



Center for Alternative Studies and Educational Testing

# READING COMPREHENSION

## STUDY GUIDE

For the  
ACCUPLACER  
COMPUTERIZED PLACEMENT TEST



The Testing Center has developed this new study guide to help students better prepare for the computerized placement tests. We value your feedback. If you have used this study guide, please take a moment to fill out the form on the last page of the guide and drop it off at either testing center. Comments and concerns will be used to improve the study guides and will be kept completely confidential.

# Table of Contents

General CPT Information .....	2
No Fee for Placement Testing .....	2
Disability Accommodations and the Accuplacer Placement Test .....	2
Retest Policy .....	2
Test Center Location and Testing Hours .....	2
The Reading Comprehension CPT .....	3
About the Test .....	3
How to Use This Guide .....	3
Strategies for Answering Questions .....	4
Reading Passages .....	5
Identifying the Main Idea .....	6
Identifying Supporting Details .....	8
Making Inferences .....	10
Determining Point of View .....	12
Determining Tone .....	14
Using Context Clues .....	15
Sentence Relationships .....	17
Strategies for Answering Sentence Relationship Questions .....	17
Answers to Practice Questions .....	21
Reading Comprehension Sample Test .....	23
Answers to Reading Comprehension Sample Test .....	25
Glossary .....	26
Most Common Prefixes .....	27
Most Common Suffixes .....	27
Resources .....	28

## General CPT Information

The Board of Higher Education requires every student attending a Massachusetts college to demonstrate proficiency in the areas of math and communications before he or she graduates. This may be done by attaining certain scores on CPT's (Computerized Placement Tests) or by completing required coursework.

North Shore Community College uses CPT test results in two ways:

1. CPT Scores determine whether a student has attained proficiency in math and communications. Most courses at NSCC require proficiency in one or both of these areas.
2. CPT scores will be used to determine a student's placement into the appropriate math and English courses. Correct placement is essential for students to succeed in completing college-level work.

## What to Bring

You will need to bring a photo ID (such as a valid driver's license or school ID with a photo) and your pink testing card (if you received one) from Enrollment. Calculators and dictionaries are not allowed. Scrap paper and pencils are provided. You will be asked to leave your belongings outside the testing room, so it is best not to bring anything of value with you when you come to test.

## No Fee for Placement Testing

There is no fee to take this test.

## Disability Accommodations and the Accuplacer Placement Test

The purpose of these tests is to ensure that students are not placed into courses that will be too easy or too difficult for them. With the exception of the writing sample, all of the tests are untimed so that most students with documented disabilities will not need to request special accommodations for placement testing. Most of the time, testing takes place in small groups in a reduced distraction environment. Regardless of the disability, students are not allowed to use a calculator on the test.

Students seeking extended time on Writeplacer or additional accommodations are required to request and be approved for those accommodations prior to their test date. Students wishing to request accommodations for the placement tests should contact the Disabilities Office on the campus they plan to attend - Danvers room DH101 x 4036 or in Lynn LW121 x 2132.

## Retest Policy

Because of the adaptive nature of CPT's, these tests are generally accurate in evaluating student competencies. Under unusual circumstances, a student will be allowed to retake one or more of the tests after a two-week waiting period. No student may take these tests more than twice per semester or enrollment period. For more information about the retest policy, please consult the test administrator before testing.

## Test Center Location and Testing Hours

Danvers Campus - DB213

Mon/Tue/Thur 8:30am - 7pm

Wed 8:30am - 8:30pm

Fri 8:30am - 4:30pm

Lynn Campus - LE232

Mon - Thur 8:30am - 7pm

Fri 8:30am - 4:30pm

Call the CPT hotline for updated testing hours: 978-762-4000 x 4376.

**No appointment is necessary to take the placement tests. To complete all of the placement tests required for new students, please allow 2 - 2.5 hours for testing.**



NSCC Lynn Campus

## **The Reading Comprehension CPT**

### **About the Test**

The reading comprehension CPT contains 20 multiple-choice questions. It is not timed.

The test is comprised of questions based on short reading passages and questions asking you to identify the relationship between two sentences.

The results will be used to determine whether you have met the requirements for communications proficiency, and to place you in the appropriate level communications courses. It is important to be prepared so that you can do your best.

### **How to Use This Guide**

This study guide contains questions like the ones found on the Accuplacer Reading Comprehension CPT, and explains strategies to assist you in preparing for the test. Familiarizing yourself with how the test is set up and what types of questions you will be asked to answer will help you to be ready to do your best.

