

Illinois Certification Testing System

STUDY GUIDE

Basic Skills (096)



Illinois State Board of Education

An Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer
Printed by the Authority of the State of Illinois

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE ILLINOIS CERTIFICATION TESTING SYSTEM

PROGRAM OVERVIEW	1-1
For Further Information	1-2
Description of the Tests	1-3
Test Administration	1-4
Score Reports	1-4
HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE TEST	1-5
Assess Your Knowledge and Test Skills	1-5
Practice Your Test-Taking Skills	1-5
THE DAY OF THE TEST: HELPFUL HINTS	1-5
Preparation	1-5
Test-Taking Tips	1-5
TEST DIRECTIONS	1-7

FIELD-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

INTRODUCTION	2-1
BASIC SKILLS DIAGNOSTIC PRACTICE TEST	2-1
ORGANIZATION OF THE TEST STANDARDS	2-2
BASIC SKILLS TEST STANDARDS	2-3
BASIC SKILLS PRACTICE MULTIPLE-CHOICE TEST QUESTIONS	2-8
ANSWER KEY	2-30
PRACTICE CONSTRUCTED-RESPONSE WRITING ASSIGNMENT	2-32
Overview	2-32
Practice Writing Assignment	2-33
Sample Response for the Writing Assignment	2-34
EXPLANATION OF THE SCORING PROCESS FOR THE CONSTRUCTED-RESPONSE WRITING ASSIGNMENT	2-35
The Scoring Process	2-35
Performance Characteristics for the Basic Skills Constructed-Response Writing Assignment	2-36
Scoring Scale for the Basic Skills Constructed-Response Writing Assignment	2-37
EXPLANATION OF THE BASIC SKILLS TEST SCORE REPORT	2-39
Overview	2-39
Reading Your Report: A Sample	2-40
HOW TO INTERPRET THE BASIC SKILLS TEST WRITING SCORE	2-40
Writing Subarea Performance Characteristics	2-40

Readers should be advised that this study guide, including many of the excerpts used herein, is protected by federal copyright law.

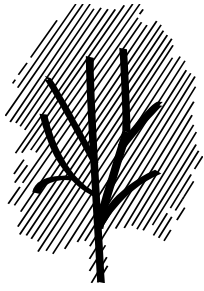
Copyright © 2006 by the Illinois State Board of Education
NES and its logo are trademarks in the U.S. and/or other countries of Pearson Education, Inc. or its affiliate(s).



General Information About the Illinois Certification Testing System

The first section of the study guide is available in a separate PDF file. Click the link below to view or print this section.

[General Information About the Illinois Certification Testing System](#)



Field-Specific Information

- **Test Subareas and Objectives**
- **Practice Test Questions**
- **Practice Constructed-Response Assignment**
- **Explanation of the Test Score Report**

INTRODUCTION

This section includes the Basic Skills test standards, practice multiple-choice test questions, answers to the practice test questions, a practice constructed-response writing assignment and sample response, an explanation of the scoring process for the constructed-response assignment, and a Basic Skills test score report explanation.

BASIC SKILLS DIAGNOSTIC PRACTICE TEST

The new ICTS Basic Skills Diagnostic Practice Test is now available online. The diagnostic practice test program is free of charge and contains a full-length practice test designed to simulate the ICTS Basic Skills test. The diagnostic practice test program offers a tutorial providing instructions on how to use and navigate through the practice test. It also offers automated scoring of the multiple-choice questions and correct answer explanations.

You may download this computer-administered diagnostic practice test program for the Basic Skills test at the ICTS Web site, www.icts.nesinc.com, by selecting "Basic Skills Diagnostic Practice Test." For individuals who do not wish to, or are not able to, download this program, a paper-based version of the practice test is also provided as a PDF file on the ICTS Web site.

ORGANIZATION OF THE TEST STANDARDS

The Basic Skills test is designed to assess a candidate's knowledge of fundamental skills in reading comprehension, language arts, and writing. The test is based on current and relevant expectations for teacher preparation students and for teachers in Illinois. This study guide is designed to focus your preparation by helping you become familiar with the format and content to be covered on the Basic Skills test. The complete set of test standards is provided on pages 2-3 to 2-7.

The content covered by the Basic Skills test is organized into three subareas, which define the content of the test. Within each subarea, the content is further defined by a set of standards. Each standard comprises two major parts:

1. the *standard statement*, which broadly defines the basic skills that an entry-level educator needs to know; and
2. the *descriptive statements*, which describe in greater detail the types of knowledge and skills covered by the test standard.

The Basic Skills test standards are broad, conceptual, and meaningful statements, written in language that reflects the skills, knowledge, and understanding that an entry-level teacher needs in order to teach effectively in an Illinois classroom and/or to successfully complete an Illinois teacher preparation program. A test consists of test questions that measure an examinee's mastery of these test standards.

Below is an example of a test standard statement and its accompanying descriptive statements for the Basic Skills test.

Standard Statement

Determine the meaning of words and phrases in context.

Descriptive Statements

- Use context clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words or words with multiple meanings.
- Recognize the correct use of commonly misused pairs (e.g., affect/effect) in a passage.
- Determine the meaning of figurative or colloquial language in a passage.
- Identify appropriate synonyms or antonyms for words in a passage.

SUBAREA I—READING COMPREHENSION

The skills addressed in this subarea require demonstration of literal, inferential, and critical reading skills in a variety of written materials—including college-level texts and original source documents—in the areas of physical and life sciences, humanities and fine arts, and the social and behavioral sciences.

Standard 1 Determine the meaning of words and phrases in context.

The following are examples of content that may be covered under this standard.

- Use context clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words or words with multiple meanings.
- Recognize the correct use of commonly misused pairs (e.g., affect/effect) in a passage.
- Determine the meaning of figurative or colloquial language in a passage.
- Identify appropriate synonyms or antonyms for words in a passage.

Standard 2 Understand the main idea and supporting details in written material.

The following are examples of content that may be covered under this standard.

- Identify the stated main idea of a paragraph or passage.
- Establish the sequence of events or steps presented in a passage.
- Recognize information that supports, illustrates, or elaborates the main idea of a paragraph or a passage.
- Identify the meaning of a figurative expression in a passage.

Standard 3 Apply skills of inference and interpretation to a variety of written materials.

The following are examples of content that may be covered under this standard.

- Recognize a writer's implied purpose for writing (e.g., to persuade, to describe).
- Identify the statement that best expresses the implied main idea of a paragraph or passage.
- Recognize implied cause-and-effect relationships in a passage.
- Interpret the content, word choice, and phrasing of a passage to determine a writer's opinions, point of view, or position on an issue.

Standard 4 Analyze relationships among ideas in written material.

The following are examples of content that may be covered under this standard.

- Recognize similarities and differences among ideas in a passage.
- Analyze relationships between ideas in opposition (e.g., pro and con).
- Select solutions to problems based on information presented in written material.
- Draw conclusions from information stated or implied in a passage.

Standard 5 Use critical reasoning skills to evaluate written material.

The following are examples of content that may be covered under this standard.

- Recognize stated or implied assumptions on which the validity of an argument depends.
- Determine the relevance of specific facts, examples, or graphic data to a writer's argument.
- Recognize fallacies in the logic of a writer's argument.
- Recognize qualifying language and distinguish between fact and opinion in written material.
- Assess the credibility, objectivity, or bias of the author of a passage or the author's sources.

Standard 6 Apply skills for outlining and summarizing written materials and interpreting information presented in graphs or tables.

The following are examples of content that may be covered under this standard.

- Organize the main ideas in a passage into an outline or another form of graphic or tabular organization.
- Identify an accurate summary of a passage.
- Interpret information presented in charts, graphs, or tables.

SUBAREA II—LANGUAGE ARTS

The skills addressed in this subarea require demonstration of the ability to write effectively at the college level, with control over the conventions of edited English in the United States and competence in drafting, organizing, and revising written work, as well as the ability to exercise critical thinking and reflection in written communications.

A. GRAMMAR AND USAGE

Standard 7 Demonstrate command of standard usage in edited English in the United States.

The following are examples of content that may be covered under this standard.

