

**READING COMPREHENSION LEVEL II**  
**TSJCL AREA F MARCH 3, 2001**

Answer all the questions based on the three passages below. You may want to separate the pages so that you can see the passage while looking at the questions.

**Passage A: The Reign of Nero**

Ultimus ex Augusti familiā princeps fuit Nero, homo animo superbo, moribus pessimis. Per quinque annos bene regebat; modeste se apud senatores gerebat, et iuravit se consilium eorum non contempturum esse. Postea tamen ille tam corruptus esse videtur, ut officia sua neglegeret, inimicos 5 interficeret, se turpissimis voluptatibus daret. Nero etiam credebatur a multis suam matrem interfecisse. Tandem Galba, qui provinciae Hispaniae praefectus erat, arma contra eum sumpsit. Nero, a suis militibus desertus, Roma noctu fugit, in casa humili se celare conatus est. Sed ubi certior factus est 10 senatum se absentem mortis damnasse, se sua manu interfecit. Traditur memoriae eum morientem haec verba locutum esse: 'Qualis artifex pereo!'

iuro, iurare	to swear
contemnere	to spurn, reject
voluptas, -tatis	pleasure
conor, conari	to try
certiorem facere	to inform
artifex	artist

### Passage B: A Tale of a Tyrant

de Dionysio, illo Syracusanorum tyranno, fabula narratur. olim vir quidam, Damocles nomine, quod ei Dionysius omnium felicissimus videbatur, divitias eius et potestatem laudabat.

"O Damocle," inquit tyrannus "quoniam vita tyranni te delectat, visne ipse more tyranni vivere?" 5

"magno cum gaudio" clamavit Damocles.

"si hanc vitam vixeris," monuit Dionysius "veritatem quidem intelleges."

quibus dictis tyrannus Damoclem, pulcherrimis vestibus indutum, iussit in lecto aureo recumbere. servi in triclinium pocula aurea ferebant et pueri pulcherrimi ad mensam stantes convivis diligenter ministrabant. aderant unguenta, coronae. 10

plurima fercula e culina efferebantur. optima cena in mensis ponebatur. felix sibi videbatur Damocles. subito tamen super caput gladium de lacunari saeta equina suspensum conspexit. nunc igitur 15 Damocles neque pulchros illos servos neque ornamenta aurea spectabat, neque manum porrigebat ad mensam; iam vita tyranni eum non delectabat. tandem Dionysio "hoc modo vivere" inquit "mihi non placet. vita tyranni revera periculosa est." haec locutus e triclinio fugit, nam tandem intellexit cur tyranni numquam felices esse possint. 20

indutus (+ abl)	dressed in
convivus, -i	banqueter
unguentum, -i	perfume
ferculum, -i	course, tray
de lacunari	from the ceiling
saeta, -ae	hair
ministro, -are	serve, attend to
porrigo, porrigere	stretch out
revera	really

### Passage C: Hannibal crosses the Rhone River

Hannibal multis cum militibus, iumentis, elephantis profectus, itinere per montes Pyrenaeos facto, ad flumen Rhodanum pervenit. quod flumen latissimum necesse erat transire. itaque navibus undique collectis, ratibus celeriter factis, exercitum flumen facile traiecit. elephantos autem traducere difficillimum fuit quod aquam maxime timebant. **5** Hannibal igitur suos iussit ratem unam, ducentos pedes longam, quinquaginta latam, a terra in flumen porrigere et ad ripam deligare. quo facto, humum in eam pontis in modum iniecerunt. ita haec ratis elephantis videbatur viae simillima. altera ratis, aequae lata, centum pedes longa, vinculis ad eam deligata est. tum pauci **10** elephantum, per stabilem ratem tamquam per viam acti, in minorem transgressi sunt. statim vinculis resolutis, minor ratis ad alteram ripam navibus pertracta est. eo modo omnes elephantum traducti sunt.

iumentum, -i (n)	mule, pack animal
profectus: proficiscor	set out
ratis, -is (f)	raft
latus, -a, -um	wide
porrigo, -ere	to extend
deligo, -are	tie down
humus, -i	earth, ground
in modum	in the manner of
aeque	equally
tamquam	as though
resolvo, -ere	loosen
stabilis, -e	steady



