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UNIT **1**

Language in mission



Passage A

Directions

You are going to read a passage with 10 statements attached to it. Each statement contains information given in one of the paragraphs. Identify the paragraph from which the information is derived. You may choose a paragraph more than once. Each paragraph is marked with a letter.

阅读理解实际用时

分 秒 (WPM)

答题正确率 %

Chinese calligraphy

- A** Calligraphy, literally “beautiful writing”, has been appreciated as an art form in different cultures throughout the world. The stature (名声) of calligraphy in Chinese culture is even unmatched. To understand how Chinese calligraphy rose to such a prominent position, it is necessary to consider a variety of factors such as the materials used in calligraphy and the nature of the Chinese written script.
- B** The earliest extant examples of Chinese writing with a relatively complete system are the inscriptions that appear on oracle bones and bronze vessels, the oldest of which date back to the Shang Dynasty. These early inscriptions were made on the surface of an oracle bone or a bronze vessel with a sharp, pointed instrument. As a result, the characters (or “graphs” as they are also called) generally lack the kind of linear variation and other attributes considered prerequisites (先决条件) of true calligraphy. Those qualities began to emerge very clearly during the Han Dynasty, when Chinese artisans perfected the manufacture of the basic materials still used by calligraphers today: brush, ink, paper, and inkstone.
- C** Although archaeological evidence confirms that brushes were used in China at a much earlier date, it was during the Han period that their use became widespread. A typical brush consists of a bundle of animal hairs (rabbit hair, goat hair, and weasel hair are all very popular) pushed inside a tube of bamboo or wood. The hairs are not all of the same length; rather, an inner core has shorter hairs around it,

which in turn are covered by an outer layer that tapers to a point. Brushes come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes that determine the type of lines produced. What all such brushes have in common, however, is their flexibility. It is this feature that allows the calligraphic line to be so fluid and expressive.

- D** The ink employed in calligraphy is usually made from lampblack. After being collected, the lampblack is mixed with glue and then pressed into molds. A hardened block or stick can then be ground against an inkstone and mixed with water, a process that allows the calligrapher to control the thickness of the ink and density of the pigment. Eventually ink blocks and ink sticks themselves became a decorative art form, and many well-known artists created designs and patterns for their molds.
- E** The invention of paper is widely appreciated as one of China's major technological contributions to the world. In ancient times, paper was made from various fibers, such as mulberry, hemp, and old rags. It provides an inexpensive alternative to silk as a ground material for calligraphy. Paper, inkstone, brush, and ink are known in China as the Four Treasures of the Study, indicating the high esteem in which the materials of calligraphy are held.
- F** To understand why calligraphy came to occupy such a prominent position in China, it is useful to consider its features that were prized when calligraphy began to emerge as a form of art distinct from mere writing; that is to say, when specimens (范例) of handwriting began to be valued, collected, and treated as art. One of the early instances concerns the fourth-century calligraphers Wang Xizhi and his son Wang Xianzhi. Few of their original works have survived, but a number of their handwritings were engraved on stone tablets and woodblocks, and rubbings were made from them. Many great calligraphers imitated their styles and appreciated their works and their personality embodied in their calligraphy.
- G** More than any other factor, it is the claim that calligraphy can serve as a medium of revelation and self-expression that best accounts for why it has become so highly esteemed. A brief consideration of how the technique of calligraphy is

mastered might shed some light on the question of why such expressive potential was seen as intrinsic (固有的) to calligraphy in the first place.

- H** The Chinese written script is made up of several thousand individual graphs. Each consists of an invariable group of strokes executed in a set order. One of the truly unique features of calligraphy that results from these apparently restrictive guidelines is that the viewer is able to mentally retrace, stroke by stroke, the exact steps by which the work was made. The viewer is also able to observe extremely subtle nuances (细微差别) of execution – where a stroke was made swiftly or slowly, whether the brush was put to the paper with great delicacy or force, and so on.
- I** The ability to perform this retracing personalizes the viewing experience and generates in the viewer the sense of interacting with the absent calligrapher. At the same time, it is precisely the nuances of execution, those individualized deviations from the set form, that separate good calligraphy from bad handwriting. Furthermore, since everyone taught to read and write learns the same basic procedures, often by literally tracing famous examples of calligraphy, every literate person in China is to a significant extent able to perceive and appreciate the achievements of a great calligrapher.
- J** The evaluation of calligraphy thus clearly has an obvious social dimension, but it also has an important natural dimension that should not be overlooked. For example, early critics and connoisseurs (鉴赏家) often likened its expressive power to elements of the natural world, comparing the movement of the brush to the force of a large rock plummeting down a hillside or to the gracefulness of the fleeting patterns left on the surface of a pond by swimming geese. Writing would also frequently be described in physiological terms that invoked the “bones”, “muscles”, and “flesh” of lines. In short, while calligraphy involves the Confucian emphasis on the society, it cannot be separated from a more Daoist emphasis on the workings of nature.

