

ests for English Majors Grade Eight

英语专业八级考试

模拟与解析

TEM E

上海交通大学出版社

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Tests for English Majors Grade Eight

主编 何兆熊

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内容提要

本书根据《高等学校英语专业教学大纲》以及《高校英语专业八级考试大纲》对英语专业四年级学生的专业要求编写。参编作者来自上海 5 所高校 9 位教学经验丰富的教师,将其在多年英语专业教学中积累的资料汇编成 8 套模拟题,并提供解析。本书邀请来自上海外国语大学的何兆熊教授担任主编,邹申教授作指导顾问,以保证本书内容的科学性和严谨性。

本书可供大学英语专业学生参加专业八级考试复习之用,也可为教师提供教学参考。

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前 言

英语专业四、八级考试自开考以来已有十多年了,这两个以检测高等学校英语专业教学质量和执行专业教学大纲情况为目的的全国统一考试受到学校、教师和学生的重视。近年来,随着这两个考试的知名度和社会认可程度的不断提高,广大师生和有关院校对这两个考试越发重视了。2000 年教育部颁布并开始实施或英语专业教学大纲,为此,2002 年底高等学校外语专业指导委员会英语组成市的考试大纲修订小组,根据新的教学大纲对原有的考试大纲进行了修订,经有专业成者或模拟与解析》便是根据新的考试大纲编与解析》和《英语专业八级考试模拟与解析》便是根据新的考试大纲编目的考试辅导用书。每本书都包括了八份模拟试卷。但和许多模拟试题册不可以为考试辅导用书。每本书都包括了八份模拟试卷。但和许多模拟试题册不不知题的考试辅导用书。每本书都包括了八份模拟试卷。但和许多模拟试题册不不对等的考试辅导用书。每本书都包括了八份模拟试卷。它们还包括对明的是,正如这两本书的书名所示,它们不单单为学生提供模拟试卷,它们还包括对对,要说得出为什么对,错,更要知道为什么错,以免再犯。我想这个评价标准也可以用到试题册上来。这两本书的编者都是英语专业的教师,教学经验颇丰,所以十分知道该怎么样使得学生知其所以然。他们在解析的编写上的确是颇费苦心的。

参加本书编写的 8 位教师来自上海的 5 所高校,包括上海交通大学、上海师范大学、上海海事大学、华东理工大学和苏州大学。他们所承担的编写工作如下:

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可以说这两本书的出版是一种合力的体现,是高校之间协作的结果。

外语学习是一个日积月累的过程,需要学习者持之以恒地练习、积累;任何投机取巧的想法和急功近利的学习方法都不会真正奏效。平日不努力,到了考试临近想靠做几套模拟试题来过关的做法我们绝对不提倡,实际上也不会奏效。我们提倡踏踏实实、一步一个脚印地学习,打好基础,扎扎实实地提高,有了真功夫,什么考试都不会怕。但在原有的基础上,适当做一些考前的准备,熟悉一下题型,对

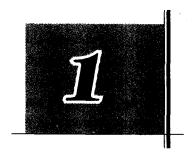
临场发挥,考出自己的真实水平当然会有好处。这正是我们编写这两本模拟题册的真正意图。希望它们能有助学生提高英语能力,在这个前提下提高考试成绩。

在这两本模拟题册的编写过程中,我们始终得到上海外国语大学博士生导师 邹申教授的关心和指导,对此,我们表示深深的感谢。

主编 何兆熊 2005 年 4 月

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MODEL TEST 1

TIME LIMIT: 185 MIN.

PART I LISTENING COMPREHENSION [25 MIN.]

SECTION A MINI-LECTURE

In this section you will hear a mini-lecture. You will hear the lecture ONCE ONLY. While listening, take notes on the important points. Your notes will not be marked, but you will need them to complete a gap-filling task on ANSWER SHEET ONE after the mini-lecture. Use the blank sheet for note-taking.

Now listen to the mini-lecture.

In Sections B and C you will hear everything ONCE ONLY. Listen carefully and then answer the questions that follow. Mark the correct answer to each question on your answer sheet.

