

A Summer's Reading

Bagrut Questions and Answers

Summer 2017 F Exam

BRIDGING

"There will always be challenges, obstacles and less than perfect conditions in life. So what! Get started now. With each step you take, you will grow stronger, more self-confident and more successful." — Mark Victor Hansen

Make a connection between the above quote and the story.

Give information from the story to support your answer.

Answer: Like in the quote, there are many challenges and obstacles in George's life which prevent George from succeeding. He doesn't have a job, he quit school at 16. He lives in a poor neighborhood with his father and sister who have low paying jobs. Despite these challenges and poor conditions in life, and with the help of Mr. Cattanzara, George decides to take an important step to get an education and improve his life by going to the library and sitting down to read

Winter 2017 F exam

LOTS

George goes to the park because he likes to (-).

- (i) meet his friends
- (ii) dream of a better life
- (iii) watch the ball games
- (iv) read his books there

Answer: (ii) dream of a better life

Sophie (-).

- (i) works with her father
- (ii) spends a lot of time with George
- (iii) tries to encourage George
- (iv) asks Mr. Cattanzara for advice

Answer: (iii) tries to encourage George

HOTS

Mr. Cattanzara seems to be the only one who can help George change his life. Explain why. Give information from the story to support your answer.

Answer: George respects Mr. Cattanzara. / George wants Mr. Cattanzara to respect him because Mr. Cattanzara is different from the other people in the neighborhood. / George is influenced by what Mr. Cattanzara says. // Mr. Cattanzara understands George. He sees himself in George. He lives a sad life and he doesn't want George to end up the same way. Supporting information: Mr. Cattanzara reads the New York Times. / He asks George different questions than everyone else. / He was kind to him as a child. / He spreads the rumor that George is reading 100 books. // He works as a change maker. / He tells George, "Don't do what I did."

For this question, choose ONE of the thinking skills. Use this thinking skill when answering the question. When George entered the library in the fall, he "was struggling to control an inward trembling." Why do you think he reacts this way? Give information from the story to support your answer.

Answer: thinking skill: Explaining cause and effect George is afraid / excited about what he is going to do. He is trying to take responsibility for himself for the first time. / He realizes that he might be able to change his life. / Because he has always failed in the past, George is afraid he will not succeed this time. / George is trying to show Mr. Cattanzara and the people in the neighborhood that he deserves their trust and he is afraid he may not succeed. Supporting information: George dropped out of school. / quit many jobs. / George understands that Mr. Cattanzara probably told the neighbors he read all the books. / When George comes out of his room after a week Mr. Cattanzara does not say anything to him about the books although he knows he hasn't read them. / A neighbor says it is a wonderful thing for a boy his age to read so much.

Moed Bet 2016 F Exam

BRIDGING

"I never let schooling interfere with my education" - Mark Twain

Make a connection between the above quote and the story. Give information from the story to support your answer.

Answer: This quote helps me understand the story better because it connects to the story. The story is about George, who lives in a poor immigrant neighborhood and doesn't go to school. One of the reasons for George not going to school is the fact that he wants to learn different things than the things taught in school. Both George and

his neighbor, Mr. Cattanzara, believe that George can get an education by reading books without having to go to school. This fits in with the quote which says that one can get an education not only in school.

Summer 2016 F exam

BRIDGING

At the beginning of the 20th century, most of the immigrants to the United States came from non-English speaking countries. They were hoping to achieve the American Dream. These immigrants had difficulties in adjusting to life in the U.S. Most of the immigrants settled in cities because that was where jobs could be found. As a result, the cities became overcrowded and the immigrants had very poor living conditions. – Adapted from *The Progressive Era 1900-1929*, the Library of Congress.

Make a connection between the above information and the story. Give information from the story to support your answer.

Answer: This information helps me understand the story better because it connects to the story. The story is about George, who is a 20 year old boy. George lives in a poor immigrant neighborhood in New York. The streets in his neighborhood are stony and the sidewalks are broken. George quit school at the age of 16. He had several jobs but he quit them all. This leaves him with a lot of free time. Sometimes, in the evenings, he goes to a little park, where he dreams about the future he wants- "The American Dream"; He wants to have a private house, a decent job, some money and a girl to be with. However, in order to achieve all that, George has to overcome difficulties he has, like getting an education and becoming active. This fits in with to the information which says that many immigrants who came to the United States at the beginning of the 20th century, had the American Dream. However, they faced difficulties and lived mostly in poor places.

