Section 3
Reading Comprehension

Question 1 -7

Hotels were among the earliest facilities that bound the United States together. They were both creatures and creators of communities, as well symptoms of the frenetic quest for community. Even in the first part of the nineteenth century, Americans were already forming the habit of gathering from all corners of the nation for both public and private, business and pleasure, purposes. Conventions were the new occasions, and hotels were distinctively American facilities making conventions possible. The first national convention of a major party to choose a candidate for President (that of the National Republican party, which met on December 12, 1831, and nominated Henry Clay for President) was held in Baltimore, at a hotel that was then reputed to be the best in the country. The presence in Baltimore of Barnum's City Hotel, a six-story building with two hundred apartments, helps explain why many other early national political conventions were held there.

In the longer run, American hotels made other national conventions not only possible but pleasant and convivial. The growing custom of regularly assembling from afar the representatives of all kinds of groups – not only for political conventions, but also for commercial, professional, learned, and avocations ones – in turn supported the multiplying hotels. By the mid-twentieth century, conventions accounted for over a third of the yearly room occupancy of all hotels in the nation; about eighteen thousand different conventions were held annually with a total attendance of about ten million persons.

Nineteenth-century American hotelkeepers, who were no longer the genial, deferential "hosts" of the eighteenth-century European inn, became leading citizens. Holding a large stake in the community, they exercised power to make it prosper. As owners or managers of the local "palace of the public," they were makers and shapers of a principal community attraction. Travelers from abroad were mildly shocked by this high social position.

Line (5) (10) (15) (20) (25)

1. The word "bound" in line 1 is closest in meaning to

(A) led
(B) protected
(C) tied
(D) strengthened

2. The National Republican party is mentioned in line 8 as an example of a group

(A) from Baltimore
(B) of learned people
(C) owning a hotel
(D) holding a convention

3. The word "assembling" in line 14 is closest in meaning to

(A) announcing
(B) motivating
(C) gathering
(D) contracting

4. The word "ones" in line 16 refers to

(A) hotels
(B) conventions
(C) kinds
(D) representatives

5. The word "it" in line 23 refers to

(A) European inn
(B) host
(C) community
(D) public

6. It can be inferred from the passage that early hotelkeepers in the United States were

(A) active politicians
(B) European immigrants
(C) professional builders
(D) influential citizens

7. Which of the following statements about early American hotels is NOT mentioned in the passage?

(A) Travelers from abroad did not enjoy staying in them.

(B) Conventions were held in them.
(C) People used them for both business and pleasure.
(D) They were important to the community

Question 8 -17

Beads were probably the first durable ornaments humans possessed, and the intimate relationship they had with their owners is reflected in the fact that beads are among the most common items found in ancient archaeological sites. In the past, as today, men, women, and children adorned themselves with beads. In some cultures still, certain beads are often worn from birth until death, and then are buried with their owners for the afterlife. Abrasion due to daily wear alters the surface features of beads, and if they are buried for long, the effects of corrosion can further change their appearance. Thus, interest is imparted to the bead both by use and the effects of time. Besides their wearability, either as jewelry or incorporated into articles of attire, beads possess the desirable characteristics of every collectible: they are durable, portable, available in infinite variety, and often valuable in their original cultural context as well as in today's market. Pleasing to look at and touch, beads come in shapes, colors, and materials that almost compel one to handle them and to sort them.

Beads are miniature bundles of secrets waiting to be revealed: their history, manufacture, cultural context, economic role, and ornamental use are all points of information one hopes to unravel. Even the most mundane beads may have traveled great distances and been exposed to many human experiences. The bead researcher must gather information from many diverse fields. In addition to having to be a generalist while specializing in what may seem to be a narrow field, the researcher is faced with the problem of primary materials that have little or no documentation. Many ancient beads that are of ethnographic interest have often been separated from their original cultural context.

The special attractions of beads contribute to the uniqueness of bead research. While often regarded as the "small change of civilizations," beads are a part of every culture, and they can often be used to date archaeological sites and to designate the degree of mercantile, technological, and cultural sophistication.

