



## Workshop: Writing Assessment

### Part A: Sentence Structure

1. If your roommate said the following sentences, which ones would you ask him or her to explain?
  - a. In the morning when the coffee machine is turned on.
  - b. Although I wrote the essay.
  - c. I took out the garbage.
  
2. You happen to see a note about student parties. Which of the following sentences catches your eye because there is not enough punctuation?
  - a. Bears can be huge the North American Kodiak stands 9 feet high and weighs over 1600 pounds I hope we don't see any at the party.
  - b. I enjoy going to student parties; I have an opportunity to visit with people I normally only see for a few minutes each day. Typically, the parties are quite popular.
  - c. The Kodiak bear would probably fit in at student parties.
  
3. Your younger sister is learning writing skills in school. She asks, "How many sentence types are in the English language?" Your response is
  - a. Two: simple and complex
  - b. Four: simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex
  - c. Sis, can't you see I'm busy doing my own homework.
  
4. Your great aunt is visiting from England. She was taught in the "old" school system and is helping your sister with her homework. Great Aunt Gertie indicates that one of the following sentences has a "comma splice." Which sentence does she indicate?
  - a. I studied all night, the exam the next day was very easy.
  - b. My mom baked a chocolate cake, and we ate it all during one meal.
  - c. The university that I attend, which is in Waterloo, is the best in Canada.

## Part B: Grammar

1. Which of these sentences seems properly constructed?
  - a. There are only one staff member attending the seminar.
  - b. She is tired today because her children were sick last evening.
  - c. The woman standing with all the children want to talk with you.
  - d. The boys and girls attends the Arts Computing Camp.
  
2. If you heard a young child say the following sentences, which ones would you want to help the child improve?
  - a. Rain fell on the night.
  - b. The swans in the river by Stratford will eat about your hand.
  - c. What is the name of your dog?
  
3. Again, Great Aunt Gertie is helping with your sister's homework. What prepositions would Great Aunt Gertie use to complete the following sentences?
  - a. We stayed \_\_\_\_\_ London for two weeks \_\_\_\_\_ the Allandale House.
  - b. The king confided \_\_\_\_\_ his cabinet ministers.
  - c. People learn \_\_\_\_\_ experience.
  - d. The blind man \_\_\_\_\_ his way home fell \_\_\_\_\_ the river but was saved \_\_\_\_\_ the shepherd who lives \_\_\_\_\_ the cottage \_\_\_\_\_ the bend \_\_\_\_\_ the stream.
  
4. Your neighbour is having a yard sale. The poster for advertising the sale has an error. Which sentence is **incorrect**?
  - a. The girl's bike is blue.
  - b. The childrens' toys are inexpensive.
  - c. Katherine and Jack's house is located in Kitchener.
  - d. Katherine's and Lorraine's flowers will be on sale.
  
5. Please match the columns

Were	_____	traveling to Rome during the spring break.
We're	_____	suitcases were lost at the airport.
Where	_____	is only an hour to shop and replace their clothes.
Wear	I would rather go to Rome _____	to Athens.
They're	If I travel to Rome, _____	I will see the Sistine Chapel.
There	_____	all going to a Greek restaurant tonight.
Their	The supervisors need to ensure that the students _____	suitable clothing.
Then	_____	are the road maps?
Than	_____	you planning on going to the Vatican City?

### Part C. Verbs

1. On some of the lockers in the SLC, you notice graffiti. You hear two students discussing the use of regular versus irregular verbs used in the graffiti. You are interested in their discussion, and you are very proud of yourself because you remember the answer from your grade five grammar class. Which sentence indicates a regular verb? Which sentence indicates an irregular verb?
  - a. I have **sung** that song many times.
  - b. I **walked** to school when I was young.
  
2. As you reflect on your grade five grammar classes, you still have difficulty remembering the difference between intransitive and transitive verbs. However, your nine-year-old sister is happy to offer two examples.
  - a. The dogs lie in their kennels (*lie* means “recline” and takes no object). Is this sentence an example of a transitive or intransitive verb?
  - b. The students lay the dinner trays on tables (*lay* means “place” and takes an object, the *trays*). Is this sentence an example of a transitive or intransitive verb?
  
3. Your parents are unable to go a school meeting, so they ask you to attend. During the parent/teacher meeting, the teacher explains that your sister is brilliant in grammar and is helping the other students understand the difference between helping and main verbs. On the way home, you ask your sister to explain the concept. Because of her explanation, you can now indicate the helping verbs and the main verbs in the following sentences:
  - a. The house should have been painted.
  - b. Who was calling?

### Part D. Essay Writing

The following questions are rhetorical; if you are unable to confidently provide answers then the Essay Writing workshop is for you.

- a. When you are writing a research paper, do you know how to break your work into manageable chunks?
- b. Do you know how to construct transitional sentences?
- c. Do you know the structure of a paragraph?
- d. Do you know one effective way to draw conclusions?

- e. Can you explain the difference between a topic and a thesis?
- f. Do you know the different types and/or patterns of essays?

