

Reading #1: Instagram influencers — note that paragraphs are numbered

- (1) Three years ago, Lisa Linh quit her full-time job to travel the world and document it on Instagram, where she has nearly 100,000 followers; since then, she has stayed in breathtaking hotels everywhere from Mexico to Quebec to the Cook Islands. Often, she stays for free.
- (2) Linh is part of an ever-growing class of people who have leveraged their social media clout to travel the world, frequently in luxury. While Linh and other elite influencers are usually personally invited by hotel brands, an onslaught of lesser-known wannabes has left hotels scrambling to deal with a deluge of requests for all-expense-paid vacations in exchange for some social media posts.
- (3) Kate Jones, marketing and communications manager at the Dusit Thani, a five-star resort in the Maldives, said that her hotel receives at least six requests from self-described influencers per day, typically through Instagram direct message.
- (4) “Everyone with a Facebook these days is an influencer,” she said. “People say, I want to come to the Maldives for 10 days and will do two posts on Instagram to like 2,000 followers. It’s people with 600 Facebook friends saying, ‘Hi, I’m an influencer, I want to stay in your hotel for 7 days,’” she said.
- (5) Instagram has ballooned to more than 800 million monthly active users, many of whom come to it for travel ideas, and influencers argue that the promotions they offer allow hotels to directly market to new audiences in an authentic way. Most hotels acknowledge that there’s some benefit to working with influencers, it’s just that determining how to work with them — and manage their requests — is a challenge.
- (6) Some influencers have gotten creative with the services they offer. Zach Benson, who owns a network of travel Instagram accounts and who says he has gotten more than 200 nights for free over the past year and a half, touts his background in digital marketing when he approaches hotels. Along with the traditional Instagram posts and stories, Benson offers to work with a hotel’s digital marketing arm to improve the brand’s in-house social media accounts.

- (7) “We really want to help people and make their companies and hotels better,” he said. “We know that just doing a couple Instagram posts for them isn’t really going to help them that much.” During his travels, Benson hosts boot camps for hotel social media teams, where he trains employees on things like Facebook ads and Instagram promotion.

Reading #1 Questions: Instagram influencers

1. Which best describes the author’s overall purpose?
 - a. To argue that social media influencers are entitled and lazy.
 - b. To show the cultural advantages and disadvantages of Instagram.
 - c. To show the pros and cons of the new trend of influencers’ seeking free services at luxury hotels.
 - d. To provide examples of how hotels must become social media-savvy in order to target a younger generation of travellers.
2. What does the phrase “leveraged their clout” (sentence #1, paragraph #2) mean?
 - a. To misinterpret their freedom
 - b. To overestimate their importance
 - c. To use their influence
 - d. To force their audience
3. How is Lisa Linh characterized in paragraphs #1 and #2?
 - a. As a wannabe
 - b. As a legitimate influencer
 - c. As narcissistic
 - d. As entitled
4. Which best describes the relationship between paragraphs #4 and #6?
 - a. Paragraph #4 portrays one image of influencers; paragraph #6 portrays a contrasting image.
 - b. Paragraph #4 sets forth an argument; paragraph #6 provides evidence.
 - c. Paragraph #4 tells a story; paragraph #6 interprets it.
 - d. Paragraph #4 presents a personal anecdote; paragraph #6 provides data.

5. Which best describes the function of paragraph #6 in the passage?
- a. To shows how many ordinary people on social media claim to be influencers and seek free hotel stays.
 - b. To suggest that hotels should not accept all influencers' requests for free services.
 - c. To provide an example of a real influencer whose services substantially profit the hotels where he stays "for free."
 - d. To contradict the argument that social influencers can benefit any business.

Reading #2: Opioid legislation — note that paragraphs are numbered

- (1) A staggering 72,000 people died last year from drug overdoses, most of them involving opioids. This week, the U.S. Senate is expected to vote on legislation to address this loss of so many lives. The legislation package is heartening and frustrating: heartening because it offers some positive steps, and frustrating because it doesn't do more.
- (2) The main law enforcement element would aim at stopping the import of illegal drugs by facilitating cooperation between the federal Food and Drug Administration and Customs and Border Protection. The Postal Service would be required to do more to detect such shipments, which often come from labs in China and Mexico. Curtailing supplies of powerful synthetic compounds such as fentanyl is a vital step, because they account for most of the increase in opioid fatalities.
- (3) The Senate bill also would expand access to treatment, which is one key to reducing demand for opioids. Among its components: The bill would make it easier for Medicare recipients to get substance abuse therapy through telemedicine services, which can be especially useful for rural patients. It directs the Department of Health and Human Services to undertake a pilot program of Medicare coverage for opioid addiction treatment.
- (4) What it doesn't do is approve money on a large scale. The Congressional Budget Office puts the price tag at an evidently inadequate \$29 billion over the next decade. And this measure only authorizes funding; additional bills will have to be approved to actually appropriate the money. A Democratic bill to provide \$45 billion for prevention, treatment and other needs has gone nowhere.
- (5) Still, credit is due to lawmakers for moving in the right direction. Regina LaBelle, who was chief of staff of the Office of National Drug Control Policy under President Barack Obama, told The Washington Post the Senate package "emphasizes prevention, making sure we have more people who can treat people with addiction and it supports people in recovery, it does reflect what the science tells us. There's always more than can be done, but in an election year, I think this is pretty good."
- (6) "Pretty good" is not quite what a disaster of this magnitude deserves. But as a step toward a more ambitious and comprehensive response by the federal government, it's worth taking.

Reading #2 Questions: Opioid legislation

1. Which of the following sentences from the passage best sums up the author's main idea?
 - a. "A Democratic bill to provide \$45 billion for prevention, treatment and other needs has gone nowhere."
 - b. "A staggering 72,000 people died last year from drug overdoses, most of them involving opioids."
 - c. "The Senate bill also would expand access to treatment, which is one key to reducing demand for opioids."
 - d. "The legislation package is heartening and frustrating: heartening because it offers some positive steps, and frustrating because it doesn't do more."
2. In paragraph #2, the author mentions the Food and Drug Administration, Customs and Border Protection, and the Postal Service because these agencies
 - a. might collaborate with the Senate to create new laws.
 - b. might collaborate with law enforcement stop the import of illegal drugs.
 - c. need more funding approved to hire more employees.
 - d. should be combined to become one large agency.
3. In paragraph #1, the word "staggering" is used to emphasize that
 - a. opioids are causing some problems for society.
 - b. drug overdoses are a very painful way for someone to die.
 - c. the number of deaths from drug overdoses last year is extremely low.
 - d. the number of deaths from drug overdoses last year is extremely high.
4. 4) What would the author say is the major flaw in the legislation?
 - a. The legislation is likely to completely fail because it's an election year.
 - b. Law enforcement isn't given an expanded role.
 - c. The legislation doesn't provide the funds needed to take the proposed steps.
 - d. The legislation doesn't expand access to treatment.
5. Why does the author include Regina LaBelle's quotation in paragraph #5?
 - a. It shows that some lawmakers believe this is the perfect bill.
 - b. It explains that, even though the legislation isn't perfect, it's a step in the right direction.
 - c. It reveals the flaws of the bill.

- d. It shows that Barack Obama agrees with the bill.
6. What is the relationship between paragraphs #4 and #5?
- a. Paragraph #4 explains the flaws of the bill; paragraph #5 gives credit to the positive aspects of the bill, despite its flaws.
 - b. Paragraph #4 explains that money is needed; paragraph #5 explains why that money isn't available.
 - c. Paragraph #4 says that there aren't enough funds to make the bill work; paragraph #5 says that the bill's critics are not calculating the funds correctly.
 - d. Paragraph #4 critiques the bill's lack of attention to funding; paragraph #5 says that additional bills are already in place to deal with getting funds.

Reading #3: Public servants — note that paragraphs are numbered

- (1) Many people who spend their careers in public service consider it more a calling than a profession. Teachers, for instance, are not drawn to the classroom for the pay or benefits. Quite the contrary. Many spend their lives working with children despite the hardship it inflicts on their bank accounts. Police officers tell a similar tale, about the opportunity to make a difference in people’s lives and to keep their communities safe. The vast majority of law enforcement officers execute their duties with integrity; high-profile incidents of wrongdoing serve as the exception, not the rule.
- (2) And, though they enjoy ample time in the spotlight already, the population of public servants would be incomplete if it omitted those women and men who serve in elected office, who submit to tremendous scrutiny and second guessing as a requisite of their positions. For it is they who make government work more effectively, who make public agencies and services more accessible and easier to understand, and who solve problems and answer questions for those who have them.
- (3) The men and women who staff the halls of government on the state and local levels assuredly deserve recognition for the important work they perform. Obviously it has become somewhat of a national pastime to dismiss the hard work being done by those who work in public offices and staff government agencies. Taxpayers are generally loath to pay for public sector employees, despite the value they provide and the valuable work they do. And yet, communities are so dependent on them.

Reading #3 Questions: Public servants

1. In paragraph #1, what does the author mean by the difference between a “calling” and a “profession”?
 - a. A profession is something we do to make a living; a calling is something we do because we deeply care about it.
 - b. A profession is something we would do whether or not we make money; a calling is something we do because it is easy and makes us money.
 - c. A profession is something we don’t enjoy; a calling is something we enjoy a lot.
 - d. A profession is a service like teaching or government work; a calling is a service like carpentry or landscaping.
2. How does the author want you to feel about people who work in public service?

- a. The author wants you to feel upset that public service officials like police officers risk their lives for others.
 - b. The author wants to inspire you to call your elected officials to tell them how you feel about your local laws.
 - c. The author wants you to appreciate public service employees and recognize the hard work they do.
 - d. The author wants you to understand how often public services employees make mistakes.
3. Why does the author discuss teachers and police officers in paragraph #1?
- a. To give examples of two types of public service employees and the work they do.
 - b. To make the argument that teachers and police officers should be given extra time off.
 - c. To show that teachers and police officers shouldn't complain about how low their pay is.
 - d. To show the importance of community in keeping people safe.
4. In paragraph #2, the author writes, "Obviously it has become somewhat of a national pastime to dismiss the hard work being done by those who work in public offices and staff government agencies." What is the purpose of this sentence?
- a. To explain that, in this country, we usually appreciate the hard work done by public employees.
 - b. To point out that there are people in this country who never acknowledge the hard work of public servants.
 - c. To point out that the hard work done by public employees often puts them in danger.
 - d. To explain that this country has a long history of not giving public servants the salaries they deserve.

Reading #4: Social justice warriors — note that paragraphs are numbered

- (1) The term “social justice warrior” emerged in the late twentieth century as a way of referring to an activist for civil rights, feminism, or multiculturalism. The phrase had a neutral or positive connotation for two decades, but around 2010 began appearing online as a pejorative way of referring to someone who was posturing as an activist rather than being deeply committed to social ideals.
- (2) “Social justice warriors” are now characterized as those who live such rarefied lives of political correctness that they can’t do ordinary things without launching into a speech about oppression of one kind or another. They don’t know how to pick their battles, so they go to war over any trivial thing. Social justice warriors are so obsessed with saving the environment that they harshly criticize strangers in a grocery store for forgetting to bring their reusable shopping bags. Social justice warriors correct anyone who uses the word “mailman” when instead they should have used the word “mailperson.”
- (3) No one wants to have their language policed or be reproached in a grocery store by a total stranger, but if you think about the issues of global warming and everyday sexism, is it really that extreme to want people to address these issues? Is it ever really a good time to mention the destruction of the ozone layer and the oppression of women? Isn’t a “social justice warrior” just someone who dares to speak up when it’s socially risky, like calling your friend or colleague out for being racist? Isn’t a “social justice warrior” just an insult invented by callous, irresponsible, or ignorant people who want to be left alone to be environmentally careless or casually sexist?

Reading #4 Questions: Social justice warriors

1. What is the relationship between paragraphs #1 and #2?
 - a. Paragraph #1 provides an opinion, and paragraph #2 provides evidence.
 - b. Paragraph #1 presents an argument, and paragraph #2 presents a counter-argument.
 - c. Paragraph #1 provides a definition, and paragraph #2 provides examples.
 - d. Paragraph #1 presents analysis, and paragraph #2 presents information.
2. What does “rarefied” mean, based on the context of the first sentence in paragraph #2?
 - a. Snobbish, superior
 - b. Common, ordinary

- c. Inclusive, accepting
 - d. Ignorant, uneducated
3. Which is true about paragraph #3?
- a. The author is undermining social justice warriors.
 - b. The author is attacking social justice warriors.
 - c. The author is mostly unsympathetic to social justice warriors.
 - d. The author is defending the motives of social justice warrior.
4. The author of the passage most likely believes that using the word “mailman” rather than “mailperson” is:
- a. Important because it’s sexist.
 - b. Unimportant because it’s just a word.
5. By stating, “No one wants to have their language policed or be reproached in a grocery store by a total stranger” (paragraph #3), the author is:
- a. Refuting the idea that social justice warriors are extreme.
 - b. Admitting that social justice warriors would be objectionable if they were that extreme.
 - c. Defending social justice warriors even though they are extreme.
 - d. Demonstrating that political correctness is not desirable.

Practice Test #1 Answers

Reading #1 Instagram

1. C
2. C
3. B
4. A
5. C

Reading #2 Opioid legislation

1. D
2. B
3. D
4. C
5. B
6. A

Reading #3 Public servants

1. A
2. C
3. A
4. B

Reading #4 Social justice warriors

1. C
2. A
3. D
4. A
5. B