

Passage 2

Homing pigeons are placed in a training program from about the time they are twenty-eight days of age. They are taught to enter the loft through a trap and to exercise above and around the loft, and gradually they are taken away for short distances in wicker baskets and released. They are then expected to find their way home in the shortest possible time.

In their training flights or in actual races, the birds are taken to prearranged distant points and released to find their way back to their own lofts. Once the birds are liberated, their owners, who are standing by at the home lofts, anxiously watch the sky for the return of their entries. Since time is of the essence, the speed with which the birds can be induced to enter the loft trap may make the difference between gaining a win or a second place.

The head of a homing pigeon is comparatively small, but its brain is one quarter larger than that of the ordinary pigeon. The homing pigeon is very intelligent and will persevere to the point of stubbornness some have been known to fly a hundred miles off course to avoid a storm.

Some homing pigeon experts claim that this bird is gifted with a form of built-in radar that helps it find its own loft after hours of flight, for hidden under the head feathers are two very sensitive ears, while the sharp, prominent eyes can see great distances in daytime.

Why do homing pigeons fly home? They are not unique in this inherent skill: it is found in most migratory birds, in bees, ants, toads, and even turtles, which have been known to travel hundreds of miles to return to their homes. But in the animal world, the homing pigeon alone can be trusted with its freedom and trained to carry out the missions that people demand.

1. What is the purpose of the passage?
 - (A) To convince the reader to buy a homing pigeon
 - (B) To inform the reader about homing pigeons and their training
 - (C) To protect homing pigeons against the threat of extinction
 - (D) To encourage the owners of homing pigeons to set the birds free
2. According to the passage, what happens to homing pigeons when they are about a month old?
 - (A) They are kept in a trap.
 - (B) They enter their first race.
 - (C) They begin a training program.
 - (D) They get their wings clipped and marked.
3. In line 8, when the author states that the owners "anxiously watch the sky" there is the implication that the owners
 - (A) want their pigeon to win the race
 - (B) are sending radar signals to their pigeons
 - (C) do not know whether the race began on time
 - (D) do not trust the rules set down by the judges
4. According to the passage, what is the difference between a homing pigeon and an ordinary one?
 - (A) The span of the wings
 - (B) The shape of the eyes
 - (C) The texture of the feathers
 - (D) The size of the brain

5. The author mentions all of the following attributes that enable a homing pigeon to return home EXCEPT
- (A) instinct (B) air sacs (C) sensitive ears (D) good eyes
6. In line 16, the pronoun "it" refers to which of the following?
- (A) Radar (B) Bird (C) Loft (D) Form
7. Why does the author mention bees, ants, toads, and turtles in the last paragraph?
- (A) To describe some unusual kinds of pets
 (B) To measure distances traveled by various animals
 (C) To compare their home-finding abilities with those of homing pigeons
 (D) To interest the reader in learning about other animals

Passage 3

Central Park, emerging from a period of abuse and neglect, remains one of the most popular attractions in New York City, with half a million out-of-towners among the more than 3 million people who visit the park yearly. About 15 million individual visits are made each year.

Summer is the season for softball, concerts, and Shakespeare; fall is stunning; winter is wonderful for sledding, skating, and skiing; and springtime is the loveliest of all. It was all planned that way.

About 130 years ago Frederic Law Olmsted and his collaborator Calvert Vaux submitted their landscaping plan for a rectangular parcel two miles north of the town's center. The barren swampy tract, home for squatters and a bone-boiling works that made glue, was reported as 'a pestilential spot where miasmatic odors taint every breath of air.' It took 16 years for workers with pickaxes and shovels to move 5 million cubic feet of earth and rock, and to plant half a million trees and shrubs, making a tribute to nature—a romantic nineteenth-century perception of nature.

What exists today is essentially Olmsted and Vaux's plan, with more trees, buildings, and asphalt. Landscape architects still speak reverently of Olmsted's genius and foresight, and the sensitive visitor can see the effects he sought.

1. With what subject is the passage mainly concerned?
- (A) The lives of Olmsted and Vaux
 (B) New York City's tourist industry
 (C) Examples of nineteenth-century art in New York City
 (D) The development of Central Park
2. According to the passage, which is the prettiest time of year in Central Park?
- (A) Winter (B) Spring (C) Summer (D) Fall
3. It can be inferred that the rectangular parcel mentioned in line 9 is
- (A) the site of Central Park (B) a gift presented to New York
 (C) a skyscraper in New York (D) the proposed design for Central Park
4. According to the passage, before Olmsted and Vaux began their work, the area now occupied by Central Park was
- (A) a romantic place (B) an infertile, marshy space
 (C) a green and hilly park (D) a baseball field

5. It can be inferred from the passage that today's landscape architects praise Olmsted for his

- (A) enthusiasm for sport
- (B) skill at designing factories
- (C) concern for New York's homeless people
- (D) foresight in anticipating New York's urbanization

6. Where in the passage does the author mention unpleasant smells?

- (A) Lines 1-3
- (B) Lines 5-7
- (C) Lines 10-12
- (D) Lines 15-16