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Topic: 1

History of England

by Charles Dickens

Refer to the following for questions 1—6:

If you look at a Map of the World, you will see, in the left-hand upper corner of the Eastern Hemisphere, two Islands lying in the sea. They are England and Scotland, and Ireland. England and Scotland form the greater part of these Islands. Ireland is the next in size. The little neighboring islands, which are so small upon the Map as to be mere dots, are chiefly little bits of Scotland, —broken off, I dare say, in the course of a great length of time, by the power of the restless water.

In the old days, a long, long while ago..., these Islands were in the same place, and the stormy sea roared round them, just as it roars now. But the sea was not alive, then, with great ships and brave sailors, sailing to and from all parts of the world. It was very lonely. The Islands lay solitary, in the great expanse of water. The foaming waves dashed against their cliffs, and the bleak winds blew over their forests: but the winds and waves brought no adventurers to land upon the Islands, and the savage Islanders knew nothing of the rest of the world, and the rest of the world knew nothing of them.

It is supposed that the Phoenicians, who were an ancient people, famous for carrying on trade, came in ships to these Islands, and found that they produced tin and lead: both very useful things, as you know, and both produced to this very hour upon the sea-coast. The most celebrated tin mines in Cornwall are, still, close to the sea. One of them, which I have seen, is so close to it that it is hollowed out underneath the ocean; and the miners say, that in stormy weather, when they are at work down in that deep place, they can hear the noise of the waves thundering above their heads. So, the Phoenicians, coasting about the Islands, would come, without much difficulty, to where the tin and lead were.

The Phoenicians' traded with the Islanders for these metals, and gave the Islanders some other useful things in exchange. The Islanders were, at first, poor savages, going almost naked, or only dressed in the rough skins of beasts, and staining their bodies, as other savages do, with coloured earths and the juices of plants. But the Phoenicians, sailing over to the opposite coasts of France and Belgium, and saying to the people there, 'We have been to those white cliffs across the water, which you can see in fine weather, and from that country, which is called Britain, we bring this tin and lead,' tempted some of the

French and Belgians to come over also. These people settled themselves on the south coast of England, which is now called Kent: and, although they were a rough people too, they taught the savage Britons some useful arts, and improved that part of the Islands. It is probable that other people came over from Spain to Ireland, and settled there.

Thus, by little and little, strangers became mixed with the Islanders, and the savage Britons grew into a wild, bold people; almost savage, still, especially in the interior of the country away from the sea where the foreign settlers seldom went: but hardy, brave, and strong.

The whole country was covered with forests, and swamps. The greater part of it was very misty and cold. There were no roads, no bridges, no streets, no houses that you would think deserving of the name. A town was nothing but a collection of straw-covered huts, hidden in a thick wood, with a ditch all round, and a low wall, made of mud, or the trunks of trees placed one upon another. The people planted little or no corn, but lived upon the flesh of their flocks and cattle. They made no coins, but used metal rings for money. They were clever in basket-work as savage people often are; and they could make a coarse kind of cloth, and some very bad earthenware. But in building fortresses they were much more clever.

They made boats of basket-work, covered with the skins of animals, but seldom, if ever, ventured far from the shore. They made swords, of copper mixed with tin; but, these swords were of an awkward shape, and so soft that a heavy blow would bend one. They made light shields, short pointed daggers, and spears—which they jerked back after they had thrown them at an enemy, by a long strip of leather fastened to the stem. The butt-end was a rattle, to frighten an enemy's horse. The ancient Britons, being divided into as many as thirty or forty tribes, each commanded by its own little king, were constantly fighting with one another, as savage people usually do; and they always fought with these weapons.

Question: 1

According to the author, why did the ancient Britons regularly fight with each other?

- A. They had many weapons.
- B. They disliked the Phoenicians.
- C. There were no roads or bridges.
- D. They were divided into many tribes.