- Understand the standard use of verbs (e.g., subject-verb agreement, verb tense, consistency of tense).
- Identify and apply the standard use of pronouns (e.g., pronoun-antecedent agreement, standard pronoun case, use of possessive pronouns, standard use of relative and demonstrative pronouns).
- Recognize and apply the standard use of modifiers (e.g., adverbs, adjectives, prepositional phrases).

Standard 8 Understand and apply knowledge of mechanical conventions in edited English in the United States.

The following are examples of content that may be covered under this standard.

- Recognize instances in which incorrect or extraneous punctuation has been used or necessary punctuation has been omitted.
- Identify standard initial capitalization and standard capitalization with proper words and titles.
- Recognize the standard spelling of words.

B. WRITING

Standard 9 Understand the role of purpose and audience in written communication.

The following are examples of content that may be covered under this standard.

- Assess the appropriateness of written material for a specific purpose or audience (e.g., a business letter, a communication to parents).
- Determine the likely effect on an audience of a writer's choice of a particular word or words (e.g., to evoke sympathy, to raise questions about an opposing point of view).
- Identify persuasive techniques used by a writer in a passage.
- Demonstrate the ability to adapt forms, organizational strategies, and styles for different audiences and purposes.

Standard 10 Understand unity, focus, development, and organization in writing.

The following are examples of content that may be covered under this standard.

- Identify organizational methods used by the author of a passage.
- Distinguish between effective and ineffective thesis statements.
- Recognize unnecessary shifts in point of view (e.g., shifts from first to third person) or distracting details that impair development of the main idea in a passage.
- Select appropriate and effective supporting material.
- Recognize examples of focused, concise, and well-developed writing.

Standard 11 Understand and apply editing and revision strategies.

The following are examples of content that may be covered under this standard.

- Apply editing and revision strategies affecting diction, syntax, transitions, organization, clarity, coherence, and point of view.
- Make revisions that improve the unity and focus of a passage or that improve cohesion and the effective sequence of ideas.
- Improve the clarity and effectiveness of a passage through changes in word choice.
- Eliminate or replace unnecessary or imprecise words and phrases.
- Insert appropriate transitional words or phrases (e.g., however, as a result) in a passage to convey the structure of the text and to help readers understand the sequence of a writer's ideas.

Standard 12 Recognize sentences and paragraphs that effectively communicate intended messages.

The following are examples of content that may be covered under this standard.

- Demonstrate an understanding of unity within paragraphs and apply methods for enhancing paragraph organization and unity.
- Recognize effective topic sentences and distinguish between effective and ineffective development of ideas within a paragraph.
- Identify sentence fragments and run-on sentences.
- Recognize wordiness, redundancy, and ineffective repetition in sentences and paragraphs.
- Recognize inefficiency in sentence and paragraph construction.

C. WRITING ASSIGNMENT

Standard 13 Prepare an organized, developed composition in edited English as used in the United States in response to instructions regarding content, purpose, and audience.

The following are examples of content that may be covered under this standard.

- Compose a unified, focused, and sustained piece of writing on a given topic using language and style appropriate to a specified audience, purpose, and occasion.
- Take a position on a contemporary social or political issue and defend that position with reasoned arguments and supporting examples.
- Use effective sentence structure and apply the standards of edited English in the United States.
- Demonstrate the ability to spell, capitalize, and punctuate according to the standards of edited English in the United States.

SUBAREA III—MATHEMATICS

The skills addressed in this subarea require demonstration of quantitative literacy at the college level through the application of mathematical methods and reasoning to the solution of real-world problems.

Standard 14 Solve problems involving integers, fractions, decimals, and units of measurement.

The following are examples of content that may be covered under this standard.

- Solve problems involving integers, fractions, and decimals, including percentages.
- Solve problems involving ratios and proportions.
- Solve problems involving units of measurement, including U.S. customary and metric measurements, and conversions, including scientific notation (e.g., 6.05×10^8).
- Use estimation skills to solve problems.

Standard 15 Apply mathematical reasoning skills to analyze patterns and solve problems.

The following are examples of content that may be covered under this standard.

- Draw conclusions using inductive reasoning.
- Draw conclusions using deductive reasoning.
- Identify errors in mathematical explanations.

Standard 16 Solve problems involving algebra and geometry.

The following are examples of content that may be covered under this standard.

- Graph numbers or number relationships.
- Find the value of the unknown in a given one-variable equation.
- Express one variable in terms of a second variable in two-variable equations.
- Solve problems involving lines and angles.
- Solve problems involving two- and three-dimensional geometric figures (e.g., perimeter and area problems, volume and surface area problems).

Standard 17 Understand concepts and procedures related to data analysis and statistics.

The following are examples of content that may be covered under this standard.

- Interpret information from tables, line graphs, bar graphs, histograms, pictographs, and pie charts.
- Recognize appropriate representations of various data in graphic form (discrete and continuous).
- Demonstrate an understanding of fundamental statistical concepts (e.g., mean, correlation, standard deviation).
- Interpret graphic and nongraphic representations of frequency distributions, percentiles, central tendency, variability, and correlation.

Standard 18 Solve applied problems using a combination of mathematical skills (including word problems involving one and two variables).

The following are examples of content that may be covered under this standard.

- Apply combinations of mathematical skills to solve a series of related problems.
- Identify an equation to solve word problems involving one and two variables.
- Apply number concepts and geometric principles to solve practical problems.
- Apply statistical principles to analyze patterns and trends in data.

Read the passage below; then answer the six questions that follow.

Durkheim and the Development of Sociology

- 1 Sociology is defined as the study of human groups. In the broadest sense, sociology is concerned with understanding patterns of human relationships, their causes and their effects. Unlike psychology, sociology does not attempt to explain the behavior of a particular individual under certain circumstances. Rather, sociology focuses on social trends or other influences that affect whole groups or categories of people. Thus, while a psychologist might counsel an individual who feels worthless after retiring from a long and successful career, a sociologist would be more likely to examine societal attitudes that may contribute to the loss of self-esteem experienced by many retired persons in our society.
- 2 The emphasis that sociology places on human groups rather than on individuals stems directly from the work of Emile Durkheim, a pioneering sociologist of the nineteenth century. Durkheim likened the nature of a social group to bronze, a unique metal that is formed when the metals tin, copper, and lead are melted and mixed together. Durkheim noted that bronze is much harder than any of its component metals. In the same way, he reasoned, the characteristics of a social group viewed as a whole cannot be determined simply by examining the characteristics of its individual members. Nor can individuals be understood strictly in terms of the individuals themselves; when people come together as members of a particular group, the group exerts considerable pressure on the individual to conform to what it considers acceptable ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving.
- 3 Besides developing a theoretical foundation for the study of social groups, Durkheim also conducted research designed to corroborate his theoretical work. Using landmark research methods, Durkheim collected and analyzed data from a number of countries that kept records on suicides. He wanted to show that social environment may have a profound effect even on those behaviors we consider most personal. The results of his study showed that suicide rates do indeed vary according to specific social characteristics. For example, Durkheim found that members of religions with strong prohibitions against suicide are less likely to commit suicide than are members of religious groups with weaker prohibitions. He also found a lower incidence of suicide among married persons than among persons who were single or divorced. Taken together, the findings of Durkheim's study provided convincing evidence that social groups do indeed exert pressures that control or regulate the behavior of individuals, including deeply personal behaviors.
- 4 Durkheim's rigorous research methods captured the attention of sociologists around the world and were perhaps even more important to the future development of sociology than any specific research results could be. Within a short time, his specific approach to formulating and testing social theory became a model that guided the work of nearly all sociologists. This assured Emile Durkheim a lasting place as one of the key figures in the history of sociology.



1. Which of the following best defines the word model as it is used in the last paragraph of the selection?
 - A. one of two or more alternative styles
 - B. an artist's subject
 - C. a small copy of an object
 - D. a plan to be imitated

2. Which of the following best expresses the main idea of the selection?
 - A. The research study conducted by Durkheim provided strong evidence that suicide rates vary among members of different social groups.
 - B. Durkheim believed that individual members of a group strongly influence the group's ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving.
 - C. Both the social group theory and the scientific research methods developed by Durkheim have contributed much to the field of sociology.
 - D. Through his research, Durkheim made great strides in distinguishing sociology from psychology.

3. The writer's main purpose in writing this selection is to:
 - A. outline the steps Durkheim followed in conducting his research study.
 - B. describe the ways in which Durkheim's work has influenced sociology.
 - C. persuade the reader that social groups control most of the behaviors of their individual members.
 - D. explain the differences between sociology and psychology.

