*Directions: read each passage and question carefully. Then select the letter of the best answer choice.*

Notes: The main idea is the common thread or glue (topic + idea) that holds all the details together. A paraphrase is generally the same length as the original. A summary is less than half the size of the original.

**Passage One:**

Picture this: a herd of elephants flies past you at sixty miles per hour, followed by a streak of tigers, a pride of lions, and a bunch of clowns. What do you see? It must be a circus train! One of the first uses of the circus train is credited to W.C. Coup. He partnered with P.T. Barnum in 1871 to expand the reach of their newly combined shows using locomotives. Before circus trains, these operators had to lug around all of their animals, performers, and equipment with a team of more than 600 horses. Since there were no highways, these voyages were rough and took a long time. Circuses would stop at many small towns between the large venues. Performing at many of these small towns was not very profitable. Because of these limitations, circuses could not grow as large as the imaginations of the operators. After they began using circus trains, Barnum and Coup only brought their show to large cities. These performances were much more profitable and the profits went toward creating an even bigger and better circus. Multiple rings were added and the show went on. Today, Ringling Bros. and Barnum and Bailey Circus still rely on the circus train to transport their astounding show, but now they use two.

1. What is the main idea of this passage?
2. Circus staff were specially trained to haul the whole circus across the country.
3. Trains changed the ways the circus operated.
4. Before trains, circuses never traveled to large cities.
5. Circus animals miss the sensation of flying 60 mph on a train.
6. What is the best summary for the passage?
   1. Circuses used to have a difficult time traveling and had to stop at many small towns along the way. Trains allowed circuses to travel easily between large cities.
   2. Barnum and Bailey revolutionized the way circuses travelled in the 1900s by creating a railway system between small towns.
   3. Creating a railway system to haul circuses between destinations allowed them to become more profitable and cut down on transportation costs.
   4. Train transportation allowed circus operators to create bigger and better performances for small towns all over the country.
7. “Before circus trains, these operators had to lug around all of their animals, performers, and equipment with a team of more than 600 horses.” What is the best paraphrase of the following quote?
   1. Before circus trains, these operators had to lug around all of their animals, performers, and equipment with a team of more than 600 horses.
   2. Before circus were transported on trains, circus operators had to haul around all of their performers, equipment, and animals with hundreds of horses.
   3. Operators shipped all aspects of the circus using hundreds of horses before trains allowed for easy transportation.
   4. Operators had to lug around all of their animals, performers, and equipment with a team of more than 600 horses before circus trains.

**Passage Two**

How do you say “Holy Cow” in French? The fastest thing in France may just be the fastest ground transportation in the world. The TGV (Train Grande Vitesse: French for very high speed) is France’s national high speed rail service. On April 3rd, 2007, a TGV test train set a record for the fastest wheeled train, reaching 357.2 miles per hour. In mid-2011, TGV trains operated at the highest speed in passenger train service in the world, regularly reaching 200 miles per hour. But what you may find most shocking is that TGV trains run on electric power, not petrol. Now if you’ll excuse me; I have a record to catch.

1. What is the main idea for the passage?
   1. France is out performing the world in passenger train service.
   2. The fastest train can go 357.2 miles per hour and regularly operates at 200 miles per hour.
   3. The fastest train in France is called the “Holy Cow.”
   4. TGV is a record setting train.
2. What is the best summary for the passage?
   1. The TGV is a French train that set a record for the fastest wheeled train and the fastest passenger train service.
   2. Different countries are competing to develop the fastest wheeled train to expand their businesses.
   3. The fastest train in France runs on electric power, not petrol, and has wheels.
   4. In 2007, a train set a record for average the most amount of trips at 200 miles per hour.
3. “In mid-2011, TGV trains operated at the highest speed in passenger train service in the world, regularly reaching 200 miles per hour.” What is the best paraphrase of this quote?
   1. TGV trains operated at the highest speed in passenger train service in the world, regularly reaching 200 miles per hour in mid-2011.
   2. In mid-2011, TGV trains operated at the highest speed in passenger train service in the world, regularly reaching 200 miles per hour.
   3. As of 2011, TGV trains, the fastest passenger train in the world, operated daily at speeds of up to 200 miles per hour.
   4. At 200 miles per hour, TGV trains operated at the highest spend in passenger train service in the world in 2011.

