

Question 24
Benchmark B
Spring 2003

Yellowstone Makes a Triumphant Return Ten Years After Fires

1 What a difference a decade makes. Ten years ago this month, Yellowstone National Park was a sea of flames. Some of the largest wildfires in U.S. history swept restlessly across the park's magnificent terrain, incinerating forests, threatening historic buildings. The news media and politicians fanned the flames even higher. Yellowstone, they said, was devastated.

2 Night after night, horrific images of ash and flame flashed across America's TV screens. One evening, after showing an enormous expanse of blackened forest, network news anchor Tom Brokaw solemnly concluded, "This is what's left of Yellowstone tonight."

3 But guess what? Fire didn't destroy Yellowstone. Ten years later, we realize fire had the opposite effect. Fire rejuvenated Yellowstone. Elk and other wildlife are healthy. Tourism is thriving. Biodiversity¹ is booming. New forests are rising from the ashes of old ones. The recovery is so dramatic it deserves a closer look.

4 First, a bit of background: The 1988 fires were gigantic. They swept over roughly 793,000 of Yellowstone's 2.2 million acres—one third of the park. Some were lightning-caused; others were of human origin. The \$120 million firefighting effort amassed against them has been called the largest in U.S. history. The heroic work saved many key structures. But in the wild lands, it made almost no difference. What put Yellowstone's fires out was not retardant-dropping planes or armies of firefighters on the ground. It was a quarter inch of autumn rain.

5 In July and August, as fires raged across the park, business owners fumed. Our future is ruined, they said. Tourism is dead. But today, tourism is very much alive. Yellowstone has set numerous visitation records since 1988. Fire has not repelled tourists; it has attracted them—just as it attracts many species of wildlife. Ten years later, the number one question asked of Yellowstone naturalists remains "What are the effects of the fires?"

6 The answer is simple: The fires were therapeutic. Since 1988, some seventy scientific research projects have looked at various aspects of the Yellowstone fires. Not one has concluded the fires were harmful. That sounds too good to be true. But it is. The science is there to prove it.

7 Come to Yellowstone this summer and see for yourself. Pull off the road near Ice Lake, east of the Norris Geyser Basin. Here the fire burned especially savagely. Hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of mature lodgepole pine trees were destroyed. But today, the forest floor is a sea of green, knee high lodgepoles planted, literally, by the fires of 1988.

8 Yellowstone’s lodgepole forest is a place of mystery. In order to live, it must first die. It must burn. The fire that swept through here worked an ancient magic: It scorched lodgepole cones, melted their sticky resin, and freed the seeds locked inside. Within minutes, a new forest was planted.

9 By suppressing wildfire, as Smokey Bear has taught us to do, we interrupt nature’s cycles. We rob our western forests of something they need desperately. We steal their season of rebirth. Without fire, pine forests grow senile, prone to disease, and unnaturally thick. There are lessons in these lodgepoles. Too much protection is no virtue. We can harm what we try to save. I’m not suggesting that we worship fire—that we let it run wild outside of natural parks and wilderness areas. But we can respect its wisdom. We can treat it, when possible, as an ally, not an enemy, and use it more frequently under controlled conditions to protect communities and make forests healthier.

10 Look closely around Ice Lake and you will almost surely see something else: wildlife. Bison, elk, mule deer, white-tailed deer, bighorn sheep, and mountain goats have all prospered since 1988. Just as fire rejuvenated lodgepoles, so, too, did it revitalize plants that grazing animals eat. Walt Disney got it all wrong: Bambi and his forest friends have nothing to fear—and much to gain—from fire.

11 If you’re lucky, you may also see Yellowstone’s king of beasts: the grizzly bear. To a grizzly, wildfire is a meal ticket. Fires kill trees, which fall to the ground and fill up with insects: grizzly sushi. Others enjoy the feast, too. Before 1988, three-toed woodpeckers were almost nonexistent in Yellowstone. After 1988, one ornithologist spotted thirty in one day. But dead lodgepoles are more than lunch counters; they are housing opportunities, home sites for mountain bluebirds, tree swallows, and other “cavity-nesting” birds and mammals.

12 Ten years ago, the news media said fire “blackened” Yellowstone. Today, we know the reverse is true. Fire has painted the park brighter, added color and texture to its ecosystem, and increased the diversity and abundance of its species. As Yellowstone scientist John Varley put it recently, “The biodiversity story over the past ten years has been fascinating. Biodiversity has gone through a revolution at Yellowstone.”

