

Questions 13-27. Refer to the following passage.

To-day we rather intended to write an essay on Laziness, but were too indolent to do so.

(5) The sort of thing we had in mind to write would have been exceedingly persuasive. We intended to discourse a little in favour of a greater appreciation of Indolence as a benign factor in human affairs.

(10) It is our observation that every time we get into trouble it is due to not having been lazy enough. Unhappily, we were born with a certain fund of energy. We have been hustling about for a number of years now, and it doesn't seem to get us anything but tribulation.

(15) Henceforward we are going to make a determined effort to be more languid and demure. It is the bustling man who always gets put on committees, who is asked to solve the problems of other people and neglect his own.

(20) The man who is really, thoroughly, and philosophically slothful is the only thoroughly happy man. It is the happy man who benefits the world. The conclusion is inescapable.

(25) We remember a saying about the meek inheriting the earth. The truly meek man is the lazy man. He is too modest to believe that any ferment and hubbub of his can ameliorate the earth or assuage the perplexities of humanity.

(30) O. Henry said once that one should be careful to distinguish laziness from dignified repose. Alas, that was a mere quibble. Laziness is always dignified, it is always reposeful.

(35) Philosophical laziness, we mean. The kind of laziness that is based upon a carefully reasoned analysis of experience. Acquired laziness. We have no respect for those who were born lazy; it is like being born a millionaire: they cannot appreciate their bliss. It is the man who has hammered his laziness out of the stubborn material of life whom we chant praise and alleluia.

The laziest man we know—we do not like to mention his name, as the brutal world does not yet recognize sloth at its community

(45) value—is one of the greatest poets in this country; one of the keenest satirists; one of the most rectilinear thinkers. He began life in the customary hustling way. He was always too busy to enjoy himself. He became surrounded

(50) by eager people who came to him to solve their problems. "It's a queer thing," he said sadly; "no one ever comes to me asking for help in solving my problems." Finally the light broke upon him. He stopped answering letters,

(55) buying lunches for casual friends and visitors from out of town, he stopped lending money to old college pals and frittering his time away on all the useless minor matters that pester the good-natured. He sat down in a secluded café with his cheek against a seidel of dark beer and began to caress the universe with his intellect.

The most damning argument against the Germans is that they were not lazy enough. In the middle of Europe, a thoroughly

(65) disillusioned, indolent and delightful old continent, the Germans were a dangerous mass of energy and bumptious push. If the Germans had been as lazy as indifferent, and as righteously-laissez-fairish as their neighbours,

(70) the world would have been spared a great deal. People respect laziness. If once you get a reputation for complete, immovable, and reckless indolence the world will leave you to your own thoughts, which are generally rather interesting....

(75) Mind your business is a good counsel; but mind your idleness also. It's a tragic thing to make a business of your mind. Save your mind to amuse yourself with.

(80) The lazy man does not stand in the way of progress. When he sees progress roaring down upon him he steps nimbly out of the way. The lazy man doesn't (in the vulgar phrase) pass the buck. He lets the buck pass him. We have always secretly envied our lazy friends. Now we are going to join them. We have burned our boats or our bridges or whatever it is that one burns on the eve of a momentous decision.

(90) Writing on this congenial topic has roused us up to quite a pitch of enthusiasm and energy.

