

Answer Key with explanations for the TOEFL iBT Reading (Beowulf)

1. C "Beowulf was written by an anonymous [author unknown] Englishman in Old English." Choice A is not correct because it is one of four surviving manuscripts. Choice B is not correct because it was written in Old English about Germanic characters. Choice D is not correct because scholars do not know if it is the sole surviving epic.
2. B "Although Beowulf was written by an anonymous Englishman in Old English, the tale takes place in that part of Scandinavia from which [that part of Scandinavia] Germanic tribes emigrated to England."
3. A "Iron was accessible everywhere in Scandinavia, usually in the form of 'bog iron' found in the layers of peat in peat bogs." Choice B is not correct because the author had already stated that the best swords had iron or iron-edged blades. Choice C is not correct because the Celts taught the Northmen how to use the materials, but they did not provide the bog iron. Choice D is not correct because the bog iron does not relate to the date, although 500 B.C. is mentioned as the time when the Northmen learned how to forge iron.
4. A 'Society in Anglo-Saxon England' paraphrases 'Anglo-Saxon society.' 'both advanced' paraphrases 'neither primitive,' and 'cultured' paraphrases 'nor uncultured.' Two negatives [Nor and -un] produce an affirmative meaning.
5. B In this passage, 'rare' is a synonym for 'unique.' Context comes from the reference to the "sole surviving epic" in the beginning of the same sentence.
6. B '... the original manuscript was probably lost during the ninth century ... , in which the Danes destroyed the Anglo-Saxon monasteries and their great libraries.' Choice A is true but it is not the reason that scholars believe the original manuscript was lost. Choice C is not correct because the Danes were invaders, not poets. Choice D is not correct because the location of the discovery is not mentioned, although the author may have been a monk.
7. A Because the word 'apparently' means 'appearing to be so.' The author is expressing doubt about the information that follows, '... [the Beowulf poet] was a Christian.' Choice B is not correct because the word 'obviously' would be used. Choice C is not correct because the phrases 'for example' or 'for instance' would signal an example. Choice D is not correct because evidence would not be presented as 'appearing to be so'.
8. A '... Beowulf is a very appealing hero ... like Hercules.' Choice B is not correct because a fight with a dragon is mentioned in reference to Beowulf but not to Hercules. Choice C is not correct because the Danish hero's welcome is the only reference to a speech, and it was jealous, not inspiring. Choice D is not correct because the time period for the epic of Hercules is not mentioned.
9. B We substitute the word 'demonstrates' in this sentence and still keep the original meaning of the sentence. This is not possible with choices A, C or D.
10. C Addition is a transitional device that connects the Insert sentence with the previous sentence. 'Moreover' signals that additional, related information will follow. '... they (scholars) disagree' refers to 'Scholars do not know' in the previous sentence.

Reference: Barron's TOEFL iBT: Internet-based Test - Pamela J. Sharpe, Ph.D.