

Unit 1 Practice Quiz

(The following passage is excerpted from a twentieth-century novelist's account of her development as a writer.)

I spent my teens and much of my twenties collecting printed rejections.* Early on, my mother lost \$61.20—a reading fee charged by a so-called agent to look at one of my unpublished stories. No one had told us that agents weren't supposed to get any money up front, weren't supposed to be paid until they sold your work. Then they were to take ten percent of whatever the work earned. Ignorance is expensive. That \$61.20 was more money back than my mother paid for a month's rent.

I badgered friends and acquaintances into reading my work, and they seemed to like it. Teachers read it and said kindly, unhelpful things. But there were no creative writing classes at my high school, and no useful criticism. At college (in California at that time, junior college was almost free), I took classes taught by an elderly woman who wrote children's stories. She was polite about the science fiction and fantasy that I kept handing in, but she finally asked in exasperation, "Can't you write anything normal?"

A schoolwide contest was held. All submissions had to be made anonymously. My short story won first prize. I was an eighteen-year-old freshman, and I won in spite of competition from older, more experienced people. Beautiful. The \$15.00 prize was the first money my writing earned me.

After college I did office work for a while, then factory and warehouse work. My size and strength were advantages in factories and warehouses. And no one expected me to smile and pretend I was having a good time.

I got up at two or three in the morning and wrote. Then I went to work. I hated it, and I have no gift for suffering in silence. I muttered and complained and quit jobs and found new ones and collected more rejection slips. One day in disgust I threw them all away. Why keep such useless, painful things?

There seems to be an unwritten rule, hurtful and at odds with the realities of American culture. It says you aren't supposed to wonder whether as a Black person, a Black woman, you really might be inferior—not quite bright enough, not quite quick enough, not quite good enough to do the things you want to do. Though of course you do wonder. You're supposed to *know* you're as good as anyone. And if you don't know, you aren't supposed to admit it. If anyone near you admits it, you're supposed to reassure them quickly so they'll shut up. That sort of talk is embarrassing. Act tough and confident and don't talk about your doubts. If you never deal with them, you may never get rid of them, but no matter. Fake everyone out. Even yourself.

I couldn't fake myself out. I didn't talk much about my doubts. I wasn't fishing for hasty reassurances. But I did a lot of thinking—the same things over and over.

Who was I anyway? Why should anyone pay attention to what I had to say? Did I have anything to say? I was writing science fiction and fantasy, for God's sake. At that time nearly all professional science-fiction writers were white men. As much as I loved science fiction and fantasy, what was I doing?

Well, whatever it was, I couldn't stop. Positive obsession is about not being able to stop just because you're afraid and full of doubts. Positive obsession is dangerous. It's about not being able to stop at all.

I was twenty-three when, finally, I sold my first two short stories. I sold both to writer-editors who were teaching at Clarion, a science-fiction writers' workshop that I was attending. One story was eventually published. The other wasn't. I didn't sell another word for five years. Then, finally, I sold my first novel. Thank God no one told me selling would take so long—not that I would have believed it. I've sold eight novels since then. Last Christmas, I paid off the mortgage on my mother's house.

Octavia E. Butler, excerpt (Sections 10-13) from "Positive Obsession" from *BloodChild and Other Stories*. Copyright © 1996, 2005 by Octavia E. Butler. Reprinted with the permission of The Permissions Company, Inc., on behalf of Seven Stories Press, www.sevenstories.com.

* responses from publishers rejecting stories the author had submitted for publication

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1. Which of the following best characterizes the author’s purpose in the passage?
 - (A) To describe how a potentially harmful tendency helped her to succeed as a writer
 - (B) To explain why beginning writers need to receive more honest criticism
 - (C) To correct the misperception that writing science fiction rarely proves lucrative
 - (D) To express appreciation for her mother’s support throughout her writing career

 2. In the fifth paragraph, the author mentions that she “got up at two or three in the morning and wrote” primarily to
 - (A) demonstrate the intensity of her devotion to writing
 - (B) emphasize that punctuality is necessary for writers
 - (C) break her silence about a painful period in her life
 - (D) show how financial insecurity can limit a writer’s career

 3. In the ninth paragraph, the author makes which of the following claims about the early years of her writing career?
 - (A) She continued writing because encouragement outweighed doubts about her ability.
 - (B) As she continued writing, her doubts about her ability steadily diminished.
 - (C) She continued writing despite lacking confidence in her ability.
 - (D) As she continued writing, she became increasingly skilled at managing her obsession.
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(The following passage is excerpted from an op-ed published by a Colombian American actor in 2014.)

