READTHEORY

Name_____
Date_____

• Reading Comprehension 7 Level 4

Directions: *Read the passage. Then answer the questions below.*

Elephants on the coast of Thailand are acting strange. They stamp their feet and motion toward the hills. The sea draws back from the beaches. Fish flop in the mud. Suddenly, a huge wave appears. This is no ordinary wave. It is a tsunami!

Tsunami (pronounced "soo-NAH-mee") waves are larger and faster than normal surface waves. A tsunami wave can travel as fast as a jet plane and can be as tall as a ten-story building. Imagine dropping a stone into a pond. The water on the surface ripples. A tsunami is like a very powerful ripple. Tsunamis begin when the ocean rises or falls very suddenly. Large amounts of seawater are displaced. This movement causes huge waves.

For a tsunami to occur, there must be some kind of force that causes the ocean water to become displaced. Most tsunamis are caused by underwater earthquakes. However, volcanoes, landslides, large icebergs, and even meteorites are capable of causing one of these mighty waves.

Tsunamis are extremely powerful. Ordinary waves lose power when they break. Tsunami waves can remain powerful for several days. Because tsunami waves are so strong, they can kill people, damage property, and completely ruin an ecosystem in just one hour.

Scientists have no way of predicting when a tsunami will hit. However, if a powerful enough earthquake occurs, scientists can issue a warning or a watch. A warning means that a tsunami will very likely hit soon. A watch means that conditions are favorable for a tsunami. When people are notified about a watch or a warning, they have more time to prepare. It is best not to get caught unaware when a tsunami is on the way!

Questions

1) In paragraph 1, the elephants are most likely acting strange because they

A. are not used to seeing fish
B. dislike the water
C. can sense something out of the ordinary
D. see the ocean drawing back from the beaches

2) This passage is mostly about

A. how to prepare for tsunamis
B. scientists who predict tsunami waves
C. similarities and differences between wave types
D. causes and effects of tsunamis

3) As used paragraph 2, **displaced** most nearly means

A. moved out of normal place
B. pushed by human force
C. sloshed around quickly
D. pulled to great heights

4) After reading the passage, we can conclude that a tsunami

A. watch is more serious than a warning
B. warning is more serious than a watch
C. warning and watch are equally serious
D. warning and watch both mean a tsunami has formed

5) Tsunamis cause so much destruction because they

A. cannot be predicted by scientists
B. break on the coast, unlike normal waves
C. are caused by volcanoes, landslides and meteorites
D. can be as tall as a ten-story building

Answers and Explanations

1) **C**
In the first paragraph, the author writes, “Elephants on the coast of Thailand are acting strange. They stamp their feet and motion toward the hills.” Using the other sentences around this selection, or context, we can understand the likely reason why the elephants are acting strange. The author adds that the “sea draws back from the beaches,” and “fish flop in the mud.” We would expect to see fish at the coast. The sea draws back all the time due to normal wave and tide patterns. Since these things ordinarily happen at the beach, we can understand that the elephants are likely acting strange because they can sense something out of the ordinary. This means **(C)** is correct. Fish are more likely to swim in the ocean than flop in the mud. Even so, from time to time, the elephants probably see fish, either when they swim in the water or from seeing fishermen catch them on the beach. For this reason, we can understand that the elephants are not likely to be acting strange just because they are not used to seeing fish. This means **(A)** is incorrect. Elephants love to go in the water. They stay cool this way. Since we know this about elephants, we can understand that the elephants are not likely to be acting strange because they dislike the water. This means **(B)** is incorrect. The sea draws back from the beaches every time there is a normal wave and also when the tides change. This fact alone is not enough to cause the elephants to act strangely. Using this information, we can understand that the elephants are not likely to be acting strange just because they see the ocean drawing back from the beaches. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.

2) **D**
Because an introduction—the first paragraph—usually introduces a new topic and the conclusion—the last paragraph—usually brings closure to a topic, we need to look at the middle paragraphs to determine what a passage is mostly about. In paragraph 2, the author writes, “Tsunamis begin when the ocean rises or falls very suddenly.” When the author explains how tsunamis begin, we know that the causes of tsunamis are being described. In paragraph 3, the author writes, “For a tsunami to occur, there must be some kind of force that causes the ocean water to become displaced.” Again, the author is writing about causes. In paragraph 4, the author writes, “Because tsunami waves are so strong, they can kill people, damage property and completely ruin an ecosystem in just one hour.” Here the author lists effects of tsunamis. Using this information, we can see that this passage is mostly about the causes and effects of tsunamis, so **(D)** is correct. In the last paragraph, the author writes, “When people are notified about a watch or a warning, they have more time to prepare.” Even though preparation is mentioned, the author never explains how people should prepare for tsunamis. Using this information, we can tell that this passage is not mostly about how to prepare for tsunamis. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. In the last paragraph, the author writes, “Scientists have no way of predicting when a tsunami will hit. However, if a powerful enough earthquake occurs, scientists can issue a warning or a watch.” Even though scientists are mentioned, the author never writes about the scientists themselves. Using this information, we can tell that this passage is not mostly about scientists who predict tsunami waves. This means **(B)** is incorrect. In paragraph 2, the author writes, “Tsunami waves are larger and faster than normal surface waves.” This is the only time the author mentions normal waves. In a comparison of similarities and differences between different types of waves, it would be necessary to explore tsunamis and normal waves. In this passage, the author mostly focuses on tsunamis. This lets us know that this passage is not mostly about similarities and differences between wave types. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect.

