

Practice Exercise 5

Figures can be deceiving. For example, *Time* magazine recently reported that the average Yale graduate in the 25th-reunion class was making \$75,111 a year. Well, good for the average Yale graduate! But what exactly does that figure mean? Is it proof that if you send your children to Yale you won't have to work in your old age and neither will they? What kind of sample is it based on? You could put one comfortable corporate executive with a hundred hungry writers and report their average income as \$75,111 a year. The figure is exact, but it has no meaning. In ways similar to this, the facts and figures pour forth every day. The writers who use facts and figures may mean to point out the truth, but more often they inflate, confuse, and oversimplify the truth. The result is "number nonsense."

1. The author's comment "Well, good for the average Yale graduate!" as a response to the average yearly salary of a Yale graduate is meant to show
 - a. humor.
 - b. praise.
 - c. displeasure.
 - d. indifference.
2. In this selection the author uses tone to make the information
 - a. more precise.
 - b. more astonishing.
 - c. less confusing.
 - d. more appealing.
3. The tone of this passage can best be described as
 - a. precise and objective.
 - b. sentimental and moving.
 - c. personal and informal.
 - d. impersonal and formal.
4. Underline a sentence that reveals the author's attitude toward business executives and writers.