PROFESSIONAL READINESS EXAM

DATA FROM COMPARABLE INSTITUTION

AREAS TO STUDY

Paragraph Development and Organization
- Topic sentence
- Focus/Cohesion: Eliminate off-topic sentence
- Focus/Cohesion: Eliminate redundant sentence
- Transitions
- Development: Add the following sentence
- Development: Reorder sentences or paragraphs

Usage
- Verb tense and agreement
- Parallel structure
- Appropriate word choice
- Homonyms
- Spelling
- Wordiness
- Adjective, adverb use
- Pronoun usage

Punctuation
- Commas, colon, semicolon
- Fragments
- Run-on sentences
- Capitalization

36 Questions, 50 percent of total writing score.

HELPFUL RESOURCE

The Purdue Online Writing Lab
https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/
PROFESSIONAL READINESS EXAM—TEST YOURSELF

A checklist based on the 20 most common grammar mistakes in order of frequency.

1. No comma after introductory element
2. Vague pronoun reference
3. No comma in compound sentence
4. Wrong word
5. No comma in nonrestrictive element
6. Wrong/missing inflected endings
7. Wrong or missing prepositions
8. Comma splice
9. Possessive apostrophe error
10. Tense shift
11. Unnecessary shift in person
12. Sentence fragment
13. Wrong tense or verb form
14. Subject-verb agreement
15. Lack of comma in series
16. Pronoun agreement error
17. Unnecessary comma with restrictive element
18. Run-on or fused sentence
19. Dangling or misplaced modifier
20. Its versus it’s error

from Harry Noden’s Image Grammar (1999)

Instructions: mark each sentence as C if it is grammatically correct, I if it is incorrect or ? if you are uncertain. Wrong answers count as a minus two. A question mark, indicating you are uncertain only counts as a minus one. Keep in mind that errors may be of any variety: spelling, punctuation, capitalization, or usage.

1. Her choice will greatly effect the outcome.
2. We have allot of work to do.
3. Mottsburgh is a busy industrial city, thousands of cars and trucks move through it every day.
4. “I suppose”, she remarked “that success comes only with time.”
5. The company should receive the package tomorrow.
6. Its impressive to hear what she has done.
7. She was late, however, she did make the presentation.
8. Give the book to whom?
9. When the ship arrives we can begin the journey.
10. We rafted down the grand mountain river.
11. The name of the book was “Outbreak.”
12. There were four in the group: Ann, Jim, Theo, and Amanda.
13. He sings good.
14. You shouldn’t lie on the wet grass.
15. He paid all the interest on the principal.
16. I wish to go irregardless of his decision.
17. He doesn’t know history very well. As you can see from his answers in class.
18. He imagined that Hawking would have all the answers but he just posed more questions.
19. Spiraling in the Andromeda Galaxy, Dr. Vilhelm insists that there is alien life on the Andromeda planet called Lanulos.
20. We packed all of our luggage, then we were on our way to the airport.
Read the passage below; then answer the questions that follow.

1 Until the 1990s, Olympic figure skating included a segment called “compulsory figures,” in which athletes would slowly trace precise, intricate shapes into the ice, and judges would inspect the resulting swirls and loops to determine much of the skater’s overall score. 2 These “figures” gave the sport its name, but they were gradually phased out because not even the most ardent skating fans would watch the tedious process on TV. 3 Today’s competitive figure skaters only do what their ancestors called the “free skating” portion—fast-paced programs set to music, packed with jumps and dance moves.

4 When American figure skater Dorothy Hamill won gold in the ladies’ single competition in 1976, however, compulsory figures were the first event. 5 They played a decisive role in whether the skater would medal. 6 Hamill adored skating, but training to execute the figures perfectly at the Olympia Halle in Innsbruck that year made her miserable.

7 “I would spend four hours a day going in circles and trying to perfect the compulsory figures, and no one ever saw those but the judges,” Hamill said. 8 “They were so complicated and so hard to perfect. 9 I changed coaches just to get someone to help me with my compulsory figures.”

10 At the time, Hamill was 19 years old and living in Colorado with her mother, who had moved with her daughter from their family’s home in Connecticut so that Hamill could focus on training to the exclusion of almost everything else. 11 Each day, she awoke early and skated in the morning, then went to school, then skated after school, then eating dinner, and then skated for another two hours.

