



Virginia Communication & Literacy Assessment Ultimate Guide

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Preparing to take the VCLA?

Awesome!

We will answer every question you have and tell you exactly what you need to study to pass the VCLA.

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Quick Facts

Overview:

The Virginia Communication and Literacy Assessment (VCLA) evaluates communication and literacy skills required of educators in Virginia.

Format:

The VCLA consists of two subtests: a reading subtest and a writing subtest. The reading subtest is composed of approximately 40 multiple-choice questions. The writing subtest includes approximately 40 multiple-choice questions, three short-answer items, one written summary, and one written composition.

The testing period is four hours.

Cost:

A single subtest costs \$40. Both subtests cost \$80. The registration processing fee is \$50.

Scoring:

For both the reading and writing subtests, scores are given in a range from 100 to 300, based on performance of all components of the subtests. The passing score for a single subtest is 235.

The passing score for both subtests is 470.

Study time:

There is no set amount of time to study to pass the test. It depends on the strengths and weaknesses of the participant in relation to the skills covered on the test; however, it is generally recommended that a person studies for 2-3 months to prepare for a certification exam.

Plan a course of study by focusing on your weaknesses.

Quick Facts

What test-takers wish they'd known:

- Test-takers tend to overestimate their abilities to perform well. Many students regret not putting more time and effort into preparing. Fortunately, it's easy to avoid this mistake by using test preparation materials.
- When answering the multiple-choice questions, you should read all possible answers before marking the correct one. You don't want to miss out on the best answer by not reading all of the responses!
- Always check your answer before moving to the next question. Many test-takers are surprised by how they're able to find overlooked errors in their work by using this strategy.

Information obtained from the Virginia Communication and Literacy Assessment website: <https://www.va.nesinc.com/>

Subtest I:

Reading Comprehension and Analysis

Overview

The Reading Comprehension and Analysis Subtest has 40 multiple-choice items.

This subtest has five competencies:

- Meaning of Words and Phrases
- Main Idea and Supporting Details
- Relationship Among Ideas
- Critical-Reasoning Skills
- Summaries, Outlines, and Visual Representations

So, let's start with Meaning of Words and Phrases.

Meaning of Words and Phrases

For this section, you need to be able to use context clues to determine the meaning of unknown words and phrases, as well as identify synonyms and antonyms for given words.

Let's discuss some concepts that will more than likely appear on the test.

Context Clues

Context clues are parts of the passage that can help you figure out what a word or phrase means. You can use what you do know about the passage, specifically the rest of the sentence that the unknown word is part of, to decide what the word means.

For example, a sentence may read:

“His grandfather pushed his spectacles up his nose as he read the article.”

You can determine that spectacles is another word for glasses. The context clues are “pushed up his nose” and “as he read the article.” Glasses are worn on the nose and often used while reading.

Synonyms and Antonyms

A synonym is a word that has the same meaning as another word.

- For example, scared and afraid are synonyms because both words mean the same thing.

An antonym is a word that has the opposite meaning of another word.

- For example, rough and smooth are antonyms, because the words have opposite meanings.

Main Idea and Supporting Details

For this section, you need to be able to identify and analyze the main idea of a paragraph or passage.

Let's discuss some concepts that will more than likely appear on the test.

Main Idea

The main idea is what the piece of text is mostly about. It is the big idea of a passage, or the “point” of what you are reading.

To find the main idea, think about what the text is mostly about. Authors often make the main idea clear in the introduction of a passage. A topic sentence is the first sentence of a paragraph that summarizes the main idea. You can also look for key words or phrases that repeat. Determine what the details (small pieces of information) relate to or support.

It is important to know the main idea of what you are reading to set your purpose in reading it. Determining the main idea of a piece of text helps you understand what you can learn or gain from reading it.

Author's Purpose

The author's purpose is the reason that he or she writes a piece of text. Authors write to entertain, inform, or persuade an audience.

To determine the author's purpose, think about what the author is trying to accomplish.

To entertain: The author delivers enjoyment to the reader.

To inform: The author teaches or provides information about a topic.

To persuade: The author tries to convince the reader to feel or think a certain way.

The author's purpose may be clearly stated in the text, or it may be inferred by the reader.

Relationship Among Ideas

For this section, you need to understand cause-and-effect and pro-and-con relationships. You'll also need to be able to draw conclusions after reading a passage.

