

PASSAGE 14

Have you ever clicked on a link like “What does your favorite animal say about you?” wondering what your love of hedgehogs reveals about your psyche? Or filled out a personality assessment to gain new understanding into whether you’re an introverted or extroverted “type”? People love turning to these kinds of personality tests on the hunt for deep insights into themselves. People tend to believe they have a “true” and revealing self, hidden somewhere deep within, so it’s natural that assessments claiming to **unveil** it will be appealing. However, psychologists have noticed something striking about these assessments. Many of the questions are poorly constructed. Their wording can be ambiguous and they often contain forced choices between options that are not opposites. On the other hand, assessments created by trained personality psychologists use questions that are more straightforward to interpret. The most notable example is probably the well-respected Big Five Inventory. Rather than sorting people into “types,” it scores people on the established psychological dimensions of openness to new experience, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness and neuroticism. This simplicity is by design. Psychology researchers know that the more respondents struggle to understand the question, the worse the question is. What makes personality tests less valid can ironically make them more interesting. Since most people aren’t trained to think about psychology in a scientifically rigorous way, they also won’t be great at evaluating those assessments. And when people try to answer these harder questions, a desire for deep insight can lead to deep confusion.

1. Which of the following can be inferred from online personality tests?

- A) The questions on these types of tests are already revealing.
- B) The topics included in these types of tests are usually about animate objects.
- C) These tests have probably been prepared by untrained individuals.
- D) There are usually too many questions to answer on these types of tests.
- E) The people preparing the questions on these tests play tricks on the respondents.

2. One can understand from the passage that ----.

- A) people can feel being discriminated against due to the questions on the personality tests
- B) some people refrain from online personality tests as they know that they are misleading
- C) people may become distracted by the flood of online personality tests
- D) some people harshly criticize the prevalence of online personality tests
- E) people are into doing personality tests in search of a better understanding of their characteristics

3. Which of the following is true about online personality tests?

- A) Psychologists suggest that poorly-constructed personality tests be strictly forbidden.
- B) Answering the hardest questions may raise respondents’ awareness about their traits.
- C) Although poorly-constructed, personality tests can give an insight into one’s personality traits.
- D) When test questions are poorly-structured; they sound more stimulating for respondents.
- E) Test takers need some training on personality tests so as to gain higher scores on them.

4. The author gave the “Big Five Inventory” example in order to ----.

- A) emphasize the risks poorly-prepared personality tests are likely to pose
- B) ruin the reputation of poorly-constructed online personality tests
- C) raise the awareness of the respondents wishing to improve their self-confidence
- D) highlight the fact that personality test questions prepared by experts are easier to comprehend
- E) criticize the social networks that constantly post poor personality tests

Bonus Question

The word **unveil** is closest in meaning to ----.

- A) disapprove B) invalidate C) discard
- D) unsubscribe E) disclose

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PASSAGE 15

A Chinese school has recently installed a “smart classroom behavior management system” (or “smart eye”) in one of its classrooms. It uses facial recognition technology to monitor students, and by this summer, officials plan to install the system in every classroom throughout the country. Here’s how it works. Three cameras installed in the classroom scan each student’s face to determine their expression: surprised, sad, antipathy, angry, happy, afraid, or neutral. They also record each student’s actions throughout the class, noting whether they are reading, listening, writing, standing up, raising hands, or leaning on the desk. Smart eye then notifies the teacher in real-time if it notices that a student appears distracted. The teacher can also view a report at the end of the class that provides an average of each student’s expressions. The officials said the goal behind using the smart eye is to help teachers improve based on student reactions. This sounds positive but that’s not the whole story. Students are also graded on how well they’re paying attention. Students who focus on lectures will be marked with an A, while students who let their minds wander will be marked with a B. The Chinese education system is already notoriously **arduous** for students. The difference between an A and a B can have major consequences for some students, and when they feel they’ve fallen short of academic expectations, students’ mental health can suffer. Any human being will have moments when their mind wanders. This system might only end up hurting students in the long run.

1. Which of the following is true about the education system in China?

- A) The current system in China has a bad reputation for being very demanding.
- B) Chinese students are unable live up to the expectations of the lecturers.
- C) Neither the teachers nor the students can meet the demands of the system.
- D) Many students experience mental illnesses due to the challenging system.
- E) Some learners have difficulties following lectures that are well beyond their level.

