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COMPREHENSION [ 25 MIN. ] In this section there are passages followed by questions or unfinished statements, each with suggested answers marked A, B, C and D. Choose the one that you think is the correct answer. Mark your choices on your ANSWER SHEET.

TEXT A The Pony Express  
In the United States today, we can send a letter from coast to coast in just a few days for well under half dollar. But news did not always travel as fast or as cheaply as it does today. In the mid 1800s, trains and horse-drawn coaches carried mail. It took many weeks for news to travel from New York to California. In 1860, the railroad and telegraph reached only from the East Coast to Missouri, less than halfway across the country.

Horse-drawn coaches, which were very slow, then carried the mail from Missouri to California. In April 1860, the Pony Express began to carry the mail from St. Joseph, Missouri, to Sacramento, California. The trip took just ten days half the time the coaches took. The Pony Express was a horse relay system. There were stations every 10 or 15 miles along the route, which was nearly 3,200 kilometers (2,000 miles) long. Fresh horses were at each station. The riders, with their heavy mailbags, changed horses at every station. They continued riding full speed for a total of about 100 miles. Then another rider took over and continued riding. The Pony Express

riders rode through dangerous territory, including mountains, deserts, and Indian lands. Bad weather didn't stop these tough riders, either. They rode through rain, snow, sleet, and blizzards, both night and day. The riders, therefore, had to be both brave and strong. Some newspapers in 1860 carried this advertisement: Wanted: Young, skinny, wiry fellows, not over 18. Must be expert riders, willing to risk death daily. Orphans preferred. Most of the young Pony Express riders completed the ride successfully. Some of them even became famous for their courage and bravery during difficult rides. What did these young men get paid for their bravery? Twenty-five dollars a week. And what was the cost of sending a letter by Pony Express? Five dollars a half-ounce in 1860, then reduced to two dollars in 1861. In October 1861, the telegraph reached California. The Pony Express disappeared after this and became a short but exciting chapter in American history.

66. What is the usage of the Pony Express?  
A. To help people travel from coast to coast.  
B. To train riders for competition.  
C. To transfer materials and messages.  
D. To arrest criminals in the West.

67. How long did the Pony Express Exist?  
A. 61 years.  
B. 6 months.  
C. One year.  
D. 18 months.

68. According to the passage, the Pony Express riders are \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. orphans  
B. well over 18  
C. skillful cart-drivers  
D. courageous and brave young men

TEXT B  
Blind people usually possess one advantage over other people who can see: their sense of hearing is far more acute. Sounds which most others would miss can carry a great deal of information to a sightless person. For instance, teams of blind children can enjoy fast-moving games of soccer with a bell inside the

ball and a new hand-held ultrasonic device to guide them. And that sound-location system could help to build up an even more complete sound picture of a blind person's surroundings. Bats, whose sight is poor, use a sound-location system to help them avoid obstacles in the dark. They send out pulses of sound waves, pitched at 50,000 cycles per second, far above the limits of the human ear, which can hear sounds up to frequencies of about 20,000 cycles per second. As the echoes bounce back off obstacles such as trees and walls, the bats are able to take appropriate action. The first steps to help blind people to see with sound are based on exactly the same principle. The sound is emitted by an ultrasonic torch, shaped like a double-barreled version of a normal electric torch. It works in a similar way to a sonar unit on a warship or submarine. The unit's transmitter sends out pulses of ultrasonic waves at the same frequency as the bat, and the receiver picks up the returning echoes. Because these are still above the frequency at which the human ear can pick them up, the echoes are filtered through circuits which turn them into clearly audible 'beeps' before passing them into headphones. This means that a person holding the torch can point it ahead of him and 'scan' the area for obstacles over a range of about 25 ft. If there are no return echoes coming through the headphones, then there is nothing in the way. If echoes do come back, then the closer the obstruction, the faster the succession of beeps and the deeper the pitch of each beep. With practice the torch could help a blind person to lead a more normal life without needing a constant companion to guide him. Experienced operators of the torch system

claim they can distinguish grass from bushes, trees, pests and curbstones. But before blind people can be helped to feel really independent, the system needs to be more streamlined. At present, the experimental ultrasonic torch requires a shoulder bag to carry the batteries, cables for the power supplies and earphones, in addition to the torch itself. But miniaturization of electronic equipment is making such rapid progress that it should not be long before the whole set-up can be reproduced in a form small enough to fit into a pair of spectacles. The transmitter and power supplies, with all the circuitry, would be packed into the bridge-piece above the nose. The sending and receiving sensors would be in the 'lenses'. And the filtered beeps would be passed on to the wearer through the earpieces, as with present-day hearing-aid spectacles. This would mean that scanning one's surroundings would become instinctive. The wearer would face in the direction he wanted to check, and lift or lower his head just as a sighted person would.

69. How do blind children play soccer?  
A. They listen to the sound of the ball bouncing.  
B. They ask an adult to guide them.  
C. They hold a bell in their hands.  
D. They put a bell inside the ball.

70. The attempt to help blind people to see with sound \_\_\_\_\_  
A. was similar to the sound location system of the bats  
B. led to a product that sent out sound waves of about 20,000 cycles per second  
C. was experimented on a submarine  
D. turned out to be a failure

71. The returning echoes the receiver picks up are \_\_\_\_\_  
A. clearly audible beeps  
B. inaudible to human ears  
C. immediately passed on to headphones  
D. filtered through the transmitter

72. Which of the following is NOT true about

the ultrasonic torch?A. It enables the blind to live a more normal life.B. It is mainly used to scan the area in front of the operator for obstacles.C. Fast succession of bleeps indicates that the obstacle is near.D. Its sound can warn other people of the blind man ' s approach. 100Test 下载频道开通，各类考试题目直接下载。详细请访问 [www.100test.com](http://www.100test.com)