

# TOEFL Reading Practice06

## Reading Section 1: Households Pests

[1] Including almost 10 million species and representing over 90% of life on planet Earth, insects are ubiquitous. And while humans live peacefully side by side with most insect species, some pose a threat to human activity and habitats. You need only to consider the damage caused by insects to agricultural crops, and the ramifications for food security and agricultural economies, to understand their potential to **wreak havoc**. But it is not only the food we grow that can be threatened by insects; our homes themselves may be impacted. And while many pests – such as cockroaches and beetles – are regarded as disgusting and unseemly on our floors and walls, **others** may be outright damaging and threaten the value of a homeowner's property. Two such pests are ants and termites.

[2] To a homeowner, termites can pose a significant threat. As detritivores, termites consume dead plant matter, which includes the wood we use in construction. Thus a colony of termites may **undermine** the strength of timber foundations, chew through walls, and hollow out stairs in a matter of months. This not only damages the home itself, but also creates safety hazards for the human occupants. Another insect capable of chewing through wood is the humble ant. Ants may put their well-deserved reputation for industriousness to work on more than just your house; they are also attracted to foods in the home and, left **unchecked**, can quickly become a terrible nuisance in the kitchen or garbage areas.

[3] Of course, pests such as termites and ants can be prevented, controlled, and eradicated, primarily through the use of chemical compounds that are toxic to the pests. These chemical compounds combat the insects at a biological level. Most compounds are composed of a pesticide, a dilutant, a particulate, a thickening agent, and a surfactant system. The pesticide is the toxic chemical that kills the pest, while the dilutant ensures that the compound does not endanger its human users (still, direct exposure is not recommended). The particulate agent suspends the pesticide within the dilutant, and the thickening agent serves to make the compound easier to apply to infested areas. Finally, the surfactant lowers the surface tension of the compound, further facilitating application.

[4] When it comes to pesticides, application is key. More specifically, the compound must be applied in the correct location, either exterior to the home or on the interior. Exterior application of a pesticide will help to prevent future pests from entering the structure. This commonly involves applying a compound to outside walls, porches, and window areas. Interior application can be more challenging, since insects seek out nesting areas which are relatively inaccessible to humans. This includes hollow spaces between walls, soft spots beneath floors, and hard-to-reach corners in cabinets and other furniture. Interior application is meant to eliminate those pests which have already infested a home. Thus effective pest control involves both prevention and eradication. **While many homeowners**

**choose to take the problem into their own hands and apply pesticides themselves, others choose to support the burgeoning pest control industry, hiring professionals who have the knowledge and equipment to ensure that compounds are applied safely.**

[5] Exactly how big of a threat to termites and ants pose to homeowners? Global statistics are difficult to compile, but it is estimated that in the southwestern U.S. alone termites cause approximately 1.5 billion dollars in damage each year. The scale of the problem is such that the pesticide and pest control industries are growing, and entire communities have undertaken measures to control and eradicate these insects.

[6] While biochemical solutions remain highly effective methods of pest control, there is growing opposition to the use of chemicals in and around human habitation. The move toward “organic” food – that grown without the use of pesticides or herbicides – has helped to raise awareness of the potential health risks of such chemicals. Thus natural pest control, relying on non-toxic methods and compounds, is becoming more popular. Natural methods may utilize plants or even other insects to ward off or eliminate pests. Particular plants are known to repel particular insects; for example, crushed mint leaves are touted as an effective ant deterrent.

## Questions

1. The word 'others' in paragraph 1 refers to:

- A. cockroaches and beetles
- B. pests
- C. floors and walls
- D. Homeowners

2. Which of the following can be inferred from paragraph 1?

- A. A majority of the world's insects cause problems to humans.
- B. Insects' damage to homes is a greater problem than their damage to agriculture.
- C. Insects are the most common type of animal on the planet.
- D. Cockroaches and beetles are commonly misunderstood by humans.

