

**Basic Skills**  
**Sub Area II- Language Arts**  
**Diagnostic Test – Julia N. Visor Academic Center**

**A. Grammar and Usage**

Standard 7: Demonstrate command of standard usage in edited English in the United States.

**Directions: Determine the appropriate verb.**

- 7-1-1 Any story (interest, interests) Billy.
- 7-1-2 One tray of cookies (is, are) enough.
- 7-1-3 The articles about trains (was, were) informative.
- 7-1-4 Neither of the boys (was, were) tardy.
- 7-1-5 Students, faculty, and staff (attend, attends) the annual holiday festivities.
- 7-1-6 The oboe or the clarinets (sound, sounds) off key.
- 7-1-7 The team (has, have) won the last ten games.
- 7-1-8 Sylvia's mentor shouldn't have (scold, scolded) her.
- 7-1-9 Has Pedro (went, gone) off without his laptop again?
- 7-1-10 The boys had (drink, drank, drunk) all the milk.
- 7-1-11 (Lay, Lie) back, Mr. Smith, and relax.
- 7-1-12 I never (set, sit) anything valuable on the kitchen table.
- 7-1-13 He shouldn't have (left, let) them eat all the breakfast pastries.
- 7-1-14 Mrs. Jones (learned, taught) us the proper etiquette for a multi-course meal.
- 7-1-15 The chef (brought, took) the dinner to his preferred patrons.

**Directions: Determine the appropriate verb tense to be used within the following paragraph. Underline any of the words that are not consistent with the prevailing tense.**

- 7-1-16 Washington Irving: diplomat, intellectual, antiquarian, and writer of such popular tales as "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" and "Rip Van Winkle" lived in Tarrytown, New York. In 1835, after spending seventeen years abroad and nearing the end of a glorious career, Irving purchases his first and last home. Located in a small village north of New York City, the residence will be named Sunnyside. Irving spends \$1,800 on a two-room tenant farmhouse situated a short distance from the Hudson River. After considerable renovation, the former structure becomes the author's version of a Dutch bowery, and in the nineteenth century becomes one of America's most famous literary landmarks. The author lived in the home until his death on November 28, 1859.

**Directions: Determine the appropriate pronoun.**

- 7-2-1 As the students entered the field house, they were told to sit within (his, their) majors.
- 7-2-2 A person should always carry some identification with (him, them).
- 7-2-3 If a college student lives beyond the tax- paying area, (he, they) will have to pay more to attend the local junior college.
- 7-2-4 (You're, your) answers are different than mine.
- 7-2-5 (Its, it's) location remained a mystery for many years.
- 7-2-6 (Whose, who's) textbooks are these?
- 7-2-7 (There, they're, their) reactions were all the same – absolute astonishment.
- 7-2-8 (He, Him) and (I, me) have been late twice this week.
- 7-2-9 The instructor informed Lars and (he, him) that the syllabus had been revised.
- 7-2-10 I always thought I was smarter than (her, she).
- 7-2-11 Freedom of speech is very important to (us, we) lawyers.
- 7-2-12 I believe (them, they) to be tedious and ignorant.
- 7-2-13 The captain chose two crew members, (she, her) and (me, I), to attempt the rescue.

- 7-2-14 The plane's captain (who, that) flew the flight to California was a twenty- year veteran with the airlines.
- 7-2-15 A rare book of D.H. Lawrence's etchings (that, which) was purchased by Milner Library was found missing.
- 7-2-16 The Rococo painting (which, that) was acquired by the Fifth Duchess of Cornwall was not adequately insured.

**Directions: Determine the appropriate modifier.**

- 7-3-1 The (frightful, frightfully) difficult journey began as a result of an ill-advised wager.
- 7-3-2 It rained (steady, steadily) all night long.
- 7-3-3 The gardenia smelled (sweet, sweetly).
- 7-3-4 Her excuse sounded (unconvincingly, unconvincing).
- 7-3-5 The team played (good, well).
- 7-3-6 Of the two candidates, she is the (more, most) qualified.
- 7-3-7 Among all of our options this one is the (better, best).
- 7-3-8 Their apartment is the (most quietest, quietest) in our area of Normal.

**Directions: Underline the words that are misplaced.**

- 7-3-9 Justine found an etiquette book that had been written by Emily Post in a corner of the coat closet.
- 7-3-10 I could see a deer grazing in the ravine with my glasses on.
- 7-3-11 Swimming in maple syrup and melted butter my mother loved these high-fiber waffles.

