

Reading Comprehension Pre-Test

Introduction

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The pre-test that follows is designed to identify areas where you, the student, can improve your skills before or after taking the Alabama High School Graduation Exam (AHSGE) in Reading Comprehension. This pre-test will be similar in format to the graduation exam.

Directions

Read each passage carefully, and then answer the questions that follow. Darken the circle corresponding to your answer choice. You may look back at each passage as often as you like. Once you have completed this pre-test, circle the questions you answered incorrectly on the pre-test evaluation chart on page 34. For each question that you missed on the pre-test, review the corresponding sections in the book as given in the evaluation chart. Read the instructional material, do the practice exercises, and take the section review tests at the end of each section.

Purpose of the Pre-Test

The following pre-test can be used as practice for the AHSGE in Reading Comprehension, but it is primarily a diagnostic tool to help you, the student, identify which skills you can improve in order to prepare better for the actual test. Any pre-test question answered incorrectly may identify a skill needing improvement or mastery. Review the corresponding skill(s) indicated in the Pre-Test Evaluation Chart by reading the instructional material on the given pages and completing the practice exercises and reviews. By reviewing each skill, you will improve mastery of the material to be tested on the Reading Comprehension portion of the AHSGE and potentially increase the score you receive on that exam. (The practice tests, which are given in separate booklets, are provided to give you additional practice taking tests similar to the actual AHSGE in Reading Comprehension.)

General Information About the AHSGE in Reading Comprehension

The AHSGE in Reading Comprehension will consist of 84 multiple-choice questions. You must obtain a score of 563 or higher on the exam to get credit for graduation.

Reading Comprehension Pre-Test

Read the following article and then read the excerpt from a table of contents. Answer questions 50 through 59. You may look back at the table of contents and article as often as you like.

Carli is researching fire ants for a research paper. She finds a book titled “Dangerous Creatures: A Collection of Articles on Poisonous Animals.” She finds the following article in the book. The table of contents for the book is also given.

Fire Ants

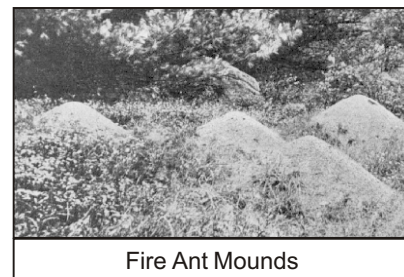
by J. T. Vogt, PhD

Few insects have inspired as much fear and hatred as the diminutive fire ants. Less than half an inch long but living in colonies of more than 250,000 individuals, the fire ant with its potent sting, aggressive behavior, and rapid spread is one of the most destructive invasive species ever to be accidentally brought into the United States. There are actually two species of imported fire ants, both from South America. The black imported fire ant was accidentally introduced around 1918, followed by the red imported fire ant in the 1930s. Both arrived on ships at the Port of Mobile, Alabama. The red imported fire ant is more widespread in the United States than the black imported fire ant, and in 70 or so years since its arrival it has spread to infest more than 300 million acres in the southeast, with isolated infestations in New Mexico and California.

Everyone in the southern United States gets to know fire ants sooner or later by painful experience. Fire ants live in large earthen mounds and are true social insects — that means they have a caste system (division of labor), with a specialized caste that lays eggs (queen) and a worker caste of sterile females. There are several reasons that they are considered pests. About 60% of people living in areas where fire ants occur are stung every year. Of these, about 1% have some degree of allergic reaction (called anaphylaxis) to the sting. Their large mounds are unsightly and can damage mowing equipment. Fire ants sometimes enter electrical and mechanical equipment and can short out switches or chew through insulation. Finally, as fire ants move into new areas, they reduce diversity of native ants and prey on larger animals such as ground-nesting birds and turtles.

Even though fire ants are pests in many circumstances, they can actually be beneficial in others. There is evidence that their predatory activities can reduce the numbers of some other important pests. In cotton, for example, they prey on important pests that eat cotton plants such as bollworms and budworms. In Louisiana sugarcane, an insect called the sugarcane borer used to be a very important pest before fire ants arrived and began preying on it. Fire ants also prey on ticks and fleas.

Whether fire ants are considered pests or not depends on where they're found, but one thing is sure — we had best get used to living with them. Eradication



Fire Ant Mounds

attempts in the 1960s and 1970s failed for a number of reasons, and scientists generally agree that complete elimination of fire ants from the United States is not possible. A new, long-term approach to reducing fire ant populations involves classical biological control. When fire ants were accidentally brought to the United States, most of their parasites and diseases were not. Classical biological control involves identifying parasites and diseases specific to fire ants in South America, testing them to be sure that they don't attack or infect native plants or animals, and establishing them in the introduced fire ant population in the United States. Since fire ants are about 5 to 7 times more abundant here than in South America, scientists hope to reduce their numbers using this approach.

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Velvet Ants	24
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Yellow Jackets	26

Other Poisonous Crawlers

Centipedes	28
Millipedes	29

50. According to the table of contents, on what page did Carli find the Fire Ant article?

- A 20
- B 22
- C 23
- D 24

(A) (B) (C) (D)

52. What is the meaning of the word *caste* as it is used in this article?

- A members of a play
- B social class or rank
- C to throw something
- D classy

(A) (B) (C) (D)

51. Through what United States seaport were fire ants brought into the country?

- A New Mexico
- B Louisiana
- C Mobile
- D California

(A) (B) (C) (D)

53. What important consideration must be determined in the classical biological control of fire ants?

- A the number of parasites and diseases needed to reduce the fire ants
- B identification and testing of parasites and diseases that can be safely introduced in United States fire ant population
- C identification of the ship that brings them in so it can be sprayed before it comes back to the United States again
- D a method of preventing them from entering and destroying electrical and mechanical equipment

(A) (B) (C) (D)