Text Structure: How Sections Fit Together

Name: _____ Date: _____ Score: _____ / 10

Quick Review

A section of nonfiction has a JOB inside the whole text — it might introduce a problem, give a cause, give an effect, give a counter-claim, or wrap things up. To answer text-structure questions, ask: what is THIS section doing for the bigger argument?

PART 1 — READ

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

The Long, Strange Career of Skateboarding

Skateboarding did not begin as a sport. In the late 1950s, surfers along the California coast realized they could nail roller-skate wheels to the bottom of a wooden plank and "surf" the cracked sidewalks of their suburban neighborhoods on flat days when the waves were too small to ride. These first boards were homemade, dangerous, and ignored by most adults. For nearly a decade, skateboarding was a hobby passed from kid to kid, with no rules, no teams, and almost no equipment companies that took it seriously.

The first big change came from a small material. In 1972, an engineer named Frank Nasworthy began selling polyurethane wheels — soft, grippy, fast — to replace the hard clay or metal wheels skateboarders had used until then. The new wheels did not crack on rough sidewalks. They held on through sharper turns. Within three years, the number of skateboarding magazines had doubled, and the first professional contests offered prize money. The sport had not yet found its identity, but it now had a tool good enough to build one on.

The 1980s pushed skateboarding underground. Public skateparks closed across the country because insurance companies refused to cover them after a few high-profile injuries. Without official places to ride, skaters built wooden ramps in their backyards, filmed each other on home video, and traded the tapes by mail. What looked, at the time, like the end of the sport turned out to be the beginning of its own culture: an underground style of clothing, photography, and music that grew alongside the riding itself.

By 1995, when ESPN aired the first X Games, skateboarding had quietly built a global audience large enough to fill a televised event. In 2021, the sport made its debut at the Tokyo Olympics. The path from cracked sidewalks to Olympic medals took more than sixty years, and at almost every step it ran through a problem — bad equipment, closed parks, lack of money — that the skaters themselves had to solve. The history of skateboarding is, in that sense, a history of solutions invented out of necessity by the people who refused to stop riding.

PART 2 — PRACTICE

Use the passage to answer each question.

1. What is the MAIN job of paragraph 1 in the overall structure of the article?

   A. To argue that skateboarding should not have become a sport.

   B. To introduce skateboarding's beginnings and set up the long journey the article will trace.

   C. To list every state where skateboarders lived in the 1950s.

   D. To prove that polyurethane wheels were the most important invention in history.

2. Paragraph 2 fits into the article MAINLY by —

   A. adding a personal opinion about Frank Nasworthy.

   B. describing the FIRST big turning point that moved skateboarding from hobby toward sport.

   C. ending the article with a final summary.

   D. comparing skateboarding to surfing for the first time.

3. Paragraph 3 mainly describes —

   A. a SETBACK and how skateboarders responded to it.

   B. the very first skateboards ever built.

   C. the future of skateboarding at the Olympics.

   D. a list of professional skaters who quit the sport.

4. Which sentence BEST shows that paragraph 4 functions as a CONCLUSION?

   A. "By 1995, when ESPN aired the first X Games, skateboarding had quietly built a global audience large enough to fill a televised event."

   B. "In 2021, the sport made its debut at the Tokyo Olympics."

   C. "The path from cracked sidewalks to Olympic medals took more than sixty years."

   D. "The history of skateboarding is, in that sense, a history of solutions invented out of necessity by the people who refused to stop riding."

5. How does paragraph 3 connect to paragraph 4?

   A. Paragraph 3 contradicts everything paragraph 4 will say.

   B. Paragraph 3 sets up an underground culture; paragraph 4 then shows how that culture grew into a global, even Olympic, audience.

   C. Paragraph 3 ends the article, so paragraph 4 is unrelated.

   D. Paragraph 3 is a definition; paragraph 4 is a list of names.

6. Suppose the author moved paragraph 3 to the END of the article. What would be LOST?

   A. The reader would not know that skateboarding once existed in the 1980s.

   B. The reader would lose the cause-and-effect chain that explains HOW underground culture led to the global audience of paragraph 4.

