



TEST ASSESSING
SECONDARY COMPLETION™

TASC PQR Writing Test Practice Items

WRITING

TASC Writing Test Practice Items

Use these items to practice for the TASC Writing subtest. Once you reach the end of the test, check your responses against the answer key provided. Take the time to read the information preceding the answers to learn what you need to know and be able to do to pass the TASC test. In the following multiple-choice questions, please circle the correct answer.

Good luck preparing for the TASC test!

1. Read these sentences.

Waiting for news about the flight delay, Sam looked for a quiet place in the noisy terminal to make a phone call. Jordan tried to find an outlet where she could plug in her computer.

Which revision most clearly combines the two sentences?

- A. Waiting for news about the flight delay, Sam, while Jordan tried to find an outlet where she could plug in her computer, looked for a quiet place in the noisy terminal to make a phone call.
- B. Waiting for news about the flight delay, Sam and Jordan looked for a quiet place in the noisy terminal to make a phone call and tried to find an outlet where she could plug in her computer.
- C. Waiting for news about the flight delay, Sam looked for a quiet place in the noisy terminal to make a phone call, while Jordan tried to find an outlet where she could plug in her computer.
- D. Waiting for news about the flight delay, Sam looked for a quiet place in the noisy terminal to make a phone call, although Jordan tried to find an outlet where she could plug in her computer.

2. Which sentence includes a misspelled word?

- A. Bobby was ecstatic about heading into the city with his friends for a baseball game this weekend.
- B. He also had reassured his brother that he would bring him an extraordinary souvenir from the ballpark’s gift shop.
- C. The spring weather was already getting warm but had not become miserably hot yet—perfect weather for a baseball game!
- D. Bobby had promised his little brother that he would take pictures of some of the star players, as well as attempt to aquire their autographs.

3. Read this sentence.

There was an effortlessness with which Barry played his guitar, and it was making it appear as if he and his instrument had—because of something almost impossible to describe—miraculously merged together into a single, music-producing unit.

Which revision of the sentence best expresses the idea precisely and concisely?

- A. He and his instrument were a miraculous music-producing unit, impossible to describe.
- B. Miraculously merged together, Barry played his guitar with an effortlessness as if he and his instrument were a single, music-producing unit.
- C. The effortlessness with which Barry played his guitar made it appear as if he and his instrument had miraculously merged into a single, music-producing unit.
- D. There was an effortlessness in how Barry played his guitar—because of something almost impossible to describe—and it was making it appear as if he and his instrument had miraculously merged together into a single, music-producing unit.

4. Read the paragraph.

An everyday hero is the average person who responds out of a sense of urgency to a situation that demands immediate action. The everyday hero recognizes that complacency is not an option. Risk to self is considered, but generally only after the fact.

Which sentence best concludes this paragraph?

- A. The world is filled with many different kinds of heroes.
- B. The actions define the hero as a giver, touching humanity in the process.
- C. The everyday hero is the next-door neighbor who rescues the child from the oncoming car.
- D. The size of the risk is of no matter to the hero because there is little time to consider the consequences.

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Read this excerpt of a draft of an essay. Then, answer the questions.

¹ All across the United States, there are cities known for their “specialty” dishes. ² Each dish has a unique flavor and story, and people travel from all across the country just to try it out.

³ Chicago is famous for its deep-dish pizza. ⁴ New York-style cheesecake is one of New York City’s claims to fame.

⁵ Pat and Harry were born in South Philadelphia. ⁶ Pat was born in 1907, and Harry was born nine years later. ⁷ When Harry was but a lad of three, the family Olivieri transported themselves to Italy. ⁸ The family stayed in Italy a short time before returning to Philadelphia. ⁹ Harry took up carpentry. ¹⁰ He worked after school. ¹¹ He also worked at the Navy shipyard. ¹² Pat began building sleds. ¹³ Harry and Pat wanted to earn a better living so they decided to open a hot dog stand and sell hot dogs at night. ¹⁴ In 1930, the brothers opened a hot dog stand at the corners of 9th Street, Wharton Street, and Passyunk Avenue.

