

中山大学

二〇一二年攻读硕士学位研究生入学考试试题

科目代码: 632

科目名称: 基础英语

考试时间: 1月8日上午

考生须知

全部答案一律写在答题纸上, 答在试题纸上的不计分! 请用蓝、黑色墨水笔或圆珠笔作答。答题要写清题号, 不必抄题。

I. Reading comprehension (40 points)

Passage 1:

The following is an excerpt from a popular book on "innumeracy," the common inability of people to deal rationally with numbers.

Without some appreciation of common large numbers, it's impossible to react with the proper skepticism to terrifying reports that more than a million American kids are kidnapped each year, or with the proper sobriety to a warhead carrying a megaton of explosive power – the equivalent of a million tons (or two billion pounds) of TNT.

And if you don't have some feeling for probabilities, automobile accidents might seem a relatively minor problem of local travel, whereas being killed by terrorists might seem to be a major risk when going overseas. As often observed, however, the 45,000 people killed annually on American roads are approximately equal in number to all Americans dead in the Vietnam War. On the other hand, the seventeen Americans killed by terrorists in 1985 were among the 28 million of us who traveled abroad that year – that's one chance in 1.6 million of becoming a victim. Compare that with these annual rates in the United States; one chance in 68,000 of choking to death; one chance in 75,000 of dying in a bicycle crash; one chance in 20,000 of drowning; and one chance in only 5,300 of dying in a car crash.

Confronted with these large numbers and with the correspondingly small probabilities associated with them, the innumerate will inevitably respond with the non sequitur,* "Yes, but what if you're that one," and then nod knowingly, as if they've demolished your argument with penetrating insight. This tendency to personalize is a characteristic of many who suffer from innumeracy. Equally typical is a tendency to equate the risk from some obscure and exotic malady with the chances of suffering from heart and circulatory disease, from which about 12,000 Americans die each week.

There's a joke I like that's marginally relevant. An old married couple in their nineties contact a divorce lawyer, who pleads with them to stay together. "Why get divorced now after seventy years of marriage?" The little old lady finally pipes up in a creaky voice; "We wanted to wait until the children were dead."

A feeling for what quantities or time spans are appropriate in various contexts is essential to getting the joke. Slipping between millions and billions or between billions and trillions should in this sense be equally funny, but it isn't, because we too often lack an intuitive grasp for these numbers.

A recent study by Drs. Kronlund and Phillips of the University of Washington showed that most doctors' assessments of the risks of various operations, procedures, and medications (even in their own specialties) were way off the mark, often by several orders of magnitude. I once had a conversation with a doctor who, within approximately 20 minutes, stated that a certain procedure he was contemplating (a) had a one-chance-in-a-million risk associated with it; (b) was 99 percent safe; and (c) usually went quite well. Given the fact that so many doctors seem to believe that there must be at least eleven people in the waiting room if they're to avoid being idle, I'm not surprised at this new evidence of their innumeracy.

*A non sequitur is a statement that does not follow logically from previous statements.

1. Which of the following can be inferred to be the author's view of the "reports that more than a million American kids are kidnapped each year" (paragraph 1)?
 - A. They are typical examples of American journalism.
 - B. They are evidence of a terrible problem that must be addressed.
 - C. They are probably untrue.
 - D. They demonstrate an American obsession with statistics.
2. The list of probabilities cited in paragraph 2 is intended to illustrate _____.
 - A. that probability can be used in many different ways in everyday life
 - B. that terrorism is far less a threat to Americans than many other common dangers
 - C. that the world is filled with many dangers
 - D. that a knowledge of probability can help Americans decide where to travel most safely abroad
3. Which of the following is NOT an element of the discussion in this passage?
 - A. A refutation of a scientific theory
 - B. A personal recollection
 - C. A reference to an authoritative study
 - D. A discussion of a common misconception
4. What is the author's view of the "penetrating insight" mentioned in line 3, paragraph 3?
 - A. It is the result of careful analysis.
 - B. It is illogical.
 - C. It demolishes a statistical argument.
 - D. It does not sufficiently personalize the situation being discussed.
5. The author mentions the time span of "approximately 20 minutes" (line 4, paragraph 6) in order to emphasize _____.
 - A. the doctor's inability to appreciate relevant time spans
 - B. the comparison with the elderly couple in the preceding joke
 - C. the frequency with which the doctor contradicted himself
 - D. the common need to approximate rather than use precise numbers

