

2009 BECE English Language Past Questions – Paper One

COMPREHENSION

Read the following passages carefully and answer the questions which follow

PASSAGE I

We were suddenly awakened at dawn by the screams of the tenants in our house. They were making a lot of commotion in the yard. Daddy quickly jumped from his bed and made for the door. Not long after, we heard him scream. We ran to the hall, switched on the lights and saw him lying flat on his back holding his forehead. In his haste to get to the hall door, he must have forgotten to switch on the lights thus running straight and crashing his head into the pillar in the middle of the hall. When we examined his forehead, we saw a big lump and blood oozing from a deep cut near his eyebrow.

Mummy, a retired nursing sister, shouted instructions to me to get the first-aid box, some ice cubes and Daddy's towel. When the items were brought, she set to work first on the cut. She put some ice cubes in the towel and pressed the towel on the cut for about two minutes. She then wiped the blood gently. Afterwards, she put a little iodine on a piece of gauze, placed it on the cut and bandaged it. Turning to the lump, she massaged

it with some ice cubes, which reduced the swelling. She then opened the front door and we beheld a pathetic scene. Lying in the middle of the house was the motionless body of one of the tenants. Trying to resist an attack from the armed robbers, he had

been butchered mercilessly and his body left in the middle of the house.

1. What made the writer wake up?

- A. The father crashing into the pillar
- B. The noise made by the father
- C. The attack by the armed robbers
- D. The shouting of the tenants

D. The shouting of the tenants

2. The writer's father was holding his forehead because he

- A. had fallen flat on his back
- B. had hit his head against the pillar
- C. wanted to stop the blood from flowing
- D. was thinking of what to do

B. had hit his head against the pillar

3. The purpose of the ice cubes was to

- A. stop the bleeding
- B. heal the cut
- C. manage the cut
- D. reduce the swelling

D. reduce the swelling

4. Pathetic in the passage means

- A. naughty
- B. merciless
- C. sad
- D. strange

C. sad

5. What happened to the tenant?

- A. He opened the door
- B. He was killed by the robbers
- C. He fell down heavily
- D. He saw a pathetic scene

B. He was killed by the robbers

PASSAGE II

Where is the musical performance of songbirds held? It is not in any concert hall but rather on trees, fences and telephone wires.

It is from these places that the little feathered creatures blend their voices in some of the most melodious songs sung in the world.

Songbirds do not just make noise. The male voices in the choir, for instance, have two different messages.

Firstly, it is a warning to other males not to come near their partners.

Secondly, it is an invitation from the bachelors

to the female birds. The most interesting songs which are sung with a lot of vigour are produced during the breeding

season by the males to impress the lady birds.
Songbirds are very remarkable. They sing three or four notes at a time.
To the human ear it sounds like one beat but the birds can identify the different notes because of their keen sense of hearing.
At times, what is heard may not be a song of our winged friends but simply an instruction to keep the flock together.
It may also be a warning of an approaching danger.
Just how birds compose their songs is an interesting subject. Some birds have their songs fixed in their brains at birth.
Whilst some imitate others, other birds try to compose songs which are unique. They will never copy what they hear others sing.

6. According to the passage, members of the choir can sing without difficulty because they

- A. are born good singers
- B. easily learn to sing
- C. have good songs
- D. have to sing

A. are born good singers

7. The male songbirds sing

- A. to instruct others
- B. four notes at a time
- C. to attract the females
- D. what others have composed

C. to attract the females

8. According to the passage, birds sing

- A. only in the breeding season
- B. some of the sweetest songs
- C. to invite the bachelors
- D. only one note

B. some of the sweetest songs

9. Unique in the passage means

- A. suitable
- B. similar
- C. exciting
- D. special

D. special

10. The writer suggests that

- A. human beings sing better than birds
- B. birds can interpret notes better
- C. birds make louder noise than human beings
- D. birds compose more interesting songs.

