

3 Apply the Skill

DIRECTIONS: Read the passage, read each question, and choose the **best** answer.

BUDGET FOR NATIONAL PARKS

1 One piece of legislation that deserves a serious push is the National Park Service Centennial Initiative. A brainchild of Dirk Kempthorne, the Interior secretary, the initiative would use the years leading up to the park system's 100th birthday in 2016 to raise \$1 billion in private money and match that with \$1 billion in federal money—above and beyond normal appropriations—to rejuvenate the national parks.

2 As recent visitors can attest, the parks need all the help they can get. Stingy budget appropriations and decades of deferred maintenance have taken a toll on everything from park roads to day-to-day operations. In his brief tenure, Mr. Kempthorne has done several good things for the parks—including killing a potentially harmful rewrite of the service's management policies that would have promoted inappropriate commercial and recreational activities at the expense of conservation. He wants now to provide a special revenue stream by using the promise of a federal match to entice private donors to help underwrite vital projects.

3 The idea was so appealing that the House Natural Resources Committee approved it by a voice vote. It has languished ever since. ...

4 The solution seems ridiculously obvious. The budget office should find the offsets (an increase in park concession fees would do the trick), and the Democratic leadership should schedule a vote. We predict that the verdict would be overwhelmingly positive, and the Senate would follow suit. The parks and their millions of visitors would be the winners, and Congress could show that it can get things done—even in an election year.

From *The New York Times's* editorial *HELP THE PARKS*, © 2008

2. What does the use of the word **stingy** (paragraph 2) reveal about the author's point of view about the budget appropriations for the national parks.

- A. The author believes that the appropriations have been unfairly small.
- B. The author believes that the appropriations have been delayed too long.
- C. The author worries that the appropriations will be potentially harmful.
- D. The author worries that the appropriations have been misused.

3. According to the passage, the author of the editorial believes that the legislature should

- A. withhold voting on the park initiative until after the election.
- B. find the money to back the National Park Service Centennial Initiative.
- C. hold another committee meeting and vote again on the issue.
- D. demonstrate the importance of the National Park Service by campaigning for conservation.

4. Which statement **best** expresses the author's overall point of view?

- A. Representatives are doing all they can to help the National Park Service.
- B. The National Park Service Centennial Initiative deserves positive attention.
- C. Management policies of the National Park Service need to be rewritten.
- D. The National Park Service has an above-average budget that should be maintained.

5. According to the passage, with which statement would the author **most** likely agree?

- A. The federal government works quickly to help the programs it oversees.
- B. The Democratic leadership should not vote on the proposed bill.
- C. The National Parks Service needs more support from the federal government.
- D. National parks should rely on visitors to get the funding for upkeep.

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DIRECTIONS: Read the passage, read each question, and choose the **best** answer.

THE IMPACT OF EDUCATION ON POVERTY

1 For decades, America has wrestled with poverty but with little success. In 1964, President Lyndon Johnson famously declared "war on poverty." A 2012 study by the Cato Institute estimates that the United States has spent roughly \$15 trillion since then, and yet the poverty rate is close to where it was more than 40 years ago. Cato reports that the United States spends nearly \$1 trillion a year between federal and state programs to fight poverty.

2 That amounts to more than \$20,000 per poor person and more than \$60,000 for a family of three. And yet, the problem has not improved.

3 Both liberals and conservatives recognize this reality. However ... some on the left think the problem is that the government has not gone far enough. They call for more government intervention, like living wages and expanded social services. Granted, the government has a role in aiding the poor, particularly the disabled, handicapped and those who are poor largely at no fault of their own.

4 But if history is any indicator, government transactions and services don't seem to be the key drivers of upward mobility. In fact, they can have the opposite effect and insulate lower classes from upward mobility.

5 Instead, conservatives would argue that education, earned success and the all-important mediating institutions—families, churches, communities, private and philanthropic enterprises, associations of coaches, teachers, parents, doctors, civil servants and religious and non-religious volunteers ... are the pillars of upward mobility.

6 The evidence seems to support that. In a landmark study, the Brookings Institution found that young adults who finish high school, get a full-time job and wait until age 21 to get married and have children have just a 2% chance of falling into poverty and a 74% chance of ending up in the middle class.

From the cnn.com article **REDUCE POVERTY BY PROMOTING SCHOOLS, FAMILIES** by William J. Bennett, © 2013

2. What is the author's main purpose in writing this passage?

- A. to persuade readers to support expanded social services
- B. to inform readers about how much the U.S. government spends to fight poverty
- C. to inform readers about high-school graduation rates
- D. to persuade readers that education is a key factor in overcoming poverty

3. Which statement **best** explains the author's view about social services and other government programs that aid the poor?

- A. Government programs are not the solution to fighting poverty.
- B. Government programs should be expanded until poverty is largely eliminated.
- C. Graduation rates improve when social services are available.
- D. The government should not spend any more money on social services.

4. The author assumes that his audience will include liberals as well as conservatives. Which statement **best** supports this assumption?

- A. He says that both liberals and conservatives agree about reality.
- B. He provides facts about the amounts of money spent on fighting poverty.
- C. He presents the liberal viewpoint and counters it with the conservative one.
- D. He mentions historical viewpoints other than those of liberals and conservatives.

5. How does paragraph 6 relate to the author's purpose?

- A. It explains the details of the Brookings Institution study.
- B. It supports the author's viewpoint stated in paragraph 5.
- C. It confirms the findings of the Cato Institute study mentioned in paragraph 1.
- D. It contradicts the figures the author presents in paragraph 2.