Author’s Use of Language*

Sample Passage

The main authors of The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution are usually thought of as America’s “Founding Fathers.” Other, less known personages also deserve the title, however, and Noah Webster was one of these. Through his writings, which include the still influential dictionary that bears his name, Webster sought to legitimize an “American English” that was independent of British spelling and pronunciation. For instance, Webster removed the “u” from “colour,” creating the distinct American version of the word.

Sample Question 1

What is the main purpose of this passage?

A. To praise the Founding Fathers
B. To present information about an important American
C. To define and explain “American English”
D. To distinguish American dictionaries from British dictionaries

Sample Passage

Guillermo Gonzalez Camarena became a successful inventor at an early age. By the age of seven, he had constructed a variety of electronically-propelled toys to play with; he later designed and built his own amateur radio and a functioning telescope. In 1940, when he was only 23, Camarena obtained the world’s first patent for color television. Camarena’s early color television transmission system was the first one to be approved by the U.S. Federal Communications Commission. Other color-television technologies came after Camarena’s patented invention, but his system is still used by a number of scientists today.

Sample Question 2

In sentence 2, the word “functioning” most nearly means

A. performing
B. running
C. working
D. moving

*Sample passages and questions taken from The College Board (2013). Texas Success Initiative: Sample Questions.