

ACT CHALLENGE: “A ROAD OF ENDLESS HORRORS: THE BATAAN DEATH MARCH”

Directions: In the ACT-like passage that follows, certain words and phrases are underlined and numbered. On the right you will see suggested revisions for each underlined part. Choose the option that best expresses the idea, makes the statement appropriate for standard written English, or is worded most consistently with the style and tone of the passage as a whole. “NO CHANGE” is a valid option if you think the original is the best choice. Along with grammar, there are also questions about the content of the passage. These questions do not refer to any underlined part of the passage but are identified by numbers in a box.

Read the passage thoroughly before answering the questions. For some questions, you must read several sentences beyond the question to determine the correct answer.

Road of Endless Horrors

On January 31st, 2016, Pueblo Indian elder Tony Reyna blew out the candles on his birthday cake with help from his grandchildren. He was 100 years old, but what made this¹ celebration extraordinary was that Reyna was one of the few living survivors of the Bataan Death March, a horrific event which took place 74 years prior.

The United States seized the Philippines as a colony after it defeated Spain in 1898. This changed on December 7, 1941, when Japan bombed Pearl Harbor. Following the bombing, the United States officially entered World War II. The day after the Pearl Harbor attack, they² began to bomb the Philippines. Given the Philippines' close proximity to Japan, the islands became a primary battleground in the Pacific Theater.

The Bataan Death March began on April 9, 1942. It was the forced transfer of roughly 75,000 American and Filipino POWs. The prisoners were forced to march over 110 km (approximately 65 miles). The journey took an untold number of lives.³ Estimates of Filipino deaths range from 5,000 to 18,000, and the number of American deaths is estimated between 500 and 650.

1. Which of the following alternatives to the underlined portion would be LEAST acceptable?

- A. the
- B. his birthday
- C. this particular
- D. his 100th birthday

2. Which of the following would be the best replacement for the underlined pronoun "they"?

- F. NO CHANGE
- G. it
- H. Japan
- J. we

3. Which alternative provides the most precise information consistent with the passage?

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. The journey resulted in thousands of deaths.
- C. The journey killed many people.
- D. The journey was deadly.

Richard Gordon, a survivor of the Bataan Death March, recalled to the Public Broadcasting Service what **he** witnessed when **he** was captured. "I passed my battalion commander, Major James Ivy, and **he** had been tied to a tree and **he** was stripped to the waist and he was just covered with bayonet holes," Gordon said. "He had been bayoneted by many, many bayonets. And that sight made me realize we had some troubles on our hands. **We** were in for deep trouble." A

The prisoners were ordered to make the 65-mile march up the Bataan Peninsula to the captured Camp O'Donnell, which had been turned into a forced-labor and concentration camp. Wounded prisoners were summarily executed; those who could not get up in the morning were buried alive or beaten to death. Their fellow prisoners were forced to bury **them**. **Those** who straggled, broke ranks, fell, or simply refused to go on were shot, stabbed, bayoneted, and even beheaded.

B Leon Beck described **these** conditions: "At night, they put **us** in barbed wire enclosures and **they'd** herd **us** in **there**. **We** defecated right where **we** were, and **it** got pretty bad. Because of the mess, everybody was sick with malaria and dysentery."

Beck was one of few prisoners who escaped. "I just rolled off the road and got into the edge of the river where **there** was palmetto brush," Beck remembers. "As soon as the group marched past **me**, I swam across **that** river and got into a rice field." **He** joined Filipino and American soldiers who managed to escape. **These** soldiers fought as guerilla fighters for three years.

1 Ben Skardon, who survived the Death March, was taken to Japan on a "hell ship." The ship Skardon was on was bombed,

4. Which of the following provides the most concise wording while maintaining the meaning and tone of the original?

F. NO CHANGE

G. he was just covered with bayonet holes," Gordon said. "He had been bayoneted repeatedly.

H. he was just covered with bayonet holes," Gordon said. "He had been stabbed many times.

J. he was covered with bayonet holes," Gordon said.

5. Which alternative provides the most precise information consistent with the passage?

A. NO CHANGE

B. executed without delay

C. executed immediately and summarily

D. quickly executed without any delay

6. The pronoun "they" most clearly refers to:

F. NO CHANGE

G. the guards (this should be clarified in the text)

H. prisoners

J. the prisoners' fellow captives

7. Which transition word, if inserted at the beginning of the second sentence, would best show the relationship between these sentences?

A. However,

B. Therefore,

C. He recalled:

D. Meanwhile,

8. For the sake of logic and coherence, the paragraph about Ben Skardon 1 should be placed:

F. where it is now — NO CHANGE

and instead of being rescued, **he** was picked up by the Japanese, who put **him** on another "hell ship." **His** friend died in **his** arms from bombing wounds. **He** recalled a chaplain saying, "'Son, **you're** going to have to turn **him** loose.' I could not believe **he** was dead."

When Tony Reyna returned to New Mexico **he was** one of 11 Death March survivors from the Taos Pueblo community. **He** opened a store which **he** ran for decades, fought to protect Pueblo traditions, and served as governor for two terms. **He** passed away peacefully in 2016. Looking back on **his** experience, **he** put **it** simply: "**We** survived because **we** were determined to survive."

"Later, in quietness away from prying eyes, I reflected on what I had done. To stand for something greater—justice, empathy, reason—no longer seemed possible under the mask I had worn. I had performed my duty for appearances sake, and I realized that to please the crowd was to betray myself." ☐ C

- G. at ☐ A, after the paragraph about Richard Gordon
- H. at ☐ B, before the paragraph about Leon Beck
- J. at the end of the passage, after Tony Reyna's story ☐ C

9. When Tony Reyna returned to New Mexico **he was** one of 11 Death March survivors from the Taos Pueblo community.

- A. **NO CHANGE**
- B. New Mexico, he was
- C. New Mexico; he was
- D. New Mexico: he was

10. The writer is considering deleting the final paragraph beginning with "Later, in quietness away from prying eyes..." Should this paragraph be kept or deleted?

- F. Kept, because it provides important reflection on the Bataan Death March.
- G. Kept, because it offers a personal perspective on survival.
- H. Deleted, because it shifts to a first-person narrator unrelated to the passage's subject.
- J. Deleted, because it repeats information already stated in the passage