

JOHNSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Study Guide

English Assessment Test

The English Assessment Test consists of two components: Writing Skills and Reading Skills. This study guide includes a basic English grammar and usage review that covers most of the grammatical areas addressed by the test. The review is followed by some sample test passages similar to those on the actual test and, finally, an answer key for each section covered. Certainly, not all technical English usage skills can be addressed by this study guide, and it is important for students to carefully review any area they may consider to be weak in their own language usage. The Writing Center would also be happy to help students with any questions they may have before or after the test is taken.

Sample Subject Areas Covered by the Writing Skills Test

Sentence Errors (fragments, fused sentences, and modification): The following are paired lines (A and B). One is correct while the other is incorrect. Circle the letter of the **incorrect** sentence.

- A. The motor in the old truck had outlasted the body and the interior.

B. Because we had taken good care of the machinery assigned to us.
- A. When we first arrived at the game, I saw the coach and the players grouped around the bench, plotting their last minute game strategy.

B. My father taught me how to fish without spending a lot of money on boats and equipment, I guess that's why I enjoy the sport as much as I do.
- A. I had always been interested in computer programs and video games, however, I could never get enough money to buy a computer.

B. There is never enough time to do things right; there's just time to do them again.
- A. Dizzy from all the amusement part rides, the ground seemed to rush up to meet me.

B. Those grabby shoppers have taken almost every food item off the shelf.

English Usage Errors (verb and pronoun agreement, spelling, and word choice): As in the last section, circle the letter of the **incorrect** sentence out of each pair presented below.

- A. When the rain began to pour on the hikers, the ranger feels they should move to some shelter nearby.

B. As the sun rose over the meadow, the cows began their day with a cool dip in the pond.

6. A. The women moved up to the courthouse steps in a group ready to voice their belief in the error of the court ruling.
- B. As Bill approached the ball, there was a feeling of confidence that he could make the winning throw.
7. A. Better than anyone else, the substitute had to make the best decision she could to reach past the goal.
- B. As Ryan got to the parking lot before everyone else, he could see that the storm had destroyed his work of the night before.
8. A. If the cat is too big for the cage, then the owner is responsible and should pay for the new container.
- B. When he decided with whom he was supposed to speak about the complaint, Barry felt more relaxed.

Punctuation Errors (comma, semicolon, and colon usage): As with the previous sections, circle the letter of the **incorrect** sentence out of each pair listed below.

9. A. When the siren started to sound, the people knew the severe weather warning was not wrong, and they all began to rush for shelter.
- B. Martha knew what she had done was wrong, because she had been brought up to know the difference.
10. A. Betty, who had been a cheerleader in college, was the hit at the class reunion when she performed all the old cheers.
- B. Max had been a big husky athletic man in college, but now he was a weak little accountant.
11. A. When the band began to play, the young boys in the front all stood up on their chairs and held their hands in the air and shouted the school anthem at the top of their lungs.
- B. They were all arrested; crowd participation was not warranted.
12. A. The teacher was kind: gentle and caring.
- B. There was no opportunity to defend the judge's call, as is consistent with the rules of the game.

Answer Key to the English Grammar Review Section

Sentence Errors

1. “B” is incorrect. The word “because” forces what follows to be a fragment and not a complete sentence. A sentence can be defined as a group of words with a subject and a predicate that make a complete thought. “B” does have a subject and predicate, but it does not make a complete thought.
2. “B” is incorrect. Unlike number 1, we do have a complete sentence. In fact, there are two complete sentences joined together by a comma, which is typically referred to as a comma splice or fused sentences. Two complete thoughts (sentences) can only be joined by a conjunction, semicolon or colon.
3. “A” is incorrect. Like the previous sentence, we have two thoughts but this time they are joined by a conjunctive adverb. As above, this would be a fused sentence because a conjunctive adverb is not the same as a coordinating conjunction; thus, a semicolon is needed before the “however” to grammatically join the two separate sentences.
4. “A” is incorrect. The phrase coming before the subject of the sentence actually modifies “ground” instead of “me.” The ground is not likely to be dizzy from the rides, but I am. In this case, we have a dangling modifier – a typical writing flaw most often caused by carelessness.

