

STYLE & RHETORIC ASSESSMENT

Legend Has It

[Paragraph 1]

[1] In the past few decades, urban legends have increased in popularity. [2] As the stories circulate, certain details may change. [3] Specific identifying details may be difficult to pin down. [4] Like other entertaining stories, urban legends often involve characters, suspenseful plots, and elements of fear, anticipation, or even humor. [5] In many cases, urban legends serve as an entertaining and indirect means to address modern-day fears and to heed warnings. 1

[Paragraph 2]

One widely-spread urban legend, (2)proliferated by the horror movie *Scream* in the 1990s, is the story known as “The Babysitter.” Watching a group of small children at a neighbor’s house, the babysitter (usually a teenage girl) receives a disturbing phone call in which all she hears is heavy breathing. The phone calls continue and become more and more (3) threatening. The babysitter calls the police, who order her to stay put and lock all the doors and windows. Unfortunately, the police trace the phone calls—they are coming from inside the house! The babysitter has just locked herself and the children in with the (4) trespassing intruder.

1. The author is considering adding the following statement after sentence 1:

Urban legends are stories that may or may not be believed by an audience, but for one reason or another continue to be preserved and shared.

Should this addition be made?

- A. YES, because it explains what urban legends are and their prevalence in modern society.
- B. YES, because it reflects the author’s skepticism over the validity of these stories.
- C. NO, because everyone knows what urban legends are.
- D. NO, because the statement does not explain why urban legends are continually shared.

2. If the author were to delete the underlined portion, the passage would primarily lose:

- F. an unnecessary detail about an old movie no one cares about anymore
- G. a glaring distraction from the main idea of the passage
- H. a subtle reinforcement of the idea that urban legends are prevalent in modern culture
- J. an indication of the author’s preference for the horror film genre

3. Which of the following replacements for the underlined portion is LEAST acceptable?

- A. intimidating
- B. menacing
- C. hostile
- D. crazy

4. F. NO CHANGE
G. intruding trespasser.
H. threatening stranger.
J. bad guy.

[Paragraph 3]

[1] She becomes **(5) frightened** when she notices the same car following her very closely. [2] Similarly, another popular tale tells of a teenage girl driving home at night. [3] Trying to lose the follower, she turns down some out-of-the-way streets, but the car continues to stay close. [4] As her brother approaches the other car, the driver quickly explains that he meant no harm, but only wanted to keep a close eye on the girl to warn her about the man hiding in her back seat. [5] She decides to drive to the house of her brother, who is a police officer. **6**

[Paragraph 4]

(7) One well-known urban legend has even alarmed law enforcement. The story goes that a man or woman meets a new acquaintance at a hotel and invites the stranger to his or her room. In the morning, the victim is shocked to find himself or herself **(8) submerged beneath ice** with a long scar along the abdomen. The stranger, now gone, leaves behind a note and a phone near the bathtub, instructing the victim to call the hospital, as his or her kidney has been stolen by an organ theft ring. **9**

[Paragraph 5]

[1] While many urban legends are scary and even gruesome, some are actually quite humorous (and slightly gross, too). [2] The legend goes that a couple on vacation finds a small abandoned dog on the street.

5. The underlined portion can be replaced with all of the following EXCEPT:

- A. alarmed
- B. nervous
- C. annoyed
- D. uneasy

6. The most logical order for the sentences in Paragraph 3 is:

- F. NO CHANGE
- G. 1, 3, 4, 2, 5
- H. 2, 3, 5, 1, 4
- J. 2, 1, 3, 5, 4

7. What is likely the author's purpose for including this statement?

- A. to express how urban legends can alarm a wide range of people
- B. to inform how urban legends can be used to catch criminals
- C. to argue that urban legends should always be believed
- D. to suggest that law enforcement officials are easily fooled

8. **F. NO CHANGE**
G. underneath ice
H. covered in icy frozen water
J. below a cold mountain of ice

9. The author is considering adding the following statement to the end of Paragraph 4:

This story is a frightening, although extreme, reminder not to trust strangers.

Should the author make this addition?

- A. YES, because it provides a valuable lesson.
- B. YES, because it explains the message behind the story.
- C. NO, because the author should not add personal opinions.
- D. NO, because the story is only intended to entertain.

[3] They decide to adopt the dog and bring it home with them. [4] After friends remark that they have never actually heard the dog bark, the couple brings the animal to a veterinarian, who reveals that their darling “dog” is actually a giant rat! **10**

[Paragraph 6]

Another urban legend **(11) rooted in humorous origins** also involves a vacationing family. A family visiting a foreign country **(12) abroad** finds that their hotel room has been burglarized. Many possessions have been stolen, but the thieves leave behind their camera and toothbrushes. After developing their vacation photos, the family is **(13) grossed out** to find pictures of the burglars using their toothbrushes! Although these stories allow an opportunity for audiences to squeal and squirm, they also subtly hint at our apprehensions about encountering the unknown or unfamiliar in a foreign land.

[Paragraph 7]

Therefore, urban legends serve many purposes in our **(14) modern** culture. These tales certainly entertain, but they also reflect the fears, apprehensions, and cautions of the twenty-first century.

[Paragraph 8]

Despite the prevalence of these stories, true accounts of these incidents have never been substantiated. However, they continue to be shared and adapted in part because they provide relevant and important warnings about safety, surroundings, and strangers. **15**

10. The author wishes to add the following sentence to paragraph 5:

Take the variations of the Mexican hairless dog story.

The best placement for this statement is after sentence:

- F. 1
- G. 2
- H. 3
- J. 4

- 11.**
- A. NO CHANGE
 - B. that originally began with humor
 - C. with a foundational basis in humor
 - D. embedded with humor
- 12.**
- F. NO CHANGE
 - G. overseas
 - H. that was alien to them
 - J. OMIT the underlined portion

13. Which of the following phrases would best express the family’s shock and disgust?

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. ready to puke
- C. horrified
- D. flabbergasted

14. The underlined portion can be replaced with all of the following EXCEPT:

- F. urban
- G. contemporary
- H. present-day
- J. current

15. Assuming the rest of the paragraphs in this passage are in the correct order, the best placement for Paragraph 8 is:

- A. after Paragraph 1
- B. after Paragraph 3
- C. after Paragraph 4
- D. after Paragraph 5