Let's discuss some concepts that will more than likely appear on the test.

Cause and Effect

Cause and effect is the relationship between what happened (effect) and why it happened (cause) in a specific situation.

Let's apply this to a scenario. Ella had a cavity, because she didn't brush her teeth carefully. The poor teeth brushing resulted in the cavity. Therefore, poor teeth brushing is the cause in this situation and the cavity is the effect.

You may be asked to identify or determine the cause and/or effect in different situations that appear in passages you read on your exam.

Drawing Conclusions

Drawing conclusions is making meaning of text based on what is actually written and what must be inferred by the reader. Think about what you read in the text and what you already know about the topic to make a decision about the text. You may be asked to interpret the author's point or message in the text that he or she wrote.

Critical-Reasoning Skills

For this section, you'll need to think critically about a passage to evaluate the writer's point of view, validity, and arguments.

Let's discuss some concepts that will more than likely appear on the test.

Fact vs. Opinion

A fact is a piece of information about a topic that can be proven.

An opinion is a statement that expresses what someone thinks or how someone feels about a topic.

For example, "Lions and tigers are mammals" is a fact. "Lions and tigers should not be taken from their natural habitats to live in zoos" is an opinion.

You may be asked to determine if a piece of information in your text is a fact or an opinion.

Levels of Point of View

Point of view is the style of narration used to tell a fictional story. The author must choose the point of view most appropriate for his/her goal, since different points of view will change the style of writing and dictate plot points and content. For example, a story written in first person requires that the reader trusts the narrator is accurately describing the events of the story. The reader only sees the events as the narrator experiences them, so there is more room for bias or unreliability than a third person narration.

First-person point of view tells the story from the narrator's perspective. The pronouns "I" and "we" are used.

Second-person point of view means the narrator chooses to write directly to an audience. The pronoun "you" is used.

Third-person point of view means that the narrator is not a character in the story and does not use first-person pronouns. The third-person point of view can be limited, describing only what is externally visible about characters and events, or omniscient, with access to characters' internal thoughts and feelings.

It is important to establish the narrator's point of view, because it can help you determine the author's thinking or feeling about a topic.

You may be asked to identify the narrator's point of view in a passage and how it relates to his or her purpose.

Summaries, Outlines, and Visual Representations

For this section, you need to be able to pick out a summary or outline of a passage and understand and analyze charts, graphs, and tables.

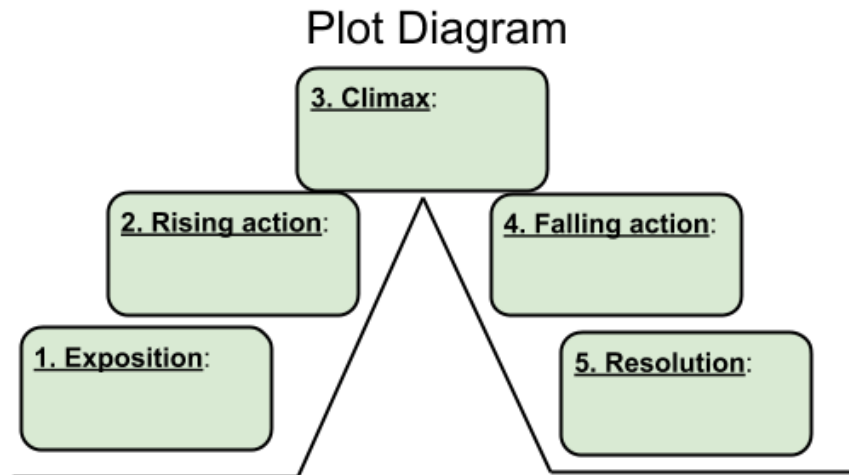
Let's discuss some concepts that will more than likely appear on the test.

Summary

A summary is a concise statement that establishes the central purpose of a text. A summary includes the main ideas from all parts of a passage, but does not focus on details.

To identify an accurate summary, determine whether the statement covers what the entire passage is mostly about. If the statement focuses on details or only covers a portion of the passage, it is not an accurate summary.

Graphic Organizer



A graphic organizer is a visual representation of the relationship between different types of information.

You may be asked to interpret the information provided in a graphic organizer, or to determine how to accurately represent information using an appropriate tool.

And that's some basic info about Subtest I: Reading Comprehension and Analysis.