Answer: D

Explanation:

The correct answer is D because the author says that the ancient Britons were divided into many tribes and each had a king. The passage does say Choice A is incorrect because the passage says the ancient Britons had weapons, however, it doesn't say the weapons were the reason they fought. Choice B is incorrect because the text says the ancient Britons fought each other. It does not mention them fighting the Phoenicians. Choice C is incorrect because paragraph 6 says that there were no roads or bridges. The author gives this detail in order to describe the land. This detail does not support paragraph 7 which says that the ancient Britons regularly fought.

Question: 2

Which phrase best shows the change Dickens believes the Phoenicians caused in the ancient Britons?

- A. "The Phoenicians traded with the Islanders..."
- B. "They were clever in basket-work..."
- C. "These people settled themselves on the south coast of England..."
- D. "...the savage Britons grew into a wild, bold people..."

Answer: D

Explanation:

The correct answer is D because the word grew shows that the ancient Britons changed after the Phoenicians arrived. Choice A is incorrect because the answer choice only shows something that the Phoenicians did with the Britons; however, it does not describe how the Britons changed.

Choice B is incorrect because basket-work is something the ancient Britons did before the Phoenicians interacted with them. Choice C is incorrect because it refers to the French and Belgians who moved to England.

Question: 3

Which sentence or phrase best expresses the isolation of the islands of England and Scotland and Ireland?

- A. "...which are so small upon the Map as to be mere dots"
- B. The Islands lay solitary, in the great expanse of water."
- C. "they can hear the noise of the waves thundering above their heads."
- D. "Thus, by little and little, strangers became mixed with the Islanders..."

Answer: B

Explanation:

The word solitary refers to isolation or being alone. Also, the sentence says that the islands are alone in a great expanse of water. So, this shows that other lands do not surround the islands.

Choice A is incorrect because the sentence only talks about the size of the small islands around Scotland. It does not talk about where the islands are in relation to larger lands. Choice C is incorrect because it refers to people on the island, not the island in relation to the rest of the world. Choice D is incorrect because it shows the opposite of isolation; the sentence shows how the people who came to the islands (e.g., the French, Belgians, and Spanish) mixed with the ancient Britons.

Question: 4

Read this phrase from paragraph 7:

But seldom, if ever, ventured far from the shore.

Why does the author include this phrase?

- A. To show the ways in which the people used boats
- B. To highlight the irony of making boats
- C. To show where the people used weapons

D. To explain why the people built fortresses

Answer: B

Explanation:

The phrase "But seldom, if ever, ventured far from the shore" means that the boats didn't go far from shore. This implies that the boats may not have had much use in spite of the effort to build them. Choice A is incorrect because the text does not explain specifically how the boats were used. The author does describe weapons in the same paragraph. However, the phrase in the question focuses on the boats that the people made. The paragraph only moves onto weapons in the second sentence. Choice D is incorrect because the author does not connect the boats (discussed in paragraph 7) to the fortresses (discussed at the end of paragraph 6).

Question: 5

Why does the author begin the passage by describing a map?

- A. To explain the location of the islands
- B. To show the roads that run through England, Scotland, and Ireland
- C. To show how the little bits of Scotland broke away from the main island
- D. To show the size of the islands in relation to France and Belgium

Answer: A

Explanation:

Choice A is the best answer because the first paragraph describes the location of the islands on the map. Choice B is incorrect because there were no roads that ran through England, Scotland, or Ireland during the time period that the passage is describing. Choice C is incorrect because the details about the small islands are only a small part of the first paragraph. Most of the paragraph describes how the islands appear on the map. Choice D is incorrect because the paragraph does not mention the size of the main islands. Also, the paragraph does not mention France or Belgium. Those countries are first mentioned in paragraph 4.

Question: 6

What sentence or phrase best describes the lands in the interior of the islands? In other words, these lands are the parts away from the coast.

- A. "These people settled themselves on the south coast of England, which is now called Kent..."
- B. "Especially in the interior of the country away from the sea where the foreign settlers seldom went..."
- C. The whole country was covered with forests and swamps.
- D. The ancient Britons, being divided into as many as thirty or forty tribes, each commanded by its own little king..."

Answer: C

Explanation:

Choice C is the correct answer because this answer choice describes the lands by mentioning swamps and forests. Choice A is incorrect because it describes the coast, not the interior land of the island. Choice B is incorrect. It is about the interior of the island, but does not describe the land. Choice D is incorrect because it discusses the tribes and the people rather than the features of the lands (e.g., the swamps and forests).