“Yellowstone Makes a Triumphant Return Ten Years After Fires” by Bruce Babbitt, Former Secretary of the Interior, originally printed in *The Austin American-Statesman*.

What is the intended effect of the rhetorical question used in paragraph 3?

- A. to produce an echoing sound when read aloud
- B. to serve as a topic sentence
- C. to stimulate reader interest
- D. to create patterns of stressed and unstressed syllables

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Based on paragraph 9, which of the following would the author support?

- A. increased spending on fire fighting in national parks
- B. periodically setting “controlled fires” in national parks
- C. viewing fire as the enemy and discovering ways to fight it
- D. educating people about the dangers of wildfires when they visit national parks

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Speech to the New Americans

[NOTE: The author’s name (Andrei Codrescu) is pronounced along the lines of “An.” The “Iron Curtain” (paragraph 3) was the political barrier that existed between the countries of the Soviet Union bloc and Western Europe from 1945 to 1990. Romania was allied with the Soviet Union during the Cold War, a member of the Soviet bloc, and was thus spoken of as “behind the Iron Curtain.”]

1 HELLO, NEW AMERICANS!

2 Ladies and gentlemen, friends, and fellow citizens, I’m Andrei Codrescu from Romania, and this country has been very very good to me.

3 Romania was a Communist country when I was growing up (remember the Iron Curtain?). In school they told us that America was a bad place where the rich laughed in the face of the poor who went about begging in the streets. That America was a country where crime and racism made it dangerous to walk outside.

4 My grandmother, on the other hand, whispered to me that in America “dogs walk around with pretzels on their tails.” Fat, healthy dogs. Big, hot pretzels. She also whispered that in America the “roads are paved with gold.” That wasn’t as good as the dogs with the pretzels—but she had to whisper because in Romania you could not say such things out loud.

5 I myself imagined America as the place where I could be a very famous writer who could say out loud all the things that would land me in jail in Romania.

6 When I came to America I found that the school and my grandmother were both wrong.

7 And yes, in America some dogs not only walked around with pretzels on their tails but got their own burial plots in Hollywood. Some dogs inherited fortunes and were tended by human servants.

8 But the roads were not paved with gold. In fact, in 1992, certain roads are not paved at all because there isn’t enough money to pave them with.

9 Yes, there are beggars and poor people and very rich people in America. But mostly there are in-between people, people who are neither rich nor poor, people who have nice houses or apartments with a little garden or a balcony, people who treat their dogs very nicely if they have dogs, people who (for the most part) let each other talk, laugh, and vote however they please. People who do not have to whisper. And the roads, whether in good shape or not, can take you somewhere else if you do not like where you are. America is a big country and you can move anywhere you want in it without having to

show your passport. 10 Almost ten years ago I sat where you sit now and listened to a judge welcome me to America. “You are now Americans,” the judge said. “You can keep your native customs, you can keep your wonderful cooking and your churches, but you are not Chinese, Haitians, Russians, or Romanians any longer. You cannot hold the interests of your old countries above those of your new country. You are now Americans.”

11 The judge spoke the truth. But the judge did not mention how hard it is to keep your customs, your cooking, and your language alive. The judge did not mention the loneliness of having left friends and family behind. He did not mention the embarrassment of different manners, the trauma of simple exchanges and transactions. He did not mention the heartbreak of watching your children forget where they came from.

12 For me, this was all good. I came here when I was nineteen years old. My loneliness became a time to dream ambitious dreams, dreams of revenge and conquest, dreams of showing everyone that I was more than the skinny little foreigner with holes in his shoes who could not speak very good English.

13 I also used my embarrassment so as not to take myself so seriously. One time, in Detroit, I asked a bus driver: “Can I buy this bus?” I meant to say, “Can I ride this bus?” He pushed me away and said: “Go buy the next bus!”

14 I haven’t bought that bus yet—but I just bought a car.

15 And as for the heartbreak of your children becoming American, that is inevitable. I was only a child myself when I came here but now I have children of my own. They are very American. They like to read books but they also play sports. In Romania you either read books or played sports. You couldn’t do both. And my children, as American as they are, are very interested in where they come from. They are proud of it, in fact, because it makes them different.