   C. The reader would lose any mention of polyurethane wheels.

   D. The article would no longer have an introduction.

7. Which sentence from paragraph 2 functions as that paragraph's TOPIC sentence?

A. "The first big change came from a small material."

B. "The new wheels did not crack on rough sidewalks."

C. "They held on through sharper turns."

D. "The sport had not yet found its identity, but it now had a tool good enough to build one on."

8. Which structural pattern BEST describes the whole article?

A. A definition followed by a list of synonyms.

B. Chronological order — a sequence of turning points that moved skateboarding from sidewalk hobby to global sport.

C. Compare-and-contrast between two different sports.

D. Cause-and-effect about a single person's career.

9. Explain in 2-3 sentences how paragraph 3 fits into the overall structure of the article. What problem does it raise, and how does it prepare the reader for paragraph 4?

_____

_____

10. Suppose a student wants to remove paragraph 2 from the article. Explain in 2-3 sentences why removing it would damage the article's overall structure.

_____

_____

Answer Keys

1	A	**B**	C	D	6	A	**B**	C	D
2	A	**B**	C	D	7	**A**	B	C	D
3	**A**	B	C	D	8	A	**B**	C	D
4	A	B	C	**D**	9	See below			
5	A	**B**	C	D	10	See below			

Explanations

1. B	Paragraph 1 plants the starting point (homemade boards, no rules) that the rest of the article will compare to later stages. A is an opinion the author never makes. C is too narrow and false. D is a polyurethane claim that belongs to paragraph 2.
2. B	Paragraph 2 names the wheel innovation as the first major change — a turning-point structure. A is an opinion the paragraph avoids. C wrongly treats paragraph 2 as a conclusion. D misnames a comparison; surfing actually appears in paragraph 1.
3. A	Closed parks (setback) and home ramps + tapes (response) = problem-and-response structure. B belongs to paragraph 1. C belongs to paragraph 4. D invents content the paragraph does not include.
4. D	D ties everything from cracked sidewalks (paragraph 1) to Olympics into one big statement — the classic concluding move. A and B are facts inside the conclusion, not the summing-up sentence. C names the timespan but does not yet make the larger point.
5. B	The underground culture in paragraph 3 becomes the global audience paragraph 4 describes — a clear setup-and-result link. A reverses the meaning. C is wrong about the article's order. D mislabels both paragraphs.
6. B	Paragraph 3 must come BEFORE 4 because it provides the cause (underground culture) for the effect (global audience). A overstates: the 1980s could still be mentioned elsewhere. C is wrong (wheels are in paragraph 2). D wrongly treats paragraph 3 as the introduction.
7. A	A names the paragraph's job (the first big change) before the supporting details. B and C are supporting facts about the wheels. D is the closing summary sentence, not the topic sentence.
8. B	The article moves 1950s → 1972 → 1980s → 1995 → 2021 — a chronology of turning points. A misreads the structure. C invents a comparison. D narrows the article to one person, which it is not.
9.	**Answer:** Strong answer: Paragraph 3 raises the problem that public skateparks closed in the 1980s and skateboarding lost its official spaces. It also describes how skaters responded — home ramps, videos, an underground style — so paragraph 3 introduces a problem AND the start of a solution. That underground culture is the audience paragraph 4 builds on to reach the X Games and the Olympics. Acceptable variations: answers that name the closure problem AND the underground culture that paragraph 4 grows from. NOT acceptable: answers that only restate paragraph 3 without linking to paragraph 4; answers that say paragraph 3 is a conclusion; answers that focus only on insurance companies. A 2-point answer (1) names the closed-park problem AND (2) shows how the underground culture becomes the audience paragraph 4 develops.

10.	**Answer:** Strong answer: Paragraph 2 explains the first big turning point — polyurethane wheels — that made skateboarding fast and grippy enough to support contests, magazines, and prize money. Without it, the article would jump from the hobby in paragraph 1 to the underground culture of paragraph 3 with no equipment or popularity bridge between them. The reader would be left unable to see HOW the sport grew enough to be "underground" in the first place. Acceptable variations: answers that name the wheel as the missing bridge between paragraphs 1 and 3, or that note paragraph 2 explains the first popularity surge. NOT acceptable: answers that say paragraph 2 is unimportant; answers that name only the date 1972; answers that confuse paragraph 2 with paragraph 4. A 2-point answer (1) names what paragraph 2 contributes (the wheel turning point) AND (2) shows what the rest of the article would lack without it.

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