Winter 2016 F exam

LOTS

At the beginning of the story George (-).

- (i) studies at night school
- (ii) hangs around the house
- (iii) plays ball games
- (iv) has an interesting job

Answer: hangs around the house

Both Sophie and Mr. Cattanzara (–).

(i) work in a cafeteria in the Bronx

(ii) read The New York Times

(iii) ask George about his reading

(iv) give George books to read

ANSWER: ask George about his reading

HOTS

The story takes place in a poor neighborhood in New York. What is the significance of this setting for George's life? Give information from the story to support your answer.

ANSWER: The story takes place in a poor immigrant neighborhood in New York. The people who live there are not rich, and they are probably not educated. Therefore, George does not have a role model. He quit school at the age of 16, and he doesn't have a job. He is passive in his life and does nothing in order to get an education. His dream is to have money and find a decent job. However, his surrounding does not motivate him to better his life.

Do you think George will succeed in achieving his goals in life? Give information from the story to support your answer.

ANSWER: inferring - I infer that George will succeed in achieving his goals in life. George goes through a process during the story. In the beginning, George is passive in his life. He quit school and he doesn't have a job. He wants to get an education, to find a job and to have money, however, he does nothing to achieve these goals. With the help of Mr. Cattanzara, George understands that, in order to fulfill his dreams, he must become active, and he decides to make a change. In the end of the story, he goes to the library, takes 100 books and starts reading. I believe that he does that after going through a real process, and that is why he will make a real change in his life and achieve his goals.

Winter 2015 F Exam

BRIDGING

“Reading as a teenager leads to success. The more teens read, the more information they pick up... Besides helping teens to do well in school, reading also helps them expand their horizons as they learn more about people and the world. Plus, reading can show teens that everyone has problems.” – quoted from “Benefits of Reading as a Teen” by Peggy Gisler and Marge Eberts, Family Education, 2014. Make a connection between the above quote and the story. Give information from the story to support your answer.

Answer: This quote helps me understand the story better, because it connects to the story. In the story, we read about George, who lives in a poor immigrant neighborhood. George wants to have a better life. He wants a private house, a decent job, a girl and people's respect. George believes that in order to achieve that goal, he has to get an education by reading books. Mr. Cattanzara also believes that George's way to better his life is by reading books. This is the reason why he pushes him to do so. This fits in with the quote, which says that reading leads to success. Through reading, teens get a lot of useful information about the world and about themselves.

Moed Bet 2014 F Exam

BRIDGING

“The way we see ourselves as people, to a large extent, is the result of influences on us as young children and teenagers. Our experience with others, such as teachers, friends, neighbors and family significantly influences this self-image.” Make a connection between the above information and the story. Give information from the story to support your answer.

Answer: We can relate this information to George's poor self-image as a teenager. He blamed others for his problems. The only one who related to him differently was Mr. Cattanzara. It was very important to George to impress him. Supporting information: He blamed others: George felt his teachers did not respect him / his family didn't value him / his neighbors and / or people his age ignored him. // George believed that because other people didn't respect him he was unable to succeed in school / he couldn't find a job / he had no friends / no money / he couldn't get a girlfriend / a nice house. Mr. Cattanzara: He asked George different questions than everyone else. // He gave George a nickel sometimes when he was a child. The quote says that the experience we have with our neighbors, among others, significantly influences our self-image. That is clearly what happens in the story, A Summer's Reading. Mr. Cattanzara believing in George, spread rumors that George was reading / had read 100 books to improve his education. The reaction of the neighbors to these rumors and the confidence Mr. Cattanzara gave him when he spread the rumors is what motivated and significantly influenced George's self-image. It influenced him so greatly that he finally went to the library in order to change his situation and pick up his education.

Summer 2014 F Exam

LOTS

Give TWO reasons why George is dissatisfied with his life. (5 points)

Answer: Two of the following: He has no money / no job / no girlfriend. // He is bored. // He feels he doesn't get respect. // He hasn't finished school. // He wanted a bigger house / to live in a better neighborhood. // He is lonely. // He doesn't have anyone to talk to. // He doesn't have a mother. // He doesn't have a relationship with his father. // His family / father is poor.

