

Reading Test

60 MINUTES, 47 QUESTIONS

Turn to Section 1 of your answer sheet to answer the questions in this section.

DIRECTIONS

Each passage or pair of passages below is followed by a number of questions. After reading each passage or pair, choose the best answer to each question based on what is stated or implied in the passage or passages and in any accompanying graphics (such as a table or graph).

Questions 1-9 are based on the following passage.

This passage is adapted from Rabih Alameddine, *An Unnecessary Woman*. ©2013 by Rabih Alameddine.

I love Javier Marias's work. I've translated two of his novels: *A Heart So White* and *Tomorrow in the Battle Think on Me*. I'll consider a third after I read the French translation of the final volume of *Your Face Tomorrow*, although at more than thirteen hundred pages, I'll probably balk at that as well.

But I digress, as usual.

In one of his essays, Marias suggests that his work deals as much with what didn't happen as with what happened. In other words, most of us believe we are who we are because of the decisions we've made, because of events that shaped us, because of the choices of those around us. We rarely consider that we're also formed by the decisions we didn't make, by events that could have happened but didn't, or by our lack of choices, for that matter.

More than fifty years ago, on a gloomy day when hope followed my shrimp of an ex-husband out the door, or so I thought at the time, my friend Hannah led me by the hand to a bookstore owned by one of her relatives. The relative, a second cousin once removed, had opened the bookstore as a lark, a ground-floor store with an inadequate picture window in a distressed building off a main street and no foot traffic. There were more stupid stuffed toys than there were books, and everything was covered with dust. The bookstore had as much chance of making it as I did.

Yet of all things, the flint that sparked a flame in my soul was the huge, darkly stained oak desk where the owner sat. To a practically penniless twenty-year-old divorcée, sitting behind such a desk so grand, so luxurious—something to aspire to. I needed grandeur in my life.

Hannah told her relative he should hire me, and he informed her that he wanted to hire someone with more experience and, just as important, with more class. He spoke as if I weren't there, as if I were invisible, as if his face were hidden behind a perforated printout. Hannah, my champion, wouldn't accept defeat. She explained that I loved books and read constantly, that I knew more about them than he ever would, and, just as important, that I could dust and clean and scrub and mop. He'd have the cleanest bookstore in the city. I piped up, the most sparkling, a diamond. I would rid it of its acrid and musty odor. He pretended to mull over the offer before deciding to hire me for the time being (still talking to Hannah and not me), until he could bring in someone else to be the face of the bookstore.

What I didn't know at the time was that the first face he offered the job to belonged to a pretty girl whose family was so classy that they immigrated to Brazil and one of their scions had recently become the governor of São Paulo. The girl left without ever showing her countenance in the bookstore. The second didn't show up either; she married and no longer needed or wished to be employed.

Had either of these women made an appearance,
 60 my life would have been altogether different. I didn't
 realize how the fate of those two had influenced mine
 until a few years ago when the owner mentioned it in
 passing. He hadn't thought for a moment that I could
 do the job. He credited my success to his diligent
 65 training.

I worked for the paperback dilettante for
 fifty years, and mine was the only face anyone
 associated with my bookstore.

3

Which choice best describes the passage?

- A) A character relates an anecdote and analyzes its applications to another character's life.
- B) A character relates to a friend an important chapter from a third character's life.
- C) An observation about an author's work leads into a personal narrative that supports that observation.
- D) The plot of a work of fiction is summarized, and that work's relationship to its author's life is considered.

2

What does the narrator imply about her own narrative style?

- A) She likes to rely heavily on a recurring phrase.
- B) She has a tendency to go off on tangents.
- C) She uses dialogue to reveal characters' thoughts.
- D) She admits to using extreme exaggerations.

3

Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?

- A) Line 7 ("But I . . . usual")
- B) Lines 10-13 ("In other . . . around us")
- C) Lines 17-21 ("More than . . . relatives")
- D) Lines 27-28 ("The bookstore . . . did")

3

What can reasonably be inferred about Hannah's motive in taking the narrator to apply for the job in the bookstore?

- A) She is trying to take the narrator's mind off the breakup of her marriage.
- B) She wants the job for herself.
- C) She suspects that the narrator will not keep the job for long.
- D) She thinks the narrator will improve the store's image.

3

The description of the bookstore (lines 21-28) creates an impression of

- A) intellectualism.
- B) playfulness.
- C) age and disuse.
- D) disuse and mellowness.

In the passage, the narrator equates the bookstore's chances for success with her own

- A) prospects for the future.
- B) fondness for literature.
- C) romantic aspirations.
- D) physical appearance.

Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?

- A) Lines 25-27 ("There were . . . dust")
- B) Lines 27-28 ("The bookstore . . . did")
- C) Lines 29-31 ("Yet . . . sat")
- D) Lines 31-34 ("To a . . . life")

As used in line 38, "class" most nearly means

- A) division.
- B) grade.
- C) refinement.
- D) structure.

Which choice provides the best evidence for the conclusion that the bookstore owner initially ignored the narrator?

