

NC DAP

(NORTH CAROLINA DIAGNOSTIC
ASSESSMENT AND PLACEMENT)

WRITEPLACER[®], READING, AND REVISING AND EDITING WRITING STUDY GUIDE

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All students are encouraged to prepare for placement testing. Not reviewing for the placement tests could result in students being placed into courses below their actual skill level. This can delay student progress, so prepare as best you can!

The placement test will determine which English and math courses you will take when you attend Coastal. All of our courses are designed to help you succeed, so you will be in good hands, no matter where you place.

This study guide contains reminders, testing tips, an overview of the test, and sample questions.

The faculty and staff of Coastal Carolina Community College wish you the best of luck as you embark on your educational path. We look forward to working with you!



Reminders

- The test is computerized; you will be furnished scrap paper and pencil to make notes and/or calculations.
- Bring a photo ID and your student ID number on test day.
- With the exception of the essay (2 hour limit).
- Once an answer is submitted, it cannot be changed.
- Unauthorized devices such as cell phones and iPads are not allowed.
- Work by yourself.

Testing Tips

- Get plenty of rest the night before you plan to take the test.
- Make sure you eat a good breakfast or lunch prior to testing.
- Take the test seriously; you may only test twice in a 12 month period.
- Don't be discouraged; this test is designed to feel difficult.
- Write as much as you can for the essay; don't just stop when you reach the required word count. Whatever you do, don't skip this section!

English and Reading Overview

The NCCCS Diagnostic and Placement English and Reading test is made up of three sections: WritePlacer®, Reading, and Revising and Editing Writing. (You will complete the WritePlacer® first.)

WritePlacer® — This section asks you to compose a 300-600 word essay and measures your ability to write effectively, which is critical to academic success. You will be asked to read a short passage and address a prompt based on the passage. You will have up to two hours to complete this portion of the test.

The following six characteristics of writing will be considered:

- Purpose and Focus
- Organization and Structure
- Development and Support
- Sentence Variety and Style
- Mechanical Conventions
- Critical Thinking

Reading — This section contains 30 questions. You will be asked to read short passages and answer questions pertaining to the passages.

Topics covered in this section include:

- Main Idea/Summary
- Supporting Detail/Paraphrase
- Vocabulary
- Organization
- Inference
- Point of View, Fact-Opinion, and Bias
- Purpose/Tone
- Author's Use of Language

Revising and Editing Writing — This section contains 20 questions. You will be asked to read essay drafts and answer questions pertaining to the drafts.

Topics covered in this section include:

- Transitions
- Sentence Combining
- Revising Sentences, Inserting Sentences, and Deleting Sentences
- Topic Sentences, Thesis Statements, and Concluding Sentences
- Grammar, Mechanics, Sentence Structure, and Word Choice

Sample Test Questions

WritePlacer®

In the writing section of the test, you will be asked to write a multiple-paragraph writing sample of about 300–600 words. You will be given a topic, such as the example below. You should use the time available to plan, write, review and edit what you have written. Please read the assignment carefully before you begin to write:

Some schools require each student to participate in an organized school sport chosen by the student. People at these schools argue that athletics is an important part of the educational experience and that there should be a rule requiring participation. Others argue that students should be free to decide whether or not they wish to participate in organized school sports. **Write an essay for a classroom instructor in which you take a position on whether participation in organized school athletics should be required.** Be sure to defend your position with logical arguments and appropriate examples. Your essay must be 300–600 words in length.

- ❖ *Pay close attention to the bold sentence above. This is what the prompt is asking you to do. Please note: This will not be bold on the actual test. You will need to determine what the prompt is asking of you.*

Step 1: Brainstorm some ideas.

- Your time begins once you read the prompt.
- Brainstorm some ideas by jotting down *everything* you can think of regarding the topic on scrap paper or on the computer.

Step 2: Establish the “bones” of your essay.

- What is your position (argument)?
- Why do you think this? (Give reasons and be able to explain each reason.)
- You should be able to form a rough outline at this point.
- Don’t overthink your argument. If you keep going back and forth, changing your mind, you will waste time, and your essay may appear confusing.

Step 3: Organize your thoughts.

- Compose complete sentences and paragraphs.
- Organize paragraphs in a logical manner.

