

TOEFL Junior : Reading Comprehension Test 11

Read the passage . 60 - 100 minutes

Questions 10-17

From their inception, most rural neighborhoods in colonial North America included at least one carpenter, joiner, sawyer, and cooper in woodworking; a weaver and a tailor for clothing production; a tanner, currier, and cordwainer (shoemaker) for fabricating leather objects; and a blacksmith for metalwork, where stone was the local building material, a mason was sure to appear on the list of people who paid taxes. With only an apprentice as an assistant, the rural artisan provided the neighborhood with common goods from furniture to shoes to farm equipment in exchange for cash or for “goods in kind” from the customer’s field, pasture, or dairy. Sometimes artisans transformed material provided by the customer wove cloth of yarn spun at the farm from the wool of the family sheep; made chairs or tables from wood cut in the customer’s own woodlot; produced shoes or leather breeches from cow, deer, or sheepskin tanned on the farm.

Like their farming neighbors, rural artisans were part of an economy seen, by one historian, as “an orchestra conducted by nature.” Some tasks could not be done in the winter, other had to be put off during harvest time, and still others waited on raw materials that were only produced seasonally. As the days grew shorter, shop hours kept pace, since few artisans could afford enough artificial light to continue work when the Sun went down. To the best of their ability, colonial artisans tried to keep their shops as efficient as possible and to regularize their schedules and methods of production for the best return on their investment in time, tools, and materials, while it is pleasant to imagine a woodworker, for example, carefully matching lumber, joining a chest together without resort to nails or glue, and applying all thought and energy to carving beautiful designs on the finished piece, the time required was not justified unless the customer was willing to pay extra for the quality—and few in rural areas were. Artisans, therefore, often found it necessary to employ as many shortcuts and economics as possible while still producing satisfactory products.

INSTRUCTION:

Read the questions carefully and refer to the text above then choose the best answer:

10. What aspect of rural colonial North America does the passage mainly discuss?
(A) Farming practices
(B) The work of artisans
(C) The character of rural neighborhoods
(D) Types of furniture that were popular
11. The word “inception” in line 1 is closest in meaning to
(A) investigation
(B) location
(C) beginning
(D) records
12. The word “fabricating” in line 3 is closest in meaning to
(A) constructing
(B) altering
(C) selecting
(D) demonstrating
13. It can be inferred from the passage that the use of artificial light in colonial times was
(A) especially helpful to woodworkers
(B) popular in rural areas
(C) continuous in winter
(D) expensive

INSTRUCTION:

Read the questions carefully and refer to the text above then choose the best answer:

14. Why did colonial artisans want to “regularize their schedules their schedules” (line 18)?

- (A) To enable them to produce high quality products
- (B) To enable them to duplicate an item many times
- (C) To impress their customers
- (D) To keep expenses low

15. The phrase “resort to” in line 20 is closest in meaning to

- (A) protecting with
- (B) moving toward
- (C) manufacturing
- (D) using

16. The word “few’ in lines 23 refers to

- (A) woodworkers
- (B) finished pieces
- (C) customers
- (D) chests

17. It can inferred that the artisans referred to in the passage usually produced products that were

- (A) simple
- (B) delicate
- (C) beautifully decorated
- (D) exceptionally long-lasting

Answers Key

- 10 B
- 11 C
- 12 A
- 13 D
- 14 D
- 15 D
- 16 C
- 17 A