Passage 2:

There is a canal two rods wide along the northerly and westerly sides of the pond, and wider still at the east end. A great field of ice has cracked off from the main body. I hear a song sparrow singing from the bushes on the shore. He too is helping to crack it. How handsome the great sweeping curves in the edge of the ice, answering somewhat to those of the shore, but more regular! It is unusually hard, owing to the recent severe but transient cold, and all watered or waved like a palace floor. But the wind slides eastward over its opaque surface in vain, till it reaches the living surface beyond. It is glorious to behold this ribbon of water sparkling in the sun, the bare face of the pond full of glee and youth, as if it spoke the joy of the fishes within it, and of the sands on its shore.

The change from storm and winter to serene and mild weather, from dark and sluggish hours to bright and elastic ones, is a memorable crisis which all things proclaim. It is seemingly instantaneous at last. Suddenly an influx of light filled my house, though the evening was at hand, and the clouds of winter still overhung it, and the eaves were dripping with sleety rain. I looked out the window, and lo! where yesterday was cold gray ice there lay the transparent pond already calm and full of hope as in a summer evening reflecting a summer evening sky in its bosom, though none was visible overhead. The pitch pines and shrub oaks about my house, which had so long drooped suddenly resumed their several characters, looked brighter, greener, and more erect and alive, as if effectually cleansed and restored by the rain. I know that it would not rain any more. You may tell by looking at any twig of the forest, aye, at your very woodpile, whether its winter is past or not. As it grew darker, I was startled by the honking of geese flying low over the woods, like weary travelers getting in late from southern lakes, and indulging at last in unrestrained complaint and mutual consolation. Standing at my door, I could hear the rush of their wings; when, driving toward my house, they

suddenly spied my light, and with hushed clamor wheeled and settled in the pond.

In the morning I watched the geese from the door through the mist, sailing in the middle of the pond, fifty rods off, large and tumultuous. But when I stood on the shore they at once rose up with great flapping of wings at the signal of their commander, and when they had got into rank circled about over my head, twenty-nine of them, and then steered straight to Canada, with a regular honk from the leader at intervals. A plump of ducks rose at the same time and took the route to the north in the wake of their noisier cousins.

For a week I heard the circling groping clangor of some solitary goose in the foggy mornings, seeking its companion, and still peopling the woods with the sound of a larger life than they could sustain. In April the pigeons were seen again flying express in small flocks, and in due time I heard the martins twittering over my clearing, though it had not seemed that the township contained so many that it could afford me any, and I fancied that they were peculiarly of the ancient race that dwelt in hollow trees ere white men came. In almost all climes the tortoise and the frog are among the precursors and herald of this season, and birds fly with song and glancing plumage, and plants spring and bloom, and winds blow to correct this slight oscillation of the poles and preserve the equilibrium of Nature.

As every season seems best to us in its turn, so the coming in of spring is like creation of Cosmos out of Chaos and the realization of the Golden Age.

6. From the passage, one can infer that the _____.
- A. geese are back C. woodpile is well stocked
B. martins are singing D. pond is melting
7. The overall purpose of this passage seems to be the narrator's _____.
- A. desire to sound poetic
B. delight to see the pond water
C. description of the bird life around him
D. celebration of the oncoming season
8. What is the predominant literary device used throughout this passage?
- A. Personification. C. Bombastic narration.
B. Restrained description. D. Rhetorical question.
9. The tone of this passage can best be described as _____.
- A. colloquial C. unrestrained
B. informative D. poetic
10. The narrator describes the water as all of the following EXCEPT _____.
- A. a canal two rods wide C. a mirror of his soul
B. a reflection of the sky D. a transparent pond
11. The geese are best characterized through a series of _____.
- A. similes and metaphors C. emotional reflections
B. aural and visual images D. unrelated impressions
12. Which is a subject not treated in this passage?
- A. The connectedness of people to nature.
B. The innocence of mankind.
C. The cyclical certainty of nature.
D. The glory of a long-awaited event.