Topic: 2

"The Gift of the Magi"

by O. Henry

Refer to the following for questions 7-12:

[Jim and Della are a young husband and wife. They are very poor, and it is Christmas Eve. Della has been able to save \$1.87 for a Christmas present. To buy a better gift for her husband, she decides to sell her beautiful hair to buy a fob for Jim. The fob will be for Jim's watch which is his most prized possession.]

When Della reached home her intoxication gave way a little to prudence and reason. She got out her curling irons and lighted the gas and went to work repairing the ravages made by generosity added to love. Which is always a tremendous task, dear friends--a mammoth task.

Within forty minutes her head was covered with tiny, close-lying curls that made her look wonderfully like a truant schoolboy. She looked at her reflection in the mirror long, carefully, and critically.

"If Jim doesn't kill me," she said to herself "before he takes a second look at me, he'll say I look like a Coney Island chorus girl. But what could I do—oh! What could I do with a dollar and eighty-seven cents?"

At seven o'clock the coffee was made and the frying pan was on the back of the stove hot and ready to cook the chops.

Jim was never late. Della doubled the fob chain in her hand and sat on the corner of the table near the door that he always entered. Then she heard his step on the stairway down on the first flight, and she turned white for just a moment. She had a habit of saying little silent prayers about the simplest everyday things and now she whispered: "Please God, make him think I am still pretty."

Jim stopped inside the door, as immovable as a setter at the scent of quail. His eyes were fixed upon Della, and there was an expression in them that she could not read, and it terrified her. It was not anger, nor surprise, nor disapproval, nor horror, nor any of the sentiments that she had been prepared for. He simply stared at her fixedly with that peculiar expression on his face.

Della wriggled off the table and went for him.

"Jim, darling," she cried, "don't look at me that way. I had my hair cut off and sold it because I couldn't have lived through Christmas without giving you a present. It'll grow out again—you won't mind, will you? I just had to do it. My hair grows awfully fast. Say 'Merry Christmas!' Jim, and let me be happy. You don't know what a nice— what a beautiful, nice gift I've got for you."

"You've cut off your hair?" asked Jim, laboriously, as if he had not arrived at that patent fact yet even after the hardest mental labor.

"Cut it off and sold it," said Della. "Don't you like me just as well, anyhow? I'm me without my hair, ain't I?"

Jim looked about the room curiously.

"You say your hair is gone?" he said, with an air almost of idiocy.

"You needn't look for it," said Della. "It's sold, I tell you—sold and gone, too. It's Christmas Eve, boy. Be good to me, for it went for you. Maybe the hairs of my head were numbered," she went on with a sudden serious sweetness, "but nobody could ever count my love for you. Shall I put the chops on, Jim?" Out of his trance Jim seemed quickly to wake. He enfolded his Della.

Jim drew a package from his overcoat pocket and threw it upon the table.

"Don't make any mistake, Dell," he said, "about me. I don't think there's anything in the way of a haircut or a shave or a shampoo that could make me like my girl any less. But if you'll unwrap that package you may see why you had me going a while at first." White fingers and nimble tore at the string and paper. And then an ecstatic scream of joy; and then, alas! a quick feminine change to hysterical tears and wails, necessitating the immediate employment of all the comforting powers of the lord of the flat.

For their lay the Combs—the set of combs, side and back, that Della had worshipped for long in a Broadway window. Beautiful combs, pure tortoise shell, with jeweled rims—just the shade to wear in the beautiful vanished hair. They were expensive combs, she knew, and her heart had simply craved and yearned over them without the least hope of possession. And now, they were hers, but the tresses that should have adorned the coveted adornments were gone. But she hugged them to her bosom, and at length she was able to look up with dim eyes and a smile and say: "My hair grows so fast, Jim!"

And then Della leaped up like a little singed cat and cried, "Oh, oh!"

Jim had not yet seen his beautiful present. She held it out to him eagerly upon her open palm. The dull precious metal seemed to flash with a reflection of her bright and ardent spirit.

