A Few Notes: You can make the answer selection bold, or you can delete the three that are not the answer. Feel free to make this work however is best for you.

What Fear Can Teach Us - Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. PART A: Which of the following best identifies a central idea of the text?

A. While stories are usually based on fiction, fears are based on facts and allow us

to adequately prepare for threatening situations.

B. Fears operate through the imagination much like storytelling does, and we can

learn from our fears just as we can learn from stories.

C. Because the human mind is naturally attracted to dramatic narratives, the most

elaborate fears usually draw the most attention.

D. Basing decisions off of a fear or a story can have disastrous consequences for

ourselves and others, as neither are based on fact.

2. PART B: Which quote from the text best supports the answer to Part A?

A. “at a certain point, most of us learn to leave these kinds of visions behind and

grow up. We learn that there are no monsters hiding under the bed, and not

every earthquake brings buildings down.” (Paragraph 4)

B. “just as importantly, we need to think of ourselves as the readers of our fears,

and how we choose to read our fears can have a profound effect on our lives.”

(Paragraph 7)

C. “Terrified of cannibals, they decided to forgo the closest islands and instead

embarked on the longer and much more difficult route to South America.”

(Paragraph 9)

D. “Maybe then we’d spend less time worrying about serial killers and plane

crashes, and more time concerned with the subtler and slower disasters we

face” (Paragraph 11)

3. PART A: Which of the following statements best describes how fear impacted the Essex

sailors’ decision to sail south, according to the text?

A. The fear of death led the sailors to choose the option that they believed would

offer the highest chance of survival.

B. The sailors’ fear of cannibalism overshadowed their sound judgment, so they

refused to sail to nearby islands.

C. The sailors decided to sail south because that was the only option that did not

arouse any fear.

D. The sailors invented stories instead of analyzing their situation, and they chose

to sail south because that was the best story.

4. PART B: Which quote from the text best supports the answer to Part A?

A. “The time had come for the men to make a plan, but they had very few options...

these men were just about as far from land as it was possible to be anywhere on

Earth.” (Paragraph 5)

B. “To be eaten by cannibals, to be battered by storms, to starve to death before

reaching land. These were the fears that danced in the imaginations of these

poor men” (Paragraph 5)

C. “When the last of the survivors were finally picked up by two passing ships, less

than half of the men were left alive, and some of them had resorted to their own

form of cannibalism.” (Paragraph 9)

D. “perhaps if they’d been able to read their fears more like a scientist, with more

coolness of judgment, they would have listened instead to the less violent but

the more likely tale, the story of starvation” (Paragraph 10)

Discussion Questions

1. In what ways do our fears prepare or fail to prepare us for future events? How much do you

agree with Walker’s argument about the effects and the value of fear? When might fear

negatively impact a person’s decisions?

2. When have you feared something that was unlikely to happen? How did it influence your

actions? How does it feel now to look back on the fear you experienced?

3. In the context of the speech, how does fear drive action? How are people influenced by fear

when making important decisions? What types of fears are they more likely to listen to? Cite

evidence from this text, your own experience, and other literature, art, or history in your

answer.