4. According to the selection, how do sociologists and psychologists differ?
 - A. Sociologists are more concerned with explaining behavior than are psychologists.
 - B. Psychologists focus more on individuals than do sociologists.
 - C. Sociologists spend more time helping people solve their problems than do psychologists.
 - D. Psychologists are more interested in understanding patterns of human relationships than are sociologists.

5. In paragraph two, the author notes that Durkheim compared social groups to bronze. Why did Durkheim consider this a meaningful analogy?
- A. The component parts of social groups can be analyzed independently of each other.
 - B. Each social group is a unique entity that is unlike any other social group.
 - C. Social groups are extremely difficult to break apart once they have been formed.
 - D. The elements that comprise a social group are in turn altered by the group.
6. Which of the following lists of topics best organizes the information in the selection?
- A. —Psychology vs. sociology
—Sociology likened to bronze
—Durkheim's suicide research
—Durkheim's influence in distinguishing sociology from psychology
 - B. —Sociology before Durkheim
—Durkheim's early work
—Durkheim's later work
—Durkheim's influence on sociology
 - C. —The focus of contemporary sociology
—Durkheim's contributions to sociological theory
—Durkheim's contributions to sociological research methods
 - D. —Sociology as the study of human groups
—Sociology in Durkheim's time
—Sociology since Durkheim

Read the passage below, written in the style of a college anthropology textbook; then answer the two questions that follow.

¹In addition to being one of the world's most vital food crops; rice is used to meet a broad range of needs. ²The Japanese make an alcoholic beverage called *sake* from it, and brewers sometimes use it to make beer. ³Equally important are the plant's by-products. ⁴In some regions, farmers use rice bran, the brown skin surrounding a kernel, as a

livestock feed. ⁵Other people extract oil from the bran to make soap and margarine. ⁶Rice grains also have rough outer shells, its hulls, that serve as an inexpensive fuel in many places. ⁷Even dried rice stalks have their uses. ⁸Many Asians use them to make hats and sandals, and to thatch the roofs of their homes.



7. Which one, if any, of the following changes is needed in the above passage?

- A. Part 1: Change the semicolon after "crops" to a comma.
- B. Part 4: Delete the comma after "bran."
- C. Part 8: Change the comma after "sandals" to a colon.
- D. None of these changes is needed.

8. Which of the following parts of the passage displays nonstandard usage?

- A. Part 2
- B. Part 3
- C. Part 6
- D. Part 7

**Read the passage below, written in the style of an education textbook;
then answer the three questions that follow.**

¹Current methods of foreign language teaching often aim for more than mastery of vocabulary and grammar. ²A new topic called "pragmatics" has been added to the curriculum. ³Researchers have observed that every language community has different rules not only about how to construct meaningful sentences, but about when, where, and how to say them—and when to remain silent.

⁴_____

⁵And as a result, more students than ever before are learning to look for cues to appropriate behavior when speaking a foreign tongue.

⁶For example, how do individuals know when it is their turn to speak in a conversation? ⁷Every language community has specific signals involving

body gestures, shifts in tone of voice, and other subtle cues that indicate when a speaker is ready to let someone else have a turn talking. ⁸What is the proper way to greet people? ⁹Every culture has its rules about who should greet whom first and which verbal and physical form of greeting is appropriate for different circumstances. ¹⁰The proper greeting usually depends on such factors as the speakers' gender, status, type of relationship between the speakers, and relative age of the speakers.

¹¹Such questions were largely ignored in traditional foreign language teaching. ¹²This may explain why until recently students could study a language for years and yet have great difficulty using it for real-life communication.



9. Which of the following sentences, used in place of the blank line labeled Part 4, would best fit the writer's pattern of development in the first paragraph?

- A. Simply remaining silent is, in fact, often the best way to understand what another person is really trying to say.
- B. Consequently, many teachers now instruct their students in the pragmatics, or practical applications, of correct vocabulary and grammar.
- C. Another topic of great interest to researchers today is the difference between adults' and young children's approaches to language learning.
- D. Of course, pragmatics is of less concern to students whose primary aim is to learn to read, rather than to speak, another language.

10. Which of the numbered parts should be revised to reduce its unnecessary repetition?

- A. Part 6
- B. Part 7
- C. Part 8
- D. Part 10

11. Which of the following changes is needed in the second paragraph?

- A. Part 6: Change "their" to "they're."
- B. Part 7: Change "specific" to "specifically."
- C. Part 8: Change "proper" to "properly."
- D. Part 9: Change "it's" to "its."

Read the passage below, written in the style of a college history textbook; then answer the three questions that follow.

¹For more than two hundred years, the proper role of government in American society has been a topic of intense political discussion. ²Long, long ago, the main outlines of the debate were shaped by the conflicting views of Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson. ³As a spokesman for the northeastern banking and commercial interests, Hamilton believed the federal government should make every effort to promote economic growth. ⁴Accordingly, he proposed the enactment of high tariffs on imports to protect new industries, the creation of a national bank to provide large loans for government and business enterprises, and the construction of roadways and lighthouses to stimulate trade. ⁵The passage of these and related

measures, Hamilton believed would enable the United States to realize its destiny as a great industrial nation.

⁶But not all Americans shared Hamilton's vision. ⁷People from the plantations and farms of the South and West hoped to preserve a quiet agricultural world of independent landowners. ⁸They believed that the creation of an urban, industrial society would diminish their political influence. ⁹They also believed that a federal government with Hamiltonian powers would threaten their individual liberties. ¹⁰It was for these people that Jefferson spoke. ¹¹In doing so, he initiated a debate that in some respects still continues today.



12. Which of the following sentences, if added between Parts 6 and 7 of the second paragraph, would be most consistent with the writer's purpose and intended audience?

- A. Some folks knew better than to jump on Hamilton's bandwagon, which was sure to face a bumpy road once the country really got going.
- B. On the contrary, many people living in the United States, including Thomas Jefferson, did not want their new nation to become heavily industrialized.
- C. How anybody could fail to see the fact that Hamilton clearly had the best plan for the future of this country is totally beyond me.
- D. Rather, there were those who viewed the Federalist geopolitical and economic strategy as a movement toward tyrannical despotism and away from democratic ideology.

13. Which of the underlined words in the first paragraph should be replaced by more precise or appropriate words?

- A. proper role
- B. Long, long ago
- C. economic growth
- D. high tariffs

14. Which of the following changes is needed in the first paragraph?

- A. Part 2: Place a colon after the word "by."
- B. Part 3: Change "As" to "Like."
- C. Part 4: Move "Accordingly" after the word "enactment."
- D. Part 5: Place a comma after the phrase "Hamilton believed."

**Read the passage below, written in the style of a sociology textbook;
then answer the two questions that follow.**

¹Population growth trends in developed countries have passed through several phases. ²Before about 1850, birthrates and death rates were both high. ³The large number of births and deaths that occurred each year tended more or less to cancel each other out, so populations remained fairly constant or exhibited relatively low growth rates.

⁴This began to change after 1850, when industrialization led to a substantial rise in living standards for the general population and advances in medical science markedly reduced the number of deaths caused by infectious diseases. ⁵The rapid decline in death rates that resulted was accompanied

by a much slower decline in birthrates, and as a result, developed countries grew increasingly populous.

⁶By 1950, _____, population growth rates in the developed countries again dropped off substantially. ⁷The main reason was the continuing decline in birthrates, which occurred gradually as the role of children in the family changed and parents began deciding to have fewer offspring.

⁸_____, in the decades since 1950, birthrates and death rates have both been low. ⁹This has resulted once again in populations that are growing only slowly or not at all.



15. Which words or phrases would, if inserted *in order* into the blanks in the third paragraph, help the reader understand the logical sequence of the writer's ideas?

- A. as a result; Furthermore
- B. for example; On the other hand
- C. however; Consequently
- D. in conclusion; Yet

16. Which of the following best describes the method of organization used by the author of the passage?

- A. problem and solution
- B. chronological order
- C. comparison and contrast
- D. order of importance

Read the passage below, written in the style of a college writing textbook for first-year students; then answer the three questions that follow.