5. Which sentence best completes the first paragraph and creates a good transition between the two paragraphs?
- A. Philly cheesesteaks were invented by the Olivieri brothers.
 - B. Pat and Harry Olivieri, who once lived in Philadelphia, invented the Philly cheesesteak.
 - C. The Olivieri brothers invented the Philly cheesesteak in order to bring publicity to the city they called home.
 - D. Thanks to two brothers, Pat and Harry Olivieri, Philadelphia has its own famous food as well: the Philly cheesesteak.

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6. Which revision most effectively combines the ideas of sentences 9 through 12 into one sentence?
- A. Because Pat built sleds, Harry worked at carpentry after school as well as at the shipyard.
 - B. Pat built sleds, and Harry worked after school, taking up carpentry and working at the shipyard.
 - C. The brothers worked after school at carpentry (Harry), at the shipyard (Harry), and at building sleds (Pat).
 - D. Harry kept busy after school, taking up carpentry and working at the shipyard, while Pat began building sleds.

TASC Writing Test Practice Items

7. Read the sentences. Move the sentences from the left into the appropriate boxes on the right so that each claim is appropriately supported and the paragraph is coherent.

These supporters feel that balancing work and school helps teach teenagers to become responsible adults.

Some parents and teachers feel that jobs take focus away from schoolwork.

Furthermore, most parents like the idea of their children earning their own wages.

It seems that people cannot agree on whether or not teenagers should have jobs while they are in school.

Many people believe that having a job is good for high school students.

Drop Area 1

Drop Area 2

For those who believe teenagers should not have jobs, the negatives outweigh the benefits.

Drop Area 3

Teenagers themselves often feel that they do not have time to handle both a job and their daily schedules at school.

8. Argumentative Essay Sample Writing Prompt

Although rates vary with the economy, between 16 and 32 percent of high school students hold part-time jobs. Proponents of students in the workforce say that employment teaches time management and responsibility while providing income and useful experiences. Opponents say that mixing school and jobs adds stress and adult temptations to a student's life while reducing the time available for study and extracurricular activities.

Weigh the claims on both sides, and then write an argumentative essay supporting either side of the debate in which you argue for or against high school students mixing school and jobs. Be sure to use information from both texts in your argumentative essay.

Before you begin planning and writing, read the two texts:

1. Benefits of Part-time Work
2. Employment Disadvantages

As you read the texts, think about what details from the texts you might use in your argumentative essay. You may take notes as you read.

After reading the texts, create a plan for your argumentative essay. Think about ideas, facts, definitions, details, and other information and examples you want to use. Think about how you will introduce your topic and what the main topic will be for each paragraph.

Then, write your argumentative essay in the space provided. Be sure to

- introduce your claim;
- support your claim with logical reasoning and relevant evidence from the texts;
- acknowledge and address alternate or opposing claims;
- organize the reasons and evidence logically;
- use words, phrases, and clauses to connect your ideas and to clarify the relationships among claims, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence;
- establish and maintain a formal style; and
- provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

Benefits of Part-time Work

High school is a critical time for adolescents to obtain knowledge needed for post-secondary education and careers as well as a time to learn about themselves and their own goals. A part-time job while in school may teach meaningful job skills and life lessons in the areas of time and money management while increasing career readiness.

Most high school students plan to go to college or vocational training after graduation, and the majority will have to provide for some of their college expenses. Students who work during high school are already learning the skills necessary to balance work, school, study, family, and recreation. Working students learn time management skills that can help them attain their higher educational goals.

Students who work also experience concrete lessons in money management. They learn about taxes, realize the effort required to earn each dollar, and gain a greater sense of autonomy. Working students often pay some of their own expenses for items like clothing or entertainment and save a portion of their earnings towards future education.

A 2002 study of over 2,700 adolescents found that working teenagers had greater career maturity. Career maturity, as defined by this study, is the degree to which the teenager knows the career he or she wants, understands the skills and education necessary to obtain that career, and has formulated a plan for obtaining the skills and education needed to meet his or her goals. Job experience teaches students about their interests, strengths, and weaknesses, and it helps them plan better for future employment.