What was the rumor that went around the neighborhood after George's first conversation with Mr. Cattanzara? (5 points)

Answer: That George had a list of (100) books and was already reading them. // That George was picking up his education

"For a few weeks he [George] had talked only once with Mr. Cattanzara, and though the change maker had said nothing more about the books, asked no questions, his silence made George a little uneasy." Why did Mr. Cattanzara's silence make George "a little uneasy"? (10 points)

Answer: George felt that Mr. Cattanzara knew the truth (that he hadn't read any books). // George felt that Mr. Cattanzara was disappointed in him. // George was afraid that Mr. Cattanzara would maybe tell the truth to the people in the neighborhood. Then the neighbors would not respect him anymore. He felt guilty that he wasn't reading and was afraid of what Mr. Cattanzara was thinking.

HOTS

George "had never exactly disliked the people in it [the neighborhood], yet he had never liked them very much either. It was the fault of the neighborhood." How does George's attitude towards the people in his neighborhood reflect his character in general? Give information from the story to support your answer. (15 points)

Answer: Possible thinking skills: Explaining patterns / Inferring / Explaining cause and effect
Explaining patterns: George blames the neighbors for the fact that he does not have a relationship with them. This is the pattern in his life. He is always blaming someone else / making excuses. Supporting information: He says he wants an education but does nothing to reach his goal. // He blames his teachers for not giving him respect. // He doesn't register for summer school because the kids will be younger than he is. // He doesn't go to night school because the teachers will tell him what to do. // He doesn't work at carpentry (his hobby) because he doesn't know where he would do it. // He doesn't read fiction because he can't stand made-up stories.

Inferring: We can infer that George doesn't feel strongly enough about anything to do something about it. Supporting information: He wanders / hangs around. / He sits in his room. / He can't decide what to do with his life, what job to work at, whether to study or not. / He wants a job but finds reasons not to get one. / He wants to continue studying but finds excuses not to.

Explaining cause and effect: George is a person who doesn't see, or doesn't want to see, that his situation is the result of his own behavior and his own wrong choices. Everything that happens to him is someone else's fault, like in this case, "the fault of the neighborhood." Supporting information: If he can't find a job, it's because it's a hard time for jobs. / If he leaves school, it's because the teachers don't respect him.

ALTERNATIVE QUESTION

“That same night a man on a street corner asked him if it was true that he had finished reading so many books, and George admitted he had. The man said it was a wonderful thing for a boy his age to read so much.” How do you think this meeting with the man made George feel about Mr. Cattanzara? Give information from the story to support your answer. (7 points)

Answer: When he meets this man, George understands that Mr. Cattanzara has not told anyone that he wasn't reading and feels grateful to him for letting the neighbors think he was. // George appreciates Mr. Cattanzara even more than before because Mr. Cattanzara understands how much he needs self-confidence and the respect of the neighbors. // Mr. Cattanzara is his savior. He feels that he owes him.

Why do you think these feelings motivated George to go to the library at the end of the story? (8 points)

Answer: George understands that Mr. Cattanzara is trying to help him improve his life and he wants to prove that his trust in him is justified. // George feels that he needs to justify the respect that he is getting from the people in the neighborhood. // George wants to pay Mr. Cattanzara back (for helping him get respect) / to make Mr. Cattanzara proud of him. / He feels he owes him for caring about him. // George doesn't want to disappoint Mr. Cattanzara any more. // George feels he had gotten a second chance after having felt that he had lost it all. // He has to live up to Mr. Cattanzara's trust in him. // He feels remorse. // He has finally learned the lesson that Mr. Cattanzara tried to teach him.

Winter 2013 F Exam

LOTS

The result of George's leaving school at the age of sixteen was (-). (5 points)

- i) he lived at home and studied carpentry
- ii) he spent most of his days doing nothing
- iii) he went to the fish market with his father
- iv) he walked around the neighborhood all day long

Answer: he spent most of his days doing nothing

When George went to the park he wished for a better life. Give TWO examples of things he wished for. (5 points)

Answer: Two of the following: He wished for a good job. // to live in a private house. // to have some money. // to have a girlfriend. // He wanted people to like and respect him.

