



ASSESSMENTS FOR SUCCESS

SAMPLE QUESTIONS – COMMUNICATIONS ASSESSMENT

1. READING ASSESSMENT

- 20 MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS
- UNTIMED

2. WRITING ASSESSMENT

- 300-600 WORD ESSAY
- TIMED FOR 1 HOUR

3. CRITICAL THINKING ASSESSMENT

- 26 MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS
- TIMED FOR 45 MINUTES

**** PLEASE NOTE: THE USE OF
EXTERNAL AIDS SUCH AS
DICTIONARIES OR EXTERNAL
WEBSITES IS NOT PERMITTED**

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Reading Comprehension

In an ACCUPLACER placement test, there are 20 questions of two primary types in Reading Comprehension.

- The first type of question consists of a reading passage followed by a question based on the text. Both short and long passages are provided. The reading passages can also be classified according to the kind of information processing required, including explicit statements related to the main idea, explicit statements related to a secondary idea, application, and inference.
- The second type of question, sentence relationships, presents two sentences followed by a question about the relationship between these two sentences. The question may ask, for example, if the statement in the second sentence supports that in the first, if it contradicts it, or if it repeats the same information.

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.
7. 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 have 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 writer believes people remember names best when they

- a. meet new people
 - b. are intelligent
 - c. decide to do so
 - d. are interested in people
8. Many people have owned, or have heard of, traditional “piggy banks,” coin banks shaped like pigs. A logical theory about how this tradition started might be that because pigs often symbolize greed, the object is to “fatten” one’s piggy bank with as much money as possible.

However, while this idea makes sense, it is not the correct origin of the term. The genesis of the piggy bank is the old English word “pygg,” which was a common kind of clay hundreds of years ago in England. People used pots and jars made out of this red “pygg” clay for many different purposes in their homes. Sometimes they kept their money in one of the pots, and this was known as a pygg bank. Over the years, because “pygg” and “pig” sounded the same, glaziers began making novelty banks out of pottery in the shape of a pig as a kind of joke. These banks were given as gifts and exported

to countries where people spoke other languages and where no one had ever heard of pygg clay. The tradition caught on all over the world, and today piggy banks come in all colors and are made of all kinds of materials, including plastic.

This passage is mainly about

- A. how people in different countries save their money
 - B. how people in England made pottery centuries ago
 - C. how a common expression began in a surprising way
 - D. how an unusual custom got started
9. It is said that a smile is universally understood. And nothing triggers a smile more universally than the 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.
- This passage implies that the writer thinks that 95 pounds of sugar per person per year is
- A. a surprisingly large amount
 - B. a surprisingly small amount
 - C. about what one would expect
 - D. an unhealthy amount
10. The wheel has been used by humans since nearly the beginning of civilization and is considered one of the most important mechanical inventions of all time. Most primitive technologies since the invention of the wheel have been based on its principles, and since the industrial revolution, the wheel has been a basic element of nearly every machine constructed by humankind. No one knows the exact time and place of the invention of the wheel, but its beginnings can be seen across many ancient civilizations.

According to this passage, the wheel is an important invention because

- a. it is one of the world’s oldest inventions
 - b. it forms the basis of so many later inventions
 - c. it is an invention that can be traced to many cultures
 - d. it is one the world’s most famous inventions
11. Samuel Morse, best known today as the inventor of Morse Code and one of the inventors of the telegraph, was originally a prominent painter. While he was always interested in technology and studied electrical engineering in college, Morse went to Paris to learn from famous artists of his day and later painted many pictures that now hang in museums, including a portrait of former President John Adams. In 1825, Morse was in Washington, D.C., painting a portrait of the Marquis de Lafayette when a messenger arrived on horseback to tell him that his wife was gravely ill back at his home in Connecticut. The message had taken several days to reach him because of the distance. Morse rushed to his home as fast as he could, but his wife had already passed away by the time he arrived. Grief-stricken, he gave up painting and devoted the rest of his life to finding ways to transmit messages over long distances faster.

Morse left the art world and helped to invent the telegraph

- A. because he was tired of painting

- B. because he wanted to communicate with people far away
- C. because of a personal tragedy in his life
- D. because he was fascinated by science

12. Leonardo DaVinci is not only one of the most famous artists in history, he was also a botanist, a writer and an inventor. Even though most of his inventions were not actually built in his lifetime, many of today's modern machines can be traced back to some of his original designs. The parachute, the military tank, the bicycle and even the airplane were foretold in the imaginative drawings that can still be seen in the fragments of Leonardo's notebooks. Over 500 years ago, this man conceived ideas that were far ahead of his time.

The author of this passage is praising Leonardo DaVinci for his:

- A. artistic talent
- B. intelligence
- C. vision
- D. fame

Directions for questions 13–22

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.

13. 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.

14. 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.

15. 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.

16. 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.

17. While most people think of dogs as pets, some dogs are bred and trained specifically for certain types of work.

The bloodhound's acute sense of smell and willing personality make it ideal for tracking people missing in the woods.

