English Assessment

The English Assessment consists of two parts; Reading Comprehension is used to place students into the appropriate reading class, and WritePlacer® is used to place students into the appropriate writing class.

These tests are used for placement into the following classes:

*English 96 – Introduction to College Reading
*English 98 – Introduction to College Writing
*English 116 – College Reading Development
*English 118 – College Writing Development
*English 122 – Freshman English: Comp and Reading

How long will the test take?

The complete English Assessment test has a time limit of one and a half hours. While there is no specific time limit on the Reading Comprehension portion of this test but the average time taken is 30 minutes. There is a 40 minute time limit on the WritePlacer® portion.

How many questions are on the test?

A total of 20 questions are administered on the Reading Comprehension test. The WritePlacer® test consists of a writing sample of 300 – 600 words in length.

When will the results be available?

Results should be available immediately upon completion of the test. Results are valid for two years.

Reading Comprehension Sample Questions

Read the statement or passage and then choose the best answer to the question. Answer the question based on what is stated or implied in the statement or passage.

1. In the words of Thomas DeQuincey, “It is notorious that the memory strengthens as you lay burdens upon it.” If, like most people, you have trouble recalling the names of those you have just met, try this: The next time you are introduced, plan to remember the names. Say to yourself, “I’ll listen carefully; I’ll repeat each person’s name to be sure I’ve got it, and I will remember.” You’ll discover how effective this technique is and probably recall those names for the rest of your life.

   The main idea of the paragraph maintains that the memory
   a) always operates at peak efficiency.
   b) breaks down under great strain.
   c) Improves if it is used often.
   d) Becomes unreliable if it tires.

2. Unemployment was the overriding fact of life when Franklin D. Roosevelt became president of the United States on March 4, 1933. An anomaly of the time was that the government did not systematically collect statistics of joblessness; actually it did not start doing so until 1940. The Bureau of Labor Statistics later estimated that 12,830,000 persons were out of work in 1933, about one-fourth of a civilian labor force of more than 51 million.

   Roosevelt signed the Federal Emergency Relief Act on May 12, 1933. The president selected Harry L. Hopkins, who headed the New York relief program, to run FERA. A gifted administrator, Hopkins quickly put the program into high gear. He gathered a small staff in Washington and brought the state relief organizations into the FERA system. While the agency tried to provide all the necessities, food came first. City dwellers usually got an allowance for fuel, and rent for one month was provided in case of eviction.

   This passage is primarily about
   a) unemployment in the 1930s.
   b) the effect of unemployment on United States families.
   c) President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s presidency.
   d) President Roosevelt’s FERA program.
3. It is said that a smile is universally understood. And nothing triggers a smile more universally than a taste of sugar. Nearly everyone loves sugar. Infant studies indicate that humans are born with an innate love of sweets. Based on statistics, a lot of people in Great Britain must be smiling because on average, every man, woman and child in that country consumes 95 pounds of sugar each year.

From this passage it seems safe to conclude that the English

a) do not know that too much sugar is unhealthy.
   b) eat desserts at every meal.
   c) are fonder of sweets than most people.
   d) have more cavities than any other people.

4. With varying success, many women around the world today struggle for equal rights. Historically, women have achieved greater equality with men during periods of social adversity. The following factors initiated the greatest number of improvements for women: violent revolution, world war, and the rigors of pioneering in an undeveloped land. In all three cases, the essential element that improved the status of women was a shortage of men, which required women to perform many of society's vital tasks.

We can conclude from the information in this passage that

a) women today are highly successful in winning equal rights.
   b) only pioneer women have been considered equal to men.
   c) historically, women have only achieved equality through force.
   d) historically, the principle of equality alone has not been enough to secure women equal rights.

5. In 1848, Charles Burton of New York City made the first baby carriage, but people strongly objected to the vehicles because they said the carriage operators hit too many pedestrians. Still convinced that he had a good idea, Burton opened a factory in England. He obtained orders for the baby carriages from Queen Isabella II of Spain, Queen Victoria of England, and the Pasha of Egypt. The United States had to wait another 10 years before it got a carriage factory, and only 75 carriages were sold in the first year.

Even after the success of baby carriages in England,

a) Charles Burton was a poor man.
   b) Americans were still reluctant to buy baby carriages.
   c) Americans purchased thousands of baby carriages.
   d) the United States bought more carriages than any other country.

6. All water molecules form six-sided structures as they freeze and become snow crystals. The shape of the crystal is determined by temperature, vapor, and wind conditions in the upper atmosphere. Snow crystals are always symmetrical because these conditions affect all six sides simultaneously.

The purpose of the passage is to present

a) a personal observation.
   b) a solution to a problem.
   c) actual information.
   d) opposing scientific theories.

Directions for questions for 7-10

For the questions that follow, two underlined sentences are followed by a question or statement. Read the sentences, then choose the best answer to the question or the best completion of the statement.

7. The Midwest is experiencing its worst drought in 15 years. Corn and soybean prices are expected to be very high this year. What does the second sentence do?

a) It restates the idea found in the first.
   b) It states an effect.
   c) It gives an example.
   d) It analyzes the statement made in the first.

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8. Social studies classes focus on the complexity of our social environment.

The subject combines the study of history and the social sciences and promotes skills in citizenship.

What does the second sentence do?

a) It expands on the first sentence.
b) It makes a contrast.
c) It proposes a solution.
d) It states an effect.

9. Knowledge of another language fosters greater awareness of cultural diversity among the peoples of the world.

Individuals who have foreign language skills can appreciate more readily other peoples’ values and ways of life.

How are the two sentences related?

a) They contradict each other.
b) They present problems and solutions.
c) They establish a contrast.
d) They repeat the same idea.

10. Serving on a jury is an important obligation of citizenship.

Many companies allow their employees paid leaves of absence to serve on juries.

What does the second sentence do?

a) It reinforces what is stated in the first.
b) It explains what is stated in the first.
c) It expands on the first.
d) It draws a conclusion about what is stated in the first.

WritePlacer® Sample Topic

Prepare a multiple-paragraph writing sample of about 300–600 words on the topic below. You should use the time available to plan, write, review, and edit what you have written. Read the assignment carefully before you begin to write.

Some schools require each student to participate in an organized school sport chosen by the student. People at these schools argue that athletics is an important part of the educational experience and that there should be a rule requiring participation. Others argue that students should be free to decide whether or not they wish to participate in organized school sports. Write an essay for a classroom instructor in which you take a position on whether participation in organized school athletics should be required. Be sure to defend your position with logical arguments and appropriate examples. Your essay must be 300-600 words in length.