

Reading Test

Directions: The passage below is followed by several questions. After reading the passage, choose the best answer to each question and fill in the corresponding oval on your answer folder. You may refer to the passage as often as necessary.

PROSE FICTION: This passage is adapted from Anne Tyler's novel *The Accidental Tourist* (©1985 by Anne Tyler Modarressi, et al.).

"Now, this is not your ordinary airplane," Macon told Muriel. "I wouldn't want you to get the wrong idea. This is what they call a commuter plane. It's something a businessman would take, say, to hop to the nearest city for a day and make a few sales and hop back again."

The plane he was referring to—a little fifteen-seater that resembled a mosquito or a gnat—stood just outside the door of the commuters' waiting room. A girl in a parka was loading it with baggage. A boy was checking something on the wings. This appeared to be an airline run by teenagers. Even the pilot was a teenager, it seemed to Macon. He entered the waiting room, carrying a clipboard. He read off a list of names. "Marshall? Noble? Albright?" One by one the passengers stepped forward—just eight or ten of them. To each the pilot said, "Hey, how you doing." He let his eyes rest longest on Muriel. Either he found her the most attractive or else he was struck by her outfit. She wore her highest heels, black stockings spattered with black net roses, and a flippy little fuchsia dress under a short fat coat that she referred to as her "fun fur." Her hair was caught all to one side in a great bloom of frizz, and there was a silvery dust of some kind on her eyelids. Macon knew she'd overdone it, but at the same time he liked her considering this such an occasion.

The pilot propped open the door and they followed him outside, across a stretch of concrete, and up two rickety steps into the plane. Macon had to bend almost double as he walked down the aisle. They threaded between two rows of single seats, each seat as spindly as a folding chair. They found spaces across from each other and settled in. Other passengers struggled through, puffing and bumping into things. Last came the copilot, who had round, soft, baby cheeks and carried a can of Diet Pepsi. He slammed the door shut behind him and went up front to the controls. Not so much as a curtain hid the cockpit. Macon could lean out into the aisle and see the banks of knobs and gauges, the pilot positioning his headset, the copilot taking a final swig and setting his empty can on the floor.

"Now, on a bigger plane," Macon called to Muriel as the engines roared up, "you'd hardly feel the takeoff. But here you'd better brace yourself."

Muriel nodded, wide-eyed, gripping the seat ahead of her. "What's that light that's blinking in front of the pilot?" she asked.

50 "I don't know."

"What's that little needle that keeps sweeping round and round?"

"I don't know."

He felt he'd disappointed her. "I'm used to jets, not these toys," he told her. She nodded again, accepting that. It occurred to Macon that he was really a very worldly and well-traveled man.

The plane started taxiing. Every pebble on the runway jolted it; every jolt sent a series of creaks through the framework. They gathered speed. The crew, suddenly grave and professional, made complicated adjustments to their instruments. The wheels left the ground. "Oh!" Muriel said, and she turned to Macon with her face all lit up.

65 "We're off," he told her.

"I'm flying!"

1. Macon felt he'd disappointed Muriel because he had not:
 - A. complimented her on her dress.
 - B. taken her on a long trip.
 - C. been able to answer her questions.
 - D. chosen a more comfortable airline.
2. Which of the following sentences best describes Macon's attitude toward Muriel as it is revealed in the passage?
 - F. Macon would like to impress Muriel.
 - G. Macon is indifferent to Muriel.
 - H. Macon resents Muriel's good looks.
 - J. Macon is disappointed in Muriel.
3. When Macon compares the plane he and Muriel are on with a bigger plane (lines 39–46), he is preparing her for a:
 - A. smooth takeoff.
 - B. smooth flight.
 - C. short flight.
 - D. bumpy takeoff.

4. To get to the plane, Macon, Muriel, and the other passengers had to walk:
- F. across a concrete area from the waiting room.
 - G. through a concrete hallway.
 - H. down a long, dark aisle before reaching the door.
 - J. in front of the pilot and under two rickety steps.
5. The passage suggests that Muriel's flight on the commuter plane was an experience she:
- A. had looked forward to.
 - B. had had before.
 - C. had read about.
 - D. considered routine.
6. How did the pilot greet the passengers in the waiting room?
- F. Harshly
 - G. Jokingly
 - H. Casually
 - J. Formally
7. According to what Macon says, how could Macon's travel experience be most accurately described?
- A. He flies on commuter planes more often than on jets.
 - B. He flies on jets more often than on commuter planes.
 - C. He does not travel by plane very often.
 - D. He travels by car more often than by plane or train.
8. Since "not so much as a curtain hid the cockpit," Macon's view of the instrument panel and the crew was:
- F. hidden.
 - G. unobstructed.
 - H. frightening.
 - J. scenic.

Reading Answer Key

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|------|------|------|
| 1. C | 4. F | 7. B |
| 2. F | 5. A | 8. G |
| 3. D | 6. H | |