3) **A**
displaced (*adjective*): moved or put out of the usual or proper place.
In paragraph 2, the author writes, “Tsunamis begin when the ocean rises or falls very suddenly. Large amounts of seawater are displaced. This movement causes huge waves!” We can use context clues provided by the words and sentences we understand around the word we want to define, in order to help us figure out what displaced means. The last sentence starts with “This movement…” which describes the word displaced. From this third sentence, we can figure out that displaced is some type of movement. Since “Large amounts of seawater” are displaced to create “huge waves,” and huge is something much bigger than normal, we can understand that displaced most nearly means moved out of normal place. This means **(A)** is correct. If the water is pushed out of place, something is responsible for doing the pushing. Normally, human beings push. In this case, we know that the “seawater” described above has not been pushed or acted on by humans. This lets us know that displaced does not most nearly mean pushed by human force, and **(B)** is incorrect. Something sloshed is mistakenly shaken. For instance, if we bump into a table with a cup of water on it, it might slosh the water in the cup. This is not the same as what happens when seawater is displaced. We would not call seawater that creates a tsunami mistakenly shaken, or sloshed. Using this information, we can tell that displaced does not most nearly mean sloshed around quickly. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect. We cannot pull on water, because it would slip out of our hands if we tried to grab it. Using this information, we can tell that displaced does not most nearly mean pulled to great heights. This means **(D)** is incorrect.

4) **B**
In paragraph 5, the author writes, “A warning means that a tsunami will very likely hit soon. A watch means that conditions are favorable for a tsunami.” If a warning means that it is “very likely” that a tsunami will hit soon, and a watch only means that “conditions are favorable” for creating a tsunami, we can tell that a warning means a tsunami has already been created. If a tsunami has already been created—even though it might not have hit—we can tell that this is more serious than if conditions are simply right for creating a tsunami. Using this information, we can conclude that a tsunami warning is more serious than a watch. This means **(B)** is correct. Using the information above, we can tell that a tsunami watch only means that a tsunami could occur, while a tsunami warning means that a tsunami has been created and will likely hit soon. Based on this information, we cannot conclude that a tsunami watch is more serious than a warning. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. Using the information above, we can tell that a tsunami watch only means that a tsunami could occur, while a tsunami warning means that a tsunami has been created and will likely hit soon. This means that the tsunami warning is more serious, since a tsunami has already been created. Based on this information, we cannot conclude that a tsunami warning and watch are equally serious. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect. In paragraph 5, the author writes, “A watch means that conditions are favorable for a tsunami.” Using this information, we can tell that a tsunami has not formed during a watch, since it simply means that conditions are favorable for creating a tsunami. Using this information, we cannot conclude that a tsunami warning and watch both mean a tsunami has formed. This means **(D)** is incorrect.

5) D

In paragraph 2, the author writes, “A tsunami wave can travel as fast as a jet plane and can be as tall as a ten-story building.” Since we know that tsunami is a type of wave, we can understand that a wave as tall as a ten-story building would likely cause a lot of destruction. We know this because a ten-story building is huge. Using this information, we know that tsunamis cause so much destruction because they can be as tall as a ten-story building. This means **(D)** is correct. In paragraph 5, the author writes, “Scientists have no way of predicting when a tsunami will hit.” Even so, the fact that they cannot be predicted does not explain why they cause so much destruction. Even if scientists could predict tsunamis, they would still cause a lot of destruction because they are so large. This lets us know that tsunamis do not cause so much destruction, because they cannot be predicted by scientists. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. In paragraph 4, the author writes, “Ordinary waves lose power when they break.” The author never writes about tsunami waves breaking, but he or she does mention ordinary waves breaking. Using this information, we can understand that tsunamis do not cause so much destruction, because they break on the coast, unlike normal waves, so **(B)** is incorrect. In paragraph 3, the author writes that when it comes to tsunamis, “volcanoes, landslides, large icebergs, and even meteorites are capable of causing one of these mighty waves.” This list of causes, in which volcanoes, landslides and meteorites are all mentioned, does not explain why the tsunamis are so destructive; it only tells us how they start. Using this information, we can understand that tsunamis do not cause so much destruction, because they are caused by volcanoes, landslides and meteorites. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect.