Taking Your Placement Tests

Are you prepared?

Placement testing is mandatory for all new students. Taking time to work through this Placement Test Preparation Guide will help you

- be ready to take your Math and English placement tests and
- be accurately assessed

resulting in

- proper placement in courses that match your skill level and
- possible reduction of unnecessary coursework.
COMPASS® Writing Skills Placement Test

The Writing Skills Placement Test helps determine if you are ready for entry-level college writing courses or other courses with significant writing loads, or if you require additional writing instruction. You will be tested on punctuation, basic grammar and usage, sentence structure, strategy, organization, and style. Depending on your Writing Skills Placement Test score, you also may need to take the Reading Skills Placement Test to determine your English course placement.

In this preparation guide, you will edit one sample essay. For additional practice, go to the COMPASS® Sample Test Questions at http://www.act.org/compass/sample/index.html

- Find “More Sample Questions” near the bottom of the page.
- Click on the “Writing Skills” link.
- Read the general test information and answer the sample items for all three writing passages.
- Check your answers with the correct answers beginning on page 24. The content categories for the Writing Skills sample items are also listed next to the correct answers. Use the content category to find additional review resources online or at the library.

Please note that in the writing skills test sample passages, each section is numbered. In the computerized COMPASS® Writing Skills Placement Test, sections are not numbered.

When you take the computerized test:

- Read the section looking for errors.
- When you find an error, move the cursor to the section of text where the error is located.
- Click the left mouse button to make the alternative text options appear.
- Choose the answer that is the best.

After clicking on a passage, you can still leave the passage unchanged; simply choose no answer and go on or “A,” which will always leave the section unchanged.

You may also find these online resources helpful.
Academic Writing
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/2/

Grammar and General Writing
http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/
Test Prep Quick Grammar Guide

This guide covers some of the major concepts in the Writing Skills Placement Test. This is not a complete list of all the concepts, but it is a useful tool.

Types of Sentences

• Simple Sentence (one Independent Clause)
  o Brittany wrote a paper.
  o Cierra and Brittany wrote a paper.
  o Cierra and Brittany wrote a paper and then took a walk.

• Complex sentence (one or more Dependent Clauses and one Independent Clause)
  o Although Brittany wrote a paper, Cierra did not.
  o Cierra wrote a paper although Brittany did not.
  o Jackie, who is my student, works very hard.
  o All of the students who take English 0980 work very hard.

• Compound Sentences (two or more Independent Clauses)*
  o Brittany wrote a paper, and Cierra checked it over.
  o Brittany wrote a paper; Cierra checked it over.
  o Brittany wrote a paper; next, Cierra checked it over.

*Run-on Sentences occur only in compound sentences when you do not punctuate them correctly, as above.

Comma Usage

• Use a comma to separate introductory words, phrases, and clauses from the rest of the sentence.
  o Darn, I will not be there.
  o Working hard on the project, Mark will be tired most of the week.
  o After he opens his account, he will send you a check.

• Use a comma to set off non-essential adjective clauses. Essential adjective clauses are not set off with commas.
  o Greg Smith, whom I met last night, will not be appearing on center stage.
  o The man whom I met last night will not be appearing on center stage.

• Use commas to separate items in a series.
  o Roger, Billy, Matt, and Susan are in place.
  o Don’t worry, fret, or be anxious.
  o Bill and Sam and Ray are gone.
Wordiness: A sentence may be grammatically correct, but it may contain too many words that make it awkward or even too confusing to follow.

- **Wordy** – As far as I am concerned, the major weakness of the hair salon in question is that the owner is rude, in a matter of speaking.
  
  **Correct** – The major weakness of the hair salon is the rude owner.

- **Wordy (and redundant)** – Many unskilled workers who have no training in a particular job are unemployed and do not have any work.
  
