

SPECTRUM TUITION PTY LTD

PRACTICE EXERCISE 1 – READING COMPREHENSION

Read the following passage and then answer the questions provided.

As comical as it is, the familiar Looney Tunes portrayal of a Tasmanian devil as a seething, snarling, insatiable lunatic is, at times, not all that far from the truth.

Tasmanian devils have a notoriously cantakerous disposition and will fly into a maniacal rage when threatened by a predator, fighting for a mate, or defending a meal. Early European settlers dubbed it a "devil" after witnessing such displays, which include teeth-baring, lunging, and an array of spine-chilling guttural growls.

Tasmanian devils are strictly carnivorous, surviving on small prey such as snakes, birds, fish, and insects and frequently feasting communally on carrion. They are at their most rowdy when jockeying for position on a large carcass. Like other marsupials, when they are well fed, their tails swell with stored fat.

Devils are solitary and nocturnal, spending their days in hollow logs, caves, or burrows, and emerging at night to feed. They use their long whiskers and excellent sense of smell and sight to avoid predators and locate prey and carrion. They'll eat pretty much anything they can get their teeth on, and when they do find food, they are voracious, consuming everything—including hair, organs, and bones.

Efforts in the late 1800s to eradicate Tasmanian devils, which farmers erroneously believed were killing livestock (although they were known to take poultry), were nearly successful. In 1941, the government made devils a protected species, and their numbers have grown since.

Tragically, though, a catastrophic illness discovered in the mid-1990s has killed tens of thousands of Tasmanian devils. Called devil facial tumor disease (DFTD), this rapidly spreading condition is a rare contagious cancer that causes large lumps to form around the animal's mouth and head, making it hard for it to eat. Animal health experts are sequestering populations where the disease has not yet appeared and are focusing on captive breeding programs to save the species from extinction. Because of the outbreak, the Australian government has listed Tasmanian devils as vulnerable.

Factual Questions

1. All of the following are true, according to the author, EXCEPT

- a. Tasmanian devils have been threatened since the late 19th century
- b. The disposition of Tasmanian devils resembles that of cartoon devils
- c. Governments are invested in ensuring the future of Tasmanian devils
- d. Tasmanian devils live in small groups

Context Meaning Questions

2. The word 'cantankerous' most nearly means

- a. Fortuitous
- b. Irritable
- c. Amiable
- d. Auspicious

Inference Questions

3. In the second last paragraph, the author suggests that

- a. Tasmanian Devils should be killed because they attack other animals
- b. Tasmanian Devils were made extinct by poachers
- c. Tasmanian Devils are not as dangerous to livestock as farmers in the 1800s assumed.
- d. Tasmanian devils have made chickens an endangered species.

Main Idea and Purpose Questions

4. The main idea of the passage is

- a. Tasmanian devils are nearly extinct
- b. Tasmanian devils are fascinating creatures
- c. More should be done to protect Tasmanian devils
- d. Tasmanian devils are amusing creatures

Tone Questions

5. The tone of this passage is

- a. Sympathetic and kind
- b. Passionate and concerned
- c. Arrogant and informative
- d. Reasonable and amused
- e. None of these