

Questions 13–23. Read the following passage carefully before you choose your answers.

This passage is taken from Jane Smiley’s “The Call of the Hunt” which appeared in The Best of Outside: The First 20 Years.

...Maybe the best thing about a fox hunt is the sight of all the horses and riders gathered together early in the morning, waiting to set off.

Line 5 The horses are impeccably clean and fitted out—in any equestrian endeavor there is a high premium placed on making a pristine appearance that I see now is a sort of conspicuous consumption rooted in the days of grooms and servants—and they are fresh and eager, too, striding about in an informal ballet, long-necked and long-limbed and long-tailed, giving off their horsey scent to the accompaniment of the happy chatter of many riders who know one another and are secure in sharing social rituals of long standing.

Line 10 When the huntsman and the whips¹ bring in the hounds, the hounds introduce an entirely different energy, noisy and single-minded, that focuses the field upon the task at hand and reminds them that this isn’t just a ride in the park. They are giving themselves up to the fox, which, once found, will lead them across all sorts of country, and they and their horses will have to be ready for anything—any sort of ground, any sort of fence, any sort of incline, any sort of woodlot. This is the “chase,” not the “stalk.” Not much care will be taken once the apotheosis² is achieved: the hounds in full cry.

I was nervous about the jumping. I had heard, though I hadn’t told my mother, that the fences could be as high as four feet, and I wasn’t used to jumping much higher than three feet. I fixed my hard hat more firmly on my head. Four feet and solid. Unlike jumps in a ring, these were not made of poles on standards that would fall if hit. They were telephone poles and chicken coops and railroad ties. I kept my fears to myself, but I did hear someone else say “Usually there’s a lower part to one side that you can go for.” I decided to stay close to that woman and discreetly fell in not far from her....

The next thing I remember is the sight of a large fence, and myself pausing to wait

45 for other riders to clear it. We gathered at the edge of the field, under the overhang of the woodland, trying to avoid the mud. My turn came up. I followed four or five strides behind the woman in front of me, knowing her horse’s willingness would influence my horse. But I didn’t have anything to worry about. My mare was happy to jump. The fence loomed, brown and upright, in front of us, got larger, and was gone. I felt her forelegs land and saw that we were in a wide, muddy lane that veered to the right toward a dirt road. I saw the other horses galloping away....

50 The next thing I remember is the diagnosis, a break at the stifle joint of the left hind leg. The stifle joint is the joint at the top of the leg, close to the body, comparable to the human knee. I knew from all the horse stories I had read by then that a broken leg was fatal to a horse. I knew that all discussion of healing her and maybe breeding her was done for my benefit, to put off the final blow....

55 Now for the peripeteia.³ The damp, muddy fall progressed into a crisp, frosty winter. The once distant gray-blue sky became a brilliant glare that surrounded us with light. I was again in the field, this time on a rented horse, also a bay mare....For some reason, I resolved to stay near the master and watch the actual chase after the fox. I don’t remember what the chase looked like. I know the sterns of the bunched, coursing, vocalizing hounds pointed up like miniature pikes as the pack ran and scabbled over the countryside in glorious full cry. I do remember the sight of the master’s horse in front of me....the long, tireless gallop and the relief I felt at there being no jumping. Then I remember the way we came upon the hounds and the huntsman and the whips just where a clearing gave way to a light oak woodlands. The liver-and-white hounds were yodeling and whining, and the huntsman vaulted off his mount and waded into the pack while the whippers-in unfurled the long lashes of their whips and began driving the hounds away from the focus of their attention. The huntsman was leaning down, and then he held the quarry aloft, a dead gray fox.

90 Yes, I felt exhilarated at the sight, pumped up by the vigor of the galloping and the sensation

¹ Assistants to the huntsman who keep the pack of hounds together in pursuit of the quarry.

² Quintessence; in this instance, high point, apex.