While using this study guide (and in your reading at home), if you come across a word you don't know, look it up in the dictionary. Key concepts are italicized and underlined, and are followed by a brief definition. If you need more help understanding these concepts, consult the glossary on page 26.

You will also find a practice test with answers, and links to other sites on the web containing more practice questions.

If you need additional help understanding the concepts, you may use North Shore Community College's tutoring center (ext. 5410).

## **Strategies for Answering Questions**

- Take your time.
- Read the question or statements carefully.
- If possible, try to answer the question without looking at the answer choices. Sometimes when answering questions based on reading passages this is not possible; however, it is a key strategy for answering sentence relationship questions (see page 21).
- Read all of the answer choices carefully before selecting one. At times it will appear that 2 choices are correct. In these cases, you must examine the question and the passage closely to determine which answer is *the best choice*. For example, sometimes only part of an answer is correct, therefore that answer is wrong.
- Focus on what is stated or implied in the passage. Some questions will ask for information that is explicitly stated in the passage, while others will require that you *infer* (draw a logical conclusion to arrive at) the answer. In either case, be sure that there is evidence in the passage to support your answer.
- If you do not know the answer, make an educated guess. Because the test is computerized, you must answer each question before moving on to the next one. You can make an educated guess by eliminating one or more incorrect answer choices and choosing from those that are left.

## **Reading Passages**

These types of questions measures your ability to understand what is stated and what is *implied* (suggested or hinted at) in various reading passages that are one or two paragraphs long.

To answer reading comprehension questions successfully, you should be able to

- Identify the main idea

- Identify supporting details

- Make inferences

- Determine point of view

- Determine tone

- Use context clues to determine the meaning of an unfamiliar word

The following sections explain each of the items listed above, give sample questions and answers with explanation, and provide practice questions so you can practice using these skills.



## Identifying the Main Idea

The main idea is what a passage is primarily about. It may be stated or *implied* (hinted at or suggested without being stated). If the main idea is stated, it may not necessarily be in the first sentence; it could be anywhere in the passage. To determine the main idea of a passage, think of how you would summarize its main point to someone else.

Be careful not to confuse the main idea with supporting details.

### Example

While silk-stocking Manhattan is asleep, East Harlem is starting to bustle. The poor are early risers. They have jobs others don't want: the early-hour jobs, the late-hour jobs. The streets are filled with fast-moving people: men, women, and swarms of children of all sizes. Some will stand at the bus stops, but most will crowd into the downtown subways that speed them to jobs to serve the affluent. East Harlem is a busy place, night and day, filled with the joyous and troubled lives of residents - rather than the heavy commercial traffic of mid-Manhattan. There is so much togetherness.

-From *A Day in East Harlem* by Patricia Cayo Sexton

The main idea of this passage is that the residents of East Harlem

- A. are dissatisfied with their jobs.
- B. are poorer than Manhattan's residents.
- C. share common struggles and goals.
- D. disdain the rich of Manhattan.

C is the correct answer.

There is no evidence in the passage to support choices A, B or D.

## Practice Questions: Main Idea

1. Embarking on the fight for independence, America faced formidable obstacles. The Continental Congress did not have the authority to pass binding legislation to impose taxes. The new nation had no army and no navy, and its population numbered only 2.5 million people, 20 percent of whom were slaves. Britain, by contrast, was a mighty power of 11 million people with the world's best navy and a well-disciplined army. Fifty thousand troops were in North America in 1776, and Britain hired thirty thousand German soldiers to supplement forces during the war. However, the American Revolutionaries were not deterred.

-From *An American History* by Rebecca Brooks Gruver

What is the main point of the passage?

- A. Britain was a great power whose population outnumbered that of America's.
  - B. America's military forces were less experienced than Britain's military.
  - C. America's Continental Congress had limited authority.
  - D. As America was about to engage in its struggle for autonomy, it was faced with arduous barriers.
2. Myths are stories, the product of fertile imaginations, sometimes simple, often containing profound truths. They are not meant to be taken too literally. Details may sometimes appear childish, but mostly myths express a culture's most serious beliefs about human beings, eternity and God.

-From The College Board

The main idea of this passage is that myths

- A. are created primarily to entertain young children.
- B. are purposefully written for the reader who lacks imagination.
- C. provide the reader with a means of escape from reality.
- D. illustrate the values that are considered important to a society.