(944 words)

- ___ 1 The true calligraphy, developed from early inscriptions, appeared after the proper writing materials were produced.
- ___ 2 The evaluation of calligraphy involves both the social dimension and natural dimension.
- ___ 3 Calligraphy, more than a form of writing, can be collected and valued as art.
- ___ 4 The unique position of calligraphy in Chinese culture can be attributed to various factors.
- ___ 5 Paper is an inexpensive alternative to silk for calligraphy as well as one of the Four Treasures of the Study in China.
- ___ 6 People value calligraphy mainly because of its function of self-expression and revelation.
- ___ 7 Each graph of the Chinese written script consists of a fixed group of strokes in a fixed order so that the viewer can retrace the steps of writing.
- ___ 8 It is the flexibility of brushes that makes expressive calligraphic lines possible.
- ___ 9 Chinese ink blocks and ink sticks serve not only in calligraphy but also as an art form of decoration.
- ___ 10 The ability to retrace the exact steps of writing makes it possible for a viewer to interact with calligraphers and appreciate their achievements.

Passage B

Directions

You are going to read a passage with 10 statements attached to it. Each statement contains information given in one of the paragraphs. Identify the paragraph from which the information is derived. You may choose a paragraph more than once. Each paragraph is marked with a letter.

阅读理解实际用时

分 秒 (WPM)

答题正确率 %

Reading literature makes us smarter and nicer

- A** A professor of philosophy at the University of Nottingham, recently argued that we should not claim literature improves people, because there is no “compelling evidence that suggests that people are morally or socially better by reading Tolstoy” or other literary masterpieces.
- B** Actually, such evidence exists. Raymond Mar, a psychologist at York University in Canada, and Keith Oatley, a professor emeritus of cognitive psychology at the University of Toronto, reported in their studies that individuals who often read fiction appear to be better able to understand other people, empathize (产生共鸣) with them, and put themselves in others’ shoes. This connection persisted even after researchers considered the possibility that more empathetic individuals tend to choose to read more novels. Another study by Mar found a similar result in young children: The more stories were read to them, the keener their “theory of mind” became. They developed their mental model of other people’s intentions.
- C** Deep reading – as opposed to the often superficial reading we do on the Web – is an endangered practice, one we ought to take steps to preserve as we would do to a historic building or a significant work of art. Its disappearance would endanger the intellectual and emotional development of generations growing up online. The loss of this practice

would also endanger the perpetuation (永存) of a critical part of our culture: The novels, poems, and other kinds of literature that can be appreciated only by readers whose brains, quite literally, have been trained to comprehend them.

- D** Recent research in cognitive science, psychology, and neuroscience has demonstrated that deep reading – slow, rich in sensory detail and emotional and moral complexity – is a distinctive experience, different in kind from the mere decoding of words. Although deep reading does not, strictly speaking, require a conventional book, the built-in limits of the printed page are uniquely helpful to the deep reading experience. A book’s lack of hyperlinks, for example, frees the reader from making decisions – Should I click on this link or not? – allowing them to remain fully immersed in the narrative.
- E** The immersion is supported by the way the brain handles language rich in detail and metaphor (隐喻): by creating a mental representation that draws on the same brain regions that would be active if the scene were unfolding in real life. The emotional situations and moral dilemmas that are the stuff of literature are also vigorous exercises for the brain, forcing us inside the heads of fictional characters and even, studies suggest, increasing our real-life capacity for empathy.
- F** None of this is likely to happen when we’re reading through entertainment news online. Although we call the activity by the same name, the deep reading of books and the information-driven reading we do on the Web are very different, both in the experience they produce and in the capacities they develop. A growing body of evidence has suggested that online reading may be less engaging and less satisfying, even for the digital natives to whom it is so familiar. For example, Britain’s National Literacy Trust lately released the results of a study of 34,910 young people aged 8 to 16. Researchers reported that 39 percent of children and teens read daily using electronic devices, but only 28 percent read printed materials every day. Those who only read onscreen were three times less likely to say they enjoyed reading very much and were less likely to have a favorite book. The study also found that young people who read daily only onscreen were nearly two times less likely to be above-average readers than those who read daily in print or both in print and onscreen.

