *Death of a Salesman* (1949)

Based on this excerpt, which of the following can we conclude about Happs name?

- A. It is ironic.
- B. It is appropriate.
- C. It is a nickname.
- D. It is not his real name.



E. It is symbolic.

Correct Answer: A

Happy is clearly not happy. As he tells Biff, he is very lonely. Thus, his name contradicts his state of being. Choice b is therefore incorrect. We do not know if

Happy is a nickname or not his real name, so choices c and d are incorrect. Because happy is an adjective, not a thing, it is difficult for it to be symbolic and represent something else, so choice e is incorrect.

## QUESTION 5

What Is the New Dress Code Policy?

MEMORANDUM

TO:All Employees FROM:Helen Suskind, Director,

Human Resources Department

DATE:March 22, 2005 RE: Implementation of New Dress Code

A new dress code for all employees will take effect on September 1. All employees will be required to wear professional business attire while in the office. In this context, professional business attire excludes T-shirts, sleeveless shirts, shorts,

jeans, athletic attire, miniskirts, sandals, flip-flops, and sneakers. The attached sheet provides a complete list of attire that is inappropriate for the office. Please be sure to review this list carefully.

Violations of the new dress code will be handled as follows:

If you have any questions about the parameters of the dress code, please contact Martin Lamb in Human Resources immediately to schedule an appointment.

It is important that all employees understand the seriousness of this policy. Management based its decision to implement this code upon evidence that the lack of a dress code leads to a decrease in productivity. Our new dress code will help

maintain the reputation and integrity of our company by keeping us aware of the need for professionalism. Thank you for your cooperation.

An employee who violates the dress code for the third time will

- A. receive a verbal warning.
- B. receive a written warning.
- C. be put on probation.
- D. be dismissed.
- E. meet with Martin Lamb.

Correct Answer: D



The second paragraph clearly states the penalties for each offense. Employees will be dismissed for their third offense.

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