Answers to practice questions may be found on pages 21 and 22.



Danvers Campus Alcove

## Identifying Supporting Details

Supporting details present facts, reasons or examples to explain the main idea of a passage. The best strategy for answering questions that ask you about details in a passage is to reread the passage carefully to rule out incorrect answer choices and thus find the correct one.

Remember that the test is not timed, so take your time.

### Example

When learners can act from their most vital selves, their curiosity emerges. They want to make sense of things and seek out challenges that are in their range of capacities and values. This leads to what human beings experience as interest, the emotional nutrient for a continuing positive attitude toward learning. When we feel interested, we have to make choices about what to do to follow that interest. Such choosing or self-determination involves a sense of feeling free in doing what one has chosen to do (Deci and Ryan, 1991). For the process of learning—thinking, practicing, reading, revising, studying, and other similar activities—to be desirable and genuinely enjoyable, adults must see themselves as personally endorsing their own learning.

*From *Enhancing Adult Motivation to Learn* by Raymond Wlodkowski*

According to the passage, which of the following is true?

- A. In order for adults to endorse their own learning, they must follow the steps of the learning process.
- B. A positive attitude toward learning is interesting to adults.
- C. Interest is a challenge that learners seek out.
- D. Interest is a result of learners being genuinely curious.

A, B and C are not supported by the passage.

D is the correct choice.

### Practice Questions: Supporting Details

3. Elements are basic substances that cannot be broken down into anything simpler, and an atom is the smallest unit of an element. Compounds are combinations of two or more elements and can be broken down into simpler substances. Compounds are formed when atoms are held together by an attractive force called a chemical bond. A molecule is the smallest unit of a compound, or a gaseous element, which can exist and still retain the characteristic properties of a substance.

-From *Introduction to Physics and Chemistry* by Bill Tillery

According to the passage, compounds

- A. require a chemical bond.
  - B. develop when the smallest unit of an element is broken down.
  - C. are formed when elements combine with atoms.
  - D. are the basic units of molecules.
4. One of the judgmental roadblocks is criticism. Many of us feel we ought to be critical - or other people will never improve. Parents think they need to judge their children or they will never become hard-working, mannerly adults. Teachers think they must criticize their students or they will never learn. Supervisors think they must criticize their employees or production will slip.

-From *People Skills* by Robert Bolton

According to the passage, which of the following is an example of the "other people" referred to in the second sentence?

- A. employees
- B. teachers
- C. supervisors
- D. parents

Answers to practice questions may be found on pages 21 and 22.

## Making Inferences

When an idea is not explicitly stated, then it is *implied* or suggested. The author provides clues in the text and readers must make *inferences* (or *conclusions*) by “reading between the lines.”

As a reader, you must be able to find evidence in the text to support your inferences. Think like a detective. When they solve the mystery in a book or movie, detectives describe the evidence, or clues, that led them to their conclusions.

Some things you may be asked to make inferences about are:

- The main idea of a passage
- The purpose of a passage
- The author’s beliefs or point of view
- The tone of a passage
- What happened before or after the events described in a passage

### Example

Giant trees once covered more than a million acres of California land. They live more than one thousand years and can grow up to 300 feet. People wanted to farm the rich California soil and the trees were in the way. Now they are nearly gone. The redwood trees are preserved in state and national forests and parks so that people may enjoy their splendor.

What happened to the redwood trees?

- A. They were killed by wild animals
- B. They burned in forest fires
- C. They had a disease and died
- D. They were cut down by people.

D is correct. Animals, forest fires and disease are not mentioned in the passage.

### Practice Questions: Inferences

5. It is early summer. August's long-awaited vacation time still seems ages away, but by the same token, its torpor-producing heat and mildew-generating humidity have not yet arrived. Instead, these cool, end-of-June days practically insist on getting the picnic season under way immediately. But alas, there is difficulty: alfresco dining has a bad name among us. Tenth-rate hot dogs, carbonized chicken parts and beef a la charcoal lighter are principally what come to mind when we hear the words "outdoor food."

-From *A Spanish Picnic* by Robert Capon

The passage implies that the author believes

- A. picnicking is the best way to spend summer.
  - B. August is better than June for a picnic.
  - C. picnicking has an unsavory reputation.
  - D. picnicking is better alfresco.
6. Do not reuse empty container. This container may be recycled in one of the limited number of aerosol recycling centers in the country. Before recycling, empty the can by using the product according to the label. If recycling is not available, wrap the container and discard in the trash.