  **Correct** – Many unskilled workers are not employed.

Watch out for the following phrases which contribute to wordiness and redundancy: at this time period, at the present time, because of the fact that, circle around, there is, there are, as far as I am concerned, in my opinion, last but not least, more or less.

Avoid unnecessary information. Leave out phrases in a sentence which detract from the main thought.

**Incorrect**: My boss, who wears a hearing aid, is a very fair person.

**Correct**: My boss is a fair person.

Types of Agreement

- **Subject /Verb**
  In present tense singular subjects agree with verbs plus “s.” Plural verbs agree with the verb without “s.”
  
  - John writes a paper.
  - Sally and Blake write a paper.
  - The presidents of each community work long hours.

- **Pronoun/Antecedent**
  Pronouns need to agree in gender and number with the nouns they are replacing.
  
  - I need to give each person his or her book.
  - Please tell the members of the team that they must return their books.
  - Everyone left his or her book behind.
  - The man who lives next door is creepy.

- **Parallelism**
  Items in a series must be of the same grammatical form.
  
  - Place all the containers, dishes, and placemats in the bin.
  - They worked hard to remove the pollutants, rebuild the fisheries, and restock the ponds.
  - We will place them in mailboxes, on porches, and on cars.

- **Tense**
  Tenses should remain consistent unless the actions happen at different times.
  
  - Last year I gave her my favorite dress. I was very generous.
  - As we go along, we see many colorful plants.
  - I picked her up at her house. Nowadays, I pick her up at the bus stop.
Writing Skills Sample Test Questions

Sample Essay

Read the following passage. After you have read the passage, answer items 1-24. You will turn in these items to the testing center prior to taking the COMPASS® Writing Skills Placement Test.

Grameen Bank

(1) Bangladesh’s economy is based primarily on small-scale (2) enterprises ran by self-employed men and women. (3) These small-business owners, who make a living as shopkeepers or providers of services, (4) face a problem common to proprietors everywhere: lack of access to credit, (5) particularly among the early start-up phase of an enterprise. (6) Credit, which allows people to obtain the resources and equipment he needs to make his business productive, (7) is often, frequently unavailable to those who possess little collateral. (8) Thus, many (9) people which would benefit from credit (10) are denied access to it. (11) The Grameen Bank, founded in 1976 by economist Muhammad Yunis, who was a fine soccer player in his youth, provides (12) the only unique alternative (13) via loans to prospective business owners, whether they are given only to those who fall below a certain level of assets. (14) Instead of putting up collateral, Grameen customers are accountable with one another, (15) congregating in (16) small groups that meet as a week. (17) If one member will fail to repay a loan, the entire group is unable to obtain credit (18) in the future thus, group members have a strong incentive to succeed and support others in the group. (19) In the last twenty years, the Grameen Bank has lent two billion dollars, (20) and his customers have repaid 97 percent of their loans. (21) Such results have led to the creation of similar programs.
Choose the best version of the items below.

Item 1.
A. Bangladesh's economy is based primarily on small-scale
B. Bangladesh's economy's is based primarily on small-scale
C. Bangladesh's economies' are based primarily on small-scale
D. Bangladesh's economys' is based primarily on small-scale
E. Bangladesh's economies' is based primarily on small-scale

Item 2.
A. enterprises ran by self-employed men and women.
B. enterprises run by self-employed men and women.
C. enterprises have run by self-employed men and women.
D. enterprises was run by self-employed men and women.
E. enterprises had been run by self-employed men and women.
See TEST PREP QUICK GRAMMAR GUIDE: Types of Agreement: Tense

Item 3.
A. These small-business owners, who make a living as shopkeepers or providers of services,
B. These small-business owners, who make a living, as shopkeepers or providers of services
C. These small-business owners, who make a living as shopkeepers, or providers of services
D. These small-business owners who make a living as shopkeepers or providers of services,
E. These small-business owners; who make a living as shopkeepers or providers of services,
See TEST PREP QUICK GRAMMAR GUIDE: Types of Sentences, Comma Usage