2. According to the officials, the primary purpose of “the smart eye” scheme is to ----.

- A) improve the education system that is being criticized by both students and teachers
- B) help teachers develop themselves through the recorded behaviour patterns of learners
- C) equip all schools in China with the system to improve the performance of students
- D) gather data on the reactions of students wishing to pursue an academic career
- E) carry out research into the behaviour patterns of young students in classroom environment

3. It is clearly stated in the passage that ----.

- A) the introduction of the “smart eye” system has put pressure on both teachers and learners
- B) students will be unfairly assessed if the “smart eye” system is used for grading purposes
- C) teachers can get instant notification of a student losing his concentration via the “smart eye”
- D) Chinese officials have embarked on the “smart eye” system against the educators’ will
- E) the “smart eye” system will definitely worsen the in-class performance of students

4. It is pointed out in the passage that ----.

- A) the “smart eye system will probably become common practice in all schools in China
- B) some students have already started to become depressed due to the “smart eye” system
- C) Chinese teachers believe the “smart eye” system will be to the benefit of their learners
- D) school administrators will be able to observe the teachers and students in class in real time
- E) any given student experiences a wide range of emotions during a class hour

Bonus Question

The word arduous is closest in meaning to ----.

- A) susceptible B) pretentious C) biased
- D) challenging E) indifferent

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PASSAGE 16

The older you get, the more difficult it is to learn to speak French like a Parisian. But no one knows exactly what the cutoff point to master a new language. Researchers from a variety of universities calculated they needed more than half a million people to make a fair estimate of when the “critical period” for the ability to acquire a new language deteriorates. So, they created a short online grammar quiz called *Which English?* that tested many linguistic elements. It became the largest linguistics studies ever conducted and drew two thirds of a million respondents. At its peak, the quiz attracted 100,000 hits a day thanks to the popular social networks. From the responses, an algorithm created by researchers predicted the respondents’ native language and which dialect of English they spoke. Also, based on people’s grammar scores and information about their learning of English, the researchers developed models that predicted how long it takes to become fluent in a language and the best age to start learning. The findings revealed that children are proficient at learning a new language up until the age of 18, roughly 10 years later than earlier estimates. But the study also showed that it is best to start by age 10 if you want to achieve the grammatical fluency of a native speaker. They concluded that the ability to learn a new language is strongest until the age of 18 after which there is a sharp decline. This is probably because people may no longer have the time, opportunity or learning environment to study a new language like they did when they were younger.

1. It is clearly stated in the passage that ----.

- A) it takes a shorter time to master a new language when compared to the time period indicated in previous research
- B) the results of the study are different from those of the previous studies in terms of the best age to start learning a new language
- C) the findings of the research carried out online showed that the elderly are as adept as the youth at acquiring a new language
- D) the researchers designing the online quiz didn’t anticipate that the number of the respondents would be as high as half a million
- E) the designers of the online quiz and the administrators of the popular social media websites worked in close collaboration

2. Which of the following is true about the quiz created by researchers?

- A) The findings of the online quiz revealed that grammar scores of the respondents have nothing to do with age.
- B) The number of respondents had to be high to make an educated guess about when the capability to learn a new language worsens.
- C) The respondents’ proficiency levels are closely related with their educational backgrounds as well as their dialects.
- D) Linguists have piloted the online quiz in different learning environments before posting it on popular social networks.
- E) Researchers made use of some artificial intelligence-based systems to accurately evaluate the data gathered via online quiz.

3. It is pointed out in the passage that ----.

- A) experts had to adopt novel methods to analyze the data due to the huge numbers of test takers
- B) there are too many factors that undermine the accurate evaluation of the huge volume of data
- C) people with certain dialects are able to master a new language faster than others
- D) the quiz has drastically changed the way language teachers exploit their class material
- E) the quiz helped researchers identify the first language of the respondents

4. It can be understood from the passage that ----.

- A) it becomes harder to learn a new language after a certain age owing to some restricting factors
- B) much more research is needed to determine why language learning ability declines over time
- C) results of the quiz can be misleading as it was not conducted in a controlled environment
- D) the quiz has failed to meet the expectations of language teachers and learners
- E) the quiz became the most common tool of identifying foreign language learners’ needs