How to Present a Seminar Paper

To involve their students more actively in the learning process, many university teachers usually conduct seminars, in which one student is asked to give his ideas on a certain topic and other students discuss the ideas.

| There are tw | o stages involved in presenting a paper at a seminar. One is | |
|--------------|--|-----|
| the (1) | stage which includes researching and writing up a topic. | (1) |

| The other stage is the presentation stage when y | ou actually present the paper | | | |
|--|---------------------------------|-----------------|--|--|
| to the audience. | | , | | |
| Two ways in which you can present your pa | per: a. (2) copies | (2) | | |
| of your paper beforehand to all the participant | s so that they could read it | | | |
| before the seminar and know about your ideas. | b. Reading it aloud to the | | | |
| (3) who are likely to make their | own notes. Comparatively | (3) | | |
| speaking, the first method is the more (4) | way of conducting a | (4) | | |
| seminar. However, you will have to introduc | e your paper at a seminar | | | |
| because the participants may have forgotten about | it your ideas or because they | | | |
| may have no time to read your paper. | | | | |
| Nine points you have to follow when introdu | icing your paper: | | | |
| 1) Decide on a time (5) for your | talk and stick to it. | (5) | | |
| 2) Write out your spoken presentation in the | way you are going to speak. | | | |
| 3) Stick to the major points and (6) | details. | (6) | | |
| 4) Do your best to make your presentation | interesting, but do not tell | | | |
| jokes and (7) | | (7) | | |
| 5) Write out and (8) what you is | ntend to say until you would | (8) | | |
| not make any error. | | | | |
| 6) Make (9) notes so that you can find your way easily from it (9) | | | | |
| to the full notes when you forget someth | ing. | | | |
| 7) Speak from the outline notes at the semi | nar. | | | |
| 8) Make eye contact with your audience and | d judge their (10) | (10) | | |
| 9) Repeat your main points briefly and invi- | te questions or comments in | | | |
| order to make a strong ending. | • | | | |
| SECTION B INTERVIEW | | | | |
| | | | | |
| Questions 1 to 5 are based on an intervie | | ew you will be | | |
| given 10 seconds to answer each of the following | ig five questions. | | | |
| Now listen to the interview. | | | | |
| 1. According to the officer, a student from oth | er countries have to | before he can | | |
| use the National Health Service in Britain. | | _ | | |
| A. register with a university | B. pay the full cost in advance | ce | | |
| C. study in Britain at least 6 months | D. be registered on at least (| | | |
| 2. If one is entitled to treatment from the Na | • | | | |
| first of all? | | | | |
| A. register a course of half a year. | B. register at any hospital. | | | |
| C. register with a doctor. | D. register with the local cit | | | |
| 3. Which of the following is true of the patien | t who has registered for the | National Health | | |

| Service according to the officer? | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|--|--|
| A. He will have to pay the cost of medicines. | | | | | |
| B. He will have to pay for the consultations with doctors. | | | | | |
| C. He will have to pay the full cost of all their treatment. | | | | | |
| D. He will have to consult with a d | D. He will have to consult with a doctor's receptionist before treatment. | | | | |
| 4. The following is free EXCEPT | - | | | | |
| A. dental treatment | B. casualty treatment | | | | |
| C. emergency treatment | D. all the treatment at a public hospital | | | | |
| | he has to do the following EXCEPT | | | | |
| A. calling out a doctor to see him | | | | | |
| B. finding out a doctor's consulting | y hours | | | | |
| | make an appointment with the doctor | | | | |
| D. contacting a doctor to find out v | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| SECTION C NEWS BROADCAST | | | | | |
| Questions 6 to 8 are based on the | following news. At the end of the news item, you | | | | |
| will be given 10 seconds to answer each | | | | | |
| Now listen to the news. | • | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| 6. Who attacked police bases, volunte | er defense posts and local government offices? | | | | |
| A. Security forces. | B. Some officials. | | | | |
| C. Militants. | D. The farmers. | | | | |
| 7. Where did the clash take place? | | | | | |
| A. In the southern provinces. | B. In the northern cities. | | | | |
| C. In the west. | D. In the east. | | | | |
| 8. How many militants were killed in | | | | | |
| A. 10. | В. 20. | | | | |
| C. At least 40. | D. At least 60. | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Questions 9 to 10 are based on th | e following news. At the end of the news item, you | | | | |
| will be given 10 seconds to answer each | - | | | | |
| Now listen to the news. | ,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,, | | | | |
| 11010 000000 00 000 00000 | | | | | |
| 9. What is President Bush's attitude t | towards the humiliating treatment of Iraqi prisoners by | | | | |
| American soldiers? | | | | | |
| A. Ambiguous. B. Negative | e. C. Apologetic. D. Supportive. | | | | |
| | I from the Arabian people's anger over the abuse? | | | | |
| A. Six American soldiers were char | | | | | |
| B. Some American soldiers were at | | | | | |
| D. Some American soluters were at | ,uonou- | | | | |

- C. An advisor to President Bush was reprimanded.
- D. President Bush was asked to make an apology.

PART | READING COMPREHENSION [30 MIN.]

In this section there are several reading passages followed by a total of twenty multiple-choice questions. Read the passages and then mark your answers on your answer sheet.

TEXT A (449 words)

The 70,000 grocery workers on strike in Southern California are the front line in a battle to prevent middle-class service jobs from turning into poverty-level ones. The supermarkets say they are forced to lower their labor costs to compete with Wal-Mart, a nonunion, low-wage employer aggressively moving into the grocery business. Everyone should be concerned about this fight. It is, at bottom, about the ability of retail workers to earn wages that keep their families out of poverty.

Grocery stores in Southern California are bracing for the arrival, in February, of the first of 40 Wal-Mart grocery supercenters. Wal-Mart's prices are about 14 percent lower than other groceries' because the company is aggressive about squeezing costs, including labor costs. Its workers earn a third less than unionized grocery workers, and pay for much of their health insurance. Wal-Mart uses hardball tactics to ward off unions. Since 1995, the government has issued at least 60 complaints alleging illegal anti-union activities.

Southern California's supermarket chains have reacted by demanding a two-year freeze on current workers' salaries and lower pay for newly hired workers, and they want employees to pay more for health insurance. The union counters that if the supermarkets match Wal-Mart, their workers will be pushed out of the middle class. Those workers are already only a step—or a second family income—from poverty, with wages of roughly \$18,000 a year. Wal-Mart sales clerks make about \$14,000 a year, below the \$15,060 poverty line for a family of three.

Wal-Mart may also be driving down costs by using undocumented immigrants. Last month, federal agents raided Wal-Mart's in 21 states. Wal-Mart is facing a grand jury investigation, and a civil racketeering class-action filed by cleaners who say they were underpaid when working for contractors hired by Wal-Mart. Wal-Mart insists that it was unaware of its contractors' practices. But aware or not, it may have helped to deprive legally employable janitors of jobs and adequate pay.

This Wal-Martization of the work force, to which other low-cost, low-pay stores also contribute, threatens to push many Americans into poverty. The first step in countering it is to enforce the law. The government must act more vigorously, and more quickly, when Wal-Mart uses illegal tactics to block union organizing. And Wal-Mart must be made to pay if it exploits undocumented workers.

Unions understand that the quickest way to win this war is to organize Wal-Mart workers. And Wal-Mart's competitors have to strive for Wal-Mart's efficiency without making workers bear the brunt. Consumers can also play a part. Wal-Mart likes to wrap itself in American values. It should be reminded that one of those is paying workers enough to give their families a decent life.

| 11. | Wal-Mart is criticized most for | | | |
|-----|---|---|--|--|
| | A. moving into the grocery business | B. squeezing its labor costs | | |
| | C. entering into anti-union activities | D. employing illegal workers | | |
| 12. | The following measures could be taken to | counter Wal-Martization of the work force | | |
| | EXCEPT | | | |
| | A. to enforce relevant laws | B. to raise workers' salaries | | |
| | C. to organize Wal-Mart workers | D. to match Wal-Mart's efficiency | | |
| 13. | We can infer from the last paragraph that | • | | |
| | A. Wal-Mart's practices are a moderately nice reflection of American values | | | |
| | B. consumers should bear the brunt of paying more for their own insurance | | | |
| | C. consumers might exert some influence on Wal-Mart to pay its workers more | | | |
| | D. Wal-Mart's efficiency is beyond what oth | ner supermarket chains can achieve | | |

TEXT B (1031 words)

Stern recounts her four-year odyssey into the hearts and minds of religious terrorists. She talks to Christian, Jewish and Muslim extremists, violent anti-abortion warriors and admirers of Timothy McVeigh, and discovers how much they have in common. Nothing she finds leads the reader to suppose that any of the religious faiths is inherently more prone to violence than the other: the problem is not the words on the page, but how they are read.

