

English Language, Literature, and Composition: Content Knowledge (0041)

Test at a Glance

Test Name	English Language, Literature, and Composition: Content Knowledge		
Test Code	0041		
Time	2 hours		
Number of Questions	120		
Format	Multiple-choice questions		
	Content Categories	Approximate Number of Questions	Approximate Percentage of Examination
	I. Literature and Understanding Text	66	55%
	II. Language and Linguistics	18	15%
	III. Composition and Rhetoric	36	30%

About This Test

The English Language, Literature, and Composition: Content Knowledge test is designed to assess whether an examinee has the broad base of knowledge and competencies necessary to be licensed as a beginning teacher of English in a secondary school. The 120 multiple-choice questions are based on the material typically covered in a bachelor's degree program in English and English education.

The test covers literature, the English language, and composition and rhetoric.

This test may contain some questions that will not count toward your score.

Topics Covered

Representative descriptions of topics covered in each category are provided below.

I. Literature and Understanding Text

- Identifying major works and authors of American, British, World (including non-Western), and young adult literature from various cultures, genres, and periods
- Paraphrasing, comparing, and interpreting (literally and inferentially) various types of print and nonprint texts, e.g., fiction, poetry, essays, drama, and graphic representations
- Identifying and interpreting figurative language and other literary elements, e.g., metaphor, simile, voice, point of view, tone, style, setting, diction, mood, allusions, irony, clichés, analogy, hyperbole, personification, alliteration, and foreshadowing
- Understanding how patterns, structures, and characteristics of literary forms and genres may influence the meaning and effect of a work
- Situating authors and texts within historical, cultural, and critical contexts to aid in interpretation
- Recognizing and applying various strategic approaches to teaching reading, e.g., applying cueing systems, activating prior knowledge, constructing meaning through context, and employing metacognitive strategies

II. Language and Linguistics

- Understanding the principles of first- and second-language acquisition and development, including social, cultural, and historical influences and the nature of dialects
- Understanding elements of the history, development, and structure of the English language, including linguistic change, etymology, and processes of word formation
- Understanding and applying the conventions of grammar, mechanics, and usage, e.g., syntax, sentence types, sentence structure, parts of speech, modifiers, phrases and clauses, capitalization, and punctuation
- Understanding the elements of semantics, e.g., ambiguity, euphemism, connotation, and jargon, and how these elements affect meaning

III. Composition and Rhetoric

- Understanding and applying elements of teaching writing, including
 1. Individual and collaborative approaches to teaching writing, e.g., stages of writing processes (prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, publishing, evaluating) and how those stages work recursively
 2. Tools and response strategies for assessing student writing, e.g., peer review, portfolios, holistic scoring, scoring rubrics, self-assessment, and conferencing
 3. Common research and documentation techniques, e.g., gathering and evaluating data, using electronic and print media, and citing sources
- Understanding and evaluating rhetorical features in writing, including
 1. Purposes for writing and the nature of the audience within varying contexts
 2. Organization in writing, including creating and maintaining coherence
 3. Strategies for organization, development, and presentation of print, electronic, and visual media
 4. Discourse aims, e.g., creative, expository, persuasive
 5. Methods of argument and types of appeals, e.g., analogy, extended metaphor, allusion, and appeals to logic or emotion
 6. Style, tone, voice, and point of view as part of rhetorical strategy
 7. Recognition of bias and fallacies, distinctions between fact and opinion, and identification of stereotypes, inferences, and assumptions

Sample Test Questions

The sample questions that follow illustrate the kinds of questions in the test. They are not, however, representative of the entire scope of the test in either content or difficulty. Answers with explanations follow the questions.

Directions: Each of the questions or statements below is followed by four suggested answers or completions. Select the one that is best in each case.

Questions 1–2 are based on the following poem.

- When I was a child I knew red miners
dressed raggedly and wearing carbide lamps.
I saw them come down red hills to their camps
dyed with red dust from old Ishkooda mines.
- (5) Night after night I met them on the roads,
or on the streets in town I caught their glance;
the swing of dinner buckets in their hands,
and grumbling undermining all their words.
- I also lived in low cotton country
(10) where moonlight hovered over ripe haystacks,
or stumps of trees, and croppers' rotting shacks,
with famine, terror, flood, and plague near by,
where sentiment and hatred still held sway
and only bitter land was washed away.
- Margaret Walker

From *This is My Century: New and Collected Poems*, by Margaret Walker Alexander. Copyright © 1942, 1989 by The University of Georgia Press.

