

## 501 Critical Reading Questions

Questions 18–25 are based on the following passage.

**The following selection explains the origins of sushi, and its popularity in the United States.**

- (1) Burgers, fries, pizza, raw fish. Raw fish? Fast food in America is changing. *Sushi*, the thousand year old Japanese delicacy, was once thought of in this country as unpalatable and too exotic. But tastes have changed, for a number of reasons. Beginning in the 1970s, Americans
- (5) became increasingly more aware of diet and health issues, and began rejecting their traditional red-meat diets in favor of healthier, lower-fat choices such as fish, poultry, whole grains, rice, and vegetables. The way food was prepared began to change, too; rather than frying food, people started opting for broiled, steamed, and raw versions. *Sushi*, a
- (10) combination of rice and fish, fit the bill. In addition, that same decade saw Japan become an important global economic force, and companies began flocking to the country to do business. All things Japanese, including décor, clothing, and cuisine, became popular.

- (15) *Sushi* started small in the United States, in a handful of restaurants in big cities. But it caught on. Today, *sushi* consumption in American restaurants is 40% greater than it was in the late 1990s, according to the National Restaurant Association. The concession stands at almost every major league stadium sell *sushi*, and many colleges and universities offer it in their dining halls. But we're not just eating it out. The
- (20) National Sushi Association reports that there are over 5,000 *sushi* bars in supermarkets, and that number is growing monthly. This incredible growth in availability and consumption points to the fact that Americans have decided that *sushi* isn't just good for them, or just convenient, but that this once-scorned food is truly delicious.

- (25) The origins of this food trend may be found in Asia, where it was developed as a way of preserving fish. Fresh, cleaned fish was pressed between rice and salt and weighted with a heavy stone over a period of several months. During this time, the rice fermented, producing lactic acid that pickled and preserved the fish. For many years, the fish was
- (30) eaten and the rice was discarded. But about 500 years ago, that changed, and *bako-zushi* (boxed *sushi*) was created. In this type of *sushi*, the rice and fish are pressed together in a box, and are consumed together.

- (35) In 1824, Yohei Hanaya of Edo (now called Tokyo) eliminated the fermentation process, and began serving fresh slices of seafood on bases of vinegared rice. The vinegar was probably used to mimic the taste of fermented *sushi*. In fact, the word *sushi* actually refers to any vinegared rice dish, and not to the fish, as many Americans believe (the

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fish is called *sashimi*). In Japanese, when *sushi* is combined with a modifier, it changes to the word *zushi*.

- (40) Chef Yohei's invention, called *nigiri zushi*, is still served today. It now refers to a slice of fish (cooked or uncooked) that is pressed by hand onto a serving of rice. Popular choices include *ama ebi* (raw shrimp), *shime saba* (marinated mackerel), and *maguro* (tuna). In addition to the vinegar flavor in the rice, *nigiri zushi* typically contains a
- (45) taste of horseradish (*wasabi*), and is served with soy sauce for dipping. *Maki zushi* contains strips of fish or vegetables rolled in rice and wrapped in thin sheets of *nori*, or dried seaweed. Popular ingredients include smoked salmon, fresh crab, shrimp, octopus, raw clams, and sea urchin. Americans have invented many of their own *maki zushi* combinations, including the California roll, which contains imitation crabmeat and avocado. They have also made innovations in the construction of
- (50) *maki zushi*. Some American *sushi* bars switch the placement of *nori* and rice, while others don't use *nori*, and instead roll the *maki zushi* in fish roe. These colorful, crunchy eggs add to the visual and taste appeal of
- (55) the dish.

- 18.** According to the passage, what other food also gained popularity in the 1970s?
- salads
  - pepperoni pizza
  - fried chicken
  - fast-food burgers
  - fried rice
- 19.** What was Yohei Hanaya's contribution to *sushi*?
- He pressed the fish and rice together in a box.
  - He introduced the population of Edo to the dish.
  - He smoked the fish before putting it on vinegared rice.
  - He used *wasabi* to flavor it.
  - He used raw fish.
- 20.** According to the passage, what does *shime* mean?
- salmon
  - shrimp
  - marinated
  - roe
  - seaweed

