English/Sentence Skills Sample Test

There are 20 questions in total on this section. You will see two types of questions: sentence correction and construction shift.

Sentence Correction

These questions give you a sentence with a part that might be wrong—key word: might. One of the answer choices will be the same as the question, so there is always the chance the sentence is already correct. Be careful! Now, for example, what if I said

The gardener decided to plant carrots tomatoes lettuce peas in her garden.

Does that sound right to you? It shouldn’t. A couple things are missing—how about some commas, and the word “and”? Before looking at the answers, try to figure out what might sound better. How about “The gardener decided to plant carrots, tomatoes, lettuce, and peas in her garden”?

Strategies for Sentence Correction

1. First, what is the trouble spot? Or, does the sentence sound ok as is?
2. Try to correct the sentence yourself, before looking at the answers—say it in your head.
3. Ask yourself—which answer choice best matches what I thought might fit?
4. Plug in the answer choices if you still aren’t sure and read the sentence to yourself.
5. If more than one answer seems correct, try to identify which one is trying to trick you.
6. Pay attention to details.

Construction Shift

These questions give you a sentence, then asks you to re-write it in a different way. For example, what if I said

“I hate going to the doctor because I don’t like getting shots.”

Is there another way to write this sentence but mean the same thing? What if I started with, “Because I don’t like getting shots…”? Fill in the blank. Remember, the meaning of the first sentence must stay the same.

Strategies for Construction Shift

1. Take your time—remember you have scratch paper.
2. Figure out what the sentence means—say it in your own words.
3. Plug in the answer choices—which one sounds the best to you?
4. Ask yourself: did I preserve the meaning of the sentence?
Practice Makes Perfect

Try these for yourself. Use scratch paper if necessary to simulate the environment of the Testing Center. Remember the strategies for each type, and try to identify which is which. The answers follow at the end.

1. **Predictions twenty years ago** that the phonograph record was about to become obsolete have proven to be true.
   a. Predictions twenty years ago that
   b. Predictions twenty years ago,
   c. Twenty years ago, predictions that
   d. Predictions, twenty years ago

2. **When you move out of an apartment before the contract expires, this** is an example of breaking a lease.
   a. When you move out of an apartment before the contract expires, this
   b. You move out of an apartment before the contract expires, this
   c. Moving out of an apartment before the contract expires
   d. The fact that you move out of an apartment before the contract expires

3. **Knocked to his knees, the quarterback looked as if he were in pain.**
   a. Knocked to his knees, the quarterback looked
   b. The quarterback was knocked to his knees, looked
   c. The quarterback looked knocked to his knees
   d. The quarterback, looking knocked to his knees,

4. **Yesterday the President announced that he would retire from political life, to amazed reporters.**
   a. Yesterday the President announced that he would retire from political life, to amazed reporters.
   b. Yesterday the President announced that he would retire from political life, amazing reporters.
   c. The President, to the amazement of reporters, announced that he would retire from political life yesterday.
   d. Yesterday the President announced to amazed reporters that he would retire from political life.
5. Writing a best seller had earned the author a sum of money and had freed him from the necessity of selling his pen for the political purposes of others.

Rewrite, beginning with The author was not obliged . . .

The new sentence will include

a. consequently he earned
b. because he had earned
c. by earning
d. as a means of earning

6. In the modern world, groups of people living thousands of miles apart may still be dependent on each other politically, culturally, and economically.

Change people living to people may live.

Your new sentence will include

a. apart and still be dependent
b. apart so as to be dependent still
c. apart, they are still dependent
d. apart, but would still be dependent

7. Jose wanted to study he tried to keep his roommates quiet; but he did not succeed.

a. Jose wanted to study he tried to keep
b. Jose wanted to study, he tried to keep
c. Because he wanted to study, Jose tried to keep
d. Jose wanting to study, and trying to keep

Directions for questions 8–12

Select the best version of the underlined part of the sentence. The first choice is the same as the original sentence. If you think the original sentence is best, choose the first answer.

8. Stamp collecting being a hobby that is sometimes used in the schools to teach economics and social studies.

a. being a hobby that is
b. is a hobby because it is
c. which is a hobby
d. is a hobby
9. Knocked sideways, the statue looked as if it would fall.
   a. Knocked sideways, the statue looked
   b. The statue was knocked sideways, looked
   c. The statue looked knocked sideways
   d. The statue, looking knocked sideways,

10. To walk, biking, and driving are Pat’s favorite ways of getting around.
   a. To walk, biking, and driving
   b. Walking, biking, and driving
   c. To walk, biking, and to drive
   d. To walk, to bike, and also driving

11. When you cross the street in the middle of the block, this is an example of jaywalking.
   a. When you cross the street in the middle of the block, this
   b. You cross the street in the middle of the block, this
   c. Crossing the street in the middle of the block
   d. The fact that you cross the street in the middle of the block

12. Walking by the corner the other day, a child, I noticed, was watching for the light to change.
   a. a child, I noticed, was watching
   b. I noticed a child watching
   c. a child was watching, I noticed,
   d. there was, I noticed, a child watching

Directions for questions 13–15

Rewrite the sentence in your head following the directions given below. Keep in mind that your new sentence should be well written and should have essentially the same meaning as the original sentence.

13. It is easy to carry solid objects without spilling them, but the same cannot be said of liquids.

Rewrite, beginning with Unlike liquids,

The next words will be

a. it is easy to
b. we can easily
c. solid objects can easily be
d. solid objects are easy to be
14. Although the sandpiper is easily frightened by noise and light, it will bravely resist any force that threatens its nest.

Rewrite, beginning with The sandpiper is easily frightened by noise and light,

The next words will be

a. but it will bravely resist
b. nevertheless bravely resisting
c. and it will bravely resist
d. even if bravely resisting

15. If he had enough strength, Todd would move the boulder.

Rewrite, beginning with Todd cannot move the boulder

The next words will be

a. when lacking
b. because he
c. although there
d. without enough

16. The band began to play, and then the real party started.

Rewrite, beginning with The real party started

The next words will be

a. after the band began
b. and the band began
c. although the band began
d. the band beginning

17. Chris heard no unusual noises when he listened in the park.

Rewrite, beginning with Listening in the park,

The next words will be

a. no unusual noises could be heard
b. then Chris heard no unusual noises
c. and hearing no unusual noises
d. Chris heard no unusual noises
Answers for English Preparation

1. a  
2. c  
3. a  
4. d  
5. b  
6. a  
7. c  
8. d  
9. a  
10. b  
11. c  
12. b  
13. c  
14. a  
15. b  
16. a  
17. d

For more practice, and a simulation of the test, visit 
http://www.yccd.edu/assessment/tests/sentenceskills.html