B. birds can interpret notes better

Choose from the alternatives lettered A to D the one which is nearest in meaning to the underlined word in each sentence

11. The house by the sea has been abandoned.

- A. deserted
- B. destroyed
- C. infested
- D. robbed

A. deserted

12. Most Ghanaians were optimistic about the Black Stars winning the African Cup.

- A. reasonable
- B. happy
- C. concerned
- D. hopeful

D. hopeful

13. The indigenous people provided the labour during the building of the school.

- A. skilled
- B. native
- C. expatriate
- D. urban

B. native

14. The effort of the watchman which led to the arrest of the thieves was laudable.

- A. quick
- B. real
- C. constant
- D. praiseworthy

D. praiseworthy

15. Our parents deserve our appreciation.

- A. assistance
- B. gratitude
- C. concern
- D. encouragement

B. gratitude

In each of the following sentences a group of words has been underlined. Choose from the alternatives lettered A to D the one that best explains the underlined words.

16. Mr. Taiwoo took the clerk to task for losing the letters. This means that Mr. Taiwoo

- A. sacked the clerk
- B. blamed the clerk

- C. called the clerk a criminal
- D. gave the clerk another work

B. blamed the clerk

17. The quarrel got out of hand. This means that the quarrel

- A. became uncontrollable
- B. was prolonged
- C. became boring
- D. was unhealthy

A. became uncontrollable

18. On seeing the headmaster, the girl took to her heels. This means that the girl

- A. fainted
- B. felt frightened
- C. ran away
- D. hid herself

C. ran away

19. Joseph lives within a stone's throw from the station. This means that Joseph

- A. lives in a stony house
- B. lives very close to the station
- C. goes to the station
- D. often throws stones at the station

B. lives very close to the station

20. All his plans for building a new theatre came to nought. This means that

- A. the theatre was built
- B. his plans were unsuccessful
- C. the building collapsed
- D. there was nothing in the theatre

B. his plans were unsuccessful

From the list of words lettered A to D, choose the one that is most nearly opposite in meaning to the word underlined in each sentence

21. My father has a cordial relationship with all his neighbours.

- A. harsh
- B. hostile
- C. scornful
- D. different

B. hostile

22. John's latest play is rather dull

- A. interesting
- B. informative
- C. sensible
- D. educative

A. interesting

23. The feeble old man spoke for about three hours.

- A. bold
- B. strong
- C. bright
- D. successful

B. strong

24. The thief descended the stairs hurriedly.

- A. consciously
- B. lazily
- C. slowly
- D. noisily

C. slowly

25. The diligent student won a prize.

- A. careless
- B. lucky
- C. playful
- D. proud

A. careless

From the alternatives lettered A to D, choose the one which most suitably completes each sentence.

26. My father wanted to find out how Abu was getting at school.

- A. on
- B. down
- C. back
- D. up

A. on

27. If the boat had been maintained properly it.....capsized.

- A. had not
- B. will not have
- C. would not have
- D. might have not

C. would not have

28. The white horse isthan the black one.

- A. faster
- B. very fast
- C. fast
- D. more fast

A. faster

29. They thought he would become a businessman.....?

- A. wouldn't they
- B. didn't they
- C. wasn't it
- D. isn't it

B. didn't they

30. There were only two of us who any idea of the answer.

- A. have
- B. had
- C. has
- D. would have

B. had

31. He had boarded a taxi,?

- A. wouldn't he
- B. hadn't he
- C. isn't it
- D. won't he

B. hadn't he

32. Mrs. Mensah in Saltpond since 1970.

- A. was living
- B. has been living
- C. has lived
- D. is living

B. has been living

33. The booking clerk made him a deposit.

- A. to pay
- B. paid
- C. to be paying
- D. pay

D. pay

34. Although all the dresses were beautiful, she likedof them.

- A. any
- B. none
- C. neither
- D. Both

B. none

35. Kwesi and Ama are in love with

- A. themselves
- B. one another
- C. each other
- D. ourselves

C. each other

36. It is to attempt in one day.

- A. too long and difficult a journey
- B. the journey too long and difficult
- C. long and difficult too a journey
- D. too long and difficult the journey

A. too long and difficult a journey

37. The rain shouldn't deter you going out.

- A. for
- B. on
- C. by
- D. from

D. from

38. Ben is leaving Takoradi this morning.

- A. for
- B. to
- C. by
- D. from

A. for

39. Yesterday I met the man

- A. the car of whom I bought
- B. whose car I bought
- C. I bought his car
- D. whom I bought his car

B. whose car I bought

40. No sooner had the Minister opened the bank the bank was filled to capacity.

- A. when
- B. for
- C. as
- D. than

D. than