3. The word 'unchecked' in paragraph 2 is closest in meaning to:

- A. inside
- B. uncontrolled
- C. persistent

D. bothered

4. Which of the following components helps to make applying the pesticides easier?

- A. particulate
- B. dilutant
- C. pesticide
- D. surfactant

5. According to paragraph 4, which of the following is true of the interior application of pesticides?

- A. It is more dangerous than exterior application.
- B. It helps to prevent an infestation from happening.
- C. It is more difficult than exterior application.
- D. It is not very effective.

6. In paragraph 4, the author mentions “hard-to-reach corners in cabinets and other furniture” as an example of...

- A. Common points of entry for insect infestations.
- B. Areas which should be avoided when applying pesticide.
- C. Key pathways for insects within a home.
- D. Possible nesting areas for pests.

7. Which of the following best expresses the essential information in the highlighted sentence? Incorrect answer choices change the meaning in important ways or leave out essential information.

**While many homeowners choose to take the problem into their own hands and apply pesticides themselves, others choose to support the burgeoning pest control industry, hiring professionals who have the knowledge and equipment to ensure that compounds are applied safely.**

- A. Homeowners may work alongside pest control professionals to support the safe and effective application of pesticide.
- B. Some homeowners choose to support the pest control industry, which hires knowledgeable and safe professionals who can assist the homeowner in applying pesticides.
- C. Some homeowners deal with pests on their own, but others seek professional help for a higher level of safety.

- D. Even though the pest control industry is growing, some people do not wish to hire professionals and instead attempt to control their pests themselves.

8. In paragraph 5, why does the author mention “1.5 billion dollars in damage?”

- A. To lend support to community-wide pest control solutions
- B. To prove that estimating the impact of pests is difficult
- C. To introduce the idea of natural pest control methods.
- D. To illustrate the extent of the problem caused by termites and ants.

9. Examine the four ■ in the selection below and indicate at which block the following sentence could be inserted into the passage:

**Another natural approach involves altering the timing or pattern of lighting, since this appears to disrupt the insects' breeding habits.**

While biochemical solutions remain highly effective methods of pest control, there is growing opposition to the use of chemicals in and around human habitation. ■ [A] The move toward “organic” food – that grown without the use of pesticides or herbicides – has helped to raise awareness of the potential health risks of such chemicals. ■ [B] Thus natural pest control, relying on non-toxic methods and compounds, is becoming more popular. Natural methods may utilize plants or even other insects to ward off or eliminate pests ■ [C] Particular plants are known to repel particular insects; for example, crushed mint leaves are touted as an effective ant deterrent. ■ [D] .

10. **Directions:** An introductory sentence for a brief summary of the passage is provided below. Complete the summary by selecting the THREE answer choices that express the most important ideas in the passage. Some sentences do not belong in the summary because they express ideas that are not presented in the passage or are minor ideas in the passage. This question is worth 2 points.

**Termites and ants are pests that can damage homes by chewing through wood.**

- A. The pest control industry is growing rapidly, and pest control professionals can help ensure safe application of pesticides.
- B. Pesticides may be applied outside the home for prevention and within the home to kill existing insects.
- C. Pests do a lot of damage to homes every year, and some people are turning to more natural methods of pest control.
- D. Pesticides alone have been found to be less effective than pesticides used in combination with natural methods of pest control.
- E. Compounds used to eliminate pests are typically comprised of several key ingredients.
- F. Besides damaging homes, insects can cause significant damage to agricultural crops and food supplies.

