

## Reading Skills 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester 2013 (Q1-A)

The pioneers of the teaching of science imagined that its introduction into education would remove the conventionality, artificiality, and backward-lookingness which were characteristic of classical studies, but they were gravely disappointed. So, too, in  
5 their time had the humanists thought that the study of the classical authors in the original would banish at once the dull pedantry and superstition of mediaeval scholasticism. The professional schoolmaster was a match for both of them, and has almost managed to make the understanding of chemical reactions as dull  
10 and as dogmatic an affair as the reading of Virgil's Aeneid.

The chief claim for the use of science in education is that it teaches a child something about the actual universe in which he is living, in making him acquainted with the results of scientific  
15 discovery, and at the same time teaches him how to think logically and inductively by studying scientific method. A certain limited success has been reached in the first of these aims, but practically none at all in the second. Those privileged members of the community who have been through a secondary or public school  
20 education may be expected to know something about the elementary physics and chemistry of a hundred years ago, but they probably know hardly more than any bright boy can pick up from an interest in wireless or scientific hobbies out of school hours. As to the learning of scientific method, the whole thing is palpably  
25 a farce. Actually, for the convenience of teachers and the requirements of the examination system, it is necessary that the pupils not only do not learn scientific method but learn precisely the reverse, that is, to believe exactly what they are told and to reproduce it when asked, whether it seems nonsense to them or  
30 not. The way in which educated people respond to such quackeries as spiritualism or astrology, not to say more dangerous ones such as racial theories or currency myths, shows that fifty years of education in the method of science in Britain or Germany has produced no visible effect whatever. The only way of learning the  
35 method of science is the long and bitter way of personal experience, and, until the educational or social systems are altered to make this possible, the best we can expect is the production of a minority of people who are able to acquire some of the techniques of science and a still smaller minority who are able to use and  
40 develop them.

Adapted from: *The Social Function of Science*, John D Bernal (1939)

1. The author implies that the 'professional schoolmaster' (line 7) has

- A. no interest in teaching science
- B. thwarted attempts to enliven education
- C. aided true learning
- D. supported the humanists
- E. been a pioneer in both science and humanities.

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Taken from the following website:

<http://www.majortests.com/sat/reading-comprehension-test01>

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2. The author's attitude to secondary and public school education in the sciences is **(WAS NOT INCLUDED FOR OUR EXAM)**

- A. ambivalent
- B. neutral
- C. supportive
- D. satirical
- E. contemptuous

3. The word 'palpably' (line 24) most nearly means **(WAS NOT INCLUDED FOR OUR EXAM)**

- A. empirically
- B. obviously
- C. tentatively
- D. markedly
- E. ridiculously

4. The author blames all of the following for the failure to impart scientific method through the education system except

- A. poor teaching
- B. examination methods
- C. lack of direct experience
- D. the social and education systems
- E. lack of interest on the part of students

5. If the author were to study current education in science to see how things have changed since he wrote the piece, he would probably be most interested in the answer to which of the following questions?

- A. Do students know more about the world about them?
- B. Do students spend more time in laboratories?
- C. Can students apply their knowledge logically?
- D. Have textbooks improved?
- E. Do they respect their teachers?

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6. Astrology (line 31) is mentioned as an example of

- A. a science that needs to be better understood
- B. a belief which no educated people hold
- C. something unsupportable to those who have absorbed the methods of science
- D. the gravest danger to society
- E. an acknowledged failure of science

7. All of the following can be inferred from the text except

- A. at the time of writing, not all children received a secondary school education
- B. the author finds chemical reactions interesting
- C. science teaching has imparted some knowledge of facts to some children
- D. the author believes that many teachers are authoritarian (a website tells that this is CORRECT)
- E. it is relatively easy to learn scientific method.

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