**Passage Three**

Giddy-up, cowboys and girls! In the Southwest during early half the 1800s, cows were only worth 2 or 3 dollars a piece. They roamed wild, grazed off of the open range, and were abundant. Midway through the century though, railroads were built and the nation was connected. People could suddenly ship cows in freight trains to the Northeast, where the Yankees had a growing taste for beef. Out of the blue, the same cows that were once worth a couple of bucks were now worth between twenty and forty dollars each, if you could get them to the train station. It became pretty lucrative to wrangle up a drove of cattle and herd them to the nearest train town, but it was at least as dangerous as it was profitable. Cowboys were threatened at every turn. They faced cattle rustlers, stampedes, and extreme weather, but kept pushing those steers to the train station. By the turn of the century, barbed wires killed the open range and some may say the cowboy too, but it was the train that birthed him.

1. What is the main idea of the passage?
   1. Cows were a free species until trains started hauling them to the Northeast, and then land owners got territorial about their cattle.
   2. Nobody ate red meat until trains became a big deal.
   3. Being a cowboy was a very dangerous job.
   4. The job of “cowboy” was created when trains were able to ship cattle.
2. What is the best summary of the passage?
   1. Cows were worth a lot of money because it cost a lot of money to ship them until trains made it easier, faster, and more affordable to send cattle to the Northeast.
   2. Cows were not worth a lot of money until they could be easily transported to the East after the invention of the train. Many people then became cowboys despite the dangers they faced.
   3. Cowboys faced a lot of danger because landowners became territorial when the price of cattle went from $2 to $20. Trains put cowboys out of work.
   4. The once-thriving cattle population became nearly extinct after the railroad system made it easier and more affordable to transport them, and the price of cattle increased dramatically.
3. “It became pretty lucrative to wrangle up a drove of cattle and herd them to the nearest train town, but it was at least as dangerous as it was profitable.” What is the best paraphrase of this quote?
   1. Though it was dangerous, cowboys made a lot of money herding cattle to the nearest train station.
   2. It became pretty lucrative to wrangle up a drove of cattle and herd them to the nearest train town, but it was at least as dangerous as it was profitable.
   3. Wrangling and herding a drove of cattle was equally as dangerous as it was profitable.
   4. Train towns were busy and dangerous places as cattle took advantage of the profit in shipping droves.

**Passage Four**

Electric trolley cars or trams were once the chief mode of public transportation in the United States. Though they required tracks and electric cables to run, these trolley cars were clean and comfortable. In 1922, auto manufacturer General Motors created a special unit to replace electric trolleys with cars, trucks, and buses. Over the next decade, this group successfully lobbied for laws and regulations that made operating trams more difficult and less profitable. In 1936, General Motors created several front companies for the purpose of purchasing and dismantling the trolley car system. They received substantial investments from Firestone Tire, Standard Oil of California, Phillips Petroleum, and other parties invested in the automotive industry. Some people suspect that these parties wanted to replace trolley cars with buses to make public transportation less desirable, which would then increase automobile sales. The decline of the tram system in North America could be attributed to many things—labor strikes, the Great Depression, regulations that were unfavorable to operators—but perhaps the primary cause was having a group of powerful men from rival sectors of the auto industry working together to ensure its destruction. Fill it up, please.