Now, let's look at a few practice questions in each area to see how these concepts might actually appear on the real test.

Subtest I Practice Questions

Use the passage below to answer questions 1 and 2

Earth's largest desert is actually a very frigid place covered with ice: Antarctica. In order for an area to be considered a desert, it must receive very little rainfall. More specifically, it must receive an average of less than 10 inches of precipitation—which can be rain, sleet, hail, or snow—on the ground every year. Antarctica, the coldest place on earth, has an average temperature that usually falls below the freezing point. And because cold air holds less moisture than warm air, the air in Antarctica does not hold much moisture at all. This is evident in the low precipitation statistics recorded for Antarctica. For example, the central part of Antarctica receives an average of less than two inches of snow every year. However, the coastline of Antarctica receives a little bit more—between seven and eight inches per year. Because Antarctica gets so little precipitation every year, it is considered a desert.

Question 1

What misconception does the author most likely think his readers have?

- A. Deserts must be hot.
- B. Antarctica is cold.
- C. Antarctica doesn't get much snow.
- D. Deserts are found across the globe.

Correct Answer: A. Since the author opens with “desert is actually a very frigid place” it can be implied that he is addressing readers who think deserts are defined by their temperature.

Question 2

According to the selection, a geographical area is considered a desert if:

- A. it gets an average of less than 10 inches of precipitation on the ground per year.
- B. it has temperatures consistently below freezing.
- C. it has temperatures consistently above 100 degrees.
- D. the air does not hold moisture.

Correct Answer: A. The author explicitly states the requirements for classification as a desert in lines 2-4 of the passage.

Use the passage below to answer questions 3-5

(1) The history of aeronautics may be divided into two periods, with the year 1914 as the dividing line between them. Before the great war the many brilliant minds that were trying to solve the problems of aerial navigation received comparatively little help or encouragement from humanity at large.

The airship and the aeroplane were both accomplished facts, but most people looked upon them as ticklish contrivances of very little practical value. From the year 1909 onward aviation occupied an immense share of public attention; liberal prizes for aerial feats were offered; new records for speed, altitude, and endurance were made from day to day; but to the public, and perhaps to most of the aviators themselves, all this meant merely that a new and thrilling sport had been created, rather than a new art of boundless utility. Very few business men felt inclined to invest money in the development of aircraft, and the governments of the leading nations, with a single exception, were incredibly blind to the importance of building air fleets for use in war. The exception was Germany, which not only gave strong support to Count Zeppelin in the building of his dirigibles, but developed military aviation to such an extent that she entered the war with about 800 aeroplanes and a thousand trained pilots.

(2) With the outbreak of the war the budding art burst into vigorous bloom. Unlimited funds were now available for experimenting and building. Thousands of flyers invaded the air, and the battle zone was a testing ground on a vast scale, where one improvement was hardly introduced before it was replaced by another. Some of the best engineering talent of the world was diverted from many and various fields to the one task of supplying the demands of the military aeronauts for more speed, more power, more reliable motors, better materials and appliances. Thus the war not only perfected aeronautics—especially aviation—as an art, but practically created it as an industry. At the close of hostilities the world found itself in possession of a vast fleet of aircraft, a multitude of aircraft factories, and a great army of trained aeronauts.

Question 3

Which of the following statements best expresses the main idea of the passage?

- A. Aeronautics is categorized into two periods, with 1914 as the dividing line between them.
- B. Aeronautics wasn't considered useful or practical until World War I.
- C. Count Zeppelin and his airships paved the way for modern aeronautics.
- D. Seen as a specialty sport before 1914, World War I expanded and perfected the field of aeronautics.

Correct Answer: D. This is the best main idea listed because it includes before-and-after effects and focuses on the war as the testing ground for aeronautics.

Question 4

In this passage, what was the main cause of the increase of interest and resources in the aviation industry?

- A. World War I
- B. contests for aerial feats
- C. the urging of Count Zeppelin
- D. the advice of businessmen

Correct Answer: A. The exponential use of airplanes in the war created a new industry.

Question 5

What are “dirigibles,” according to context clues in the text?

- A. Dirigibles are “air fleets for use in the war,” and Germany was a strong supporter of their inventor, Count Zeppelin.
- B. Dirigibles are weapons that are mounted on airplanes, used mainly in World War I.
- C. Dirigibles are German-trained pilots, since Germany was the “single exception” in terms of supporting aviation as an industry.
- D. Dirigibles are weapons that were used in contests of aerial feats before the war.