¹Beginning writers often have a hard time setting an appropriate length for their paragraphs. ²And they generally have an even harder time locating a reference source that offers reasonable advice about how to deal with this problem. ³Composition textbooks are often distressingly vague when they discuss this topic. ⁴One might learn, for example, that paragraphs should not be too short because one- or two-sentence paragraphs make a composition disjointed and difficult to follow. ⁵At the same time, they should not be too long: lengthy paragraphs can be implausible and confusing to the reader.

⁶The truth is that there are no hard-and-fast rules for determining how long paragraphs should be. ⁷There are, however, two general principles that writers should keep in mind. ⁸The first is that the main purpose of a paragraph is to develop an idea. ⁹The second is that writing is broke into units such as paragraphs to help readers understand the writer's message. ¹⁰All decisions about paragraph length should reflect both of these concerns.



17. Which of the following sentences, if added between Parts 3 and 4 of the first paragraph, would be most consistent with the writer's purpose and intended audience?
- A. If you ask me, those books aren't even worth the trouble it takes to read them.
 - B. These books can be very useful, however, when a writer is looking for information on subjects other than paragraph length.
 - C. In these texts, sections on paragraph structure tend to concentrate on what to avoid rather than what to do.
 - D. These tomes are rife with rambling, ambiguous theoretical discourse that fails to provide any constructive counsel.
18. Which of the following parts of the passage displays nonstandard use of a verb form?
- A. Part 1
 - B. Part 4
 - C. Part 6
 - D. Part 9
19. Which underlined word in the passage should be replaced by a more appropriate word?
- A. reasonable
 - B. distressingly
 - C. disjointed
 - D. implausible

**Read the passage below, written in the style of a college history textbook;
then answer the two questions that follow.**

¹The Franco-Prussian War had far-reaching affects on France and her people. ²The French had to pay the German Empire a sum of approximately one billion dollars, an amount that had a significant impact on the French economy. ³In addition, the French lost all of Alsace and part of Lorraine, areas

that have changed hands often in the history of these two powers. ⁴A victory march through Paris caused further suffering for the French people. ⁵The terms of settlement were extremely harsh, the only reason they were accepted was that the French were weary of war and eager for peace.



20. Which of the underlined words in the passage above should be replaced by a more precise or appropriate word?

- A. affects
- B. approximately
- C. further
- D. accepted

21. Which of the following parts of the paragraph is not a standard sentence?

- A. Part 2
- B. Part 3
- C. Part 4
- D. Part 5

MATHEMATICS DEFINITIONS AND FORMULAS

Definitions

$=$ is equal to	\leq is less than or equal to	\overline{AB} line segment AB
\neq is not equal to	$\pi \approx 3.14$	\overleftrightarrow{AB} line AB
$>$ is greater than	\sphericalangle angle	AB length of \overline{AB}
$<$ is less than	\perp right angle	$\frac{a}{b}$ or $a : b$ ratio of a to b
\geq is greater than or equal to		

Abbreviations for Units of Measurement

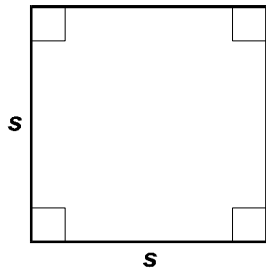
U.S. Customary			Metric System		
Distance	in. inch	ft. foot	Distance	m meter	Time sec. second
		mi. mile		km kilometer	min. minute
				cm centimeter	hr. hour
				mm millimeter	
Volume	gal. gallon	qt. quart	Volume	L liter	
		oz. fluid ounce		mL milliliter	
				cc cubic centimeter	
Weight	lb. pound	oz. ounce	Mass	g gram	
				kg kilogram	
				mg milligram	
Temperature	$^{\circ}\text{F}$ degree Fahrenheit		Temperature	$^{\circ}\text{C}$ degree Celsius	
				K kelvin	
Speed	mph miles per hour				

Conversions for Units of Measurement

U.S. Customary		Metric System	
Length	12 inches = 1 foot 3 feet = 1 yard 5280 feet = 1 mile	Length	10 millimeters = 1 centimeter 100 centimeters = 1 meter 1000 meters = 1 kilometer
Volume (liquid)	8 ounces = 1 cup 2 cups = 1 pint 2 pints = 1 quart 4 quarts = 1 gallon	Volume	1000 milliliters = 1 liter 1000 liters = 1 kiloliter
Weight	16 ounces = 1 pound 2000 pounds = 1 ton	Weight	1000 milligrams = 1 gram 1000 grams = 1 kilogram

Geometric Figures

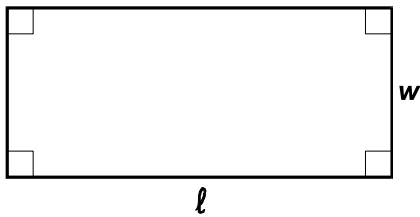
Square



$$\text{Area} = s^2$$

$$\text{Perimeter} = 4s$$

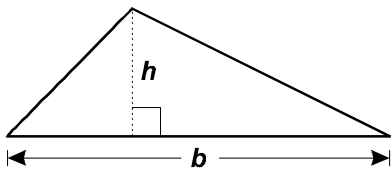
Rectangle



$$\text{Area} = \ell w$$

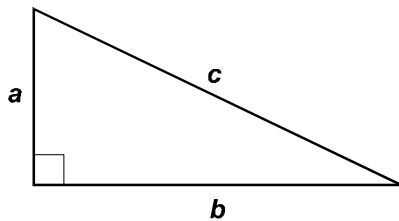
$$\text{Perimeter} = 2\ell + 2w$$

Triangle



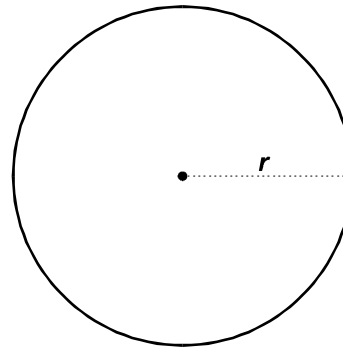
$$\text{Area} = \frac{1}{2}bh$$

Right triangle



$$\text{Pythagorean formula: } c^2 = a^2 + b^2$$

Circle

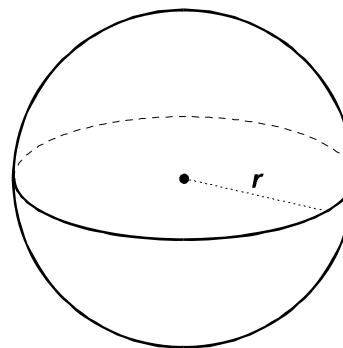


$$\text{Area} = \pi r^2$$

$$\text{Circumference} = 2\pi r$$

$$\text{Diameter} = 2r$$

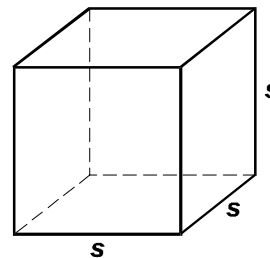
Sphere



$$\text{Surface area} = 4\pi r^2$$

$$\text{Volume} = \frac{4}{3}\pi r^3$$

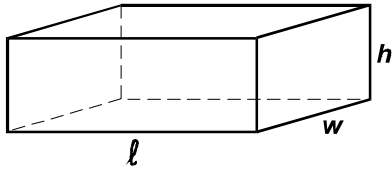
Cube



$$\text{Surface area} = 6s^2$$

$$\text{Volume} = s^3$$

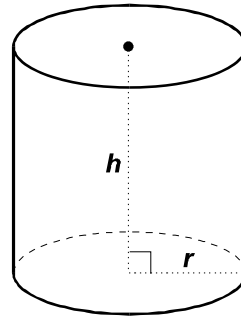
Rectangular solid



$$\text{Surface area} = 2lw + 2lh + 2wh$$

$$\text{Volume} = lwh$$

Right circular cylinder



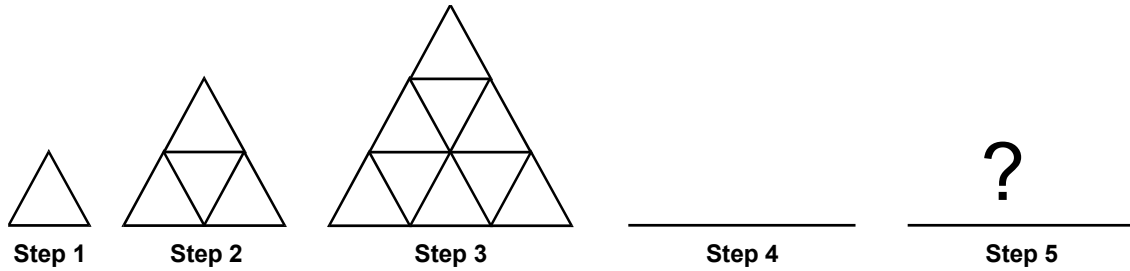
$$\text{Surface area} = 2\pi rh + 2\pi r^2$$