³ (Gk) a sudden or unexpected reversal of circumstances or situation.

of having ridden in front of the field, of having
 been in at the death. I wasn't at all repelled
 95 or moved by the sight of the dead fox, and
 my reaction was entirely visceral, not at all
 intellectual. We had wanted to kill him, and
 now he was dead, a stillness at the center of
 human, canine, and equine tumult. Good for
 100 us, good for me, good for my rented mount....

13. In her first paragraph description of the social ritual of the foxhunt, the author wishes to create an aura of
- (A) smugness
 - (B) anticipation
 - (C) tradition
 - (D) impatience
 - (E) chaos
14. In the second paragraph the author attempts to convey the diversity of potential landscape challenges through a parallel series of
- (A) action verbs
 - (B) descriptive adjectives
 - (C) participles
 - (D) infinitives
 - (E) appositives
15. The author's observation that the riders are "giving themselves up to the fox" (lines 20–21) suggests that they are
- (A) wasting a morning on an outdated ritual
 - (B) revealing their presence by their chatter
 - (C) acknowledging the wiles of their quarry
 - (D) committing to a physically arduous pursuit
 - (E) conceding the impossibility of catching it
16. The author's "pausing" before the obstacle that confronts her in line 42 is likely a result of her
- (A) sense of trepidation
 - (B) place in the field
 - (C) consciousness of decorum
 - (D) dearth of any jumping experience
 - (E) chagrin over a potential failure
17. Which of the following does the sentence, "The fence loomed, brown and upright, in front of us, got larger, and was gone" (lines 50–52), NOT do?
- (A) augment via its action verb the potentially hazardous nature of the enterprise
 - (B) dramatize the author's approach to the wooden fence
 - (C) downplay the challenge posed by the obstruction
 - (D) show that the author's fears of not clearing the obstacle were unfounded
 - (E) mislead the reader into thinking the jump was achieved without consequence
18. The phrase "final blow" (line 64) refers to the
- (A) broken leg suffered by the horse
 - (B) physical injury suffered by the author
 - (C) emotional impact of the horse's injury upon the author
 - (D) doleful necessity to euthanize the horse
 - (E) sobering fact that the author's riding career is over
19. During the initial stages of the winter foxhunt, at a later time in her life (line 65 onward), the author seems surprisingly
- (A) timid and apprehensive
 - (B) distant and distracted
 - (C) fawning and obsequious
 - (D) tenacious and determined
 - (E) avid and enthusiastic
20. The concluding paragraph of the selection possibly implies that the "peripeteia" which the author experiences involves her ability to
- (A) endure the physical rigors of the chase
 - (B) keep pace with the vanguard of the hunters
 - (C) bond with other members of the social elite
 - (D) avenge the injuring of her mount
 - (E) tolerate the sight of the slain gray fox

The passage is reprinted for your use in answering the remaining questions.

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Line 5 The horses are impeccably clean and fitted out—in any equestrian endeavor there is a high premium placed on making a pristine appearance that I see now is a sort of conspicuous consumption rooted in the days of grooms and servants—and they are fresh and eager, too, striding about in an informal ballet, long-necked and long-limbed and long-tailed, giving off their horsey scent to the accompaniment of the happy chatter of many riders who know one another and are secure in sharing social rituals of long standing.

Line 10 When the huntsman and the whips¹ bring in the hounds, the hounds introduce an entirely different energy, noisy and single-minded, that focuses the field upon the task at hand and reminds them that this isn't just a ride in the park. They are giving themselves up to the fox, which, once found, will lead them across all sorts of country, and they and their horses will have to be ready for anything—any sort of ground, any sort of fence, any sort of incline, any sort of woodlot. This is the "chase," not the "stalk." Not much care will be taken once the apotheosis² is achieved: the hounds in full cry.

Line 20 I was nervous about the jumping. I had heard, though I hadn't told my mother, that the fences could be as high as four feet, and I wasn't used to jumping much higher than three feet. I fixed my hard hat more firmly on my head. Four feet and solid. Unlike jumps in a ring, these were not made of poles on standards that would fall if hit. They were telephone poles and chicken coops and railroad ties. I kept my fears to myself, but I did hear someone else say "Usually there's a lower part to one side that you can go for." I decided to stay close to that woman and discreetly fell in not far from her....