Correct Answer: A. The passage describes Germany as the one country who backed the creation of “air fleets for use in war,” and uses Count Zeppelin as his creations as an example.

Use the passage below to answer questions 6 and 7.

The following is an excerpt written about World War I By Vernon Bartlett

- (1) Those at home in England, with their experience of war books and photographs, of Zeppelin raids and crowded hospitals, are beginning to imagine they know all there is to know about war. The truth is that they still have but little idea of the life in the trenches, and, as far as mud is concerned, they are delightfully ignorant. They do not know what mud is.
- (2) They have read of Napoleon’s “Fourth Element,” they have listened to long descriptions of mud in Flanders and France, they have raised incredulous eyebrows at tales of men being drowned in the trenches, they have given a fleeting thought of pity for the soldiers “out there” as they have slushed home through the streets on rainy nights; but they have never realised what mud means, for no photograph can tell its slimy depth, and even the pen of a Zola or a Victor Hugo could give no adequate idea of it.
- (3) It is the infantryman who suffers most, for he has to live, eat, sleep, and work in the mud. The plain of dragging slime that stretches from Switzerland to the sea is far worse to face than the fire of machine guns or the great black trench-mortar bombs that come twisting down through the air. It is more terrible than the frost and the rain—you cannot even stamp your feet to drive away the insidious chill that mud always brings. Nothing can keep it from your hands and face and clothes; there is no taking off your boots to dry in the trenches—you must lie down just as you are, and often you are lucky if you have two empty sandbags under you to save you from the cold embrace of the swamp.

Question 6

Is the information in this passage fact or opinion?

- A. The information is all fact, as the passage describes conditions in WWI.
- B. The information is mostly opinion, as the author relates his opinion on what “those at home” think of life at the front.
- C. The information is all opinion, as the passage describes the conditions he personally saw in WWI.

D. The information is mostly fact, as the author describes the mud on the Western Front.

Correct Answer: B. The author is relating his own ideas about what “those at home” think of life on the front.

Question 7

What attitude does the author hold toward “[t]hose at home in England”?

- A. The author thinks those at home are too sympathetic towards the soldiers at the front.
- B. The author thinks those at home are too harsh in their judgment of conditions on the front.
- C. The author thinks those at home will never have any idea how terrible conditions are at the front, as they have never experienced it firsthand
- D. The author thinks those at home are right and that the war should end as soon as possible.

Correct Answer: C. The author’s attitude shows that he does not think those at home know what it is like to be at the front. One example of this is when he says “The truth is that they still have but little idea of the life in the trenches.”

Use the passage below to answer questions 8 and 9

(1) Whenever travellers penetrate into remote regions where human hunters are unknown, they find the wild things half tame, little afraid of man, and inclined to stare curiously from a distance of a few paces. It takes a long time and much restraint to win back their confidence. This is ideal, a paradise for the naturalist and the camera hunter.

(2) In the early days of the West, when game abounded and when fifty yards was the extreme deadly range of the hunter’s weapons, wild creatures were comparatively tame. The advent of the rifle and of the lawless skin hunter soon turned all big game into fugitives of excessive shyness and wariness. One glimpse of a man half a mile off, or a whiff of him on the breeze, was enough to make a Mountain Ram or a Wolf run for miles, though formerly these creatures would have gazed serenely from a point but a hundred yards removed.

(3) The establishment of the Yellowstone Park in 1872 was the beginning of a new era of protection for wildlife; and, by slow degrees, a different attitude in these animals toward us. In this Reservation, and nowhere else at present in the northwest, the wild things are not only abundant, but they have resumed their traditional Garden-of-Eden attitude toward man.

Question 8

Which of the following organizes the main ideas of the passage in the correct order?

- A. I. Animals that have never encountered men are not afraid of them.
II. The development of the rifle greatly increased animals' fear of men.
III. If protected from man, animals slowly become less afraid of them.
- B. I. Men must travel far to find animals who are not afraid of them.
II. The development of the rifle greatly increased animals' fear of men.
III. Yellowstone National Park was founded in 1872.
- C. I. Animals that have never encountered men are not afraid of them.
II. It takes very little to startle an animal.
III. If protected from man, animals slowly become less afraid of them.
- D. I. It is best to live peacefully with animals.
II. It takes very little to startle and animal.
III. Animals that have never encountered men are not afraid of them.

