

ESL Grammar/Usage Sample Questions

Level 1

Item Type: Word order

Our children enjoy this garden. _____ it every day.

- A. They visit
- B. Visit they do
- C. Visit they
- D. Visit do they

Level 2

Item Types: (1) Word order in Wh-questions; (2) Simple past tense

SPEAKER A: This soup is too spicy. (1) _____ so much pepper?

SPEAKER B: Maybe the cook (2) _____ it was hot pepper.

1. A. Why the cook did use
 B. Why the cook use
 C. Why the cook used
 D. Why did the cook use

2. A. doesn't knows
 B. didn't know
 C. didn't knew
 D. don t know

ESL Grammar/Usage Sample Questions

Level 3

Item Types: (1) Punctuation; (2) Two-word and phrasal verbs; (3) Modal verbs

TEACHER: In addition to your textbooks, there are a couple of other materials you need to buy for this course. Because you will be writing weekly (1) _____ I want you to have a notebook that you can (2) _____ to me every Friday. Make sure that the size is 8 1/2 by 11, not a smaller one. You also need a set of index cards. You will be taking notes on books that you will read, and you will write your notes on these cards. One set (3) _____. Any questions?

1. A. journals;
 B. journals,
 C. journals
 D. journals.

2. A. turn up
 B. turn on
 C. turn down
 D. turn in

3. A. should be enough
 B. should have been enough
 C. should enough
 D. should been enough

ESL Grammar/Usage Sample Questions

Level 4

Item Types: (1) Passive voice verbs; (2) Punctuation conventions: parentheticals; (3) Conjunctions; (4) Noun clauses; (5) Noun clauses

The lion (1) _____ the "king of beasts," but in fact, this king doesn't do much to deserve the title. Lions live in groups; each group, or "pride," of lions consists of one dominant male and several females and their offspring. However, all the (2) _____ is done by the lionesses, the females. Males spend their time (3) _____ what they have killed. Occasionally, males may have to scare off possible threats to the group, but for no more effort than this, they get to eat first, and to eat until they are full. Male lions are also guilty of what (4) _____ not very kingly behavior. When a new male takes over the pride, he will usually kill all the cubs of the male that formerly led the pride. This ensures that only his own offspring will survive. This may seem brutal, but it is how (5) _____. Perhaps we might want to reconsider calling the lion the "king of beasts."

1. A. is often been calling
 B. has often called
 C. is often been called
 D. has often been called

2. A. work the stalking, chasing, and killing of prey
 B. work the stalking, chasing, and killing of prey:
 C. work; the stalking, chasing, and killing of prey;
 D. work: the stalking, chasing, and killing of prey

3. A. either sleeping while the females hunt or eating
 B. sleeping while either the females hunting or eat
 C. either sleeping while the females hunt or eat
 D. sleeping while the females either hunt or eating

4. A. would we probably call
 B. we would probably call
 C. we would probably call it
 D. would we probably called

5. A. nature does working
 B. is nature working
 C. nature works
 D. does nature work

ESL Reading Sample Questions

Level 1

Item Type: Recognizing the main idea of a picture

Look at the picture.



Which sentence describes the picture?

- A. The people are sitting together under a tree.
- B. The family is standing in the rain.
- C. The family is walking together in the park.
- D. The men are running in the park.

ESL Reading Sample Questions

Level 2

Item Types: (1) Inferring meanings of words; (2) Locating explicit details

Read the paragraph about the emporium in Galveston.

Shoppers enter the **emporium**, which is on the ground floor, through the original 14-foot doors. You can eat a sandwich inside while sitting on a wooden seat at an umbrella-covered table, or you can buy meats and cheeses by the pound for a picnic on the beach. There is also a wide selection of Texas foods, beers, chocolates, books, baskets, and specialty coffees and teas. A wine room features Texas, U.S., and international wines.

Adapted from Ann Gallaway, "A Present from the Past." '1994 by Texas Highways.