**Standard 8: Understand and apply knowledge of mechanical conventions in edited English in the United States.**

**Directions: Insert the comma (s).**

- 8-1-1 Eventually the sun disappeared behind the horizon.
- 8-1-2 In a Henry James's novel the writing is almost opaque.
- 8-1-3 Because I could not fall asleep I decided to watch late night TV.
- 8-1-4 The climbers must reach the summit today or they will need to descend.
- 8-1-5 The voters had carefully considered the candidates' platforms but they could not discern a significant difference.
- 8-1-6 Since I attended the local community college I was not required to take the introductory course.
- 8-1-7 The Bloomington Civic Center featuring exceptional performances attracts many fine arts enthusiasts.
- 8-1-8 Beethoven's only opera Fidelio includes the famous "Prisoners' Chorus."
- 8-1-9 The dusty hot and suffocating trek across the desert was nearly unbearable.
- 8-1-10 Reading the professor's journal article however was easier than reading his textbook.
- 8-1-11 As a matter of fact I cannot see any reason to object to your course of action.
- 8-1-12 Please forward all my mail to Williams Hall Illinois State University Normal Illinois.
- 8-1-13 The second semester began on Monday January 14 2012 with renewed enthusiasm.
- 8-1-14 Three peeling white birches dominated the grove.
- 8-1-15 The small liberal arts college had an enrollment of 20000 in the fall of 2011.

**Directions: Insert the semicolon.**

- 8-1-16 The tour included visits to several Midwestern communal settlements many of which offered dining and overnight accommodations.
- 8-1-17 Anthropology encompasses archaeology, the study of ancient civilizations through artifacts linguistics, the study of the structure and development of language and cultural anthropology, the study of language, customs, and behaviors.

**Directions: Insert the appropriate quotation marks.**

- 8-1-18 She smiled and said, I trust that this incident will not be repeated.
- 8-1-19 Alice Walker's Everyday Use is about more than just quilts.

- 8-1-20 According to The Mc Graw –Hill College Handbook, a compound sentence may consist of two or more independent clauses joined by coordinating conjunctions and proper punctuation.

**Directions: Insert apostrophes.**

- 8-1-21 Older alumni spoke nostalgically during the dormatorys official demolition.  
8-1-22 Childrens games can be easily re-invented to suit adult audiences.  
8-1-23 Her father-in-laws job was in jeopardy.  
8-1-24 Harcourt, Brace, and Jovanovichs publishing firm produced many classroom texts.  
8-1-25 The companies off-shore assets have rapidly been diminishing.  
8-1-26 Jamess adventure had just begun.  
8-1-27 Its too hot to weed the garden today.  
8-1-28 This season, youre going to be surprised at the over-abundance of ruby-throated hummingbirds.  
8-1-29 Heres an interesting problem: who is going to be responsible for the alley between the dress shop and the insurance agency?

**Directions: Insert colons.**

- 8-1-30 The class was assigned to read Alger Lamont's national best seller, *Doing Without Responding to the Demands of an Impatient Society*.  
8-1-31 Routinely, he ate dinner at 530.  
8-1-32 The Constitution of the United States established a durable form of government indirect democracy has withstood numerous social, political, and economic catastrophes.  
8-1-33 During her tenure, she was able to restore the department's credibility modernizing the curriculum, improving facilities, and employing enthusiastic faculty.  
8-1-34 Young writers should take Proverb 12 1 as their motto.

**Directions: Insert dashes.**

- 8-1-35 John F. Kennedy quipped, "I think this is the most extraordinary collection of human talent, of human knowledge, that has ever gathered at the White House with the possible exception of when Thomas Jefferson dined alone."  
8-1-36 Pizza, text messages, throbbing music, and an incomprehensible textbook the components of a not very productive study session.  
8-1-37 Christmas break a long awaited holiday was marred by the need to complete his dissertation before spring break.

**Directions: Insert hyphens**

- 8-1-38 He is a scholar poet who not only taught classes at the university but also was the state's poet laureate.  
8-1-39 To be a stay at home mom was a difficult decision for the financially challenged mother of four.  
8-1-40 She was a quick thinking project manager, but her bad mannered replies to her fellow employees were intolerable.  
8-1-41 Prior to World War II, Charles Lindberg's Germanic bias was seen by some as anti American.  
8-1-42 His Japanese American heritage was not forgotten as he became part of the American melting pot.  
8-1-43 Thirty interior decorators carefully re created the ballroom's art nouveau décor.

**Directions: Insert or eliminate capital letters.**

- 8-2-1 The library of congress announced the release of previously classified documents.  
8-2-2 Highly paid celebrities often promote nike shoes.  
8-2-3 During the time of the American Civil War, the north was primarily an industrial power; whereas, the south was agricultural.  
8-2-4 My Mother wrote to my aunt about the dangers inherent in second-degree smoke.  
8-2-5 The Winter term ended shortly before the Holidays.