$$\text{Volume} = \pi r^2 h$$

End of Definitions and Formulas

22. During a bike-a-thon, a local company pledges to donate \$1.25 for every \$4.00 pledged by the public. If the public pledges a total of \$156.00 dollars per mile, how much will the company donate per mile?
- A. \$ 2.75
 - B. \$ 48.75
 - C. \$195.00
 - D. \$499.20
23. The nutritional label on a snack food indicates that one serving of the snack provides 20% of the daily adult requirement of protein. If one serving weighs $1\frac{3}{4}$ ounces, how many ounces of the snack food would provide 100% of the daily requirement of protein?
- A. 3 ounces
 - B. $8\frac{3}{4}$ ounces
 - C. 11.43 ounces
 - D. $21\frac{3}{4}$ ounces

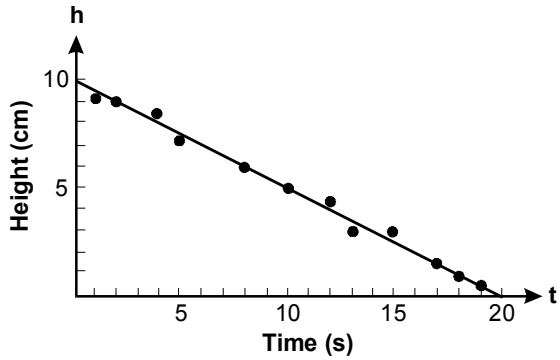
24. Use the diagram below to answer the question that follows.



If the sequence above continues in the same pattern, how many small triangles would be needed to make the figure that would occur in **Step 5**?

- A. 16
 - B. 25
 - C. 36
 - D. 49
25. When a student is questioned about his school, he replies that there are at least as many freshmen as there are juniors and at least as many juniors as there are sophomores. If the student is correct, which of the following statements must be true?
- A. There are just as many sophomores as there are freshmen.
 - B. There are at least as many sophomores as there are freshmen.
 - C. There are at least as many freshmen as there are sophomores.
 - D. There are more freshmen than there are sophomores.

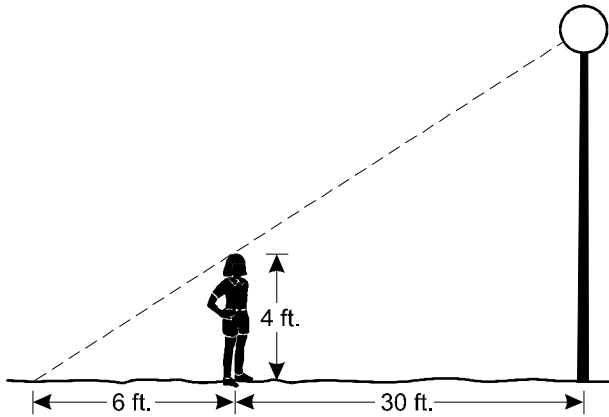
26. Use the graph below to answer the question that follows.



The graph shows data collected by measuring the height, h , in centimeters, of a burning candle at different times, t , in minutes. Which of the following equations best represents the line drawn through the data points?

- A. $h = -2t + 10$
- B. $h = -\frac{1}{2}t + 10$
- C. $h = 2t + 20$
- D. $h = 10t + 20$
27. If $6b + 20 = a$, and $4b + 30 = a$, then $b =$
- A. -5
- B. -1
- C. 1
- D. 5

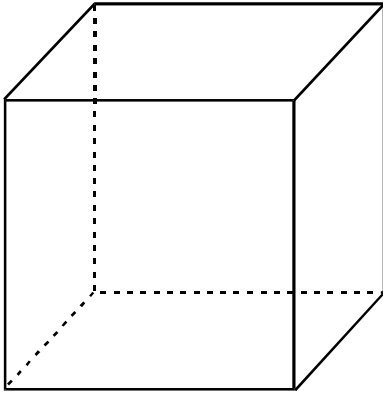
28. Use the diagram below to answer the question that follows.



The diagram above (not to scale) shows how an elementary student who is 4 feet tall estimates the height of a lamppost. The student stands 30 feet from the base of the lamppost and measures her shadow from the light as 6 feet long. Approximately how high is the lamppost?

- A. 20 feet
- B. 24 feet
- C. 36 feet
- D. 45 feet

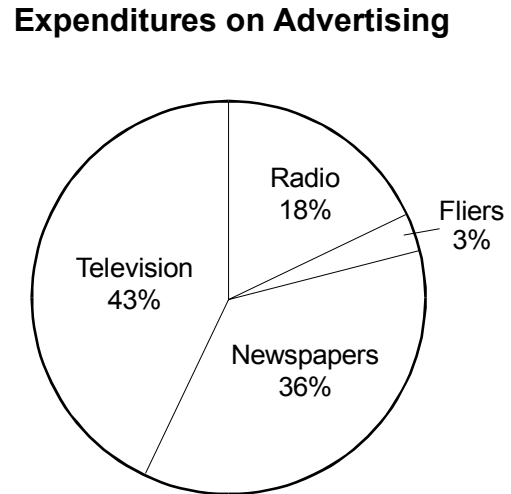
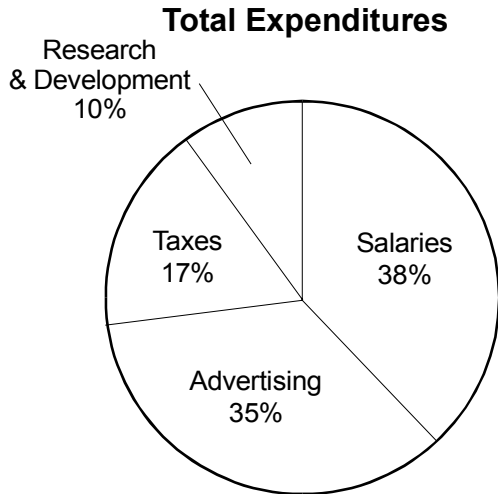
29. Use the diagram below to answer the question that follows.



A metal worker is building a wire frame (represented by the dotted and solid lines in the diagram above) for a cubic box that is to have a volume of 27 cubic feet. What is the total length of wire the metal worker will need?

- A. 27 feet
- B. 36 feet
- C. 54 feet
- D. 81 feet

30. Use the pie charts below to answer the question that follows.

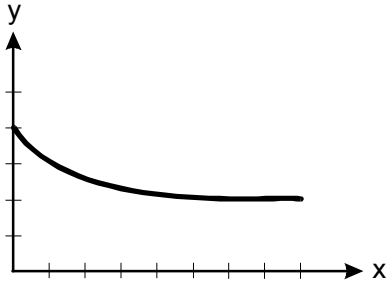


The first pie chart represents a company's total expenditures, and the second pie chart shows a breakdown of the company's advertising expenditures. What percentage of the company's total expenditures is spent on radio advertising?

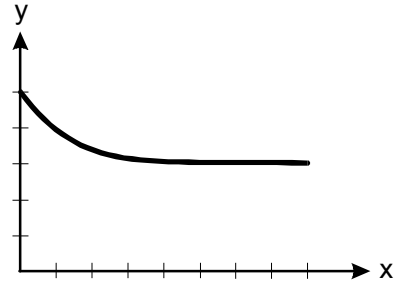
- A. 6.3%
- B. 11.7%
- C. 18.0%
- D. 35.0%

31. Scientists have stocked Wilson's pond with a species of fish. The scientists note that the population has steadily decreased over a period of time until the population is approximately half the number of fish originally stocked. If the number of fish is plotted on the y -axis and the amount of time on the x -axis, which of the following graphs represents the population of fish in the pond with respect to time?