1. In the passage, what does the highlighted word "emporium" mean?

A. Store

B. Beach

C. Bar

D. Hotel

2. What can you buy at the emporium?

A. 14-foot doors

B. Wooden seats

C. Meats and cheeses

D. Ground floors

ESL Reading Sample Questions

Level 3

Item Types: (1) Recognizing main ideas; (2) Locating explicit details; (3) Inferring meanings of words

Read the definitions from two different dictionaries.

Radburn layout In town planning and urban studies, a planned urban layout, developed by Clarence Stein, applied in Radburn, New Jersey, USA in 1928, which separates pedestrians from cars and trucks by arranging "superblocks" of housing, shops, offices, schools, etc., around a central green. Each superblock has its outer roads, off which come service cul-de-sacs. The central green or pedestrian space has pedestrian access only, either by underground passages or **surface** walks.

Adapted from Audrey N. Clark, Longman Dictionary of Geography. '1985 by Longman, Inc.

Radburn layout A style of residential layout pioneered at Radburn, New Jersey (USA) between 1928 and 1933 and later widely adopted in the planning of postwar housing areas in Britain, particularly in new towns and expanded towns. Its main features include the separation of pedestrian and car traffic, housing facing onto open space and gardens and with car access to the rear, loop roads, and cul-de-sacs. In the British postwar new towns, the Radburn principles were clearly evident in the detailed plans of neighborhood units.

Adapted from John Small and Michael Witherick, A Modern Dictionary of Geography. '1995 by E. Arnold.

1. Based on the two passages, the most important feature of the Radburn layout is the

- A. use of underground passages.
- B. separation of car and pedestrian traffic.
- C. building of houses so that they face the street.
- D. use of cul-de-sacs for pedestrians.

2. Which information appears in both dictionaries?

- A. The plan was developed by Clarence Stein.
- B. The plan was widely used in Britain.
- C. The plan made use of cul-de-sacs.
- D. The plan included underground passages.

3. As it is used in the first paragraph, the highlighted word "surface" means

- A. the part of something that you can see.
- B. a smooth area, like a tabletop.
- C. outward appearance.
- D. at the level of the ground.

ESL Reading Sample Questions

Level 4

Item Types: (1) Applying concepts in the passage to new situations; (2) Recognizing the main idea of a paragraph; (3) Locating explicit details; (4) Inferring the meaning of words or phrases; (5) Inferring style, tone, intended audience

Read the passage about psychology.

Social Influence

Of the many influences on human behavior, social influences are the most pervasive. The main influence on people is people. When we hear the term social influence, most of us think of deliberate attempts of someone to persuade us to alter our actions or change our opinions. The television commercial **comes to mind**. But many of the most important forms of social influence are unintentional, and some of the effects we humans have on one another occur by virtue of the simple fact that we are in each other's physical presence.

In 1898 a psychologist named Triplett made an interesting observation. In looking over speed records of bicycle racers, he noticed that better speed records were obtained when cyclists raced against each other than when they raced against the clock. This observation led Triplett to perform the first controlled laboratory experiment ever conducted in social psychology. He instructed children to turn a wheel as fast as possible for a certain period of time. Sometimes two children worked at the same time in the same room, each with his own wheel; at other times, they worked alone. The results confirmed his theory: Children worked faster in coaction, that is, when another child doing the same thing was present, than when they worked alone.

Soon after Triplett's experiment on coaction, it was discovered that the mere presence of a passive spectator (an audience rather than a coactor) was sufficient to facilitate performance. This was discovered accidentally in an experiment on muscular effort and fatigue by Meumann (1904), who found that subjects lifted a weight faster and farther whenever the psychologist was in the room. Later experiments have confirmed this audience effect.

It appears that coaction and audience effects in humans are caused by the individual's "cognitive" concerns about competition and the evaluation of performance that others will make. We learn as we grow up that others praise or criticize, reward or punish our performances, and this raises our drive level when we perform before others. Thus, even the early studies of coaction found that if all elements of competition are removed, coaction effects are reduced or eliminated. Similarly, audience effects are a function of the subject's interpretation of how much he is being evaluated.