In addition to important academic subjects, high school students must learn how to cooperate with others who have different values, goals, and experiences. They must learn to manage their time and their finances. They are becoming more autonomous and learning to shoulder more responsibility. Working during the school year can increase the skills and confidence needed to achieve later in life.

Employment Disadvantages

The idea that employment during high school benefits the student may not be a valid presumption. Some studies indicate that the benefits of employment are outweighed by the stress a job places on the student and the reduction in time available for academic and social experiences. Students who work more than 20 hours per week during high school are more likely to drop out of school, drink alcohol, and exhibit delinquent behavior. They are also less likely to receive a college degree.

Students who work significant hours have less time for studying, extracurricular activities, and socializing with their peers. Teachers find working students are often tired or unprepared for class. High-work involvement undermines education as the central aspect of student life and is related to greater absenteeism and a higher dropout rate. Some psychologists believe that intense work schedules deny students the free time they need to develop a solid sense of identity. Work stress and difficulties with schoolwork can lead to depression, feelings of powerlessness, and a reduction in self-esteem.

Researchers found that as work hours increased, so did student alcohol use. Some theorize that as students spend more time in an adult world, they experience an early transition into adult life for which they are ill-equipped. Other researchers suspect that stress from the responsibilities of work and school drives students to alcohol as a coping mechanism. Students with intense work schedules tend to be more independent and experience less parental influence.

Although work may teach responsibility and useful job skills, an intense commitment to work during high school can negatively impact a student's success. The premature adoption of adult roles and responsibilities can create stress in a student's life, leading to poorer educational outcomes and impaired psychological development. With greater work hours, parental monitoring is usually decreased, and students have a higher likelihood of developing adult habits like alcohol use. Students who are highly invested in their jobs are less likely to attain a four-year degree. Students should consider these factors when deciding whether employment during the school year would provide a positive experience.



TASC Writing Test Practice Items

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STOP 

Answer Key

After taking these practice items, you can check your answers with the following answer key. For your added benefit, answers come with explanations to help you understand why they're right. If you do well on the practice test, then you know you may be prepared to take the official TASC Readiness Test. If you struggle on the practice test, then you know you may still have more work to do to get prepared.

1. This multiple-choice item will provide evidence regarding your proficiency in using various types of phrases (noun, verb, adjectival, adverbial, participial, prepositional, absolute) and clauses (independent, dependent; noun, relative, adverbial) to convey specific meanings and add variety and interest to writing or presentations. The item requires you to recognize correct and incorrect examples of various types of phrases (among them noun and prepositional phrases) and clauses and determine how their arrangement best conveys meaning and adds interest in a specific sentence. You will also apply your knowledge of appropriate syntax.

Answer: C

Explanation for Correct Response:

Only choice C effectively combines the ideas by subordinating the 2nd sentence with an appropriate conjunction and placement of the clause.

2. This multiple-choice item will provide evidence regarding your proficiency in spelling. The item requires you to distinguish between correctly spelled and misspelled words in the context of sophisticated sentences.

Answer: D

Explanation for Correct Response:

Only choice D has a misspelled word: acquire. Other choices contain words which may draw students who are not proficient in the construct being measured (spelling): ecstatic, reassured, extraordinary, souvenir, and miserably.

3. This multiple-choice item will provide evidence regarding your proficiency in choosing language that expresses ideas precisely and concisely, recognizing and eliminating wordiness and redundancy. The item requires you to recognize language that is superfluous to a sentence's intended meaning, as well as identify sentences in which the content is too sparse to convey the intended meaning.

Answer: C

Explanation for Correct Response:

Only choice C eliminates the unnecessary (the idea that it is impossible to describe) while maintaining the same meaning as the original. The switch to active voice tightens up the text.

4. This multiple-choice item will provide evidence regarding your proficiency in providing concluding statements in writing. The item requires you to recognize the role of conclusions in writing and assess which responses are relevant and cohesive, as well as which responses do not provide the necessary information and finality.

Answer: D

Explanation for Correct Response:

Speaking to the risk and there being little time to consider consequences offers a conclusive statement that is both relevant and cohesive to the tenor of the paragraph.

