

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Basic Skills: Topic, Thesis (Main Idea), Details** Harrigan, Reading 91

**Instructions:** Read the following paragraphs/short essays and answer the questions, selecting the best answer for each on multiple choice and true and false items.

**Paragraph 1**

**Remaining Childless: No Bundles of Joy**

Some couples are choosing not to have children, leaving themselves free to devote their time, energy, and money to pursuing their own interests and careers. A few studies indicate that such couples are happier and find their marriages more satisfying than couples with children (Campbell, 1975). However, this same sense of satisfaction may not continue into middle and old age, when couples may wonder if their decision to remain childless was a good one. A 1990 Gallup poll found that only about 4 percent of Americans are “anti-children”—that is, they don’t have any, they don’t want any, or they are glad they never had any children {Gallup and Newport, 1990c}. In spite of the tremendous emotional and financial investment children require, most parents find their children provide a major source of satisfaction and meaning in their lives and that the investment has been a good one.

---Samuel Wood and Ellen Green Wood

**Multiple Choice (8 points each)**

**1. The main point of this paragraph is that**

- A. children are rewarding for middle and elderly parents, despite the high cost of raising them.
- B. childless couples wish they had children
- C. despite the tremendous emotional and financial burden of children, childless couples should have them to feel better in old age.
- D. Couples who do not have children are more satisfied than couples who have children; however, as they age, they may wonder if their decision to have not children was a good one.

**2. The topic of the above paragraph is**

- A. how children are a rewarding part of middle and old age for parents.
- B. about the ways in which children cost a lot to raise, but are worth it.
- C. only 4% of parents are actually anti-child
- D. about the relative happiness of couples, over time, who chose not to have children

**True or False ( 4 points each)**

- 3. \_\_\_\_ The main idea is directly stated.
- 4. \_\_\_\_ The topic can be inferred from the title.
- 5. \_\_\_\_ Another appropriate title for this essay is “ Don’t Have Kids—Be Happy!”
- 6. \_\_\_\_ A critical supporting detail in the paragraph is that 4% of Americans are actually “anti-child,” a chilling fact that reminds us that not all children are wanted.

## Basic Skills: Topic, Thesis, Details, continued.

### Paragraph 2

If a smoker stops smoking, his or her mortality rate decreases progressively as the number of nonsmoking years increase. Those who have stopped for fifteen years have mortality rates similar to those who never smoked, with the exception of smokers who stopped after the age of 65. Persons who smoke cigars and pipes also have an increased risk of death. Life expectancy is eight to nine years shorter for a two-pack-a-day smoker of age 30 to 35 than it is for a nonsmoker and those who smoke cigarettes with higher contents of “tar” and nicotine have a much higher death rate. Overall, the greatest mortality is seen in the 45 to 55 age groups. Hence, death from smoking is a premature death.

--Charles B. Simone, M.D.

### Multiple Choice (8 points each):

#### 6. The main point of this paragraph is

- A. smoking tobacco causes premature death in all age groups, though stopping smoking can often increase life expectancy.
- B. People who have stopped smoking for 15 years have mortality rates as if they had not smoked, except if they are over age 65.
- C. Life expectancy for a two-pack-a-day smoker is actually related more to the amount of tar and nicotine inhaled than to time as a smoker.
- D. how smokers have reduced life expectancy and increased mortality rates.

#### 7. The details of this paragraph are about

- A. the effects of smoking on smokers of various ages
- B. the life expectancies of smokers in various age groupings
- C. mortality rates among smokers of various ages
- D. none of the above
- E. all of the above

#### 8. The topic of this paragraph is

- A. the immediate dangers of smoking cigarettes, pipes, and cigars.
- B. a warning to people to quit smoking—now!
- C. higher premature mortality rates among smokers than among non-smokers
- D. all of the above

### True and False (4 points each)

- 9. \_\_\_\_ The main point is stated indirectly.
- 10. \_\_\_\_ From this essay you can infer that if you smoked low tar and low nicotine cigarettes for less than 15 years prior to turning 65 years old, you would have the same mortality rate as a 50 year old smoker.
- 11. \_\_\_\_ If you are age 67 and have smoked a pipe most of your life, your life expectancy would clearly be increased by immediately quitting smoking.
- 12. \_\_\_\_ This study is flawed by the fact that other unhealthy lifestyle choices are not considered. Therefore, the author does not have a main point.

## Basic Skills: Topic, Thesis, Details, continued.

### Paragraph 3

Many people wonder how they can tell whether or not someone else is sexually attracted to them. Shotland and Craig discovered that when people first meet a person in whom they are sexually interested, they exhibit a particular pattern of behavior. In their study, pairs of male and female college students who had just met were videotaped having conversation. Afterward, the researchers asked the subjects whether their interest in the other person had been sexual or just friendly. The researchers then matched reports of sexual interest to specific behaviors in the videotapes. They found that behaviors that exhibit sexual interest include long eye contact; playing with inanimate objects; asking questions; giving long answers; discontinuing eating, drinking, or reading; being the first to speak after a pause; doing most of the talking; and, especially, mentioning that one has noticed the other person before this meeting. Although these behaviors, such as asking questions, also tend to occur when a person has only a friendly interest in the partner, they occur to a greater degree when sexual interest is present. When the interest is simply friendly rather than sexual, eye contact is briefer; fidgeting is less; answers to questions tend to be shorter; and the person tends to continue eating, drinking, or even reading when the other person is present. However, because friendly and sexually interested behavior fall at two ends of a continuum and the difference between them is a matter of degree, interpreting behaviors can be difficult.

*--Marriage and Families in a Diverse Society by Robin Wolf*

### Multiple Choice (8 points each):

#### 12. The main idea is that

- A. because friendly and sexually interested behavior fall at two ends of a continuum, interpreting behaviors can be difficult.
- B. many people wonder when someone is sexually attracted to them.
- C. students were videotaped talking to each other to determine sexual interest.
- D. researchers discovered that when people first meet a person in whom they are sexually interested, they exhibit a certain pattern of behavior.

#### 13. The topic is about

- A. research regarding what people do when they are sexually attracted to someone.
- B. Shotland and Craig, researchers.
- C. sexual interest that is more than just friendly.
- D. how interpreting sexual and friendly behaviors can be difficult.

### True or False (4 points each):

- 14. \_\_\_ The main idea is directly stated.
- 15. \_\_\_ Students who were videotaped and showed sexual interest in others showed long eye contact and fidgeting; they often said that they had noticed the other person before.
- 16. \_\_\_ If you see a student reading, eating, and apparently ignoring the person across a table from them, you can infer with certainty that there is no sexual interest between them.