When George first meets Mr. Cattanzara he lies to him about reading books because he wants his respect. Why is Mr. Cattanzara's respect so important to George? Support your answer with information from the story. (10 points)

Answer: Mr. Cattanzara's respect is important to George because George has a high opinion of Mr. Cattanzara. Answer should be supported by at least one of the following: Mr. Cattanzara asks George questions that show he is very interested in him. // He is like a father to him. // George thinks Mr. Cattanzara is smarter than other people in the neighborhood. For example, he reads The New York Times from cover to cover

HOTS

How do you think Mr. Cattanzara sees George? Support your answer with information from the story.

Answer: Possible thinking skills: Explaining patterns / Explaining cause and effect / comparing and contrasting.

Mr. Cattanzara sees George as a young man who is going to repeat the same pattern of behavior as he did when he was young. He was smart but wasted his potential by not getting an education and works at a boring job. He wants George to stop wasting his potential and do something to change his life. He says to George, "Don't do what I did."

ALTERNATIVE QUESTIONS

He stayed in his room for almost a week, except to sneak into the kitchen when nobody was home."

What caused George to stay in his room for a week? (7 points)

Answer: George was ashamed to see anyone / was ashamed of himself so he didn't leave the room. // He thought that Mr. Cattanzara would tell everyone that he hadn't been doing any reading. // He thought he lost the respect of everyone in his neighborhood.

In what way is this behavior typical of George? Support your answer with information from the story. (8 points)

Answer: George doesn't deal with things; he just avoids them. Answer should be supported by at least one of the following: He doesn't want to meet Mr. Cattanzara after he lied to him about the book. / He avoids speaking to people in the neighborhood by staying in his apartment all day and only going to the park at night. / He dropped out of school because the teachers didn't respect him. / He left every job he took. / He was good at carpentry but he did nothing about it.

Moed Bet 2012 F Exam

LOTS

Give TWO facts that we learn about George's family. (5 points)

Answer: Two of the following: George's mother was dead. / The family was poor. / His sister was older than him. / Sophie resembled George. / His father worked in the fish market. / His sister worked in a cafeteria in the Bronx. / Sophie had to take care of the house. / They lived above a butcher store. / They lived in a five room and / or railroad flat. / The father didn't talk much. / The father was shy. / The father got up early to go to work. / Sophie took the subway to work. / Sophie was tall and bony. / Sophie didn't earn much. / Whatever Sophie earned she kept for herself. // Sophie read a lot // Sophie left for work early / at 8 a.m.

Why does George like Mr. Cattanzara? Give ONE reason. (5 points)

Answer: (George likes Mr. Cattanzara) because Mr. Cattanzara is really interested in him / he asks him questions / he cares about him / he treats him well / he gave him money as a child / he is different / he knows a lot. / He is an intelligent man.

After Sophie realizes that George hasn't been reading the 100 books she says, "Why should I break my back for you? Go on out, you bum, and get a job." Do you agree with Sophie's opinion of George? Explain, with reference to the text. (10 points)

Answer: I agree with Sophie because George isn't doing anything worthwhile with his life. He told Mr. Cattanzara that he was reading 100 books and that made people respect him. It also made Sophie proud of him. However, then she realizes that he isn't doing any reading which means that he isn't doing anything about improving his situation. That is why she thinks she doesn't have to give him a weekly allowance and he should earn money by himself.

OR

I disagree with Sophie. She should understand that George is finding it difficult to change his life. She needs to be more sympathetic / encourage him / try to help him find a way to do that like Mr. Cattanzara is doing. She should continue to give him money for as long as she can.

HOTS

How does what we learn about George's family and / or his neighborhood help explain his situation at the beginning of the story?

Answer: Possible thinking skill: Explaining cause and effect / Explaining patterns / Comparing and contrasting

- There is no one to encourage George in his studies. He has no mother and his father works in a fish market. His sister works in a cafeteria. These are low-paying jobs that do not

demand a higher education. The people who surround him in his neighborhood also work at low-paying jobs and haven't had a higher education.

- None of George's role models have made a success of their lives. That is why he gives up easily when faced with the challenge of high school. He knows that no one around him is successful and, therefore, the chance that he will be successful is very small. He gives up before he even tries.