Line 30 The next thing I remember is the sight of a large fence, and myself pausing to wait

45 for other riders to clear it. We gathered at the edge of the field, under the overhang of the woodland, trying to avoid the mud. My turn came up. I followed four or five strides behind the woman in front of me, knowing her horse's willingness would influence my horse. But I didn't have anything to worry about. My mare was happy to jump. The fence loomed, brown and upright, in front of us, got larger, and was gone. I felt her forelegs land and saw that we were in a wide, muddy lane that veered to the right toward a dirt road. I saw the other horses galloping away....

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21. Which of the following phrases and/or sentences is MOST similar?
- (A) "striding about in an informal ballet" (lines 9–10) and "the sterns of the bunched, coursing, vocalizing hounds..." (lines 73–74)
 - (B) "...this isn't just a ride in the park" (lines 19–20) and "This is the 'chase,' not the 'stalk'" (lines 25–26)
 - (C) "jumps in a ring" (lines 33–34) and "telephone poles and chicken coops and railroad ties" (lines 35–36)
 - (D) "I was nervous about the jumping" (line 28) and "...the long, tireless gallop and the relief I felt at there being no jumping" (lines 78–79)
 - (E) "...the hounds in full cry" (line 27) and "The liver-and-white hounds were yodeling and whining..." (lines 83–84)
22. The author uses a strategically placed fragment to do which of the following?
- (A) describe the pristine appearance of the equestrians
 - (B) stress the formidable nature of an obstacle
 - (C) convey the impact of a landing
 - (D) depict the blinding glare of a winter morning
 - (E) show the huntsman's sense of satisfaction
23. All of the following are accurate observations about the passage EXCEPT:
- (A) It depicts a young person's rite-of-passage.
 - (B) It employs an implied metaphor drawn from dance to describe the pre-hunt equestrian ritual.
 - (C) It utilizes stream-of-consciousness to capture the bedlam of a foxhunt.
 - (D) It suggests, via a late subtle change of pronoun, the author's acceptance into the social elite.
 - (E) It links a flashback with a parallel, later life scene.

Précis and Explication of Passage Two: From Jane Smiley’s “The Call of the Hunt”

The second multiple choice passage in Sample Examination Two comes from Jane Smiley’s “The Call of the Hunt,” a description of the ritual of fox-hunting. Smiley begins her account by declaring how “... Maybe the best thing about a fox hunt is the sight of all the horses and riders gathered together early in the morning, waiting to set off” (lines 1–3). In a lengthy eleven-line sentence she describes the anticipatory atmosphere that pervades the air as riders and mounts gear up for the morning’s exercise. Smiley describes how the “horses are impeccably clean and fitted out...” (line 4), noting the emphasis on “pristine appearance that [she now sees] is a sort of conspicuous consumption rooted in the days of grooms and servants...” (lines 6–8). Smiley’s reference to the horses’ appearance as “conspicuous consumption,” a term first coined by Theodore Veblen in his seminal work *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, implies that the attention paid to the grooming and equipage of the mounts is more intended as a display of wealth than as a pragmatic necessity. Smiley notes how the horses are “fresh and eager, too, striding about in an informal ballet, long-necked and long-limbed and long-tailed, giving off their horsey scent to the accompaniment of the happy chatter of many riders who know one another and are secure in sharing social rituals of long standing” (lines 9–14). Much as the dinner parties in Edith Wharton’s *The Age of Innocence*, the fox-hunting ritual is a gathering of the clan and, as such, an opportunity to flaunt one’s wealth and revel in the company of equally prosperous peers.

