

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Inference Practice 2**

Kelly C. Roell ©<http://testprep.about.com>

*Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow.*

It was about ten-thirty at night in Gaufurt, Bavaria, several weeks after V-E Day. Staff Sergeant X was in his room on the second floor of the civilian home in which he and nine other American soldiers had been quartered, even before the armistice. He was seated on a folding wooden chair at a small, messy-looking writing table, with a paperback overseas novel open before him, which he was having great trouble reading.

The trouble lay with him, not the novel. Although the men who lived on the first floor usually had first grab at the books sent each month by Special Services, X usually seemed to be left with the book he might have selected himself. But he was a young man who had not come through the war with all his faculties intact, and for more than an hour he had been triple-reading paragraphs, and now he was doing it to the sentences. He suddenly closed the book, without marking his place. With his hand, he shielded his eyes for a moment against the harsh, watty glare from the naked bulb over the table.

He took a cigarette from a pack on the table and lit it with fingers that bumped gently and incessantly against one another. He sat back a trifle in his chair and smoked without any sense of taste. He had been chain-smoking for weeks. His gums bled at the slightest pressure of the tip of his tongue, and he seldom stopped experimenting; it was a little game he played, sometimes by the hour. He sat for a moment smoking and experimenting. Then, abruptly, familiarly, and, as usual, with no warning, he thought he felt his mind dislodge itself and teeter, like insecure luggage on an overhead rack. He quickly did what he had been doing for weeks to set things right: he pressed his hands hard against his temples. He held on tight for a moment. His hair needed cutting, and it was dirty. He had washed it three or four times during his two weeks' stay at the hospital in Frankfort on the Main, but it had got dirty again on the long, dusty jeep ride back to Gaufurt. Corporal Z, who had called for him at the hospital, still drove a jeep combat-style, with the windshield down on the hood, armistice or no armistice. There were thousands of new troops in Germany. By driving with his windshield down, combat-style, Corporal Z hoped to show that he was not one of them, that not by a long shot was he some new son of a b in the E.T.O.

When he let go of his head, X began to stare at the surface of the writing table, which was a catchall for at least two dozen unopened letters and at least five or six unopened packages, all addressed to him. He reached behind the debris and picked out a book that stood against the wall. It was a book by Goebbels, entitled "Die Zeit Ohne Beispiel." It belonged to the thirty-eight-year-old, unmarried daughter of the family that, up to a few weeks earlier, had been living in the house. She had been a low official in the Nazi Party, but high enough, by Army Regulations standards, to fall into an automatic-arrest category. X himself had arrested her. Now, for the third time since he had returned from the hospital that day, he opened the woman's book and read the brief inscription on the flyleaf. Written in ink, in German, in a small, hopelessly sincere handwriting, were the words "Dear God, life is hell." Nothing led up to or away from it. Alone on the page, and in the sickly stillness of the room, the words appeared to have the stature of an uncontestable, even classic indictment. X stared at the page for several minutes, trying, against

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

heavy odds, not to be taken in. Then, with far more zeal than he had done anything in weeks, he picked up a pencil stub and wrote down under the inscription, in English, "Fathers and teachers, I ponder 'What is hell?' I maintain that it is the suffering of being unable to love." He started to write Dostoevski's name under the inscription, but saw--with fright that ran through his whole body--that what he had written was almost entirely illegible. He shut the book.

### Question 1

According to the first two paragraphs, we can reasonably infer that Staff Sergeant X had trouble reading the book primarily because...

- A. the harsh glare from the naked bulb made reading difficult.
- B. the other men had selected better novels, so he wasn't interested in it.
- C. he was tired from his time on duty.
- D. the war had disturbed him in some way.

### Question 2

Which of the following statements is best supported by the last paragraph?

- A. Staff Sergeant X feels guilty about arresting the woman who wrote in the book by Goebbels.
- B. Staff Sergeant X believes Dostoevski able to correct the war's most awful mistakes.
- C. Staff Sergeant X wants to discharge himself from the war.
- D. Staff Sergeant X has gone completely insane.

### Question 3

The author uses the phrase "...like insecure luggage on an overhead rack" in order to further imply...

- A. that Staff Sergeant X was battle scarred in the mind as well as in the body.
- B. that Staff Sergeant X was teetering on the edge of a nervous breakdown.
- C. that Staff Sergeant X had grown completely careless in his environment.
- D. that Staff Sergeant X's hallucinations had caused him to break from reality.

### Question 4

Based on the last paragraph, it could be inferred that Staff Sergeant X...

- A. longed for love.
- B. longed for a swift resolution to the war.
- C. longed for silence.
- D. longed to leave his station.

### Question 5

The passage suggests that Corporal Z, who had driven Staff Sergeant X back from the hospital...

- A. was too proud to give up his old ways.
- B. had no compassion for Sergeant X.
- C. was a fool who valued previous notions over new ideas.
- D. had earned the respect of Sergeant X.