## Reading Section 2: Mummies

[1] The word 'mummy' is thought to derive from the Persian word mummiya which means bitumen, the black material of ancient bodies. Mummification has occurred all around the world. Body purification began in South American cultures, thousands of years before the Egyptians. The world's oldest mummies were created by small fishing communities known as the Chinchorro people in Northern Chile and Peru. Their mummification techniques indicate a developed and **sophisticated** culture. The Chinchorro people removed the skin, brain and internal organs of the body, dried the bones and reinforced the mummy with reeds and twigs. The skin was then reapplied with paste and a clay mask covering the face. The mummies were buried in groups according to family. Many mummies were unborn babies or children, so it is considered that it was their mothers who first began the mummification techniques to keep their dead children with them. Mummification was later practiced by the Peruvian Nazca and Chiribaya cultures of the South American desert regions, as well as the Chachapoyas. They are also known as the 'Cloud People' whose mummies were discovered high above the Amazon rain forests.

[2] There is also evidence of mummification dating back to the Inca period as freeze-dried mummies have been discovered in the Andes, **surrounded** by gold and silver objects, thought to have been religious offerings. The Incas mummified their royalty and considered them to be still living with them as they were paraded during events and considered advisers in difficult times. These mummies were destroyed by the Spanish conquistadors who refused to accept the mummies as living beings. They also destroyed the Guanches and Berber mummies of North Africa. Studies of very few of these remaining mummies indicate a link with the mummification practices of ancient Egypt.

[3] In modern society, mummification is generally associated with ancient Egypt. The first interest in mummies started at the beginning of the 19th century when affluent tourists returned from Egypt for 'mummy unwrapping parties'. Mummies then became popular in works of fiction and Hollywood movies. It is important to remember, however, that mummies are in fact preserved bodies – once living people – who were preserved in the hope of an immortal life.

[4] The process of mummification begins with the brain being removed, along with the organs. The **hollow** body was dried out with salts and the skin was treated with special oils and resins. The remains were then treated to restore a lifelike appearance and then wrapped in linen material. One famous mummy (Wah) was wrapped in 375 square meters of linen. Once placed in a coffin, a funeral ceremony then took place to 'reactivate' the spirit in the mummy and there were chants and prayers for immortality. The mummy was then buried in the ground with supplies of food and drink. Although the rich were buried in special tombs, most mummies were buried in the sand near the River Nile. The hot sand and arid climate naturally preserved the skin, hair, and nails of these mummies. The bodies of mummies buried in tombs actually **decomposed** much faster, so a new means of body preservation was developed. Discoveries in the region of Hierakonpolis indicate that mummification in linen dates back to about 3400 BC. However, the new method of

mummification began around 2600 BC when the Egyptians began to remove the internal organs to prevent fast decay. Over the next 3000 years, their embalming and mummification techniques were developed and mastered.

[5] In Europe, some mummies have been found, such as frozen bodies discovered high in the mountain tops, in peat bogs, the Takla Makan desert in China, the Eurasian Steppes and in Greenland, those of which are only 500 years old. Modern scientific techniques such as DNA analysis, CAT-scans, x-rays, electron microscopy and endoscopy prove to be very safe means of studying ancient remains. They can now be used to provide valuable information regarding lifestyle, profession, relationships, health, disease, diet and even drug use of these ancient people whose remains we have discovered.

[6] During excavations, archeologists were usually rushing to find treasures of great value and worth. However, **the mummified remains of the people who established these great civilizations are in fact the most important legacy of the ancient world and must be remembered and venerated as such.**

## Questions

1. Which of the following can be inferred from paragraph 2 about Egyptian mummification?
  - A. Egyptian mummification may have been learned from the ancient mummification practices of the Berber and Guanches cultures.
  - B. Egyptian mummies were also destroyed by the Spanish conquerors.
  - C. There are very few remains of Egyptian mummification practices.
  - D. Because there are very few remains of Berber and Guanches mummies, it's impossible to know the connection with Egyptian mummification.
  
2. According to paragraph 4, why were the mummies buried by the banks of the River Nile better preserved?
  - A. Due to the fact that they were naturally preserved by the heat and dryness.
  - B. Because they were buried in tombs.
  - C. Due to the fact that they were wrapped in linen.
  - D. Because they were preserved with new embalming techniques.
  