Adapted from Ernest R. Hilgard, Richard C. Atkinson, and Rita L. Atkinson, *Introduction to Psychology*. '1975 by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.

ESL Reading Sample Questions

Level 4 (Continued)

- Which of the following would be an example of the coaction effect?
 - A. A woman works harder when her boss is in the room than when she is alone.
 - B. Bob's two children finish their homework faster when he is watching them than when he is not.
 - C. Players on the team work harder when they exercise together than when they each exercise alone.
 - D. Joe and his two friends work more slowly when they are together than when each is alone.
- What is the main idea of the last paragraph?
 - A. How people grow up determines their adult behavior.
 - B. Competition and evaluation increase the coaction and audience effects.
 - C. People praise and criticize children as they grow up.
 - D. Competition and evaluation are not related to the coaction and audience effects.
- According to the passage, Triplett's experiment of 1898
 - A. supported his theory of coaction effect.
 - B. challenged his theory of coaction effect.
 - C. showed that cyclists race harder against each other than against the clock.
 - D. showed the connection between coaction effect and audience effect.
- As it is used in the passage, what does the highlighted phrase "comes to mind" mean?
 - A. Is a problem
 - B. Affects our thinking
 - C. Creates confusion
 - D. Is an example

ESL Reading Sample Questions

Level 4 (Continued)

5. Where would you most likely find this passage?

- A. In a business letter
- B. In an instructional manual
- C. In a college textbook
- D. In a book review

ESL Listening Sample Questions

Level 1





NOTE: The shaded sections of the Listening items are the audio passages that students hear. These passages will not appear on the student's computer screen.

Item Type: Recognizing simple social formulae

Listen.

[Recording]
Please come in.

Choose the correct picture

- A. 
- B. 
- C. 
- D. 

ESL Listening Sample Questions

Level 2

NOTE: The shaded sections of the Listening items are the audio passages that students hear. These passages will not appear on the student's computer screen.

Item Type: Recognizing instructions or directions

Listen to the people talking.

[Recording]

Female voice:

Excuse me, which bus goes to Central Park?

Male voice:

Well, the 22 goes there, but it's better to take the 7 express.
It will be here in 10 minutes.

Which bus does the man say to take?

- A. The 7 express
- B. The 10
- C. The 22 express
- D. The 22

ESL Listening Sample Questions

Level 3

NOTE: The shaded sections of the Listening items are the audio passages that students hear. These passages will not appear on the student's computer screen.

Item Types: (1) Recognizing main ideas; (2) Recognizing instructions or directions

Listen to the taped information from a college.

[Recording]

Thank you for calling T-R-A-I-L, or TRAIL, the taped registration and information line. The TRAIL system operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you want information about classes offered by the college, press 1. If you want to register for specific classes, press 2 and follow the instructions. You will have 15 minutes to register. You must confirm your registration by pressing the zero key before you hang up or the computer won't accept your registration. If you have any questions, call the registration office at 555-4933. Press 1 for information or 2 to register now.

1. What is the TRAIL system used for?

- A. To go to classes
- B. To get information and register for classes
- C. To speak to someone at the Registration Office
- D. To get your grades

2. What will happen if you do NOT confirm your registration?

- A. You will have to pay more.
- B. The computer will change your registration.
- C. You will need to take more classes.
- D. The computer will not accept your registration.

ESL Listening Sample Questions

Level 4

NOTE: The shaded sections of the Listening items are the audio passages that students hear. These passages will not appear on the student's computer screen. Italicized words indicate vocal emphasis by the speakers.

Item Types: (1) Recognizing main ideas; (2) Recognizing details; (3) Recognizing details

Listen to the lecture from an art class.

[Recording]

Yesterday we got off the subject a bit talking about how artists can be difficult people; they're seen as temperamental, too emotional, et cetera. Well, let's talk about *where* this *image* came from. It's a stereotype, of course: not *all* artists are temperamental. But the stereotype is very common today.