Correct Answer: A. These are the main ideas and are in the correct order.

Question 9

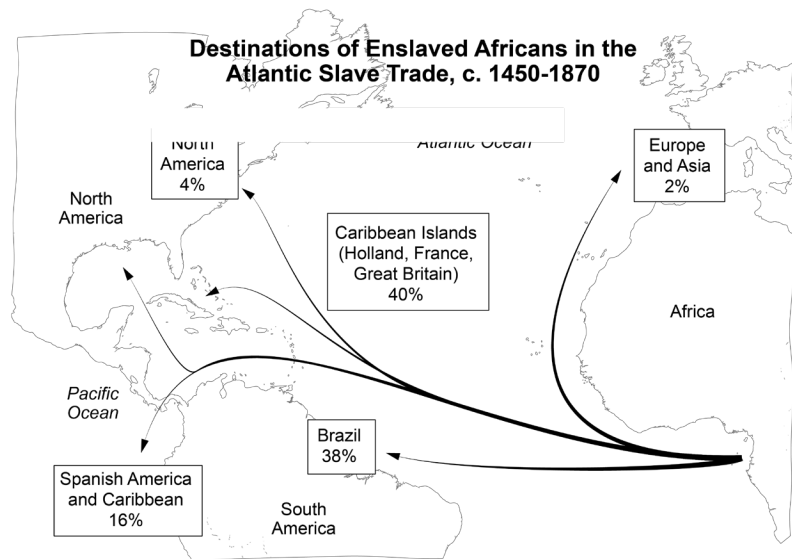
In the first sentence, the author most likely uses the phrase “penetrate into remote regions” to convey:

- A. blame toward hunters and travelers.
- B. regret for the inevitable.
- C. impatience for change.
- D. frustration with the destruction of natural habitats.

Correct Answer: A. The word “penetrate” has an aggressive connotation and “remote” demonstrates how far a person must travel to find these animals. The author chooses these words to present the travelers and hunters as invaders of the animals' homes.

Question 10

Based on the information illustrated below, which of the following conclusions can be reached?



- A. The largest importer of African slaves was the Southern American colonies.
- B. A significant percentage of African slaves were sent to European countries.
- C. The slave trade increased in frequency in the 19th century.
- D. The largest importer of African slaves was the Caribbean countries.

Correct Answer: D. According to the chart, the Caribbean Islands imported 40% of the slaves, the largest percentage of any area.

Subtest II:

Writing Knowledge and Proficiency

Overview

The Writing Knowledge and Proficiency Subtest has 40 multiple-choice items, three short-answer items, and two writing assignments.

This subtest has nine competencies:

- Purpose and Audience
- Unity, Focus, and Development
- Principles of Organization
- Sentence and Paragraph Construction
- Usage
- Mechanical Conventions
- Sentence Revision
- Writing a Summary
- Writing a Composition

So, let's start with Purpose and Audience.

Purpose and Audience

For this section, you need to be able to identify the purpose of a piece of text and revise writing for various audiences.

Let's discuss a concept that will more than likely appear on the test.

Identifying Audience

To identify the intended audience for a passage, think about for whom the author wrote it. For example, the intended audience of a campaign speech would probably be the voting constituents of that community. A persuasive letter about restoring a historical building would be written for those making the decision about the building's future.

Unity, Focus, and Development

For this section, you need to understand what unity, focus, and development are in nonfiction writing. You will have to revise sentences or paragraphs to improve the unity, focus, or development of the writing.

Let's look at some concepts that will more than likely appear on the test.

Unity

Unity in writing means that the essay stays focused on the topic. All included details support or relate to the main idea. They do not seem random or off-topic. If a sentence or portion of the writing is not focused on the topic, find a way to make it relate. Remove the off-topic words or ideas and replace them with those that support the main topic.

Focus

Focus in writing means that the purpose of the writing is clear and remains clear throughout the passage. You can identify an off-topic statement if it does not relate to or support the central idea of the text.

Principles of Organization

For this section, you need to know how to order sentences and paragraphs to create an organized piece of text, as well as how to effectively use transition words to move from one idea to the next.

Take a look at some things that could come up on the test.

