

How many professions do you know of that come with "how to" instructions? Read this poem that offers pointers and suggestions on how to be a poet and answer the questions that follow.

## How To Be a Poet

(to remind myself)

by Wendell Berry

### I

Make a place to sit down.  
Sit down. Be quiet.  
You must depend upon  
affection, reading, knowledge,  
5 skill—more of each  
than you have—inspiration,  
work, growing older, patience,  
for patience joins time  
to eternity. Any readers  
10 who like your poems,  
doubt their judgment.

### II

Breathe with unconditional breath  
the unconditioned air.  
Shun electric wire.  
15 Communicate slowly. Live  
a three-dimensional life;  
stay away from screens.  
Stay away from anything  
that obscures the place it is in.  
20 There are no unsacred places;  
there are only sacred places  
and desecrated places.

### III

Accept what comes from silence.  
Make the best you can of it.  
25 Of the little words that come  
out of the silence, like prayers  
prayed back to the one who prays,  
make a poem that does not disturb  
the silence from which it came.

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1. Which of the following statements **best** expresses the theme of the poem?
- A Create the space and time to appreciate life and find your own voice.
  - B Mistrust the opinions of others and the influence of technology.
  - C Stay in one place long enough to find your inspiration.
  - D Rely on the teachings of others to help you find your passion.
2. Throughout the poem, the poet uses imperative sentences such as "Sit down," "Be quiet," and "Communicate slowly," to emphasize which of the following?
- A the poet's disregard for correct grammar
  - B the poet's arrogant, demanding tone
  - C the directions and guidance suggested by the poem's title
  - D the complex connection between the poet and the reader
3. How do the phrases "unconditional breath" and "three-dimensional life" **best** exemplify the advice the poet gives in section II?
- A avoid crowded spaces
  - B compose carefully and with feeling
  - C find a sacred place to work
  - D stay open-minded to fresh ideas
4. By telling the audience to "communicate slowly" in line 15, the poet is telling the reader to do which of the following?
- A breathe deeply
  - B read each word carefully
  - C express oneself deliberately
  - D slow down one's speech
5. In line 14 in the expression "shun electric wire," the poet seems to be encouraging which of the following?
- A avoid the use of telephones
  - B avoid the use of technology in general
  - C use computers for Internet communication
  - D use caution when working with electricity

6. The poet uses lines 9–11 to emphasize which of the following ideas?
- A a poet's need to be continually reflective, even when praised
  - B a reader's superficial understanding of poetry
  - C a poet's need to seek societal approval
  - D a reader's importance in deciding the fate of a poet

### End of Set

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*Answers to*  
*English I Textual Analysis Sample Items*

<b>Passage Title</b>	<b>Question Number</b>	<b>Correct Answer</b>	<b>Thinking Skill</b>	<b>Objective Number</b>
How To Be a Poet	1	A	Integrating	5.01
How To Be a Post	2	C	Integrating	4.02
How To Be a Poet	3	D	Integrating	5.01
How To Be a Poet	4	C	Analyzing	5.01
How To Be a Poet	5	B	Analyzing	5.01
How To Be a Poet	6	A	Generating	6.01