We have studied Michelangelo, but I haven't talked about how his personality is the *model* for the modern image of the artist. [pause] His paintings on the Sistine Chapel are some of the most famous works of art in the world. But, he didn't even *want* the job when it was offered to him he considered himself a *sculptor* first, and didn't want to take time away from that. His sculpting was *most* important to him, and he almost refused the job. He was also famous for a quick and fiery temper, and didn't want to take suggestions about his work. He was extremely independent, fighting with powerful religious and political leaders who hired him to create works of art. So, to sum up, the modern *image* of the *artist* that we talked about yesterday is largely due to Michelangelo.

Oh, I should add that this image we've been talking about is primarily a *Western* view of the artist. This stereotype of an artist is not so common in other parts of the world.

1. What is the main idea of the lecture?
 - A. Michelangelo was the greatest artist of his time.
 - B. Michelangelo was a better sculptor than a painter.
 - C. Michelangelo's personality, more than his art, made him famous.
 - D. Michelangelo's personality is the model for a common image of Western artists.

ESL Listening Sample Questions

Level 4 (Continued)

2. According to the lecture, why was Michelangelo reluctant to paint the Sistine Chapel at first?
- A. He lost his temper with political leaders.
 - B. He wanted to work on his sculpting instead.
 - C. He did not want to paint the pictures he was asked to paint.
 - D. He was not satisfied with the payment offered.
3. Based on the lecture, which of the following is the most correct statement?
- A. The image of the artist, modeled after Michelangelo, is a Western stereotype.
 - B. Michelangelo wanted to be the model for the image of the modern artist.
 - C. Michelangelo created more art than most artists of his time.
 - D. Michelangelo believed he was a better painter than sculptor.

English & ESL Sample Screen Shot

SAMPLE SCREEN SHOT

The figure below shows a sample essay and test item similar to those in the Placement Test and illustrates how these materials would appear on the computer screen. Students are instructed to read the essay and to use the mouse to click on each section of the essay that they believe to be problematic. After a student clicks on a section of text, that section is highlighted, and four alternative text selections are shown in the right half of the screen. Students then select the section they believe best fixes the problem in the text, and then continue in this fashion until they believe they have identified all problems in the essay. They then click on the “Finished editing essay” button and are presented with several questions that address strategy, organization, and style. Students then click on the “Go On” button to proceed to the next computer-selected essay. The sample items on the following pages provide examples of the contents of the Writing Skills Placement and Diagnostic Tests.

The screenshot displays the COMPASS/ESL Writing Test interface. At the top left, the title "COMPASS/ESL Writing Test" is visible, and at the top right, there is a "HELP" button. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column contains an essay with two paragraphs. The first paragraph reads: "An increasing number of lakes and rivers in the northern United States invaded are being by a mussel no larger than a fingernail." The second paragraph reads: "The zebra mussel probably steamed aboard a transatlantic ship sometime in the mid-1980s from the Caspian Sea into U.S. waters. Despite its growth was explosive, partly because the species was preyed upon by very few native predators in its new environment. As a consequence, the zebra mussels did find a plentiful food supply. They eat huge amounts of phytoplankton, which tiny free-floating sea organisms that dwell in water. Scientists are concerned when the mussels may compete aggressively with other species that depend on the same food supply." A mouse cursor is positioned over the text "Scientists are concerned when the mussels may compete aggressively with other species that depend on the same food supply." Above the essay is a "MORE" button, and below it is another "MORE" button. The right column is titled "Question 1" and contains five multiple-choice options, each with a checkbox:

- A. Scientists are concerned when the mussels
- B. Scientists are concerned that if the mussels
- C. Scientists are concerned wherein the mussels
- D. Scientists are concerned that the mussels
- E. Scientists are concerned as if the mussels

At the bottom right of the question area is a button labeled "Finished editing essay".