A rough social template can be extrapolated from Stern's account: the leaders of such groups tend to have much younger, attractive and submissive wives who support their views; long hair, robes, veils and conspicuous deference are popular in all three faiths. The leaders tend to live in comfortable houses and enjoy the trappings of their power: large cars, acolytes and bodyguards. They talk in generalities about the justice of their cause and the Almighty's firm support. Those who serve as cannon fodder, on the other hand, are likely to be young, vulnerable, socially disadvantaged and poorly educated, and to have a sense of personal or collective humiliation. Violence for the cause gives them a feeling of purpose, dignity and the transcendent experience of serving, and perhaps dying for, ideals that they regard as pure. With faith, the weak become strong, the selfish become altruistic, and rage turns to conviction.

If some of this sounds predictable, it is not to diminish the interest of Stern's account. A leading expert on terrorism and a lecturer at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, she has tracked down and interviewed an impressive range of activists in a variety of causes

from Florida to Kashmir. On a subject that tends to be richer in rhetoric than in detail, a writer able and willing to get this close is hard to find.

These are not always profoundly penetrating encounters: there is an implicit bargain—which Stern readily acknowledges—that if you are allowed across the threshold it is because your interlocutor has an agenda that he imagines will be furthered. Terrorists need people to notice what they do and, for reasons of fund-raising and recruitment, want to convince a wider circle that the cause is just. Perhaps Stern's critics would deem this a reason to stay away, but they would be wrong. She is a levelheaded investigator whose knowledge of the background of groups like these adds perspective to her interviews.

A feeling of complete certainty, let alone absolute purity, is hard to come by in the examined life. To foster the conviction that God supports the murder of innocents requires a tightknit group and a settled hatred of the Other; in these circles, whites hate blacks and Jews; Jews and Christians hate Muslims and vice versa; anti-abortion crusaders hate gynecologists. All of them seem to have it in for homosexuals and most, even the Americans, hate contemporary America. Tolerance and women's rights, as Stern observes, are irritating to those left behind by modernity.

Avigdor Eskin, a millenarian Jew, believes, rather against the evidence, that the United States is conspiring to destroy Israel. To meet him, Stern, who is careful to share this kind of detail, dressed in a long skirt, long sleeves and a scarf that covered her hair, neck and shoulders completely—an outfit that would have been equally de rigueur for a meeting with a strict Muslim. And as Eskin himself volunteers, they resemble each other in more than their dress code: "Here in Israel, we don't like to say this very loudly, but the radical right Jewish groups have a lot in common with Hamas." Both, Stern adds, have twin political and religious objectives and both use selective readings of religious texts and of history to justify violence over territory.

If to the outsider the manners are similar, each group believes itself to be uniquely favored by the Almighty, and each individual follows his own trajectory. A Palestinian suicide bomber might be suffering from what Stern describes as the epidemic of despair that afflicts his people. An American Identity Christian who was sickly as a child still burns with the humiliation of being made to join a girls' gym class at school. A young madrasah student in Pakistan says that the day he came to the religious school was the first time in his life he had enough food to eat or clothes to wear; two of his fellow pupils tell her that education and wealth are the two greatest threats to their cause.

The argument is often a fight about land and resources expressed through the powerful ideologies of identity. Some groups—the mujaheddin who fought in Afghanistan or the Muslim warriors in Indonesia—were created by state security services but have now escaped from control. Most enjoy ample funds and money has become, for many, a reason for continuing the war.

In between her interviews, Stern offers a cogent analysis of methodologies and

structures; she distinguishes between lone-wolf avengers and organizations with hierarchies of command, between networks, franchises and freelances, between inspirational leaders and leaderless resistance. She lays out the impact of the post-9/11 war on terror on organizations like Al Qaeda and confirmed my suspicion that both the rhetoric and the reality of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have boosted their numbers without crippling their capacity to harm. To fight today's terrorism with an army is like trying to shoot a cloud of mosquitoes with a machine gun.

The hard part, of course, is what to do instead. Stern describes how winner-take-all globalization provokes powerful resentment in a wide range of communities. Failed states, weak or tyrannical governments, social deprivation, arbitrary use of power and a perception of injustice—all help generate recruits. The Internet and the easy availability of weapons helps empower the discontented. On an individual level, though, why one true believer in search of a transcendent experience should become a saint and another a terrorist seems to be chance: it can come down to the wrong company at the vulnerable moment. On a global scale, Stern ventures some general policy advice, without claiming to offer a solution. As a description of the problem, though, this is a serious and provocative beginning.

