## Sample of the reading comprehension portion for the ATIA Associate-level examination

The reading comprehension portion of the exam consists of 4 passages of varying lengths followed by 5 questions in multiple-choice format.

## Sample Passage 1:

The hippopotamus is the third largest land animal, smaller only than the elephant and the rhinoceros. Its name comes from two Greek words which mean "river horse." The long name of this animal is often shortened to the easier to handle term "hippo."

The hippo has a natural affinity for the water. It does not float on top of the water; instead, it can easily walk along the bottom of a body of water. The hippo commonly remains underwater for three to five minutes and has been known to stay under for up to half an hour before coming up for air.

In spite of its name, the hippo has relatively little in common with the horse and instead has a number of interesting similarities in common with the whale. When a hippo comes up after a stay at the bottom of a lake or river, it releases air through a blowhole, just like a whale. In addition, the hippo resembles the whale in that they both have thick layers of blubber for protection and they are almost completely hairless.

1.	The topic of this passage is a the largest land animals b the derivations of animal names	c the characteristics of the hippo d the relation between the hippo and the whale		
2. It can be inferred from the passage that the rhinoceros is				
	a smaller than the hippo	c a hybrid of the hippo and the elephant		
	b equal in size to the hippo	d one of the two largest types of land animals		
3.	The possessive "Its" in line 2 refers to			
	a hippopotamus	c rhinoceros		
	b elephant	d horse		
4.	The expression "has relatively little in commor	" in the third paragraph could best be replaced by		
	a has few interactions	c has minimal experience		
	b is not normally found	d shares few similarities		
5.	The word "blubber" in paragraph 3 is closest in meaning to			
	a fat	c water		

a	lai	C	water
b	fur	d	skin

Solutions: 1 c; 2 d; 3 a; 4 d; 5 a

## Sample Passage 2:

People are often surprised to learn just how long some varieties of trees can live. If asked to estimate the age of the oldest living trees on Earth, they often come up with guesses in the neighborhood of two or perhaps three hundred years. The real answer is considerably larger than that, more than five thousand years.

The tree that wins the prize for its considerable maturity is the bristlecone pine of California. This venerable pine predates wonders of the ancient world such as the pyramids of Egypt, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, and the Colossus of Rhodes. It is not nearly as tall as the giant redwood that is also found in California, and, in fact, it is actually not very tall compared with many other trees, often little more than five meters in height. This relatively short height may be one of the factors that aid the bristlecone pine in living to a ripe old age - high winds and inclement weather cannot easily reach the shorter trees and cause damage. An additional factor that contributes to the long life of the bristlecone pine is that this type of tree has a high percentage of resin, which prevents rot from developing in the tree trunk and branches.

- 1. The best title for this passage would be
  - a \_\_\_\_The Size of the Bristlecone Pinec \_\_\_\_The wonders of the Ancient Worldb \_\_\_\_Three-Hundred-Year-Old Forestsd \_\_\_\_An Amazingly Enduring Tree
- 2. It can be inferred from the passage that most people
  - a \_\_\_\_\_ are quite accurate in their estimates of the ages of trees
  - b \_\_\_\_ have two or three hundred trees in their neighbourhoods
  - c \_\_\_\_\_ do not really have any idea how old the oldest trees on earth are
  - d \_\_\_\_ can name some three-hundred-year-old trees
- 3. The word "venerable" in the second paragraph is closest in meaning to which of the following?
  - a \_\_\_\_ ancient c \_\_\_\_ towering
  - b\_\_\_\_\_incredible d\_\_\_\_\_unrecognizable
- 4. Which of the following is true about the bristlecone pine?
  - a \_\_\_\_ It is as tall as the great pyramids.
  - b \_\_\_\_\_ It is never more than five meters in height.
  - c \_\_\_\_\_ It is short in comparison to many other trees.
  - d \_\_\_\_ It can be two or three hundred feet tall.
- 5. The word "inclement" in the second paragraph could best be replaced by
  - a \_\_\_\_ sunny c \_\_\_\_ unusual
  - b bad d strong

Solutions:				
1 d; 2 c; 3 a; 4 c; 5 b				