13. Which of the following BEST articulates the author's thesis?
- (A) "It is our observation that every time we get into trouble it is due to not having been lazy enough." (lines 9-11)
- (B) "The man who is really, thoroughly, and philosophically slothful is the only thoroughly happy man." (lines 20-22)
- (C) "Laziness is always dignified, it is always reposeful." (lines 31-32)
- (D) "People respect laziness." (line 71)
- (E) "The lazy man does not stand in the way of progress." (lines 80-81)
14. The author's use of the collective "we" is likely intended to do which of the following?
- I. Establish himself as a proponent of and advocate for lethargy.
- II. Echo the characteristic indolence of royalty or the aristocracy.
- III. Fit the conventional style of an editorial.
- (A) I only
- (B) III only
- (C) I and II
- (D) II and III
- (E) I, II and III
15. The diction of the passage establishes which of the following contrasts?
- (A) pride and humility
- (B) activity and idleness
- (C) reason and irrationality
- (D) progress and regression
- (E) serenity and discord
16. In lines 1-19 the author reinforces his natural inclination to avoid action through all of the following EXCEPT
- (A) verbs that imply intent rather than action
- (B) a humorous vow to be even more lethargic
- (C) the equation of industry with troubles and unwanted involvements
- (D) a chronological record of postponements
- (E) the use of passive constructions to reinforce indolence
17. Lines 20-23—"The man who is really, thoroughly, and philosophically slothful.... The conclusion is inescapable"—exemplify which of the following rhetorical techniques?
- (A) *ad hominem* argument
- (B) syllogism
- (C) ironical understatement
- (D) anaphora
- (E) causal analysis
18. The conclusion that to the author seems "inescapable" (line 23) is that
- (A) happiness is illusory
- (B) initiative insures success
- (C) sloth is beneficial
- (D) accomplishment breeds arrogance
- (E) meekness leads to peace
19. Line 33, "Philosophical laziness, we mean," offers an example of a(n)
- (A) qualification
- (B) conjecture
- (C) assertion
- (D) maxim
- (E) generalization
20. The most persuasive example of "Philosophical laziness" as it is defined in lines 33-35 would be epitomized by which of the following individuals?
- (A) the "bustling man" mentioned in lines 17-19
- (B) the "truly meek man" in lines 25-28
- (C) "those who were born lazy" in line 36
- (D) "one of the greatest poets" in lines 45-61
- (E) the "Germans" in lines 62-70
21. The syntax of lines 54-59—"He stopped answering letters... and frittering his time away on all the useless minor matters that pester the good-natured"—is characterized by a series of
- (A) gerundive phrases
- (B) participial phrases
- (C) prepositional phrases
- (D) infinitive phrases
- (E) appositive phrases

22. In lines 81-82—“When he sees progress roaring down upon him he steps nimbly out of the way”—the author depicts progress as
- (A) practical and necessary
 - (B) methodical and steady
 - (C) innovative and beneficial
 - (D) noble and edifying
 - (E) inexorable and threatening
23. Lines 82-84—“The lazy man doesn’t (in the vulgar phrase) pass the buck. He lets the buck pass him”—exemplify which of the following figures of speech?
- (A) personification
 - (B) hyperbole
 - (C) chiasmus
 - (D) allusion
 - (E) irony
24. Lines 86-88—“We have burned our boats or our bridges or whatever it is that one burns on the eve of a momentous decision”—are primarily intended to demonstrate the author’s
- (A) resolve to be languid
 - (B) ignorance of popular idiom
 - (C) self-destructive spontaneity
 - (D) flair for the metaphorical
 - (E) tendency to be melodramatic
25. In light of the context in which it appears, which of the following should NOT be viewed as ironic?
- (A) that the indolence of the author prevented him from writing an essay on laziness
 - (B) that the author’s troubles arise from not being lazy enough
 - (C) that the type of man whom the author admires most has actually labored to be lazy
 - (D) that writing on the topic of laziness seems to have invigorated the author
 - (E) that the lazy man does not impede progress
26. In the course of his essay, the author alludes to all of the following EXCEPT
- (A) the First World War
 - (B) other prominent writers
 - (C) the New Testament
 - (D) the Industrial Revolution
 - (E) a well-known adage
27. The tone of the passage is BEST labeled
- (A) disapproving and derisive
 - (B) abashed and resigned
 - (C) tongue-in-cheek and droll
 - (D) rueful and apologetic
 - (E) embittered and envious

Précis and Explication of Passage Two: From Christopher Morley's "On Laziness"

From the opening of Christopher Morley's essay "On Laziness"—"To-day we rather intended to write an essay on Laziness, but were too indolent to do so" (lines 1-3)—to its ironic conclusion—"Writing on this congenial topic has roused us up to quite a pitch of enthusiasm and energy" (lines 89-91)—the reader is treated to a droll examination of procrastination as well as to an active example of such dilly-dallying in action. The opening two paragraphs are replete with diction that suggests a desire to do something—"we rather intended to write..." (line 1); "The sort of thing we had in mind to write..." (line 4); "We intended to discourse a little..." (lines 5-6)—aided by a dash of the subjunctive, to establish a playful tone that characterizes the author as the embodiment of indolence. Moreover, the author's repeated use of the plural pronoun "we" when referring to himself lends the piece an air of royal or aristocratic privilege that abets his characteristic inertia. The declarative statement that opens paragraph three—"It is our observation that every time we get into trouble it is due to not having been lazy enough" (lines 9-11)—blithely implies that initiative spawns difficulties and that "hustling about" (lines 12-13) only seems to lead to "tribulation" (line 14). Though clearly tongue-in-cheek, the author's argument actually mirrors a Romantic sentiment manifest in the poetry of Wordsworth that such hustle and bustle has vitiated our ability to appreciate nature. Morley's essay, however, quickly returns the reader to its more droll agenda via the author's dramatic declaration that "Henceforward we are going to make a determined effort to be more languid and demure. It is the bustling man who always gets put on committees, who is asked to solve the problems of other people and neglect his own" (lines 15-19).