My parents came here from Colombia during a time of great instability there. Escaping a dire economic situation at home, they moved to New Jersey, where they had friends and family, seeking a better life, and then moved to Boston after I was born.

Throughout my childhood I watched my parents try to become legal but to no avail. They lost their money to people they believed to be attorneys, but who ultimately never helped. That meant my childhood was haunted by the fear that they would be deported. If I didn't see anyone when I walked in the door after school, I panicked.

And then one day, my fears were realized. I came home from school to an empty house. Lights were on and dinner had been started, but my family wasn't there. Neighbors broke the news that my parents had been taken away by immigration officers, and just like that, my stable family life was over.

Not a single person at any level of government took any note of me. No one checked to see if I had a place to live or food to eat, and at 14, I found myself basically on my own.

While awaiting deportation proceedings, my parents remained in detention near Boston, so I could visit them. They would have liked to fight deportation, but without a lawyer, and with an immigration system that rarely gives judges the discretion to allow families to stay together, they never had a chance. Finally, they agreed for me to continue my education at Boston Arts Academy, a performing arts high school, and the parents of friends graciously took me in.

I was lucky to have good friends, but I had a rocky existence. I was always insecure about being a nuisance and losing my invitation to stay. I worked a variety of jobs in retail and at coffee shops all through high school. And, though I was surrounded by people who cared about me, part of me ached with every accomplishment, because my parents weren't there to share my joy.

My family and I worked hard to keep our relationships strong, but too-short phone calls and the annual summer visits I made to Colombia didn't suffice. They missed many important events in my life, including my singing recitals—they watched my senior recital on a tape I sent them instead of from the audience. And they missed my prom, my college application process and my graduations from high school and college.

My story is all too common. Every day, children who are U.S. citizens are separated from their families as a result of immigration policies that need fixing.

I consider myself lucky because things turned out better for me than for most, including some of my own family members. When my brother was deported, his daughter was just a toddler. She still had her mother, but in a single-parent household, she faced a lot of challenges. My niece made the wrong friends and bad choices. Today, she is serving time in jail, living the reality that I act out on screen.* I don't believe her life would have turned out this way if her father and my parents had been here to guide and support her.

I realize the issues are complicated. But it's not just in the interest of immigrants to fix the system: It's in the interest of all Americans. Children who grow up separated from their families often end up in foster care, or worse, in the juvenile justice system despite having parents who love them and would like to be able to care for them.

I don't believe it reflects our values as a country to separate children and parents in this way. Nor does it reflect our values to hold people in detention without access to good legal representation or a fair shot in a court of law.

President Obama has promised to act on providing deportation relief for families across the country, and I would urge him to do so quickly. Keeping families together is a core American value.

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Congress needs to provide a permanent, fair legislative solution, but in the meantime families are being destroyed every day, and the president should do everything in his power to provide the broadest relief possible now. Not one more family should be separated by deportation.

From "My Parents Were Deported" by Diane Guerrero (Copyright © Diane Guerrero, 2014). Reprinted by kind permission of the author.

* A reference to the author's role in the Netflix series *Orange Is the New Black*.

4. Which of the following best describes the author's exigence in the passage?
 - (A) The increasing number of people seeking asylum in the United States
 - (B) The impact of government policies on undocumented immigrant families
 - (C) The lack of positive role models for children of undocumented immigrants
 - (D) The author's desire to acknowledge her parents' efforts to support her despite their immigration status

 5. In the first sentence of the sixth paragraph, the author describes her "rocky existence" during high school in order to
 - (A) support the claim that her parents' absence affected her during her adolescence
 - (B) highlight the hospitality offered to her by the parents of her friends
 - (C) suggest that her high school was not sufficiently supportive of students in her situation
 - (D) balance a discussion of her high school triumphs with an acknowledgement of her challenges

 6. In order to strengthen her argument, the author references which of the following contemporary circumstances?
 - (A) Legislation that has recently been passed by Congress
 - (B) The backlog of cases for immigration hearings
 - (C) An unfulfilled pledge by a political leader
 - (D) Widespread abuses in the criminal justice system
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In 2017 United States Senator Ben Sasse of Nebraska released his book *The Vanishing American Adult*. Shortly after the release of the book, Senator Sasse wrote an op-ed in the *New York Times* in which he argued for the importance of teaching young people the value of work. The following passage is excerpted from Sasse's essay. Read the passage carefully, then complete the following tasks:

1. Identify a claim made by Sasse and explain the reasoning underlying this claim.
2. List at least two pieces of supporting evidence from the passage, and briefly explain how they support the claim you have identified in task 1.