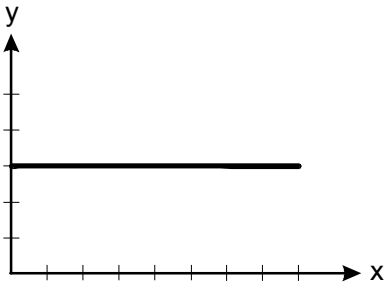
A.



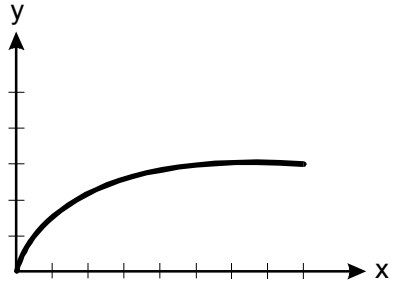
B.



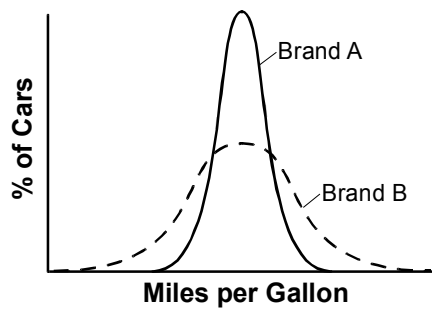
C.



D.



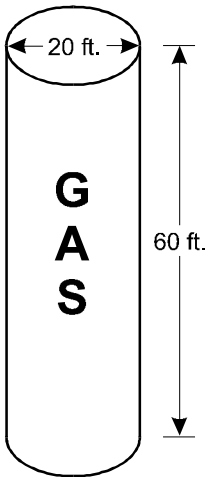
32. Use the distribution curves below to answer the question that follows.



The distribution curves above show data on the gas mileage for two different brands of car. Which of the following correctly analyzes the information presented in these distributions?

- A. The mean gas mileage of Brand A is greater than the mean gas mileage of Brand B.
- B. Data was collected for more cars of Brand A than of Brand B.
- C. Brand A cars have smaller variability in gas mileage than Brand B cars.
- D. Brand A cars get poorer gas mileage than Brand B cars.

33. Use the diagram and the information below to answer the question that follows.

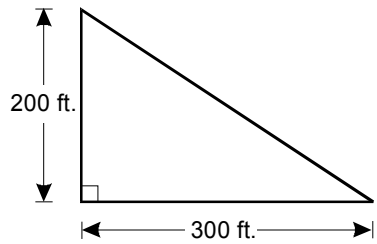


A company has a right cylindrical storage tank for storing natural gas. The tank measures 20 feet wide by 60 feet high.

The company estimates that it will cost \$2.00 per square foot to paint the tank. Which of the following expressions could be used to determine the total cost to paint the top and the side of the tank?

- A. $(1200\pi + 100\pi)(2.00)$
- B. $\frac{1200\pi + 100\pi}{2.00}$
- C. $(1200\pi + 200\pi)(2.00)$
- D. $\frac{1200\pi + 200\pi}{2.00}$

34. Use the diagram below to answer the question that follows.



The diagram shows the dimensions of a triangular field next to a school. To estimate the number of wildflowers growing in the field, students counted a total of 36 flowers in a randomly selected 3-foot-by-4-foot rectangular section. Assuming the section is a representative sample of the entire field, approximately how many flowers are in the entire field?

- A. 17,500
- B. 35,000
- C. 90,000
- D. 180,000

ANSWER KEY

This section contains the answers to the practice multiple-choice test questions in the previous section.

After you have worked through the practice multiple-choice test questions, check the answers given in this section to see which questions you answered correctly.

Question Number	Correct Response	Test Standard
1.	D	Determine the meaning of words and phrases in context.
2.	C	Understand the main idea and supporting details in written material.
3.	B	Apply skills of inference and interpretation to a variety of written materials.
4.	B	Analyze relationships among ideas in written material.
5.	D	Use critical reasoning skills to evaluate written material.
6.	C	Apply skills for outlining and summarizing written materials and interpreting information presented in graphs or tables.
7.	A	Understand and apply knowledge of mechanical conventions in edited English in the United States.
8.	C	Demonstrate command of standard usage in edited English in the United States.
9.	B	Understand unity, focus, development, and organization in writing.
10.	D	Recognizes sentences and paragraphs that effectively communicate intended messages.
11.	D	Demonstrate command of standard usage in edited English in the United States.
12.	B	Understand the role of purpose and audience in written communication.
13.	B	Understand and apply knowledge of mechanical conventions in edited English in the United States.
14.	D	Understand and apply knowledge of mechanical conventions in edited English in the United States.
15.	C	Understand and apply editing and revision strategies.
16.	B	Understand unity, focus, development, and organization in writing.
17.	C	Understand the role of purpose and audience in written communication.
18.	D	Demonstrate command of standard usage in edited English in the United States.
19.	D	Understand and apply editing and revision strategies.
20.	A	Understand and apply knowledge of mechanical conventions in edited English in the United States.
21.	D	Recognizes sentences and paragraphs that effectively communicate intended messages.
22.	B	Solve problems involving integers, fractions, decimals, and units of measurement.

(continued on next page)

Question Number	Correct Response	Test Standard
23.	B	Solve problems involving integers, fractions, decimals, and units of measurement.
24.	B	Apply mathematical reasoning skills to analyze patterns and solve problems.
25.	C	Apply mathematical reasoning skills to analyze patterns and solve problems.
26.	B	Solve problems involving algebra and geometry.
27.	D	Solve problems involving algebra and geometry.
28.	B	Solve problems involving algebra and geometry.
29.	B	Solve problems involving algebra and geometry.
30.	A	Understand concepts and procedures related to data analysis and statistics.
31.	A	Understand concepts and procedures related to data analysis and statistics.
32.	C	Understand concepts and procedures related to data analysis and statistics.
33.	A	Solve applied problems using a combination of mathematical skills (including word problems involving one and two variables).
34.	C	Solve applied problems using a combination of mathematical skills (including word problems involving one and two variables).

PRACTICE CONSTRUCTED-RESPONSE WRITING ASSIGNMENT

OVERVIEW

In this section of the test, examinees are asked to prepare a written response on an assigned topic.

In the directions for this section, you will be instructed to read the topic carefully before beginning to write and to think about how to organize what you plan to say. You may use space provided in the test booklet to make notes, prepare an outline, or write a first draft. The final response must be your original work, written in your own words, and not copied or paraphrased from some other work.

Responses are scored on the extent to which they effectively communicate a whole message to the specified audience for the stated purpose. Examinees are assessed on their ability to express, organize, and support opinions and ideas, not on the position they take. The final version of the composition should conform to the conventions of edited English as used in the United States, should be written legibly, and should be the examinee's own original work. More specifically, each response is scored according to the following performance characteristics:

- **Focus:** the clarity with which the response presents and maintains the main idea
- **Support/Elaboration:** the extent to which the main idea is supported and explained by details and reasons
- **Organization:** the explicitness of the text structure or plan and the clarity of the logical flow of ideas
- **Grammar and conventions:** the extent to which the response shows control of the use of standard written English and the extent to which errors interfere with communication of the main idea

Responses to the constructed-response writing assignment must be written in the written response booklet provided. Responses that are written in the test booklet will not be scored.

PRACTICE CONSTRUCTED-RESPONSE WRITING ASSIGNMENT

The following is a sample of the type of prompt to which you will be asked to respond.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT

Read the passage below on mandatory national service, and then follow the instructions for writing your essay.

Should all young men and women between the ages of 18 and 25 be required to perform one year of military or civilian service? Proponents assert that such a requirement would provide young people with socially useful roles, while the larger society would benefit from their skills and energy and from the encouragement of social responsibility among all citizens. Opponents of mandatory national service, on the other hand, argue that such a program would constitute an unacceptable infringement on personal freedom, that it would be just as likely to breed resentment as idealism, and that it would require creation of a cumbersome and expensive federal bureaucracy.

Your purpose is to write an essay, to be read by a classroom instructor, in which you discuss whether or not young men and women between the ages of 18 and 25 should be required to perform one year of military or civilian service. Be sure to defend your position with logical arguments and appropriate examples.

SAMPLE RESPONSE FOR THE WRITING ASSIGNMENT

The sample below is an example of a strong response to the practice constructed-response writing assignment.

