

Sample Test Material for:

Written expression: creating and reviewing written material

Test material will be presented in a multiple-choice question format.

There are 30 questions in this subject area.

Test Tasks:

Each of the first 15 questions consists of two choices, A and B; they are almost alike, except for the particular point being tested, such as grammar, usage, punctuation, or clarity of presentation. You are to compare the two choices and decide which one better answers the question posed.

Each of the rest of the questions consists of four choices, A, B, C, and D. You will be asked to recognize correct sentence structure, to determine the best way to edit a given passage, to judge the accuracy or appropriateness of the material presented, and to organize sentences into well-constructed paragraphs.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

GRAMMAR SAMPLE QUESTION 1: Recognizing a grammatically correct sentence

Which one of the following is grammatically correct?

- A. The testimony of two eyewitnesses is scheduled to be heard tomorrow.
- B. The testimony of two eyewitnesses are scheduled to be heard tomorrow.

Solution:

A singular subject requires a singular verb; a plural subject requires a plural verb.

Choice A recognizes that the subject of the sentence is “testimony,” a singular noun, and follows it with the singular verb form, “is.”

Choice B has the incorrect plural form of the verb, “are.” It is not the eyewitnesses who *are* scheduled, but their testimony, which *is*.

The correct answer to this sample question is **Choice A**.

GRAMMAR SAMPLE QUESTION 2: Applying a specific rule or principle

Which one of the following states that something that started in the past continues to the present?

- A. Allowing semi-annual payment of school taxes was common practice for over ten years.
- B. Allowing semi-annual payment of school taxes has been common practice for over ten years.

Solution:

Choice A uses the simple past tense (“was”). That verb tense is used to indicate an action performed and completed in the past.

Choice B uses the present perfect tense (“has been”). That verb tense is used to indicate that an action that started in the past continues to the present.

The correct answer to this sample question is **Choice B**.

PUNCTUATION SAMPLE QUESTION 1: Recognizing a correctly punctuated sentence

Which one of the following is punctuated correctly?

- A. The curfew was imposed following the storm and, once public safety services were restored, was rescinded two days later.
- B. The curfew was imposed following the storm, and once public safety services were restored, was rescinded two days later.

Solution:

Commas should be placed around additional information in a way that retains the integrity of the rest of the sentence.

Choice A has the commas placed in such a way that the remainder of the sentence still makes sense. (“The curfew was imposed following the storm and was rescinded two days later.”)

Choice B has the commas placed in such a way that what remains is no longer a meaningful sentence. (“The curfew was imposed following the storm was rescinded two days later.”)

The correct answer to this sample question is **Choice A**.

PUNCTUATION SAMPLE QUESTION 2: Analyzing punctuation and meaning

Which one of the following clearly conveys that two people will discuss the reorganization?

- A. Bob Manero, the program director, and I will discuss the reorganization today.
- B. Bob Manero (the program director) and I will discuss the reorganization today.

Solution:

Choice A, by the use of commas, leaves the reader wondering if Manero and the program director refer to one person or two, making a possible total of three people.

Choice B, by the use of parentheses, makes it clear that Manero is the program director, making a total of two people.

The correct answer to this sample question is **Choice B**.

USAGE SAMPLE QUESTION:

Which one of the following contains the correct word choice?

- A. We have been able to adopt to the new layout.
- B. We have been able to adapt to the new layout.

Solution:

The business writer should use words with precision. Context determines which word choice fits the sentence.

Choice A uses the word “adopt,” which means to take or choose as one’s own, but it requires a direct object. You can adopt someone or something, but not adopt to someone or something.

Choice B uses the word “adapt,” which means “to make suitable (for) or to conform (to)” some purpose or condition.

The correct answer to this sample question is **Choice B**.

SENTENCE STRUCTURE SAMPLE QUESTION:

Which one of the following is an example of correct sentence structure?

- A. The regulation is amended to increase the maximum fee you may charge for assistance in attaining a certificate is now \$75.00.
- B. If really committed to reaching agreement, success is all but assured.
- C. In only the top 25 percent of the adjudicated incidents in the last five years.
- D. Of all the annual statistics, the teen driver mortality rates prompted the most discussion.

Solution:

Choice **A** is not a correctly constructed sentence. It consists of two overlapping sentences that, when joined as one, do not convey a coherent message. When a large amount of detail is placed in one sentence, the relationship among the parts can suffer.

Choice **B** is not a correctly constructed sentence. There is no subject (or agent or doer) in the first part of the sentence.

Choice **C** is not a correctly constructed sentence. It is only a fragment, consisting of a phrase looking for a main message to complete it.