The container mentioned in the passage above most likely refers to:

- A. A can that cannot be recycled
- B. An aerosol can
- C. A non-aerosol can

Answers to practice questions may be found on pages 21 and 22.

## Determining Point of View

Point of view is a statement of the author's opinion, belief or attitude toward a topic. The author gives hints about his or her opinion and the reader can use those hints to infer how the author feels.

To determine an author's point of view, consider what the author states and implies as well as his or her word choices and the images that these words evoke.

### Example

Today American women have the right to vote. It seems impossible to believe that this right was ever denied to them. Yet it wasn't until 1920 that the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution was passed that gave women that right. Perhaps sometime before the year 2020 we will have our first woman president. That will be a great triumph for women.

Which statement best describes the author's point of view?

- A. Women should not vote.
- B. Some day soon there should be a woman president.
- C. A woman president would be a mistake.
- D. The 19th Amendment is unbelievable.

A and C are the opposite of the author's position.

B best expresses the author's attitude. The last sentence of the passage states that a woman president would be a "great triumph" for women.

D is not supported in the passage.



### Practice Questions: Point of View

7. One may react to someone's sarcastic comment with anger on one occasion but with amusement on another depending on current emotional status. How responsive one is to another's needs can vary significantly if, for example, an employee has just been reprimanded by a superior or praised for excellence in customer relations, or, if someone a professor perceives as an excellent student hands in sub-standard work. Perceptions are different for one who just learned of the death of a favorite relative or has been informed that they have won the lottery.

-From *Visual Literacy* by David Moore and Francis Dwyer

Based on the passage, which statement about perceptions would the authors of the passage most likely agree?

- A. One who is both perceptive and emotionally reactive most likely lacks mental stability.
  - B. Perceptions are wrong and should never be trusted.
  - C. Present feelings affect one's perception.
  - D. One should react without being swayed by one's perceptions.
8. My parents' divorce was final. The house had been sold and the day had come to move. Thirty years of the family's life was now crammed into the garage. The two-by-fours that ran the length of the walls were the only uniformity among the clutter of boxes, furniture, and memories. All was frozen in limbo between life just passed and the one to come. I suddenly became aware of the coldness of the garage, but I didn't want to go back inside the house, so I made my way through the boxes to the couch. I cleared a space to lie down and curled up, covering myself with my jacket. I hoped that my father would return soon with the truck so we could empty the garage and leave the cryptic silence of parting lives behind.

-From *Limbo* by Rhonda Lucas

What is the author's mood?

- A. Melancholic
- B. Idealistic
- C. Vindictive
- D. Indignant

Answers to practice questions may be found on pages 21 and 22.

## Determining Tone

Tone is the author's attitude toward the reader or toward the subject. It can be described in similar terms as the tone of one person speaking to another. For example, an author's tone may be described as angry, amused, respectful, negative, formal, condescending, cheerful, whimsical, serious and sarcastic.

Understanding tone helps us to understand the real message someone is trying to convey. When someone is speaking to us, we use clues such as tone of voice and facial expressions to ascertain that person's tone. To determine the tone of a passage, readers must examine not only what is stated, but what is implied by the author's word choices and the images that are evoked.

### Example

North Shore Community College will be a catalyst for personal, community and regional change through education, training and civic engagement.

The College will serve as a beacon of hope and opportunity for an increasingly diverse student body and be a respected, full partner with other public and private organizations seeking better lives for North Shore residents and a vibrant future for the region.

The passage's tone can best be described as

- A. Negative
- B. Positive
- C. Neutral

B is the correct choice. Consider "catalyst for ... change," "beacon of hope and opportunity," and "vibrant future."

### Practice Question: Tone

9. When in the Course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

*From the Declaration of Independence*

The tone of the passage can best be described as

- A. determined
- B. nonchalant
- C. impertinent
- D. neutral

Answers to practice questions may be found on pages 21 and 22.



## Using Context Clues

Although there are no vocabulary questions on the test, it will be helpful for you to review strategies for determining the meaning of a word in context in case you encounter a word you are unfamiliar with. Remember that dictionaries are not allowed.

When you come across a word you are unfamiliar with, you can use the words around it (its *context*) to make an educated guess as to its meaning. This is called using context clues.