Indeed, it is this pervasively droll tone that effectively checks the essay from ever becoming truly serious. For example, the author's claim that "The man who is really, thoroughly, and philosophically slothful is the only thoroughly happy man" (lines 20-22) seems almost brazenly blasphemous, especially when he follows this with a mock allusion to the Beatitudes, "We remember a saying about the meek inheriting the earth" (lines 24-25). In the lines which follow the author parodies a solemn promise made by Jesus to the disenfranchised multitude that their sufferings would someday be rewarded with the irreverent observation that "The truly meek man is the lazy man. He is too modest to believe that any ferment and hubbub of his can ameliorate the earth or assuage the perplexities of humanity" (lines 25-28). Like his earlier observation that industriousness just brings the individual still more work and tribulation, these lines suggest that there is no human action that can ease the travails of humanity; therefore, laziness is best.

In the middle section of his essay, the author shifts to literary and historical allusions to justify his thoughts on laziness. He first cites acclaimed short story writer O. Henry's admonition that "one should be careful to distinguish laziness from dignified repose" (lines 29-31). Calling this a "mere quibble" (line 31), or a petty distinction, the author shamelessly declares that "Laziness is always dignified..." (lines 31-32). To be fair, however, he does draw a line between what he calls "Philosophical laziness" (line 33) and "Acquired laziness" (line 35). The former he says is "based upon a carefully reasoned analysis of experience" (lines 34-35), an indolence born from careful reflection. This is unlike the latter which he summarily dismisses as having required no work to attain: "We have no respect for those who were born lazy; it is like being born a millionaire: they cannot appreciate their bliss" (lines 35-38). As the author unabashedly concludes in a droll irony, "It is the man who has hammered his laziness out of the stubborn material of life whom we chant praise and alleluia" (lines 38-41). Eager to provide an example of successful philosophical laziness, the author alludes to a poet whom he declares to be the laziest person he knows. He relates how "He began life in the customary hustling way. He was always too busy to enjoy

himself. He became surrounded by eager people who came to him to solve their problems” (lines 47-51). This industry and openness, however, soon made his life miserable—until he experienced a life-changing epiphany:

He stopped answering letters, buying lunches for casual friends and visitors from out of town, he stopped lending money to old college pals and frittering his time away on all the useless minor matters that pester the good-natured. He sat down in a secluded café with his cheek against a seidel of dark beer and began to caress the universe with his intellect” (lines 54-61).

This closing comic image, which almost seems a parody of Mersault’s epiphany in *The Stranger*, when he “lay[s] himself open to the benign indifference of the universe,” returns the poet to an indolent—and blissful—harmony. The subsequent allusion to the German military aggression that spawned the First World War provides a more macrocosmic historical parallel to the poet. Claiming the Germans were a “dangerous mass of energy and bumptious push” (lines 66-67) that was out of synch with the “thoroughly disillusioned, indolent and delightful old continent...” (lines 64-66), the author humorously blames the subsequent hostilities on the Germans’ innate lack of indolence: “If the Germans had been as lazy as indifferent, and as righteously-laissez-fairish as their neighbours, the world would have been spared a great deal” (lines 67-70).

In the final twenty lines, the author succinctly and declaratively hammers home his points about indolence: “People respect laziness,” he says. “If once you get a reputation for complete, immovable, and reckless indolence the world will leave you to your own thoughts, which are generally rather interesting...” (lines 71-75). In the following paragraph, he reiterates this advice in the form of two Ben Franklin-like aphorisms, saying “Mind your business is a good counsel; but mind your idleness also” (lines 76-77) and “It’s a tragic thing to make a business of your mind. Save your mind to amuse yourself with” (lines 77-79). He depicts the indolent man as self-serving and accommodating, saying “The lazy man does not stand in the way of progress. When he sees progress roaring down upon him he steps nimbly out of the way” (lines 80-82). Using chiasmus, a verbal pattern in which the second half of a phrase mirrors the first but in reverse order, he remarks that “The lazy man doesn’t (in the vulgar phrase) pass the buck. He lets the buck pass him” (lines 82-84). And finally, in a culminating irony, the author confesses “We have always secretly envied our lazy friends. Now we are going to join them” (lines 84-86), the irony lying in the implication that laziness requires choice and action.