Item 4.
A. face a problem common to proprietors everywhere: lack of access to credit,
B. face a problem common to proprietors everywhere: lack of access credit,
C. face a problem common to proprietors everywhere: lack of access from credit,
D. face a problem common to proprietors everywhere: lack of access in credit,
E. face a problem common to proprietors everywhere: lack of access for credit,

Item 5.
A. particularly among the early start-up phase of an enterprise.
B. particularly between the early start-up phase of an enterprise.
C. particularly below the early start-up phase of an enterprise.
D. particularly during the early start-up phase of an enterprise.
E. particularly now the early start-up phase of an enterprise.

Item 6.
A. Credit, which allows people to obtain the resources and equipment he needs to make his business productive,
B. Credit, which allows people to obtain the resources and equipment they need to make their businesses productive,
C. Credit, which allows people to obtain the resources and equipment we need to make our business productive,
D. Credit, which allows people to obtain the resources and equipment one needs to make our business productive,
E. Credit, which allows people to obtain the resources and equipment you need to make one's business productive,
See TEST PREP QUICK GRAMMAR GUIDE: Types of Agreement: Pronoun/Antecedent
Item 7.
A. is often, frequently unavailable to those who possess little collateral.
B. is often unavailable many times to those who possess little collateral.
C. is often unavailable to those who possess little collateral.
D. is often unavailable frequently to those who possess little collateral.
E. is often unavailable, all the time, to those who possess little collateral.
See TEST PREP QUICK GRAMMAR GUIDE: Wordiness: Wordy (and redundant)

Item 8.
A. Thus, many
B. Although, many
C. Nevertheless, many
D. Since, many
E. Anyway, many

Item 9.
A. people which would benefit from credit
B. people whom would benefit from credit
C. people whose would benefit from credit
D. people who’s would benefit from credit
E. people who would benefit from credit
See TEST PREP QUICK GRAMMAR GUIDE: Types of Agreement: Pronoun/Antecedent

Item 10.
A. are denied access to it.
B. are denying access to it.
C. deny access to it.
D. denied access to it.
E. there is access denied to it.

Item 11.
A. The Grameen Bank, founded in 1976 by economist Muhammad Yunis, who was a fine soccer player in his youth, provides
B. The Grameen Bank, founded in 1976 by economist Muhammad Yunis, who visited the University of Michigan, provides
C. The Grameen Bank, founded in 1976 by economist Muhammad Yunis, who studied economics at a highly regarded university, provides
D. The Grameen Bank, founded in 1976 by economist Muhammad Yunis, who is married and has three children, provides
E. The Grameen Bank, founded in 1976 by economist Muhammad Yunis, who returned to Bangladesh in 1972, provides
See TEST PREP QUICK GRAMMAR GUIDE: Wordiness: Avoid Unnecessary Information

Item 12.
A. the only unique alternative
B. the sole unique alternative
C. the lone unique alternative
D. a unique alternative
E. the exclusive unique alternative
See TEST PREP QUICK GRAMMAR GUIDE: Wordiness: Wordy (and redundant)
Item 13.
A. via loans to prospective business owners, whether they are given only to those who fall below a certain level of assets.
B. via loans to prospective business owners, which are given only to those who fall below a certain level of assets.
C. via loans to prospective business owners are given only to those who fall below a certain level of assets.
D. via loans to prospective business owners. Which are given only to those who fall below a certain level of assets.
E. via loans to prospective business owners, when given only to those who fall below a certain level of assets.

Item 14.
A. Instead of putting up collateral, Grameen customers are accountable with one another,
B. Instead of putting up collateral, Grameen customers are accountable in one another,
C. Instead of putting up collateral, Grameen customers are accountable one another,
D. Instead of putting up collateral, Grameen customers are accountable at one another,
E. Instead of putting up collateral, Grameen customers are accountable to one another,

Item 15.
A. congregating in
B. and congregation in
C. congregate in
D. so congregating in
E. congregating between

Item 16.
A. small groups that meet as a week.
B. small groups that meet every weekly.
C. small weekly groups that meet.
D. small groups that meet weekly.
E. small groups weekly each meet.