This introductory socializing dispensed with, the ritual of the hunt is set to begin. Smiley describes how with the introduction of the hounds, who will race ahead and endeavor to roust the fox out of hiding, there is “an entirely different energy, noisy and single-minded, that focuses the field upon the task at hand and reminds them that this isn’t just a ride in the park” (lines 16–20). In language that sounds almost self-sacrificial in nature, she notes how “They are giving themselves up to the fox, which, once found, will lead them across all sorts of country, and they and their horses will have to be ready for anything—any sort of ground, any sort of fence, any sort of incline, any sort of woodlot” (lines 20–25). The truth of this surrender, however, is the devotion of a morning to the pursuit of a terrified and desperate animal though the phrase “ready for anything” implies that they are the ones most in peril. The forceful declarative sentence, “This is the ‘chase,’ not the ‘stalk’” (lines 25–26), captures the fervency with which they regard this ritual.

The third paragraph is marked by a change to a first-person perspective and by a flashback to the author’s youth, to her first participation in the hunt. The youthful author admits her consternation at the four foot high fences, revealing she has never cleared anything over three and observing that “Unlike jumps in a ring, these were not made of poles on standards that would fall if hit. They were telephone poles and chicken coops and railroad ties” (lines 33–36). Overhearing an older woman saying to another participant “‘Usually there’s a lower part to one side that you can go for’” (lines 38–39), she sagely decides to stay close by her side.

When the chase actually commences, the young rider’s fears are initially allayed. Though she pauses to allow others to precede her in vaulting over the first obstacle, she happily discovers that her “mare was happy to jump. The fence loomed, brown and upright, in front of us, got larger, and was gone. I felt her forelegs land and saw that we were in a wide, muddy lane that veered to the right toward a dirt road...” (lines 49–54). This ecstasy, however, proves short-lived when her mount suffers a broken hind leg. As Smiley glumly recalls, “I knew from all the horse stories I had read by then that a broken leg was fatal to a horse. I knew that all discussion of healing her and maybe breeding her was done for my benefit, to put off the final blow...” (lines 60–64). Thus, the exaltation of her first fox hunt is dampened by a new consciousness of the imminent and inevitable death of her horse.

Line 65, “Now for the peripeteia,” uses a term from Greek tragedy meaning “a sudden or unexpected reversal of circumstances,” to set up the conclusion of the episode. The setting now changes to “a crisp, frosty winter” on which, Smiley recalls “The once distant gray-blue sky became a brilliant glare that surrounded [the riders] with light” (lines 66–68). Again, the author is in the field, participating in the fox hunt ritual though on this occasion she “resolve[s] to stay near the master and watch the actual chase after the fox...” (lines 70–72). This time the author’s focus remains solely on the pursuit though her recollection of the action is conveyed in a random and blurred fashion:

I don’t remember what the chase looked like. I know the sterns of the bunched, coursing, vocalizing hounds pointed up like miniature pikes as the pack ran and scabbled over the countryside in glorious

full cry. I do remember the sight of the master’s horse in front of me...the long, tireless gallop and the relief I felt at there being no jumping (lines 72–79).

Only upon the actual cornering of the desperate prey does the description slow and become more specific. The author describes how

The liver-and-white hounds were yodeling and whining, and the huntsman vaulted off his mount and waded into the pack while the whippers-in unfurled the long lashes of their whips and began driving the hounds away from the focus of their attention. The huntsman was leaning down, and then he held the quarry aloft, a dead gray fox (lines 83–90).

To some degree the ritual is painfully predictable: the fox is released, the hounds unleashed in rabid pursuit, the prey cornered then slain by the chief huntsman who then affirms the success of the morning’s venture by raising his dead quarry in lofty triumph. What is of greater interest, however, is the reaction of the author to these proceedings:

Yes, I felt exhilarated at the sight, pumped up by the vigor of the galloping and the sensation of having ridden in front of the field, of having been in at the death. I wasn’t at all repelled or moved by the sight of the dead fox, and my reaction was entirely visceral, not at all intellectual. We had wanted to kill him, and now he was dead, a stillness at the center of human, canine, and equine tumult. Good for us, good for me, good for my rented mount... (lines 91–100).

