

(This passage is from an essay by a 19th century American writer)

As soon as a stranger is introduced into any company, one of the first questions which all wish to have answered, is, How does that man get his living? And with reason. He is no whole man until he knows how to earn a blameless livelihood. Society is barbarous, until every industrious man can get his living without dishonest customs.

Every man is a consumer, and ought to be a producer. He fails to make his place good in the world, unless he not only pays his debt, but also adds something to the common wealth. Nor can he do justice to his genius, without making some larger demand on the world than a bare subsistence. He is by constitution expensive, and needs to be rich. Wealth has its source in applications of the mind to nature, from the rudest strokes of spade and axe, up to the last secrets of art. Intimate ties subsist between thought and all production; because a better order is equivalent to vast amounts of brute labor. The forces and the resistances are Nature's, but the mind acts in bringing things from where they abound to where they are wanted; in wise combining; in directing the practice of the useful arts, and in the creation of finer values, by fine art, by eloquence, by song, or the reproductions of memory. Wealth is in applications of mind to nature; and the art of getting rich consists not in industry, much less in saving, but in a better order, in timeliness, in being at the right spot. One man has stronger arms, or longer legs; another sees by the course of streams, and growth of markets, where land will be wanted, makes a clearing to the river, goes to sleep, wakes up rich. Steam is no stronger now, than it was a hundred years ago; but is put to better use. A clever fellow was acquainted with the expansive force of steam; he also saw the wealth of wheat and grass rotting in Michigan. Then he cunningly screws on the steam-pipe to the wheat-crop. Puff now, O Steam! The steam puffs and expands as before, but this time it is dragging all Michigan at its back to hungry New York and hungry England. Coal lay in ledges under the ground since the Flood, until a laborer with pick and windlass brings it to the surface. We may well call it black diamonds. Every basket is power and civilization. For coal is a portable climate. It carries the heat of the tropics to Labrador and the polar circle: and it is the means of transporting itself whithersoever it is wanted. Watt and Stephenson whispered in the ear of mankind their secret, that *a half-ounce of coal will draw two tons a mile*, and coal carries coal, by rail and by boat, to make Canada as warm as Calcutta, and with its comfort brings its industrial power.

When the farmer's peaches are taken from under the tree, and carried into town, they have a new look, and a hundredfold value over the fruit which grew on the same bough, and lies fulsomely on the ground. The craft of the merchant is this bringing a thing from where it abounds, to where it is costly.

Wealth begins in a tight roof that keeps the rain and wind out; in a good pump that yields you plenty of sweet water; in two suits of clothes, so to change your dress when you are wet; in dry sticks to burn; in a good double-wick lamp; and three meals; in a horse, or a locomotive, to cross the land; in a boat to cross the sea; in tools to work with; in books to read; and so, in giving, on all sides, by tools and auxiliaries, the greatest possible extension to our powers, as if it added feet, and hands, and eyes, and blood, length to the day, and knowledge, and good-will.

1. What is the relationship between the first two paragraphs in the passage?

- (A) The first paragraph contemplates the role of wealth, and the second paragraph refutes these assertions
- (B) The first paragraph decries social status, and the second paragraph illuminates why status is not important
- (C) The first paragraph explains what wealth is, and the second paragraph outlines how to earn it
- (D) The first paragraph introduces a thesis, and the second paragraph develops it with multiple points of evidence
- (E) The first paragraph surveys the meaning of wealth, and the second paragraph provides personal examples to support this thesis

2. Which of the following best represents the author's intended audience?

- (A) Individuals who are open to new lifestyle philosophies
- (B) Businessmen looking for ways to make more money
- (C) Scholars seeking a look into the mind of a top financial investor
- (D) Readers who are interested in farming
- (E) Workers in the heartland of the country seeking to maximize production