Transitional Words

Transitional words or phrases connect one idea to another in a logical order in writing. They help the reader move smoothly through the writing piece. They keep the ideas in the writing from sounding disjointed or unrelated. Some examples to use or look for are in addition, such as, for example, as stated above, and in conclusion.

Sequence of Ideas

Writing should flow in a logical order. You can use transitional words or phrases to help your writing sound fluid and not choppy. You may be asked to identify a transitional word or phrase that would be appropriate to use in a particular place in the text. You may also be asked to rearrange sentences or portions of the passage into an order that makes more sense to a reader.

Sentences and Paragraph Construction

For this section, you need to know what topic sentences are, as well as how to eliminate unnecessary information and correct fragments and run-ons.

Let's look at some concepts that will more than likely appear on the test.

Topic Sentences

A topic sentence is a sentence that makes the main idea of a paragraph clear. Topic sentences are written at the beginning of each new paragraph. They open a new section of writing and make that section's purpose apparent.

Example: The right to vote is a cornerstone of American citizenship.

Every sentence of the paragraph that follows this topic sentence should support this idea.

Sentence Fragments

A sentence fragment is a group of words that cannot stand alone as a complete sentence. A complete sentence must include a subject (naming part) and predicate (telling part).

Incorrect example: Some of the students at school.

This sentence includes a subject but not a predicate.

Incorrect example: Enjoyed the Veterans Day assembly.

This sentence includes only a predicate.

Correct example: Some of the students at school enjoyed the Veterans Day assembly.

This includes both a subject and a predicate.

You may be asked to identify a sentence fragment that is missing either a subject or predicate.

Usage

For this section, you need to understand the relationships between parts of speech, as well as be able to recognize commonly misused words.

Take a look at some things that could come up on the test.

Subject-Verb Agreement

The subject of a sentence is who or what the sentence is about. The verb is the action, or what happens, in the sentence. Subject-verb agreement means that if the subject is singular (one) the verb is also singular, and if the subject is plural (more than one) the verb is also plural.

Incorrect subject-verb agreement: The pig walk.

Correct subject-verb agreement: The pig walks.

Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement

A pronoun is a word that takes the place of a noun. For example, I, we, he, she, it, they, and you are all examples of pronouns. An antecedent is a word that a pronoun refers to. For pronouns and antecedents to agree, they must match in number.

Incorrect pronoun-antecedent agreement: The team worked hard at practice. He won the championship game.

Correct pronoun-antecedent agreement: The team worked hard at practice. They won the championship game.

Modifiers

Adverbs describe verbs. They convey when, where, how, or how often an action happens.

Example: The girl slowly placed her crayons in the box.

Slowly is an adverb because it describes how the crayons were placed in the box.

Adjectives describe nouns. They convey color, size, shape, smell, feeling, number, etc., of a person, place, thing, animal, or idea.

Example: The smooth rock skipped across the pond.

Smooth is an adjective, because it describes how the rock feels.

Comparatives show differences between nouns.

Example: The racer from North High School ran faster than the racer from East High School.

Faster is a comparative, because it shows the difference in the racers' speeds.

Superlatives are used to describe a noun with the highest or lowest quality in a group of three or more.

Example: Her house is the largest on the block.

Largest is a superlative, because the woman's house is the highest in the quality of size in a group of three or more houses.

Mechanical Conventions

For this section, you need to understand and apply correct punctuation and capitalization in sentences, as well as find and correct misspelled words.

Take a look at some things that could come up on the test.

Standard Capitalization

In a properly written sentence, certain words start with a capital letter. The first letter of a sentence should always be capitalized. Proper nouns (specific names of people, places, and things) should be capitalized no matter where they appear in the sentence.

Example: My golf instructor took Jeff and Debbie to play a round at Iron Forks Country Club last Saturday.

My - first word of the sentence

Jeff/Debbie - specific names of people

Iron Forks Country Club - specific name of place

Saturday - specific day of the week

Commonly Misspelled Words

You may be asked to identify a commonly misspelled word in a sentence.

For example, vacuum, success, and tomorrow are all commonly misspelled words because of the double letters they contain. Achieve and believe are commonly misspelled because of the double vowels.

Sentence Revision

For this section, you need to understand how to revise sentences and paragraphs to improve grammar and usage, construction, and mechanics.

Here's exactly what you need to know for this competency.

Revising a Sentence

This section of the test will be completed in short answer form. You will see three sentences that each contain two errors in grammar, usage, or mechanics. You will rewrite each sentence, correcting the errors while maintaining meaning.