Here I am reminded of the scene in Golding’s *Lord of the Flies* when Piggy and Ralph, caught up in the ritualistic chanting of “Kill the pig! Cut his throat! Spill his blood!,” partake in the barbaric fire-lit murder of the defenseless Simon. However, unlike this scene which the next day finds Piggy rationalizing their complicity in the murder by declaring “It was dark. There was that—that bloody dance. There was lightning and thunder and rain. We was scared!,” the conclusion of the fox hunt has a totally different feel. While the exuberance of the author in being part of the chase is at least understandable, she displays a peculiar callousness and sense of gratification for this new “stillness at the center of human, canine, and equine tumult” (lines 98–99). Her concluding expression of satisfaction—“Good for us, good for me, good for my rented mount...” (lines 99–100)—seems perversely vindictive, as if she blames the fox for the earlier death of her horse. Whether this is intentional or incidental, there is an uncomfortably perverse feeling about this final expression, a feeling akin to what Twain’s Huck compares to eating bread with sand in it.

The author, Jane Smiley, has had a lifelong love affair with horses. In an article in the *New York Times* (September 2015) entitled “Jane Smiley’s Horse Country,” she relates the following:

Back in Carmel Valley, I have four horses. I ride two of them almost every day, and even on bad days, I appreciate their opinions, their beauty, their distinct differences from one another. On good days, I appreciate the four-beat energy of the trot, the waltz-like three-quarter rhythm of the canter, the loose relaxation of a good walk, the reciprocity between horse and human that can be smooth and can be electric. But wherever I am, I appreciate looking at horses, or paintings of horses, or books about horses in bookstores.

Later, she describes a visit to The Maryland Grand National, a prestigious horse race, noting how “The field of horses begins the race the way it was done in the old days in England, not out of a starting gate, but walking in a circle as the flag goes up and then comes down. The drumming of their hooves on the course is muffled by a rich, thick carpet of grass.” Clearly, Smiley has an appreciation of, even a fascination with, ritual, which informs one’s reading of “The Call of the Hunt.” Thus, the temptation to see this as satire must be quelled, if not altogether silenced. For some the obsessive hunt of a defenseless fox is brutality; for others, it is clearly a way of life.

13. In her first paragraph description of the social ritual of the foxhunt, the author wishes to create an aura of **(B) anticipation**.

The selection of B as the correct answer is largely arrived at by the author's observations about the horses, how they "are fresh and eager, too, striding about in an informal ballet, long-necked and long-limbed and long-tailed, giving off their horsey scent to the accompaniment of the happy chatter of many riders who know one another and are secure in sharing social rituals of long standing" (lines 9–14), as well as by her remark that the riders are "waiting to set off" (line 3).

14. In the second paragraph the author attempts to convey the diversity of potential landscape challenges through a parallel series of **(E) appositives**.

Smiley remarks how the riders and their horses "will have to be ready for anything—any sort of ground, any sort of fence, any sort of incline, any sort of woodlot" (lines 23–25). The words "ground," "fence," "incline" and "woodlot" are all nouns in apposition with "anything," nouns placed side by side with the object of the preposition for purposes of clarifying what that "anything" might be.

15. The author's observation that the riders are "giving themselves up to the fox" (lines 20–21) suggests that they are **(D) committing to a physically arduous pursuit**.

The phrase "giving themselves up" suggests sacrifice—in this case sacrifice of time and effort in this ritualistic pursuit. The phrase itself is a bit hyperbolic, but it accents the ambience of wealth and privilege that characterizes such an activity. This is further supported by the author's claim that the fox "will lead them across all sorts of country, and they and their horses will have to be ready for anything—any sort of ground, any sort of fence, any sort of incline, any sort of woodlot" (lines 21–25).

16. The author's "pausing" before the obstacle that confronts her in line 42 is likely a result of her **(A) sense of trepidation**.

The young Smiley reveals that she "wasn't used to jumping much higher than three feet" (lines 31–32) and that "Unlike jumps in a ring, these were not made of poles on standards that would fall if hit. They were telephone poles and chicken coops and railroad ties" (lines 33–36). She later adds that she "kept [her] fears to herself..." (lines 36–37).

