

ACCUPLACER ESL Reading Skills Test

The ESL Reading Skills test measures your ability to read English. Specifically, it assesses your understanding of short passages. It contains brief passages of 50 words or less and moderate length passages of 50 to 90 words. Half of this test contains straightforward comprehension items (paraphrase, locating information, vocabulary on a phrase level, and pronoun reference). The other half assesses inference skills (main idea, fact versus opinion, cause/effect logic, identifying irrelevant information, author's point of view, and applying the author's logic to another situation).

Sample Questions

R1. Television has been introduced to almost every country in the world, reaching a large number of viewers on every continent. About 600 million people saw the first person walk on the moon, and a billion people watched the twentieth Olympic Games. Television has in many ways promoted understanding and cooperation among people. It does this by showing educational and cultural programs.

According to the passage, which of the following is true?

- A. Television is watched in nearly every country.
- B. Not everybody who had a television set could watch the 1998 World Cup finals.
- C. Watching television makes people dissatisfied with their own lives.
- D. Television was invented in 1980.

R2. Janet's parents bought her a new sports car as a birthday present. It was blue. Janet sold her 7-year-old blue pickup truck to a high school student. The truck could not go very fast, but the student was happy with it.

According to the passage, which of these statements is true?

- A. Janet bought a pickup truck and a sports car.
- B. The pickup truck was faster than the sports car.
- C. The high school student traded cars with Janet.
- D. The pickup truck was older than the sports car.

R3. Some of Edward Weston's black-and-white photographs of American nature scenes are considered superb examples of visual art. Indeed, some of his photographs have commanded top prices at art galleries.

Which of the following best characterizes Weston's photographs?

- A. They belong to famous collectors.
- B. They have been sold in art galleries for large sums of money.
- C. They introduced many Americans to visual art.
- D. They contrast American cities with natural settings.

R4. Speaking to a group of people can be a frightening experience. Some speakers cope by looking above the heads of the audience. Others try to imagine that they are talking to a friend. A few try picturing the audience in some non-threatening way, such as in their pajamas.

The author of the passage assumes that speakers should

- A. feel comfortable when addressing an audience.
- B. scare the audience.
- C. encourage people to talk during the speech.
- D. speak only to familiar people.

R5. People have different ways of learning. Some are better at making mental pictures of new ideas. Others are more comfortable with writing lists of things to memorize. Certain people can learn best when listening to music, while others need silence to concentrate.

Which of the following is the main idea of the passage?

- A. Mental pictures help many to learn.
- B. Some people prefer lists to making mental pictures.
- C. To learn well you need to be comfortable.
- D. Different individuals have different ways of acquiring information.

R6. Before giving first aid to an accident victim, you should obtain his or her consent. Asking for consent takes a simple question. Say to the victim, "I know first aid, and I can help you until an ambulance arrives. Is that okay?"

"Asking for consent" means asking for

- A. permission to help the victim.
- B. thanks from the victim.
- C. help from onlookers.
- D. information about the victim's injuries.

R7. Jane and Paul are busy for 15 hours a day, 5 days a week going to college and working in a restaurant. They go to sleep at 11 p.m. every day, but on Sunday they take part in dance lessons.

According to the passage, Jane and Paul spend most of their time

- A. at home.
- B. going to college and working.
- C. taking part in dance lessons.
- D. sleeping.

R8. If you hold a piece of copper wire over the flame of a match, heat will be conducted by the copper wire to your fingers, and you will be forced to drop the wire. You will, however, still be able to hold the match because the match is a poor conductor of heat. Anyone, child or adult, can try this simple experiment.

Which of the following is implied in the passage above?

- A. Copper is a good conductor of heat.
- B. A match and copper conduct heat equally.
- C. A match is an excellent conductor of heat.
- D. Matches should be kept out of the reach of small children.