3. According to paragraph 4, all of the following statements are true about the process of mummification, EXCEPT:
  - A. All mummies were wrapped in 375 square meters of linen.
  - B. Once placed in a coffin, there was a ceremony to revive the spirit.
  - C. There were chants and prayers for immortality during the ceremony.
  - D. Food and drink was supplied with the mummy in the burial place.
  
4. The word 'decomposed' in paragraph 4 is closest in meaning to:
  - A. made up of
  - B. decayed
  - C. created
  - D. damaged

5. Paragraph 5 supports which of the following statements about mummies discovered in more recent times:

- A. New scientific methods are as safe and useful as older techniques when investigating preserved bodies.
- B. New scientific methods give useful information about the identity of people whose bodies were preserved.
- C. New scientific methods are both safe and useful to give information about many aspects of the person whose body was preserved.
- D. Only older scientific methods can provide us with information about many aspects of the person whose body was preserved.

6. The word 'remains' in paragraph 6 is closest in meaning to:

- A. corpse
- B. heritage
- C. relics
- D. remnant

7. Which of the sentences below best expresses the essential information in the following sentence?

***The mummified remains of the people who established these great civilizations are in fact the most important legacy from the ancient world and must be remembered and venerated as such.***

- A. The most essential legacy we have of ancient people is the preserved remains of those great cultures – we should respect them.
- B. The most essential legacy we have of the ancient world is the people who discovered the ancient remains, and were responsible for the establishment of these great cultures – we should respect them.
- C. The most essential legacy we have of the ancient world is the preserved remains of these great cultures – we should respect them.
- D. The most essential legacy we have of the ancient world is the preserved remains of those who were responsible for the establishment of these great cultures – we should respect them.

8. According to the passage, what was the goal for archeologists during excavations?

- A. Archeologists were usually working quickly to find something of material value.
- B. Archeologists were usually rushing to find treasures of spiritual significance.
- C. Archeologists were usually rushing to bring mummies back to Europe and America.
- D. Archeologists were usually rushing to gain fame and notoriety for their discoveries.

9. Examine the four ■ in the selection below and indicate at which block the following sentence could be inserted into the passage:

***Current archeologists now have a more precise knowledge of how mummification was achieved in Ancient Egypt.***

■ **[A]** In Europe, some mummies have been found, such as frozen bodies discovered high in the mountain tops, in peat bogs, the Takla Makan desert in China, the Eurasian Steppes or in Greenland, those of which are only 500 years old. ■ **[B]** Modern scientific techniques such as DNA analysis, CAT-scans, x-rays, electron microscopy and endoscopy prove to very safe means of studying ancient remains. ■ **[C]** They can now be used to provide valuable information regarding lifestyle, profession, relationships, health, disease, diet and even drug use of these ancient people whose remains we have discovered. ■ **[D]** .

10. Directions: An introductory sentence for a brief summary of the passage is provided below.

Complete the summary by selecting the THREE answer choices that express the most important ideas in the passage. Some sentences do not belong in the summary because they express ideas that are not presented in the passage or are minor ideas in the passage.

This question is worth 2 points.

**Modern understanding of mummification leads to a greater awareness of the behavior and beliefs of ancient civilizations.**

- A. This is due to better analysis techniques of mummified bodies.

- B. Mummification occurred up until recent times.
- C. In Ancient Egypt, the text clearly suggests there was a spiritual ceremony to invoke immortality.
- D. Thanks to better analysis, the first mummies can definitely be dated back to ancient South American cultures.
- E. The Spanish conquerors were not responsible for the damage and destruction of some mummified bodies.
- F. Modern archeologists did not always respect the significance of mummified bodies.

## Reading Section 3: Hieroglyphs

[1] Egyptian hieroglyphs were a formal writing system used by the ancient Egyptians that combined logographic and alphabetic elements. The word Hieroglyph comes from the Greek word hieroglyphica, meaning 'sacred carvings'. Hieroglyphs were first considered to be simple picture writing. However, it was later discovered that the hieroglyphs actually **represent** sounds, like the letters in English.