Passage 3:

I received Everett's *Life of Washington* which you sent me, and enjoyed its perusal. How his spirit would be grieved could he see the wreck of his mighty labors! I will not, however, permit myself to believe, until all ground of hope is gone, that the fruit of his noble deeds will be destroyed, and that his precious advice and virtuous example will so soon be forgotten by his countrymen. As far as I can judge by the papers, we are between a state of anarchy and civil war. May God avert both of these evils from us! I see that four states had declared themselves out of the Union; four more will apparently follow their example. Then, if the border states are brought into the gulf of revolution, one half of the country will be

arrayed against the other. I must try and be patient and await the end, for I can do nothing to hasten or retard it.

The South, in my opinion, has been aggrieved by the acts of the North, as you say. I feel the aggression and am willing to take every proper step for redress. It is the principle I contend for, not individual or private benefit. As an American citizen, I take great pride in my country, her prosperity and institutions, and would defend any state if her rights were invaded. But I can anticipate no greater calamity for the country than a dissolution of the Union. It would be an accumulation of all the evils we complain of, and I am willing to sacrifice everything but honor for its preservation. I hope, therefore, that all constitutional means will be exhausted before there is a resort to force. Secession is nothing but revolution. The framers of our Constitution never exhausted so much labor, wisdom, and forbearance in its formation, and surrounded it with so many guards and securities, for it was intended to be broken by every member of the Confederacy at will. It was intended for "perpetual union," so expressed in the preamble, and for the establishment of a government, not a compact, which can only be dissolved by revolution or the consent of all the people in convention assembled. It is idle to talk of secession. Anarchy would have been established, and not a government, by Washington, Hamilton, Jefferson, Madison, and the other patriots of the Revolution... Still, a Union that can only be maintained by swords and bayonets, and in which strife and civil war are to take the place of brotherly love and kindness, has no charm for me. I shall mourn for my country and for the welfare and progress of mankind. If the Union is dissolved, I shall return to my native state and share the miseries of my people; and, save in defense, will draw my sword on none.

13. The "he" the speaker refers to in the opening paragraph is _____.
- A. Everett, author of *Life of Washington*
B. General Robert E. Lee
C. George Washington
D. the president in office when the selection was written, Abraham Lincoln
14. The narrator's attitude toward George Washington is that he _____.
- A. admires Washington for his personal traits but recognizes that his style of leadership is ill-suited to the present conflict
B. understands that Washington is aggrieved by the acts of the North
C. praises Washington as a man of great actions, fine advice, and unshakable ethics
D. believes that Washington has contributed to the present state of anarchy and civil war
15. Based on his description of George Washington, we can infer that the narrator/speaker _____.
- A. admires people of noble character and sought such greatness of spirit himself
B. has great inner strength but shies away from physical confrontation
C. is intolerant of anyone who does not meet his exacting standards of behavior
D. is humble in the face of adversity but fully believes that he will be as famous as Washington one day
16. From his remarks, we can infer that the speaker _____.
- A. is a Northerner who strongly believes that the South has been wronged by the North in the present conflict
B. loves his country but not its leaders
C. is loyal but only to the point of actual war; then he will lay down his arms and be a martyr
D. is highly patriotic
17. What conclusion can you draw about the speaker's character from the conclusion?
- A. He is devoted to his state, but hates war.
B. He is a natural leader who has much experience with public service.
C. He is judgmental and rigid.
D. He is cowardly and faint-of-heart.
18. The thesis or main idea of the passage is that _____.
- A. People must take up arms in defense of their country; to do any less is cowardice.
B. The Union is being tested by wrongs committed by both the North and the South
C. The Union will always endure, no matter what happens
D. Anarchy is a healthy state because it leads to positive change

19. Based on its point of view, tone, form, and content, this passage is most likely an excerpt from a _____.
- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------|
| A. public speech | C. short story |
| B. journal or diary entry | D. letter |
20. The author's diction can best be characterized as _____.
- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| A. formal and precise | C. mediocre but educated |
| B. informal and relaxed | D. colloquial and informal |