### Strategies for identifying unknown words:

- **Generalize** - From the rest of the sentence/passage, can you figure out what the passage is generally about? Try to summarize the overall meaning of the passage.
- **Determine its relationship with other words** - Which word or words in the passage does the unknown word seem to relate to? Could words near the unknown word be an example, a synonym or an antonym?
- **Identify its part of speech** - What part of speech is the unknown word? Is it a noun, verb, adjective, adverb or preposition?
- **Substitute** - Once you have generalized the meaning of the passage and identified its part of speech, try substituting the word you don't know with a word that also fits in the sentence.

#### Example

I don't want to pay too large a price for my friend, but I want you to have your proper percentage and be remunerated for your loss of time.

From *Bleak House* by Charles Dickens

First, ask yourself what the passage is about. In the passage two people are negotiating a price. The speaker in this sentence does not want to pay too much, but does want to pay a fair price.

What part of speech is the word? The word "be" before remunerated is a clue that the word is a verb. Remunerated is something that will be done.

Next, substituting another word in place of the word you don't know can often help you figure out the meaning. What other words might fit in place of the word remunerated? How about compensated, or paid?

The dictionary definition of remunerated is, "To compensate for; make payment for goods or services."

#### Example

"You are mistaken in thinking so," returned Franz calmly; "but you merely fall into the same error which leads so many of our countrymen to commit the most egregious blunders..."

From *The Count of Monte Cristo* by Alexandre Dumas

Egregious is used as an adjective to describe the word blunders. We know that the word blunder means mistake. The next question to ask is whether the countrymen have committed a good mistake or a bad mistake. The general tone of the passage suggests that the mistakes that have been made have not been helpful. What other adjective might fit before the word blunders?  
*horrible or terrible...*

Egregious means "outrageously bad" or "extraordinary in some bad way."

## Practice Questions: Context Clues

10. The Irish described their migration to America in Gaelic terms: *deorai* or "exiles," *dithreabhach* or "homeless," and *dibeartach* ... "*Dob eigeán dom imeacht go Meirice,*" they explained, "I had to go to America," or "Going to America was a necessity for me."

-From *A Different Mirror* by Ronald Takaki

Which of the following is most likely a synonym for *dibeartach*?

- A. banished people
  - B. travelers
  - C. emigrants
  - D. detainees
  - E. foreigners
11. Equivocation is an option that many of us take when faced with choosing a lie and telling an unpleasant truth. We are all familiar with the situation where we are asked what we think of another's new outfit when our evaluation of it is less than positive. Rather than say what we think about it, we may say, "I think it really fits you." We have avoided telling a lie or an unpleasant truth by answering a different question altogether.

-From *Interpersonal Growth through Communication* by Sarah Treholm and Arthur Jensen.

Which of the following is most likely the definition of equivocation?

- A. avoiding a direct answer through the use of ambiguous or unclear language
- B. entering a particular occupation or vocation
- C. giving a genuine compliment or authentic praise
- D. the act of making equal or uniform

Answers to practice questions may be found on pages 21 and 22.



## **Sentence Relationships**

These types of questions assess your ability to determine how two given sentences are related. For example, the second sentence may analyze, repeat or contrast the statement made in the first.

### **Strategies for Answering Sentence Relationship Questions**

- First, try to understand the main points of each of the sentences.
- Next, try to determine how these two sentences/ideas are related *before reading the answer choices*.
- Last, read through the answer choices to find the one that matches your conclusion.

### **Some Common Relationships**

Below is a list of some of the ways one sentence may be related to another.

Analyze; Analysis - to examine carefully and in detail so as to identify causes, key factors and possible results. One sentence *provides an analysis of* (or *analyzes*) what is stated in the other sentence.

Cause and Effect - an action or event (cause) produces a certain response (effect). Key words: so, so that, as a result of, in order to, therefore, consequently, thus, hence. (E.g., "Global warming is a worsening problem. Consequently, it may change local weather patterns." Global warming is the cause, change in local weather is the effect.) One sentence states a cause that produces a certain effect. Or, one sentence states an effect of another sentence.

Compare; Comparison - to examine to show how two things are alike. Key words: similarly, similar, to, both, like, as, likewise, as well, compared to, in the same way, also, either... or, neither... nor. One sentence *compares* (or *makes a comparison of*) something to something described in another sentence.

Condition - provides a specific circumstance under which the idea is true. Key words: If, when, providing, unless, whenever, only if, after, assuming that. One sentence *states a condition* which must occur in order for the other sentence to be true.

Continuation of Idea - to add another idea or more information about the same thought. Key words: and, nor, also, besides, further, furthermore, in addition, too, moreover, again, and then, eventually, another. One sentence *continues an idea* stated in another sentence.