ALTERNATIVE QUESTIONS

At the end of the story, when George finally went out into the street, he "... walked, in disgrace, away from them [the people on the block], but before long he discovered they were still friendly to him."

What do you think Mr. Cattanzara has done to make people feel friendly towards George? (7 points)

Answer: Mr. Cattanzara (might have) told people that George has finished reading 100 books. That is why they still respect George and admire him for trying to get an education.

They don't know he lied about the reading.

What might be Mr. Cattanzara's motive for doing this? (8 points).

Answer: Mr. Cattanzara knows George has a need for respect. If he still has people's respect he might actually do the reading / improve his education / get a better life for himself

Summer 2012 F Exam

BRIDGING

"Many first generation Americans, like Bernard Malamud, valued education as a path to opportunity for themselves and their children." – From an interview for The Paris Review with Bernard Malamud by Daniel Stern. Explain how this quote adds to your understanding of the story.

Answer: This quote adds to my understanding of the story because it helps me to understand the reason reading was valued by Mr. Cattanzara and others in George's neighborhood. People came to the United States in search of the American dream: that everyone has an equal chance to succeed if they try hard enough. The people in the neighborhood were immigrants and understood that the only way that they, or their children, could succeed in the United States was by getting an education. Although George had dropped out of school, the people in the neighborhood encouraged George when they found out he was reading.

Winter 2012 F Exam

LOTS

Before speaking to Mr. Cattanzara, how did George spend his days? Give TWO examples from the story. (5 points)

Answer: Two of the following: He cleaned / tidied the house. // He sat in his room. // He read (old copies of) the World Almanac / copies of old magazines / newspapers (Sophie had brought home (from the cafeteria)) / He listened to the (ballgame on the) radio. / He went for walks in the neighborhood. / He spent time at the park

Give ONE way that people's attitudes towards George change after his first meeting with Mr. Cattanzara. (5 points)

Answer: They seem to respect / approve of him more. // People smile kindly at him. // Sophie is softer towards George / She shows him she is proud of him in different ways. / Sophie gives George a buck a week allowance

"Go buy yourself a lemon ice, Georgie." Why did Mr. Cattanzara say this to George? (10 points)

Answer: Mr. Cattanzara says these words because he wants George to know that he isn't fooled by George's behavior / to show George his disappointment with his behavior. / He believes treating George like a child will "wake him up" and show him that his behavior is leading him nowhere. Mr. Cattanzara believes that George is only fooling himself and he is the one who will pay the price for this, not anyone else.

HOTS

Why do you think it was so important to Mr. Cattanzara to help George change his life? Support your answer with reference to the story. (15 points)

Answer: Possible thinking skills: Inferring / Comparing and contrasting / Explaining patterns / Explaining cause and effect / Distinguishing different perspectives / Problem solving Possible information that would be adapted according to the thinking skill chosen: It was important for Mr. Cattanzara to help George change his life because he likes George very much and feels responsible for him. He identifies with George and sees in George a reflection of himself as a young man. He realizes that George is wasting his life and he knows that if he continues not doing anything to improve his situation, he will end up like Mr. Cattanzara himself. George is bright but confused, without direction. Like Mr. Cattanzara in the past, George is not making the most of his potential. His own life has been one of missed opportunities and he can see the same happening with George. He wants George to get an education and succeed in life, something he was unable to do.

ALTERNATIVE QUESTIONS

Can we infer from the story that Mr. Cattanzara has really succeeded in changing George? Support your answer with reference to the story.

Answer: Yes, we can infer that Mr. Cattanzara has been able to change George. At the end of the story, George goes to the library, counts off one hundred books and starts to read. The writer chooses to end the story at this point, on a positive note. He is now able to start his education and growth. He has changed from being totally passive, to taking the first step to making a change in his life.

OR:

No, we cannot infer that Mr. Cattanzara has succeeded in changing George. The author has purposely given us an open ending because the outcome is not clear at all. We know that George has taken the first step with Mr. Cattanzara's help but now it is up to George. It is very possible that he will give up; the story gives us enough examples of times he has done this. He dropped out of school, wasn't able to keep a job and never did anything about his carpentry skills. So we are not convinced that on this occasion things will be different. In addition, George seems to need the constant approval from others and it will not be so easy for him to get this constant approval just by reading books.