17. Which of the following does the sentence, "The fence loomed, brown and upright, in front of us, got larger, and was gone" (lines 50–52), NOT do? **(C) downplay the challenge posed by the obstruction**.

Choice A is validated by the verb "loomed" which suggests an imminent threat, choice B by the fact that it got larger and more distinct as she approached it. Choice D is confirmed by the fact that the obstacle is quickly "gone" as she and her mount successfully vault over it, choice E by her almost immediate revelation that her horse broke its left hind leg upon landing. Choice C is countered both by the verb "loomed" and by the fact that the author has never cleared an obstacle of that height.

18. The phrase "final blow" (line 64) refers to the **(D) doleful necessity to euthanize the horse**.

The phrase "final blow" is somewhat euphemistic in that it refers to the author's understanding that "a broken leg was fatal to a horse" (lines 61–62). Though young, she realizes that "all discussion of healing her and maybe breeding her was done for [her] benefit..." (lines 62–64), meaning that the persons who are telling her this wish to spare her the harsh reality of the horse's being put down.

19. During the initial stages of the winter foxhunt, at a later time in her life (line 65 onward), the author seems surprisingly **(B) distant and distracted**.

This is evidenced most in her concentration on the weather—her description of how “The once distant gray-blue sky became a brilliant glare that surrounded us with light” (lines 66–68)—and comments such as “I don’t remember what the chase looked like” (lines 72–73). She even remarks “For some reason, I resolved to stay near the master and watch the actual chase after the fox “ (lines 70–72), as if she cannot account for that decision. This is the first intimation that she is perhaps connecting her earlier episode with the present one.

20. The concluding paragraph of the selection possibly implies that the “peripeteia” which the author experiences involves her ability to **(D) avenge the injuring of her mount**.

This is largely based upon the culminating fragment, “Good for us, good for me, good for my rented mount...” (lines 99–100). As was indicated in the overall explication of the passage, there is a perversely celebratory feel to the line. Yes, the hunters have successfully captured the fox which is, after all, the primary purpose of the endeavor, and, yes, there is an understandable feeling of exhilaration. However, the author’s earlier remark that she was “pumped up by the vigor of the galloping and the sensation of having ridden in front of the field, of having been in at the death...” (lines 91–94) connotes a feeling of blood lust, of Old Testament justice. The death of the fox, I suspect, provides the author a sense of closure. As she declares, “We had wanted to kill him, and now he was dead, a stillness at the center of human, canine, and equine tumult” (lines 97–99).

21. Which of the following phrases and/or sentences is MOST similar? **(B) “...this isn’t just a ride in the park” (lines 19–20) and “This is the ‘chase,’ not the ‘stalk’” (lines 25–26)**.

The rationale behind the selection of B here is that in both cases there is a sense of the author’s wishing to convey the seriousness of the enterprise, the fact that it is a time-honored and admirable tradition. This is further supported by her remark about their “giving themselves up to the fox” (lines 20–21).

22. The author uses a strategically placed fragment to do which of the following? **(B) stress the formidable nature of an obstacle**.

This is determined by line 33, “Four feet and solid,” which conveys the imposing nature of the obstacle which she must leap. Though there is a second fragment at the very end of the passage, none of the answers are related to it.

23. All of the following are accurate observations about the passage EXCEPT: **(C) It utilizes stream-of-consciousness to capture the bedlam of a foxhunt**.

Choice A is true on two fronts: her completion of the fox hunt ritual and her confrontation with the reality of death. Choice B is evidenced by her reference in line 10 to an “informal ballet.” Choice D is manifest in the switch from the singular “I” to the collective “We” in the final paragraph which is suggestive of a new sense of belonging. Choice E is supported by the merger of the author’s first fox hunt in lines 28–64 and the one in which she participates in lines 65–100. Though the author certainly conveys the chaos of the fox hunt, she does not use stream-of-consciousness to do so.