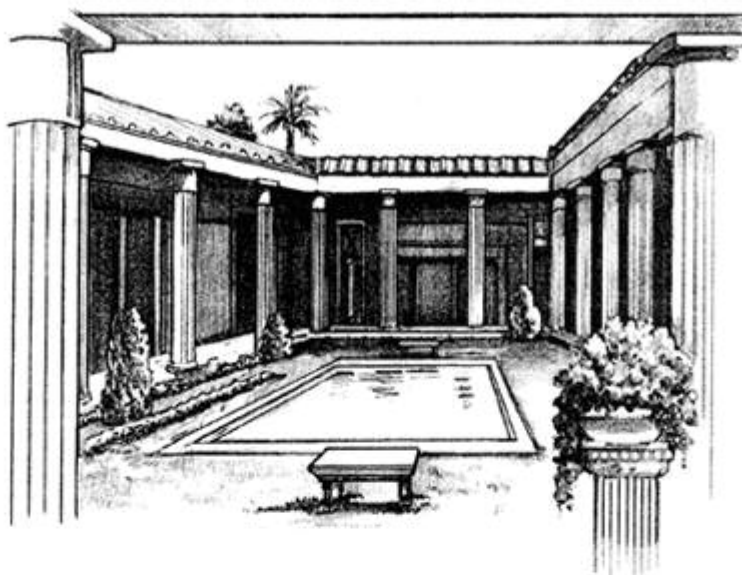


PASSAGE 1.

Read the story below about a king who liked to write poetry. Then answer the following questions.



# A TRUTH SPEAKER

*Retold by Grace H. Kupfer*

There ruled in the city of Syracuse, in Sicily, many hundreds of years ago, a tyrant by the name of Dionysius. Not only was he sometimes

ruthless = having  
no compassion

ruthless in his actions, but he was vain of his own talents.

vain = proud

His court was made up of flatterers, who were afraid to speak anything but praise to his face, though they spoke ill of him when there was no danger of being overheard.

Dionysius, among other vanities, considered himself a great poet. On all occasions he wrote verses. And when he had composed them, he would assemble all his courtiers and read the lines aloud. Then they would all lift their hands and exchange glances, as though in admiration of his genius, and exclaim over the beauty of the poetry, until even Dionysius was satisfied.

courtiers = people  
who seek favor  
through flattery

The most learned man in Syracuse at that time was a philosopher by the name of Philoxenus. Dionysius became so conceited, because of the flattery of all his courtiers, that he made up his mind to summon Philoxenus, so that he, too, might hear the poems and praise the poet.

Philoxenus came. The poems were read to him, and Dionysius eagerly awaited the critic's words of praise and admiration. But none came; for, instead, to the amazement of all, the philosopher, in disdain, said the verses were so bad that they did not deserve the name of poetry, nor did their author deserve the name of poet. Dionysius, almost beside himself with rage at this unexpected frankness, called his guards and ordered Philoxenus to be removed, in chains, to a deep, underground dungeon, where only the worst criminals were sent.

When the news of this action reached the ears of the friends of Philoxenus, they were very angry. As weeks passed, and still their friend was kept a prisoner in that underground dungeon, they became much excited, and at last sent to Dionysius a letter begging for the philosopher's release.

Perhaps Dionysius was afraid of rousing the anger of so many of his subjects, or possibly he had an entirely different reason, as you will presently see. At all events, he agreed to release the philosopher, provided he would come once more to dine with him.

Philoxenus came. After a great feast, at which all the courtiers were present, the king arose and read some new verses he had written. He wanted the truth-speaking Philoxenus to hear them, because he himself thought them uncommonly good. So, too, judging from their gestures and praises, did the fawning courtiers. Philoxenus alone sat silent, saying nothing and betraying nothing by the expression of his face.

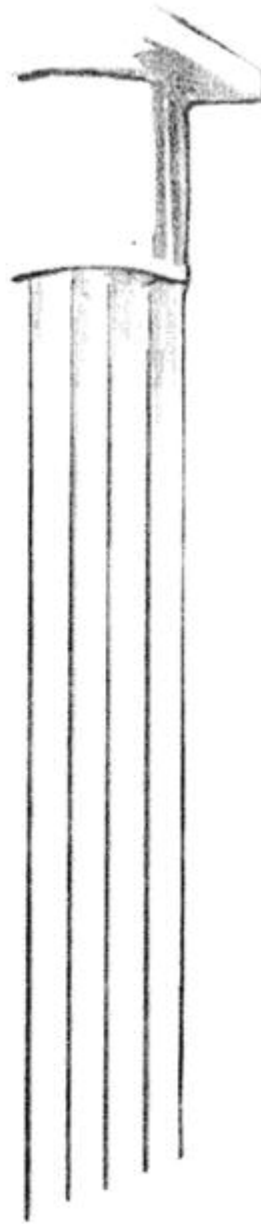
fawning = trying to please

This did not in the least suit Dionysius. He controlled his impatience as long as he could; but when Philoxenus continued silent, the king at length turned to him, and thinking he would not again dare to rouse his monarch's anger, said, "Tell me, Philoxenus, your opinion of this latest poem of mine."

