

# INFORMATIONAL READING COMPREHENSION

## AZULEJOS: A TRADITION OF PORTUGAL

Answer the following questions about "Azulejos: A Tradition of Portugal." **Sample answers**

1. What are azulejos?  
Azulejos are traditional Portuguese ceramic tiles.
2. What does the word **ubiquitous** mean as it is used in the first paragraph?  
A. old or vintage  
B. vibrant or loud  
**C. found all throughout a place**  
D. unique
3. Which group of people introduced tile-making to what is now known as Portugal?  
A. Dutch traders from the north  
**B. Arabs who ruled the Iberian Peninsula**  
C. Italian artists during the Renaissance  
D. ancient Egyptian travelers
4. What makes azulejos uniquely Portuguese? How are they different from tile-making traditions in other parts of the world?  
Portuguese azulejos have "their own special flair" due to "the unique combination of influences from cultures throughout the world," specifically, the Arabic tradition of geometric shapes, the Italian tradition of portraying scenes from mythology, and the Dutch tradition (influenced by Chinese ceramics) of using blue-and-white tiles.
- 5a. What central idea is conveyed in paragraph 3?  
The style of tiles changed during the 1500s and 1600s due to new influences from the Italians and the Dutch.
- 5b. How does Image 1 support the central idea of paragraph 3?  
The image shows a blue-and-white mural showing a scene from mythology, which represents the influence from both the Dutch and the Italian Renaissance.
6. Which of the following is the best synonym for **utilitarian** as it is used in paragraph 4?  
A. boring  
B. somber  
C. decorative  
**D. functional**
7. Describe the effect of the great earthquake of 1755 on the Portuguese azulejo tradition. Cite specific evidence from the text to support your response.  
The earthquake destroyed Lisbon. The city needed to be rebuilt, and since tiles were cheaper than stone, weather-resistant, and relatively low maintenance, azulejos were used to help rebuild. This caused a return to the earlier, simpler geometric designs of azulejos.
8. List two ways that azulejos are still relevant in modern Portugal.
  1. There are contemporary azulejo murals in subway stations.
  2. Azulejos are still produced and sold by Portuguese artisans.
9. The steps in the traditional process for making azulejos are mixed up. Number from 1 to 5 to put them in the correct order.
  - 2 Tiles are dried for 1-2 months.
  - 3 Tiles are baked at 2,000°F for 18 hours.
  - 1 Clay is pounded into tile molds.
  - 5 Tiles are fired in a kiln.
  - 4 Tiles are hand-painted.
10. In your own words, state the central idea of the passage as a whole.  
Portuguese azulejos, or ceramic tiles, are a national artistic tradition that developed from various influences from around the world and are still relevant in modern Portugal.