16 And so—I would modify what the judge said to me ten years ago in this way:

17 “You must make an effort to keep your old customs and to make others admire them, you must use your native cooking to make new friends and to bring your community together, you must make an effort to support the community life of your fellow immigrants. You are still Chinese, Haitians, Russians, and Romanians, but you are also American, which means that you can be better Chinese, better Haitians and Russians and Romanians—better because you are living together with all of these other people and you can enrich each other through your differences. You are American now, which means that you must forget the hatreds and prejudices of your own past . . . that if you are a Croatian American you cannot fight your Serbian American neighbor because that’s what is going on in the old country. You cannot pass on to your children the prejudices and hatreds of the old country. You must always remember *why* you left your countries in the first place: because you were persecuted for your political beliefs, for your religious beliefs, or simply because you wanted to live a better material life

No matter. All those reasons are precisely why you must heal the wounds of the past. America is the place where you must deliberately forgo revenge if you are to go forward. You can be born again here, but like a baby you must cancel the pain that brought you here.

18 America was set up as a place to get away from the murderous sentimentalities of the old worlds—which does not mean that you must abandon or forget the beauties of your cultures. On the contrary. The greater and prouder the cultural difference you bring here the greater your success. America changes with every single new citizen. America in 1992 is not the America I came into in 1966. Today, Spanish is spoken almost as much as English, and millions of people from Asia, the Caribbean, and the Pacific have come since then, changing the flavor and look of the place, making America more colorful, spicier, more exciting.

19 The American poet Walt Whitman wrote in 1855:

*I celebrate myself, and sing myself,
And what I assume you shall assume,
For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.*

20 And so it is. Today’s song may be a bit darker and more difficult but it’s still there.

21 America is an idea in our minds. Every generation of new immigrants remakes America in the shape of what they imagine it to be.

22 It’s your turn.

From ROAD SCHOLAR: Coast to Coast Late in the Century by Andrei Codrescu.
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In paragraph 6, the author writes, “when I came to America I found that the school and my grandmother were both wrong.”

Explain what his school taught him and what his grandmother told him about America, and give one example for each to show how they were both wrong.

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~Advertisement~

Don't Sweat the Small Stuff ... and it's all small stuff

Discover a wealth of no-sweat, low stress strategies for success!

1. What is your reaction when you are stuck in traffic ... on hold forever ... thrown yet another rush project that is “due yesterday” ... or faced with others’ thoughtless or irrational behavior?
2. If you are like most people, you fume ... fidget ... mutter under your breath. You may even work yourself into a full-blown fit of anger.
3. The trouble is, when you spend your precious time and energy “sweating the small stuff,” you sacrifice your potential to achieve happiness and success in your life. As Richard Carlson says, “When you are bothered, frustrated, stressed out, and annoyed, all the emotion takes a great deal of energy that could be better spent accomplishing your goals.”
4. This seminar will show you how to respond to stressful situations with grace and dignity. You’ll learn how to infuse your life with greater wisdom and restraint through the seven-point M.A.G.I.C.A.L. process. And you’ll see that by altering your attitude, you can alter your life—and boost your professional productivity and personal happiness in the bargain.
5. Most of us already understand how we “should” act in certain situations—cool in a crisis, positive when things go wrong, emotionally consistent with our loved ones, persistent when breaking a bad habit or taking on a new, constructive one. Yet, why is it so hard for us to do what we know is best? It isn’t—not if you use the lessons you’ll gain in this seminar.
6. In one day you’ll learn strategies to help you handle crises and reduce stress, methods for reducing compulsive behavior, and techniques to remain in control and ease pressure. Here’s your chance to develop the steady self-control that people respond to and respect. It can help you live a happier and less stressful life, starting the very next day.

Which quote from the passage does **not** demonstrate a persuasive technique used in the passage?

- A. “You’ll learn how to infuse your life with greater wisdom and restraint through the sevenpoint M.A.G.I.C.A.L. process.” (paragraph 4)
- B. “Most of us already understand how we ‘should’ act in certain situations.” (paragraph 5)
- C. “It can help you live a happier and less stressful life, starting the very next day.” (paragraph 6)
- D. “In just one day you’ll see the amazing results.” (paragraph 7)

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Living Treasure

1 Pick up a handful of soil anywhere on Earth. In it you will find more organisms—visible and microscopic—than exist on the entire surfaces of other planets.

2 The planet Mars is icy cold—and lifeless. The planet Venus is fiery hot—and lifeless. Between these planets lies our home, Earth. Its atmosphere makes it an oasis in space, with a favorable climate, abundant water, and a rich variety of living things.

