

Part 2 (Questions 9–20)

Directions (9–20): Below each passage, there are several multiple-choice questions. Select the best suggested answer to each question and record your answer on the separate answer sheet provided for you.

Reading Comprehension Passage A

...On the days that M'Dear¹ washed her hair, she called them "Days of Beauty." She spent the whole day pampering herself, and she taught me how to pamper myself as well. ...

5 During the wet, cold months that make up a Louisiana winter, M'Dear's hair was so long and thick that drying it could take all day. On those days we'd stay inside, cleaning, ironing, and cooking up huge pots of gumbo. I'd climb up onto the big soft chair next to the fireplace in the kitchen, and shine shoes or sew on buttons or do the other tasks she was teaching me. I'd sit there and watch her work, watch her go in and out of the washroom like a breeze was blowing her in.

10 On hot Days of Beauty, we'd put on our swimsuits and stand outside on the wooden platform of the outdoor shower. It was my happy job to scrub clean buckets and other containers and set them outside to gather rainwater to wash our hair. M'Dear would undo my braid, pour the rainwater on my head, put on a little Breck shampoo, and wash my hair. The sun shone down, my mother's hands touched my head, and her fingers lathered love into me. Never has my hair been so soft. Sometimes I still wash my hair in rainwater, to
15 remember.

20 After our hair was clean, M'Dear would leave hers down, and, still in our swimsuits, we'd hang clean clothes outside to dry on the line, with me handing her clothespins out of a small apron she had sewn for me out of flower sacks. I have a photo of us by the clothesline, doing this very thing. We were working and smiling, squinting slightly in the sunlight. I was just about to enter first grade, just about to leave behind those mother-daughter days of intimacy, of little maternal baptisms. M'Dear prepared me for that leaving so that it was smooth and felt natural. Not all leavings are that easily prepared for.

25 After finishing chores and when our hair was dry, M'Dear and I would go down to our pier, just before sunset. These memories are so vivid to me that I don't need a photograph to see them. I carry them inside me.

In one memory, it is growing toward twilight. We are sitting on the pier with the La Luna River flowing by. ...

30 And as the sun sparkled off the cocoa-red water and the wind stirred in the tall pines, I stood behind my mother, my legs on either side of her, and brushed her hair. I lifted her long chestnut hair up off her neck, twirled it up on top of her head, then let it fall, watching its weight settle back down and around her shoulders. Then I'd lean my face into her hair and smell it. I can close my eyes and smell it now: sun and vanilla.

35 What I first learned about love, I learned on that dock with M'Dear. The La Luna River flowing by with its river sounds, the riverbanks with their lovely sweet citrus scent of jasmine, the scent of M'Dear's hair, the oils of her scalp, the fullness of her thick, long curls against my hands, our breathing together, the closeness, her love for me—all of this knit my soul together. When the fading sunlight hit the river, it bounced up to form iridescence, like a halo, around M'Dear's head. *She is the most beautiful person in the universe.* ...

—Rebecca Wells

excerpted from *The Crowning Glory of Calla Lily Ponder*, 2009

HarperCollins Publishers

¹M'Dear — the narrator's mother

- 9 What kind of mood is reinforced by lines 4 through 8?
- (1) optimistic
 - (2) tranquil
 - (3) concerned
 - (4) unhappy
- 10 What role does the daughter play in the passage?
- (1) narrator
 - (2) antagonist
 - (3) audience
 - (4) hero
- 11 One way M'Dear created "days of intimacy" (line 21) was to
- (1) read stories to her daughter
 - (2) visit family with her daughter
 - (3) involve her daughter in daily routines
 - (4) engage her daughter in decision making
- 12 Lines 28 through 32 are primarily developed through the use of
- (1) sensory details
 - (2) comparison and contrast
 - (3) order of importance
 - (4) rhetorical questions
- 13 What is the setting of the story?
- (1) in a city
 - (2) on a farm
 - (3) near a waterway
 - (4) beside a mountain
- 14 The narrator's conclusion that "all of this knit my soul together" (lines 36 and 37) suggests the
- (1) boredom from chores
 - (2) relationship between characters
 - (3) need for amusement
 - (4) importance of cleanliness
-

Reading Comprehension Passage B

During her junior year of high school, Candice Backus’s teacher handed her a worksheet and instructed the 17-year-old to map out her future financial life. Backus pretended to buy a car, rent an apartment, and apply for a credit card. Then, she and her classmates played the “stock market game,” investing the hypothetical earnings from their hypothetical jobs in the market in the fateful fall of 2008. “Our pretend investments crashed,” Backus says, still horrified. “We felt what actual shareholders were feeling.”

