

ACT Activities

Examples directly align to Law & Public Safety standards.

Career Cluster: Law, Public Safety, Corrections, & Security

Reading Comprehension in Criminal Justice I—Addresses Standard 11

During the 1970s, a number of state and federal courts adopted a broader legal definition of insanity **45**proposed by the American Law Institute, which states:

“A person is not responsible for criminal conduct if at the time of such conduct, as a result of mental disease or defect, he lacks substantial capacity either to **appre**
-ciate the wrongfulness of his conduct or to conform his **50**conduct to the requirements of the law.” The word *sub*
-stantial suggests that “any” incapacity is not enough to avoid criminal responsibility but that “total” incapacity is not required either. The use of the word *appreciate* rather than *know* implies that intellectual awareness of **55**right or wrong is not enough; individuals must have some understanding of the moral or legal consequences of their behavior before they can be held criminally responsible.

SOCIAL STUDIES: This passage is adapted from the chapter “Personality Disorders” in *Introduction to Psychology*, edited by Rita L. Atkinson and Richard C. Atkinson (©1981 by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.).

According to the explanation provided in lines 43-58, use of the word *appreciate* in the phrase “to appreciate the wrongfulness” instead of *know* implies which of the following?

- The difference between right and wrong is something people feel rather than know, which makes deciding legal responsibility difficult.

- b. To *know* implies certainty, and distinguishing right from wrong is often a subjective matter in determining legal responsibility.
- c. The word *appreciate* suggests than an action and that action's implications must be understood for there to be legal responsibility.
- d. An insane person would "know" something the way a sane person would "know" something, and be able to appreciate that knowledge, too.

Answer: **The best answer is C.** Support for this choice is found in lines 53-58. This section of the passage explains the use of the word *appreciate*, which implies that before persons can be held criminally responsible, they "must have some understanding of the moral or legal consequences of their behavior."

Taken from a larger passage on the ACT Website. Reading Test, Passage Two. <http://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/test-preparation/reading-practice-test-questions.html?page=0&chapter=1> Retrieved Feb. 29, 2016.