8. What is the main subject of the passage?

(A) Materials used in making beads
(B) How beads are made
(C) The reasons for studying beads
(D) Different types of beads

9. The word "adorned" in line 4 is closest in meaning to

(A) protected
(B) decorated
(C) purchased
(D) enjoyed

10. The word "attire" in line 9 is closest in meaning to

(A) ritual
(B) importance
(C) clothing
(D) history

11. All of the following are given as characteristics of collectible objects EXCEPT

(A) durability
(B) portability
(C) value
(D) scarcity

12. According to the passage, all of the following are factors that make people want to touch beads EXCEPT the

(A) shape
(B) color
(C) material
(D) odor

13. The word "unravel" in line 16 is closest in meaning to

(A) communicate
(B) transport
(C) improve
(D) discover

14. The word "mundane" in line 16 is closest in meaning to

(A) carved
(B) beautiful
(C) ordinary
(D) heavy

15. It is difficult to trace the history of certain ancient beads because they

(A) are small in size
(B) have been buried underground
(C) have been moved from their original locations
(D) are frequently lost

16. Knowledge of the history of some beads may be useful in the studies done by which of the following?

(A) Anthropologist
(B) Agricultural experts
(C) Medical researchers
(D) Economists

17. Where in the passage does the author describe why the appearance beads may change?

(A) Lines 3-4
(B) Lines 6-8
(C) Lines 12-13
(D) Lines 20-22

Question 18 -25

In the world of birds, bill design is a prime example of evolutionary fine-tuning. Shorebirds such as oystercatchers use their bills to pry open the tightly sealed shells of their prey; hummingbirds have stiletto-like bills to probe the deepest nectar-bearing
Line flowers; and kiwis smell out earthworms thanks to nostrils located at the tip of their
(5) beaks. But few birds are more intimately tied to their source of sustenance than are crossbills. Two species of these finches, named for the way the upper and lower parts of their bills cross, rather than meet in the middle, reside in the evergreen forests of North America and feed on the seeds held within the cones of coniferous trees.

The efficiency of the bill is evident when a crossbill locates a cone. Using a lateral
(10) motion of its lower mandible, the bird separates two overlapping scales on the cone and exposes the seed. The crossed mandibles enable the bird to exert a powerful biting force at the bill tips, which is critical for maneuvering them between the scales and spreading the scales apart. Next, the crossbill snakes its long tongue into the gap and draws out the seed. Using the combined action of the bill and tongue, the bird cracks
(15) open and discards the woody seed covering and swallows the nutritious inner kernel. This whole process takes but a few seconds and is repeated hundreds of times a day.

The bills of different crossbill species and subspecies vary – some are stout and deep, others more slender and shallow. As a rule, large-billed crossbills are better at securing seeds from large cones, while small-billed crossbills are more deft at
(20) removing the seeds from small, thin-scaled cones. Moreover, the degree to which cones are naturally slightly open or tightly closed helps determine which bill design is the best.

One anomaly is the subspecies of red crossbill known as the Newfoundland crossbill. This bird has a large, robust bill, yet most of Newfoundland's conifers have
(25) small cones, the same kind of cones that the slender-billed white-wings rely on.

18. What does the passage mainly discuss?

(A) The importance of conifers in evergreen forests
(B) The efficiency of the bill of the crossbill
(C) The variety of food available in a forest
(D) The different techniques birds use to obtain food

19. Which of the following statements best represents the type of “evolutionary fine-tuning" mentioned in line 1?

(A) Different shapes of bills have evolved depending on the available food supply.
(B) White-wing crossbars have evolved from red crossbills.
(C) Newfoundland's conifers have evolved small cones.
(D) Several subspecies of crossbills have evolved from two species.

20. Why does the author mention oystercatchers, hummingbirds, and kiwis in lines 2-4?

(A) They are examples of birds that live in the forest.
(B) Their beaks are similar to the beak of the crossbill.
(C) They illustrate the relationship between bill design and food supply.
(D) They are closely related to the crossbill.

21. Crossbills are a type of

(A) shorebird
(B) hummingbird
(C) kiwi
(D) finch

22. Which of the following most closely resembles the bird described in lines 6-8?

(A)

(B)

(C)

(D)

23. The word "which" in line 12 refers to

(A) seed
(B) bird
(C) force
(D) bill

24. The word "gap" in line 13 is closest in meaning to

(A) opening
(B) flower
(C) mouth
(D) tree

25. The word "discards" in line 15 is closest in meaning to

(A) eats
(B) breaks
(C) finds out
(D) gets rid of