Cross-Text Connections Questions

The 3-Step Strategy

THE QUESTION

- Based on the texts, how would the author of Text 2 (or a person in Text 2) most likely **respond to** the claim, the view, or the underlined portion in Text 1? (The stem may say *characterize*, *regard*, or *say about*, and now and then Text 1 does the responding.)
- Based on the texts, **both authors** would most likely **agree** with which statement?
- Which choice best describes a **difference** in how the authors view something? / how the texts **relate**?

1 **Core claims** · Ignore the decorations: find each text's core claim, and whose it is.

Read the question first: **who responds**, and **to what** (Text 1 as a whole, one underlined sentence, or one person's view). Then sum up each text in about ten words. Names, dates, and numbers are decoration unless they are the evidence. Catch three things:

- **Whose view is it?** Text 1 often reports a view that isn't its author's own (*some scientists argue*, *to these owners*). Keep the owner attached to the view.
- **What does it rest on?** A study, a resemblance, a timeline, an assumption. Text 2 often attacks the basis, not the claim.
- **What exactly is the target?** If the question names an underlined sentence or a group, the answer must reply to that.

2 **Connect** · Find the connective tissue, then name the relationship.

The **connective tissue** is the one narrow point where the texts meet: a single question both texts answer. Put Text 1's answer beside Text 2's. **Red pen:** if the responder could mark just one phrase in the other text, which phrase, and what mark?

RELATIONSHIP	WHAT TEXT 2 DOES TO TEXT 1	RED-PEN MARK	LISTEN FOR
Yes, and	agrees, on stronger evidence (rare)	underlines it	a better reason for the same claim
Yes, but	grants the claim (or part of it), then limits it or adds a second cause	keeps it, adds a limit beside it	*while, although, certainly … but; also, in part, not only … but also*
Not proven	says the evidence can't carry the claim; the claim may still be true	puts a question mark beside it	*may, might, premature, not necessarily, remains unclear*
No, it's something else	gives a different answer: another cause, an earlier date	crosses it out, writes in another	*instead, in fact, rather than*; a rival date or cause, stated flatly
Here's how	one text solves or explains the other's problem	writes the answer in the margin	a problem in one text, a method or principle in the other

> **Sorting test:** what does Text 2 think of Text 1's claim itself? Partly right → **Yes, but**. May or may not be right → **Not proven**. Wrong → **No, it's something else**. For an **agree** question, find the **common ground** (often one modest clause); for a **difference** question, find the **split**. Then say the reply in the responder's voice *before* you look at the choices.

3 **Match** · Test every choice: direction, strength, and reason.

- **Direction:** does it agree, push back, or link? In response questions, the right answer rarely just agrees.
- **Strength:** does it push exactly as hard as Text 2, and no harder? *May* stays *may*; a doubt is not a denial.
- **Reason:** is it the reason Text 2 actually gives, aimed at the tissue? Read two-part choices from the back.

WRONG-ANSWER TRAPS: Outside it (a point neither text makes) · **Misreads** (a real detail, bent; the most tempting trap) · **Reverses it** (the relationship flipped) · **Wrong strength** (a doubt turned into a denial) · **Wrong target** (a reply to another part of Text 1) · **One side only** (in agree questions, a statement only one author would accept).

Two Worked Examples

Example 1 · No, It's Something Else

Text 1
Paintings in ancient Egyptian tombs often show a cat seated beneath its owner's chair, and the Egyptians honored Bastet, a goddess frequently pictured with the head of a cat. For much of the twentieth century, images like these persuaded many scholars that people first made cats part of their lives in Egypt, roughly 4,000 years ago.

Text 2
In 2004, Jean-Denis Vigne and colleagues described a grave at Shillourokambos, a village site on the island of Cyprus, where a cat had been buried beside a person about 9,500 years ago. Wild cats are not native to Cyprus, so people must have brought the animals there by boat. Egyptian art, then, can record when cats came to matter to one culture, but not when people first lived with them.

Based on the texts, how would the author of Text 2 most likely respond to the view of the scholars discussed in Text 1?

A) By agreeing that Egyptian art reveals when people first kept cats but suggesting that the scholars misdated some of the tomb paintings they relied on

B) By arguing that the Egyptian images show only that cats were valued there, while a grave on Cyprus reveals a far older bond with cats

C) By suggesting that cats were first tamed on Cyprus and were only later carried from the island to Egypt

D) By suggesting that the Egyptian images may have exaggerated how many households in ancient Egypt actually kept cats as pets

CORE CLAIMS Text 1: Egyptian art convinced scholars that people first kept cats in Egypt, about 4,000 years ago. It is the *scholars'* view ("persuaded many scholars"), and it rests on the art. Text 2: A 9,500-year-old grave on Cyprus shows the bond began far earlier.

CONNECT Tissue: *When did people first live with cats?* Text 1: about 4,000 years ago. Text 2: by about 9,500 years ago. Red pen: cross out "roughly 4,000 years ago" and write in an earlier date. **No, it's something else.** In Text 2's voice: "Your paintings show when cats came to matter in Egypt; the grave puts the start thousands of years earlier."

MATCH B. Direction: pushes back. Strength: as firm as Text 2, and its *only* is earned: art can show when cats "came to matter to one culture, but not when people first lived with them." Reason: the grave on Cyprus.