3 Scientists are dazzled and puzzled by the diversity of life on Earth. No one knows how many different kinds of plants, animals, and other organisms there are. But we do know that the organisms identified so far are only a small fraction of all living things. There are millions—perhaps many millions—that await discovery.

4 The study of living things is called biology (bio is a Greek term for “life”). Scientists who study living things are called biologists. And biologists have a name for Earth’s incredible variety of life: biodiversity.

5 The first step toward understanding this biodiversity is naming and describing the different living organisms. Throughout human history and all over the world, people have given names to animals and plants they recognize. For example, in New Guinea, hunters can name sixteen different frogs, seventeen lizards and snakes, more than a hundred birds, and many more insects and worms. The New Guinea hunters are walking encyclopedias of information about the life around them.

6 Besides naming things, people have tried to make sense of Earth’s biodiversity by considering similar organisms to be members of groups. The modern system of naming and classifying living things was devised by Swedish botanist Carl von Linné in the eighteenth century. At that time, Linné and other scientists believed that perhaps 50,000 kinds of organisms lived on Earth.

7 Since then, more than 1.5 million kinds, or species, have been discovered and named. They include 250,000 species of flowering plants and 41,000 kinds of vertebrate animals. These animals with backbones include about 4,000 mammals, 19,000 fishes, about 9,000 birds, and more than 10,000 reptiles and amphibians. The largest group by far is the insects, with more than 751,000 named so far. The remainder includes worms, spiders, fungi, algae, and microorganisms.

8 Biologists believe that most of Earth’s flowering plants and vertebrate animals have been discovered. They estimate that only a few thousand more fishes, birds, reptiles, and other vertebrates are likely to be found. The greatest riches of biodiversity remain to be discovered in the world of insects and other small creatures without backbones (invertebrates).

9 Biologists expect to find some of Earth’s undescribed organisms living in coral reefs. There also may be other undiscovered habitats, and species, on the floor of the deep ocean. In the 1980s, using small research submarines, scientists began to discover new forms of life—near geysers of hot, mineral-laden water that spew from the ocean floor.

10 Earth’s greatest riches, however, lie in tropical rain forests. In the 1980s, as funds for tropical research increased, biologists found astonishing numbers of animals there.

11 In Panama, entomologist¹ Terry Erwin of the Smithsonian Institution collected insects from nineteen trees of the same species. On those trees alone, he found more than 12,000 different kinds of beetles. He estimated that one out of seven species lived on that kind of tree and no other.

12 Erwin also collected insects from one tree in the Amazon rain forest of Peru. He sent the ant specimens to be identified by biologist Edward O. Wilson of Harvard University. Wilson found forty-three kinds of ants, including several new species. This diversity of ants—from a single tropical tree—equaled the number of ant species that are known to live in all of Canada or Great Britain.

13 Tropical forests are also rich with plant life. In Borneo, a botanist discovered 700 species of trees growing on ten separate plots of land that totaled about twenty-five acres. This matches the number of tree species growing in all of North America. Also, the trunks and branches of rain forest trees are habitats for mosses, ferns, lichens, orchids, and other plants that grow far above the soil. In Costa Rica alone, more than 1,100 species of orchids have been identified.

14 In the 1980s, Terry Erwin and other biologists began for the first time to study insects, plants, and other organisms that live near the tops of tropical trees. The organisms living in the treetops, or canopy, of a rain forest are different from those living on or close to the ground. More than half of all rain forest species may live aloft. Most of them never touch the ground. Terry Erwin has called the tropical forest canopy “the heart” of Earth’s biodiversity.

15 Until the 1980s, biologists estimated that 3 to 5 million species live on Earth. However, since large numbers of tropical insects and other organisms may live on just one kind of tree, or in one small area of tropical forest, the biodiversity of Earth may be much greater. Terry Erwin has estimated that Earth may be home to 30 million species of insects alone.

16 The total of all kinds of life could be much higher. Rain forest canopies harbor not only insects but also unknown numbers of mites², roundworms, fungi, and other small organisms. Little is known about life in tropical soils. And most animals have other living things, called parasites, living on or inside them.

17 Whether the total number of species is 5 million, 30 million, or more, we know very

little about the biodiversity of our planet. Our ignorance is great.

18 Suppose the number of species is “only” 10 million. This means that we have perhaps discovered just 15 percent of the total number of species. Then consider that we have not yet learned much about the plants and animals that have been identified. Many of these organisms are “known” only in the sense that a few individuals are kept as preserved specimens in scientific collections and that they have been given a formal name.