That pain of earning and losing money is a feeling that public schools increasingly want to teach. Forty states now offer some type of financial instruction at the elementary or high-school level, embedding lessons in balancing checkbooks and buying stock into math and social-studies classes. Though it’s too early to measure the full impact of the Great Recession, anecdotally the interest in personal-finance classes has risen since 2007 when subprime became a four-letter word and bank failures a regular occurrence. Now, a handful of states including Missouri, Utah, and Tennessee require teenagers to take financial-literacy classes to graduate from high school. School districts such as Chicago are boosting their offerings in money-management classes for kids as young as elementary school, and roughly 300 colleges or universities now offer online personal-finance classes for incoming students. “These classes really say, ‘This is how you live independently,’” says Ted Beck, president of National Endowment for Financial Education.

Rather than teach investment strategies or financial wizardry, these courses offer a back-to-the-basics approach to handling money: Don’t spend what you don’t have. Put part of your monthly salary into a savings account, and invest in the stock market for the long-term rather than short-term gains. For Backus, this means dividing her earnings from her part-time job at a fast-food restaurant into separate envelopes for paying bills, spending, and saving. “Money is so hard to make but so easy to spend,” she says one weekday after school. “That was the big takeaway.”

Teaching kids about the value of cash certainly is one of the programs’ goals, but teachers also want students to think hard about their finances long term. It’s easy for teenagers to get riled up about gas prices because many of them drive cars. But the hard part is urging them to put off the instant gratification of buying a new T shirt or an iPod. “Investing and retirement aren’t things teenagers are thinking about. For them, the future is this weekend,” says Gayle Whitefield, a business and marketing teacher at Utah’s Riverton High School. ...

That’s a big goal for these classes: preventing kids from making the same financial missteps their parents did when it comes to saving, spending, and debt. Though the personal savings rate has shot up to 4.2 percent as of July 2009, that’s still a far distance from 1982, when Americans saved 11.2 percent of their incomes. It’s hard for schools to teach strict money-management skills when teenagers go home and watch their parents rack up credit-card debt. It’s like telling your kids not to smoke and then lighting up a cigarette in front of them, Beck says. ...

Even with these challenges, students such as Backus say learning about money in school is worthwhile. After Backus finished her financial-literacy class, she opened up a savings account at her local bank and started to think more about how she and her family would pay for college. “She just has a better understanding of money and how it affects the world,” says her mother, Darleen—and that’s down to the minutiae¹ of how money is spent at-large from taxes to bank bailouts to the federal government’s deficit. All of this talk of money can make Backus worry, she says, but luckily, she feels prepared to face it.

—Nancy Cook
excerpted from “Getting Schooled About Money”
www.newsweek.com, September 2, 2009

¹minutiae — details

- 15 The purpose of the high school class’s “stock market game” (line 4) is to
- (1) introduce a new course
 - (2) encourage personal savings
 - (3) learn about investment
 - (4) teach credit card hazards
- 16 According to the passage, student interest in taking classes on finance has increased because of the
- (1) state of the economy
 - (2) need for employment
 - (3) rate of graduation
 - (4) desire to purchase cars
- 17 According to the passage, taking money-management courses will help young people to
- (1) get accepted by colleges
 - (2) become very wealthy
 - (3) take more vacations
 - (4) prevent going into debt
- 18 According to the passage, from the early 1980s to July 2009, the personal savings rate of Americans shows that
- (1) less money is being set aside
 - (2) new businesses are less secure
 - (3) stores are charging higher prices
 - (4) investments are showing lower yields
- 19 The author’s attitude toward financial literacy classes is one of
- (1) disgust
 - (2) hope
 - (3) fear
 - (4) joy
- 20 According to the passage, one result of Candice Backus’s completing the class about money in school is that she
- (1) is debt free
 - (2) manages the family income
 - (3) will retire early
 - (4) feels more competent
-