"Isn't it a dandy, Jim? I hunted all over town to find it. You'll have to look at the time a hundred times a day now. Give me your watch. I want to see how it looks on it."

Instead of obeying, Jim tumbled down on the couch and put his hands under the back of his head and smiled.

"Della," said he, "left put our Christmas presents away and keep 'em a while.

There too nice to use just at present. I sold the watch to get the money to buy your combs. And now suppose you put the chops on."

Question: 7

What is the meaning of the word ardent?

- A. procrastinate
- B. passionate
- C. lukewarm
- D. uncaring

Answer: B

Explanation:

The word ardent means passionate or devoted. Look at the word in the context of the sentence: "The dull precious metal seemed to flash with a reflection of her bright and ardent spirit" and think about Della's actions. Choice A is not correct because Della has planned and saved to buy her husband a Christmas present. So, she has not procrastinated (i.e., waited too long to start on something). Choices C and D are synonyms. They are wrong because Della shows over and over again that she cares very much for her husband.

Question: 8

What is the chronological order of these events: ?

(1) Jim gives Della's present to her | (2) Della prepares dinner | (3) Jim assures Della that he is not upset | (4) Della prepares her hair | (5) Della prays for Jim's reaction | (6) Jim receives his present from Della

- A. 4,3,2,1,5,6
- B. 6,1,4,3,2,5
- C. 4,2,1,5,3,6
- D. 4,2,5,3,1,6

Answer: D

Explanation:

The first event in the story is Della preparing her hair (4). The next event in the story is Della preparing a meal for the night (2). Then, Della prays about the reaction that Jim will have to her hair (5). The next event is Jim assuring Della that he is not upset about her decision to cut her hair (3). Then, Jim gives the combs to Della (1). Finally, Della gives the fob chain to Jim (6).

Question: 9

In the passage, O. Henry uses several similes. Which of the following is not an example of a simile?

- A. "her head was covered with tiny, close-lying curls that made her look wonderfully like a truant schoolboy."
- B. "Jim stopped inside the door, as immovable as a setter at the scent of quail."
- C. "'I hunted all over town to find it.'"
- D. "And then Della leaped up like a little singed cat and cried, 'Oh, oh!'."

Answer: C

Explanation:

The sentence hunted all over town to find it.'" is an exaggeration or hyperbole. The other answer choices have similes.

Question: 10

Which of the following best shows how O. Henry builds tension in the story?

- A. "It was even worthy of The Watch. As soon as she saw it she knew that it must be Jim's."
- B. "The door opened and Jim stepped in and closed it. He looked very thin and very serious."
- C. "Jim looked about the room curiously. 'You say your hair is gone?' he said, with an air almost of idiocy."
- D. "Jim was never late. Della doubled the fob chain in her hand and sat on the corner of the table near the door that he always entered."

Answer: C

Explanation:

In the beginning of the story, Della has her hair cut off. She does this so she can get money for Jim's gift. However, she is worried about how she will appear to her husband and is concerned that he will be very angry or worse. When Jim keeps asking about Della's hair, it almost seems as if he is angry about it.

Question: 11

What is the theme of this passage?

- A. True love leads to the sacrifice of one's most precious possessions.
- B. Christmas is the representation of the love and sacrifice needed by all.
- C. The love between two people eventually leads to frustration.
- D. People should not try to surprise each other gifts.

Answer: A

Explanation:

The entire story is about how Della and Jim are deeply in love. They sell a prized possession to buy a present for the other. Choice B is wrong because the overall meaning of this passage is not about a holiday. Choice C is wrong because it fails to recognize how Della and Jim overcome difficulty and have a deeper love for each other after giving their gifts. Choice D is wrong because the focus of the passage is not on buying the right gift for a loved one. Instead, the focus is on giving up a thing that you care about to show how much you love someone.

Question: 12

Who is the narrator of this passage?

- A. Della
- B. Jim
- C. O. Henry
- D. None of the above

Answer: D

Explanation:

The narrator of the passage is not named. Della and Jim are simply characters in the story. O. Henry is the author of the story, not the narrator.

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