14. According to the passage, which of the following is NOT the writer's opinion? A. Those who criticize Stern would be wrong in effect. B. Stern's analysis of terrorist structures is quite convincing. C. Stern does not try to offer solutions to end terrorism. D. Hamas uses selective readings of history to justify violence. 15. According to the passage, which of the following statements is NOT true? B. Some terrorists die for their ideals. A. Terrorists appreciate women's rights. D. Some terrorist groups fight for money. C. Terrorists tend to hate homosexuals. 16. We can infer from the passage that ___ A. different terrorist groups actually have a lot in common B. the United States is secretly planning to destroy Israel C. the war against terrorism has largely failed in its purpose D. Stern had to bargain with terrorists before interviewing them 17. This passage is most probably part of _____. B. a book review A. a summary of interviews

TEXT C (623 words)

C. a true story

A. indifferent

When Maggie was gone to sleep, Stephen, weary too with his unaccustomed amount of rowing and with the intense inward life of the last twelve hours, but too restless to sleep,

18. The writer comments on Stern's investigation and analysis in a __

B. negative

D. a biography

C. positive

D. ironic

walked and lounged about the deck, with his cigar, far on into midnight, not seeing the dark water—hardly conscious there were stars—living only in the near and distant future. At last fatigue conquered restlessness, and he rolled himself up in a piece of tarpaulin on the deck near Maggie's feet.

She had fallen asleep before nine, and had been sleeping for six hours before the faintest hint of a midsummer daybreak was discernible. She awoke from that vivid dreaming which makes the margin of our deeper rest. She was in a boat on the wide water with Stephen, and in the gathering darkness something like a star appeared, that grew and grew till they saw it was the Virgin seated in St Ogg's boat, and it came nearer and nearer till they saw the Virgin was Lucy and the boatman was Philip, who rowed past without looking at her; and she rose to stretch out her arms and call to him, and their own boat turned over with the movement and they began to sink, till with one spasm of dread she seemed to awake and find she was a child again in the parlour at evening twilight. From the soothed sense of that false waking she passed to the real waking, to the plash of water against the vessel, and the sound of a footstep on the deck, and the awful starlit sky. There was a moment of utter bewilderment before her mind could get disentangled from the confused web of dreams; but soon the whole terrible truth urged itself upon her. Stephen was not by her now; she was alone with her own memory and her own dread.

The irrevocable wrong that must blot her life had been committed—she had brought sorrow into the lives of others—into the lives that were knit up with hers by trust and love. The feeling of a few short weeks had hurried her into the sins her nature had most recoiled from—breach of faith and cruel selfishness; she had rent the ties that had given meaning to duty, and had made herself an outlawed soul with no guide but the wayward choice of her own passion. And where would that lead her? —where had it led her now? She had said she would rather die than fall into that temptation. She felt it now—now that the consequences of such a fall had come before the outward act was completed. There was at least this fruit from all her years of striving after the highest and best—that her soul, though betrayed, beguiled, ensnared, could never deliberately consent to a choice of the lower.

Her life with Stephen could have no sacredness: she must for ever sink and wander vaguely, driven by uncertain impulse; for she had let go the clue of life—that clue which once in the far off years her young need had clutched so strongly. She had renounced all delights then, before she knew them, before they had come within her reach: Philip had been right when he told her that she knew nothing of renunciation: she had thought it was quiet ecstasy; she saw it face to face now—that sad patient living strength which holds the clue of life, and saw that the thorns were for ever pressing on its brow. That yesterday which could never be revoked—if she could exchange it now for any length of inward silent endurance she would have bowed beneath that cross with a sense of rest.