Morley’s witty and entertaining essay reminds the reader of the best moments of Oscar Wilde, and though clearly light-hearted and tongue-in-cheek, it raises legitimate questions about the need for respite and inactivity in a world that is too often “too much with us.” It also shows the versatility of the essay and reinforces the fact that it need not always be heavy-handed, argumentative or reflective.

13. Which of the following BEST articulates the author’s thesis? **(B) “The man who is really, thoroughly, and philosophically slothful is the only thoroughly happy man.” (lines 20-22).**

Morley’s essay advocates, albeit somewhat humorously, indolence as a lifestyle. Industry, he suggests, only creates problems: “It is our observation that every time we get into trouble it is due to not having been lazy enough” (lines 9-11), and “We have been hustling about for a number of years now, and it doesn’t seem to get us anything but tribulation” (lines 12-14). On the contrary, the lazy man is “too modest to believe that any ferment and hubbub of his can ameliorate the earth or assuage the perplexities of humanity” (lines 26-28); thus, he does not trouble himself with issues that regularly torment others. As the author observes in lines 17-19, “It is the bustling man who always gets put on committees, who is asked to solve the problems of other people and neglect his own.” A perfect example of this is the notable poet to whom he anonymously refers in lines 42-61. The author observes how he “began life in the customary hustling way [and] was always too busy to enjoy himself” (lines 47-49). However, after “seeing the light” and cutting himself off from others who were monopolizing his attention, he “sat [himself] down in a secluded café with his cheek against a seidel of dark beer and began to caress the universe with his intellect” (lines 59-61), a thoroughly happy man. Choice B reflects this best.

14. The author’s use of the collective “we” is likely intended to do which of the following?

- I. Establish himself as a proponent of and advocate for lethargy.
- II. Echo the characteristic indolence of royalty or the aristocracy.
- III. Fit the conventional style of an editorial.

(C) I and II.

Clearly the author celebrates indolence as if it were an admirable virtue (I), and though there are many different rationales for individuals referring to themselves in the second person plural—the collective “we,” the editorial “we,” and the royal “we”—the latter seems most appropriate here since the tone of the piece seems terribly self-centered and self-indulgent and calls to mind the sense of privilege that such pompous individuals expect, even demand (II). III does not make sense given the nature of this piece of nonfiction.

15. The diction of the passage establishes which of the following contrasts? **(B) activity and idleness.**

From the opening sentence, “To-day we rather intended to write an essay on Laziness, but were too indolent to do so” (lines 1-3), the author establishes his preferences for idleness over action. As was established in the explanation of question #13, the author believes that industry breeds trouble and tribulation, things he clearly eschews. His example of the poet serves to illustrate the problems an industrious spirit can cause. The poet, he observes, “began life in the customary hustling way [and] was always too busy to enjoy himself” (lines 47-49). Soon, however, he reveals, “He became surrounded by eager people who came to him to solve their problems. ‘It’s a queer thing,’ he said sadly; ‘no one ever comes to me asking for help in solving my problems’” (lines 49-53). Only after he ceases “answering letters, buying lunches for casual friends and visitors from out of town ...[stops] lending money to old college pals and frittering his time away on all the useless minor matters that pester the good-natured” (lines 54-59) can he free himself from these annoyances. The

author even goes so far as to blame Germany's aggression in the First World War upon a "dangerous mass of energy and bumptious push" (lines 66-67) that spurred their desire for conquest. This contrast culminates metaphorically in lines 80-82 when the author observes, "The lazy man does not stand in the way of progress. When he sees progress roaring down upon him he steps nimbly out of the way."

16. In lines 1-19 the author reinforces his natural inclination to avoid action through all of the following EXCEPT **(D) a chronological record of postponements**.

Choice A is reflected by verbs such as "intended" (lines 1 and 6) and "had in mind" (line 4), choice B by lines 15-17, "Henceforward we are going to make a determined effort to be more languid and demure." Choice C is validated by lines 9-11, "It is our observation that every time we get into trouble it is due to not having been lazy enough" and lines 12-14, "We have been hustling about for a number of years now, and it doesn't seem to get us anything but tribulation." Choice E gains support from lines 9-11, "It is our observation that every time we get into trouble it is due to not having been lazy enough" and lines 17-19, "It is the bustling man who always gets put on committees, who is asked to solve the problems of other people and neglect his own," which both exemplify the use of the impersonal passive, passive constructions that begin with "it is." Nowhere does the passage support choice D.