## Questions to Passage A

1. What sort of man was Nero?
  - a. good in spirit, but bad in actions
  - b. haughty and very immoral
  - c. superbly ill-suited for power
  - d. courageous even in death
  - e. courageous except in death
2. Lines 2-6 describe how
  - a. Nero handled power well at first, but then became corrupted.
  - b. The senate corrupted Nero.
  - c. Nero consistently abused his power.
  - d. Nero lied about his real intentions.
  - e. After five years of abusing his power, Nero learned to rule well.
3. In the sentence *iuravit...esse* (4-5), what is the best translation for *se*?
  - a. him
  - b. himself
  - c. he
  - d. they
  - e. themselves
4. To whom or what does *eorum* refer in line 4?
  - a. *Nero*
  - b. *familiā*
  - c. *senatores*
  - d. *moribus*
  - e. *annos*
5. The best translation of *ut* in line 5 is
  - a. as
  - b. so that
  - c. that
  - d. when
  - e. how
6. What did Nero swear never to do (3-4)?
  - a. spurn the advice of the senate
  - b. kill his enemies
  - c. give himself over to pleasures
  - d. become corrupted
  - e. neglect his duties

## Passage A

7. Translate as accurately as possible the sentence *Nero...interfecisse* (6-7).
  - a. It was even believed that Nero had killed his own mother.
  - b. Many believed that Nero had even killed his own mother.
  - c. Nero was even believed by many to have killed his own mother.
  - d. Nero believed that his own mother had been killed by his many enemies.
  - e. Nero even believed that his own mother had killed many.
  
8. How did Galba finally respond to the situation (7-9)?
  - a. He took charge of the province of Spain.
  - b. He set out from Spain with an army.
  - c. He overpowered Nero's forces in Spain.
  - d. He took up arms against Nero.
  - e. All of the above.
  
9. What news prompted Nero to take his own life?
  - a. He was deserted by his own soldiers.
  - b. He was caught in a humiliating situation.
  - c. The Senate had condemned him to death.
  - d. The Senate had deserted Rome.
  - e. The Senate had named another emperor in his absence.
  
10. Which expression indicates how we even know about Nero's final moments?
  - a. *damnavisse*
  - b. *traditur memoriae*
  - c. *sua manu*
  - d. *eum morientem*
  - e. *Qualis artifex*

## Passage B

11. What about Dionysius impressed Damocles?
- a. his tyranny
  - b. his wealth
  - c. his power
  - d. his happiness
  - e. all of the above
12. What does Damocles wish to do?
- a. to live as a tyrant
  - b. to take power from Dionysius
  - c. to avoid the life of a tyrant
  - d. to kill the tyrant
  - e. to trade places with Dionysius; he would be a tyrant, Dionysius a servant.
13. The most accurate translation of *vixeris* in line 7 is
- a. have overcome
  - b. will have avoided
  - c. have avoided
  - d. will have lived
  - e. lived
14. Which of the following did Damocles NOT experience?
- a. a large dinner
  - b. beautiful clothes
  - c. golden couch
  - d. golden cups
  - e. golden crown
15. In line 11 *stantes* refers to
- a. *servi*
  - b. *pueri*
  - c. *pocula*
  - d. *mensam*
  - e. *convivis*
16. In line 14 *sibi* is best translated
- a. to him
  - b. for him
  - c. to himself
  - d. for himself
  - e. to them

## Passage B

17. In line 15 *saeta equina* is best translated
- a horse-hair
  - of a horse-hair
  - to a horse-hair
  - because of a horse-hair
  - by a horse-hair
18. What phrase indicates the sword's location?
- in mensis*
  - super caput*
  - de lacunari*
  - a and b
  - b and c
19. What was Damocles' reaction to the sight of the sword (15-18)?
- he said nothing
  - he stopped eating
  - he got up from the table
  - he begged for forgiveness
  - he turned his gaze away
20. What word or phrase could substitute for *hoc modo* (18)?
- more tyranni*
  - magno cum gaudio*
  - revera*
  - ad mensam*
  - ornamenta aurea*
21. Why did Damocles flee from the dining room?
- Dionysius threatened to strike him with a sword.
  - The roof of the dining room was about to collapse.
  - He had learned a frightening lesson.
  - He was afraid that a tyrant would be poisoned.
  - He felt ill after his meal.