While there are good arguments both for and against mandatory national service, I believe there are at least three important benefits of requiring young men and women between the ages of 18 and 25 to perform one year of military or civilian service: restoring the idea of citizenship, providing young people with valuable work and life experience, and helping young Americans learn to live in a democratic society.

Before and during World War II, the idea of citizenship was an important part of American life. Along with that idea came the responsibility to vote and to participate in the process of making our communities better places to live. John Kennedy revived the idea of citizenship in the 1960s when he called upon Americans to "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country." In recent years, however, the idea of citizenship seems to have faded away. Requiring young people to devote a year of their lives to their country or their community would restore the concept that our society depends upon the contributions of all of its citizens.

Also, young people participating in a national service program would gain valuable work experience. They would learn the discipline necessary to come to work on time, every day. They would learn to work with others as part of a team. They would learn new skills and develop the ability to solve real world problems. And they would gain the satisfaction of accomplishing something significant for the benefit of others.

Perhaps most important, mandatory national service would help young people better understand the true meaning of democracy. Whether they served their country in the armed forces, in an environmental conservation project, or at a community shelter for the homeless, young men and women would meet people from all different social, economic, and cultural backgrounds. As a result, participation in national service could help break down geographic, gender, and racial barriers.

Requiring every young American to devote a year to national service would not be without its problems. Starting up such a program would be expensive. For some people, national service would disrupt education or career plans.

But the advantages of mandatory national service—reviving the idea of citizenship, providing valuable life experiences, and helping young people learn to work positively in a democratic society—would outweigh any disadvantages. For the young people of America, for the communities they would serve, and for our country as a whole, national service would be a valuable investment in our future.

EXPLANATION OF THE SCORING PROCESS FOR THE CONSTRUCTED-RESPONSE WRITING ASSIGNMENT

This section is designed to provide you with an explanation of the scoring process for the constructed-response writing assignment of the Basic Skills test. The writing assignment is designed to assess Standard 13 from the Language Arts subarea of the Basic Skills test.

Standard 13: Prepare an organized, developed composition in edited English as used in the United States in response to instructions regarding content, purpose, and audience.

The following are examples of content that may be covered under this standard.

- Compose a unified, focused, and sustained piece of writing on a given topic using language and style appropriate to a specified audience, purpose, and occasion.
- Take a position on a contemporary social or political issue and defend that position with reasoned arguments and supporting examples.
- Use effective sentence structure and apply the standards of edited English in the United States.
- Demonstrate the ability to spell, capitalize, and punctuate according to the standards of edited English in the United States.

THE SCORING PROCESS

Written responses are rated on a six-point scoring scale (see pages 2-37 to 2-38). Within the range of scores (i.e., from 1 to 6), a response that receives a score point of 1 is an undeveloped written response, while a score point of 6 is assigned to a response that is very well developed.

Specific performance characteristics (see page 2-36) describe the elements typically found in responses at each of the six score points, although any particular response may be either more or less developed in respect to any specific element.

Each category of the six-point scale will comprise a range of ability across that particular score. Thus, among the most competent written responses, there will be those that represent a "high 6" (the best) as well as those that represent a "low 6" (clearly superior responses, but they are not quite as well written as the "high 6"). This range of ability holds true within each of the other five points on the scoring scale.

Each response will be read and scored by two readers; the sum of the two readers' scores will be the examinee's total score for the constructed-response writing assignment. Any pair of scores that differs by more than one point will be regarded as discrepant and will require resolution by a third reader. For example, a total score of 10 would result from the assignment of a "5" and a "5" from each of two readers; it could not result from assigned scores of "6" and "4" because the scores differ by more than one point.

PERFORMANCE CHARACTERISTICS FOR THE BASIC SKILLS CONSTRUCTED-RESPONSE WRITING ASSIGNMENT

The performance characteristics for each score point for the Basic Skills test constructed-response writing assignment are organized according to four major writing performance features: (1) focus, (2) support/elaboration, (3) organization, and (4) grammar and conventions. Each of these performance characteristics is described in more detail below. Detailed characterizations of the score point features are described in the scoring scale on pages 2-37 to 2-38.

Focus

The clarity with which the response presents and maintains the main idea.

Focus involves whether the writing is appropriate, logical, and unified throughout the response. Evidence of a unified response includes an introduction, a clearly presented purpose or main idea, and a conclusion that relates to the opening.

Support/Elaboration

The extent to which the main idea is supported and explained by details and reasons.

Quality of support and elaboration depends on specificity, depth, relevance, and amount. Support should be evenly balanced across subtopics. Supporting details should be more specific than the generalizations they develop. Strategies for building support include use of description, explanation, evidence, example, and/or reasons.

Organization

The explicitness of the text structure or plan and the clarity of the logical flow of ideas.

Organization is the plan—beginning, middle, end—with which the response is constructed and the logic with which the points are related to one another. Organization has a "vertical" dimension (coherence) indicated by the use of paragraphing and transitions to signal the logical flow from paragraph to paragraph and the relationship of subtopics to the main idea. Organization also has a "horizontal" dimension (cohesion) evidenced by the connection of one sentence to the next. Coherence and cohesion may be achieved through the use of logical sequencing, transitions, pronouns, synonyms, demonstratives, conjunctions, parallel constructions, and connectives.

Grammar and Conventions

The extent to which the response shows control of the use of standard written English and the extent to which errors interfere with communication of the main idea.

Grammar conveys the inherent structure of a language, while conventions help organize meaning, control emphasis, and create rhythm. Errors are weighted according to the level of their interference with communication and the number of errors in proportion to the amount written. Major errors make the message difficult to understand. Minor errors do not seriously interfere with communication unless there is an abundance of them. Categories include sentence structure, usage, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and paragraph format.

**SCORING SCALE FOR THE BASIC SKILLS CONSTRUCTED-RESPONSE
WRITING ASSIGNMENT**

Score Point	Score Point Description
6	<p>The 6 response is very well formed.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focus is effectively stated and clearly maintained. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction is effective. • The thesis is very appropriate to the topic; logical connections to the thesis are clearly maintained throughout. • An effective closing relates to the thesis without simply restating it. 2. Support is extensive. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major points are supported and elaborated fully and evenly. • Ideas are supported using multiple strategies. 3. The organizational plan is effective and clear. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coherence is maintained by an effective vertical plan; paragraphs present a purposeful, logical structure. • Cohesion is maintained by effective horizontal connections. • Transitions are effectively used to signal vertical and horizontal relationships. 4. The writing shows mastery of grammar and conventions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very few minor errors occur in proportion to the amount written. • Sentence structure is varied and effective. • Usage is precise throughout the essay.
5	<p>The 5 response is well formed.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focus is clearly stated and maintained. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction is presented well. • The thesis is appropriate to the topic; logical connections to the thesis are substantially maintained throughout. • The closing relates to the thesis without simply restating it. 2. Support is substantial. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most major points are supported fully, but elaboration may be uneven. • Ideas may be supported using multiple strategies. 3. The organizational plan is clear. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coherence is maintained by a vertical plan; paragraphs present a logical structure. • Cohesion is maintained by horizontal sequencing. • Transitions are logically used to signal vertical and horizontal connections. 4. The writing shows good control of grammar and conventions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few minor errors occur in proportion to the amount written. • Sentence structure shows variation. • Usage is often precise.
4	<p>The 4 response is adequately formed.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focus is stated and generally maintained. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purpose is adequately stated. • The thesis is generally appropriate to the topic; logical connections are adequately maintained. • The closing may simply restate the thesis. 2. Support is adequate. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most major points are adequately supported; elaboration may be uneven. • Ideas may be supported using a single strategy; support may be general. 3. The organizational plan is adequate. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coherence is generally maintained by a vertical plan. • Cohesion is generally maintained by horizontal sequencing. • Transitions are sometimes used to signal vertical and horizontal connections. 4. The writing shows adequate control of grammar and conventions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor and perhaps a few major errors occur, but they do not interfere with meaning. • Sentence structure is adequate but may not be varied. • Usage is adequate.

