

ACT READING PRACTICE PAPER

The following passage is from a discussion of various ways that living creatures have been classified over the years.

	The world can be classified in different ways, depending on one's interests and principles of classification. The classifications (also known as
Line	taxonomies) in turn determine which comparisons
5	seem natural or unnatural, which literal or analogical. For example, it has been common to classify living creatures into three distinct groups—plants, animals, and humans. According to this classification, human beings are not a special kind of
10	animal, nor animals a special kind of plant. Thus any comparisons between the three groups are strictly analogical. Reasoning from inheritance in garden peas to inheritance in fruit flies, and from these two species to inheritance in human beings,
15	is sheer poetic metaphor.

	Another mode of classifying living creatures is commonly attributed to Aristotle. Instead of treating plants, animals, and humans as distinct groups, they are nested. All living creatures
20	possess a vegetative soul that enables them to grow and metabolize. Of these, some also have a sensory soul that enables them to sense their environments and move. One species also has a rational soul that is capable of true understanding.
25	Thus, human beings are a special sort of animal, and animals are a special sort of plant. Given this classification, reasoning from human beings to all other species with respect to the attributes of the vegetative soul is legitimate, reasoning from
30	human beings to other animals with respect to the attributes of the sensory soul is also legitimate, but reasoning from the rational characteristics of the human species to any other species is merely analogical. According to both classifications, the
35	human species is unique. In the first, it has a kingdom all to itself; in the second, it stands at the pinnacle of the taxonomic hierarchy.

	Homo sapiens is unique. All species are. But this sort of uniqueness is not enough for many
40	(probably most) people, philosophers included. For some reason, it is very important that the species to which we belong be uniquely unique. It is of utmost importance that the human species be

insulated from all other species with respect to
45 how we explain certain qualities. Human beings
clearly are capable of developing and learning
languages. For some reason, it is very important
that the waggle dance performed by bees ` not
count as a genuine language. I have never been
50 able to understand why. I happen to think that the
waggle dance differs from human languages to
such a degree that little is gained by terming them
both "languages," but even if "language" is so
defined that the waggle dance slips in, bees still
55 remain bees. It is equally important to some that
no other species use tools. No matter how inge-
nious other species get in the manipulation of
objects in their environment, it is absolutely
essential that nothing they do count as "tool use."
60 I, however, fail to see what difference it makes
whether any of these devices such as probes and
anvils, etc. are really tools. All the species
involved remain distinct biological species no
matter what decisions are made. Similar observa-
65 tions hold for rationality and anything a computer
might do.

According to the author, what is most responsible for influencing our perception of a comparison between species?

- The behavior of the organisms in their natural environment
- The organizational scheme imposed on the living world by researchers and philosophers
- The style of language used by scientists in presenting their research
- The sophistication of the communication between organisms
- The magnitude of hierarchical distance between a species and Homo sapiens

Which of the following is NOT possible within an Aristotelian classification scheme?

- Two species that are alike in having sensory souls but differ in that one lacks a rational soul
- Two species that are alike in having vegetative souls but differ in that only one has a sensory soul
- A species having a vegetative soul while lacking sensory and rational souls

- A species having vegetative and rational souls while lacking a sensory soul
- A species having vegetative and sensory souls while lacking a rational soul

Which of the following comparisons would be "legitimate" for all living organisms according to the Aristotelian scheme described in paragraph two?

- I. Comparisons based on the vegetative soul
- II. Comparisons based on the sensory soul
- III. Comparisons based on the rational soul

- I only
- II only
- III only
- II and III only
- I, II, and III

If the author had wished to explain why "most" people (line 40) feel the way they do, the explanation would have probably focused on the

- reality of distinct biological species
- most recent advances in biological research
- behavioral similarities between Homo sapiens and other species
- role of language in the development of technology
- lack of objectivity in the classification of Homo sapiens

The author uses the words "For some reason" in lines 40-41 to express

- rage
- disapproval
- despair
- sympathy
- uncertainty

Which best summarizes the idea of "uniquely unique" (line 42)?

- We are unique in the same way that all other species are unique.
- We are defined by attributes that we alone possess and that are qualitatively different from those of other species.
- We are, by virtue of our elevated rank, insulated from many of the problems of survival faced by less sophisticated species.
- Our awareness of our uniqueness defines us as a rational species.
- Our apparently unique status is an unintended by-product of classification systems.

In line 44, "insulated from" means

- warmed by
- covered with
- barred from
- segregated from
- protected from

In the third paragraph, the author criticizes those who believe that

- the similarities between Homo sapiens and other species are more significant than their differences
- the differences between Homo sapiens and other animals are those of degree, not kind
- Homo sapiens and animals belong to separate and distinct divisions of the living world
- Homo sapiens and animals have the ability to control their environment
- Homo sapiens and other organisms can be arranged in Aristotelian nested groups