Tigers | Nonfiction Reading Test 2

Who would win in a fight, a lion or a tiger? Well, if size has anything to do with the matter, the tiger would win. That's because tigers are the largest of all cat species. They grow up to eleven feet long and weigh as much as 670 lbs. This makes tigers the third largest land carnivore. The only larger land carnivores are polar bears and brown bears. Tigers are not only large, they are also fast. They can sprint as fast as 40 miles per hour for short distances and leap as far as 30 feet horizontally. This makes for an extremely dangerous pounce. You might not think that such large, fast, and ferocious creatures need help to survive, but they do. The tiger is an endangered species.

Despite all of the tiger's strengths, the future of the species is uncertain. Tigers face a very high risk of extinction. It is estimated that at the start of the 20th century, there were over 100,000 tigers living in the wild. By the turn of the century, the number of tigers outside of captivity dwindled to just over 3,000. Interestingly, the most serious threats that tigers face come from a much smaller species, one with an average weight of around 140 lbs. That species is Homo sapiens, better known as humans. Humans threaten tigers in primarily two ways: hunting and destroying habitat.

Tigers are hunted for many reasons. People have long valued the famous striped skins. Though trading tiger skins is now illegal in most parts of the world, tiger pelts are worth around $10,000 on the black-market. Though the fur would be incentive enough for most poachers, other parts of the tiger can also fetch a pretty penny. Some people in China and other Asian cultures believe that various tiger parts have healing properties. Traditional Chinese medicine calls for the use of tiger bones, amongst other parts, in some prescriptions.

Tigers have also been hunted as game. In other words people hunted tigers solely for the thrill and achievement of killing them. Such killings took place in large scale during the 19th and early 20th centuries, when a single maharaja or English hunter might claim to kill over a hundred tigers in their hunting career. Though this practice is much less popular today than it was in the past, it has not ceased entirely.

Humans have done considerable damage to the world's tiger population through hunting, but perhaps more damage has been caused through the destruction of habitat. Tigers once ranged widely across Asia, all the way from Turkey to the eastern coast of Russia. But over the past 100 years, tigers have lost 93% of their historic range. Instead of spanning all the way across Asia, the tiger population is now isolated in small pockets in south and southeastern Asia. This is because humans have drastically changed the environments. Humans have built towns and cities. Road and transit systems were created to connect these towns and cities. To feed the people living in these areas, forests and fields have been cleared to create farmland. Large tracts of land have been strip-mined to yield metals and other materials used in manufacturing. All of these activities have consumed habitats that at one time supported tigers.

A major obstacle to preserving tigers is the enormous amount of territory that each tiger requires. Each wild tiger demands between 200 and 300 square miles. Tigers are also both territorial and solitary animals. This means that they are protective of the areas that they claim and they generally do not share with other tigers. Because tigers need so much territory, it is difficult for conservationists to acquire land enough to support a large population of tigers. Even when such these considerable spaces are allocated, it is even more difficult to patrol such large areas to prevent poaching. There is no easy way to preserve the wild tiger population without making large sacrifices.

Though tiger population faces many threats and obstacles to recovery, there have been some successes in conservation and preservation efforts. For example, Save China's Tigers, an organization working to restore the wild tiger population, successfully rewilded a small number of South China tigers. These tigers were born into concrete cages from parents who were also captive and unable to sustain in the wild. This organization brought these tigers to South Africa and helped them learn the necessary skills for a predator to survive in the wild. Current evidence indicates that the project was been successful. While this is just a small step, it shows that restoring the world's tiger population is possible.

Directions: Read each question carefully and choose the best answer. Refer to the text if necessary. Write your answer on the provided space.

1. Which of the following is **not** a reason in the article explaining why tigers are hunted?   _____
a. Because tiger skins are worth a lot of money
b. Because tiger parts are used as medicines in some cultures
c. Because some tigers attack local villages
d. Because tigers are hunted for enjoyment by some people

2. Which animal does **not** grow larger than the tiger?   _____
a. Brown bear   b. Lion
c. Polar bear   d. All of these animals grow larger than a tiger

3. Which number is *closest* to the estimation of the wild Tiger population in 2003?   _____
a. 3,000   b. 100,000
c. 140   d. 30,000

4. Which of the following best describes the author's main purpose in writing this article?   _____
a. To provide readers with interesting information about the lifestyles of tigers
b. To persuade readers to help the world's tiger population and to offer ways to help
c. To entertain readers with stories about how tigers hunt and are hunted
d. To explain to readers why the world's tiger population is endangered

5. Information in the third paragraph is *mainly* organized using which text structure?   _____
a. Cause and effect   b. Compare and contrast
c. Chronological order   d. Spatial order

6. Which *best* explains why tigers have lost so much of their habitat according to the text?   _____
a. Because humans are afraid of tigers
b. Because tiger skins are extremely valuable
c. Because humans have changed the land
d. Because tigers need so much space to survive

7. Based on information in the text, which *best* explains why tigers are poached?   _____
a. Poachers hunt tigers to protect their families from dangerous animals.
b. Poachers hunt tigers for medicine to cure sick family members.
c. Poachers hunt tigers because they enjoy killing dangerous animals.
d. Poachers hunt tigers to earn large amounts money.

8. Which *best* explains why it is so difficult to preserve the wild tiger population?   _____
a. Tigers do not get along with most other animals.
b. Tigers must make their homes close to rivers and the world's rivers are evaporating.
c. Tigers require a lot of space.
d. Tigers hunt in large packs and there are too few tigers left to make these packs.

9. Which of the following is an opinion?   _____
a. Tigers can grow up to eleven feet long.
b. Saving the wild tiger population is important.
c. South China tigers were brought to live in South Africa.
d. Humans have endangered the world's wild tiger population.

10. Based on context, which *best* defines the term "rewilded" as used in the last paragraph?   _____
a. To preserve animals by keeping them in zoos
b. To teach animals to coexist with humans
c. To teach humans to coexist with animals
d. To bring animals born in zoos back to nature

11. What does this idiom mean: "*other parts of the tiger can also fetch a pretty penny*"?   _____
a. The fur is the only valuable part of the tiger.
b. Other parts of the tiger are worth a lot of money.
c. The tiger is a very beautiful animal.
d. Tigers can be trained to do tricks like in the circus.

12. Which of the following could be best supported by information from the text?   _____
a. Efforts to save tigers have had some success, but there are many obstacles to recovery.
b. Efforts to save tigers have failed in the past, but there is reason to continue trying.
c. Efforts to save tigers have been so successful that they saved tigers from endangerment.
d. Efforts to save tigers have failed completely.