You may be sure neither he nor his court expected the answer that was given. For, turning his back on the feast and the feasters, Philoxenus approached the guards of the banquet hall, and exclaimed, in a tone of disgust, "Take me back to my dungeon!" Nothing could more plainly have shown his opinion of the king's bad verses. He knew that by expressing his view honestly he would incur certain punishment; so he chose the simpler method of going back to prison of his own free will.

The courtiers were very much startled at this plain speaking, and looked in terror to see what Dionysius would do. But even this king, vain as he was, seems to have had a sense of humor, and a respect for real moral courage. For, turning with a smile from his trembling courtiers to the calm and untroubled Philoxenus, he bade him depart in peace.

bade = told



1. According to the story, the courtiers praise the king's poetry because they

- A** wish to please the king
- B** enjoy the king's excellent verses
- C** are covering up a plot to overthrow the king
- D** hope to be chosen as the king's special adviser

2. Which ideal does Philoxenus show through his actions?

- F** White lies are harmless.
- G** A little praise goes a long way.
- H** Be true to yourself, whatever the cost.
- J** Treat others as you wish to be treated.

3. Read this quote from the story.

*. . . to the amazement of all, the philosopher, in disdain, said the verses were so bad that they did not deserve the name of poetry, nor did their author deserve the name of poet.*

What does *disdain* most likely mean?

- A** fear
- B** respect
- C** scorn
- D** confusion

4. The story is told from the point of view of

- F** a main character
- G** an angry courtier
- H** a philosopher
- J** a third person narrator

5. Read this sentence from the story.

*Perhaps Dionysius was afraid of rousing the anger of so many of his subjects, or possibly he had an entirely different reason, as you will presently see.*

Which writing technique does this sentence illustrate?

- A** metaphor
- B** foreshadowing
- C** alliteration
- D** personification

6. This story is set during a time period in which
- F people were judged solely by their character
  - G all citizens were treated equally and fairly
  - H people often overthrew oppressive leaders
  - J a person's fate depended on the king's attitude
7. The author probably wrote this story to
- A entertain the reader with a moral tale
  - B teach the reader about what makes good poetry
  - C educate the reader about social groups in history
  - D persuade the reader to value education over power

**PASSAGE 2.**

**Read this poem about the Everglades. Then answer the following questions.**

**About the Everglades.** The Everglades is actually a marsh in southern Florida. In this poem the poet refers to it as a river because its waters flow slowly in a southerly direction.

A large portion of the Everglades was drained for agricultural purposes and other developments, but some 2,350 square miles have been preserved as Everglades National Park.

## *Some Rivers*

*by Frank Asch*

1 Some rivers rush to the sea.  
2 They push and tumble and fall.  
3 But the Everglades is a river  
4 with no hurry in her at all.  
5 Soaking the cypress  
6 that grows so tall;  
7 nursing a frog,  
8 so quiet and small;  
9 she flows but a mile  
10 in the course of a day,  
11 with plenty of time  
12 to think on the way.

13 But how can she cope  
14 with the acres of corn  
15 and sorrowful cities that drain her?  
16 With hunters and tourists and levees  
17 that chain and stain and pain her?  
18 Does the half of her that's left  
19 think only of the past?  
20 Or does she think of her future  
21 and how long it will last?  
22 Some rivers rush to the sea.  
23 They push and tumble and fall.  
24 But the Everglades is a river  
25 with no hurry in her at all.

cypress = a type of evergreen  
tree native to warm climates

levee = an embankment raised to  
prevent a river from overflowing

1. The purpose of the poem is to
  - A persuade the reader to care about the Everglades
  - B remind the reader of the history of the Everglades
  - C propose a solution to rebuild the Everglades
  - D show the Everglades is just like other rivers
  
2. How does the poet connect the beginning of the poem to the end?
  - F repetition
  - G rhyme
  - H simile
  - J symbolism
  
3. Which word best describes the tone of the poem?
  - A angry
  - B enthusiastic
  - C impatient
  - D mournful
  
4. When the poet says in line 18 “the half of her that’s left,” he means that
  - F the Everglades moves very slowly and some parts are left behind
  - G parts of the Everglades have been drained and used for other purposes
  - H the Everglades will probably last for a long time
  - J parts of the Everglades have already reached the sea

5. The poem attempts to appeal to the reader's feelings by
- A** describing rivers that "rush to the sea"
  - B** describing rivers that "push and tumble and fall"
  - C** listing the river's benefits, such as "soaking the cypress"
  - D** listing things that "chain and stain and pain" the river