Item 17.
A. If one member will fail to repay a loan, the entire group is unable to obtain credit
B. If one member fails to repay a loan, the entire group is unable to obtain credit
C. If one member do fail to repay a loan, the entire group is unable to obtain credit
D. If one member is fail to repay a loan, the entire group is unable to obtain credit
E. If one member failing to repay a loan, the entire group is unable to obtain credit

Item 18.
A. in the future thus, group members have a strong incentive to succeed and support
B. in the future and thus, group members have a strong incentive to succeed and support
C. in the future, thus, group members have a strong incentive to succeed and support
D. in the future, and, thus, group members have a strong incentive to succeed and support
E. in the future; thus, group members have a strong incentive to succeed and support
Item 19.
A. others in the group. In the last twenty years, the Grameen Bank has lent two billion dollars,
B. others in the group. In the last twenty years, the Grameen Bank has lended two billion dollars,
C. others in the group. In the last twenty years, the Grameen Bank lend two billion dollars,
D. others in the group. In the last twenty years, the Grameen Bank did lent two billion dollars,
E. others in the group. In the last twenty years, the Grameen Bank lends two billion dollars,

Item 20.
A. and his customers have repaid 97 percent of their loans.
B. and their customers have repaid 97 percent of their loans.
C. and its customers have repaid 97 percent of their loans.
D. and itself’s customers have repaid 97 percent of their loans.
E. and our customers have repaid 97 percent of their loans.

Item 21.
A. Such results have led to the creation of similar programs.
B. Such results: have led to the creation of similar programs.
C. Such results have led, to the creation of similar programs.
D. Such results, have led to the creation of similar programs.
E. Such results; have led to the creation of similar programs.

Item 22.
Suppose the writer wants to show that lending programs similar to the one administered by the Grameen Bank have been widely accepted. Which of the following phrases, if added to the last sentence of the essay, would best achieve that goal?
A. to make credit available
B. over the years
C. around the world
D. to encourage development
E. with some variations

Item 23.
Suppose the writer had been asked to write an essay explaining the influence of the credit system developed by Muhammad Yunis on the economy of the United States. Does this article fulfill that assignment?
A. Yes, because the article explains the work of Yunis and his success since 1976.
B. Yes, because the article says that there are similar credit programs in the United States.
C. Yes, because the economic influence of the Grameen Bank is felt throughout the world.
D. No, because the article says that similar credit systems have been established but does not specifically mention the United States.
E. No, because the article is concerned with the reputation of Yunis as an economist, rather than the credit system he developed.

Item 24.
Which of the following sentences, if added at the end of the first paragraph, would best make the point that there was a need for the Grameen Bank?
A. This led to a stagnant economy in Bangladesh.
B. Other people, however, are able to overcome a lack of credit.
C. Collateral, therefore, is essential for a healthy economy.
D. Of course, there are some start-up businesses that do not need loans at all.
E. The banks, however, are able to lend their money in other countries.
For additional placement testing information, please contact the testing center of your choice.

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<th>Building/Room</th>
<th>Phone</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brunswick University Center</td>
<td>BUC 214</td>
<td>216.987.3877</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corporate College West</td>
<td>CCW 221</td>
<td>216.987.5888</td>
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<td>Eastern Campus</td>
<td>ESS 1108</td>
<td>216.987.2256</td>
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<td>Metropolitan Campus</td>
<td>MSS 103</td>
<td>216.987.4311</td>
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<td>Western Campus</td>
<td>WTLG GT 115</td>
<td>216.987.5256</td>
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<tr>
<td>Westshore Campus</td>
<td>SHCS 130A</td>
<td>216.987.3887 or 216.987.3888</td>
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