- G** To understand why we should be concerned about how young people read, and not just whether they're reading at all, helps to know something about the way the ability to read evolved. "Human beings were never born to read," notes Maryanne Wolf, director of the Center for Reading and Language Research at Tufts University and author of *Proust and the Squid: The Story and Science of the Reading Brain*. Unlike the ability to understand and produce spoken language, which under normal circumstances will unfold according to a program determined by our genes, the ability to read must be painstakingly acquired by each individual. The "reading circuits (巡回路线)" we construct are built from structures in the brain that evolved for other purposes – and these circuits can be weak or they can be strong, depending on how often and how vigorously we use them.
- H** The deep reader, protected from distractions and being conscious of the slight differences of language, enters a state that psychologist Victor Nell, in a study of the psychology of pleasure reading, compares to a hypnotic trance (催眠后的恍惚状态). Nell found that when readers are enjoying the experience the most, the pace of their reading actually slows. The combination of fast, fluent decoding of words and slow, unhurried progress on the page gives deep readers time to enrich their reading with reflection, analysis, and their own memories and opinions. It gives them time to establish an intimate relationship with the author, the two of them engaged in an extended and enthusiastic conversation like people falling in love.
- I** This is not the reading many young people have come to know. Their reading is practical and instrumental: the difference between what a literary critic calls "carnal reading" and "spiritual reading". If we allow our children to believe carnal reading is all there is – if we don't open the door to spiritual reading, through the early insistence on discipline and practice – we will have cheated them of an enjoyable experience they would not otherwise encounter. And we will have deprived them of an elevating and enlightening experience that will enlarge them as people. Observing young people's attachment to digital devices, some progressive educators and easy-going parents talk about needing to meet kids where they are, forming instruction around

their onscreen habits. This is mistaken. We need, rather, to show them some place they've never been to, a place only deep reading can take them to.

(1,007 words)

- ___ 1 A study showed that young children who read only on electronic devices got less enjoyment from reading.
- ___ 2 Lack of spiritual reading may deprive young children of enjoying an enlightening experience.
- ___ 3 It was found that readers actually slow down their reading speed when they are enjoying the deep reading experience the most.
- ___ 4 Psychologists' studies indicate that those who often read novels seem to understand other people better and empathize with them.
- ___ 5 We are not born with the ability to read; instead, we acquire it through great efforts.
- ___ 6 Conventional books play a unique role in helping readers acquire the deep reading experience.
- ___ 7 Deep reading helps build up a close relationship between the reader and the author.
- ___ 8 The practice of deep reading is on the brink of disappearing, so we need to pay attention and take action to protect this practice.
- ___ 9 Some educators and parents think that we should adjust our instruction based on children's onscreen reading habits.
- ___ 10 Emotional situations and moral dilemmas in literature are helpful to increase our empathy for others in real life.

Passage C

Directions

In the following passage, some sentences have been removed. Choose the most suitable one from the choices listed from A to G to fit into each of the numbered gaps. There is ONE which does not fit in any of the gaps.

阅读理解实际用时

分 秒 (WPM)

答题正确率 %

Is anesthesia in infancy linked to later disabilities?

Every surgery poses risks, as doctors will inform you, but in most cases, it's a necessary one. The benefits of going under the knife frequently outweigh the risks of infection, complications (并发症), or the dangers associated with anesthesia (麻醉).
1 Now a new study from the Mayo Clinic, published in the journal *Anesthesiology*, finds a link between the exposure to anesthesia during surgery in infancy and learning disabilities later in life – the first such study to do so in humans – making the decision to operate even more difficult for both parents and doctors.