3. The author uses a generalization in the first paragraph in order to
- (A) Celebrate the primacy of wealth in this culture
 - (B) Compare interactions between cultures
 - (C) Establish the prevalence of a norm that proves his thesis
 - (D) Criticize the boringness of social interactions
 - (E) Question the necessity of livelihood in modern existence
4. Lines 9-11 (“He...wealth”) assert
- (A) The only wealth worth earning is made by exploiting public labor
 - (B) A man is no man unless he owns property and maintains it
 - (C) There is more to life than personal gain
 - (D) Elimination of capitalism is essential for progress
 - (E) Paying off personal debts is the most necessary component of being a whole man
5. In lines 15-19, the author characterizes the roots of “wealth” as
- (A) Application of the mind to distract from brute labor
 - (B) Any work that takes place in nature
 - (C) An intimate relationship between attitude and performance
 - (D) Knowledge that reduces toil and increases production
 - (E) Polite discourse that forges intimate bonds
6. Which rhetorical strategy does the author adopt in the second paragraph?
- (A) He satirizes the materialistic values of modern culture, providing examples to mock
 - (B) He makes a claim about wealth, developing it with specific examples
 - (C) He creates a hypothetical example of a world without wealth
 - (D) He compares his value of wealth to those of noted philosophers
 - (E) He investigates the historical origins of the concept of wealth, then applies it to modern context
7. In lines 25-28 (“Wealth...spot”) the author contrasts
- (A) physical labor versus intellectual pursuits
 - (B) accumulating material versus contributing to the greater good
 - (C) artliness versus manual labor
 - (D) timeliness versus craftiness in the application of labor
 - (E) getting rich versus becoming a reliable man
8. In lines 33-34 the author refers to “a clever fellow” to
- (A) mock the overconfidence of modern men
 - (B) contrast his behavior to modern actions
 - (C) illustrate an application of wealth
 - (D) normalize the habits of common man
 - (E) celebrate the value of brute force labor
9. The use of personification in lines 44-47 has which of the following effects?
- (A) It emphasizes the greater value of this “wealth”
 - (B) It demonstrates how hot coal can get
 - (C) It creates authority with geological facts
 - (D) It adds a contrastingly humorous tone
 - (E) It refutes points already made in the paragraph
10. The use of italics in lines 48-49 suggest that the author’s attitude is
- (A) supercilious
 - (B) despairing
 - (C) skeptical
 - (D) confused
 - (E) amazed
11. The author mentions “Canada” and “Calcutta” in line 50 in order to
- (A) decry the environmental effects of coal
 - (B) expand the scope of the argument from national to global
 - (C) counter an argument that made earlier in the paragraph
 - (D) increase the alliterative effects of the argument
 - (E) add to the list of places where true wealth exists
12. What is the purpose of the third paragraph?
- (A) It contrasts ideas presented in earlier paragraphs
 - (B) It introduces a completely new perspective on the author’s thesis
 - (C) It addresses counterclaims that might be raised by the reader
 - (D) It offers additional support for the author’s thesis
 - (E) It refutes much of the ideas presented in the second paragraph
13. In the fourth paragraph, the writer asserts that the ultimate benefit of “wealth” is
- (A) improving comfort for yourself
 - (B) an expansion of mankind’s abilities
 - (C) adding to national security
 - (D) a development of better home life
 - (E) an increase in personal opportunity

Answers and explanations

*(This passage is from Ralph Waldo Emerson's essay
"Wealth")*

1. **D is the correct answer.** All of the other options contain flaws that make them incorrect.
2. **A is the correct answer.** B and C are not correct, as the "wealth" discussed in this passage is far from monetary wealth. D and E are distractors, but the essay touches on much more than just farming (making D incorrect) and production (making E incorrect).
3. **C is the correct answer.** The verbs at the beginning of each answer are key. There is criticism in the first paragraph, but the generalization of social interactions is not meant to criticize their boringness (making D incorrect).
4. **C is the correct answer.** This is a comprehension question for a particularly tricky -- but important -- sentence. Multiple distractor answers make use of words from the passage but are flawed. The writer is not in support of exploiting labor (making A incorrect). While the writer thinks debts should be paid off, he does not assert that it is the most necessary part of being a man (making E incorrect).
5. **D is the correct answer.** Another comprehension question. The distractor answer is A, which uses words from the passages, but is incorrect because the author doesn't characterize wealth's value in distraction.
6. **B is the correct answer.** There is no satire in the passage (making A incorrect). There are hypothetical examples, but they are not being used to compare against the ideas of philosophers (making D incorrect).
7. **B is the correct answer.** A comprehension question for this long sentence, where the author asserts that real wealth transcends mere thriftiness.
8. **C is the correct answer.** While the writer does celebrate wealth, it is not the value of brute force labor (making E incorrect).
9. **A is the correct answer.** The distractor question, C, is not fully correct, as the geological emphasis on coal doesn't establish the author's authority on the topic.
10. **E is the correct answer.** A tone question. The big distractor is supercilious, a fancy word for arrogant, an attitude the author is not adopting (making A incorrect).
11. **B is the correct answer.** While there are no distractors in this question, the time required to complete the question and eliminate the incorrect options creates the difficulty.
12. **D is the correct answer.** Similar to the previous question, this one requires time to eliminate the wrong answers.
13. **B is the correct answer.** Homelife and comfort are mentioned in the paragraph, but they are not the ultimate benefit of wealth (making A and D incorrect).