Example: Aiden and Sienna ate there dinner at the club after they run the 5K last Saturday.

Corrected: Aiden and Sienna ate their dinner at the club after they ran the 5K last Saturday.

Writing a Summary

To write a successful summary, begin by reading the given passage critically. In your summary, identify the central idea and supporting details in your own words. Before submitting it, review it and correct any mechanical errors (spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, etc.).

Writing a Composition

To write a successful composition, start by thoroughly examining the prompt. Determine who you are writing for and the reason you are writing. Plan out your paragraphs. Start with an introduction that makes it clear to readers what your composition is about. Move into paragraphs that cite specific examples and details that support the main idea of your composition. End with a conclusion that provides a clear sense of closure to your composition. Make the focus of each paragraph clear by starting with a topic sentence. Before submitting, review it and correct any mechanical errors (spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, etc.).

And that's some basic info about Subtest II: Writing Knowledge and Proficiency.

Subtest II Practice Questions

Use the passage below to answer questions 1 and 2.

1. The Civil War was an armed conflict in the United States of America, taking place between 1861 and 1865. 2. The term “civil war” means an organized war between groups within the same country. 3. The difference between a civil war and a revolution is that, in a civil war, both sides claim to be the rightful government of a country, whereas a revolution involves one group trying to change the system of government entirely and leads to fighting in the attempt at takeover. 4. The Civil War was fought over the issue of slavery, as well as for the states’ right to secede, or leave the Union diplomatically. 5. Lincoln had run on a platform of abolishing slavery in all states and won the electoral college without winning a single Southern state. 6. This victory angered the Southern states, who thought it was their Constitutional right to have slaves, and South Carolina was the first to call a vote to secede in 1860, citing the right of all states to leave the Union if they chose.

Question 1

Where should the following sentence be inserted?

Leading up to the war, the United States was composed of 34 states, and had just elected Abraham Lincoln as president.

- A. immediately after sentence 4
- B. immediately after sentence 2
- C. immediately after sentence 6
- D. immediately after sentence 1

Correct Answer: A. This sentence provides an introduction for the information about the election.

Question 2

Which of the following revisions best improves the clarity of the sentence?

- A. Sentence 2: When two or more groups within the same country begin an organized war, it is called a Great Rebellion.
- B. Sentence 3: A civil war and a revolution differ in that in a civil war, both sides claim to be the lawful government of a country, whereas a revolution involves one group trying to change the system of an entire government.
- C. Sentence 6: Lincoln’s platform was to abolish slavery in all states and won.
- D. Sentence 1: The Civil War, 1861—1865, was an armed conflict in the United States of America, taking place between 1861 and 1865.

Correct Answer: B. This sentence is made slightly shorter by deleting “and leads to fighting in the attempt at takeover.” This helps with redundancy and simplification.

Use the passage below to answer the question that follows.

Earth's largest desert is actually a very frigid place covered with ice: Antarctica. In order for an area to be considered a desert, it must receive very little rainfall. More specifically, it must receive an average of less than 10 inches of precipitation—which can be rain, sleet, hail, or snow—on the ground every year. Antarctica, the coldest place on earth, has an average temperature that usually falls below the freezing point. And because cold air holds less moisture than warm air, the air in Antarctica does not hold much moisture at all. This is evident in the low precipitation statistics recorded for Antarctica. For example, the central part of Antarctica receives an average of less than two inches of snow every year. However, the coastline of Antarctica receives a little bit more—between seven and eight inches per year. Because Antarctica gets so little precipitation every year, it is considered a desert.

Question 3

The selection is written in a manner that would be most appropriate for use in which of the following contexts?

- A. a newspaper article
- B. an encyclopedia entry
- C. an almanac
- D. a biographical dictionary

Correct Answer: B. An encyclopedia is a book or set of books that provide information on a subject. Of the choices listed, it is the most appropriate.

Use the passage below to answer questions 4 and 5.

