

The Reading Comprehension and Sentence Skills test descriptions below are from the Accuplacer™ Student Guide for their online tests.

## DESCRIPTIONS OF THE TESTS

### **READING COMPREHENSION TEST**

This test measures your ability to understand what you read.

Before you begin there will be two sample questions with the correct answers indicated.

Some questions will ask you to read the statement or passage and then choose the best answer to the question. Answer the question on the basis of what is stated or implied in the passage.

#### **Sample Question**

There are two types of pottery that I do. There is production pottery---mugs, tableware--- the kinds of things that sell easily. These pay for my time to do the other work, which is more creative and satisfies my needs as an artist.

The author of the passage implies that

- A. artists have a tendency to waste valuable time
- B. creativity and mass-production are incompatible
- C. most people do not appreciate good art
- D. pottery is not produced by creative artists

The correct answer is **creativity and mass-production are incompatible**. The author of the passage implies that creativity and mass-production are incompatible.

#### **Sample Question**

Every sip of milk contains 59 different bioactive hormones according to endocrinologist Clark Grosvenor. Imagine taking 59 different hormone pills every morning, afternoon and evening. These hormones cause mood swings, irritability and depression. Imagine the devastation that is created in your body by the cumulative effect of taking those powerful drugs. What is the gross effect on the total behavior of a society, so dosed?

As we drink more and more milk and increase the amount of genetically engineered milk and cheese and ice cream products containing increased levels

of naturally occurring milk hormones, we most certainly have influenced the way we act as a society.

The author's argument is that:

- A. Many people are drug addicts
- B. Milk has an effect on the way our society acts
- C. Women need to take hormones
- D. Everyone should drink more milk

The correct answer is ***Milk has an effect on the way our society acts***. The author argues that the hormones in milk have an effect on our society's behaviour.

In other questions, two underlined sentences are followed by a question or statement. Read the sentences, then choose the best answer to the question or the best completion of the statement.

### Sample Question

The Midwest is experiencing its worst drought in fifteen years.

Corn and soybean prices are expected to be very high this year.

What does the second sentence do?

- A. It restates the idea found in the first.
- B. It states an effect.
- C. It gives an example.
- D. It analyzes the statement made in the first.

The correct answer is ***It states an effect***. The author is implying that the drought will cause a rise in prices.

## **SENTENCE SKILLS TEST**

This test measures your understanding of sentence structure -- how sentences are put together and what makes a sentence complete and clear.

Before you begin there will be two sample questions with the correct answers indicated. In some questions you will be asked to select the best version of the underlined or bold part of the sentence. The first choice is the same as the original. If you think the original sentence is best, choose the first one.

### Sample Question

Ms. Rose planning to teach a course in biology next summer.

- A. planning
- B. are planning
- C. with a plan
- D. plans

The correct answer is **plans**. The sentence should be "Ms. Rose plans to teach a course in biology next summer."

In other questions you will be asked to rewrite a sentence in your head. You will be told how to begin your new sentence. Your new sentence should be well written and should have essentially the same meaning as the sentence given you.

### Sample Question

Being a female jockey, she was often interviewed.

Rewrite, beginning with

She was often interviewed . . .

The next words will be

- A. on account of she was
- B. by her being
- C. because she was
- D. being as she was

The correct answer is **because she was**. The sentence should be "She was often interviewed because she was a female jockey."

## THE ESSAY TEST

You will be given a general topic which requires no specialized knowledge. Typically, the topic will ask for your opinion or ask you to take a side or stand on a general issue. Your essay is marked based on the criteria below:

- **Topic Focus & Content** (writing is fully focused on the assigned topic with effective examples and details).
- **Organization & Paragraphing** (essay has at least three separate paragraphs and has a clear and logical beginning, middle, and ending; paragraphs each focus on a main idea and develop that idea logically using transitions).
- **Writing Mechanics** (writing conveys ideas clearly and correctly: e.g. avoids grammar, usage, spelling, and punctuation errors)

Below are writing descriptions that match BCIT's English 12 essay marks. (Since a "B" is the highest mark required by a BCIT program, all tests are marked for English 12 B level and below.)

MARK	DESCRIPTION
B	Very good or excellent writing that generally needs only minor improvement in the criteria areas. All criteria are fully or almost fully met.
C+	Good writing that generally needs only moderate (but definite) improvement in the criteria areas. All criteria are mostly/reasonably met.
C	Generally satisfactory writing that might need moderate to major improvement in one or more criteria areas. This essay does more than barely meet criteria overall, but it has not mostly/reasonably met criteria in all areas.
C-	Barely adequate writing that needs major improvement. Although all criteria areas are at least partially met, one or more of these areas has significant flaws that (while not unacceptable) reduce the essay's effectiveness.
U	Inadequate writing that needs serious improvement. Although some criteria areas may be met, one or more of these areas has unacceptable errors.

## ***Sample Essay Topic***

You have noticed that some of the other companies in your building have casual Fridays (a day on which employees don't have to dress as business-like). Your boss is considering having casual Fridays at your company. Do you think this would be a good idea? Why or why not? Write a 300-600 word essay explaining why casual Fridays are or are not a good idea. Although you are taking one side (e.g. either for or against casual Fridays), you should consider both sides in your message. Provide examples to support and explain your points.

*If you'd like to practice writing your own essay on this topic, please do this before viewing the sample solution on the next page.*

## **Sample Excellent Essay**

The essay below in italics (450 words) provides a sample excellent essay on the topic above. Please remember that the opinion or side taken on an essay topic does not matter, as long as the essay meets the required criteria.

*Casual Fridays are increasingly popular in business, as companies strive to improve staff morale and create a family or team feeling between coworkers on the job. Casual Fridays may not work for every business or every employee position, and they work best if employees are given clear guidelines on appropriate casual dress. However, in general, casual Fridays are a popular and effective custom because they give employees a break in routine, reduce employee stress, and cost nothing to implement.*

*Most people love to have a break in their routines, and this is one reason why casual Fridays are so popular and effective. For example, people often like to feel they're breaking the rules a bit or just being a bit different. In this case, of course, the company allows this breaking of the dress "rules," but the psychological effect is still the same. Comfort is another reason why casual Fridays are popular. For instance, most of us feel that our workplace clothes aren't as comfortable as our at-home clothes, so casual dress can make a workplace feel more like home. When we feel comfortable, we're typically more relaxed. Thus, more comfortable clothes on the job can substantially reduce employee stress. Finally, a casual dress day is a no-cost way to show employees that the company cares about their feelings and comfort—it tells employees that the company is willing to bend the usual rules to keep employees happy. Since many companies of all types and sizes have successfully implemented casual Fridays, this is clearly a method that works.*

*Of course, casual Fridays aren't possible for everyone, and they require careful preparation to be effective. For instance, some job positions require employees to dress a certain way when meeting with clients. In addition, some positions require specific uniforms or safety clothing. Thus, a company first must consider if casual Fridays (or any weekday) can be applied to all employees or just some. Next, a company should create some clear and specific guidelines for appropriate casual Friday clothing. For example, are shorts allowed? What about exercise clothing such as sweat pants? Each company needs to consider what level of casual is appropriate. Ideally, the company would consult the employees before creating the guidelines, so that everyone participates in making casual Fridays work well. With effective planning, most companies can find a way to customize casual Fridays to meet their needs.*

*In summary, even though casual Fridays require special planning and consideration, they are still an excellent way to keep employees happy. They are*

*a no-cost, proven method to give employees a break from routine and reduce employee stress. Thus, it's no surprise that so many companies have adopted this popular workplace custom.*