12 Hamill said part of what spurred her on were the sacrifices that her parents and coaches had made. 13 She wasn’t very interested in school, and most of the family’s money went to her training. 14 It was skating or bust. 15 It was during this time that Hamil began wearing her hair in a short wedge cut, a trend that would sweep the nation after her Olympic gold medal.

16 “I had a commitment to myself and all the people who were helping me skate,” she said. 17 “It’s like a marriage, you don’t walk away from it. 18 It was a huge investment in everyone’s life—my mom and my brothers and sisters and coaches.”

1. Which underlined word in the passage should be replaced by a more appropriate word?
   A. determine
   B. ancestors
   C. decisive
   D. miserable

2. Which of the following changes is needed to correct a run-on sentence?
   A. Part 1: change the comma after “ice” to a semicolon.
   B. Part 4: change the comma after “however” to a semicolon.
   C. Part 7: insert a comma after “circles.”
   D. Part 17: change the comma after “marriage” to a semicolon.

3. Which of the following parts should be edited to maintain the focus of the paragraph?
   A. Part 3
   B. Part 6
   C. Part 11
   D. Part 15

4. Which of the following changes is needed to correct an error in verb tense?
   A. Part 6: change “training” to “trained.”
   B. Part 7: change “said” to “says.”
   C. Part 11: change “eating” to “ate.”
   D. Part 14: change “was” to “is.”

5. Which of the following sentences best summarizes the passage?
   A. Dorothy Hamil worked very diligently to win a gold medal at the 1976 Olympics.
   B. Young people today should take inspiration from the story of Dorothy Hamil.
   C. Compulsory figures, a component of competitive figure skating that once demanded hours of practice from Olympic skaters, is no longer a part of the modern Olympics.
   D. Medaling at the Olympics requires enormous sacrifices from athletes, their coaches, and their families.
Read the passage below; then answer the questions that follow.

1 A new weather forecasting model based on autumn snowfall in Siberia could help meteorologists predict winter temperatures and snowfall in the United States and Europe.

2 The model results, reported in the Journal of Climate, could help make climate prediction more accurate and reliable for fields such as agriculture, water management, and general weather risks. At least $3 trillion of the U.S. economy is sensitive to weather conditions, estimates the National Science Foundation. Many U.S. industries are affected by variations in weather conditions.

3 Scientists used weather information from October, a month when snow begins to pile up across Siberia and when the Siberian high develops. This area of high pressure is the prime weather pattern in the region. The cold air above Siberia enhances atmospheric disturbances, which propagate into the upper level of the atmosphere, a part of the atmosphere called the stratosphere.

4 “This eventually descends from the stratosphere to Earth’s surface over a week or two in January, making for a warmer winter in Northern Hemisphere high latitudes”, Cohen said. “However, in mid-latitudes it turns colder, so winters in the northeastern U.S. and eastern Europe are likely to be colder and snowier than normal.”

5 In general, greater-than-average snowfall causes weather patterns in the Arctic to shift southward into mid-latitudes during the winter, while below-average snowfall in Siberia sends the weather patterns poleward.

*Passage taken from http://www.livescience.com/*
6. Which underlined word in the passage should be replaced by a more appropriate word?
   A. model
   B. sensitive
   C. prime
   D. propagate

7. Which of the following parts should be edited to eliminate unnecessary repetition or redundancy?
   A. Part 4
   B. Part 6
   C. Part 7
   D. Part 10

8. Which of the following parts should be edited to eliminate wordiness?
   A. Part 1
   B. Part 7
   C. Part 8
   D. Part 10

9. Which of the following parts should be changed to correct an error?
   A. Part 2: change italics to quotation marks for title.
   B. Part 2: omit comma after “management.”
   C. Part 8: place comma inside quotation marks.
   D. Part 9: capitalize “northeastern” and “eastern.”

10. Which of the following sentences, if used as Part 11, effectively gives emphasis to the main idea of the passage?
    A. But no one can really predict when or why such shifts will happen.
    B. The new forecasting model could help predict when such shifts will occur, potentially benefiting weather-dependent economies in the U.S. and Europe.
    C. Many scientists disagree over the accuracy of the forecasting model.
    D. Wildlife in the Artic is also likely to be affected by shifts in snowfall.