The Loch Ness monster, known as “Nessie,” has been a subject of interest and curiosity for hundreds of years. Read this passage about the search for Nessie and then answer questions 16 through 22.

The Quest for Nessie

This photograph is probably the most published image of the Loch Ness monster. It was first released in 1934. Recently, however, the photograph was exposed as a hoax. The photo was actually created using a small model as Nessie.

Nestled deep in the Scottish Highlands, surrounded by rugged mountains and forests and fields, Loch Ness is one of Europe’s great lakes. Its length is a modest twenty-four miles, and its width rarely exceeds one mile, but the fantastic depth—more than 700 feet in places—makes Loch Ness by volume the third-largest body of freshwater in Europe. And it
Session 2: Reading and Responding

is by all odds the most mysterious. In those frigid waters, rendered dark and virtually opaque by peat leached from the land, a huge creature is said to reside.

Among the countless believers is Hugh Ayton, a farmer who in 1963 was tilling land that bordered the lake near the village of Dores. Ayton, his son Jim, and three other men were still working at 7:30 one serene August evening when the son saw something moving across the lake. The men stared where the youth was excitedly pointing. “It was big and black,” said Ayton later. “The loch was calm and everything was quiet; there wasn’t a noise anywhere. Just this thing moving steadily forward.”

Suddenly, the men realized that they were watching “the monster” of Loch Ness lore, and in an instant, curiosity overwhelmed caution. Racing down to a nearby jetty, four of them jumped into a small rowboat equipped with an outboard motor and took off after it. “The thing was still coming down the loch,” recalled Ayton, “and as we got closer, we could see more details of it. There was a long neck coming about six feet out of the water, and a head which reminded me rather of a horse, though bigger and flatter. The body was made up of three low humps—about 30 to 40 feet long in all and about four feet high. The color was dark and the skin looked rough.”

The men were within about fifty yards of the creature, related Ayton, when it “rose up a little out of the water and dived and put up an enormous disturbance which swirled the boat around.” A few seconds later, the head resurfaced, and then it disappeared for good. “The one feature of it that I’ll always remember,” said Ayton, “was the eye—an oval-shaped eye near the top of its head. I’ll always remember that eye looking at us.”

History does not record when the first of the lake creatures was sighted or who encountered it. Water spirits and other such beings have been a part of Highland legend for many centuries. . . .

The early Scots called these creatures water kelpies, water horses, water bulls, or simply spirits, and mothers sternly warned their children not to play too close to the shores of lakes or rivers; the beast, or whatever it was, could take the form of a horse, galloping onto the land, enticing a child on top of its back, and then plunging with its helpless little rider back into the depths.

One of the first of the modern-day sightings is said to have occurred in 1880, when a seasoned Loch Ness waterman named Duncan McDonald was examining a boat that had sunk in the lake. McDonald was examining the wreck when he signaled frantically to be pulled to the surface. Ashen-faced, trembling uncontrollably, and incoherent with fear, he was finally able to blurt out that he had seen a monster in the murky water. He had gotten a good look at one of the creature’s eyes, he reported, and described it as “small, gray and baleful.” According to some accounts, McDonald never entered the lake again.

Since then, there have been something like 3,000 reported sightings—from shore and from boats, in every daylight hour, some
vague and some powerfully detailed—by every imaginable sort of person, singly and in groups of a score or more: farmers and priests, fishermen and lawyers, policemen and politicians, and even a Nobel prize-winning chemist, the Englishman Richard L. M. Synge, who saw the creature in 1938. Million-dollar expeditions have descended on Loch Ness. Investigators have spent months at a time scanning the lake with binoculars, have launched mini-submarines into its depths, and have probed its gloomy reaches with strobe-light cameras and sonar equipment. One investigator estimated that, for every observation, there have been 350 hours of concerted search, leading to scores of books, some scornfully debunking, others stoutly championing “Nessie,” as she—for some reason, the monster seems to have been deemed female—has come to be called.

Nevertheless, the lake has yet to yield an ancient bone, a bit of tissue, or any other definitive testimony to the monster’s presence. Aside from the volumes of eyewitness reports, the evidence consists of only a handful of fuzzy and ambiguous photographs and films and some debatable sonar readings. For all the ardent attention, the puzzles of Loch Ness and its elusive creature are no closer to solution now than they were that day in 1880 when Duncan McDonald was scared half to death by the ominous form he supposedly spotted in the dim, peat-stained waters.
Session 2: Reading and Responding

16. Which sentence expresses a central idea of the passage?
   
   A. Most of the people who claim to have seen Nessie have been proven wrong.
   B. Nessie is most likely some kind of large, common fish or turtle.
   C. In spite of many reports, the existence of Nessie has never been proved.
   D. The stories of Nessie are told mostly to attract people to Scotland.

17. How is the first paragraph of "The Quest for Nessie" important for developing the ideas in the passage?
   
   A. It argues that Loch Ness is a healthy environment for a creature like Nessie.
   B. It explains practical reasons that research on Nessie is difficult to conduct.
   C. It offers instructions on how people interested in Nessie can reach Loch Ness.
   D. It establishes the atmosphere in which Nessie is reported to live.

18. In paragraph 3, what is the author's purpose for putting quotation marks around “the monster”?
   
   A. to imply that Nessie is only a mythical creature
   B. to acknowledge that the words are a direct quotation
   C. to indicate that the phrase is used in an unusual way
   D. to signal that people commonly refer to Nessie like this

19. How does the passage make connections between Hugh Ayton and Duncan McDonald?
   
   A. by pointing out the consistency in two sightings of the creature from different time periods
   B. by commenting on their similar reactions to seeing the creature in the water
   C. by describing the ways in which their lives changed as a result of seeing the creature
   D. by analyzing the believability of the two accounts of the creature
20. What is the meaning of the word **enticing** as it is used in paragraph 6 of the passage?

   A. sensing  
   B. allowing  
   C. tempting  
   D. providing

21. According to the passage, what is the source of **most** evidence about the Loch Ness monster?

   A. historic myths  
   B. reports of individuals **C.** scientific investigations  
   D. photographs and sonar

Write your answer to question 22 on the lines provided on page 54.

22. Explain whether the passage is more convincing in supporting Nessie’s existence **or** more convincing in casting doubt on Nessie’s existence. Use specific details from the passage to support your response.