R9. Many people own different pets. Dogs, cats, birds, and fish are common household pets. Others pets are considered to be exotic animals. These include snakes, lizards, and hedgehogs.

Snakes are

- A. uncommon pets.
- B. likely to be found in a household with dogs.
- C. found only in zoos.
- D. not allowed in people's homes.

R10. Cesar Chavez was an influential leader for farmworkers. He fought for their rights and better working conditions. Chavez led many strikes that angered farm owners. Eventually he succeeded in getting increased wages and improved living situations for farmworkers.

Chavez changed lives because he

- A. helped the farmers get more workers.
- B. worked for the farmers.
- C. helped work on the farms every day.
- D. changed the conditions for the farmworkers.

ACCUPLACER ESL Sentence Meaning Test

The ESL Sentence Meaning test measures how well you understand the meaning of sentences in English. It assesses the understanding of word meanings in one- or two-sentence contexts. The sentences are drawn from the subject areas of natural science, history/social studies, arts/humanities, psychology/human relations, and practical situations. There are four content areas measured: (a) Particle, Phrasal Verbs, Prepositions of Direction; (b) Adverbs, Adjectives, Connectives Sequence; (c) Basic Nouns and Verbs; and (d) Basic and Important Idioms.

Sample Questions

I. The sentence below has a blank space. Choose the word or phrase that makes the sentence meaningful and correct.

SM1. Shikibu Murasaki, who wrote almost a thousand years ago, was one of the world's ____ novelists.

- A. most early
- B. too early
- C. more early
- D. earliest

SM 2. The Chang children ____ their parents by making sandwiches for the whole family.

- A. helped out
- B. helped with
- C. helps for
- D. helps to

SM 3. As demonstrated by his last album, which was released after his death, Ibrahim Ferrer ____ one of the most beautiful voices in Latin music.

- A. had
- B. have
- C. have had
- D. having

SM 4. After we saw the play, we had different opinions ____ Jane's performance.

- A. about
- B. at
- C. for
- D. towards

II. Each problem contains one or two sentences followed by a question. Choose the correct answer to the question.

SM 5. Elena found a tomato that was much bigger than all the others in the garden.

How did the tomato compare to the others in the garden?

- A. It was the smallest.
- B. It was not very large.
- C. It was larger than some.
- D. It was the largest.

SM 6. When the popular entertainer canceled her appearance, the Latin American festival was postponed indefinitely.

When will the festival likely take place?

- A. Tonight
- B. Tomorrow
- C. Next week
- D. Many weeks later

SM 7. Janet is never late to meet her friends, and sometimes arrives early.

Which best describes Janet?

- A. Lonely
- B. Punctual
- C. Talkative
- D. Tardy

SM 8. Bram Stoker is best known for his classic horror novel *Dracula*, which was published in 1897.

What did Bram Stoker do?

- A. He was a doctor.
- B. He was a merchant.
- C. He was a writer.
- D. He was an engineer.

SM 9. Exhausted from her transatlantic flight, Judy could not stay up past 9 p.m.

What did Judy do at 9 p.m.?

- A. Leave work
- B. Come home from the airport
- C. Lose her enthusiasm
- D. Go to bed

SM 10. This semester many students are enrolled in a new course, African Dance, which is being taught by a first-time instructor, Sheila Duncan.

How long has the university offered the African dance class?

- A. For a short time
- B. For many years
- C. For an entire school year
- D. On and off for a while

Answer Table

Now check your answers with the correction tables below. Study both those you answered correctly and those that you had trouble with.

ESL Reading Skills	
Question Number	Correct Answer
R 1	A
R 2	D
R 3	B
R 4	A
R 5	D
R 6	A
R 7	B
R 8	A
R 9	A
R 10	D
ESL Sentence Meaning	
Question Number	Correct Answer
SM 1	D
SM 2	A
SM 3	A
SM 4	A
SM 5	D
SM 6	D
SM 7	B
SM 8	C
SM 9	D
SM 10	A