Step 4: Polish your essay.

- Read your essay closely, paying attention to each word and each punctuation mark.
- Edit what you think needs to be changed.
- Use a variety of complete sentences, some long and some short.
- Use capital letters, where appropriate, and correct punctuation.
- Spell out words; avoid using “text-speak” or abbreviations.

Reading

In the reading section, you will be asked to read a short paragraph (passage) and answer a question. One example is below:

Polyvinyl chloride, or PVC, is used in most water-carrying pipes in the United States. Known for their resistance to the corrosion that can be caused by water, PVC pipes are more durable than the metal pipes of old. As useful as PVC is, it may be surprising that it was accidentally discovered in 1835 by Henri Victor Regnault, who observed a mysterious white solid plastic forming inside some test tubes that were left exposed to sunlight in his lab.

The main idea of the passage is that PVC, the material used in water pipes,

- A. is formed from a rare chemical compound
- B. was discovered by accident
- C. was Regnault's only major scientific discovery
- D. is less pliable than metal

Choice (B) is correct. The main idea of the passage is that PVC, the durable plastic used in many water pipes, was discovered by accident when Henri Victor Regnault—who it seems was not trying to invent a plastic—"observed a mysterious white solid plastic forming inside some test tubes that were left exposed to sunlight in his lab." Choices (A), (C), and (D) are incorrect. The author of the passage gives no indication that PVC is formed from a rare or unusual chemical compound, that PVC was Regnault's only major scientific discovery, or that PVC is less pliable or flexible than metal.

For other reading questions, you will be asked to read two paragraphs (passages) and answer a question. One example is below:

Passage 1

As computer programs and online services continue to advance, paperless offices are growing in popularity. Going paperless is certainly a more environmentally friendly option than using reams of paper. A paperless office may also save on various overhead expenses. However, it may be expensive in the long run to go paperless, depending on the size and needs of your company. Another option might be using less paper instead of attempting a completely paperless office. This way, your company can enjoy some advantages of a paperless system while avoiding some of the disadvantages.

Passage 2

Many companies today are choosing not to go paperless because of the high costs of doing so. Despite the “green” advantages, going paperless requires companies to maintain up-to-date hardware and software, and upgrades often come at a steep cost. Businesses may need to hire an IT person to monitor their systems, train new users and perform regular backups of information. Ensuring online security is also vital, and the more people a company has using a system, the closer the system must be monitored for privacy issues and viruses. It takes a lot of time and money to go paperless, and for many small businesses, it’s just not worth the expense.

The author of Passage 1 would most likely criticize the author of Passage 2 for

- A. overemphasizing the significance of a company’s size
- B. overlooking the environmental benefits of going paperless
- C. failing to consider an alternative to eliminating all paper
- D. underestimating the consequences of technological issues

Choice (C) is correct. The author of Passage 2 discusses the high costs of “going paperless” and concludes that “for many small businesses, it’s just not worth the expense.” The author of Passage 1 acknowledges the costs of going paperless (“it may be expensive in the long run”), but he or she proposes another option: using less paper. The author of Passage 1 would most likely criticize the author of Passage 2 for failing to consider the option of reducing, but not completely eliminating, paper in an office. Choice (A) is incorrect because the author of Passage 2 does not place much emphasis on the size of a company. Choice (B) is incorrect because the author of Passage 2 does note “the ‘green’ advantages” of going paperless. And choice (D) is incorrect because the author of Passage 2 speaks of technological considerations throughout the passage.

Revising and Editing Writing

In the revising and editing section of the test, you will be asked to read a short essay draft and answer a series of questions. (Please note: Each sentence will be numbered. You will need to pay attention to these numbers in order to answer many of the questions.)

(1) There is a new fitness fad in California that provides exercise for dogs and fun for their owners. (2) The sport, called urban mushing, is similar to traditional dogsledding, only without the sleds or the miles of bleak, rural, frozen terrain. (3) Urban mushing is an activity for city residents.