1. Henry VIII had faults which have been trumpeted about the world from his own day to ours. 2. But of all English sovereigns, he stands foremost as the monarch of the sea. 3. Young, handsome, learned, exceedingly accomplished, gloriously strong in body and in mind, Henry mounted the throne in 1509 with the hearty goodwill of nearly all his subjects. 4. Happily for herself and for her future colonists, Henry was richly endowed with strength and skill for his task. 5. Before England could become the mother country of an empire overseas, she had to shake off her medieval weaknesses, become a strongly unified modern state, and arm herself against any probable combination of hostile foreign states. 6. With one hand he welded England into political unity, crushing disruptive forces by the way. 7. With the other he gradually built up a fleet the like of which the world had never seen.

Question 4

Which of the following is the best way to combine sentences 6 and 7?

6. With one hand he welded England into political unity, crushing disruptive forces by the way. 7. With the other he gradually built up a fleet the like of which the world had never seen.

- A. With one hand he welded England into political unity, crushing disruptive forces by the way, and with the other, he gradually built up a fleet the like of which the world had never seen.
- B. He both welded England into political unity and gradually built up a fleet of ships.
- C. With one hand he welded England into political unity, crushing disruptive forces by the way, but with the other he gradually built up a fleet the like of which the world had never seen.
- D. With one hand he welded England into political unity, crushing disruptive forces by the way because he gradually built up a fleet the like of which the world had never seen.

Correct Answer: A. It would be helpful for modern readers to understand what degree of challenge Henry VIII had in front of him at the start of his rule.

Question 5

Which change could improve the logical order of the paragraph?

- A. Move sentence 2 so that it comes after sentence 5.
- B. Move sentence 4 so that it comes before sentence 1.
- C. Move sentence 4 so that it comes after sentence 5.
- D. Move sentence 2 so that it comes before sentence 1.

Correct Answer: C. This is the best rearrangement, as sentence 4 defines what Henry VIII needed to do to make England successful. It also provides the antecedent for the “herself” and “her” used referenced in sentence 4.

Use the passage below to answer the following question.

1. It is possible that the Puritan woman gained one very material blessing from the religion of her day; she was relieved of practically all work on Sunday. 2. But it is doubtful whether the alternative — attendance at church almost the entire day — would appear one whit more desirable to the modern woman. 3. The wife and mother was therefore spared the heavy tasks of Sunday so commonly expected of the typical twentieth-century housewife. 4. The colonial Sabbath was indeed strictly observed; there was little visiting, no picnicking, no heavy meals, no weekend parties, none of the entertainments so prevalent in our own day.

Question 6

Which of the following revisions to the underlined portion of sentence 4 would best improve the clarity of the passage?

The colonial Sabbath was indeed strictly observed; there was little visiting, no picnicking, no heavy meals, no weekend parties, none of the entertainments so prevalent in our own day.

- A. on Sundays, there was
- B. there were
- C. in observation of the Sabbath, there was
- D. women allowed

Correct Answer: A. Adding “On Sundays” provides the reader with context for the meaning of the word “Sabbath.”

Question 7

Which answer correctly addresses the error in the underlined portion of the sentence?

I like to go to the store, and buy ice cream.

- A. store, and (no change needed)
- B. store and
- C. store, but
- D. stores too
- E. stores; and

Correct Answer: B. This sentence contains a list of two things (“go to the store” and “buy ice cream”) so no comma is needed. If a noun was in front of “buy ice cream,” then it would be a compound sentence and need the comma.

Question 8

Which of the following underlined portions of the sentence contains an error?

After a grueling soccer practice in the excessively hot sun, I was hungry and thirsty my mom took me home for dinner.

- A. grueling soccer practice
- B. excessively hot
- C. sun, I
- D. thirsty my
- E. No error.

Correct Answer: D. This is a run-on sentence, and the two independent clauses should be separated by a period, a semicolon, or a coordinating conjunction here.

Question 9

Which of the following underlined portions of the sentence contains an error?

Jaalah told Mia, her best friend about the new historical fiction book she was reading over lunch on Friday. No error.

- A. Mia,
- B. her best friend
- C. new historical fiction book
- D. over lunch on Friday.
- E. No error.

Correct Answer: B. The phrase “her best friend” renames Mia and should have a comma after it.

Question 10

Which of the following underlined portions of the sentence contains an error?

I purchased a new bed for my dog, Peaches, but she chewed it up almost immediately, which leads me to believe that she would prefer to sleep on the couch. No error.

- A. I purchased
- B. she chewed it up
- C. leads me to believe
- D. she would prefer
- E. No error.

Correct Answer: E. Although there are multiple subjects and verbs in this sentence, there are no errors.

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