[2] Other scripts, or 'hieratic' and 'demotic' scripts, were used for daily writing in Ancient Egypt. Ancient Egyptian writing dates back to 394 AD. At the end of the fourth century AD, any language associated with paganism was forbidden with the advent of Christianity. At this point, 'Coptic' script, a language with 24 letters from the Greek alphabet, replaced hieroglyphs. Ancient Egyptian developed into this Coptic language. Eventually, Coptic was replaced by Arabic by the 11th century.

[3] In 1799, The Rosetta Stone was discovered by the French army of Napoleon in the Nile Delta. The stone was inscribed with text in Greek, demotic and hieroglyphs. It was handed over to the British and remains at the British Museum until today. The inscription on the stone was revealed as a law, written in these three forms of text – indicating that it could help in the deciphering of the hieroglyphs. **However, although the meaning of the hieroglyphs could be interpreted, it was still not possible to understand the phonetics of the ancient language.**

[4] In 1814, a British polymath called Thomas Young had a breakthrough in the phonetics of hieroglyphs by comparing names (Ptolemy and Berenika) with the Greek words. He concentrated on a group of hieroglyphs that were enclosed by a cartouche, or loop. He thought these special hieroglyphs represented something special, such as the name of the Pharaoh. If so, he could connect the phonetics of the name with the corresponding hieroglyphs as the name would be pronounced similarly in a different language. He matched the letters of the name with the hieroglyphs. He **applied** the same technique on another cartouche and continued to identify sounds of the ancient language. However, Young lost interest in the work in 1819.

[5] Jean-François Champollion, a French philologist, applied Young's technique to other names, such as Alexander and Cleopatra and made important **breakthroughs** in 1822 when he discovered hieroglyphs were phonetic and their underlying language was Egyptian. He discovered that the writers of hieroglyphs used the rebus principle – breaking long words into phonetic components and using images to represent those sounds. The word 'belief' could be represented by pictures of a bee and a leaf. He is famous for having cracked the code of a four-lettered cartouche, starting with the picture of a sun or 'Ra', the Egyptian sun god. Fluent in Coptic, Champollion discovered the meaning of the word 'Ra me ses' or Rameses. The importance of the sun in the Rameses cartouche is vital because it indicates the language of the scribes. Champollion continued to prove that the Coptic **scribes** depended on using a phonetic alphabet.

[6] Champollion continued to do an **in-depth** study of hieroglyphs and realized that the hieroglyphs represented phonetic values and sometimes two or three consonants. In this way, the writers could use simple hieroglyphs to spell a word. Champollion launched his first trip to Egypt in July 1828. He was then able to study the hieroglyphs covering the Egyptian temples and to decode them accurately. Only four years later, Champollion died, aged 41. His work remains a valuable contribution to the understanding and interpretation of hieroglyphs today.

## Questions

1. Which of the following can be inferred from paragraph 2 about hieroglyphs?
  - A. Coptic was a new form of hieroglyphic language.
  - B. Hieroglyphs were no longer used after the rise of Christianity.
  - C. Hieroglyphs were used for daily writing up to 394 AD.
  - D. After 394 AD, hieroglyphs were not studied as they were forbidden.
  
2. In paragraph 3, why does the author mention the importance of the discovery of The Rosetta Stone in 1799?
  - A. Because the discovery of The Rosetta Stone was a historical moment for the French.
  - B. Because the discovery of The Rosetta Stone was a historical moment for the British.
  - C. Because the discovery of The Rosetta Stone led to the decoding of the hieroglyphs.
  - D. Because the discovery of The Rosetta Stone was the first dictionary ever written.
  
