PREPARING FOR STANDARDIZED TESTS

Writing Skills Review

Response to Literature

Directions: Read the following passage from a book review. Then, answer each question that follows.

(1) In *Red Scarf Girl,* Ji-li Jiang not only writes a compelling autobiography, she makes the history of the Communist Chinese Cultural Revolution come alive for her readers. (2) The story takes place in Communist China. (3) Her story begins in 1966, when she was twelve years old. (4) Always an excellent student, Ji-li Jiang is shocked to discover that her talent will not be enough for her to get ahead in the new Communist society. (5) She is at a disadvantage because her deceased grandfather had been a wealthy landlord, something that is looked down upon. (6) Many terrible things happen to Ji-li Jiang and her family. (7) Terrible things happen to many innocent people in China at this time. (8) I recommend this book to anyone who would like to meet an interesting girl growing up in difficult times and to anyone who would like to learn about Chinese history.

1. Which transitional word or phrase would add clarity to the first sentence?

- **A** but also
- **B** because
- **C** and so
- **D** nevertheless

2. Which sentence is unnecessary for the review and can be deleted?

- **A** Sentence 1
- **B** Sentence 2
- **C** Sentence 5
- **D** Sentence 8

3. This passage could be improved by —

- **A** providing stronger opinions
- **B** adding examples from the story text
- **C** combining sentences
- **D** giving background information about communism

4. What would be the best way to combine sentences 6 and 7?

- **A** Many terrible things happen to Ji-li Jiang's family, and many terrible things happen to other innocent people in China at this time.
- **B** Many terrible things happen to innocent people in China at this time, including Ji-li Jiang and her family.
- **C** Ji-li Jiang and her family suffered terribly at that time in China, along with other innocent people.
- **D** Other innocent people in China at this time had terrible things happen to them and to Ji-li Jiang and her family.

Application

Reviewing

Have students work in pairs to write a review of one of the stories in this collection. Assign pairs to write positive or negative reviews. Have them use the organizational tips in the Writing Workshop, proofread their work, and share it with the class.

Extension Homework

Panel Discussions

Organize students into groups of four. Each group will review a book or story that all group members have read. Have one person in each group act as the moderator who asks questions such as, "What was the theme of the story? What was the (best, worst) part?" Through discussion, groups should draw conclusions about scenes, characters and themes. Tell students that their responses should be logical. Have groups present summaries of their discussions to the class.

Assess

Independent Practice

Answers and Explanations

1. ***A*** *The transitional phrase* but also *is typically paired with the phrase* not only. *B and C indicate a cause-and-effect relationship, while D indicates contrast.*
2. ***B*** *The reviewer already stated that the book is about Communist China. A is a needed introduction. C gives necessary information. D is the reviewer's opinion.*
3. ***C*** *The review suffers because transitions between the sentences are harsh. Combining sentences would help ease the transitions and help readers understand the review more clearly.*
4. ***B*** *This sentence is clear. A, C, and D are cluttered.*

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