30. Based on paragraph 5, which is probably true?

- A. Hunters in New Guinea did not name any fish or plants.
- B. People did not begin naming animals and plants until three hundred years ago.
- C. All of the frogs, lizards, snakes, birds, insects, and worms in New Guinea have been named.
- D. Other cultures around the world have historically named the animals and plants like the hunters in New Guinea.

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Hope Is the Thing with Feathers

[Note: The last documented sighting of a wild Passenger Pigeon in the USA was near Sargents, in Pike County, Ohio. It was spotted sometime between March 12 – 24, 1900, by 14-year-old Press Clay Southworth. For many years, the stuffed and mounted Passenger Pigeon was on view at The Ohio Historical Museum, in Columbus, Ohio.]

1 In a volume of his *American Ornithology*, pioneering naturalist Alexander Wilson described a flock of Passenger Pigeons that he had witnessed in the early 1800s as the birds flew between Kentucky and Indiana. The flock, Wilson estimated, numbered 2,230,272,000 birds. “An almost inconceivable multitude,” he wrote, “and yet probably far below the actual amount.” The multitude spanned a mile wide and extended for some 240 miles, consisting of no fewer than three pigeons per cubic yard of sky.

2 Mathematicians and physicists perhaps can visualize the number, but for years struggled. Just what was a flock of more than 2.2 billion pigeons like? I needed metaphor. I needed to make the swarm linear. My pocket calculator—good for figuring gas mileage—fritzed as I attempted the equations. So I called on two friends with better calculators. What I wanted to know was this: If the birds had flown single file, beak to tail, how long would the line have stretched?

3 Assuming each pigeon was about 16 inches long, a line of 2,230,272,000 Passenger Pigeons would have equaled 35 billion inches, or 3 billion feet. That’s 563,200 miles of Passenger Pigeons. In other words, if Wilson’s flock had flown beak to tail in a single file the birds would have stretched around the earth’s equatorial circumference 22.6 times.

4 Not to be confused with message-bearing “carrier pigeons”—those trained, domesticated birds so useful in war—Passenger Pigeons were wild creatures, prodigious and unequalled. This species once comprised 25 to 40 percent of the total land-bird population of what would become the United States. Historians and biologists have estimated that 3 to 5 billion Passenger Pigeons populated eastern and central North America at the time of the European conquest. The Passenger Pigeon was the most abundant bird on the planet. The next time you see an American Robin, imagine 50 Passenger Pigeons in its stead; that was the ratio between the two during colonial times.

5 Jacques Cartier, the first European to write about the pigeons, did so on July 1, 1534, having seen flocks on what is now Prince Edward Island. Champlain saw them at Kennebunkport, Maine, in 1605. De Soto. Marquette. Sir Walter Raleigh. William Strachey. The pigeons awed them all. “So thicke that even they have shadowed the Skie from us,” marveled one early account. “What it portends I know not,” mused Thomas Dudley of Salem, Massachusetts, on March 28, 1631, after having witnessed a tenebrific flight of pigeons.

6 Flying as low as a few feet off the ground or as high as a quarter-mile, Passenger Pigeons moved in vast congregations that observers compared to squall lines, oval clouds, thick arms, and waterfalls. Wilson saw how his flock flew in the shape of a river, then, suddenly, the birds moved into “an immense front.” Flocks could contain pigeons on only a single level or be stacked in layers, with the birds flying loosely scattered or packed wing tip to wing tip. When bright sky showed through those multitudes, it must have glittered like a lantern signaling a frantic code, a frenzied semaphore.

7 With their powerful chests and long, quick-snapping wings, the pigeons flew an average of 60 miles per hour, for hours at a time. Sometimes the swift and seemingly endless flocks stretched across the entire dome of the sky, so that wherever one looked, horizon or zenith or somewhere between, there flew the pigeons. They closed over the sky like an eyelid.

From *Hope Is the Thing with Feathers* by Christopher Cokinos, copyright © 2000 by Christopher Cokinos. Used by permission of Jeremy P. Tarcher, a division of Penguin Putnam, Inc.

37. The author’s purpose in this passage is to
- A. persuade people to study their own favorite birds or animals.
 - B. explain why Passenger Pigeons can no longer be seen.
 - C. describe how impressive the numbers of Passenger Pigeons were.
 - D. show the danger of wild Passenger Pigeons.

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40. What do paragraphs 6 and 7 add to the reader’s understanding of Passenger Pigeons?
- A. how mathematicians and physicists calculated the number of pigeons that flew over Kentucky and Indiana in the early 1800s
 - B. the reasons why Passenger Pigeons are more interesting than carrier pigeons
 - C. what the Passenger Pigeons looked like to those who saw them
 - D. the reasons why Passenger Pigeons are unlikely to be seen again

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42. The author uses the image, “They closed over the sky like an eyelid” (paragraph 7), to describe the
- A. breadth of the flock.
 - B. delicate flesh color of the flock.
 - C. sense of doom brought by the flock.
 - D. way the flock appeared in his dreams.

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43. What does paragraph 5 add to the reader's understanding about flocks of Passenger Pigeons?

- A. the difficulty in imagining how many there were
- B. how people reacted to their appearance
- C. why their sighting was a rare event
- D. what scientists long ago believed about them

Question 2
Benchmark B
Spring 2005

Senator George Graham Vest

[NOTE: George Vest was a United States senator from Missouri from 1879 to 1903.

As a lawyer, he once represented a plaintiff who sued his neighbor because the neighbor had killed the plaintiff's dog. Vest gave this speech in court as part of the lawsuit on behalf of his client.]

1 Gentlemen of the jury:

2 The best friend a man has in the world may turn against him and become his enemy. His son or daughter that he has reared with loving care may prove ungrateful. Those who are nearest and dearest to us, those whom we trust with our happiness and our good name may become traitors to their faith. The money that a man has, he may lose. It flies away from him, perhaps when he needs it most. A man's reputation may be sacrificed in a moment of ill-considered action. The people who are prone to fall on their knees to us in honor when success is with us may be the first to throw the stone of malice when failure settles its cloud upon our heads.

3 The one absolutely unselfish friend that man can have in this selfish world, the one that never deserts him, the one that is never ungrateful or treacherous is his dog. A man's dog stands by him in prosperity and in poverty, in health and in sickness. He will sleep on the cold ground, where the wintry winds blow and the snow drives fiercely, if only he may be near his master's side. He will kiss the hand that has no food to offer; he will lick the wounds and sores that come in encounter with the roughness of the world. He guards the sleep of his pauper master as if he were a prince. When all other friends desert, he remains. When riches take wings, and reputation falls to pieces, he is as constant in his love as the sun in its journey through the heavens.

4 If fortune drives the master forth an outcast in the world, friendless and homeless, the faithful dog asks no higher privilege than that of accompanying him, to guard him against danger, to fight against his enemies. And when the last scene of all comes, and death takes his master in its embrace and his body is laid away in the cold ground, no matter if all other friends pursue their way, there by the graveside will the noble dog be found, his head between his paws, his eyes sad, but open in alert watchfulness, faithful and true even in death.

Speech given by Senator Vest while representing a client in court September 23, 1870.
Public domain.

2. In describing those friends who turn out to be false, the author uses the phrase “the first to throw the stone of malice when failure settles its cloud upon our heads.”

The effect of the phrase is to

- A. show how physically difficult friendship can be.
- B. explain that betrayal may sometimes be necessary.
- C. emphasize the pain of having friends turn against you.
- D. imply that friends are really unnecessary for happiness.

Question 4
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4. The phrase “when riches take wings” (paragraph 3) is used to mean
- A. the loss of money.
 - B. friends running away.
 - C. changes bringing new wealth.
 - D. wealth enabling better things to happen.

Question 20
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My Favorite Teacher

[Note: Thomas L. Friedman is currently a well-known columnist for the *New York Times* and writes on foreign affairs. A malt shop (paragraph 5) was a type of informal restaurant where teenagers often met friends and classmates. A “malt” or a “malted milk,” very much like a milkshake, was a popular drink to have at such a place. Wolfman Jack (paragraph 5) was a famous radio disk jockey who played music especially popular with teenagers during the 1950s and early 1960s.]

1 Last Sunday’s *New York Times Magazine* published its annual review of people who died last year who left a particular mark on the world. I am sure all readers have their own such list. I certainly do. Indeed, someone who made the most important difference in my life died last year—my high school journalism teacher, Hattie M. Steinberg.

2 I grew up in a small suburb of Minneapolis, and Hattie was the legendary journalism teacher at St. Louis Park High School, Room 313. I took her intro to journalism course in 10th grade, back in 1969, and have never needed, or taken, another course in journalism since. She was that good.

3 Hattie was a woman who believed that the secret for success in life was getting the fundamentals right. And boy, she pounded the fundamentals of journalism into her students—not simply how to write a lead or accurately transcribe a quote, but, more important, how to comport yourself in a professional way and to always do quality work. To this day, when I forget to wear a tie on assignment, I think of Hattie scolding me. I once interviewed an ad exec for our high school paper who used a four-letter word. We debated whether to run it. Hattie ruled yes. That ad man almost lost his job when it appeared. She wanted to teach us about consequences.

4 Hattie was the toughest teacher I ever had. After you took her journalism course in 10th grade, you tried out for the paper, *The Echo*, which she supervised. Competition was fierce. In 11th grade, I didn’t quite come up to her writing standards, so she made me business manager, selling ads to the local pizza parlors. That year, though, she let me write one story. ... First story I ever got published.

5 Those of us on the paper, and the yearbook that she also supervised, lived in Hattie’s classroom. We hung out there before and after school. Now, you have to understand, Hattie was a single woman, nearing 60 at the time, and this was the 1960s. She was the polar opposite of “cool,” but we hung around her classroom like it was a malt shop and she was Wolfman Jack. None of us could have articulated it then, but it was because we enjoyed being harangued by her, disciplined by her and taught by her. She was a woman of clarity in an age of uncertainty.

6 We remained friends for 30 years, and she followed, bragged about and critiqued every

twist in my career. After she died, her friends sent me a pile of my stories that she had saved over the years. Indeed, her students were her family—only closer. Judy Harrington, one of Hattie’s former students, remarked about other friends who were on Hattie’s newspapers and yearbooks: “We all graduated 41 years ago; and yet nearly each day in our lives something comes up—some mental image, some admonition that makes us think of Hattie.”

7 Judy also told the story of one of Hattie’s last birthday parties, when one man said he had to leave early to take his daughter somewhere. “Sit down,” said Hattie. “You’re not leaving yet. She can just be a little late.”

8 That was my teacher! I sit up straight just thinkin’ about her.

9 Among the fundamentals Hattie introduced me to was *The New York Times*. Every morning it was delivered to Room 313. I had never seen it before then. Real journalists, she taught us, start their day by reading *The Times* and columnists like Anthony Lewis and James Reston.

10 I have been thinking about Hattie a lot this year, not just because she died on July 31, but because the lessons she imparted seem so relevant now. We’ve just gone through this huge dot-com-Internet-globalization bubble— during which a lot of smart people got carried away and forgot the fundamentals of how you build a profitable company, a lasting portfolio, a nation-state or a thriving student. It turns out that the real secret of success in the information age is what it always was: fundamentals—reading, writing and arithmetic, church, synagogue and mosque, the rule of law and good governance.

11 The Internet can make you smarter, but it can’t make you smart. It can extend your reach, but it will never tell you what to say at a P.T.A. meeting. These fundamentals cannot be downloaded. You can only upload them, the old-fashioned way, one by one, in places like Room 313 at St. Louis Park High. I only regret that I didn’t write this column when the woman who taught me all that was still alive.

20. Which idea from the essay is an example of irony?

- A. A student ends up enjoying his high school journalism class.
- B. A student’s toughest teacher turns out to be his favorite teacher.
- C. A student still remembers a particular teacher.
- D. A first-year journalism student sells the most ad space for the yearbook.

Question 32
Benchmark B
Spring 2005

Made in America

1 As America became increasingly urbanized, people more and more took to eating their main meal in the evening. To fill the void between breakfast and dinner, a new and essentially American phenomenon arose: lunch. The words *lunch* and *luncheon* (often spelled *lunchon*, *lunchen*, *lunchion*, or *lunching*) have been around in English since the late 1500s. Originally they signified lumps of food—“a luncheon of cheese”—and may have come from the Spanish *lonja*, a slice of ham. The word was long considered a deplorable vulgarism, suitable only to the servants’ hall. In America, however, “lunch” became respectable, and as it dawned on opportunistic restaurateurs that each day millions of office workers required something quick, simple, and cheap, a wealth of new facilities sprang up to answer the demand. In short order Americans got *diners* (1872), *lunch counters* (1873), *self-service restaurants* (1885), *cafeterias* (1890s), *automats* (1902), and *short-order restaurants* (1905).

2 The process began in 1872 in Providence, Rhode Island, when one Walter Scott loaded a wagon with sandwiches, boiled eggs, and other simple fare and parked outside the offices of the *Providence Journal*. Since all the restaurants in town closed at 8 p.m., he had no competition and his business thrived. Soon wagons began appearing all over. By the time Scott retired forty-five years later he had fifty competitors in Providence alone. They were called *lunch wagons*, which was a little odd, since lunch was one thing they didn’t serve. A few, seeking greater accuracy, called themselves *night lunch wagons* or *night cafés*. When residents complained about having food sold outside their houses, cities everywhere enacted ordinances banning the wagons. So lunch wagon proprietors hit on the idea of moving their wagons to vacant lots, taking off the wheels, and calling them restaurants, since restaurants were immune from the restrictions. By the 1920s, several companies were mass-producing shiny, purpose-built restaurants known everywhere as *diners*. From a business point of view, diners were an appealing proposition. They were cheap to buy and maintain. You could set them up in hours on any level piece of ground, and if trade didn’t materialize you loaded them onto a flatbed truck and moved them elsewhere. A single diner in a good location could turn a profit of \$12,000 a year—a lot of money in the 1920s. One of the more enduring myths of American eating is that diners were built out of old railway dining cars. Hardly any were. They were just made to look that way.

3 The first place known to be called a *cafeteria*—though the proprietor spelled it *cafetiria*—was opened in Chicago in the early 1890s. The word came from Cuban Spanish and as late as 1925 was still often pronounced in the Spanish style, with the accent on the penultimate syllable. Cafeterias proved so popular that they spawned a huge, if mercifully short-lived, vogue for words of similar form: *washeteria*, *grocceteria*, *caketeria*, *drugeteria*, *bobateria* (a place where hair was bobbed), *beauteria*, *chocolateria*, *shaveteria*, *smoketeria*, *hardware-ateria*, *garmenteria*, *furnitureteria*—even

cafeteria for a funeral home and the somewhat redundant *restauranteria*.

4 The *automat*—a cafeteria where food was collected from behind little windows after depositing the requisite change in a slot in each—was not an American invention but a Swedish one. In fact, they had been common in Sweden for half a century before two entrepreneurs named Horn and Hardardt opened one in Philadelphia in 1902 and started a small, lucrative empire.

5 *Luncheonette* (sometimes modified to *lunchette*) entered American English in about 1920 and in its turn helped to popularize a fashion for words with *-ette* endings: *kitchenette*, *dinette*, *usherette*, *roomette*, *bachelorette*, *drum majorette*, even *parkette* for a meter maid and *realtyette* for a female real estate agent.

6 The waitresses and *hash slingers* (an Americanism dating from 1868) who worked in these establishments evolved a vast, arcane, and cloyingly jocular lingo for the food they served and the clients who ate it. By the 1920s if you wanted to work behind a lunch counter you needed to know that *Noah's boy* was a slice of ham (since Ham was one of Noah's sons) and that *burn one* or *grease spot* designated a hamburger. *He'll take a chance* or *clean the kitchen* meant an order of hash, *Adam and Eve on a raft* was two poached eggs on toast, *cats' eyes* was tapioca pudding, *bird seed* was cereal, *whistleberries* were baked beans, and *dough well done with cow to cover* was the somewhat labored way of calling for an order of toast and butter.

Food that had been waiting too long was said to be *growing a beard*. Many of these shorthand terms have since entered the mainstream, notably *BLT* for a bacon, lettuce, and tomato sandwich, *over easy* and *sunny side up* in respect of eggs, and *hold* as in “hold the mayo.”

7 Eating out—usually quickly, cheaply, and greasily—became a habit for urban workers and a big business for the providers. Between 1910 and 1925 the number of restaurants in America rose by 40 percent. A hungry New Yorker in 1925 could choose among seventeen thousand restaurants, double the number that had existed a decade before. Even drugstores got in on the act. By the early 1920s, the average drugstore, it was estimated, did 60 percent of its business at the soda fountain. They had become, in effect, restaurants that also sold pharmaceutical supplies.

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32. What is the intended effect of the imagery used in the excerpt “and as it dawned on opportunistic restaurateurs” (paragraph 1)?

- A. to show an awareness of changing needs developing over time
- B. to show the immediate unsuitability of the old way of thinking
- C. to show the process involved in making a successful business
- D. to show the necessity for change constantly occurring