- 8-2-6 Marjorie McCallister wrote the charming short story, "I will walk with you in the Park."
- 8-2-7 We attended an evening lecture delivered by professor John Hopkins who taught theology 317.
- 8-2-8 Allah, so Muslims believe, sent Mohammed to deliver his word to the world.
- 8-2-9 Among the courses to be offered to incoming freshmen are composition 101 and microeconomics.

**Directions:** Circle the appropriate spelling.

- 8-3-1 Please (accept, except) my apologies.
- 8-3-2 I strongly (advice, advise) you to disregard his (advice, advise).
- 8-3-3 It is (all together, altogether) impossible for me to attend the department meeting when I have a previously scheduled instruction period.
- 8-3-4 (Besides, beside) a textbook, he will also need a lap top computer.
- 8-3-5 He considers sauerkraut a perfect (compliment, complement) to any German-inspired entrée.
- 8-3-6 (Too, To) get to the party you will need to follow the directions very carefully.
- 8-3-7 (Weather, Whether) or not to create a web presence was no longer a matter of discussion.

## B. Writing

**Standard 10: Understand unity, focus, development, and organization in writing.**

**Standard 11: Understand and apply editing and revision strategies.**

**Standard 12: Recognize sentences and paragraphs that effectively communicate intended messages.**

**Directions:** Read the accompanying paragraph. Then, answer the following questions.

1. In 1991, the U.S.S.R. broke up. 2. Eventually, the dissolution of this conglomeration of various ethnic lands resulted in the creation of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. 3. During the same period and into 1992, Yugoslavia also was partitioned into a number of different nations. 4. Which were Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, and Slovenia. 5. Several years later, in 1993, Eritrea became independent of Ethiopia; Czechoslovakia was partitioned to create the nations of the Czech Republic and Slovakia; and the Marshall Islands of Micronesia and Palau became sovereign nations. 6. In 1990, Namibia split from South Africa. 7. While East and West Germany combined to become Germany. 8. The United States government has maintained an updated list of those nations to which Americans may travel safely. 9. Currently, certain South American countries and areas in the Middle East and Africa are considered not suitable for safe travel.
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- 10-11-12-1 Currently, this paragraph does not contain a topic sentence. What would be considered an appropriate topic sentence?
  - a) What is the difference between a country and a state?
  - b) Which countries are not members of the United Nations?
  - c) During the Cold War what determined if a country was considered "first world" or "second world"?
  - d) The 1990's was an era of new nation-building.
- 10-11-12-2 Now, that you have determined the topic sentence, what two sentences destroy the unity of the paragraph?
  - a) 1 and 7
  - b) 8 and 9
  - c) 5 and 6
  - d) 1 and 4

10-11-12-3 What sentence(s) is (are) not in the proper order – if we assume that the paragraph is written in chronological order?

- a) 5
- b) 6 and 7
- c) 3
- d) None of the above

10-11-12-4 What sentence appears to be a fragment?

- a) 7 and 4
- b) 7
- c) 2
- d) 3

10-11-12-5 What sentence appears to be a run- on or fused sentence?

- a) 9
- b) 5
- c) 1
- d) None of the above

10-11-12-6 Which of the following phrases or words are considered transitional?

- a) Eventually
- b) Several years later
- c) In 1993
- d) All of the above

10-11-12-7 Which of the following describes this paragraph's form?

- a) Process analysis
- b) Comparison and Contrast
- c) Narration
- d) Definition

11-12-1 If a composition contained the following topic sentences:

- Buying locally-grown produce saves fuel used to transport food.
- Buying locally-grown produce helps support the local economy.
- Buying locally-grown products helps re-establish the connection between us and nature.

what is a suitable thesis statement?

- a) Abandoning the industrial food pipeline has its advantages.
- b) Eating locally-grown produce creates a sense of community within an increasingly isolated society.
- c) Buying locally-grown crops is a good way to encourage healthful eating habits.
- d) As the old adage states, "You are what you eat."

11-12-2 What is not a recommended strategy for developing an introduction?

- a) Explain a history.
- b) Tell an anecdote.
- c) Suggest a course of action.
- d) Explain the topic's significance.

11-12-3 Given the following topic sentences, what is an appropriate restatement of the thesis?

- Mistletoe, a parasite with white berries, has long been associated with holiday décor.
  - The holly with its scarlet fruit and prickly leaves is a striking decorative element associated with the holidays.
  - The ivy, with its attractive green and white leaves, is often used in holiday decorations.
- a) The rivalry between the holly and the ivy is personified in the traditional carol, “The Holly and the Ivy”.
- b) The seasonal significance of winter trees is well documented.
- c) In many places in the world, mistletoe, holly, ivy, and cherry tree branches are traditional indoor holiday decorations.
- d) Traditionally, the mistletoe, holly, and ivy have been used to add a natural, festive touch to holiday decoration.

