

• Reading Comprehension 2 Level 8

Directions: Read the passage. Then answer the questions below.

Most importantly, though, the highway bypass would have disastrous effects on the area's homeowners. As planned, the new road would cut directly through the middle of the Ellwood Acres subdivision. Not only would this send more cars through the neighborhood, but these cars would be traveling at much higher speeds, putting children at risk. What is more, homeowners would have to deal with the increased noise and pollution that would result from such a heavily trafficked road. Finally, the new road would cause residential properties to **depreciate**. This means that families who chose to move away would have to sell their homes for far less than their current value.

Questions

- 1) This passage would most likely be found in
 - A. an editorial in a local newspaper
 - B. a brochure for prospective homeowners in Ellwood Acres
 - C. an encyclopedia article about the history of highways
 - D. a personal letter from a son to his father
- 2) Where in the full article is this paragraph most likely to appear?
 - A. near the beginning
 - B. near the end
 - C. in the middle
 - D. it could appear anywhere
- 3) As used in the passage, which is the best definition for **depreciate**?
 - A. to diminish in popularity
 - B. to decrease in value
 - C. to accumulate over time
 - D. to improve with age
- 4) Which of the following pieces of information, if included, would provide the best additional support for the author's argument as presented in this passage?
 - A. In 2008, the author's youngest child was killed by a drunk driver.
 - B. Pollution is harmful to the environment.
 - C. According to a recent magazine study, white noise (similar to that produced by traffic) was rated the number one cause of daytime napping.
 - D. In 2011, homeowners who live near interstate traffic saw a 20% reduction in the value of their homes.

Answers and Explanations

1) **A**

The passage presents a strong opinion about a proposed highway project. Since the highway is likely only a matter of interest for people in the author's area, the passage's target audience is probably local people. The editorial section of the newspaper usually contains writing that expresses strong opinions about topics or issues. Since this passage contains a strong opinion about a local issue, it would most likely be found in an editorial in a local newspaper, which means **(A)** is the best choice. A brochure aimed at people thinking about buying a home in Ellwood Acres would probably only discuss the positive aspects of living there. This means **(B)** is incorrect. Encyclopedia articles are usually factual and unbiased, meaning they do not express strong opinions. Thus **(C)** is incorrect. The tone of the passage is formal, whereas most personal letters have a familiar tone. It is unlikely a son would write to his father about such a topic in this formal tone. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.

2) **B**

The first sentence of the passage begins with "Most importantly, though." This phrase lets us know that the author has explained other reasons earlier in the article. It also tells us that he or she has intentionally organized these reasons in order of importance, ending with the most important. Since this is the most important and presumably last reason the author is going to present, this paragraph is likely to appear near the end of the article. Therefore **(B)** is correct. The passage does not contain information to support choices **(A)**, **(C)**, and **(D)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

3) **B**

depreciate (*verb*): to lower the price or estimated value of.

Near the end of the passage, the author writes, "Finally, the new road would cause residential properties to depreciate. This means that families who chose to move away would have to sell their homes for far less than their current value." Since families would be forced to sell their homes in the future for less than the current value, we can infer that the values of the homes will have gone down, or decreased. From this fact we can understand that *depreciate* means to decrease in value. Therefore **(B)** is correct. Although *depreciate* does mean to *diminish*, it refers specifically to price or value and not to popularity. This makes **(A)** incorrect. *Accumulate* is the opposite of decrease, so **(C)** is incorrect. The values of the homes will not *improve* with age; rather, they will decrease. This means **(D)** is incorrect.

4) **D**

While elsewhere in the article the author may have provided many different arguments against the proposed bypass, this paragraph focuses solely on the bypass's potential effects on homeowners. The author argues that the heavier traffic would put "children at risk," cause "increased noise and pollution," and "cause residential properties to depreciate." Providing statistics for exactly how much property values dropped elsewhere because of new road construction would add credibility to this last point, and thus add support to the author's argument. This means **(D)** is correct. While the author does discuss the bypass putting children at risk, the passage focuses on the effects of the bypass, not on the effects of drunk driving. This makes **(A)** incorrect. The author does mention pollution as a negative effect of the bypass, but the statement, "Pollution is harmful to the environment," is too broad to be the best support for this argument. The author argues that there will be specific, immediate negative effects for homeowners if the bypass is built. A decrease in home values is a more specific, immediate consequence for homeowners than general harm to the environment. Also, there are many different causes of pollution, so even if the bypass was not built, pollution could still harm the environment. For these reasons, **(B)** is not the best answer. Napping is irrelevant to the author's argument about how the bypass will affect homeowners. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect.