

**Directions:**

The passage below is followed by questions based on its content; questions following a pair of related passages may also be based on the relationship between the paired passages. Answer the questions on the basis of what is stated or implied in the passage and in any introductory material that may be provided.

*This passage is an excerpt from a work published in 2000 by a Chinese American writer.*

Line In kindergarten, I learned the Pledge of Allegiance.  
Or rather, I learned to imitate it. The words spilled  
out of my mouth in one long jumble, all slurred and  
sloppy. I'd stand tall and put my right hand over my  
5 heart, mumbling proudly. Even then, I understood  
that "'Merica" was my home-and that I was an  
American.

Still, a flicker of doubt was ever present. If  
10 I were truly American, why did the other American  
people around me seem so sure I was foreign?

By the time I was a teenager, I imagined that I was  
a "dual citizen" of both the United States and China.  
15 I had no idea what dual citizenship involved, or  
if it was even possible. No matter, I would be a  
citizen of the world. This was my fantasy.

When I got to college, I decided to learn more about  
20 "where I came from" by taking classes in Asian  
history. I even studied Mandarin Chinese. This had  
the paradoxical effect of making me question  
my Chinese-ness. Other students, and even the  
teachers, expected me to spout perfectly  
25 accented Chinese. Instead I stumbled along as  
badly as the other American students next to  
me. Still my fantasy persisted; I thought I  
might "go back" to China, a place  
I had never been.

30 President Richard Nixon's historic trip to China  
in February 1972 made a visit seem possible  
for me. That summer, China cracked open the  
"bamboo curtain" that separated it from the  
35 West, allowing a small group of Chinese  
American students to visit the country  
as a goodwill gesture to the United States.  
I desperately wanted to be one of them, and  
I put together a research proposal that got  
40 the support of my professors. With a special  
fellowship, I joined the group and became  
one of the first Americans, after Nixon,

to enter "Red" China.

45 In China I fit right in with the multitude.  
In the cities of Shanghai and Suzhou, where  
my parents were from, I saw my features  
everywhere. After years of not looking  
"American" to the "Americans" and not  
50 looking Chinese enough for the Cantonese  
who made up the majority of Chinese  
Americans, I suddenly found my face on  
every passerby. It was a revelation of  
sameness that I had never experienced at  
55 home. The feelings didn't last long.

While in China, I visited my mother's  
eldest sister; they hadn't seen each  
other since 1949, the year of the  
60 Communist revolution in China, when  
my mother left with their middle sister  
on the last boat out of Shanghai. Using  
my elementary Chinese, I struggled to  
communicate with Auntie Li. My vocabulary  
65 was too limited and my idealism too thick  
to comprehend my family's suffering from  
the Cultural Revolution,\* still very much  
in progress. But girlish fun transcended  
language as my older cousins took me by  
70 the hand and dressed me in a khaki Mao  
suit, braiding my long hair in pigtails,  
just like the other young, unmarried  
Chinese women.

75 All decked out like a freshly minted Red  
Guard in my new do, I passed for a local.  
Real Chinese stopped me on the street, to  
ask for directions, to ask where I got my  
tennis shoes, to complain about the long  
80 bus queues, to say any number of things  
to me. As soon as I opened my mouth to  
reply, my clumsy American accent infected  
the little Chinese I knew. My questioners  
knew immediately that I was a foreigner,  
85 a Westerner, an American, maybe even a  
spy-and they ran from me as fast as they  
could. I had an epiphany common to Asian  
Americans who visit their ancestral  
homelands. I realized that I didn't fit  
90 into Chinese society, that I could never  
be accepted there. If I didn't know it,  
the Chinese did: I belonged in America,  
not China.

\*During the Cultural Revolution, Chinese leaders used the Red Guard—young soldiers—to impose desired behaviors on members of Chinese society.

