

**“Like the Sun”** by R. K. Narayan  
**“Tell all the Truth but tell it slant—”** by Emily Dickinson

## Selection Test

### Critical Reading

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

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. What is the nature of Sekhar’s experiment in “Like the Sun”?
- He wants to observe the different ways in which anger affects people.
  - He wants to find out if he can be completely truthful for one entire day.
  - He wants to learn more about the effects of sunlight on the Earth.
  - He wishes to study the effects of music on different people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. What is Sekhar’s main reason for going through with the experiment?
- He feels it will give everyone a good laugh.
  - He wants to please people.
  - He feels that without truth, life is meaningless.
  - He wants to get back at his enemies.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Why is Sekhar’s negative response to his wife’s “culinary masterpiece” an example of irony?
- She spent hours preparing the meal.
  - He usually enjoys breakfast.
  - She knew he would not like the meal.
  - She was not expecting him to be so honest.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. What is a consequence of Sekhar’s truthfulness at his morning meal?
- He leaves for work.
  - His wife prepares another meal.
  - His wife feels hurt and disappointed.
  - He is unable to finish his meal.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. What does Sekhar’s firm commitment to telling the truth at all costs say about his character?
- He does not make friends easily.
  - He enjoys being rude.
  - He is kind and considerate.
  - He is sincerely interested in becoming an honest person.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. How does Sekhar feel about being asked to the headmaster’s home to critique the headmaster’s singing?
- excited
  - angry
  - pleased
  - uneasy
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. What becomes the most difficult test of Sekhar’s vow to be truthful?
- being honest with his co-workers
  - needing to tell the truth about his headmaster’s singing
  - listening to music
  - making amends with his wife

- \_\_\_ 8. Why does Sekhar fear that losing his friends and his job might be a consequence of his decision to be honest?
- Honesty takes too much of his time.
  - People do not want Sekhar to try to improve himself.
  - People are against change.
  - Hearing the truth often angers and hurts people.
- \_\_\_ 9. What seems ironic about the headmaster's response to Sekhar's criticism?
- The headmaster is openly angry with Sekhar.
  - The headmaster refuses to speak to Sekhar.
  - The headmaster seems to have accepted Sekhar's criticism.
  - The headmaster seems hurt by the criticism.
- \_\_\_ 10. What is a consequence of Sekhar's decision to be brutally honest with the headmaster?
- Sekhar has to spend his entire night correcting test papers.
  - Sekhar has to find a new job.
  - The headmaster spends more time practicing his music.
  - Sekhar decides to stop teaching.
- \_\_\_ 11. What does Sekhar mean when he calls honesty a "luxury"?
- Being honest at all times is boring.
  - Total honesty is a complete waste of time for most people.
  - Total honesty can really only be practiced by people who do not need to succeed or get along with others.
  - It is expensive to be honest.
- \_\_\_ 12. In "Tell all the Truth but tell it slant—," what does Dickinson mean when she says that truth must be told at a "slant"?
- People should lie.
  - Truth should be at an angle.
  - Truth should be told gently, not harshly.
  - People should be brutally honest.
- \_\_\_ 13. To what does Dickinson compare truth?
- sunlight
  - rainfall
  - mountain slopes
  - jewels
- \_\_\_ 14. According to Dickinson, what will happen if truth does not "dazzle gradually"?
- People will die.
  - People will become blinded.
  - Rain will fall.
  - Truth will slant.
- \_\_\_ 15. What theme do "Like the Sun" and "Tell all the Truth but tell it slant—" share?
- It is impossible for people to be truthful.
  - Achieving truth is a waste of time.
  - People are dishonest.
  - Truth is valuable but difficult to speak or hear.

## Vocabulary and Grammar

- \_\_\_ 16. Sekhar is bothered by the fact that people are constantly \_\_\_\_\_ truth so that it might not shock.
- tempering
  - ingratiating
  - scrutinizing
  - considering
- \_\_\_ 17. In the following sentence, which noun or pronoun is the direct object?  
He added half humorously, "I will give you a week's time."
- you
  - time
  - he
  - week's
- \_\_\_ 18. Sekhar was \_\_\_\_\_ by the headmaster's singing.
- angered
  - stupefied
  - shirked
  - scrutinized
- \_\_\_ 19. The headmaster reminds Sekhar that each paper must be carefully \_\_\_\_\_ .
- sorted
  - tempered
  - shirked
  - scrutinized
- \_\_\_ 20. In the following sentence which noun or pronoun is an indirect object?  
No one would tell me the truth about my music all these days.
- me
  - truth
  - music
  - days

## Essay Questions

21. In a short essay, explain what Sekhar, the main character of "Like the Sun," means when he says that "Truth is like the sun." According to Sekhar, what characteristics do absolute truth and intense sunlight share? What has Sekhar observed about the way in which absolute truth's similarity to bright sunlight affects human behavior? Why does he feel his experiment is so crucial? Support your opinion with details from the selections.
22. In an essay, explain how "Like the Sun" makes use of the literary technique of irony of situation. Explain some of the events that violate the expectations of characters in the story. Why is Sekhar's statement at the end of the story—that "sitting up all night with a hundred test papers was a small price to pay for the luxury of practicing Truth"—particularly ironic?
23. In an essay, compare and contrast Sekhar's approach to expressing truth in "Like the Sun" to Emily Dickinson's approach to expressing truth in "Tell all the Truth but tell it slant—." In your essay, address the following questions: What specific details in each piece convey the idea that speaking and knowing truth is important? What does Dickinson mean when she says "Tell all the Truth but tell it slant—" and "The Truth must dazzle gradually . . ."? In what way does Sekhar's approach to introducing truth into his life seem to differ from Dickinson's approach? Does he express truth gradually, at a "slant"? Might he have had a more pleasant day had he read Dickinson's poem before he began his day of truth? Why, or why not?