FREMONT, Neb. — Summer break 1985 was defined by my 4:30 a.m. alarm. The bus rolled up at 5, and my friends and I stumbled on, fighting off sleep until we arrived at the fields. Detasseling corn was a rite of passage in this Nebraska town: In order to cross-pollinate top-notch seed corn in those days, you needed people, lots of them, to walk through the fields to pull corn tassels manually from individual rows.

The job stank. It's wet and chilly in the field that early. Giant sprinklers called center pivots often got stuck and flooded acres with ankle-deep cold water. We'd start out wearing sweatshirts underneath trash bag ponchos, but by 10, as temperatures approached triple digits, we'd shed layers. For the rest of the day, our bare skin would brush against sharp corn leaves until it was marked with innumerable paper cuts.

We would get home covered in nasty rashes, caked in mud and bone-tired. I'd go to bed in the late afternoon and sleep straight through till the alarm sounded again, for weeks on end.

That was our summer vacation. What do our kids do today?

It's not an idle question. Nearly a quarter-century on, when I became the president of Midland University back in this same Nebraska town, one of the first things I noticed was how few of our students had done any hard physical work before college. Detasseling corn, like a lot of agricultural work, is now done mostly by machine.

And parents, on the whole, had fewer household labor needs and could afford to spare their kids the less pleasant experiences of their own childhoods, while providing them with things they wish they'd had, as well as opportunities to cultivate new skills. The time our students didn't spend in school was mostly spent consuming: products, media and entertainment, especially entertainment.

Another thing I noticed was an unnerving passivity. When I saw students doing their campus jobs, they seemed to have a tough time. Over and over, faculty members and administrators noted how their students' limited experience with hard work made them oddly fuzzy-headed when facing real-world problems rather than classroom tests.

I was worried. How would these kids survive once they left home for good? And how would an America built on self-discipline and deferred gratification survive?

Adolescence is a great thing, but we've made it too long. It's supposed to be a protected space in which kids who've become biologically adult are not obligated to immediately become emotionally, morally and financially adult. Done right, adolescence is a greenhouse phase, but adolescence should not be an escape from adulthood; it should be when we learn *how* to become adults.

We're parenting too much, too long. Our efforts to protect our kids from hurt feelings, tedious chores, money worries and the like are well intentioned. But many of us, perhaps especially middle-class parents, are unwittingly enabling many of our kids to not grow up.

What can we do about it — especially during these long summer months when our kids expect to be entertained? What's the modern equivalent of detasseling corn?

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My wife, Melissa, and I, together with our neighbors, try to create experiences for our kids that build character. We want our kids to exercise their muscles and their minds.

Last year, we sent our eldest child, Corrie, then 14, to spend a month working on a cattle ranch. When we dropped her off, she was nervous but eager. Between checking cows for pregnancies—a job that involves a shoulder-length glove—and bottle-feeding orphaned heifers, she loved it and hated it. But she knew that her mild suffering was also a formative experience for a lifetime.

Not everyone lives in a big cattle state, and younger kids require more parental supervision. I also don't romanticize agrarian life—there's too much manure around for it to be truly idyllic—but meaningful work for kids is less about any particular task than the habits the hours teach. The effort involved and the struggles, once overcome, become the scar tissue of future character.

Look around your neighborhood and see what ways your kids could serve their community. Even in this digital age, lawns need to be mowed and lemonade stands can break even.

Older folks will benefit from the help, and your kids will gain from the perspective of people who've been on the planet longer than they have. Younger kids can work alongside Mom and Dad, too (just know that everything will take twice as long). The point isn't how perfect your neighbor's lawn looks; the point is that your kids can learn to work toward making a contribution to their community.

from "What to Do With the Kids This Summer? Put 'Em to Work" by Ben Sasse © 2017 by Ben Sasse. Used by permission.

7. Read the passage carefully, then complete the following tasks:
1. Identify a claim made by Sasse and explain the reasoning underlying this claim.
 2. List at least two pieces of supporting evidence from the passage, and briefly explain how they support the claim you have identified in task 1.
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(1) Ever since psychologist Gordon Gallup developed the mirror self-recognition test in the 1970s, it's been the classic way to determine whether a species has self-awareness. (2) In the test, researchers surreptitiously place a mark on a subject's body and then place the subject before a mirror. (3) If the subject tries to touch or remove the mark, then he or she must be self-aware. (4) Gallup originally tested chimpanzees (which passed), but other species, mostly other primates, have also recognized themselves in the mirror. (5) Subsequently, humans typically pass the test starting at around 18 months of age.

(6) These studies have supported the long-held belief that only the most intelligent creatures are capable of recognizing the self. (7) But a recent study in which a tiny tropical fish seemingly passed the mirror test is turning that assumption on its head, suggesting that self-awareness is more widespread throughout the animal kingdom than previously thought.