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PASSAGE 17

Racism isn't just about police brutality or the criminal justice system. It's in the air and water. Environmental racism refers to the way in which minority group neighborhoods populated primarily by people of color and members of low socioeconomic groups are burdened with a disproportionate number of hazards. These may include toxic waste facilities, garbage dumps, and other sources of environmental pollution that lower the quality of life. All around the globe, members of minority groups bear a greater burden of the health problems resulting from higher exposure to waste and pollution. This can occur due to unsafe or unhealthy work conditions where no regulations exist or are enforced for poor workers, or in neighborhoods that are uncomfortably close to toxic materials. Research shows that environmental racism **pervades** all aspects of African Americans' lives: environmentally unsound housing, schools with asbestos problems, facilities and playgrounds with lead paint. A twenty-year comparative study revealed that race is more important than socioeconomic status in predicting the location of the nation's commercial hazardous waste facilities. The research found, for example, that African American children are five times more likely to have lead poisoning – the leading environmental health threat for children – than their Caucasian counterparts, and that a disproportionate number of people of color reside in areas with hazardous waste facilities. The issue is further **exacerbated** when people with resources tend to protest poor environmental practices only if these practices affect them directly.

1. It is clearly stated in the passage that ----.

- A) governments all around the globe prefer to build toxic waste facilities in poor districts of the city
- B) ethnicity plays a significant part in predicting the site of a country's toxic waste facilities
- C) environmental racism has become a more serious issue than any other types of racism
- D) governments intentionally build toxic waste facilities in regions where minorities live
- E) environmental pollution is often triggered by environmental racism

Bonus Question 1

The word **pervade** is closest in meaning to ----.

- A) afflict B) commit C) deplete
- D) satisfy E) invest

2. One can conclude from the passage that ----.

- A) environmental racism is just one of the negative consequences of poor urban planning
- B) African Americans suffer most from environmental racism all around the globe
- C) people with power contribute negatively to the issue of environmental racism
- D) environmental racism affects everyone regardless of their socioeconomic status
- E) environmental policies are under the influence of high-status individuals with resources

3. It is stated in the passage that ----.

- A) minorities tend to reside in districts where laws and regulations aren't enforced
- B) members of working minority groups are unable to protect themselves against exploitation
- C) children of minority groups are forced to attend special schools
- D) individuals involved in crimes tend to live in the regions where minority groups reside
- E) minorities are more likely to develop medical conditions than others throughout the world

4. The passage is mainly about the ----.

- A) reasons why people of colour suffer from environmental racism
- B) some health threats to minorities who are discriminated against
- C) ways of dealing with the health problems of minorities suffering from discrimination
- D) research into the socioeconomic problems of African American children
- E) ways to resolve the conflicts caused by environmental racism

Bonus Question 2

The word **exacerbate** is closest in meaning to ----.

- A) exaggerate B) worsen C) reverse
- D) elaborate E) enhance

PASSAGE 18

Social media advertising is among the most profitable forms of digital advertising today. When done right, the benefits will almost always outweigh the potential financial risks you would have to put in to make your efforts successful. The best social media platform to advertise on is the one most popular among target audience. Advertising on a platform like this gives you an automatic advantage. You can also post and share various forms of content such as photos, videos, and website links through your free account to **bolster** your messaging and reach the audience. However, social media is crowded. According to a survey, more than 88% of companies in the U.S. use social media for marketing. That means you have to invest more time and effort into crafting unique and compelling content as well as training. Failing to do so may cause your company *to become just another grain of sand on the beach*. Also, social media advertising requires constant monitoring. To successfully engage with your clients and answer their feedback, you will have to designate a significant portion of time for social media ad upkeep. Unfortunately, even if you are **savvy** about social media, there is still a lot to know about it, otherwise it can result in unfortunate consequences: your posts could be misinterpreted, or you could read your audience wrong. No matter what business you operate, social media advertising is the future of marketing. Its power is undeniable. But, just like any investment, you need the will to put almost everything you have into it to reach new heights of success.

1. It can be understood from the passage that ----.

- A) businesses shouldn't embark on anything without carrying out risk analysis
- B) time management is a vital factor for firms in carrying out e-commerce operations
- C) social media advertising often brings more drawbacks than gains
- D) a great majority of businesses in U.S depend largely on e-commerce to generate profits
- E) social media advertising requires attentiveness, familiarity and education

Bonus Question

The word **bolster** is closest in meaning to ----.

