

PART III: READING COMPREHENSION

SECTION A:

INSTRUCTIONS: Read Selections 1 and 2 and answer the multiple-choice questions that accompany them by filling in the circle ○ to the left of the correct answer.

Selection 1

① There are two main types of forest fires — those that get started by accident (a lightning strike or a careless smoker or camper), and those that are deliberately set for beneficial human purpose. ② (Somewhere in between are those deliberately set by an arsonist for no good reason.) ③ The fires that make it most frequently into the newspaper headlines are those that were set accidentally. ④ But human beings have long been deliberately setting forests on fire for a variety of purposes, such as improving the habitat of the wild animals they are dependent upon for food, or converting a forest into farmland. ⑤ However, it is only in the last two decades that scientists responsible for forest management in Canada (primarily in Ontario, Alberta, and British Columbia) have **been setting what they call “prescribed burns.”** ⑥ Although it may sound paradoxical, there is evidence that some types of forests need a fire if they are going to enjoy long-term survival. ⑦ The reason for this is that over the **years, as a forest’s** trees grow larger and taller, the area it covers can become so dense that there is not enough sunlight reaching down to the ground to allow the fallen cones or seeds to sprout and turn into healthy seedlings. ⑧ When this happens, there will be no new growth to replace the original trees when they begin to die off. ⑨ Because of this, forest management workers will decide to put the torch to a forest. ⑩ They want to open it up in order to save it. ⑪ They point out that some types of forest are defined as **being “fire-dependent.”** ⑫ For example, in a forest that contains a number of biodiverse species such as aspen, willow and Douglas fir, along with shade trees such as pine and spruce, the first tree will not survive if there is not a fire every 20 years or so to let some light in.

Questions:

1. Which one of the following is the best description of an arsonist? A person who...
 - starts fires for illegal purposes.
 - sets fire because forests need a fire to sustain growth.
 - creates “prescribed burns.”
 - is deliberately beneficial.
2. According to the passage, which one of the following is a useful result of prescribed burning?
 - new farmland
 - improved logging practices
 - regeneration of part of a forest
 - improved habitat for hunting

3. In sentence 9, the idiom “to put the torch to” means which one of the following?

- to ignite
- to abandon
- to illuminate
- to fight a fire

4. Which one of the following statements about forest fires is implied in the passage?

- They occur approximately every 20 years.
- They have increased over the last two decades.
- They make some forests “fire-dependent.”
- They are sometimes a necessary occurrence.