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CRITICAL VERBAL REASONING PRACTICE TEST 1

The extreme cold and wet weather events of late 2013/early 2014 in the U.S. and the U.K. respectively brought the clear links to climate change back into the political arena. Prior to this the UK government's focus was on other political and socio-economic issues such as unemployment and a very welcome - however uneven - recovery. Yet, in the same period of the credit crunch and its aftermath, the US's home-grown "fracking" industry revolutionised America's energy economy. American "fracking" looks now to deliver a supply of cheap gas for many years to come. Over the same period, the world's second biggest economic powerhouse, China, has further cemented its reputation for exporting solar power technologies. By 2015, the US expects to be energy self-sufficient and to have become the world's biggest oil producer.

Britain's Energy Minister has described fracking as "an exciting prospect, which could bring faster growth, more jobs and energy security". Already drilling rights covering almost 40,000 British square miles have been sold to "fracking" companies who will from 2014 apply for the additional environmental and planning permits that are required before any drilling can proceed. The British Government only expects a minority of these exploration rights to be claimed. Fracking has already started in West Sussex; causing a massive increase in road traffic and in opponents; campaigning on site against the potential environmental damage. In fact, fracking is banned in France for environmental reasons.

Fracking in the US involves pumping sand, water and special chemicals into the ground to widen the cracks where pockets of gas are trapped. This solution then needs to be pumped out before collecting the released gas. The UK hopes that US-style fracking methods will produce a US-style "revolt" in the price of domestic energy. The American desire for cheaper energy is driving an *onshoring* process that is shifting manufacturing bases back home from the Far East. This reindustrialisation has helped to underpin a rapidly improving US recovery.

- 1) Which of the following is the most accurate summary of the second paragraph?
 - a) Drilling rights across the UK are expected to lead to a rapid expansion of fracking.
 - b) Environmental activists recently lost their fight to stop fracking coming to the UK.
 - c) The British Government is broadly supportive of more fracking across the UK.
 - d) There are economic and environmental benefits from increasing our use of fracking.
 - e) Fracking has recently begun in the UK and there is economic support for its future expansion.

- 2) Which of the following statements can be inferred from the passage?
 - a) America is one of the world's key manufacturers of solar power equipment.
 - b) The British fracking industry is nascent.
 - c) Fracking is an increasingly contentious means of extracting gas across the globe.
 - d) Social unrest is caused by high levels of unemployment.
 - e) The latest global recession is now over.



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- 3) What does the passage's author intend to show by putting the word "revolt" in inverted commas?
- That he disagrees.
 - To show that this is a quote.
 - The revolt was unplanned.
 - The revolt may not have happened.
 - It was an unusual revolt.
- 4) The passage includes which one or more of the following facts about fracking in the US?
- There has been rapidly rising US unemployment due to the global recession.
 - The first British fracking sites were established in West Sussex in 2013.
 - The US imports most of its manufactured goods from the Far East.
 - Fracking has caused a shift in US energy prices.
 - Exploration rights have been sold for over 40,000 square miles of land.
- 5) What is the meaning of the *onshoring* term used in the context of the final paragraph?
- The trade deficit between America and the Far East has reduced.
 - Many Americans prefer to use cheaper, onshored energy.
 - The pumping of a mixture of sand, water and special chemicals into the ground.
 - Bringing goods manufacturing back to America.
 - The rapid improvement in American industry.
- 6) Which of the following best summarises the passage's main idea?
- Fracking's benefits clearly outweigh the costs.
 - The UK is aiming to mirror the US's fracking expansion.
 - The price of gas fluctuates over time.
 - Fracking could potentially alter the UK's energy supply mix.
 - The politically charged economic benefits of fracking have environmental costs.
- 7) Which two of the following reasons are given for resisting fracking expansion in the UK?
- Energy security
 - Extreme weather
 - Environmental concerns
 - Economic benefits
 - Cheaper gas