- In the octave, the poet recalls
 - the discontent of the miners
 - the happiness of the miners
 - the efficiency and competence of the miners
 - a conversation between a child and miners
- The last three lines suggest that “cotton country” (line 9) is a place where
 - only the land washes away; the hatred, terror, flood, and plague remain
 - all the bitter aspects of life such as hatred, terror, flood, and plague were washed away with the land
 - all the troubles and discontentment such as hatred, terror, flood, and plague are gone once the land is washed away
 - in a land where there are many problems, it will require a flood to rid society of the evils of famine, terror, and plague

- Grammar may be taught in two main ways—by experience with discourse that entails the varieties of word forms and sentence construction, or by analyzing dummy sentences and diagramming parts. Plentiful discursive experience is what really teaches grammar, for it exercises judgment and provides language intake, whereas formal grammar study has been proved irrelevant. Politics more than pedagogy retards the changing of the curriculum to fit this truth.

The author of the passage above argues that

- using language in a wide variety of situations improves grammar
 - good judgment can be improved by studying the rules of formal grammar
 - analyzing and diagramming provide exercise in logical thinking
 - formal study of grammar improves writing ability
- The book announced an insane world of dehumanization through terror in which the individual was systematically obliterated by an all-powerful elite. Its key phrases—Big Brother, doublethink, Newspeak, the Ministry of Peace (devoted to war), the Ministry of Truth (devoted to lies), the Ministry of Love (devoted to torture)—burned their way at once into the modern consciousness.

The passage above discusses

- E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India*
- Thomas Pynchon's *V.*
- George Orwell's *1984*
- Flannery O'Connor's *The Violent Bear It Away*

Questions 5–6 refer to the following passages.

- (A) If the rude throng pour with furious pace,
And hap to break thee from a friend's embrace,
Stop short; nor struggle through the crowd
in vain,
But watch with careful eye the passing train.
- (B) There lived a wife at Usher's Well,
And a wealthy wife was she;
She had three stout and stalwart sons,
And sent them o'er the sea.
- (C) She thanked men,—good! but thanked
Somehow— I know not how—as if she
ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame
This sort of trifling?
- (D) Upon the maple leaves
The dew shines red,
But on the lotus blossom
It has the pale transparence of tears.

5. Which is an example of the ballad stanza?

6. Which is from a dramatic monologue?

Questions 7–8 are based on the following excerpt from Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*.

This was all the account I got from Mrs. Fairfax of her employer and mine. There are people who seem to have no notion of sketching a character, or observing and describing salient points, either in persons or things: the good lady evidently belonged to this class; my queries puzzled, but did not draw her out. Mr. Rochester was Mr. Rochester in her eyes, a gentleman, a landed proprietor—nothing more: she inquired and searched no further, and evidently wondered at my wish to gain a more definite notion of his identity.

7. The passage suggests that the speaker would describe the “account” mentioned in the first sentence as

- (A) enlightening
(B) mystifying
(C) deficient
(D) erroneous

8. Mrs. Fairfax differs from the speaker in that Mrs. Fairfax

- (A) has more interest in the complexities of people's personalities
(B) judges people by their social station in life
(C) is more willing to take people at face value
(D) has a more positive opinion of Mr. Rochester

9. bawl . . . ball

mettle . . . metal

nun . . . none

The pairs above are examples of

- (A) antonyms
(B) synonyms
(C) homophones
(D) colloquialisms

10. Which of the following is the best description of traditional phonics instruction?

- (A) Students study lists of high-frequency words in order to increase reading speed and comprehension.
(B) Students are taught individual letter sounds first, followed by letter combination sounds and the rules of putting these combinations together to make words.
(C) Students are immersed in written language and encouraged to decode entire words using context clues.
(D) Students analyze patterns of organization and syntax as a way of learning to recognize common structures.

Questions 11–13 refer to the following sentences.