English Usage Errors

5. “A” is incorrect. It is very important to maintain tense consistently through any writing. “Began” is past; therefore, “feels” must be “felt.” Or, the “began” could be “begins” to make the sentence simple present tense.
6. “B” is incorrect. Word choice is very important, and some of the most difficult words are homonyms: words that sound alike but have different meanings. In this case, “their,” which is a possessive plural pronoun, should have been “there,” the adjective which shows place or position.
7. “A” is incorrect. Similar to the previous pair, “then” and “than” are words often confused. “Then” refers to time while “than” is used in comparisons. “Better than anyone . . .” is such a comparison.
8. “B” is incorrect. “Who” and “whom” are also difficult terms. “Who” takes the role of a subject and “whom” takes the role of an object. In this case, “whom” is the object of the preposition “with.”
9. “B” is incorrect. Two sentences joined together by a coordinating conjunction are separated by a comma, but “because” is not a coordinating conjunction and what follows would be considered a dependent clause. Thus, no comma would be used, unless the clause was an afterthought, something not grammatically necessary to understand the content of the sentence.

10. “B” is incorrect. Commas are used to separate equal modifiers of the same noun. In other words, “big,” “husky,” and “athletic” all modify “man” and should read “big, husky, athletic man.” The same rule would apply to “weak, little accountant.”
11. “A” is incorrect. Items in a series containing three or more parts should be separated by commas with the conjunction only before the last item.
12. “A” is incorrect. A colon is used to introduce a list or to separate two sentences where the second restates the first. In this sentence, the colon is awkward and divides parallel characteristics.

The Advanced Language Usage Test Format and Sample Passage

The actual test will not be similar to the previous questions, although knowledge of those concepts can be easily applied. The intent of the opening review was only to help you identify grammar weaknesses and strengths. The actual test will provide you several passages from writing samples and ask that you determine whether or not an error exists in an underlined segment and, if so, what should be done to correct that error. For example, read the following short paragraph example.

The real art of bass fishing is not in the equipment you can buy or the secret scent you sprayed on your lure. The real art is being able to find a shady tree on a hot summers day.

This I know because many a big lunker has caught my bait as it pounded the shady water, disturbing an afternoon nap. More than any other fresh water fish the bass is an attacker and is quick to defend its personal territory.

1. A. NO CHANGE
B. you spray on
C. you spray at
D. you have sprain on

2. A. NO CHANGE
B. around a hot day
C. on a hot, summers day
D. on a hot, summer's day

3. A. NO CHANGE
B. water bass the fish
C. water fish, the bass
D. water fish; the bass

Now, try the longer passage which follows on the next page. Indicate your response by circling the correct answer, and in all cases, choose the best response considering style, content, and tone.

Soccer Is for Little Kids

(1)

Soccer does not require a great amount of coordination on the part of the inexperienced player, especially when they are given free rein by their coach or instructor. As most coaches and parents agree the important goal is to have fun, and when possible, all parties can try to emphasize some of the basic fundamentals needed to play the sport. Although many viewers call the games “herd ball. The players are still learning how to kick, play on teams, and work toward a goal. This is great for any pre-schooler through third grade, male or female.

(2)

When people think about soccer in the USA, they most often think about what they see on television, men who play in an enclosed arena, or they may think about European soccer and the riots. However soccer has got a foothold with the youth of our country, the 4-8-year-olds who love to run and kick the ball into the goal. They may not have much finesse, but they have found a way to have fun and learn a sport at the same time.

(3)

Their are so many wonderful experiences to be gained from being on a team with your peers and having only a few simple guidelines to follow. Because of the competition taught to children, it is just good to see kids playing and no one keeping score (at least not the kids).