(4) For over one thousand years, dog-powered sleds have been used for hunting and travel by indigenous peoples across the northern reaches of Siberia and North America. (5) Interestingly, the people known as Eskimos in the U.S. are called Inuit in Canada. (6) However, it was not until the Alaska Gold Rush in the late 1800s that dogsledding, or

mushing, became known as a sport. (7) Before long, dogsled races were popping up throughout Alaska and the Northwest. (8) Dogsled racing involves being pulled various distances on a sled by a single dog or a team of dogs. (9) The increasingly popular pastime was even a demonstration sport at the 1932 and 1952 Olympics.

(10) Over the years, dogsled races spread across North America, northern Europe, and beyond. (11) As participation in the races grew, they sought out a way to keep the dogs in shape during warmer seasons. (12) Thus urban mushing was born. (13) Started in Seattle and now practiced all over the West Coast, the new sport involves harnessing dogs to bicycles, scooters, or carts instead of sleds. (14) Dogs seem to love the exercise and their mushers enjoy an exciting ride through city parks, on bike paths and even on neighborhood streets. (15) As the trend catches on, can it be long before we start measuring vehicle performance in dogpower instead of horsepower?

1. In context, which of the following is best to insert at the beginning of sentence 3 (reproduced below)?

Urban mushing is an activity for city residents.

- A. Despite this,
- B. For all these reasons,
- C. As the name indicates,
- D. Yet in an unexpected way,

Choice (C) is correct. Sentence 2 indicates that the sport of “urban mushing” resembles “traditional dogsledding, only without the sleds or the...frozen terrain.” Sentence 3 states that this sport is “for city residents”—a fact that readers who are paying attention already know, since “urban” means “city.” Of the options, the best transition between sentence 2 and sentence 3 is “As the name indicates.” Choices (A), (B), and (D) suggest relationships between the two sentences that are not supported by the passage.

2. In context, where would the following sentence best be placed?

The American Dog Derby, for example, was started in Ashton, Idaho, in 1917 and is still held today.

- A. Immediately after sentence 4
- B. Immediately after sentence 6
- C. Immediately after sentence 7
- D. Immediately after sentence 12

Choice (C) is correct. The new sentence refers to “The American Dog Derby” and notes that this event began in Idaho in 1917 and is still in existence. The Derby is also an “example” of something (“The American Dog Derby, for example...”). Sentence 7 indicates that “dogsled races were popping up throughout Alaska and the Northwest” in the years following the

“Alaska Gold Rush in the late 1800s” mentioned in sentence 6). “The American Dog Derby,” which began in the northwestern state of Idaho in 1917, is an example that supports the claim made in sentence 7. The new sentence makes the most sense if placed directly after sentence 7.

3. In sentence 11 (reproduced below), which of the following best replaces “they”?
As participation in the races grew, they sought out a way to keep the dogs in shape during warmer seasons.

- A. Eskimos
- B. Olympic athletes
- C. Californians
- D. dogsled racers

Choice (D) is correct. Sentence 11 uses the pronoun “they” ambiguously; it is unclear at first glance who “sought out a way to keep the dogs in shape during winter seasons.” To find the answer, readers must look closely at the passage. Sentence 10 refers to “dogsled races,” and sentence 11 states that “As participation in the races grew,” people looked for a way to keep dogs in shape. These people started the sport of “urban mushing” in Seattle. Who were “they”? There is no reason to think that “Eskimos,” “Olympic athletes,” or “Californians” created the sport; context indicates that it was “dogsled racers.”

4. Which of the following sentences contains irrelevant information and should be deleted from the passage?

- A. Sentence 2
- B. Sentence 5
- C. Sentence 12
- D. Sentence 13

Choice (B) is correct. Sentence 5 remarks that “Interestingly, the people known as Eskimos in the United States are called Inuit in Canada.” The passage does mention Eskimos indirectly (they are the “indigenous peoples” referred to in sentence 4). However, sentence 5 is not about the passage’s main topic, urban mushing, and does not provide a key link with any other sentence in the passage. Sentence 5 is essentially irrelevant and should be deleted. In contrast, sentences 2, 12, and 13 all provide important information and links to other sentences.

MORE SAMPLE QUESTIONS:

More sample questions, including math questions, are available at the following link:

<http://media.collegeboard.com/digitalServices/pdf/accuplacer/nc-sample-questions.pdf>



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**GOOD LUCK ON THE PLACEMENT TEST.
WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING
YOU IN CLASS!**