What does the second sentence do?

- A. It makes a contrast.
- B. It restates an idea found in the first.
- C. It states an effect.
- D. It gives an example.

18. Paris, France, is a city that has always been known as a center of artistic and cultural expression.

In the 1920s, Paris was home to many artists and writers from around the world who became famous, such as Picasso and Hemingway.

What does the second sentence do?

- A. It reinforces the first.
- B. It states an effect.
- C. It draws a conclusion.
- D. It provides a contrast.

19. Studies show that the prevalence of fast-food restaurants corresponds with the rates of obesity in both children and adults.

Obesity is now on the rise in countries outside the U.S., where fast food restaurants are becoming more common.

How do the two sentences relate?

- A. They express roughly the same idea.
- B. They contradict each other.
- C. They present problems and solutions.
- D. They establish a contrast.

20. Compared with the rest of the country, North Dakota has a thriving economy, making it a place where more people want to live.

Winters in North Dakota are inhospitable, with average temperatures in January ranging from 2 degrees Fahrenheit to 17 degrees.

What does the second sentence do?

- A. It reinforces the first.
 - B. It explains what is stated in the first.
 - C. It contradicts the first.
 - D. It analyzes a statement made in the first.
21. Some stores are testing a new checkout system that allows shoppers to use their mobile phones to scan items as they walk through stores and pay at self-service kiosks, skipping the cashiers' lines.

The new mobile checkout system is intended to reduce long lines and customer wait times in stores.

What does the second sentence do?

- A. It expands on the first.
 - B. It states an effect.
 - C. It contrasts with the first.
 - D. It gives an example.
22. According to the American Sleep Disorders Association, the average teenager needs around 9.5 hours of sleep per night, possibly because critical growth hormones are released during sleep.

The average adult requires between six and eight hours of sleep per night for optimal health and productivity.

How do the two sentences relate?

- A. They establish a contrast.
- B. They contradict each other.
- C. They reinforce each other.
- D. They provide a problem and solution.

WritePlacer®

This test measures your ability to write effectively, which is critical to academic success.

Your writing sample will be scored on the basis of how effectively it communicates a whole message to the readers for the stated purpose. Your score will be based on your ability to express, organize and support your opinions and ideas, not the position you take on the essay topic. The following five characteristics of writing will be considered:

- Focus — The clarity with which you maintain your main idea or point of view
- Organization — The clarity with which you structure your response and present a logical sequence of ideas
- Development and Support — The extent to which you elaborate on your ideas and the extent to which you present supporting details
- Sentence Structure — The effectiveness of your sentence structure
- Mechanical Conventions — The extent to which your writing is free of errors in usage and mechanics

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.

HElghten™ Critical Thinking

Sample Items

Questions 1 - 2 are based on the material below.

1. Records indicate that William Shakespeare was baptized on April 26, 1564, and buried April 25, 1616, in Stratford-upon-Avon, England.
2. There is no evidence that William Shakespeare attended school, but had he done so, it would have been the local grammar school, and he would have left by age 14.
3. Documents show that by the early 1590s William Shakespeare was a managing partner of the Lord Chamberlain's Men, an acting company in London that built the Globe Theatre.
4. A total of 37 plays list Shakespeare as the author, including 13 that are set in Italy and several that make references to London politics.
5. There is no evidence that Shakespeare traveled outside of England.
6. In writings by others during Shakespeare's lifetime, Shakespeare was often referred to as a writer.
7. There is no manuscript of any play in William Shakespeare's own handwriting; only print versions of his plays exist.
8. No one questioned Shakespeare's authorship of the plays attributed to him during his lifetime or for centuries after his death.
9. Christopher Marlowe (1564–1593) was a brilliant poet and dramatist, educated at Cambridge University, who pioneered blank verse (unrhymed lines, almost always in the pattern of stressed syllables called "iambic pentameter") for dramatic plays.
10. Blank verse praised for its beauty appears frequently in the works attributed to Shakespeare.
11. Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford (1550–1604), whose aristocratic crest of arms depicted a lion shaking a spear, was trained in law, was a court poet, and visited Italy extensively.

Argument 1: (an abstract of an academic paper in a literary journal)

Abstract: "William Shakespeare of Stratford Could Not Have Written the So-called Shakespearean Plays"

We all know that there was a real person named William Shakespeare, who was born in Stratford in 1564, the son of a middle-class glove-maker, and who died in 1616. He was also a well-known actor and managing partner of an acting company in London in the 1590s. Beyond that, there is not a shred of evidence linking him to the 37 plays ascribed to him. How could an uneducated actor from Stratford have such intimate knowledge of court politics, legal matters, royalty, and Italy (the setting of 13 plays including *Othello*, *Merchant of Venice*, and *All's Well That Ends Well*)? Clearly, the plays reflect a sophisticated intellect, a familiarity with London politics, and a deep understanding of Latin and Greek literature—all improbable for a mere actor who grew up in Stratford and who had at best a grammar-school education. Either Edward de Vere (who is known to have visited Italy and was a court favorite) or Christopher Marlowe (who was college educated and the pioneer of blank verse for dramatic plays) was the real author of these brilliant and nuanced plays.