- A) analyze B) predict C) reinforce
- D) determine E) attach

2. One can understand from the passage that ----.

- A) research suggests businesses must have their own websites to attract more customers
- B) using social networks for marketing is especially harmful for specific businesses
- C) the know-how to deal with social media may prove inadequate for social media advertising
- D) social media users can be easily fed up with advertisements appearing too often
- E) businesses don't have to invest huge sums of money on advertising through social media

3. The author used the phrase "*to become just another grain of sand on the beach*" in order to suggest that ----.

- A) not the quantity but the quality is what matters to make huge profits
- B) if you deal with too many things at a time, you will eventually lose interest in them
- C) determining the right environment for your business can become too difficult to achieve
- D) unless you stand out in the crowd, you will fail to attract attention
- E) finding the right person to do a task is as hard as looking for something in sand on the beach

4. The primary purpose of the author is to ----.

- A) give information on utilizing social networking websites to conduct international business
- B) raise the awareness of the audience about the pros and cons of social media advertising
- C) suggest ways of enabling a business to become more successful than it already is
- D) highlight the potential threats that social media advertising poses
- E) provide information on different ways of reaching target customers by using social media platforms

Bonus Question

The word **savvy** is closest in meaning to ----.

- A) deliberate B) lucrative C) ignorant
- D) knowledgeable E) bewildered

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PASSAGE 19

Despite what you may hear from daytime talk shows or read in self-help books, science has **roundly** debunked the idea that there's no such thing as the "female brain" or the "male brain." Yet when people look to explain the science gender gap they often obstinately argue that women are innately less-suited to science and math. A recent study suggests that one factor (of many) may be that women are simply conditioned to believe they're worse at these subjects. Based on surveys of a group of 202 students, researchers found that women had a significantly lower opinion of their academic ability relative to men. This also affects how female students behaved in class. Researchers found that male students who consider themselves smarter are more likely to participate in class while females are hesitant to do so. In the long term, that confidence gap and lack of participation makes women more hesitant to ask questions, receive lower grades, and even drop classes out of discomfort. That might help explain why there are significantly fewer women in science, tech, engineering and math (STEM) fields than men. Unfortunately, this discouragement causes women to spend their formative years hearing that they're less suited for math and science careers, which leads to low self-confidence in STEM subjects, which leads to fewer women in the field, and which **perpetuates** the myth that women aren't suited for STEM. In fact, the gender gap in science isn't just a female problem; research suggests that it hurts everyone.

1. It can be understood from the passage that ----.

- A) employers are prejudiced about women regarding their academic success in science
- B) females may lose their jobs due to the idea that they aren't suited for STEM
- C) it might take a long time to fix the adverse effects of gender gap in science
- D) the gender gap in science affects not only females but also males
- E) males can get higher positions at work more easily than females

Bonus Question

The word **roundly** is closest in meaning to ----.

- A) entirely
- B) inherently
- C) casually
- D) peculiarly
- E) deceptively

2. Recent research reveals that ----.

- A) some people disregard research findings on the grounds that their outcome is often biased
- B) the idea that men are better than women in science stems from bitter school experiences
- C) many people think there is no such thing as science gender gap
- D) the number of women pursuing a career related to STEM fields has plunged dramatically
- E) the myth suggesting that women are less suited for STEM subjects affects their class behavior

3. It is clearly stated in the passage that ----.

- A) there is a disagreement among scientists as to whether there is female brain and male brain
- B) science has disproved the idea that the brain shows differences depending on gender
- C) women are discriminated against in class when STEM subjects are taught
- D) males are significantly more successful than females in STEM subjects
- E) females are inherently more adept than males in social subjects

4. One can understand from the passage that females ----.

- A) are adversely affected due to TV programs and books suggesting they are less adept in science
- B) put the blame on the education system favoring men more than women regarding STEM fields
- C) feel inferior due to the idea that they are not as skillful as men in certain school subjects
- D) tend to drop out of college more than males do due to the social pressure they feel
- E) think they can be more successful than males in STEM subjects unless educators are biased

Bonus Question

The word **perpetuates** is closest in meaning to ----.

- A) suspects
- B) observes
- C) discontinues
- D) releases
- E) maintains

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