



The California State University

Focus on English - English Placement Test

Assessment of Reading Skills—30 minutes

Part A: Reading Comprehension

Students will be asked to analyze the ideas presented in brief passages (typically 100-150 words). Students should be able to read closely in order to:

- identify important ideas
- understand direct statements
- draw inferences and conclusions
- detect underlying assumptions
- recognize word meanings in context
- respond to tone and connotation

Students may be asked to select the answer choice that best summarizes a passage, explains the purpose of a passage, focuses on a specific detail, explains a word in context, compares/contrasts two aspects of a passage, explains the implications or suggestions made in a passage, identifies causal relationships, or other similar tasks.

Directions: Each passage below is followed by questions based on its content. Answer all questions following a passage on the basis of what is stated or implied in that passage.

Questions 1-3 are based on the following passage.

The search for a workable panacea is not new. Spanish explorers sought the Fountain of Youth. Millions of Americans used to seek health and contentment in a patent medicine called Hadacol. During the past two decades, however, more and more people have been turning to various branches of psychology for magic solutions, hoping that psychology can take care of any problem, cure the common cold, or solve the riddle of existence.

1. From the passage one can infer that the word "panacea" means
 - A. utopia
 - B. religion
 - C. cure-all
 - D. life style

2. According to the passage, what do the Fountain of Youth and Hadacol have in common?
 - A. Neither really existed.
 - B. Both brought their discoverers great fortunes.

- C. Both helped to end the search for magic solutions.
 - D. Both were thought to have great power.
3. What does the passage call into question?
- A. People's expectations of psychology.
 - B. People's use of the lessons of history.
 - C. The relationship between psychology and medicine.
 - D. The legitimacy of the field of psychology.

Part B: Vocabulary in Context

Students should be able to understand the meaning of a particular word or phrase in the context of a sentence. Students will be asked to consider grammatically similar words and choose the one that fits most logically into each sentence in place of a nonsense word, gliff.

Directions: For each of the following questions, choose the best word or phrase to substitute for the underlined portion containing gliff, a nonsense word.

4. Though Mr. Rivera is a gliff man and could live anywhere he chooses, he still lives in the small house in which he was born.
- A. an unhappy
 - B. a wealthy
 - C. an ambitious
 - D. a strong
5. The water looked fine for swimming but, in fact, the currents in the river were gliff.
- A. contaminated
 - B. soothing
 - C. treacherous
 - D. unnoticeable
6. Many of the problems we have with our natural resources could be gliffed if all of us did what we could to conserve those resources.
- A. avoided
 - B. defined
 - C. publicized
 - D. understated

Part C: Logical Relationships

Students should be able to read two related statements and understand the relationship between them to see how:

- they may contrast
- they may illustrate cause and effect
- they may contradict each other

- they may show cause and/or effect
- one may explain the other
- one may provide a more specific example to illustrate the other
- one may explain consequence
- one may clarify something implied by the other

Students will be asked to find exactly what the second sentence does in relation to the first and/or how the two sentences relate to each other.

Directions: In each of the following questions, two underlined sentences have an implied logical relationship. Read each pair of sentences and the question that follows, and then choose the answer that identifies the relationship.

7. The Historic Dominguez Rancho Adobe, usually visited by those in search of tranquility, became a political battleground.
The cities of Compton and Carson each claimed ownership of the estate.

In relation to the first sentence, what does the second sentence do?

- A. It makes a comparison.
 - B. It provides factual support.
 - C. It describes an inevitable result.
 - D. It introduces a different point of view.
8. Harry typically vacations in Tahoe.
Two years ago, Harry spent his vacation in Madrid.

In relation to the first sentence, what does the second sentence do?

- A. It clarifies an assumption.
 - B. It notes an exception.
 - C. It adds emphasis.
 - D. It draws a conclusion.
9. Teresa has missed the last three practices of the dance step.
She cannot perform the maneuver.

In relation to the first sentence, what does the second sentence do?

- A. It states a consequence.
- B. It suggests a cause.
- C. It offers proof.
- D. It limits a preceding idea.

Assessment of Composing Skills—30 minutes

Part A: Construction Shift

Students should be able to rephrase a sentence by beginning with a different construction and producing a new sentence that does not change the meaning of the original. These questions ask students to:

- find a more economical or effective way of phrasing a sentence
- find a more logical way of presenting a fact or idea
- provide appropriate emphasis
- achieve sentence variety

Students may be asked to logically sequence part of a sentence that begins with a gerund, or an adverbial or other introductory phrase, etc; or to avoid slow starting sentences, they may be asked to consider a more appropriate noun phrase, or to consider a phrase that includes parenthetical information.

Directions: The following questions require you to rewrite sentences in your head. Each question tells you exactly how to begin your new sentence. Your new sentence should have the same meaning and contain the same information as the original sentence.

10. The student senate debated the issue for two hours and finally voted down the resolution.

Rewrite, beginning with Having debated the issue for two hours, . . .

The next word or words will be

- A. the issue
- B. it
- C. the student senate
- D. a vote

11. The tree fell away from the house when it was struck by lightning.

Rewrite, beginning with Struck by lightning, . . .