- I. Americans who do not speak French are at a disadvantage in Paris.
 - II. Americans, who do not speak French, are at a disadvantage in Paris.
11. Which of the following describes the meaning of sentence I ?
- (A) All Americans are at a disadvantage in Paris.
 - (B) Only those Americans who do not speak French are at a disadvantage in Paris.
 - (C) Some French-speaking Americans are at a disadvantage in Paris.
 - (D) Only French-speaking Americans are at a disadvantage in Paris.
12. Which of the following describes the meaning of sentence II ?
- (A) All Americans are at a disadvantage in Paris.
 - (B) Only those Americans who do not speak French are at a disadvantage in Paris.
 - (C) Some French-speaking Americans are at a disadvantage in Paris.
 - (D) Only French-speaking Americans are at a disadvantage in Paris.
13. The sentences can best serve as illustrations of which of the following?
- (A) The semantics of punctuation
 - (B) The differences between transformational and structural grammar
 - (C) The differences between value judgments and reports
 - (D) The importance of word order in determining meaning in English
14. In a holistic evaluation of student essays, evaluations are made on the basis of the
- (A) number and variety of errors made by each student
 - (B) average sentence length and the complexity demonstrated in each essay
 - (C) ability of each student to communicate in a variety of discourse modes
 - (D) overall quality of each student's essay in relation to the topic

Questions 15–17 refer to the following paragraphs.

- I. On a dark, secluded street stood three abandoned houses. The first had broken shutters and shattered windows. Next to it stood a dilapidated structure badly in need of paint. Adjacent, amid debris, stood a shack with graffiti scrawled across the door.
- II. Weeks before they decided on their destination, the seniors had already begun a massive fundraising project to help finance their class trip. When they were offered the choice between Rome and London, an overwhelming majority chose Rome. Then preparations began in earnest. In the months that followed, the students' enthusiasm escalated until the day the plane finally took off, carrying them toward an experience they would remember forever.
- III. Selecting a new car requires each buyer to weigh a number of factors. First to be considered is the car's appearance. Next, and even more critical, are the car's performance and safety ratings. Most significant to any prospective buyer, however, is the car's price.

15. Which of the following best describes the organization of paragraph I ?

- (A) Chronological order
- (B) Spatial order
- (C) Cause and effect
- (D) Order of importance

16. Which of the following best describes the organization of paragraph II ?

- (A) Chronological order
- (B) Spatial order
- (C) Cause and effect
- (D) Order of importance

17. Which of the following best describes the organization of paragraph III ?

- (A) Chronological order
- (B) Spatial order
- (C) Cause and effect
- (D) Order of importance

18. From the very beginning, I wrote to explain my own life to myself, and I invited any readers who chose to make the journey with me to join me on the high wire. I would work without a net and without the noise of the crowd to disturb me. The view from on high is dizzying, instructive. I do not record the world exactly as it comes to me but transform it by making it pass through a prism of fabulous stories I have collected on the way. I gather stories the way a lepidopterist hoards his chloroformed specimens of rare moths, or Costa Rican beetles. Stories are like vessels I use to interpret the world to myself.

-----Pat Conroy

Which of the following best describes the organization of the passage?

- (A) The author provides several explanations for taking a certain course of action.
- (B) The author uses analogies to explain his experience of a particular action.
- (C) The author makes a comparison between his own experiences and that of others in his profession.
- (D) The author chronicles the various phases of his work in a particular discipline.