### **Part E. Punctuation**

1. While on a work term, you are proofreading an article your director wrote. Your director uses the same sentence twice, but with different punctuation. Which sentence is **correct**?
  - a. The school offers a Ph.D..
  - b. The school offers a Ph.D.
2. Your friend at work knows that you have a good understanding of punctuation. She is studying for a TOEFL exam and asks you which sentences properly use a comma. Your answer is
  - a. I enjoy running, my friend enjoys cycling.
  - b. I enjoy running, but I do not like running marathons.
  - c. I enjoy running; therefore, I eat a lot of protein.
  - d. Although Jack writes poetry, his friends would rather play hockey.
  - f. Although, Jack writes poetry, his friends would rather play hockey.
3. You are preparing a report for an advisory committee on academic resources. You need to make two lists. You think of Great Aunt Gertie and know that she would punctuate the following sentences using colons, semi-colons, and commas. How would you imitate Great Aunt Gertie's punctuation?
  - a. The classroom has been supplied with all the necessary resources for the new term desks chairs a whiteboard markers an overhead projector and text books.
  - b. The campus has many buildings for the various departments Needles Hall Dana Porter Library Psychology Anthropology and Sociology Davis Centre Physical Athletics Complex Student Life Centre and Health Services.
4. You want to help your sister punctuate three sentences, and you are very proud that you can do it without the help of Great Aunt Gertie. How would you punctuate these sentences?
  - a. Even when students buy meal plans they often eat in restaurants.
  - b. Students often eat in restaurants although they buy meal plans.

- c. In a debate that has lasted centuries scientists use identical twins to argue for or against genetic destiny.
5. At work, a graduate student speaks English as a Second Language, and the student is experiencing difficulty using semi-colons and commas. You help the student by indicating which sentences are properly punctuated.
- a. Pygmies are in danger of extinction; because of encroaching development.
  - b. Pygmies are in danger of extinction because of encroaching development.
  - c. According to African authorities; only about 35,000 Pygmies exist today.
  - d. According to African authorities, only about 35,000 Pygmies exist today.
  - e. Teachers have heard all sorts of reasons why students do poorly; psychological problems, family illness, too much work, too little time.
  - f. Teachers have heard all sorts of reasons why students do poorly: psychological problems, family illness, too much work, too little time.
6. Great Aunt Gertie is helping your sister learn how to use possessives properly. If you were Aunt Gertie, how would you correct the sentences so that the possessives are correctly punctuated?
- a. Bill Boughtons skillful card tricks amaze children.
  - b. Anyones eyes would widen.
  - c. Most tricks will pique an adults curiosity, too.
  - d. Henry Jamess novels reward the patient reader.
  - e. The businesss customers filed suit.
  - f. Childrens educations are at stake.
  - g. We need to attract the medias attention.
  - h. The brother-in-laws business failed.

**I hope you found this quiz enjoyable. Perhaps, it prompted fond memories of grammar school days.**

**Thank you for your time!**

## Answers:

### Part A: Sentence Structure

1. A,B
2. A
3. B
4. A

### Part B: Grammar

1. b
2. a, b
3. a = in, at  
b = in  
c = from  
d = on, into, by, in, on, by
4. b
5. Match the columns:  
They are/We're traveling to Rome during the spring break.  
Their suitcases were lost at the airport.  
There is only an hour to shop and replace their clothes.  
I would rather go to Rome than to the Athens.  
If I travel to Rome, then I will see the Sistine Chapel.  
We're/They are all going to a Greek restaurant tonight.  
The supervisors need to ensure that the students wear suitable clothing.  
Where are the road maps?  
Were you planning on going to the Vatican City?

### Part C. Verbs

1. a = irregular  
b = regular
2. a = Intransitive  
b = Transitive
3. a = helping verbs: *should have been*, main verb: *painted*  
b = helping verb: *was*, main verb: *calling*

### Part D: Essay Writing

These questions are rhetorical, no answers are provided.

## Part E: Punctuation

1. b
2. b, c, d
3. a. The classroom has been supplied with all the necessary resources for the new term: desks, chairs, a whiteboard, markers, an overhead projector, and text books.  
  
b. The campus has many buildings for the various departments: Needles Hall; Dana Porter Library; Psychology, Anthropology, and Sociology; Davis Centre; Physical, Athletics Complex; Student Life Centre; and Health Services.
4. a. Even when students buy meal plans, they often eat in restaurants.  
  
b. Students often eat in restaurants although they buy meal plans.  
  
c. In a debate that has lasted centuries, scientists use identical twins to argue for or against genetic destiny.
5. b, f
6. a. Bill Boughton's skillful card tricks amaze children.  
b. Anyone's eyes would widen.  
c. Most tricks will pique an adult's curiosity, too.  
d. Henry James'(s) novels reward the patient reader.  
e. The business's customers filed suit.  
f. Children's educations are at stake.  
g. We need to attract the media's attention.  
h. The brother-in-law's business failed.