11-12-4 Which one of the following strategies would be appropriate for creating a conclusion?

- a) Evaluate what has been done or determine the significance of what has been said.
- b) Apologize to the reader for any shortcomings you have belatedly noticed.
- c) Introduce a related topic that would be appropriate for a subsequent paper.
- d) End with a quotation that gives your reader additional thoughts to consider.

**Directions: Read the following article and answer the accompanying questions.**

- 1) The factory whistles shrieked. 2) It was 5:00 in the afternoon. 3) The sun was weak. 4) The sky was perpetually gray in color. 5) The sky tearfully wept grime, soot, and smoke. 6) It was the month of July, plumes of steam belched from the stacks, and millions of laborers toiled in south Chicago’s factories and steel mills. 7) Forty years later, the soot from the smoke stacks is less. 8) The workers are fewer, but the steam remains. 9) Indicative of the nation’s energy waste, the steam continues to tick off those who recognize the potential of this recyclable resource. 10) Yearly, according to some experts, fifty billion dollars of recyclable energy floats into our air. 11) Industries could generate their own power and could buy less from the grid by constructing interdependent energy systems. 12) The bottom line is that we currently have affordable, proven, and readily available technologies to make this happen. 13) Seems like doing the right and smart thing is a no brainer- right? 14) However, for a variety of cultural, financial, and regulatory reasons such an interdependent arrangement is not a slam/dunk. 15) U.S. industries often fail to recognize energy-saving as a competitive strategy. 16) Often times, coordination and integration of the industrial process are neglected by our nation’s engineers. 17) Because of the boom and bust nature of the business cycle, managers hesitate to invest in energy efficiency. 18) Industry inertia is reinforced by well-intentioned regulations that inadvertently discourage energy recycling. 19) On account of the fact that some plants elect not to tinker with their inadequate industrial exhaust systems for fear of attracting unwanted scrutiny from federal and local authorities, needed innovations are not initiated, 20) Hey, we’ve got beaucoup problems here; we are tres lethargic, but we are not sans solutions. 21) Folks, it’s sink or swim time. 22) Gray power, technological changes to industrial plants, makes economic sense, makes environmental sense, makes moral sense, and will become a realistic goal for the present.
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11-12-5 Sentences 1,2,3, and 4

- a) are unclear
- b) lack sentence variety
- c) contain cliches
- d) contain jargon

11-12-6 Sentences 4, 5, and 6 are

- a) responsible for destroying the article's unity
- b) incompatible with the tone of the article
- c) grammatically redundant
- d) confusing because of mood shifts

11-12-7 Sentences 9, 13, and 14 contain

- a) empty inflated phrases
- b) redundancy
- c) slang
- d) non- parallel construction

11-12-8 Sentences 12 and 17 contain

- a) dialect
- b) jargon
- c) confusing shifts in person
- d) passive voice

11-12-9 Sentences 11,16, and 18 contain

- a) confusing shifts in tense
- b) dialect
- c) empty inflated phrases
- d) passive voice

11-12-10 Sentence 20 exhibits

- a) inappropriate tone and diction
- b) appropriate audience engagement
- c) wordiness
- d) cliches

11-12-11 Sentence 21 contains

- a) a cliché
- b) appropriate connection with the audience
- c) slang
- d) jargon

11-12-12 In addition to being wordy and containing jargon, Sentence 22

- a) contains slang
- b) is passive
- c) is not parallel
- d) is a cliché

## **Additional Problems Associated with the Test**

AP -1 I will be available (when, whenever) he arrives.

AP- 2 (When, Whenever) will you be ready to leave?

AP- 3 (When, Whenever) will you ever learn to mind your own business?

AP-4 (Where, When) will the event begin?

AP-5 (Where, When) is the Island of the Flowers located?

AP-6 (Then, While) he made the attempt to scale K3, the others remained at the highest base camp.

AP-7 (Then, There) all the suspects were eliminated, and the case was still not solved.

AP-8 (Then, There) is little vegetation in some parts of Africa as desertification has claimed all once-habitable areas.

AP- 9 To (who, whom) is this letter to be addressed?

AP- 10 (Who, Whom) will be handling the appointments when the receptionist has left?

AP-11 (Each, Every) car is handled with extreme care.

AP- 12 (Each, Every) group needs to be accorded the same respect.

AP-13 In the Scarlet Letter, Hawthorne used imagery (as, like) he does in his other works.

AP-14 He is more loquacious (then, than) his brother.

Now, that you have completed the diagnostic test, check your answers. You may be able to ascertain a pattern of errors. If you have concerns regarding this test or any other academic area, we encourage you to contact us for an appointment.