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- 21.** All of the following can be explicitly answered by reading the passage EXCEPT
- What is the definition of the word *sushi*?
  - Did Japan's economic status have a bearing on *sushi*'s popularity?
  - Have Americans adapted *sushi* to make it more in keeping with their tastes?
  - Why do some Americans prefer *maki zushi* over *nigiri zushi*?
  - What happens to fish when it is layered together with rice and left for a period of months?
- 22.** The passage describes Americans' *sushi* consumption as
- more than it was five years ago.
  - important when watching baseball.
  - taking place primarily in their homes.
  - a trend due to supermarket marketing.
  - beginning for many in college.
- 23.** In line 3, *unpalatable* most nearly means
- not visually appealing.
  - not good tasting.
  - bad smelling.
  - too expensive.
  - rough to the touch.
- 24.** What happens when fish is pickled (line 29)?
- It becomes crisp.
  - It turns green.
  - It dissolves into the rice.
  - It is preserved.
  - It gets dry.
- 25.** What would be the best name for *maki zushi* that has the placement of the rice and *nori* switched?
- rice ball
  - maki maki*
  - zushi* deluxe
  - inside-out
  - wasabi sashimi*

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Questions 26–33 are based on the following passages.

*Both of these passages were adapted from high school newspaper editorials concerning reality television.*

### PASSAGE 1

- (1) There comes a time in every boy's life when he becomes a man. On this fateful day, he will be swept up and put on an island to compete for one million dollars. Then, this man will realize that money can't buy happiness. He will find his soul mate, as we all do, on national TV, (5) picking a woman out of a line of twenty. By then it will be time for him to settle down, move to the suburbs, make friends with the neighbors, and then refurbish the neighbors' house.

Welcome to real life. That is, real life as the television networks see it.

- (10) Reality TV is flawed in many ways, but the most obvious is in its name. It purports to portray reality, but no "reality" show has succeeded in this endeavor. Instead, Reality TV is an extension of fiction, and there are no writers who need to be paid. Television executives love it because it is so much cheaper to produce than any other type (15) of programming, and it's popular. But the truth is that there is little or no reality in Reality TV.

- Do you sing in the shower while dreaming of getting your own record deal? There are a couple of shows made just for you. Audition, and make the cut, so some British guy who has never sung a note can (20) rip you to pieces on live television. Or maybe you're lonely and fiscally challenged, and dream of walking down the aisle with a millionaire? Real marriage doesn't involve contestants who know each other for a couple of days. The people on these shows seem to be more interested in how they look on camera than in the character of the person they (25) might spend the rest of their life with. Let's hope that isn't reality.

- There are also about a dozen decorating shows. In one case, two couples trade rooms and redecorate for each other. The catch is, interior designers help them. This is where the problem starts. Would either couple hire someone who thinks it's a great idea to swathe a (30) room in hundreds of yards of muslin, or to adhere five thousand plastic flowers as a mural in a bathroom? The crimes committed against defenseless walls are outrageous. When you add the fact that the couples are in front of cameras as well as the designers, and thus unable to react honestly to what is going on, you get a new level of "unreality."

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- (35) Then there is the show that made the genre mainstream—*Survivor*. The show that pits men and women from all walks of life against each other for a million dollar prize in the most successful of all the Reality TV programs. What are record numbers of viewers tuning in to see? People who haven't showered or done their laundry in weeks are shown scavenging for food and competing in ridiculous physical challenges. Where's the reality? From the looks of it, the contestants spend most of their time, when not on a Reality TV show, driving to the Burger Barn and getting exercise only when the remote goes missing.
- (40) So the television networks have used Reality TV to replace the dramas and comedies that once filled their schedules, earning millions in advertising revenue. The lack of creativity, of producing something worth watching, is appalling. We are served up hundreds of hours of Reality TV each week, so we can watch real people in very unreal situations, acting as little like themselves as possible. What's real about that?
- (45)

### PASSAGE 2

- (1) Why does Reality TV get such a bad rap? Editorials on the subject blame its popularity on everything from the degenerate morals of today's youth to our ever-decreasing attention spans. The truth is that reality-based programs have been around for decades. *Candid Camera*
- (5) first aired in 1948, a "Cops"-like show called *Wanted* was on CBS's lineup in the mid-1950s, and PBS aired a controversial 12-hour documentary filmed inside a family's home in 1973. But it was *Survivor*, which debuted on American TV in the summer of 2000, which spawned the immense popularity of the "reality" genre. There are now
- (10) more than 40 reality shows on the air, and, hinting that they are here to stay, the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences added "Best Reality Show" as an Emmy category in 2002.