Studying a group of more than 5,000 children born in the past five years in Olmsted County, Minnesota, researchers tracked the number of operations each youngster underwent before age four, as well as their scores on reading, writing, and math tests conducted once a year from elementary school through high school. Infants who were exposed to anesthesia just once showed no greater risk of having learning problems by age 19, but those with two or more exposures had a 60 percent increased chance of developing a learning disability compared with babies who had not had any operations. 2

The results restart a long-standing controversy over the impact of anesthesia on still developing minds and bodies. The hazards were documented in earlier studies of animals. For example, rat studies have repeatedly shown that animals exposed to anesthesia drugs in the first seven days of life – when nerve

cells are forming and connecting to the larger neural network – develop problems in performing maze exercises, which require memory and reasoning skills. In the 1960s, based on similar concerns over possible injury to a baby’s immature nervous system, doctors advocated only light anesthesia or none at all for infants undergoing surgery. Some experts believed babies did not have completely developed neural connections to even feel any pain. “There was a whole series of papers showing that (giving anesthesia) was a bad thing to do,” says Dr. Robert Wilder, an author of the Mayo Clinic study. “One thing that is very clear is that kids who have surgery without the appropriate anesthetic have higher degrees of morbidity (发病率) and, in some cases, even mortality (死亡率) associated with surgery compared to kids who have gotten the appropriate anesthetic.”

3 The author is quick to point out, however, that the data are preliminary and do not necessarily suggest a direct or final causal link between anesthesia and learning disabilities, only an association. “We clearly have not demonstrated that anesthetics are the cause of learning disability,” says Wilder. “We don’t want this to alarm the public to the point that they aren’t giving children appropriate medical care.” It could be dangerous to deny children surgery just to spare them the anesthesia, Wilder says, since in most cases of surgery, the procedure is a necessary and potentially life-saving one that cannot be avoided or postponed.

Wilder and his colleagues are also cautious about their results because the data do not make clear whether it was the anesthesia that contributed to the children’s learning deficits, or whether it was an underlying condition that might have required surgery and caused the learning problems. Of the more than 5,000 babies studied, 593 needed at least one surgery and just over 100 infants needed more than two before age three.

4 “The data we have are very preliminary,” says Wilder’s colleague at the Mayo Clinic. “It really doesn’t prompt me or any of my colleagues to say we should change the way we practice.”

Not yet, perhaps. But it does emphasize the need for future research. While the study does not establish a direct link between anesthesia and learning disabilities, it doesn’t rule one out. The babies who underwent surgery in the Mayo study were

treated for a wide range of conditions, few of which were brain-related. By far, the most common procedure performed on the infants involved the insertion of tubes in the ears to remove fluid to prevent hearing loss and potential delays in speech and language skills; 26 percent of the babies undergoing surgery fell into this category. One-quarter of the infants needed general surgery, while 13 percent required some type of orthopedic (矫形外科的) surgery. Only one percent of the infants needed a neurological surgery. 5

What's more, the Mayo researchers found hints of a dose-dependent effect: The longer infants stayed under anesthesia, the greater their chance of developing later problems in reading, writing, and doing math.

Still, experts are not willing to say that babies should never be given anesthesia. "We don't want to delay surgery or withhold surgery for the kids who need it," says an anesthesiologist at Harvard Medical School and Boston Children's Hospital. "But we need more research and clinical investigation to find new drugs and new combinations of drugs that can weaken the cognitive effects."

6 Meanwhile, says Wilder's colleague, "It's just not time yet to make any recommendations about changing practices."

(819 words)

- A At present, the Food and Drug Administration is supporting further study of the connection between anesthesia and cognition to find such alternatives.
- B This suggests that some aspect of the operation or anesthesia – and not the condition that required surgical treatment – could have influenced the babies' cognitive development.
- C But balancing benefits and risks is more difficult when the patients are babies, the most fragile population.

- D** Some people take no comfort from statistics, for example, there are two or three deaths per one million patients anesthetized.
- E** There may have been something unusual about this population of children that made them vulnerable to learning problems and required them to undergo surgery and anesthesia.
- F** Three or more exposures to anesthesia by age three doubled children's risk of having difficulty in thinking, speaking, spelling, or performing math calculations by the end of high school.
- G** Anesthesia may also put babies at greater risk for cognitive problems later in life, according to Wilder's latest findings.

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____
- 6 _____

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