Answers

1. The correct answer is A. In Margaret Walker’s poem, the octave recalls the poet’s awareness of the discontent of the miners; she caught the “grumbling undermining all their words.”
2. The correct answer is A. This is no sentimental picture of a rural idyll. The poet knows that life is hard for those who must wrest a living from the earth. Miners and farmers share this bitter truth and learn to live with it. They live in a world where “famine . . . and plague” are ever near.
3. Choice A is the best expression of the author’s argument. The author maintains that “plentiful discursive experience” is the most effective teacher of grammar. In this context, “discursive” experience means experience with discourse—that is, speech or texts that communicate ideas for some purpose and not merely as an exercise. The author argues that students learn the rules of grammar as part of the process of learning to understand the meaning of diverse texts.
4. The correct answer is C. The passage describes the themes and key phrases of Orwell’s *1984*.
5. The correct answer is B. The ballad stanza is a quatrain of alternating tetrameter and trimeter lines rhyming abcb.
6. The correct answer is C. The lines are from Browning’s dramatic monologue “My Last Duchess.” One distinguishing characteristic of such a poem is that it consists of the words of a single character who reveals in his speech his own nature as well as the dramatic situation. Here, the Duke is displeased by his wife’s failure to value his “gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name.” He reads her graciousness in accepting gifts from others as a devaluing of his gift.
7. The correct answer is C. The speaker indicates that Mrs. Fairfax is one of those people who has “no notion of sketching a character, or observing and describing salient points, either in persons or things.” Thus it can be inferred that Mrs. Fairfax’s description of Mr. Rochester seemed deficient to the speaker. Option A does not key because Mrs. Fairfax’s description left the speaker with a desire to “gain a more definite notion of his identity.” Options B and D do not key because the passage does not indicate that Mrs. Fairfax gave puzzling or inaccurate information about Mr. Rochester.
8. The correct answer is C. Mrs. Fairfax sees that Mr. Rochester is “a gentleman, a landed proprietor” and she is content knowing only these external facts about Mr. Rochester. The speaker suggests that she, in contrast, would like to know more about Mr. Rochester’s identity. Option A does not key because it is true of the speaker rather than of Mrs. Fairfax. Options B and D do not key because no indication is given of either character’s judgment or opinion of Mr. Rochester.
9. The correct answer is C. The words in each pair sound alike despite their differences in spelling and meaning. They are homophones.
10. The correct answer is B, which is a typical definition of traditional phonics instruction. Choice C is a very general description of whole-language instruction, and A and D represent potential strategies for increasing reading comprehension.
11. Choice B is the best answer. Because the adjective clause “who do not speak French” is not set off by commas in sentence I, it is restrictive and therefore essential to the meaning of the sentence. In this case, the subject of the sentence—“Americans who do not speak French”—would be simply “Americans” if the adjective clause were deleted. Since “Americans who do not speak French” is clearly a subset of all Americans, choice A cannot be correct. The statement includes nothing to support choice C and contradicts choice D.
12. Choice A is the best answer. In sentence II, the adjective clause “who do not speak French” is set off by commas, and it is therefore nonrestrictive. Grammatically, it provides additional information about the subject, “Americans,” but its omission would not essentially change the meaning of the sentence. The sentence makes the statement that, as a total group, Americans do not speak French and are at a disadvantage in Paris, untrue though that statement may be. Choices B, C, and D either state or imply that some Americans speak French; therefore, these statements cannot be correct.
13. The sentences illustrate how drastically meaning can be changed by the presence or absence of commas. In this case, the meaning of the sentences changes dramatically depending on whether the adjective clauses are nonrestrictive (not essential to the meaning of the sentence) or restrictive (essential to the meaning of the sentence). Since these semantic differences are indicated by commas, the correct choice is A.

14. The correct answer is D. Holistic evaluation is based on the premise that the overall impact of an essay depends on the integration of different elements of writing, such as organization, development, sentence structure, word choice, and mechanics. Holistic evaluators assign a single score to a student essay based on the total effect to which these elements contribute. Holistic evaluation does not rely on a count of errors, as described by choice A, nor does it focus exclusively on one or two specific writing skills, as do the methods of evaluation suggested by choices B and C.

15. Choice B is the best answer. Paragraph I describes three houses standing in a row and relates them to one another according to where in that row each is situated. The words “next to” and “adjacent” are typical of the kinds of words used in descriptions of spatial relationships.

16. Choice A is the best answer. Paragraph II describes a series of events that take place over the course of several months. Words and phrases such as “Weeks before,” “When,” “Then,” and “In the months that followed” relate events sequentially.

17. Choice D is the best answer. The organization of paragraph III reflects an order of increasing importance. The features of the car are arranged from the one that should least affect the prospective buyer’s decision (appearance) to the one that should most influence the buyer’s decision (price). Words such as “more” and “Most” help establish the comparative importance of each feature.

18. The correct answer is B. In the excerpt, Conroy discusses his experience as a writer. He compares it both to being a trapeze artist in a high wire act and to a lepidopterist collecting bugs. Thus he uses analogies to explain his experience. A is incorrect because the author provides only one explanation for why he writes: to explain his life to himself. C and D are incorrect because the author neither discusses other writers nor various phases of his life as a writer.



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