Much More Than Trash

Wait! Don’t throw away that cardboard box!

Most people think cardboard boxes are trash. But this is a major oversight. Cardboard boxes are certainly not trash. They are much more than that. Why, they can be just about anything you like! All you have to do is use your imagination.

A small cardboard box makes a great jewelry box. First, cut the box in half. This will allow it to open and close from the back like a jewelry box. Next, cover the inside with felt. This will make a soft place for your jewelry to sit. You can cover the outside of the box with cloth. This will give it a more refined appearance.

A medium cardboard box makes a great basketball hoop. First, cut the top and bottom out of the box. Second, fasten the box to a tree or a wall inside your house. You can now shoot hoops on your new indoor goal.

A large cardboard box makes a great house. First, cut one side out of the cardboard box. Then, fold it in half. Tape the folded side so that it covers the opening in the box. This will be the roof. Once you have the roof installed, cut a small rectangle in the front of the box. This will be the door. You can also cut small square holes in the sides of the box for windows. If you have any paint, you can color the outside of your house. You can add pieces of green tissue paper to the base for a garden. As a finishing touch, you can paint a small rectangle box red and attach it to the roof. Now your cardboard box has a chimney!

Making things out of cardboard boxes is fun. And it’s a great way to use your imagination. It doesn't cost anything either. You can find cardboard boxes just about anywhere. You can find them at the grocery store. You can find them at the post office. You can even find them in your attic!

You can find cardboard boxes just about anywhere. But the best ones come in the mail. If something gets shipped to your house, chances are it will come in a cardboard box.

1) In paragraph 2, the narrator says, "But this is a major oversight." What is "a major oversight"?

   A. a big mistake
   B. a new idea
   C. a long story
   D. a good decision

2) Using the passage as a guide, we can understand that felt is

   A. soft
B. shiny
C. cheap
D. expensive

3) Why does the narrator discuss small, medium, and large cardboard boxes?
   A. to take a guess
   B. to make an argument
   C. to ask a question
   D. to give examples

4) According to the narrator, what is the second thing you must do to make a basketball hoop using a cardboard box?
   A. cover the inside with felt
   B. cut the top and bottom out of the box
   C. fasten the box to a tree or a wall
   D. fold it in half

5) According to the narrator, which of these is NOT a place where you can find cardboard boxes?
   A. the post office
   B. the grocery store
   C. your basement
   D. your attic

6) The author wrote this passage mostly to
   A. show you how to make a jewelry box
   B. let you know about a good activity
   C. get you to recycle more cardboard boxes
   D. make you buy fewer toys

7) There are many things a person can use a cardboard box for. Some examples are explained in the passage. Can you think of any more? Explain at least three extra ways to use a box below.

   _______________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________


Answers and Explanations

1) A
Core Standard: Craft and Structure

oversight (noun): a mistake due to lack of attention.

In paragraph 2, the narrator says: “But this is a major oversight.” We can use context clues—hints from known words or phrases around the unknown word or phrase—to help us figure out what the phrase “a major oversight” means. In the previous sentence, the narrator says: “Most people think cardboard boxes are trash.” This lets us know that most people think cardboard boxes don’t have any use. In the next sentence, the narrator says: “But this is a major oversight.” Because the narrator uses the word “But,” we can understand that he or she is probably saying that the people who think cardboard boxes are trash are wrong. In the next sentence, the narrator says: “Cardboard boxes are certainly not trash.” This lets us know that, according to the passage, the people who think cardboard boxes are trash are wrong. And we can now tell that when the narrator says that thinking cardboard boxes are trash is a “major oversight,” he is most likely saying that thinking this is a mistake. And in the rest of the passage, the narrator tells us some of the many ways in which cardboard boxes can be more than trash. All of this lets us know that when the narrator says “this is a major oversight,” he or she means that it is a big mistake. Therefore (A) is correct.

In paragraph 2, the narrator describes the idea that cardboard boxes are trash as “a major oversight.” Although he or she goes on to give us lots of new ideas about what to do with a cardboard box besides throw it away, this does not mean that the first idea, that cardboard boxes are trash, is also a new idea. In fact, the idea that cardboard boxes are trash is an old idea. From this we can tell that when the narrator says “a major oversight,” he or she does not mean a new idea. Therefore (B) is incorrect.

In paragraph 2, the narrator describes the idea that cardboard boxes are trash as “a major oversight.” The idea that cardboard boxes are trash is not a story. And when the narrator goes on to describe some of the many ways in which you can make things out of cardboard boxes, he or she is not telling a story. From this we can tell that when the narrator says “this is a major oversight,” he or she does not mean a long story. Therefore (C) is incorrect.

In paragraph 2, the narrator describes the idea that cardboard boxes are trash as “a major oversight.” He or she then goes on to show how this idea is wrong, and to tell us some of the many things that we can do with cardboard boxes if we don’t throw them away. Because the narrator tells us that the idea that cardboard boxes are trash is a wrong idea, and because he or she also calls it a “major oversight,” we can tell that he does not also think it is a good decision. This lets us know that when the narrator says “this is a major oversight,” he or she does not mean a good decision. Therefore (D) is incorrect.