- Why are these shows so popular today? Are they really a sign that our morals, and our minds, are on a decline? People have been tuning
- (15) in to Reality TV for generations, so what makes today's shows any worse than their predecessors? Let's look at a number of current, popular shows to see what the fuss is about. MTV's *The Real World* has been on the air for over ten years. It places seven strangers in one house and tapes them as they live together for a few months. The show has been
- (20) a ratings homerun for MTV, and tens of thousands of hopefuls audition each time they announce they are producing another show. Those who make the cut are attractive young singles not only looking for a good time, but also looking for fame, too. It's not uncommon for them to hire a show business agent before the taping starts.

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- (25) Other Reality shows take fame-seekers to the next level by having them compete against one another. *American Idol*, *Star Search*, and *Fame* showcase singers, actors, dancers, and model wannabes, and offer them a chance at professional success. Even those who don't win the big prize get national television exposure, and have a better chance than they did before the show of becoming famous. *Survivor* offers another twist: not only can you become an instant celebrity, but you have a chance to win a million dollars. The combination of fame and money has helped to make *Survivor* the most popular Reality TV program of all time. But it's not alone in the format. *Big Brother* combines the "group living together in a beautiful setting" concept of *The Real World* with a \$500,000 prize, and *Fear Factor* pays \$50,000 to the contestant who completes the most terrifying stunts.

- (30) Given television's long history of reality-based programming, why is there a problem now? Most Reality TV centers on two common motivators: fame and money. The shows have pulled waitresses, hair stylists, investment bankers, and counselors, to name a few, from obscurity to household names. These lucky few successfully parlayed their fifteen minutes of fame into celebrity. Even if you are not interested in fame, you can probably understand the desire for lots of money. Watching people eat large insects, jump off cliffs, and be filmed 24 hours a day for a huge financial reward makes for interesting viewing. What's wrong with people wanting to be rich and famous? Not much, and, if you don't like it, you can always change the channel.

- (35) **26.** The author's tone in Passage 1, lines 1–7, may best be described as
- satire concerning a man's journey through life.
  - cynicism about the reasons people go on Reality TV shows.
  - humor regarding the content of Reality TV.
  - irony about the maturation process.
  - sarcasm toward the television networks.
- 27.** Based on the passages, which statement would both authors agree with?
- Reality TV has had a long history.
  - Big Brother* is about the desire for fame and money.
  - The popularity of Reality TV is an indication of a decline in morals.
  - Survivor* is the most successful Reality TV show.
  - There is nothing wrong with Reality TV.

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- 28.** The primary purpose of Passage 2 is to
- refute an argument.
  - explore possible outcomes.
  - give a brief history.
  - explain how to get famous.
  - show the need for change.
- 29.** The two passages differ in that the author of Passage 1
- defends Reality TV, while the author of Passage 2 does not.
  - explains what he or she thinks is wrong with Reality TV, while the author of Passage 2 does not.
  - believes Reality TV has many faults, while the author of Passage 2 thinks no one has a problem with it.
  - blames Reality TV for the lack of variety in programming, while the author of Passage 2 thinks it has improved variety.
  - says Reality TV is cheap to produce, while the author of Passage 2 disagrees.
- 30.** In Passage 2, line 20, the phrase *ratings homerun* means that
- a lot of people watch *The Real World*.
  - The Real World* beats baseball games in TV ratings.
  - there are baseball players on *The Real World*.
  - the Nielsen company likes *The Real World*.
  - The Real World* contestants play softball on the show.
- 31.** Both passages illustrate the idea that
- people on Reality TV shows become famous.
  - Reality TV is all about getting rich.
  - Reality TV is a good alternative to traditional programming.
  - the producers of Reality TV are getting rich.
  - Reality TV is controversial.
- 32.** *Swathe* in Passage 1, line 29 most nearly means
- to stitch.
  - a combination of pleating and stapling.
  - to cover.
  - a way of making curtains.
  - to cover the floor.