

CRITICAL READING TEST 3

Directions: Answer the questions below based on the information in the accompanying passage.

The following passage is excerpted from a study of modern architecture.

- Fallingwater, a small country house constructed in 1936, stands as perhaps the greatest residential building achievement of the American architect Frank Lloyd Wright. In designing the dwelling for
- (5) the Pittsburgh millionaire Edgar J. Kaufmann, Wright was confronted with an unusually challenging site, beside a waterfall deep in a Pennsylvania ravine. However, Wright viewed this difficult location not as an obstacle, but as a
- (10) unique opportunity to put his architectural ideals into concrete form. In the end, Wright was able to turn Fallingwater into an artistic link between untamed nature and domestic tranquility, and a masterpiece in his brilliant career.
- (15) Edgar J. Kaufmann had originally planned for his house to sit at the bottom of the waterfall, where there was ample flat land on which to build. But Wright proposed a more daring response to the site. The architect convinced Kaufmann to
- (20) build his house at the top of the waterfall on a small stone precipice. Further, Wright proposed extending the living room of the house out over the rushing water, and making use of modern building techniques so that no vertical supports
- (25) would be needed to hold up the room. Rather than allowing the environment to determine the placement and shape of the house, Wright sought to construct a home that actually confronted and interacted with the landscape.

- (30) In one sense, Fallingwater can be viewed as a showcase for unconventional building tactics. In designing the living room, for example, Wright made brilliant use of a technique called the cantilever, in which steel rods are laid inside a shelf of
- (35) concrete, eliminating the need for external supports. But Fallingwater also contains a great many traditional and natural building materials. The boulders which form the foundation for the house also extend up through the floor and form part of
- (40) the fireplace. A staircase in the living room extends down to an enclosed bathing pool at the top of the waterfall. To Wright, the ideal dwelling in this spot was not simply a modern extravaganza or a direct extension of natural surroundings;
- (45) rather, it was a little of both.
- Critics have taken a wide range of approaches to understanding this unique building. Some have postulated that the house exalts the artist's triumph over untamed nature. Others have compared
- (50) Wright's building to a cave, providing a psychological and physical safe haven from a harsh, violent world. Edgar Kaufmann Jr., the patron's son, may have summed up Fallingwater best when he said, "Wright understood that people were creatures of
- (55) nature; hence an architecture which conformed to nature would conform to what was basic in people. . . . Sociability and privacy are both available, as are the comforts of home and the adventures of the seasons." This, then, is Frank Lloyd Wright's
- (60) achievement in Fallingwater, a home which connects the human and the natural, for the invigoration and exaltation of both.

1. The primary purpose of the passage is to
 - (A) showcase Wright's use of unconventional building tactics and techniques
 - (B) describe the relationship between Wright and Edgar J. Kaufmann
 - (C) judge the place of Fallingwater in the history of architecture
 - (D) describe Fallingwater as Wright's response to a challenging building site
 - (E) evaluate various critical responses to Fallingwater

2. The word *concrete* in line 11 could best be replaced by
 - (A) dense
 - (B) hard
 - (C) substantial
 - (D) durable
 - (E) reinforced

3. The passage suggests that Edgar J. Kaufmann's original plans for the site were
 - (A) conservative
 - (B) inexpensive
 - (C) daring
 - (D) idealistic
 - (E) architecturally unsound

4. The author includes a description of a cantilever (lines 33–36) in order to explain
 - (A) the technique used to create the fireplace in Fallingwater
 - (B) the use of traditional engineering techniques in Fallingwater
 - (C) an unusual design feature of Fallingwater
 - (D) modern technological advances in the use of concrete
 - (E) how Fallingwater conforms to nature

5. The end of paragraph 3 indicates that, otherwise, Wright wanted Kaufmann's home
 - (A) representative of its owner's wealth and position
 - (B) as durable as current construction techniques would allow
 - (C) a landmark in 20th century American architecture
 - (D) impressive yet in harmony with its surroundings
 - (E) a symbol of man's triumph over the natural landscape

6. Critics' comparison of Fallingwater to a cave (line 50) suggests that the house conveys a sense of
 - (A) warmth
 - (B) darkness
 - (C) simplicity
 - (D) claustrophobia
 - (E) security

7. In context, the phrase *for the invigoration and exaltation of both* (line 62) suggests that Fallingwater
 - (A) encourages visitors to appreciate the change of seasons
 - (B) benefits the environment as well as its occupants
 - (C) stands out as the most beautiful feature in the local landscape
 - (D) enables its owners to entertain in an impressive setting
 - (E) typifies Wright's efforts to infuse modern architecture with spirituality