

“Africa” by David Diop
“Old Song” Traditional
“All” by Bei Dao
“Also All” by Shu Ting
from ***The Analects*** by Confucius

Selection Test

Critical Reading

In the blank, write the letter of the one best answer.

- ___ 1. The speaker of “Africa” addresses his poem to
- his grandmother beside her distant river.
 - the continent of Africa.
 - the holders of sjamboks.
 - an impetuous child.
- ___ 2. How could one best summarize the question the speaker of “Africa” asks?
- How can one return to a lost homeland?
 - What has happened to my aged grandmother?
 - Who caused the ancient bloodshed?
 - When will Africa rule itself?
- ___ 3. The poem “Africa” compares Africa’s political development to
- a young and sturdy tree.
 - ancestral savannahs.
 - an impetuous child.
 - a solemn voice.
- ___ 4. According to “Africa,” which words summarize the continent’s progress?
- distance and blood
 - bending and trembling
 - patience and stubbornness
 - white and faded
- ___ 5. According to “Africa,” why will the fruits grow to have the “bitter taste of liberty”?
- High hopes rarely come to pass.
 - Few people’s ancestors were ever free.
 - Freedom has a high price.
 - The ends will not justify the means.
- ___ 6. The message of “Old Song” might best be expressed as
- fame is its own reward.
 - be proud but not prideful.
 - heroism is futile; heroes die.
 - the only victory is staying alive.
- ___ 7. Which of the following words from “Old Song” is *not* a synonym for *aphorism*?
- prediction
 - adage
 - saying
 - proverb

- ___ 8. What do the following lines from “Old Song” express?
Many heroes are not yet born, /many have already died.
- the striving required of heroes
 - the permanence of heroism
 - the need for heroes to appear
 - the hopelessness of heroism
- ___ 9. In “Also All” the line “Today is heavy with tomorrow” means
- tomorrow’s cares cause us anxiety today.
 - what happens today determines what happens tomorrow.
 - both today and tomorrow are shrouded in doubt.
 - today and tomorrow will be just the same.
- ___ 10. Which of the following familiar modern proverbs is closest in meaning to a recurrent theme from *The Analects*?
- It’s six of one and half a dozen of the other.
 - A rolling stone gathers no moss.
 - The early bird catches the worm.
 - Actions speak louder than words.
- ___ 11. According to *The Analects*, Confucius would approve most of someone who
- strives for self-improvement.
 - studies a topic in detail.
 - knows the faults of another.
 - promises to take action.
- ___ 12. According to Confucius, a worthy person is one who
- expects a lot from others.
 - makes no promises.
 - considers alternate views.
 - governs many subjects.
- ___ 13. The phrase “ritual performed without reverence, the forms of mourning observed without grief” is a judgment against people who are ____.
- simple
 - happy
 - fake
 - biased
- ___ 14. According to *The Analects*, a “small” person is a person of
- lowly office.
 - rigid views.
 - few words.
 - sparse learning.
- ___ 15. What does Confucius mean by “slow in word”?
- thoughtful
 - lazy
 - stingy
 - dull-witted
- ___ 16. Choose the best interpretation of the following sentence from *The Analects*.
“He who will not worry about what is far off will soon find something worse than worry close at hand.”
- If you spend too much time worrying, you won’t recognize real problems.
 - If you don’t prevent problems, you will have to solve them.
 - Don’t waste time thinking about the future; concentrate on the present.
 - Wherever you look, you can always find something to worry about.

Vocabulary and Grammar

- ___ 17. The word *impetuous* means _____.
 a. unfortunate
 b. forsaken
 c. haughty
 d. impulsive
- ___ 18. A verb is in the active voice when
 a. the subject comes immediately before the verb.
 b. it is a form of a linking verb.
 c. the subject of the sentence performs the action.
 d. it is preceded by a helping verb.
- ___ 19. Choose the sentence that contains a verb in the passive voice.
 a. Not all is as you say.
 b. Not every seed finds barren soil.
 c. Not all flames consume themselves.
 d. Not all trees are felled by storms.
- ___ 20. The word *lamentation* means _____.
 a. intention
 b. aphorism
 c. wailing in grief
 d. regret

Essay Questions

21. In *The Analects*, Confucius says “Yu, shall I teach you what knowledge is? When you know a thing, to recognize that you know it, and when you do not know a thing, to recognize that you do not know it. That is knowledge.” Confucius does not refer to vast stores of learning, and even includes not knowing things in his definition of knowledge. Is this idea a conventional approach to knowledge? In an essay, explain Confucius’ definition in your own terms. Use examples from life to illustrate how knowing and not knowing contribute to this concept of knowledge.
22. In many places and times, people have attempted to define qualities of good conduct and character. Two of these selections, *The Analects* and “Old Song,” separated by place and time, concern themselves specifically with conduct. What might Confucius think of “Old Song”? Would the composer of “Old Song” agree with *The Analects*? How are these two works alike? In what ways do they differ? Write an essay in which you compare and contrast *The Analects* with “Old Song,” noting similarities and differences. Give examples from the selections to support your ideas.
23. In “All,” Bei Dao finds “every speech a repetition,” and would probably agree with the ancient writer of the book of Ecclesiastes who said “there is no new thing under the sun.” Yet we live in an age of constant change. New devices, images, ideas, and issues surround us. Do you agree with Bei Dao? Is “every speech a repetition”? Write an essay in which you assess his statement and explain whether or not you agree with it. Give specific reasons for your opinion.