Choice **D** is a correctly constructed sentence. It has an introductory phrase followed by a meaningful message about the annual statistics.

The correct answer to this sample question is **Choice D**.

EDITING SAMPLE QUESTION:

The passage below is followed by four edited versions. Choose the one that shows the best editing. Work on this proposal took much longer than we originally anticipated due to the limited staffing resources we had, as a result of our role in the implementation of the InSource-It program.

- A. Due to the limited staffing resources, which we had as a result of our role in the InSource-It program, we could not anticipate originally that work on the proposal would take as long as it did in the end.
- B. We had limited staffing resources than we had originally anticipated as a result of our role in implementing the InSource-It program; it made work on this proposal take much longer.
- C. The staffing resources we had to work with on the proposal were limited by the fact that we had a role in the implementation of the InSource-It program, and it took much longer than had been anticipated originally.
- D. Work on this proposal took longer than we had anticipated; we had limited staffing resources resulting from our role in implementing the InSource-It program.

Solution:

Choice **A** is not the best editing of the passage. It begins with “Due to,” which should never start a sentence. The phrasing is uneven, and the sentence contains unnecessary words (“...in the end”).

Choice **B** is not the best editing of the passage. The use of “than” implies a comparison. Had the sentence read, “We had *more* limited ... resources...,” “than” would have been appropriate. Also, it was not the staffing resources that had originally been anticipated, but the time it would take.

Choice **C** is not the best editing of the passage. Unnecessary verbiage (“by the fact that we had a” could be reduced to “our”) adds to the reader’s burden. Also, as constructed, the sentence could be interpreted as saying that the *program* took longer than anticipated. The original says that it was the work on the *proposal* that took longer than anticipated.

Choice **D** retains all the meaningful elements of the original and presents them in the proper relationships with proper sentence structure.

The correct answer to this sample question is **Choice D**.

CLEAR, COMPLETE, ACCURATE RESTATEMENT SAMPLE QUESTION:

Warren Valle failed to take proper precautions. His failure to take proper precautions caused several personal injury accidents.

Which one of the following is the most clear, complete, and accurate restatement of the information above?

- A. Warren Valle failed to take proper precautions that caused several personal injury accidents.
- B. Warren Valle failed to take proper precautions, and he also caused several personal injury accidents.
- C. Warren Valle’s failure to take proper precautions caused several personal injury accidents.
- D. Warren Valle, who failed to take proper precautions, was in several personal injury accidents.

Solution:

Choice A conveys the incorrect impression that proper precautions caused several personal injury accidents.

Choice B states two things that Warren Valle did, but it does not say that his failure to take proper precautions caused the personal injury accidents.

Choice C best presents the original information: Warren Valle failed to take proper precautions, and it was this failure that caused several personal injury accidents.

Choice D states that Warren Valle was in several personal injury accidents. The original information states that Warren Valle caused several personal injury accidents, but it does not state that he was in several personal injury accidents.

The best answer to this sample question is **Choice C**.

PARAGRAPH ORGANIZATION SAMPLE QUESTION:

The following question is based upon a group of sentences. The sentences are shown out of sequence, but when correctly arranged, they form a connected, well-organized paragraph. Read the sentences, and then answer the question about the best arrangement of these sentences.

1. Eventually, they piece all of this information together and make a choice.
2. Before actually deciding upon a human services job, people usually think about several possibilities.
3. They imagine themselves in different situations, and in so doing, they probably think about their interests, goals, and abilities.
4. Choosing among the many occupations in the field of human services is an important decision to make.

Which one of the following is the best arrangement of these sentences?

- A. 2-4-1-3
- B. 2-3-4-1
- C. 4-2-1-3
- D. 4-2-3-1

Solution:

Choices A and C present the information in the paragraph out of logical sequence. In both **A** and **C**, sentence 1 comes before sentence 3. The key element in the organization of this paragraph is that sentence 3 contains the information to which sentence 1 refers; therefore, in logical sequence, sentence 3 should come before sentence 1.

Choice B also presents the information in the paragraph out of logical sequence. Choice **B** places sentence 2, which concerns deciding on a particular job, before sentence 4, which introduces the topic of the paragraph, that is, choosing among the many occupations in the field.

Choice D presents the information in the paragraph in the most logical sequence. Sentence 4 introduces the main idea of the paragraph: “choosing an occupation in the field of human services.” Sentences 2-3-1 then follow up on this idea by describing, in order, the steps involved in making such a choice. Choice **D** is the best answer to this sample question.

The best answer to this sample question is **Choice D**.