2) A
Core Standard: Integration of Knowledge

In paragraph 3, the author writes: “Next, cover the inside with felt. This will make a soft place for your jewelry to sit.” From this we can tell that, according to the passage, putting felt inside the box will make a soft place for jewelry. This lets us know that felt must be soft. Therefore (A) is correct.
The passage does not provide information to support choices (B), (C), or (D). Therefore they are incorrect.

3) D
Core Standard: Integration of Knowledge

In this passage, the narrator tells us that people who think that cardboard boxes have no use are wrong. And he or she then goes on to tell us some examples of the many ways in which we can use cardboard boxes. We are told what we could do with a small box, with a medium box, and with a large box. This lets us know that it doesn’t matter what size box it is, it still has a use and is not only trash. From this we can understand that the narrator probably discusses small, medium, and large cardboard boxes in order to give us different examples of what we could do with cardboard boxes. Therefore (D) is correct.

In this passage, the narrator tells us that people who think that cardboard boxes have no use are wrong. And he or she then goes on to tell us some examples of the many ways in which we can use cardboard boxes. The narrator does not take a guess about anything in this passage. From this we can understand that the narrator probably discusses small, medium, and large cardboard boxes in order to give us different examples of what we could do with them, and not in order to take a guess. Therefore (A) is incorrect.

Although the narrator does make an argument in this passage, the discussion of small, medium, and large cardboard boxes is only one part of that argument. When people make an argument, they say an idea, and then they give examples that help to explain that idea. In this passage, the narrator says the idea that cardboard boxes have many uses besides being thought of as trash. He or she then gives some examples that help to explain that idea. Small boxes can become jewelry boxes. Medium boxes can become basketball hoops. Large boxes can become houses. This lets us know that when the narrator discusses small, medium, and large cardboard boxes, he or she is not making an argument. Instead, he or she is giving examples of what we could do with cardboard boxes. Therefore (B) is incorrect.

In this passage, the narrator tells us that people who think that cardboard boxes have no use are wrong. And he or she then goes on to tell us some examples of the many ways in which we can use cardboard boxes. The narrator does not ask a question about anything in this passage. From this we can understand that the narrator probably discusses small, medium, and large cardboard boxes in order to give us different examples of what we could do with them, and not in order to ask a question. Therefore (C) is incorrect.

4) C
Core Standard: Key Ideas and Details

In paragraph 4, we read that a medium cardboard box “makes a great basketball hoop.” We are then given instructions for making a medium cardboard box into a basketball hoop. We read: “First, cut the top and bottom out of the box.” We then read: “Second, fasten the box to a tree or wall inside your house.” This lets us know that the second thing you must do to make a basketball hoop using a cardboard box is fasten the box to a tree or a wall. Therefore (C) is correct.
Although the passage does talk about using felt, it does so in paragraph 3, which is about using a small box to make a jewelry box. It does not say to use felt at any point when making a basketball hoop out of a medium cardboard box. This eliminates (A).

Although the passage does tell us to cut the top and bottom out of the box, it tells us to do this first, not second. This eliminates (B).

In paragraph 5, we read that, in order to make a large cardboard box into a house, we need to cut one of the box sides out and then fold it in half to make a roof. But we are not told to fold anything in half when making a cardboard box into a basketball hoop. We are only told to cut out the top and the bottom and to fasten the box to a tree or a wall. This eliminates (D).

5) C  
Core Standard: Key Ideas and Details

In order to answer this question correctly, we need to say which choice is NOT a place where you can find cardboard boxes, according to the narrator. In doing this, it is helpful to use the process of elimination.

In paragraph 6, we read: “You can find them at the post office.” This eliminates (A).

In paragraph 6, we read: “You can find them at your grocery store.” This eliminates (B).

In paragraph 6, we read: “You can even find them in your attic!” This eliminates (D).

We have now eliminated 3 of the 4 choices. Although some people may be able to find cardboard boxes in their basement, the passage does not say that you can. Therefore (C) is correct.

6) B  
Core Standard: Integration of Knowledge

In this passage, the narrator tells us that people who think cardboard boxes are just trash are wrong. We are then given several ideas for cool activities to do with cardboard boxes. For example, we are told how to make a cardboard box into a jewelry box, or into a basketball hoop, or even into a house. All of these are good activities to do with a cardboard box instead of just throwing it away as trash. This lets us know that the main purpose of this passage is to let you know about a good activity. Therefore (B) is correct.

Although this passage does show you how to make a jewelry box out of a cardboard box, it also shows you how to make a basketball hoop and a house, and how to find cardboard boxes to work
This lets us know that the main purpose of this passage is not to show you how to make a jewelry box. Therefore (A) is incorrect.

This passage does not tell you to recycle cardboard boxes. It tells you to reuse them, and to transform them into other fun things. This lets us know that the main purpose of this passage cannot be to get you to recycle more cardboard boxes. Therefore (C) is incorrect.

In this passage, the narrator tells us that people who think cardboard boxes are just trash are wrong. We are then given several ideas for cool activities to do with cardboard boxes. For example, we are told how to make a cardboard box into a jewelry box, or into a basketball hoop, or even into a house. We are finally given a few ideas about where we can find cardboard boxes. Although people who use cardboard boxes to make a basketball hoop or a house might then need to buy one or two fewer toys, the passage does not say that this is true. And it spends most of its time talking about how these good activities can be done. From this we can tell that the main purpose of this passage cannot be to make you buy fewer toys. Therefore (D) is incorrect.