3. According to paragraph 4, why did Thomas Young focus on the deciphering of names?
  - A. Due to the fact that they would be pronounced the same in different languages.
  - B. Because it was easier to decode names rather than common words.
  - C. Due to the fact that the names of the pharaoh and queen were sacred in meaning.
  - D. Because they were easier to decode.
  
4. According to paragraph 4, all of the following statements are true about the work of Thomas Young, EXCEPT:
  - A. Thomas Young focused on 'special hieroglyphs' when decoding the ancient language.
  - B. Thomas Young suspected special cartouches represented something important.
  - C. Thomas Young used a matching technique between the name's letters and the hieroglyphs.
  - D. Thomas Young used a matching technique to identify the sounds of all hieroglyphs.
  
5. Paragraph 5 supports which of the following statements about the writers of hieroglyphs:

- A. The writers of hieroglyphs used long and short words
  - B. The writers of hieroglyphs used images which represented the phonetic sounds of words.
  - C. The writers of hieroglyphs used the rebus principle to break long words into smaller words.
  - D. The writers of hieroglyphs cracked the codes of the famous cartouches.
6. The word 'scribes' in paragraph 5 is closest in meaning to:
- A. Designers
  - B. Pharaohs
  - C. Egyptians
  - D. Writers
7. Which of the sentences below best expresses the essential information in the following sentence?
- However, although the meaning of the hieroglyphs could be interpreted, it was still not possible to understand the phonetics of the ancient language.**
- A. Nevertheless, it was still impossible to comprehend the sounds of the language even though the signification of the hieroglyphics was understood.
  - B. Nevertheless, it was still impossible to comprehend the meaning of the language even though the sounds of the hieroglyphics were understood.
  - C. Nevertheless, it was still possible to comprehend the sounds of the language even though the signification of the hieroglyphics was not understood.
  - D. Nevertheless, it was still impossible to comprehend the language even though hieroglyphics were never fully interpreted.
8. According to the passage, what was the Champollion's achievement?
- A. Champollion was the first to discover that the hieroglyphs represented phonetic values.
  - B. He discovered that the hieroglyphs represented consonant sounds.

- C. He discovered that the hieroglyphs represented phonetic values as well as sometimes two or three consonants.
- D. He discovered that the hieroglyphs represented the ancient Egyptian language.

9. Examine the four ■ in the selection below and indicate at which block the following sentence could be inserted into the passage:

**The French scholar began to decipher ornate hieroglyphs.**

■ [A] Champollion launched his first trip to Egypt in July 1828. ■ [B] He was then able to study the hieroglyphs covering the Egyptian temples and to decode them accurately. ■ [C] Only four years later, Champollion died, aged 41. ■ [D] .

10. Directions: An introductory sentence for a brief summary of the passage is provided below.

Complete the summary by selecting the THREE answer choices that express the most important ideas in the passage. Some sentences do not belong in the summary because they express ideas that are not presented in the passage or are minor ideas in the passage.

This question is worth 2 points.

**Both Thomas Young and Jean-Francois Champollion had important breakthroughs in the interpretation of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs.**

- A. Thomas Young discovered the hieroglyphs represented two or more consonants.
- B. Thomas Young made a breakthrough in the comparison of names.
- C. Jean-Francois Champollion discovered hieroglyphs represented phonetic sounds and more than one consonant.
- D. Jean-Francois Champollion studied the inscriptions on the Rosetta Stone.
- E. Champollion provided evidence that phonetics was the basis used by the Coptic writers.

- F. Thomas Young and Jean-Francoise Champollion worked together on the interpretation of the Egyptian hieroglyphs.

# Answer Key

## Reading Section 1

1. B
2. C
3. B
4. D
5. C
6. D
7. C
8. D
9. D
10. B, C, E

## Reading Section 2

1. A
2. A
3. A
4. B
5. C
6. A
7. D
8. A
9. B
10. A, C, D

## Reading Section 3

1. B
2. C
3. A
4. D
5. B
6. D
7. A
8. C
9. B
10. B, C, E