

ACCUPLACER ESL Reading Skills Test

The ESL Reading Skills test measures your ability to read English. Specifically, it assesses your comprehension of short passages. It contains brief passages of 50 words or less and moderate length passages of 50 to 90 words. Half of this test contains straightforward comprehension items (paraphrase, locating information, vocabulary on a phrase level, and pronoun reference). The other half assesses inference skills (main idea, fact versus opinion, cause/effect logic, identifying irrelevant information, author's point of view, and applying the author's logic to another situation).

Sample Questions

1. Television has been introduced to almost every country in the world, reaching a large number of viewers on every continent. About 600 million people saw the first person walk on the moon, and a billion people watched the twentieth Olympic Games. Television has in many ways promoted understanding and cooperation among people. It does this by showing educational and cultural programs.

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

- A. Television is watched in nearly every country.
- B. Not everybody who had a television set could watch the 1998 World Cup finals.
- C. Watching television makes people dissatisfied with their own lives.
- D. Television was invented in 1980.

2. Janet's parents bought her a new sports car as a birthday present. It was blue. Janet sold her 7-year-old blue pickup truck to a high school student. The truck could not go very fast, but the student was happy with it.

According to the passage, which of these statements is true?

- A. Janet bought a pickup truck and a sports car.
- B. The pickup truck was faster than the sports car.
- C. The high school student traded cars with Janet.
- D. The pickup truck was older than the sports car.

3. Some of Edward Weston's black-and-white photographs of American nature scenes are considered superb examples of visual art. Indeed, some of his photographs have commanded top prices at art galleries.

Which of the following best characterizes Weston's photographs?

- A. They belong to famous collectors.
- B. They have been sold in art galleries for large sums of money.
- C. They introduced many Americans to visual art.
- D. They contrast American cities with natural settings.

4. Speaking to a group of people can be a frightening experience. Some speakers cope by looking above the heads of the audience. Others try to imagine that they are talking to a friend. A few try picturing the audience in some non-threatening way, such as in their pajamas.

The author of the passage assumes that speakers should

- A. feel comfortable when addressing an audience.
- B. scare the audience.
- C. encourage people to talk during the speech.
- D. speak only to familiar people.

5. People have different ways of learning. Some are better at making mental pictures of new ideas. Others are more comfortable with writing lists of things to memorize. Certain people can learn best when listening to music, while others need silence to concentrate.

Which of the following is the main idea of the passage?

- A. Mental pictures help many to learn.
- B. Some people prefer lists to making mental pictures.
- C. To learn well you need to be comfortable.
- D. Different individuals have different ways of acquiring information.

6. Before giving first aid to an accident victim, you should obtain his or her consent. Asking for consent takes a simple question. Say to the victim, "I know first aid, and I can help you until an ambulance arrives. Is that okay?"

"Asking for consent" means asking for

- A. permission to help the victim.
- B. thanks from the victim.
- C. help from onlookers.
- D. information about the victim's injuries.

7. Jane and Paul are busy for 15 hours a day, 5 days a week going to college and working in a restaurant. They go to sleep at 11 p.m. every day, but on Sunday they take part in dance lessons.

According to the passage, Jane and Paul spend most of their time

- A. at home.
- B. going to college and working.
- C. taking part in dance lessons.
- D. sleeping.

8. If you hold a piece of copper wire over the flame of a match, heat will be conducted by the copper wire to your fingers, and you will be forced to drop the wire. You will, however, still be able to hold the match because the match is a poor conductor of heat. Anyone, child or adult, can try this simple experiment.

Which of the following is implied in the passage above?

- A. Copper is a good conductor of heat.
- B. A match and copper conduct heat equally.
- C. A match is an excellent conductor of heat.
- D. Matches should be kept out of the reach of small children.

9. Many people own different pets. Dogs, cats, birds, and fish are common household pets. Others pets are considered to be exotic animals. These include snakes, lizards, and hedgehogs.

Snakes are

- A. uncommon pets.
- B. likely to be found in a household with dogs.
- C. found only in zoos.
- D. not allowed in people's homes.

10. Cesar Chavez was an influential leader for farmworkers. He fought for their rights and better working conditions. Chavez led many strikes that angered farm owners. Eventually he succeeded in getting increased wages and improved living situations for farmworkers.

Chavez changed lives because he

- A. helped the farmers get more workers.
- B. worked for the farmers.
- C. helped work on the farms every day.
- D. changed the conditions for the farmworkers.

ACCUPLACER ESL Sentence Meaning Test

The ESL Sentence Meaning test measures how well you understand the meaning of sentences in English. It assesses the understanding of word meanings in one- or two-sentence contexts. The sentences are drawn from the subject areas of natural science, history/social studies, arts/humanities, psychology/human relations, and practical situations. There are four content areas measured: (a) Particle, Phrasal Verbs, Prepositions of Direction; (b) Adverbs, Adjectives, Connectives Sequence; (c) Basic Nouns and Verbs; and (d) Basic and Important Idioms.

Sample Questions

The sentence below has a blank space. Choose the word or phrase that makes the sentence meaningful and correct.

1. Shikibu Murasaki, who wrote almost a thousand years ago, was one of the world's ____ novelists.
 - A. most early
 - B. too early
 - C. more early
 - D. earliest
2. The Chang children ____ their parents by making sandwiches for the whole family.
 - A. helped out
 - B. helped with
 - C. helps for
 - D. helps to

3. As demonstrated by his last album, which was released after his death, Ibrahim Ferrer ____ one of the most beautiful voices in Latin music.

- A. had
- B. have
- C. have had
- D. having

4. After we saw the play, we had different opinions ____ Jane's performance.

- A. about
- B. at
- C. for
- D. towards

Each problem contains one or two sentences followed by a question. Choose the correct answer to the question.

5. Elena found a tomato that was much bigger than all the others in the garden.

How did the tomato compare to the others in the garden?

- A. It was the smallest.
- B. It was not very large.
- C. It was larger than some.
- D. It was the largest.

6. When the popular entertainer canceled her appearance, the Latin American festival was postponed indefinitely.

When will the festival likely take place?

- A. Tonight
- B. Tomorrow
- C. Next week
- D. Many weeks later

7. Janet is never late to meet her friends, and sometimes arrives early.

Which best describes Janet?

- A. Lonely
- B. Punctual
- C. Talkative
- D. Tardy

8. Bram Stoker is best known for his classic horror novel *Dracula*, which was published in 1897.

What did Bram Stoker do?

- A. He was a doctor.
- B. He was a merchant.
- C. He was a writer.
- D. He was an engineer.

9. Exhausted from her transatlantic flight, Judy could not stay up past 9 p.m.

What did Judy do at 9 p.m.?

- A. Leave work
- B. Come home from the airport
- C. Lose her enthusiasm
- D. Go to bed

10. This semester many students are enrolled in a new course, African Dance, which is being taught by a first-time instructor, Sheila Duncan.

How long has the university offered the African dance class?

- A. For a short time
- B. For many years
- C. For an entire school year
- D. On and off for a while

5. Jacques Cousteau will be remembered for his inventions and for _____ to marine science.

- A. dedication
- B. his dedication
- C. being dedicated
- D. his being dedicated

6. Since my parents always insist that I get a good night's sleep, they were _____ when I stayed out last night past my curfew.

- A. very happy
- B. very relieved
- C. very tired
- D. very angry

ACCUPLACER ESL Language Use Test

The ESL Language Use test measures your proficiency in using correct grammar in English sentences. There are five content areas measured on this test: (a) Nouns, Pronouns, Pronoun Case Structure; (b) Subject–Verb Agreement; (c) Comparatives, Adverbs, Adjectives; (d) Verbs; and (e) Subordination/Coordination.

Sample Questions

The sentence below has a blank space. Choose the word or phrase that makes a grammatically correct sentence.

1. _____ washing her sweater, Mary hung it up to dry.

- A. After
- B. Before
- C. By
- D. Until

2. Some day men and women _____ to Mars.

- A. will travel
- B. will travels
- C. will traveling
- D. will traveled

3. Water _____ at a temperature of zero degrees Celsius.

- A. having frozen
- B. freezing
- C. freeze
- D. freezes

4. _____ get a new haircut?

- A. Have you
- B. Does you
- C. Are you
- D. Did you

Read the two sentences below and choose the best way of combining them.

7. Her puppy ran out into the street chasing a cat. The owner quickly went to retrieve it.

- A. The owner quickly went to retrieve it after a cat was chased into the street by her puppy.
- B. The owner quickly retrieved it after her puppy chased a cat into the street.
- C. When her puppy ran into the street after a cat, the owner quickly went to retrieve the puppy.
- D. Quickly retrieving it, the owner went quickly after her puppy that ran out into the street after a cat.

8. Lisa plays the piano. Her sister Kelly plays the piano, too.

- A. Lisa and her sister Kelly plays the piano.
- B. Both Lisa and her sister Kelly play the piano.
- C. Lisa plays the piano and Kelly plays the piano.
- D. Lisa and Kelly too play the piano.

9. The road was slippery. We put chains on the tires.

- A. Although the road was slippery, we put chains on the tires.
- B. The road became slippery when we put chains on the tires.
- C. We put chains on the tires because the road was slippery.
- D. Putting chains on the tires, the road we were on was slippery.

10. Kazuko took her dog for a walk. They went to the park.

- A. Kazuko, going to the park, took her dog for a walk.
- B. Kazuko took her dog for a walk in the park.
- C. Kazuko took her dog for a walk because they went to the park.
- D. Kazuko and her dog went to the park, where they walked.

Part Three: ESL Writing Test

A student will be asked to write in English. The topic will be based on the student's score on the Accuplacer test. One topic will be given to the student.

Sample Questions for Writing:

Topics for Beginners (based on Accuplacer test)

- My Favorite Holiday
- A Beautiful Place

Topics for Advanced Beginners

- The Most Important Thing I Brought to the United States from My Country
- Compare the Food in Your Country with the Food in the United States
- What Characteristics are Important in a Friend?
- Should Smoking in Public Places be Illegal?

Topics for Intermediates

- It has been recently announced that a large shopping center may be built in your neighborhood. Do you support or oppose this plan? Give specific reasons for your answer.
- Is it better to enjoy your money when you earn it or is it better to save your money for some time in future. Explain your answer.

Topics for Advanced Students

Students who score high on the Accuplacer test will be given more advanced topics involving opinion, compare/contrast, or problem/solution, etc.