(8) Researchers in Japan decided to test the bluestreak cleaner wrasse because of its strong eyesight and its habit of eating parasites off other, larger fish. (9) The researchers presumed the fish were intelligent, yet even they were surprised by the study's results. (10) The territorial wrasses at first reacted aggressively when presented with a mirror in their tank, but over time they developed erratic behavior: dancing and bobbing in front of the mirror, sometimes upside down. (11) When researchers placed a colorful gel on the fish's throat, a spot they could see only in the mirror, the wrasses spent a lot of time examining the mark and even tried to scrape it off.

(12) Redouan Bshary offered his opinions on the study: "I never saw a cleaner swimming on its back, and I never saw a cleaner scratching its throat. (13) These are new behaviors that are apparently tightly linked to the mirror." (14) While the study has not yet been peer-reviewed, it is already sparking debate, with some scientists citing it as proof that fish are more clever than commonly thought—and may even belong in the exclusive club of self-aware animals, previously dominated by primates.

8. The writer would like to introduce the quotation in sentences 12 and 13 (reproduced below) in a way that relates it to the argument presented in the passage.

Redouan Bshary offered his opinions on the study: "I never saw a cleaner swimming on its back, and I never saw a cleaner scratching its throat. These are new behaviors that are apparently tightly linked to the mirror."

Which of the following versions of the underlined text would best accomplish this goal?

- (A) (As it is now)
- (B) Biologist Redouan Bshary read about the study and said,
- (C) Someone who has studied cleaner wrasses is Redouan Bshary, who commented on the unexplainable behavior of the fish:
- (D) Redouan Bshary, a biologist familiar with cleaner wrasse behavior, found the study remarkable, stating,

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(1) If you live in a city, you may have seen references to sister cities in other countries and wondered what the designation means—or whether it really matters. (2) In fact, sister-city programs can matter a great deal: civic organizations and local businesses are often involved in sister-city relationships.

(3) Sister-city partnerships were developed to foster international cooperation after the Second World War, and they continue to serve this purpose today. (4) Many of the earliest relationships were between cities that had previously been at war. (5) Nevertheless, the English city of Bristol and the German city of Hanover formed a partnership in 1947, with Bristol shipping relief supplies to Hanover and Hanover sending musicians to perform in Bristol. (6) The partnership evolved to include an educational exchange that continues to give English and German students experience in another culture.

(7) Such relationships provide an important complement to diplomacy carried out between governments. (8) Governments can forge alliances between countries, but the particular officials charged with doing so vary from country to country. (9) What’s more, as Mary Kane of Sister Cities International notes, “Foreign affairs doesn’t have to be done just by the State Department.” (10) By conveying international relations into people’s lives, sister cities make connections with distant places feel real to citizens.

(11) Although the potential benefits of sister cities are great, they can’t be taken for granted. (12) Without active participation from community groups, local government, and ordinary citizens, the relationships can fall into neglect. (13) But with engagement from community stakeholders, sister-city programs provide a gratifying and profitable connection to the wider world.

(14) Because trust and understanding are essential to business things, the feelings of closeness that connect sister cities can translate into economic benefits. (15) This dynamic is illustrated in the sister-city relationship between Muscatine, Iowa, and Zhengding County in China. (16) In 1985, Xi Jinping visited Muscatine on a research trip to study soybean farming. (17) When Xi later became president of China, his personal connection to Muscatine formed the basis for the sister-city relationship, which in turn led to Chinese investment in Muscatine’s hospitality and tourism industries.

9. Which version of the underlined text in sentence 2 (reproduced below) provides the most effective claim to set up the discussion that follows in the passage?

In fact, sister-city programs can matter a great deal: civic organizations and local businesses are often involved in sister-city relationships.

- (A) (as it is now)
- (B) they have been established between cities including Bristol, England, and Hanover, Germany.
- (C) when effectively cultivated, they bring people together to create mutually beneficial cultural and economic ties.
- (D) the organization Sister Cities International is dedicated to promoting sister-city relationships for cities around the world.

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10. The writer is considering adding the following sentence after sentence 9.

Indeed, Kane persuasively argues that diplomacy works best “if we bring it down to our individual communities and the people in the communities.”

Should the writer add this sentence after sentence 9 ?

- (A) Yes, because it strengthens the argument of the passage by showing that the writer offers contrasting points of view.
 - (B) Yes, because it lends further support to the idea expressed in sentence 9 by incorporating an additional clarifying quotation from the expert.
 - (C) No, because it cites the same individual as sentence 9 does, suggesting that the writer has failed to perform sufficient research.
 - (D) No, because it introduces information about communities that is not relevant to the discussion of diplomatic relations between governments.
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