



READING PRACTICE SETS

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THE EMPIRE OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT



**TOEFL iBT
READING PRACTICE SET**

Directions: Read the passage and answer the questions. Give yourself 18 minutes to complete this practice set.

THE EMPIRE OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT

- 1 In 334 B.C., Alexander the Great, who is often ranked among the most influential people in history, took his Greek armies to the east and in only ten years completed his creation of an empire out of much of southwest Asia. In the new empire, barriers to trade and the movement of peoples were removed; markets were put in touch with one another. In the next generation, thousands of Greek traders and artisans would enter this wider world to seek their fortunes. Alexander's actions had several important consequences for the region occupied by the empire.
- 2 The first of these was the expansion of Greek civilization throughout the Middle East. Greek became the great international language. Towns and cities were established not only as garrisons but also as centers for the diffusion of Greek language, literature, and thought, particularly through libraries, as at Antioch in modern Turkey and the most famous of all, at Alexandria in Egypt, which would be the finest in the world for the next thousand years.
- 3 Second, this internationalism spelled the end of the classical Greek city-state – the unit of government in ancient Greece – and everything it stood for. Most city-states, such as Tyras and Olbia in modern Ukraine, had been quite small in terms of citizenry, and this was considered to be a good thing. The focus of life was the agora, the open marketplace where assemblies could be held and where issues of the day, as well as more fundamental topics such as the purpose of government or the relationship between law and freedom, could be discussed and decisions could be made by individuals in person. The Athenian philosopher Plato (428-348 B.C.) felt that the ideal city-state should have about 5,000 citizens, because it was important to the Greeks that everyone in the community should know each other. In decision-making, the whole body of citizens together would have the necessary knowledge in order generally to reach the right decision, even though the individual might not be particularly qualified to decide. The Greek philosopher Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), who lived at a time when the city-state system was declining, believed that a political entity of 100,000 simply would not be able to govern itself.
- 4 This implied that the city-state was based on the idea that citizens were not specialists but had multiple interests and talents – each a so-called jack-of-all-trades who could engage in many areas of life and politics. [A] It implied a respect for the wholeness of life and a consequent dislike of specialization. It implied economic and military self-sufficiency. [B] However, with the development of trade and commerce in Alexander's empire came the growth of cities, and it was no longer possible to be a jack-of-all-trades. [C] One now had to specialize, and with specialization came professionalism. [D] There were getting to be too many persons to know; an easily observable community of interests was being replaced by a multiplicity of interests. The city-state was simply too "small-time."
- 5 Third, Greek philosophy was opened up to the philosophy and religion of the East. At the peak of the Greek city-state, religion played an important part. Its gods – such as Zeus, who ruled as king of the gods of Mount Olympus, and his wife Hera, the goddess of women, marriage, family, and childbirth – were thought of very much as being like humans but with superhuman abilities. Their worship was linked to the rituals connected with one's progress through life – birth, marriage, and death – and with invoking protection against danger, making prophecies, and promoting healing, rather than to any code of behavior. Nor was there much of a theory of afterlife.
- 6 Even before Alexander's time, a life spent in the service of their city-state no longer seemed ideal to Greeks. The Athenian philosopher Socrates (470-399 B.C.) was the first person in Greece to propose a morality based on individual conscience rather than the demands of the state. For this, he was accused of not believing in the city's gods and so corrupting the youth, and he was condemned to death. Greek philosophy – or even a focus on conscience – might complement religion but was no substitute for it, and this made Greeks receptive to the religious systems of the Middle East, even if they never adopted them completely. The combination of the religious instinct of Asia with the philosophic spirit of Greece spread across the world in the era after Alexander's death, blending the culture of the Middle East with the culture of Greece.

1. According to paragraph 1, which of the following did Alexander the Great do?
 - (A) Regulated the movement and resettlement in southwest Asia of thousands of Greek people
 - (B) Opened up opportunities in new markets for traders and artisans
 - (C) Created new restrictions on trade
 - (D) Encouraged Greek citizens to choose military careers over careers in trade

2. The word **diffusion** in the passage is closest in meaning to
 - (A) adoption
 - (B) spread
 - (C) teaching
 - (D) learning

3. In paragraph 2, the author mentions the libraries at Antioch and Alexandria in order to
 - (A) provide evidence that the library was a cultural institution in the East before it spread to the West
 - (B) explain why it was important for Greek to become the great international language
 - (C) identify two of the sources of Greek cultural influence within Alexander's empire
 - (D) support the claim that the Greeks transformed Middle Eastern garrisons into cultural centers

4. According to paragraph 3, Plato believed that the ideal city-state should be
 - (A) governed by a ruling body of about 5,000 city leaders with a total population of no more than 100,000
 - (B) led by the most qualified individual
 - (C) governed by the group of citizens with the most knowledge about the issues of the day
 - (D) small enough so that everyone would know each other

5. According to paragraph 4, Alexander' empire was characterized by all of the following EXCEPT
 - (A) decreased need for military control
 - (B) growing professionalism
 - (C) growth of cities
 - (D) specialization in trades

6. According to paragraph 5, religion in the Greek city-state involved
 - (A) a set of rules governing behavior
 - (B) a detailed conception of life after death
 - (C) rituals related to significant life events
 - (D) worship of gods who were not like humans

7. According to paragraph 6, what was the basis for the accusation against Socrates?
 - (A) He encouraged people to be guided by their own consciences instead of by the state.
 - (B) He stated that people had a duty to fight against the corruption of their leaders.
 - (C) He reasoned that the needs of the youth were more important than the needs of the state.
 - (D) He argued that people's behavior should be guided by the religious systems of the Middle East.

8. Which of the sentences below best expresses the essential information in the highlighted sentence in paragraph 3? Incorrect choices change the meaning in important ways or leave out essential information.
- (A) Assemblies were held in the agora to discuss some issues of the day, but more fundamental questions were decided by key individuals.
- (B) In a culture where philosophical discussions were frequent, some individuals questioned the value of a life focused on the marketplace.
- (C) Life centered around the agora, an open marketplace and a site for public debate, where individuals could participate in decision-making.
- (D) The focus of individuals was on fundamental topics such as the purpose of government and the connection between law and freedom.
9. Look at the four squares [A-D] that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the passage.

Likewise, the collective decision-making process of the open marketplace was no longer practical.

Where would the sentence best fit?

10. **Directions:** An introductory sentence for a brief summary of the passage is provided below. Complete the summary by selecting the **THREE** answer choices that express the most important ideas in the passage. Some sentences do not belong in the summary because they express ideas that are not presented in the passage or are minor ideas in the passage. **This question is worth 2 points.**

Alexander the Great's creation of a vast empire had important consequences for Greece and the conquered areas of southwest Asia.

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Answer Choices

- (A) Scholars from Antioch, Alexandria, and other Middle Eastern cultural centers came to Greece to study the Greek language and culture.
- (B) Increasing urbanization and the elimination of trade barriers meant the end of the Greek city-state and the creation of a much larger political and economic body.
- (C) The professionalism and specialization so prized by the ancient Greeks were replaced by a more generalized philosophy of education in the empire.
- (D) The expansion of Alexander's empire brought about the diffusion of Greek language, literature, and thought throughout the Middle East.
- (E) The empire saw the birth of a new culture, merging Greek philosophical ideas with the religious spirit of Asia.
- (F) Religion played an important part in the expansion of the empire, as Alexander introduced Zeus and the other Greek gods to Asia.