II. Correct the mistakes in the following sentences: underline the wrong parts and put the correct ones in the brackets. If there is no error, use a ✓ or write "No error" on the ANSWER SHEET. (10 points)

- The lack of progress in international relations reveals that governments must study the art of diplomacy much closer.
- Before the curtain rose, Anthony wished that he were back in bed, only dreaming about performing in front of hundreds of strangers rather than actually doing it.
- Caravaggio demonstrated the great range of his artistic talent in such paintings as "Bacchus" and "Basket of Fruit," painted in 1593 and 1596, respectfully.
- James, like many parents, believes that if a child can read at a very young age, he/she will grow to have exceptional literary talent.
- Grizzly bears rarely show aggression toward humans, but they will protect their territory from anyone whom they would have considered to be a threat.
- Andre told the board that both the fund deficit and the disillusionment of the investors were a problem that had to be addressed immediately.
- Just when those who were observing the heart transplant procedure assumed the worst, the surgeons themselves are most confident.
- Since 2001, the company has spent more on employee training than it did in the previous 10 years combined.
- Some doctors believe that taking vitamins on a daily basis help decrease a patient's susceptibility to infection.
- When the window was opened, the affects of the cool spring breeze were felt immediately by the uncomfortable workers.

III. English composition (40 points)

Consider carefully the issue discussed below, and then write an essay that answers the question posed in the task.

Oscar Wilde once said that the only thing worse than being talked about was *not* being talked about. Today it seems we have taken this witticism to its logical extreme. Some people make their lives as 'personalities' whose only job is to get their names in the media. They lack any discernible talents except self-promotion.

Assignment: You are required to write an essay of about at least **400 words** in which you answer the question "Is fame a good thing or a bad thing?" and discuss your point of view on this issue. Support your position logically with examples from literature, the arts, history, politics, science and technology, current events, or your experience or observation.

You are required to support your arguments with relevant information and examples based on your own ideas, knowledge and experience.

Marks will be awarded for **Content, Organization, Grammar, and Appropriateness**. Failure to follow the instruction will result in a loss of marks.

IV. Translation

1. Translate the following passage into Chinese. Write your translation on the ANSWER SHEET. (20 points)

Montaigne fully accepted human weaknesses and understood that no philosophy could be effective unless it took into account our deeply ingrained imperfections, the limitations of our rationality, the flaws that make us human. It is not that he was ahead of his time; it would be better said that the later scholars (advocating rationality) were backward.

He was a thinking fellow, and his ideas did not spring up in his tranquil study, but while on horseback. He went on long rides and came back with ideas. He was never a dogmatist: he was a skeptic with charm, a fallible*, personal, introspective writer, and, primarily, someone who, in the great classical tradition, wanted to be a man.

fallible: able to make mistakes

2. Translate the following passage into English. Write your translation on the ANSWER SHEET. (20 points)

剪纸是中国民间一门有着近千年历史的独特艺术。它要求的材料很简单,只要有纸张和一把剪刀(或刻刀)就可以了。熟练的剪纸艺人剪纸的过程如同变魔术,他将一张红纸在手上左叠右叠,然后用剪刀轻轻地剪几下,摊开一看,就是一幅漂亮的图画。有的艺人根本不需要眼睛看,就能在袖子里剪出漂亮的图案来。剪纸是一种即兴的艺术,剪纸人无需画稿,就靠手中的一把剪刀,刀起图出,每一次剪出的都有所不同,所以它的表现力很强。

旧时人们的窗户多是纸糊的,白白的纸,显得过于单调,也不吉利。于是心灵手巧的女子就剪出红色的四喜娃娃,或者剪一只美丽的蝴蝶,贴在窗上,于是平凡的窗子便有了灵气。

V. 1. Give short answers to the following questions. (10 points)

- Mention one of King Alfred's contributions to Britain.
- What were the consequences of the English Civil War?
- What themes are found in Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*?
- Explain why republicanism is favoured by many Australians.
- Which government agency in Canada is responsible for funding cultural programs?

2. Answer the following question. (10 points)

How did the Vietnam War affect the American people, its economy and political system?