

GRE VERBAL PRACTICE PAPER

Passage adapted from H.G Wells' *Anticipations* (1901)

Democracy of the modern type—manhood suffrage and so forth—became a conspicuous phenomenon in the world only in the closing decades of the eighteenth century. Its genesis is so intimately connected with the first expansion of the productive element in the State, through mechanism and a co-operative organization, as to point at once to a causative connection. The more closely one looks into the social and political life of the eighteenth century the more plausible becomes this view. New and potentially influential social factors had begun to appear—the organizing manufacturer, the intelligent worker, the skilled tenant, and the urban abyss, and the traditions of the old land-owning non-progressive aristocratic monarchy that prevailed in Christendom, rendered it incapable—without some destructive shock or convulsion—of any re-organization to incorporate or control these new factors. In the case of the British Empire an additional stress was created by the incapacity of the formal government to assimilate the developing civilization of the American colonies. Everywhere there were new elements, not as yet clearly analyzed or defined, arising as mechanism arose; everywhere the old traditional government and social system, defined and analyzed all too well, appeared increasingly obstructive, irrational, and feeble in its attempts to include and direct these new powers.

But now comes a point to which I am inclined to attach very great importance. The new powers were as yet shapeless. It was not the conflict of a new organization with the old. It was the preliminary dwarfing and deliquescence of the mature old beside the embryonic mass of the new. It was impossible then—it is, I believe, only beginning to be possible now—to estimate the proportions, possibilities, and inter-relations of the new social orders out of which a social organization has still to be built in the coming years. No formula of definite reconstruction had been evolved, or has even been evolved yet, after a hundred years. And these swelling inchoate new powers, whose very birth condition was the crippling, modification, or destruction of the old order, were almost forced to formulate their proceedings for a time, therefore, in general affirmative propositions that were really in effect not affirmative propositions at all, but propositions of repudiation and denial. "These kings and nobles and people privileged in relation to obsolescent functions cannot manage our affairs"—that was evident enough, that was the really essential question at that time, and since no other effectual substitute appeared ready made, the working doctrine of the infallible judgment of humanity in the gross,

as distinguished from the quite indisputable incapacity of sample individuals, became, in spite of its inherent absurdity, a convenient and acceptable working hypothesis.

1. Which of the following is a likely conclusion that could be drawn from Wells' remarks?
 - A. The newly emerging society eventually would look quite like mob rule.
 - B. The new forms of government would collapse under their absurd forms.
 - C. There would likely be widespread repudiation of the new forms of government.

A and C

B

A

A and B

A, B, and C

Passage adapted from John Dewey's "The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy" (1915)

Intellectual advance occurs in two ways. At times increase of knowledge is organized about old conceptions, while these are expanded, elaborated and refined, but not seriously revised, much less abandoned. At other times, the increase of knowledge demands qualitative rather than quantitative change; alteration, not addition. Men's minds grow cold to their former intellectual concerns; ideas that were burning fade; interests that were urgent seem remote. Men face in another direction; their older perplexities are unreal; considerations passed over as negligible loom up. Former problems may not have been solved, but they no longer press for solutions.

Philosophy is no exception to the rule. But it is unusually conservative--not, necessarily, in proffering solutions, but in clinging to problems. It has been so allied with theology and theological morals as representatives of men's chief interests, that radical alteration has been shocking. Men's activities took a decidedly new turn, for example, in the seventeenth century, and it seems as

if philosophy, under the lead of thinkers like Bacon and Descartes, was to execute an about-face. But, in spite of the ferment, it turned out that many of the older problems were but translated from Latin into the vernacular or into the new terminology furnished by science.

The association of philosophy with academic teaching has reinforced this intrinsic conservatism. Scholastic philosophy persisted in universities after men's thoughts outside of the walls of colleges had moved in other directions. In the last hundred years intellectual advances of science and politics have in like fashion been crystallized into material of instruction and now resist further change. I would not say that the spirit of teaching is hostile to that of liberal inquiry, but a philosophy which exists largely as something to be taught rather than wholly as something to be reflected upon is conducive to discussion of views held by others rather than to immediate response. Philosophy when taught inevitably magnifies the history of past thought, and leads professional philosophers to approach their subject-matter through its formulation in received systems. It tends, also, to emphasize points upon which men have divided into schools, for these lend themselves to retrospective definition and elaboration. Consequently, philosophical discussion is likely to be a dressing out of antithetical traditions, where criticism of one view is thought to afford proof of the truth of its opposite (as if formulation of views guaranteed logical exclusives). Direct preoccupation with contemporary difficulties is left to literature and politics.

2. If Dewey's remarks are correct, which of the following likely describes the situation at a University at his time?
- A. Philosophy departments are stifling all questioning about new problems expressed on campus.
 - B. The most radical members of a campus are members of other departments, like sociology, anthropology, and literature.
 - C. There is little that is culturally beneficial coming out of the work of the philosophy departments.

A, B, and C

A and C

B and C

C

A

3. Which of the following could be an additional explanation that Dewey could cogently claim for his main point?

A. Philosophy is conservative because the human mind asks the same basic questions in all periods of history.

B. Philosophy is conservative because new ideas are merely copies of older ones.

C. Philosophy is conservative because people are not always aware of the novelty of their current social and historical conditions.

C

A

A and C

B

A and B

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4. Which of the following best describes a phenomenon that likely was problematic in the older form of government? Select all that apply:
- A. The older forms of government were not able to regulate the wage system arising in the new forms of industry.
 - B. The rulers of the old government were irrationally clinging to the rights of kings against the people.
 - C. The older government was unable to organize the cities, all of which required new services and ordinances as they grew.

<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A and C
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A, B, and C

A and B

B

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philosophers to approach their subject-matter through its formulation in received systems. It tends, also, to emphasize points upon which men have divided into schools, for these lend themselves to retrospective definition and elaboration. Consequently, philosophical discussion is likely to be a dressing out of antithetical traditions, where criticism of one view is thought to afford proof of the truth of its opposite (as if formulation of views guaranteed logical exclusives). Direct preoccupation with contemporary difficulties is left to literature and politics.

5. Which of the following might Dewey recommend, based on the remarks in the selection above:
- A. A repudiation of concern with philosophical questions.
 - B. The reorientation of philosophical questions asked by thinkers.
 - C. The end of the professional teaching of philosophy.

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<input type="text" value="select"/>	
<input type="radio"/>	A and C
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<input type="radio"/>	A, B, and C
<input type="text" value="select"/>	
<input type="radio"/>	B
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<input type="radio"/>	B and C

6. Which of the following might be a bias of Dewey's:
- A. He does not believe that all questions are raised in the context of previous answers and outlooks.
 - B. He does not give enough weight to the importance of thinking with previous great thinkers, even though they might have had problems and questions different from those of people alive today.
 - C. He is too worried about immediate needs and not long-term goals and solutions.

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<input type="radio"/>	A, B, and C
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B

C

A and C

7. Which of the following express Dewey's overall contention adequately?

A. Theology has exerted too much influence on the development of philosophy.

B. At certain rare moments in history, philosophy nearly made a radical break with its past forms of expression.

C. Philosophy is susceptible to its own particular impediments to development.

C

B and C

A, B, and C

B

A