

# Selections for Practice

## Selection 1

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Everyone agrees that exercise is good for your health. Some people work out at a gym or jog. Others enjoy sports. But for many people, it is hard to find time in the day to exercise. Recent studies have shown that it is not necessary to go to the gym or to be involved in athletic activities every day. Climbing stairs instead of taking the elevator, walking instead of taking the bus, or parking a block or two away from your destination can all be ways of getting enough exercise.

- 1 The main idea of this passage is—
- A it is important to go to the gym every day
  - B some ways of getting exercise are better than others
  - C people can get enough exercise in their daily life
  - D it is hard to keep in good shape

## Selection 2

### A Strong Opinion

Rosa Marco, a ninth-grader, sent a letter to the editor of her school paper to express her opinion about teenagers taking on after-school jobs. Her letter to the editor was published the following week.

Dear Editor,

We need a new law to regulate the working hours of teenagers. Students fifteen and younger should not be allowed to work more than fifteen hours a week. Students sixteen and seventeen should not be allowed to work more than twenty-five hours a week.

One hundred years ago children as young as eight or nine or ten worked long hours in mines and factories. Many died young because their health was destroyed. The Child Labor Act signed by President Franklin Roosevelt ended this harmful activity. The work life of fourteen- and fifteen-year-olds today doesn't present the same danger to life as in 1900, so people don't realize the importance of limiting work hours for modern teenagers. But although fourteen- and fifteen-year-olds are not physically as fragile as young kids, it is not a good idea for them to put in long days. Even the most energetic teenagers cannot spend five hours on the job after school, day after day, and still get any studying done. They get tired and find it harder to concentrate, and they don't have any energy to look at math problems or to write a long essay or read a book.

Last year most of my fifteen-year-old friends took jobs during the school year. My friends' parents don't object to these jobs because a lot of them had to work hard themselves when they were young and because they think you can learn a lot on the job. What parents don't realize is that school is much more important today than forty years ago, that there is a lot of homework, and that if you are tired from the job, the result is that you don't learn much. Some teenagers work so hard, they fall asleep in class, and they can't even do an hour's worth of homework. There is no point in having laws that make schooling compulsory if the people in class can't even stay awake.

No one wants laws telling us what to do. But according to Mr. Horster, the school guidance counselor, more and more students are taking jobs that are practically full-time, and more and more students aren't getting the kind of education they need to succeed in the workplace as adults. A new law would help prevent this problem.

Sincerely,  
Rosa Marco

- 2A The main idea of this article is that—
- A teens like to have jobs to pay for things they want to buy
  - B working teenagers are more likely to succeed in life
  - C teenagers who work may have problems in school
  - D teenagers under the age of fourteen should never have a part-time job
- 2B The main idea of the last two paragraphs is that many teenagers who work don't get as much out of school as they would if they didn't work. Which detail BEST supports this main idea?
- A *Some teenagers work so hard, they fall asleep in class.*
  - B *No one wants laws telling us what to do.*
  - C *Last year most of my fifteen-year-old friends took jobs during the school year.*
  - D *My friends' parents don't object to these jobs because a lot of them had to work hard themselves when they were young.*

## Selection 3

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### The Majestic Bald Eagle

- 1 The beauty of the bald eagle has long been written about in both essays and poems. This majestic bird has also been a symbol of American courage ever since it was chosen as our national emblem.
- 2 The bald eagle's appearance is probably one important reason why it has attracted so much attention. Its size is impressive. Bald eagles are usually about 3 feet long and have a wingspan of 7 to 8 feet. Its name comes from the fact that adult birds have dark brown body feathers and a white head and tail, making it appear "bald" from a distance. These white feathers on the head and tail, and the equally distinctive yellow curved beak only develop after the bird is about four years old. Bald eagles can be found in Canada and the United States near seacoasts, bays, and rivers. They have excellent long distance vision, which helps them to spot prey. They feed mainly on fish, swooping down to snatch them out of the water with their strong talons. Bald eagles will also wade in shallow water in order to grab salmon as they swim past.
- 3 Every spring the bald eagles return to their traditional nesting site. They build huge nests called *aeries* high up in trees or on remote cliffs. Each year the birds repair and add sticks to the same nest. Older nests can sometimes grow to be 10 feet across and over 15 feet high. Eagles mate for life and usually lay one or two eggs at a time. Both the male and female take turns sitting on the eggs, and then feeding and caring for the young birds after the eggs hatch.
- 4 Bald eagles were once abundant across the United States but became endangered during the twentieth century. For a while bald eagles could only be found in Canada and Alaska. Chemicals sprayed on fields to kill insects seeped into the rivers and lakes poisoning the fish on which the birds feed. The build up of these pesticides in the birds' bodies caused them to lay thin-shelled eggs, which broke easily before the baby birds were ready to hatch. Irresponsible hunting practices also reduced the numbers of birds. As a result of new laws protecting them from being poisoned and hunted, bald eagles have made a strong comeback. They can again be

found in many places throughout North America. If we continue to protect the bald eagle we will be able to experience for ourselves the soaring beauty of these powerful birds.

**3A** What is the main idea of this selection?

- A Bald Eagles were in danger of becoming extinct but have made an amazing recovery.
- B Bald Eagles are large birds that feed mostly on fish and share the care of their young.
- C Bald Eagles are magnificent birds that have interesting habits and should be protected.
- D Bald Eagles are so impressive that people have written poems about them.

**3B** What is the main idea of the second paragraph?

- A Bald Eagles are interesting because of the way they look and the way they get their food.
- B Bald Eagles get their fish by diving for it and by wading in shallow water.
- C Bald Eagle parents both hunt for food for the baby birds.
- D Bald Eagles are large birds with a strong bill and talons for catching fish and making huge nests.

**3C** The main idea of the last paragraph is that bald eagles were in danger of disappearing from the earth, but because things were done to protect them their numbers are increasing. What detail supports this main idea?

- A *Irresponsible hunting practices also reduced the numbers of birds.*
- B *Chemicals sprayed on fields to kill insects seeped into the rivers and lakes poisoning the fish on which the birds feed.*
- C *As a result of new laws protecting them from being poisoned and hunted, bald eagles have made a strong comeback.*
- D *For a while, bald Eagles could only be found in Canada and Alaska.*

