

第 17 回難関大ゼミ (長文読解)

【1】 次の英文を読み, 下の問いに答えなさい。

Unwanted noise is perhaps the most annoying assault on our senses. An awful sight? Close your eyes, or turn the other way. A horrible taste? Spit it out. Sound, on the other hand, is all-surrounding, and is difficult to escape from. (1)A piece of music can echo endlessly once it finds its way into your head. "Noise is not only an interruption," complained the German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer, "but it also disturbs thought."

Noise ranks as the number one complaint of restaurant-goers in the U.S., and the majority of calls to New York City's complaints hotline* are noise-related. Even if these complaints are part of an age-old problem, we seem to be dealing with (2)it differently today. From noise-canceling headphones to quiet vacations in the country, (3)there has never been quite so much importance placed on silence. And not only do we value it in a general sense, we're willing to pay for it. Silence has become the ultimate luxury.

A number of rail lines around the country now offer quiet cars, a service for which people seem willing to pay extra. Noise-canceling headphones have become

a necessity for business-class travelers, and recent surveys suggest that many airline passengers would be happy to be (X) more for silent flights. Even when other people aren't a problem, silent travel is sellable. "One of the most luxurious aspects" of driving the hybrid Lexus car, writes one reviewer, is the "near absolute silence."

The sale of silence extends beyond trains, planes and automobiles to our own (Y). Household products are being newly marketed with an emphasis on noise-reduction. A dishwasher that sells for about \$1700 is promoted as the quietest dishwasher in the U.S., while the "Ultra Silencer" vacuum cleaner goes for about \$600.

Why has silence become a commodity? The search for silence might be an extension of the urge to get rid of modern life's annoying baggage: all those emails, texts, and bits of media — digital, social, etc. — that invade our consciousness. It has come to represent an ideal state, much like an empty inbox*. Of course, our inboxes will never be empty, and (4)we will never be free of noise.

But the impossibility of silence says something about why it remains so appealing. Noise-related annoyances arise from emotion — frustration, disorientation, fear — as much as actual audible* irritation. During late

nineteenth-century industrialization, writes Emily Thompson in *The Soundscape of Modernity*, "(5)The noise of the railroad's steam whistle was disturbing not only for its loudness but also for its unfamiliarity." When a 1926 study determined that an individual horse and carriage was actually louder than an individual automobile, *The New York Times* responded that it was not the nature of the sounds that was the trouble, but the fact that "the ear has not learned how to handle them." In a 1929 American opinion poll, noises identified as "machine-age inventions" were the ones that bothered people most. And by the late 1920s, scientists had a way to quantify their stress. In 1929, the decibel was established as the standard unit of sound. Science thus contributes to noisiness in more than just audible output: (6)New means of measuring increased peoples' awareness of their irritation.

Technology has therefore both increased our perceived need for silence, and created the means of obtaining it. We're troubled by a ceaseless stream of calls and messages and tweets and status updates, but we put on our headphones (7)to tune it out. Those lightweight noise-canceling headphones are the product of years of research and development. Likewise with the vacuum cleaner and the dishwasher and the automobile, marketed as quiet luxuries for our noise-filled

lives.

I don't mean to suggest that our current concerns are merely a product of anxiety or technology or the economy. There are real disadvantages to a noise-filled life, and we appear to be more aware of these issues than before. The Centers for Disease Control estimates that four million Americans experience "damaging" noise at work every day, while ten million people in the U.S. have noise-related hearing loss. And the dangers are not limited to our ears. A 2003 study found that exposure to loud aircraft noise could harm reading comprehension and long-term memory in children. (8) No wonder then, that silence has become such a valuable commodity.

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Notes :

hotline 電話相談サービス inbox 受信箱

audible 聞こえる, 聞き取れる

A. 下線部(1)の意味に最も近いものを次の(イ)~(ニ)の中から1つ選び, その記号を解答欄にマークしなさい。〔解答用紙マーク〕

- (イ) Listening to a relaxing piece of music can be good for your mental well-being.
- (ロ) Once you start listening to a piece of music it is hard to stop doing so until it ends.
- (ハ) Sometimes you keep hearing a piece of music in your mind long after you actually listened to it.
- (ニ) You may be able to remember how to play a piece of music even if you heard it only once.

B. 下線部(2)の意味するものとして最も適切なものを次の(イ)～(ニ)の中から1つ選び、その記号を解答欄にマークしなさい。〔解答用紙マーク〕

(イ) noise (ロ) old age (ハ) restaurant-going

(ニ) silence

C. 下線部(3)の意味に最も近いものを次の(イ)～(ニ)の中から1つ選び、その記号を解答欄にマークしなさい。〔解答用紙マーク〕

(イ) it is not very important to think about silence

(ロ) silence has never been as important as it is today

(ハ) silence has never been considered really important

(ニ) there are more important things to think about than silence

D. 空所(X)に入る語として最も適切なものを次の(イ)～(ニ)の中から1つ選び、その記号を解答欄にマークしなさい。〔解答用紙マーク〕

(イ) charged (ロ) offered (ハ) paid (ニ) sold

E. 空所(Y)に入る語として最も適切なものを次の(イ)～(ニ)の中から1つ選び、その記号を解答欄にマークしなさい。〔解答用紙マーク〕

(イ) cities (ロ) heads (ハ) homes (ニ) vacations

F. 下線部(4)とほぼ同じ意味を表す4語からなる語句を次の段落から探し、その答えを解答欄に書きなさい。〔解答用紙記述〕

G. 下線部(5)を解答欄に与えられた語句に続けて、句読点を含め25字以内の日本語に訳しなさい。〔解答用紙記述〕

汽車の汽笛の音は、その音の()

H. 下線部(6)の意味に最も近いものを次の(イ)～(ニ)の中から1つ選び、その記号を解答欄にマークしなさい。〔解答用紙マーク〕

- (イ) It is much more difficult today to measure how irritated people are by loud noises.
- (ロ) Nowadays, people are more aware of just how much the noise they make irritates others.
- (ハ) People became more conscious of how annoyed they were by noise when they had a way to measure it.
- (ニ) People grew more annoyed by the new measures that were introduced to deal with the increase in noise.

I. 下線部(7)の意味に最も近いものを次の(イ)~(ニ)の中から1つ選び、その記号を解答欄にマークしなさい。〔解答用紙マーク〕

- (イ) to escape from the noise (ロ) to increase the sound
- (ハ) to play a favorite song (ニ) to turn off the music

J. 下線部(8)の意味に最も近いものを次の(イ)~(ニ)の中から1つ選び、その記号を解答欄にマークしなさい。〔解答用紙マーク〕

- (イ) It's extraordinary (ロ) It's hard to remember
- (ハ) It's not easy to accept (ニ) It's not surprising

K. 本文の内容と一致するものを次の(イ)~(ト)の中から2つ選び、その記号を解答欄にマークしなさい。ただし、3つ以上マークした場合は得点を認めません。〔解答用紙マーク〕

- (イ) It is easier to avoid unpleasant sounds than it is to avoid unpleasant sights or tastes.
- (ロ) Manufacturers have begun to stress how quiet some of their dishwashers and vacuum cleaners are.
- (ハ) In order to improve our lives we ought to reduce the amount of baggage we take on our travels.
- (ニ) The word "decibel" was chosen as the name for the standard unit of sound in an American opinion poll.
- (ホ) Technology has made our lives much noisier, but it lacks the means to reduce this noise.
- (ヘ) We seem to be more conscious today of how damaging noise can be than people were in the past.
- (ト) Forty million Americans currently suffer from workplace-related hearing loss.