Contradict - to state the opposite of. Key words: although, but, in contrast, conversely, however, yet. One sentence *states an idea that is contrary to* (or *contradicts*) the idea stated in another sentence.

Contrast - to point out how two things are opposite or not alike. Key words: but, yet, or, in spite of, still, however, although, regardless, even though, nevertheless, conversely, on the other hand, even so, on the contrary, in contrast, notwithstanding, despite, in spite of, though, instead of, rather than, opposed to. One sentence *contrasts* a statement made in another sentence.

Define; Definition - to note a specific meaning given for a term. Key words: meaning is, is defined as. One statement *defines* (or *provides a definition of*) an idea presented in another sentence.

Example; Exemplify - used to identify an idea that is being illustrated or emphasized. Key words: for example, for instance, specifically, to demonstrate, such as, as in the case of, like, as, in particular, in other words, that is, to repeat, primarily, especially, again. One sentence *gives an example of* (or *exemplifies*) what is stated in another sentence.

Expand; Expansion - to add more detail. One sentence makes a statement, and the other sentence *expands* the idea given in that statement.

Explain; Explanation - to make clear the reason of, to make more clear or understandable, to clarify. One sentence *explains* (or *provides an explanation of*) something stated in another sentence.

Illustrate; Illustration - to clarify by using examples or comparisons. One sentence *illustrates* (or *provides an illustration of*) what is stated in the other sentence.

Problem and Solution - One sentence states a possible solution to a problem stated in the first.

Repeat, repetition - to restate the same idea using different words. One sentence *repeats* an idea stated in another sentence.

Sequence; Trace - used to organize ideas in a particular order. Keywords: first, second, next, last, in the first place, finally, then, later, before, subsequently, presently, once...then, eventually, following this.

Support - to uphold, corroborate, or reinforce. (E.g., Leading doctors *supported* his testimony). One sentence supports or provides proof of the ideas presented in the other sentence.

## Sentence Relationships

### Example

Directions: 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.

The American prison system functions primarily to exact retribution.

In Japan, the courts are less concerned with sending people to jail than they are with rehabilitating them.

What does the second sentence do?

- First, try to understand the main points of each of the sentences. It may help to put it in your own words - but be careful not to change the meaning.

What is the main idea in the first sentence?

*The American prison system's main purpose is to impose punishment.*

What is the main idea in the second sentence?

*In Japan, courts aren't focused on sending people to jail, but rather making them better citizens.*

- Next, try to determine how these two sentences/ideas are related.

*The first sentence tells that prisons exist in the United States to punish, and the second sentence describes a place where the courts don't exist to punish, but to help people become better citizens.*

*So...the first sentence states an idea, and the second sentence states a case where that idea is different. In other words, the second sentence contrasts the main idea in the first.*

- Last, read through the answer choices to find the one that matches your conclusion.
  - A. It supports an idea found in the first sentence.
  - B. It contrasts an idea that is expressed in the first sentence.
  - C. It analyzes an idea made in the first sentence.
  - D. It exemplifies an idea found in the first sentence.

The correct answer is B.

## Practice Questions: Sentence Relationships

Directions: For the questions that follow, two underlined sentences are followed by a question or statement. Read the sentences, and then choose the best answer to the question or the best completion of the statement.

12. Males and females are treated differently from grade school through college.

Therefore, this treatment of the sexes by school officials influences both the student's choice of career and level of performance.

-From *Sociology* by Scott and Sally McNall

How are the sentences related?

- A. The second sentence contradicts the first sentence.
- B. The second sentence shows a cause of the first sentence.
- C. The second sentence states an effect of the first sentence.
- D. The second sentence defines an idea found in the first sentence.

13. The functions and meaning of the American family have changed over time.

There is now a stronger emphasis on romantic love between parents and an increase in the number of mothers in the workforce.

-From *Sociology* by Scott and Sally McNall

What does the second sentence do?

- A. It restates the idea found in the first sentence.
- B. It states an effect of the first sentence.
- C. It gives examples of the first sentence.
- D. It analyzes the statement made in the first sentence.

Answers to practice questions may be found on pages 21 and 22.



## **Answers to Practice Questions**

### 1 (Main Idea)

- A. At first glance, this answer may seem correct, however it is only part of what the paragraph is about (its main point).
- B. This is not stated or implied in the passage. In fact, the statement "the new nation had no army and no navy" suggests that America did not have military forces.
- C. This is a detail supporting the main point.
- D. This is correct. The main point is stated in the first sentence and then supported by details given in the passage.

