

TOEFL 読解問題演習

Read the passage and choose the best answer from among the four choices for each question.

Standing on the rim of the Grand Canyon, gazing across the giant wound in the Earth's surface, a visitor might assume that the canyon had been caused by some ancient convulsion. In fact, the events that produced the canyon, far from being sudden and cataclysmic, are all part of the slow and orderly process called "erosion."

Many millions of years ago, the Colorado Plateau in the Grand Canyon area contained 10,000 more feet of rock than it does today, and was relatively level. The additional material consisted of some 14 layered formations of rock. In the Grand Canyon region these layers were largely worn away over the course of millions of years.

Approximately 65 million years ago the plateau's flat surface in the Grand Canyon area surged from internal pressure. Geologists refer to this bulging action as "upwarping." This was followed by a general elevation of the whole Colorado Plateau, a process that is still going on. As the plateau gradually rose, shallow rivers that meandered across it began to run more swiftly and cut more definite courses. One of these rivers, located east of the upward bulge, was the ancestor of the Colorado. Another river system, called the Hualapai, flowing west of the uplifted area, extended eastward by cutting back into it; it eventually connected with the ancient Colorado and captured its waters. The new river then began to carve out the 277-mile-long trench that eventually became the Grand Canyon. Geologists estimate that this initial cutting action began no earlier than 10 million years ago.

Since then, the canyon's formation has been cumulative. To the corrosive force of the river itself have been added other factors. Heat and cold, rain and snow, along with the varying levels of resistance of the rocks, increase the opportunities for erosion. The canyon walls crumble; the river acquires a cutting tool—tons of debris; rainfall running off the high plateau creates feeder streams that carve side canyons. Pushing slowly backward into the plateau, the side canyons yield to expose new rocks, and the pattern of erosion continues.

QUESTIONS

1. What does the passage mainly discuss?
 - (A) patterns of erosion in different mountain ranges
 - (B) the forces that made the Grand Canyon
 - (C) the increasing pollution of the Colorado River
 - (D) the sudden appearance of the Grand Canyon

2. In line 1 through 2, the author refers to the Grand Canyon as a wound to indicate that
 - (A) it was caused by some ancient convulsion
 - (B) its presence is an embarrassment to the state of Colorado
 - (C) it looks like an injury on the Earth's surface
 - (D) it has caused many visitors to injure themselves

3. According to the passage, the first phenomenon to contribute to the formation of the Grand Canyon was
 - (A) a series of volcanic eruptions
 - (B) the collapse of rock formations in the Colorado Plateau
 - (C) a succession of floods from the Hualapai River and what is now the Colorado River
 - (D) an uplifting of a level surface brought on by the earth's internal pressure

4. The author mentions all of the following as causes of erosion EXCEPT
 - (A) wind
 - (B) rain
 - (C) heat
 - (D) cold

5. Which of the following conclusions about the Grand Canyon can be drawn from the passage?
 - (A) Its contours are constantly changing.
 - (B) It contains approximately 14 million tons of rock.
 - (C) Its eruptions have increased in recent years.
 - (D) It is being eroded by toxic waste and pollutants.

6. The passage would most likely be found in a textbook on which of the following subjects?

- (A) astronomy
- (B) botany
- (C) geology
- (D) chemistry

7. Look at the word surged in the passage. Which of the following is closest in meaning to surged?

- (A) slumped
- (B) cracked
- (C) flattened
- (D) rose up

8. Look at the word yield to in the passage. Which of the following is closest in meaning to yield?

- (A) give way
- (B) react
- (C) converge
- (D) disappear

Each of the following sentences has an underlined word or phrase. Below each sentence are four other words or phrases. You are to choose the one word or phrase that best preserves the meaning of the original sentence if it is substituted for the underline

9. While most deserts are located in continental interiors, the world's most arid region, the Atacama Desert in Northern Chile and Southern Peru, borders the sea.

- (A) most acidic
- (B) driest
- (C) most deserted
- (D) most desolate

10. Commercial jet pilots have a stressful but prestigious occupation.

- (A) well-paid
- (B) challenging
- (C) respected
- (D) undesirable