- A. had some special feeling for Philip
- B. loathed the love affair with Stephen
- C. fell into the water without waking
- D. dreaded being alone with memory
- 20. According to the passage, which of the following statements is NOT true?
 - A. Maggie had a rather good rest in her sleep.
 - B. Maggie and Stephen were in the same boat.
 - C. Maggie found a fruit after years of searching.
 - D. Maggie didn't intend to be selfish and hurt others.
- 21. Which of the following can NOT be inferred from the passage?
 - A. Maggie experienced a complex and passionate inward life.
 - B. Maggie did not really give up what she once desired.
 - C. Maggie had poor relations with her family members.
 - D. Maggie was sophisticated even when she was young.
- 22. The author intends to present the reader an analysis of Maggie's _____.
 - A. fantasies
- B. psychology
- C. character
- D. repentance

TEXT D (460 words)

The story of Polly Klaas' murder by a man with a history of violence galvanized California voters into passing the state's three-strikes-and-you're-out law in 1994. Two dozen states and the federal government have now adopted similar laws. Still, only in California can conviction on any third felony put someone behind bars for life. That singularity points to what is wrong with the California law, despite its emotionally wrenching origins.

Eleven years after Polly was snatched from her upstairs bedroom and murdered, voters are troubled by other stories—about the Army veteran who stole \$153 worth of videotapes or the father who pinched a box of diapers for his baby, both now in prison for life, and about the \$31,000 that taxpayers pony up every year to house such individuals. Those tales should push voters to pass Proposition 66, correcting a gross injustice while reserving the harshest punishment for those who commit the worst crimes.

Proposition 66 would limit third-strike offenses to serious or violent felonies; that's the law many voters now say they thought they passed back in 1994. Excluded would be crimes like petty theft, passing a bad check or holding a small amount of drugs. These offenses would remain felonies for repeat offenders, who could still get longer prison terms for each new crime. Only the life sentence is excluded.

Of California's 7,300 third-strikers, 4,200 are doing 25 years to life for a nonserious or nonviolent felony. Proposition 66 also requires judges to resentence these third-strikers, meaning some who have already served several years behind bars may be freed.

Los Angeles County Dist. Atty. Steve Cooley first campaigned for office in 2000 arguing that the 1994 law was unduly harsh and wisely promising not to charge as strikes most nonviolent, nonserious felonies without a good reason. Because Cooley has made good on that promise, his opposition to Proposition 66 is particularly disappointing. He—along with Gov.

Arnold Schwarzenegger, Oakland Mayor and former Gov. Jerry Brown and Atty. Gen. Bill Lockyer—now insists, wrongly in our view, that the measure would flood the streets with predators. Those who might be released would have already done time for their crimes, just not life.

Proposition 66 does not eliminate the three-strikes law. It restores voters' original intent to keep violent criminals off the street for good. That said, like almost every initiative, Proposition 66 is not a model of nuanced legislation. It goes too far in narrowing the universe of "third strikes". If it passes, lawmakers in Sacramento should reinstate serious offenses like burglary and arson to that list.

Then again, if Sacramento had fixed the three-strikes law in the first place, and not been so cowered by the fear of seeming "soft on crime", this proposition wouldn't be needed now.

- 23. California's three-strikes-and-you're-out law basically means that .
 - A. people who go on strike three times in prison will be out of prison for good
 - B. people who are beaten up three times in prison will be freed from prison
 - C. people who are convicted of three felonies may end up facing life in prison
 - D. people who finally strike sympathy into the public's hearts will be freed
- 24. According to the passage, which of the following statements is NOT true in relation to Proposition 66?
 - A. It limits third-strike offenses to those worst crimes.
 - B. It puts right an obviously unfair law in California.
 - C. It differs considerably from the three-strikes law.
 - D. It abolishes the three-strikes-and-you're-out law.
- 25. The author of the passage thinks that ...
 - A. it is right to imprison the father who pinched a box of diapers for his baby
 - B. it is wrong to insist that Proposition 66 would result in nonserious felonies
 - C. it is wrong to insist that Proposition 66 would result in more violent felonies
 - D. it is right to charge as strikes most nonviolent felonies without a good reason
- 26. The best title for this passage would be _____
 - A. Vote for Three-Strikes Reform
- B. Proposition 66 to Be Passed
- C. Three-Strikes-And-You' re-Out
- D. California With a Wrong Law

TEXT E (442 words)

Job worries helped push consumer confidence down in September for the second consecutive month. The Consumer Confidence Index fell 1.9 points to 96.8 from a revised reading of 98.7 in August, according to the Conference Board. Analysts had expected a reading of 99.5.

"The recent declines in the index were caused primarily by a deterioration in consumers' assessment of employment conditions," said Lynn Franco, director of the organization's