TRAPS A reverses it (it accepts the art as evidence and argues only about dates). C misreads (cats were carried *to* Cyprus, not from it). D is outside it and the most tempting: it sounds like doubt about the art, but Text 2 never asks how many Egyptians kept cats.

Example 2 · Yes, But

Text 1
Land managers in the American Southwest have spent decades trying to clear tamarisk, a shrub from Asia and the Mediterranean that was brought to the United States in the 1800s and planted to slow erosion. Tamarisk spreads quickly along rivers, crowding out native willows and cottonwoods and, the managers say, drawing down the water those trees depend on. An introduced plant, these managers warn, can upend an ecosystem that developed without it.

Text 2
Along some stretches of southwestern rivers where cottonwoods and willows have largely disappeared, the southwestern willow flycatcher, a native songbird listed as endangered since 1995, now builds many of its nests in dense tamarisk thickets. For these birds, the shrub that crowded out their old habitat has become their habitat. None of this erases the harm tamarisk has done along these rivers. It does mean that the same introduced plant can both threaten native species and, in some places, shelter them.

Based on the texts, how would the author of Text 2 most likely respond to the warning in the underlined sentence of Text 1?

A) By granting that tamarisk has done real harm along these rivers while showing that an introduced plant can, in some places, become a refuge for native wildlife

B) By agreeing that tamarisk has harmed southwestern rivers but urging land managers to stop clearing it so that the flycatcher keeps its nesting sites

C) By agreeing that introduced plants can harm ecosystems but arguing that the flycatcher's use of tamarisk shows the shrub has caused little lasting harm along southwestern rivers

D) By acknowledging that introduced plants can upend ecosystems but noting that the flycatcher spread into the Southwest only after tamarisk arrived

CORE CLAIMS Text 1: Land managers warn that an introduced plant like tamarisk can upend an ecosystem. The target is that warning, the underlined sentence. Text 2: The harm is real, but tamarisk now shelters an endangered native bird.

CONNECT Tissue: *What can an introduced plant do to an ecosystem?* Text 1: upend it. Text 2: threaten it and, in some places, shelter its natives. Red pen: keep the warning and add "but it can also shelter natives." **Yes, but.** Signals: "None of this erases the harm … It does mean …" In Text 2's voice: "You're right that it does damage, but the same plant can also be a refuge."

MATCH A. All four choices have two halves, so test both. "Real harm" is "None of this erases the harm"; "a refuge for native wildlife" is the flycatcher nesting in tamarisk.

TRAPS B is outside it and the most tempting: its first half is right, but Text 2 recommends nothing. C reverses it: the harm is not cancelled. D misreads: the flycatcher is a native bird that lost its old habitat.

Your Turn

Name _____ Date _____

Practice 1

Text 1

In a 2016 experiment, ecologist Monica Gagliano and colleagues grew pea seedlings in Y-shaped tubes. For three days, a small fan blew air down one arm of each tube for an hour before a blue light came on in that same arm, with the arm varying from session to session. Afterward, when only the fan ran, most seedlings grew toward it, as if expecting light. Pea plants, the experiment shows, can learn even though they have no nervous system.

Text 2

Learning is not the only way to explain what the seedlings did. A growing shoot responds to slight differences in its surroundings, and moving air can cool, dry, or jostle one side of a plant more than the other. And when plant biologist Kasey Markel repeated the experiment in 2020, he found no sign that the seedlings had linked the fan with the light.

Based on the texts, how would the author of Text 2 most likely respond to the underlined claim in Text 1?

A) By arguing that Markel's repeat of the experiment showed that the seedlings had instead learned to avoid the fan's air

B) By agreeing that the seedlings probably learned to expect light from whichever arm the fan was blowing down

C) By arguing that the claim overlooks how much faster pea seedlings grow than most other kinds of flowering plants do

D) By noting that the seedlings' growth may have another cause and that Markel's version of the test found no sign of learning

CORE CLAIMS · TEXT 1: _____ **TEXT 2:** _____

CONNECTIVE TISSUE (AS A QUESTION): _____

RELATIONSHIP: _____

THE REPLY, IN THE RESPONDER'S VOICE: _____

Your answer: (A) (B) (C) (D)

Practice 2

Text 1

The columns of the Parthenon, the temple completed on the Acropolis in Athens in the fifth century BCE, are not perfectly straight-sided: each swells slightly toward its middle, a refinement called entasis. The builders were most likely correcting an optical illusion. A column with perfectly straight sides, they believed, would seem to narrow in the middle when seen from a distance, and the swelling would make it look straight.

Text 2

The builders of the Parthenon refined every line of the temple, and the gentle swelling of its columns was no exception. But its purpose was expressive, not corrective. A column that bulges slightly, as a muscle does under strain, seems to push back against the weight of the roof it carries. That impression of vigor is what a column with straight sides would lack.

Based on the texts, both authors would most likely agree with which statement?

A) The swelling was meant to keep the columns from seeming to narrow in the middle.

B) The swelling helped the columns carry the weight of the temple's roof.

C) Columns with perfectly straight sides would have suited the Parthenon better.

D) The swelling of the columns was meant to change how they look.

CORE CLAIMS · TEXT 1: _____ **TEXT 2:** _____

COMMON GROUND (ONE POINT BOTH ACCEPT): _____

WHERE THEY SPLIT: _____

Your answer: (A) (B) (C) (D)