- A) Lines 35-38 ("Hannah . . . class")
- B) Lines 38-40 ("He spoke . . . printout")
- C) Lines 40-41 ("Hannah . . . defeat")
- D) Lines 41-44 ("She explained . . . mop")

Questions 10-18 are based on the following passage and supplementary material.

This passage is adapted from Kathleen D. Vohs, "It's Not 'Mess.' It's Creativity." ©2013 by The New York Times Company.

Messy or tidy—which is better?

Historically, the evidence has favored the tidy camp. The anthropologist Mary Douglas noted almost 50 years ago a connection between clean, open spaces and moral righteousness. More recently, psychologists have shown that the scent of citrus cleaning products is enough to raise people's ethical standards and promote trust. Conversely, in another study, people were found to associate chaotic wilderness with death.

But if messiness is so bad, why do so many people tolerate, and even embrace, it?

Not long ago, two of my colleagues and I speculated that messiness, like tidiness, might serve a purpose. Since tidiness has been associated with upholding societal standards, we predicted that just being around tidiness would elicit a desire for convention. We also predicted the opposite: that being around messiness would lead people away from convention, in favor of new directions.

We conducted some experiments to test these intuitions, and our hunches were borne out.

For our first study, we arranged rooms in our laboratory to look either tidy, with books and papers stacked and orderly, or messy, with papers and books strewn around haphazardly. Then we invited 188 adults to visit our laboratory individually, ostensibly for a consumer-choice study. Each subject was assigned to either a messy or a tidy room, where he or she was shown a menu from a deli that made fruit smoothies. The smoothies were said to come with a "boost" (added ingredients) from which there were three options to choose—a health, wellness or vitamin boost.

We created two versions of the menu. Half of the subjects saw a menu that had the word "classic" highlighting the health boost option, whereas the other half saw the health boost highlighted by the word "new." Then our subjects made their choices.

As predicted, when the subjects were in the tidy room they chose the health boost more often—almost twice as often—when it had the "classic" label: that is, when it was associated with convention. Also as predicted, when the subjects were in the messy room, they chose the health boost more often—more

than twice as often—when it was said to be “new”; that is, when it was associated with novelty. Thus, people greatly preferred convention in the tidy room and novelty in the messy room.

59 Given that divergence from the status quo is the essence of ingenuity, we conducted a second experiment to test whether messiness fostered creativity.

Forty-eight research subjects came individually to 55 our laboratory, again assigned to messy or tidy rooms. This time, we told subjects to imagine that a Ping-Pong ball factory needed to think of new uses for Ping-Pong balls, and to write down as many ideas as they could. We had independent judges rate the 60 subjects' answers for degree of creativity, which can be done reliably.

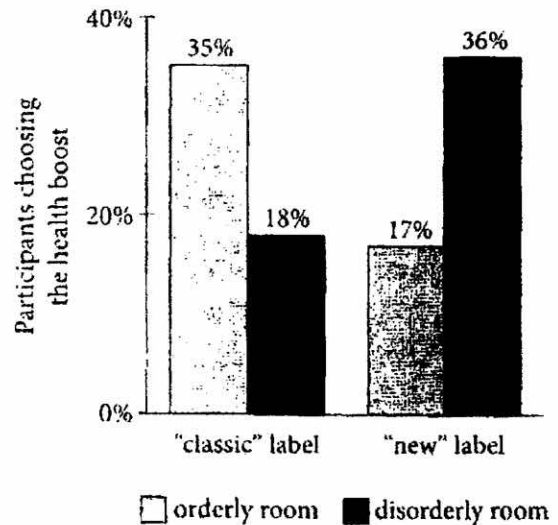
When we analyzed the responses, we found that the subjects in both types of rooms came up with about the same number of ideas, which meant they 45 put about the same effort into the task. Nonetheless, the messy room subjects were more creative, as we expected. Not only were their ideas 28 percent more creative on average, but when we analyzed the ideas that judges scored as “highly creative,” we found a 70 remarkable boost from being in the messy room—these subjects came up with almost five times the number of highly creative responses as did their tidy-room counterparts.

(These results have been confirmed by 75 independent researchers at Northwestern University, who found that subjects in a messy room drew more creative pictures and were quicker to solve a challenging brainteaser puzzle than subjects in a tidy room.)

80 Our findings have practical implications. There is, for instance, a minimalist design trend taking hold in contemporary office spaces: out of favor are private walled-in offices—and even private cubicles. Today's office environments often involve desk 85 sharing and have minimal “footprints” (smaller office space per worker), which means less room to make a mess.

At the same time, the working world is abuzz about cultivating innovation and creativity, 90 endeavors that our findings suggest might be hampered by the minimalist movement. While cleaning up certainly has its benefits, clean spaces might be too conventional to let inspiration flow.

Participants' Choice of Health Boost Option Grouped by Menu Label



Adapted from Kathleen D. Vohs et al., "Physical Order Produces Healthy Choices, Generosity, and Conventionality, Whereas Disorder Produces Creativity." ©2013 by Kathleen D. Vohs et al.

10

As used throughout the passage, “convention” most nearly means

- A) formality.
- B) resolution.
- C) custom.
- D) regulation.

11

As used in line 8, “promote” most nearly means

- A) advocate.
- B) publicize.
- C) endorse.
- D) encourage.