

ACT-like Reading Comprehension

6 Questions - 6 Minutes

*The following excerpt is adapted from **The Mysteries of Udolpho**, a Gothic Romance novel written by Ann Radcliff in 1803. After you read the passage, choose the best answer to each of the questions that follow. You may refer to the passage as you work on the questions.*

Monsieur St. Aubert loved to wander with his wife and daughter on the banks of the Garonne River, and to listen to the music that floated on its waves. He had known life in other forms than
5 those of pastoral simplicity, having mingled in the gay and in the busy scenes of the world, but the flattering portrait of mankind, which his heart had delineated in early youth, his experience had too sorrowfully corrected. Yet, amid the changing
10 visions of life, his principles remained unshaken and his benevolence unchilled. He retired from the city life, more in *pity* than in anger, to scenes of simple nature, to the pure delights of literature, and to the exercise of domestic virtues.

15 He was a descendant from the younger branch of an illustrious family, and it was designed that the deficiency of his wealth could be corrected either by a splendid alliance in marriage, or by success in the intrigues of public affairs. But St.
20 Aubert had too nice a sense of honor to fulfil the latter hope, and too small a portion of ambition to sacrifice marital happiness to the attainment of wealth. Toward the end of his life, Monsieur St. Aubert's father had achieved such success in
25 business that his son would find it necessary to dispose of that part of the family domain. After the death of his father he married a very amiable woman, his equal in birth, and not his superior in fortune. Some years after his marriage, he sold his
30 father's business holdings to Monsieur Quesnel, the brother of his wife, and retired to a small estate in Gascony where conjugal felicity and parental duties divided his attention with the treasures of knowledge and the illuminations of
35 genius.

He had been attached to this spot near the Garonne River from his infancy. He had often made excursions to it when a boy: the green pastures along which he had so often bounded in
40 the exultation of health, and youthful freedom;

the woods, under whose refreshing shade he had first indulged that pensive melancholy, which afterwards made a strong feature of his character; the wild walks of the mountains, the river, on
45 whose waves he had floated; and the distant plains, which seemed boundless as his early hopes. As a young man, this spot was never after remembered by St. Aubert but with enthusiasm and regret. At length when he disengaged himself
50 from the world, he retired here to realize the wishes of many years.

The building, as it then stood, was merely a summer cottage, rendered interesting to a stranger by its neat simplicity or the beauty of the
55 surrounding scene, and considerable additions were necessary to make it a comfortable family residence. St. Aubert felt a kind of affection for every part of the fabric, which he remembered in his youth, and would not suffer a stone of it to be
60 removed, so that the new building, adapted to the style of the old one, formed with it only a simple and elegant residence. The taste of Madame St. Aubert was conspicuous in its internal finishing, where the same chaste simplicity was observable
65 in the furniture, and in the few ornaments of the apartments, that characterized the manners of its inhabitants.

1. Over the course of this passage, the focus shifts from:
- A.** a discussion of a father's love for wealth to his son's distaste for money.
 - B.** a description of a character's personality to a depiction of his new home.
 - C.** a narrative of a woman's search for a husband to her search for a cottage.
 - D.** an explanation of why a man left a country to a description of his retirement in the city.
2. The passage's description of St. Aubert reveals that compared to his father, he is:
- F.** more appreciative of spending time out of doors.
 - G.** less likely to decorate his home in an opulent fashion.
 - H.** equally intent in increasing his wealth through marriage.
 - J.** less interested in running a business and earning money.
3. According to the passage, St. Aubert's thoughtful character was developed:
- A.** while he listened to music with his wife and daughter.
 - B.** when he was an infant being raised by his father.
 - C.** when he spent time alone in the woods as a young boy.
 - D.** when he left the city for a quiet retirement in Gascony.
4. Which of the following is a detail from the passage that indicates St. Aubert's love of books and knowledge?
- F.** The ways in which he spent his time during his retirement.
 - G.** The simplicity of his home and its decorations.
 - H.** His rejection of the business world and the income he might derive from it.
 - J.** His exploration of the mountains, river, and plains during his boyhood.
5. As it is used in line 58, the word *fabric* most nearly means:
- A.** essence.
 - B.** cloth.
 - C.** thread.
 - D.** suffering.
6. The passage most strongly suggests that Madame St. Aubert:
- F.** inherited a considerable fortune.
 - G.** owned a business with her brother before she was married.
 - H.** was a devoted wife and mother.
 - J.** had a similar style of decorating as her husband.

Answer Key:

1.) B

2.) J

3.) C

4.) F

5.) A

6.) J