4. A. NO CHANGE
B. agree, the important
C. agree: the important
D. believe are unrealistic
 5. A. NO CHANGE
B. ball,” the players
C. ball.” The players
D. ball”, the players
 6. A. NO CHANGE
B. see on television; men who play
C. see on television, men whom play
D. see on television: men who play
 7. A. NO CHANGE
B. However; soccer has got
C. However, soccer has
D. However: soccer has got
 8. A. NO CHANGE
B. Their’s so many
C. There are many
D. There are so many
 9. A. NO CHANGE
B. competition taught to children
C. competition children often experience
D. sportsmanship children may learn
 10. Choose the sequence of paragraph numbers that will make the structure of the passage most logical.
A. NO CHANGE
B. 1, 3, 2
C. 3, 2, 1
D. 2, 1, 3
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Answer Key

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|------|-------|
| 1. B | 6. A |
| 2. D | 7. C |
| 3. C | 8. D |
| 4. B | 9. B |
| 5. B | 10. D |
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Johnson County Community College**Study Guide****Reading Skills Sample Test**

Directions: The passage below is followed by four questions. After reading the passage, choose the best answer to each question. You may look back at the passage as often as you wish. When finished, check your answers for this in the answer key below.

The industrial Revolution got under way first in England. This is a historical fact of the utmost significance, for it explains in large part England's primary role in world affairs in the nineteenth century. Consequently, the question of why the Industrial Revolution began where it did is of much more than academic interest.

The problem may be simplified by eliminating those countries that could not, for one reason or another, have generated the Industrial Revolution. Italy at one time had been an economic leader but dropped behind with the Discoveries and the shift of the main trade routes from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic. Spain had been economically predominant in the sixteenth century but had then lost out to the northwestern states for various reasons already noted. Holland had enjoyed her Golden Age in the seventeenth century, but she lacked the raw materials, labor resources, and water power necessary for machine production. The various countries of Central and Eastern Europe had been little affected by the Commercial Revolution and hence did not develop the technical skills, the trade markets, and the capital reserve needed for industrialization.

This leaves only France and Britain as possible leaders, and of the two, England had certain advantages that enabled her to forge far ahead of her rival. In commerce, for example, the two countries were about equal in 1763, or if anything, France was somewhat in the lead. But France had a population three times that of England. France also lost ground in foreign trade when she was driven out of Canada and India in 1763. Furthermore, the blockade of the British fleet during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars reduced French commerce to about half its 1788 value, and the loss was not restored until 1825.

Another important advantage enjoyed by Britain is that she had taken an early lead in the basic coal and iron industries. Because the forest reserves were being depleted, Britain early began using coal for fuel and for smelting iron. By the time of the French Revolution in 1789, Britain was producing about 10 million tons of coal per year, while France was producing 700,000 tons. A contemporary poet sensed the significance of this unlimited source of power for English industry when he wrote,

England's a perfect World! has Indies too!

Correct your Maps! New-castle is Peru.

England also pioneered in the development of the blast furnace which, in contrast to the old forges, could mass-produce iron. In 1780 Britain's iron output had been a third that of France; by 1840 it was three times more. All this meant that Britain was pushing ahead in the production of goods of mass consumption for which there was a large and steady demand, whereas France specialized more in luxury commodities of limited and fluctuating demand. Perhaps Voltaire had this in mind when he wrote in 1735, "In truth we are the whipped cream of Europe."

From L.S. Stavrianos, *The World Since 1500: A Global History*.

1. The word *forge*, as it is used in the third paragraph, means
 - A. make use of the blast furnace
 - B. alter in order to deceive
 - C. move forward steadily
 - D. produce wrought iron

2. In comparing the economic development of England and France, the passage shows that
 - A. England and France were essentially equals until the middle of the nineteenth century
 - B. France modeled itself on the examples of Italy and Spain, while England modeled itself on the example of Holland
 - C. England gained most of its capital reserves from the spoils of war, while France gained its capital reserves from trade
 - D. England began on an equal base with France in the middle of the eighteenth century, but pulled far ahead by the middle of the nineteenth century

3. What reason does the author give for discussing several countries besides England and France?
 - A. Enriching the information provided in the passage
 - B. Balancing the passage in the interest of fairness
 - C. Simplifying the problem confronted in the passage
 - D. Eliminating countries whose Golden Age was yet to come

4. The passage suggests that generating the first Industrial Revolution required which of the following?

I. Raw materials	II. Technical skills	III. A large population
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 - A. I only
 - B. III only
 - C. I and II only
 - D. II and III only

Answer Key

1. C
 2. D
 3. C
 4. C
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