## Passage C

22. The most accurate translation of *itinere... facto* in context would be
- when a journey had been made
  - because a journey had been made
  - although a journey had been made
  - having made the journey
  - with a completed journey
23. The best translation of *quod* (3) is
- which
  - this
  - because
  - what
  - he
24. Which word contributes nothing to the portrayal of Hannibal as an effective man of action?
- latissimum* (3)
  - itaque* (3)
  - undique* (3)
  - celeriter* (4)
  - facile* (4)
25. What explanation is given for the difficulty in crossing?
- There were so many soldiers, pack animals, and elephants.
  - The elephants were scared of the water.
  - The elephants were too heavy for the raft.
  - The river's current was swift.
  - The soldiers had not prepared enough rafts.
26. To whom or what does *suos* (6) refer?
- soldiers
  - elephants
  - boats
  - feet
  - river

## Passage C

27. Which is NOT a feature of the first raft?
- hastily built
  - 200 feet long
  - 50 feet wide
  - extending into the water
  - tied to the bank
28. Why did the men throw dirt onto the raft?
- to stabilize the rocking motion of the raft
  - to keep the elephants from slipping
  - to fill in the gaps between the logs
  - to make the raft look like a bridge
  - to cover the rough spots
29. In what way was the second raft different from the first?
- It was wider.
  - It was shorter.
  - It was not tied to anything.
  - It looked like a ship.
  - The elephants would not step onto it.
30. What is meant by *eo modo* (13)?
- The elephants swam across.
  - The elephants pulled the raft to the opposite bank.
  - The elephants were successfully tricked into getting onto the raft.
  - The boat was dragged across the river by the rafts.
  - When the cables were released, the raft struck a boat.

## RC II

**TIE-BREAKERS.** These answers will only be counted in the event of a tie

Read the following passage and answer the questions below

Mustela ab homine capta, cum instantem mortem effugere vellet, "Quaeso, parce mihi," inquit, "quae domum tibi molestis muribus purgo." Respondit ille: "Haec facis non causam meam, sed causam tuam, laboras ut eum cibum devores quem consumere quoque mures volunt, simul et ipsos consumas tibi supplicium igitur nullam veniam dabo nolium igitur imputare vanum beneficium mihi." Atque ita locutus improbam sine mora necavit. Haec significat fabula quorum privata utilitas sibi serviat, et meritum inane imprudentius iactare

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mustela, -ae	weasel	devoro, devorare	devour
quaeso	please	imputo, imputare	ascribe, charge
mus, muris	mouse	vanus, -a, -um	false, deceptive
purgo	clean, rid	servio, servire	serve
devoro, devorare	devour	iacto, iactare	boast
venia, -ae	pardon	inanis, inane	empty, useless
supplex, supplicis	beggar, suppliant		

31 Why, according to the weasel, should the man spare her?

- a The weasel once helped the man escape instant death
- b The man will otherwise have to clean up the house by himself
- c The mice also wish the weasel to be released
- d The weasel gets rid of the mice in the man's house
- e The weasel and the mice together protect the house.

32 What is the best translation for *ut* in line 3?

- a so that
- b that
- c how
- d and
- e as

33 To whom or what does *ipsos* in line 4 refer?

- a weasel
- b food
- c man and weasel
- d mice
- e mice and food

34 Why does the man call the weasel's good deed *vanum* (5)?

- a The weasel is lying about her ability to catch mice.
- b The weasel's good deed is in fact self-serving.
- c The weasel's good deed is not useful to the man
- d The weasel is eating more of the man's food than the mice
- e The mice do not cause as much damage as the weasel claims

35 The moral of this story is

- a Do not spare liars.
- b Weasels are not as useful as they seem
- c What you do for your own benefit you cannot claim as a kindness to another
- d You should not boast in public about actions done in private
- e It is imprudent to boast of your own merits no matter how useful they are to others