17. Lines 20-23—"The man who is really, thoroughly, and philosophically slothfulThe conclusion is inescapable"—exemplify which of the following rhetorical techniques? **(B) syllogism**.

A syllogism is defined as a form of deductive reasoning consisting of a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion. Here the major premise is that only a man who is totally indolent is happy. The minor premise is that only happy men benefit the world. The logical conclusion, which the author labels "inescapable" and hence leaves unsaid, is that indolence is beneficial to humanity.

18. The conclusion that to the author seems "inescapable" (line 23) is that **(C) sloth is beneficial**.

This may be directly inferred from what precedes the word "inescapable"—namely, the author's observation that "The man who is really, thoroughly, and philosophically slothful is the only thoroughly happy man. It is the happy man who benefits the world" (lines 20-23). The "conclusion" to be drawn from this is that indolence is beneficial.

19. Line 33, "Philosophical laziness, we mean," offers an example of a(n) **(A) qualification**.

A qualification, in this usage, may be defined as a "modification" or "clarification." The author does not want "philosophical laziness" to be confused with "acquired laziness," for which he displays nothing but unadulterated scorn: "We have no respect for those who were born lazy; it is like being born a millionaire: they cannot appreciate their bliss" (lines 35-38). Rather, the author believes that "It is the man who has hammered his laziness out of the stubborn material of life whom we chant praise and alleluia" (lines 38-41).

20. The most persuasive example of “Philosophical laziness” as it is defined in lines 33-35 would be epitomized by which of the following individuals? **(D) “one of the greatest poets” in lines 45-61.**

Once the poet decides to stop answering letters and squandering his time helping others, he is able to “[sit] down in a secluded café with his cheek against a seidel of dark beer and [begin] to caress the universe with his intellect” (lines 59-61). This is the epitome of philosophical laziness.

21. The syntax of lines 54-59—“He stopped answering letters... and frittering his time away on all the useless minor matters that pester the good-natured”—is characterized by a series of **(A) gerundive phrases.**

The words “answering,” “buying,” “lending,” and “frittering” are all objects of the verb “stopped.” This makes them gerunds.

22. In lines 81-82—“When he sees progress roaring down upon him he steps nimbly out of the way”—the author depicts progress as **(E) inexorable and threatening.**

In lines 81-82 progress is seemingly compared to a steam engine barreling inexorably down the track. In the eyes of the author, the lazy man sagely “...does not stand in the way of progress.” Rather, “When he sees progress roaring down upon him he steps nimbly out of the way” (lines 81-82). This paints progress as a minatory presence and suggests that the lazy man’s actions are pragmatic and self-preservational.

23. Lines 82-84—“The lazy man doesn’t (in the vulgar phrase) pass the buck. He lets the buck pass him”—exemplify which of the following figures of speech? **(C) chiasmus.**

Chiasmus is defined as a verbal pattern in which the second half of a phrase mirrors the first but in reverse order. This line demonstrates this perfectly.

24. Lines 86-88—“We have burned our boats or our bridges or whatever it is that one burns on the eve of a momentous decision”— are primarily intended to demonstrate the author’s **(A) resolve to be languid.**

The fact that the author does not know whether the idiom involves boats or bridges—and does not care enough to look it up—suggests that he is well on his way toward fulfilling the vow he makes in lines 15-17 “to make a determined effort to be more languid and demure.” Choice A is the answer choice that reflects this.

25. In light of the context in which it appears, which of the following should NOT be viewed as ironic? **(E) that the lazy man does not impede progress.**

Choices A, B, C and D all contain examples in which the opposite of what is expected occurs, qualifying them as ironies. That the lazy man would not impede progress is logical.

26. In the course of his essay, the author alludes to all of the following EXCEPT **(D) the Industrial Revolution**.

The author's allusion to First World War (A) is apparent in his reference to the Germans in lines 62-70 while his allusion to other writers (B) may be seen in his referencing of O. Henry (lines 29-31) and the "great poet" (lines 42-61). His allusion to the New Testament (C) appears in lines 24-25, in his parody of a line from the Beatitudes while his allusion to a well-known adage (E) is evident in line 76, "Mind your business is good counsel." The Industrial Revolution is never alluded to directly.

27. The tone of the passage is BEST labeled as **(C) tongue-in-cheek and droll**.

This is immediately apparent in the author's mock-serious approach to a clearly humorous topic and in the satire of his own characteristic laziness.