The next words will be

- A. it was when
- B. it fell when
- C. the tree fell
- D. and falling

12. Watson maintains that the worsening economic plight of the poor is reflected in the rising unemployment rate.

Rewrite, beginning with Watson maintains that the rising unemployment rate . . .

The next words will be

- A. reflects the
- B. and the plight of
- C. is what worsens
- D. is worse

Part B: Sentence Correction

Students should be able to find the best way of correcting a sentence in order to resolve problems of:

- clarity
- sentence predication
- parallel structure
- subordination and coordination
- modification
- sentence boundaries

Students are asked to select the best way to phrase an underlined portion of a sentence. This question type tests the students' understanding of syntax, usage, and idiom rather than specific knowledge of grammatical rules.

Directions: In each of the following questions, select the best version of the underlined part of the sentence. Choice (A) is the same as the underlined portion of the original sentence. If you think the original sentence is best, choose answer (A).

13. Ancient Greeks ate with their fingers, wiped them on pieces of bread, and tossed them to the dogs lying under the table.
- A. tossed them
 - B. tossing them
 - C. tossed the bread
 - D. they tossed
14. Many doctors are now convinced of a fiber-rich diet reducing the risk of colon and heart diseases.
- A. of a fiber-rich diet reducing the risk of colon and heart diseases.
 - B. of the risk of colon and heart diseases caused by a fiber-rich diet.
 - C. that the reduction of the risk of colon and heart diseases caused by a fiber-rich diet.
 - D. that a fiber-rich diet reduces the risk of colon and heart diseases.
15. Painters studied in Florence for the opportunity both to live in Italy and for seeing the art treasures.
- A. and for seeing the art treasures.
 - B. and to see the art treasures.
 - C. as well as the art treasures to be seen.
 - D. as well as seeing the art treasures.

Part C: Missing Sentence

Students should be able to select an appropriate sentence that most logically:

- begins a paragraph
- fits in the middle of a paragraph
- ends a paragraph

Students may be asked to find the most appropriate topic sentence (one that most successfully generalizes what follows); to find the most appropriate middle sentence (adds specifics or carries the paragraph forward in some way); or to find the sentence that logically concludes the paragraph.

Directions: Each of the following questions presents a passage with a missing sentence indicated by a series of dashes. Read each passage and the four sentences that follow it. Then choose the sentence that can best be inserted in place of the long dash (——).

16. —— . Scholars hold differing opinions. Some trace the roots of Mexicans in the United States all the way back to the earliest migrations across the Bering Strait. Others start with Aztec society to demonstrate the historical continuities between contemporary Chicanos and their Aztec ancestors. A third group identifies the “Spanish Borderlands” period (1540-1820) as the earliest phase of Chicano history.
- A. When does Chicano history begin?
 - B. There is continuing interest in Chicano history.
 - C. Chicano history has fascinated scholars for many years.
 - D. Few are concerned about setting a precise date for the origin of Chicano history.
17. Many Easterners think that all California college students surf every day, wear sunglasses indoors as well as outdoors (even on rainy days), and mingle with the superstars daily. —— . A recent survey of students on a large, urban CSU campus revealed that only 2 percent had surfed, and although 40 percent did wear sunglasses, 15 percent of those were doing so on their doctors’ recommendations. As for the superstars, barely 10 percent had met a Hollywood actor.
- A. The possibilities of such stereotypes are endless.
 - B. Stereotypes, however, are often misleading.
 - C. Probably both Easterners and Californians would like to fit all of those stereotypes.
 - D. Most California students do live up to those enviable stereotypes.
18. Accompanying the article on humor were pictures of a leering Groucho Marx and a grinning Sigmund Freud, one a brilliant humorist and the other a brilliant analyst whose own study of humor has been largely ignored. The unlikely pair attracted readers to the article, whose author made two major points. Serious studies of humor are rarely undertaken. —— .
- A. Comics would urge us to laugh, not soberly to study laughter.
 - B. What a joke a Freudian analysis of the Marx Brothers would have been.
 - C. The studies that are made are rarely taken seriously.
 - D. Freud was interested in all aspects of the human mind.

Part D: Supporting Sentence

Students should be able to read a sentence and decide which of four subsequent sentences will give appropriate logical support by:

- adding relevant detail
- stating a probable cause or explanation
- providing a supporting example

Students will be asked to discriminate among sentences that might all seem related to the original sentence, but only one of which provides logical support for the original.

Directions: Each of the following questions presents a topic and four sentences. Select the sentence that provides the best support for the topic presented.

19. Chester Nakamura is an expert on Samurai swords.

- A. The swords are richly decorated, and their engravings have meaning to the collector.
- B. Collectors around the world seek his advice about swords they plan to buy.
- C. Each Samurai took pride in his sword.
- D. Many people in the United States have extensive collections of such swords.

20. It is not true that intellectual development stops after age seventeen.

- A. Older people commonly complain of poor memory.
- B. Many older people can learn at least as well as young people can.
- C. People in their sixties, seventies, and eighties have been studied.
- D. Sometimes depression can cause what is assumed to be mental deterioration.

Answer Key	
1.	C
2.	D
3.	A
4.	B
5.	C
6.	A
7.	B
8.	B
9.	A
10.	C
11.	C
12.	A
13.	C
14.	D
15.	B
16.	A
17.	B
18.	C
19.	B
20.	B