

Determining Relevant and Irrelevant Information in a Passage

DIRECTIONS: One of the sentences in the paragraph is **irrelevant** to the main idea of the paragraph. Cross out the **irrelevant** sentence.

The longest-lived creature in the insect world is the queen termite (ant). She has been known to live for over 50 years. During that time, the queen can lay over 30,000 eggs each day. So in her 50 years of life, it is possible for her to give birth to half a billion children. Some termite hills can be over six meters high.

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For many years, all books were written by hand. Because it took so long to write one book, there were only a few of them. Most people could never own a book. Then sometime between 1450 and 1460, Johannes Gutenberg got the idea of carving separate letters and moving them to make new words. Gutenberg died at the age of 68. This was the invention of moveable type. From then on, the numbers of books printed grew quickly.

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The solar system is believed to have formed, perhaps 5 billion years ago, from a spinning cloud of gas called a nebula. As this nebula contracted it began to spin faster and faster. Probably it spun off rings of planetary matter as it became more disk-like. These rings later contracted into planets. Earth is the third planet from the Sun.

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Some people do not know that the whale is a mammal just like a human. Humpback whales will sometimes leap clear up out of the water, an act known as breaching. A humpback whale can weigh thirty tons and measure 15 meters in length. So it takes an enormous amount of energy for a whale to breach.

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The largest organ in the human body is the skin. One of the skin's functions is to help regulate the amount of body heat that flows in and out of the body. Heavy smoking ages skin very quickly. When it is cold, we cover the skin with extra layers of clothing to slow down the outward flow of heat. When it is hot, evaporation of sweat cools us down.

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The largest set of wings on any bird, more than three meters across, is found on the albatross. They are so heavy that it is difficult for the albatross to flap them in order to take off and fly. Not all large birds can fly. Albatross often nest on steep cliffs so that they can simply fall off into the air. Once they are airborne, they soar gracefully.

Lake Baikal in central Asia is the deepest lake in the world. In places, it is 1.5 kilometers deep. The lake contains about one sixth of the world's fresh water supply. It contains over 1200 species of animals and 500 species of plants. Many of these plants and animals are not to be found anywhere else on earth. The name Baikal comes from the Mongolian word that means 'nature'.

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Ice floats on water because it is not quite as dense as water is. The chemical formula for water is H₂O. If ice were denser than water, then lakes and other bodies of water would freeze from the bottom up during the winter. Fish would surface and eventually die.

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Bats are able to maneuver in the dark even if they are blindfolded. However, if their ears are taped shut they cannot find their way. Bats emit very high pitched sound waves through their nostrils. The reflection of these sound waves reaching their sensitive ears enables bats to avoid obstacles. In this way they can capture even very tiny insects. Many bats prefer to eat fruit than insects.

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The cheetah, which is found mostly in Africa and India, is one of the fastest land animals. Cheetahs, like leopards, are covered in spots. They have long and muscular legs. Cheetahs have been known to sprint at a speed of over 60 miles per hour. On a long distance run, however, a cheetah can be overtaken by a horse.

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It is estimated that the temperature of the inner core of the planet earth is between four and five thousand degrees Celsius. In some parts of the world, Fahrenheit is the unit used to measure temperature. Lava, the molten rock that flows down the sides of an erupting volcano, is much cooler. Even so, fresh lava is hot enough to emit light. A night view of an erupting volcano is a spectacular sight.

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The elephant is about as heavy as a land animal can be. The larger an animal is, the larger the diameter of its legs. An antelope has slender legs. A horse's legs are somewhat thicker and those of an elephant are even thicker. If the elephant were much larger, its legs would touch one another and it wouldn't be able to move at all. Indian elephants have smaller ears than African elephants.