1. What is the main idea of the passage?
   1. No one knows why the electric trolley cars went out of business in favor of buses.
   2. The vast majority of city populations preferred buses to the electric trolley cars.
   3. Rival sectors of the auto industry worked together to end the electric tram system in North America.
   4. Standard Oil of California tried to help the Electric Trolley Car system before it went out of business, but couldn’t help that people preferred buses.
2. What is the best summary of the passage?
   1. Electric trolley cars or trams were once the chief mode of public transportation in the United States until buses were created during the Great Depression for cheaper transportation.
   2. In 1936, General Motors created several front companies for the purpose of purchasing and dismantling the trolley car system. They received substantial investments from Firestone Tire, Standard Oil of California, Phillips Petroleum, and other parties invested in the automotive industry.
   3. Electric trolley cars or trams were once the chief mode of public transportation in the United States.
   4. Many large companies that served the automotive market conspired to dismantle the electric trolley car system and replace them with less desirable buses.
3. “Some people suspect that these parties wanted to replace trolley cars with buses to make public transportation less desirable, which would then increase automobile sales.” What is the best paraphrase of this quote?
   1. Some people are suspicious that the major US companies wanted buses to replace trolley cars so that public transportation would be less attractive, which would improve the automobile business.
   2. Some people suspect that these parties wanted to replace trolley cars with buses to make public transportation less desirable, which would then increase automobile sales.
   3. By replacing trolley cars with less desirable buses, which would then increase automobile sales, as suspected by some people.
   4. The automobile industry stood to profit from replacing trolley cars with less-desirable buses.

**Passage Five**

Ninjas used many different tools and weapons to get the job done: throwing stars, bows, acid-spurting tubes to name a few, but the favorite weapon of most ninjas was probably the katana. The katana is a long, curved sword with a single blade and a long grip to accommodate two hands. This sword was often carried in a sheath or scabbard on the ninja’s back. Though the sword was primarily used for fighting and killed, the scabbard served a number of purposes, too. The ninja could remove the sword, angle the scabbard against a wall, and use it to climb to a higher place. Or, while stealthily negotiating their way through a dark place (such as an enemy’s residence at night), ninjas may have used the scabbard as a walking stick, feeling or probing their way around objects so as not to knock into anything and alert the enemy. Perhaps the ninja’s most sinister use of the scabbard was to put a mixture of red pepper, dirt, and iron shavings at the top of the scabbard, so that when the ninja drew his sword, his opponent would be blinded. I wonder what a ninja could have done with a Swiss Army knife?

1. What is the main idea of the passage?
   1. A ninja is more deadly with a sheath than the katana itself.
   2. A ninja can inflict more damage with a Swiss Army knife than a katana.
   3. The katana scabbard was more than just a sheath for the sword.
   4. The katana has a long handle for a two-handed grip.
2. What is the best summary of the passage?
   1. The katana was a powerful fighting sword, but the scabbard had additional uses as a climbing tool, a probing tool, and a blinding weapon.
   2. The Swiss Army knife was a powerful fighting tool, but the katana has more than one use such as blinding a person, and being a walking stick.
   3. Ninjas created the Swiss Army knife as a smaller tool to accompany their katanas.
   4. A katana sheath has more functions than a Swiss Army knife sheath because it can blind someone, be a walking stick, and help a ninja climb.
3. “Or, while stealthily negotiating their way through a dark place (such as an enemy’s residence at night), ninjas may have used the scabbard as a walking stick, feeling or probing their way around objects so as not to knock into anything and alert the enemy.” What is the best paraphrase of this quote?
   1. Or, while stealthily negotiating their way through a dark place (such as an enemy’s residence at night), ninjas may have used the scabbard as a walking stick, feeling or probing their way around objects so as not to knock into anything and alert the enemy.
   2. Kata sheaths can be used to help a ninja navigate through the dark.
   3. Ninjas may have used the scabbard as a walking stick while stealthily negotiating their way through a dark place.
   4. Not wanting to knock into anything and alert the enemy, ninjas often used their katana sheaths as a walking stick to help negotiate their way through a dark place.