### 2 (Main Idea)

- A, B and C are not stated or implied in the passage.
- D is the correct answer. This is stated in the last sentence.

### 3 (Supporting Details)

- A is correct. The third sentence states, "compounds are held together by chemical bonds."
- B, C, and D are all incorrect. The passage describes atoms as the smallest unit of an element, elements are combinations of atoms, and compounds are combinations of elements.

### 4 (Supporting Details)

- A is the correct answer. The passage gives examples of teachers, supervisors and parents as groups who are critical of others.

### 5 (Inferences)

- A and B are both incorrect. The author appears to dislike picnics.
- C is the correct answer. Unsavory means "unpleasant" which is illustrated in the last sentence ("tenth-rate hot dogs," etc).
- D is also incorrect. Alfresco means outdoors. Picnics are almost always outside.

### 6. (Inferences)

- B is the correct answer.
- Choices A and C are incorrect because the passage states that the container "may be recycled" in an aerosol recycling center.

### 7. (Point of View)

- C is the answer choice that is supported by the details in the passage.

### 8 (Point of View)

- A is the correct answer. Imagine a "clutter of... memories," the "coldness of the garage," and the author curling up in a ball on the couch in the garage waiting to leave the "cryptic silence of parting lives" behind. These images suggest that the author is sad or melancholy.
- Choices B, C and D are not supported by evidence in the passage.

### 9 (Tone)

- A is the correct answer.

10 (Context Clues)

A is correct. Use of the word "exile" and "had to go to America" imply banishment rather than the remaining options.

11 (Context Clues)

A is the correct answer.

12 (Sentence Relationships)

- A. The second sentence does not contradict (or oppose) the information given in the first.
- B. The students' career choices and levels of performance do not cause them to be treated differently in school.
- C. This is the correct answer. The second sentence states an effect of being treated differently (the student's career choice and level of performance is influenced).
- D. The use of the word "therefore" indicates that what follows is a conclusion (the student's career choice and level of performance is influenced), not a definition of an idea stated in the first.

13 (Sentence Relationships)

- A. The second sentence does more than restate what is stated in the first; it provides additional information.
- B. This answer doesn't make sense. A stronger emphasis on romantic love between parents and an increase in the number of mothers in the workforce are not effects of the functions and meaning of the American family changing over time.
- C. This is the correct answer. The second sentence provides examples of how the American family has changed over time.
- D. The second sentence does not analyze the statement made in the first - it only provides examples of how the family has changed.



## Reading Comprehension Sample Test

From collegeboard.com

*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. Three of 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.

Directions: 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.

7. 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.

8. 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 gives an example.
- B. It makes a contrast
- C. It proposes a solution.
- D. It states an effect.

9. 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 people's 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.

10. 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. The second expands on the first.
- D. It draws a conclusion about what is stated in the first.



Answers to Reading  
Comprehension Sample  
Test (this page and  
previous 2 pages)

- 1. C
- 2. D
- 3. C
- 4. D
- 5. B
- 6. C
- 7. B
- 8. A
- 9. D
- 10. A

## Glossary

- Context clues** - the words around an unfamiliar word that can be used to determine its meaning
- Draw a conclusion** - to “figure out” or solve; to come to a conclusion
- Imply/implied** - to hint at or suggest without stating
- Infer/inference** - to draw a logical conclusion from information presented; to “read between the lines” or “connect the dots.” When an author’s ideas are not explicitly stated, then the reader must examine the evidence in the passage and make an inference, or draw a logical conclusion. A reader may need to infer the main idea of a passage or the author’s beliefs or point of view.
- Intended audience** - the group of people that the author or passage is meant for
- Main idea/Central idea** - the overall meaning of a passage
- Mainly** - the main idea or overall meaning
- Mood** - the feeling or emotional character of the writing
- Perspective** - the author’s point of view
- Prefix** - a syllable added to the beginning of a word that changes its meaning. For example, adding “un” to the word “happy” = unhappy. Some common prefixes are: “un-” meaning not (as in uncomfortable, or not comfortable), and “pre-” meaning before (as in prenatal, or before birth). A list of the most common prefixes follows this glossary.
- Purpose of** - the reason
- Redundant** - repeating more than necessary; saying the same thing more than once
- Repetitive** - repeating
- Sequence** - the logical order of ideas; to arrange in order
- Setting** - the background or surrounding environment
- Suffix** - a syllable added to the end of a word to change the word’s meaning. Some common suffixes are “-ist” meaning a person (as in dentist), and “-ful” meaning a lot of (as in “hopeful,” and “doubtful”). A list of the most common suffixes follows this glossary.
- Supporting details** - facts that support the main idea of the writing
- Theme** - the dominant idea in a piece of writing
- Topic Sentence** - the sentence that describes the main idea of a paragraph or essay
- Tone** - the author’s attitude toward the reader or toward the subject
- Unify/unifies** - to come together