(continued on next page)

Score Point	Score Point Description (<i>continued</i>)
3	<p>The 3 response is partially formed, but all performance characteristics are present.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focus may be clear, but it is not adequately maintained. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purpose may need to be inferred. • Although the thesis may be appropriate to the topic, minor drifts in focus or lapses in logic may be present. • The closing may be absent or only a repetition of the introduction. 2. Support may be limited. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some points are partially supported. • Elaboration that is present may lack depth. 3. An organizational plan may be inferred. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coherence is partial; only some major points are appropriately paragraphed. • Cohesion is partial because sequencing may be disrupted. • Transitions may be inappropriate, intrusive, or absent. 4. The writing shows partial control of grammar and conventions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some minor and major errors occur and may be distracting. • Some control of basic sentence structure is evident. • Usage may be imprecise.
2	<p>The 2 response displays only the rudiments of techniques for forming an essay.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focus may be vague and poorly maintained. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purpose is vague or prompt-dependent. • The thesis may be inappropriate to the topic and contain unrelated, illogical, or redundant ideas. • The closing, if present, may be unrelated to the opening. 2. Support is rudimentary. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few points are supported by specific or relevant detail. • Elaboration may be redundant or simply a list of specifics. 3. An organizational plan is attempted. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coherence is rudimentary, showing little evidence of a vertical plan. • There is often disjointedness in the writer's efforts to transition from one idea to another and relate ideas to selected examples. Cohesion is rudimentary. 4. The writing shows rudimentary control of grammar and conventions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many minor and major errors interfere with communication. • Sentence structure may be rambling or fragmentary. • Usage is imprecise.
1	<p>The 1 response fails to form an essay.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focus is unclear. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purpose is unclear and/or inappropriate to the topic. • Any discussion present is confused. • There may be no discernable conclusion. 2. Support is insufficient. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and elaboration, if present, are irrelevant, insufficient, and/or confused. 3. An organizational plan is not evident. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is so little control of paragraphing that the response lacks coherence. • Cohesion is not evident. Sequencing is confused. Almost no points are logically related. 4. The writing shows little control of grammar and conventions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor and major errors are so various and numerous that meaning is seriously impeded.
U	<p>The response is unscorable because it is unrelated to the assigned topic, illegible, primarily in a language other than English, or of insufficient length to score.</p>
B	<p>The written response form is blank.</p>

EXPLANATION OF THE BASIC SKILLS TEST SCORE REPORT

OVERVIEW

The score report indicates whether or not you passed the Basic Skills test and how you performed on each of the four test subareas. The passing scores for the Illinois Certification Testing System were established by the Illinois State Board of Education based on recommendations from panels of Illinois educators. The Basic Skills test passing score is designed to reflect the level of knowledge and skills required to perform effectively in an Illinois teacher preparation program and to perform the job of an educator receiving an initial certificate in Illinois.

Passing Score

To pass the Basic Skills test you must obtain a scaled total test score of 240 or higher **and** you must score at or above the minimum allowable score for each test subarea.

Total Test Score

The total test score is based on your performance on the entire test, including the number of multiple-choice test questions you answered correctly and the score you received on your essay.

Minimum Allowable Scores For Each Test Subarea

The minimum allowable scores for each subarea are:

Reading Comprehension	50% of questions correct
Language Arts	50% of questions correct
Mathematics	35% of questions correct
Writing	Score of 5 out of 12

To pass the test you must obtain a total test score of 240 or higher **and** you must score at or above each of these minimum test subarea levels. If any of your test subarea scores do not meet the minimum allowable score for the subarea, you will not pass the test, regardless of how high your total test score may be. Conversely, if you achieve the minimum allowable score in each subarea but do not obtain a total test score of 240 or higher you will not pass the test.

Please note:

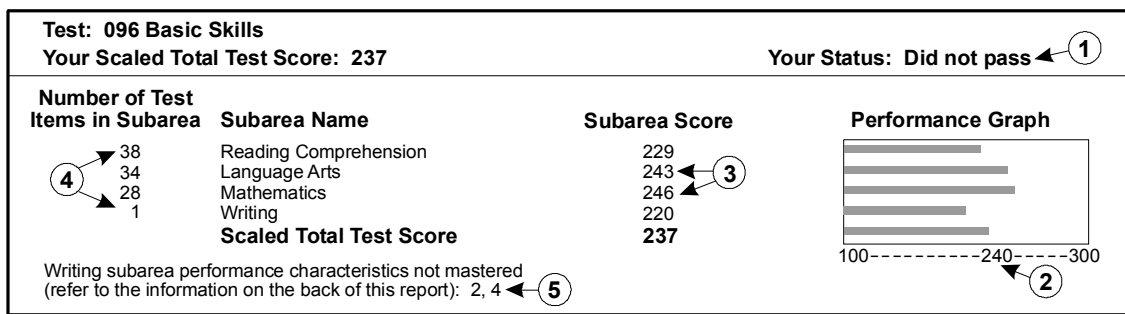
- Subarea scores are presented on the same scale as the total test score.
- The total test score required to pass the test (240) is greater than the sum of the minimum acceptable scores for each subarea.
- Subarea scores contain different numbers of questions and are weighted differently in the computation of the total test score; therefore, the average of the subarea scaled scores generally will not equal the scaled total test score.
- Subarea scores will help you assess your areas of relative strength and weakness.
- If you did not pass the total test and did not obtain a Writing subarea score of 240 or higher, the features of your writing that may need improvement are indicated.

Reporting of Scores

Your results will be forwarded to the Illinois State Board of Education and to the Illinois institution you indicate during the registration process. You should keep the score report you receive for your own records.

READING YOUR REPORT: A SAMPLE

A sample of the Basic Skills test score report is provided below. You will find similar information reported on your score report if you took the Basic Skills test.



According to the above sample, the examinee did not pass the Basic Skills test ①, because the examinee's scaled total test score of 237 is below the passing scaled score of 240 ②. The examinee did better on Language Arts and Mathematics ③ than on Reading Comprehension and the Writing assignment. The examinee will need to retake the Basic Skills test and achieve a scaled total test score of 240 or higher and meet the minimum allowable scores to pass the test. The score report indicates that there were 38 questions for the Reading Comprehension subarea and that Writing is measured through one assignment ④. The examinee's Writing response was weak in features 2 (support/elaboration) and 4 (grammar and conventions) ⑤. Information about how to interpret your Writing subarea score is provided below.

HOW TO INTERPRET THE BASIC SKILLS TEST WRITING SCORE

The writing responses are scored by educators oriented in writing assessment, using the same standards for all examinees, by a process called focused holistic scoring. The process allows the scoring of writing samples based on overall quality rather than on an analysis of the components. Scorers base their judgments on the quality of the writing rather than on penmanship, length, or neatness. In general, an essay that receives a passing score achieves the following performance characteristics:

WRITING SUBAREA PERFORMANCE CHARACTERISTICS

1. Focus—the focus of the essay is clear;
2. Support/Elaboration—it provides elaboration of major points;
3. Organization—it possesses overall organization with a logical sequence of ideas; and
4. Grammar and Conventions—it is written in complete sentences that conform to the rules of standard written English.

Each essay is scored on a scale from 1 to 6, with 1 representing a totally undeveloped paper and 6 representing a paper that is very well developed. Each paper is read and scored by two readers; the sum of the two readers' scores is the total score assigned to the essay. This score is then converted to the scaled score that is reported on your score report. This conversion is as follows.

Two Readers' Scores Assigned	Total Essay Score	Scaled Score
6 + 6	12	300
5 + 6	11	288
5 + 5	10	276
4 + 5	9	264
4 + 4	8	252
3 + 4	7	240
3 + 3	6	220
2 + 3	5	200
2 + 2	4	180
1 + 2	3	160
1 + 1	2	140
U	0	100
B	0	100

If two readers' scores differ by more than one point, the essay is scored by a third reader. Based on the chart above, an examinee who receives a scaled score of 288 received an essay score of 5 from one reader and of 6 from the other reader. A total score of 9 can result only from reader scores of 4 plus 5, not from scores of 3 plus 6, since the scores in the latter pair differ by more than one point. The designation of U (unscorable) is assigned to papers that are off topic, are illegible, are written primarily in a language other than English, or provide insufficient quantity of text to score. A designation of B is assigned if the written response booklet is blank. For more information on the scoring process, including detailed descriptions of the score points (1 to 6) and a sample written response, see pages 2-34 and 2-37 to 2-38 of this study guide.