1. The passage as a whole suggests that becoming a "citizen of the world" (line 17) might best be characterized as
  - (A) a worthwhile endeavor
  - (B) a painful reality
  - (C) a modest achievement
  - (D) an unrealistic goal
  - (E) an uncommon ambition
2. The author most likely cites the information in lines 75 - 81 ("All . . . to me") in order to
  - (A) suggest her preference for staying in China
  - (B) point out her industriousness
  - (C) demonstrate her acceptance of people who differed from her
  - (D) illustrate the degree to which she appeared to be Chinese
  - (E) show her deep appreciation of Chinese culture
3. Which of the following most directly calls into question the "revelation" (line 53)?
  - (A) The "feelings" (line 55)
  - (B) The "revolution" (line 60)
  - (C) The "idealism" (line 65)
  - (D) The "girlish fun" (line 68)
  - (E) The "epiphany" (line 87)

(Note: Passages on the PSAT/NMSQT are between 450 and 850 words long.)

I remember the summer of 1940 when I first left here. After my final school year my days had been reduced to waiting, anticipating the preinduction physical for the year of compulsory service required of all physically fit seventeen and eighteen year olds, both men and women. Although I wanted the medical reports to declare me perfectly fit and would have felt inferior if they had not, I was not looking forward to upcoming camp life. Yet without any say in my future, all I hoped to know was where and when. Then the paralyzing uncertainty ended. My orders to report to a never-heard-of location in Czechoslovakia even kindled a spark of anticipation for traveling to a foreign country and moving toward new experiences, whatever they might be. I was assigned to a camp that was an agricultural teaching facility, where I was expected to learn to run a large rural household. Like me, most of the girls at the camp enjoyed the hearty meals and learned to ignore our servant status. After years of having subsisted on ration diets in the cities, we blossomed into robust young women whose physical well-being countered surges of hurt pride, resentment, and periods of homesickness. And so began just one of the many disjointed and unpredictable periods I endured before the subsiding waves of war swept me an ocean away.

4. The author uses the phrase "disjointed and unpredictable" to describe
  - (A) her infrequent reunions with her family
  - (B) her plans for her life after the war
  - (C) the varied situations she experienced during the war
  - (D) her prior experiences with foreign traveling
  - (E) her preparation for performing skilled labor
5. The passage indicates that if the author had failed the preinduction physical, she would most likely have felt
  - (A) grateful for the excuse to spend more time with her family
  - (B) wistful about having missed the opportunity to travel
  - (C) upset that she was not classified as completely healthy
  - (D) dejected because her friends would be leaving without her
  - (E) unconcerned since she was already unable to control her destiny

Answers:

1. D. Early in the passage, the author tells us that as a child, her "fantasy" was to be a "citizen of the world." But later, after she traveled to China and tried to pass for a "local," she learned that this was not an easy thing to do. "Real Chinese," upon talking to her, immediately realized that she was a "foreigner" and avoided her. This led the author to her "epiphany": she didn't "fit into Chinese society" and "could never be accepted there." So the passage as a whole suggests that becoming a "citizen of the world" is an "unrealistic goal."
2. D. In this part of the passage, the author indicates that she "passed for a local," meaning that the "Real Chinese" who saw her on the street assumed that she was from China. And the details presented in the subsequent lines, which say that she was stopped, asked for directions, asked where she got her tennis shoes, etc, help to support this point. So the author most likely cites this information to "illustrate the degree to which she appeared to be Chinese."
3. E. When the author initially arrived in China, she saw "her face on every passerby," meaning that she believed that she looked like everyone else. She describes this feeling as a "revelation of sameness." But her later "epiphany" is that she "didn't fit into Chinese society" and that she "could never be accepted there." Because this "epiphany" indicates that she is not in fact the same as the other Chinese people, it calls into question her earlier "revelation of sameness."
4. C. In the last sentence of the passage, the author states that the period described was one of the many "disjointed and unpredictable" periods she endured before the waves of war swept her an ocean away. Therefore, choice (C) is the correct answer.
5. C. The correct answer to this question is found in the sentence that begins in line 7: Although I wanted the medical reports to declare me perfectly fit and would have felt inferior if they had not . . . . In other words, the author would have been upset if the doctors had said she was less than perfectly healthy. Choice (C), therefore, is the correct answer.