Based on Georgia’s Quality Core Curriculum ([www.doe.k12.ga.us/](http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/)).

## **Most Common Prefixes**

Copyright © Scholastic Inc. All rights reserved. This page may be photocopied for use with students.

Prefix:	Means:	Example:
anti-	against	antifreeze
de-	opposite	defrost
dis-*	not, opposite of	disagree
en-, em-	cause to	encode, embrace
fore-	before	forecast
in-, im-	in	infield
in-, im-, il-, ir-*	not	injustice, impossible
inter-	between	interact
mid-	middle	midway
mis-	wrongly	misfire
non-	not	nonsense
over-	over	overlook
pre-	before	prefix
re-*	again	return
semi-	half	semicircle
sub-	under	submarine
super-	above	superstar
trans-	across	transport
un-*	not	unfriendly
under-	under	undersea

## **Most Common Suffixes**

Suffix:	Means:	Example:
-able, -ible	can be done	comfortable
-al, -ial	having characteristics of	Personal
-ed*	past-tense verbs	hopped
-en	made of	wooden
-er	comparative	higher
-er,	one who works, worker	actor
-est	comparative	biggest
-ful	full of	careful
-ic	having characteristics of	linguistic
-ing*	verb form	running
-ion, -tion,	act, process	occasion, attraction
-ity, -ty	state of	infinity
-ive, -ative, -itive	adjective form of a noun	decorative
-less	without	fearless
-ly*	characteristic of	quickly
-ment	action or process	enjoyment
-ness	state of, condition of	kindness
-ous, -eous, -ious	possessing the qualities of	dangerous
-s, -es*	more than one	books, boxes
-y	characterized by	happy, lucky

From *Teaching Reading Sourcebook: For Kindergarten Through Eighth Grade* by Bill Honig, Linda Diamond, and Linda Gutlohn. © 2000 by CORE. Reproduced by permission of Arena Press.

## **Resources**

### Tutoring

NSCC offers tutoring services on both the Lynn and Danvers campuses to current students. Please call 978-762-4000 x 5417 for hours.

### Additional Practice Questions

<http://wcb.neit.edu/asc/prctctst.htm>

Other NSCC study guides available:

### Communications Skills:

Writing the 5-Paragraph Essay  
Survival Kit for Beginning Writers  
Sentences

### Mathematics Skills:

Arithmetic  
Fractions  
Decimals  
Percents  
Order of Operations  
Elementary Algebra  
College Level Math

## STUDY GUIDE SURVEY

Thank you for using the NEW Reading Study Guide. Your feedback is important to us and will assist us in improving study materials for students. Please fill out the form below and drop off at either testing center - Danvers room DB213, or Lynn room LE232. Thank you.

Please check all that apply:

- I am/will be a new student at North Shore Community College
- I am a NSCC returning student
- I am a student at another school but want to take a course that requires proficiency
- I am a faculty, staff member or tutor
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate the approximate amount of time you spent reviewing this study guide:

- 30 minutes or less
- 30 minutes to 1 hour
- 1 - 2 hours
- 2 hours plus

NSCC allows students to take a placement test twice per enrollment period.

Did you use this guide before taking the test for the first time?  Yes  No

Did you use this guide before taking the test for the second time?  Yes  No

Did your score improve?  Yes - by how many points? \_\_\_\_\_  No

Did you know that NSCC has tutoring centers on both campuses?  Yes  No

Did you use the tutoring center to help you prepare for this test?  Yes  No

Did anyone else help you prepare for this test (ie friend, family member)?  Yes  No

Did you find this study guide helpful?  Very helpful  Somewhat helpful  Not helpful

Please list the most helpful topics that were presented: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list the least helpful topics that were presented: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you recommend this study guide to a friend? \_\_\_\_\_

Comments/Suggestions:

---

---

---