Argument 2: The argument below is a rebuttal in the form of a letter to the editor, published in a subsequent issue of the journal that published Argument 1 above.

It is ludicrous to question Shakespeare's authorship of the plays. The argument presented in this journal smacks of elitism. Other arguments for that position rely on conspiracy theory and convoluted logic. There is a historical record of such a man who was connected to London theater and whose name was given as the author of the plays. No one questioned Shakespeare's authorship until hundreds of years after his death. Those who put forward names of the "real" author—over 60 such names have been suggested—have their own agendas, including the elitism already mentioned, or a preference for a particular alternative author. Circumstantial evidence or outrageous ideas such as that Marlowe faked his own death in 1593 and authored some of the plays afterward, or that the real author, for whatever reasons, wanted to keep his own identity hidden, are flimsy and do not hold up under serious scrutiny.

1. Given the information in the facts list, someone wishing to establish that Marlowe is most likely the author of the plays attributed to Shakespeare would be aided in that task if which of the following were found and determined to be authentic? Select all that apply.
 - ☐ 1. Comparisons of Marlowe's plays with Shakespeare's plays that show strong linguistic parallels and similar range of vocabulary
 - ☐ 2. Journal entries in Marlowe's handwriting that note plot elements of a Shakespearean play prior to its being performed
 - ☐ 3. Historical events that continue into the 1600s and parallel key plot elements in the plays

2. From the following facts excerpted from the list, select the two that together most help to support a claim central to Argument 1.
 - ☐ 2. There is no evidence that William Shakespeare attended school, but had he done so, it would have been the local grammar school, and he would have left by age 14.
 - ☐ 4. A total of 37 plays list Shakespeare as the author, including 13 that are set in Italy and several that make references to London politics.
 - ☐ 5. There is no evidence that Shakespeare traveled outside of England.
 - ☐ 10. There is no manuscript of any play in William Shakespeare's own handwriting; only print versions of his plays exist.
 - ☐ 12. Christopher Marlowe (1564–1593) was a brilliant poet and dramatist, educated at Cambridge University, who pioneered blank verse (unrhymed lines, almost always in the pattern of stressed syllables called “iambic pentameter”) for dramatic plays.

3. The following is an exchange between two contributors to an online literary forum.

Kate: Ursula Seti's undated poem "Eucalyptus," which compares the eucalyptus tree's periodic shedding of its bark to various momentous events in her own life, could not have been written before 1960. Before that date, Seti had never left her native Alaska, where it is far too cold for most species of eucalyptus trees to grow. In 1960, however, she visited Australia, where eucalyptus trees are very common, so the poem must have been written during or after that visit.

Miriam: But Seti could certainly have known that eucalyptus trees periodically shed their bark without having personally observed that process, so she could have written the poem at any time during her career, which began well before 1960.

Which of the following most accurately characterizes Miriam's response to Kate?

- (A) It shows that Kate's argument assumes the very point that it attempts to demonstrate.
- (B) It draws an opposing conclusion from the evidence cited in Kate's argument.
- (C) It refutes Kate's argument by rejecting one of its unstated assumptions.
- (D) It calls into question one of the statements Kate makes to support her conclusion.

4. In Longport, a survey of residents showed that more of them had taken continuing education classes in literature than in the arts over the last twelve months. If so, some residents must have taken multiple arts classes, because an examination of enrollment figures showed that overall enrollment in continuing education arts classes was higher than overall enrollment in continuing education literature classes.

The reasoning in the passage depends on assuming which of the following?

- (A) There was no substantial enrollment in arts classes by people who were not residents of Longport.
- (B) There were no more literature classes than arts classes.
- (C) Few, if any, residents took both an arts class and a literature class in the last twelve months.
- (D) Most Longport residents took at least one arts class in the last twelve months.

Questions 5 - 6 are based on the information below.

In a benefit concert, seven solo performers—Harris, Jones, McIntyre, Nelson, Strapp, Trevino, and Williams—will each sing once only and one after another. The order in which the performers will sing is governed by the following conditions:

Harris must sing at some time before McIntyre sings.

Strapp must sing at some time before Jones sings.

Trevino must sing either immediately before or immediately after Nelson sings.

Williams must sing third.

5. If McIntyre is to sing immediately before Strapp sings, Trevino can sing

- (A) second
- (B) fourth
- (C) sixth
- (D) seventh

6. If McIntyre is to sing fourth, which of the following must be true?

- (A) Harris sings at some time before Strapp sings.
- (B) Jones sings at some time before Trevino sings.
- (C) Nelson sings at some time before McIntyre sings.
- (D) Strapp sings at some time before Williams sings.

Keys

- 1) 1, 2
- 2) 4, 5
- 3) C
- 4) A
- 5) A
- 6) D