THE WRITING SKILLS TEST

The Writing Skills Test is a 72-item, 40-minute test designed to measure understanding of the conventions of standard written English in punctuation, basic grammar and usage, sentence structure, strategy, organization, and style. Spelling, vocabulary, and rote recall of rules of grammar are not tested. A range of passage types is used to provide a variety of rhetorical situations similar to those found in a postsecondary curriculum.

You will need to bring No. 2 pencils with erasers with which to take this test.

SAMPLE TEST

Directions

In the passage that follows, certain words and phrases are underlined and numbered. In the right-hand column, you will find alternatives for each underlined part. You are to choose the one that best expresses the idea, makes the statement appropriate for standard written English, or is worded most consistently with the style and tone of the passage as a whole. If you think the original version is best, choose "NO CHANGE."

You will also find questions about a section of the passage, or about the passage as a whole. These questions do not refer to an underlined portion of the passage, but rather are identified by a number or numbers in a box.

For each question, choose the alternative you consider best and fill in the corresponding circle on your answer sheet. Read each passage through once before you begin to answer the questions that accompany it. You cannot determine most answers without reading several sentences beyond the question. Be sure that you have read far enough ahead each time you choose an alternative.

Sample Passage and Items

In the end, everyone gives up jogging. Some find that their strenuous efforts to earn a living drains (1) away their energy.

1. A. NO CHANGE
   B. drain
   C. has drained
   D. is draining

Others suffering from (2) defeat by the hazards of the course, from hard pavement to muddy tracks, and from smog to sleet and snow.

2. A. NO CHANGE
   B. suffered
   C. suffer
   D. suffering with

These can also (3) collapse in their sneakers.

3. A. NO CHANGE
   B. Still others
   C. They can also
   D. They also can

My experience having been different (4) however; I had a revelation.

4. A. NO CHANGE
   B. being different,
   C. was a difference,
   D. was different,

It happened two summers ago at Lake Tom. I had been accustomed to running every day, but that week I decided to be lazy. I sailed, basked in the sun, and ate wonderfully; the best meals I've ever eaten (5).

5. Which of the following would most specifically illustrate the point that the writer ate wonderfully?
   A. NO CHANGE
   B. nutritious and healthful meals.
   C. lobster, steak, and baked potatoes.
   D. breakfast, lunch and dinner.
By the fourth day I had to face the truth: my body was slowly changing to becoming (6) dough.

So I tied on my running shoes and loped out to the main road in search of a five-mile route. Out of curiosity I turned onto Lookout Hill Road (7) and soon discovered how the road had come by its name.

I was chugging up one of the longest, steepest (8) inclines in the region. Perched at the top was a ramshackle house, and only a desire to get a closer look kept me going.

I was exhausted when I reached the crest of the hill. There I found a native New Englander rocking on the front porch of the house, which was painted (9). "Mister," I panted, "you sure live on a big hill!"

He studied me closely for a moment and then responded, "Yep, and I've got the good sense not to run up it." That night I tied the laces of my running shoes around a rock and dropped them in Lake Tom (10).

6. A. NO CHANGE
   B. become
   C. being
   D. OMIT the underlined portion.

7. A. NO CHANGE
   B. Out of curiosity, Lookout Hill Road was turned onto
   C. Having become curious, Lookout Hill Road was the route I turned onto
   D. Curious, a turning into Lookout Hill Road was what I did,

8. A. NO CHANGE
   B. longest, steepest,
   C. longest steepest,
   D. longest and steepest,

9. A. NO CHANGE
   B. house (painted).
   C. house, and it was painted.
   D. house.

10. Which of the following sentences would provide the conclusion that best supports the point made in the first paragraph that the writer gave up jogging because of a revelation?
    A. NO CHANGE
    B. I realized that the New Englander was, indeed, correct, and walked back down the hill.
    C. After that, I sat down on the porch and we talked for more than an hour.
    D. Jogging may be good for you, but it's also tiring—especially if you jog up hills!

Answers: Sample Writing Skills Test