5. This multiple-choice item asks you to demonstrate the correct way to transition between paragraphs, calling for attention to syntax, clarity, and cohesion. The answer choices focus on your understanding of transitions and how to correctly link seemingly unrelated ideas within a written work by using relevant details to create the connection.

Answer: D

Explanation for Correct Response:

The first paragraph introduces the specialty dishes of several cities. The introduction of the two brothers before concluding with Philadelphia's specialty cohesively transitions into the second paragraph about the two brothers.

6. This multiple-choice item is a traditional approach to measuring revision skills. The answer choices focus on the use of concise word choice to enhance clarity and effect. You are expected to analyze sentences and then identify the sentence that is most clear and coherent.

Answer: D

Explanation for Correct Response:

Choice D effectively combines the sentences into two clear clauses about each brother. Interest is also added by subordinating Harry's jobs to the statement about him keeping busy.

7. The examinee earns 2 points if all three supporting details are placed correctly and 1 point if only one supporting detail is placed correctly.

The correct answers and sequence are:

It seems that people cannot agree on whether or not teenagers should have jobs while they are in school.

Many people believe that having a job is good for high school students.

These supporters feel that balancing work and school helps teach teenagers to become responsible adults.

Furthermore, most parents like the idea of their children earning their own wages.

For those who disagree with teenagers having jobs, the negatives outweigh the benefits.

Some parents and teachers feel that jobs take focus away from schoolwork.

Teenagers themselves often feel that they do not have time to handle both a job and their daily schedules at school.

8. TASC test requires you to write either an argumentative or an informational essay using details and examples associated with the prompt.

Explanation for Correct Response:

A scoring rubric is a tool used to evaluate a piece of writing. The score you receive on your essay is based on how well your writing sample aligns to the criteria referenced in the rubric. Read your essay and assign it a score based on the measures in the scoring rubric below.

Scoring Rubric–Argumentative Essay

Score: 4

The response is a well-developed essay that develops and supports an opinion or argument from both texts.

- Effectively introduces an opinion or claim
- Uses logical, credible, and relevant reasoning and evidence to support opinion or claim
- Uses an organizational strategy to present reasons and relevant evidence
- Acknowledges and counters opposing claims, as appropriate
- Uses precise and purposeful word choice
- Uses words, phrases, and/or clauses that effectively connect and show relationships among ideas
- Uses and maintains an appropriate tone
- Provides a strong concluding statement or section that logically follows from the ideas presented
- Has no errors in usage and conventions that interfere with meaning

Score: 3

The response is a complete essay that develops and supports an opinion or argument.

- Clearly introduces an opinion or claim
- Uses reasoning and evidence to support opinion or claim
- Uses an organizational structure to present reasons and relevant evidence
- Attempts to acknowledge and/or counter opposing claims, as appropriate
- Uses clear word choice
- Uses words and/or phrases to connect ideas
- Uses an appropriate tone
- Provides a concluding statement or section that follows from the ideas presented
- Has few, if any, errors in usage and conventions that interfere with meaning

Score: 2

The response is an incomplete or oversimplified essay that develops and supports an opinion or argument.

- Attempts to establish an opinion or claim
- Develops, sometimes unevenly, reasons and/or evidence to support opinion or claim
- Attempts to use an organizational structure
- Makes little, if any, attempt to acknowledge or counter opposing claims
- Uses simple language, which sometimes lacks clarity
- Provides a weak concluding statement or section
- May have errors in usage and conventions that interfere with meaning

(Scoring Rubric–Argumentative Essay
continued on next page.)

Scoring Rubric–Argumentative Essay (continued)

Score: 1

The response provides evidence of an attempt to write an essay that offers an opinion or argument.

- Weakly states or alludes to an opinion or claim
- Has minimal support for opinion or claim
- May be too brief to demonstrate an organizational structure
- Makes no attempt to acknowledge or counter opposing claims
- Uses words that are inappropriate, overly simple, or unclear
- Provides a minimal or no concluding statement or section
- Has errors in usage and conventions that interfere with meaning

Score: 0

The response is completely irrelevant or incorrect, or there is no response.

