Main Idea and Supporting Details

Sample Passage 1*

When we think of volcanoes, eruptions, lava, and smoke-filled air come to mind—all occurring on land. Most people are surprised to learn about the prevalence of underwater volcanoes on our planet. Because the lava and smoke spilling out of an active, underwater volcano is contained by the ocean, people generally do not take note of these eruptions. However, the largest underwater volcanoes are capable of creating huge tidal waves, threatening coastal communities.

Sample Question 1

The main idea of the passage is that

A. traditional volcanoes and underwater volcanoes are similar
B. the lava and smoke from an underwater volcano is contained by the sea
C. most tidal waves are caused by underwater volcanoes
D. underwater volcanoes receive little attention but can be dangerous

Sample Passage 2

Plywood, while not the most pleasing wood to look at, has become an incredibly important building material in house construction. It is flexible, inexpensive, and strong. Its strength is due to layers of thin wood glued on top of each other with the grain of each layer making a right angle with the grain of the layer below it. This way of layering the sheets of wood makes plywood difficult to break.

Sample Question 2

According to the passage, the arrangement of the layers of thin wood explains plywood’s
A. strength
B. cost
C. attractiveness
D. flexibility

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