

Pre-Professional Skills Test: Reading (O710)

Test at a Glance

| | | | |
|---------------------|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| Test Name | Pre-Professional Skills Test: Reading | | |
| Test Code | 0710 | | |
| Time | 60 minutes | | |
| Number of Questions | 40 | | |
| Format | Multiple-choice questions based on reading passages and statements | | |
| | Content Categories | Approximate Number of Questions | Approximate Percentage Examination |
| | I. Literal Comprehension | 23 | 55% |
| | II. Critical and Inferential Comprehension | 17 | 45% |

About this test

The Pre-Professional Skills Test in Reading measures the ability to understand and to analyze and evaluate written messages. It contains long passages of approximately 200 words, shorter passages of approximately 100 words, and short statements of one or more sentences. The reading material, which varies in difficulty, is drawn from a variety of subject areas and real-life situations.

Each passage or statement is followed by questions based on its content. Some questions may deal with the information presented in the passage or statement and the way in which it is presented. Such questions may ask about:

- the main idea or the primary purpose of the passage or statement
- supporting ideas or specific details
- the organization of the passage or statement and its language

Other questions are about the implied message of a passage or statement, its arguments, and its logic. Such questions may ask about:

- the author's assumptions
- the author's attitude toward the subject of the passage or statement
- inferences from the passage or statement
- the strengths or weaknesses of the author's argument
- the relevance or appropriateness of supporting evidence in the passage or statement
- applications of ideas presented in the passage or statement to other situations

The questions vary in difficulty. However, all questions can be answered on the basis of what is stated or implied in the passage or statement.

Topics Covered

Representative descriptions of topics covered in each category are provided below.

I. Literal Comprehension

Literal comprehension content measures the ability to understand accurately and completely the explicit content of a written message. There are four types of questions:

- main idea questions involve identifying summaries or paraphrases of the main idea or primary purpose of a reading selection
- supporting idea questions involve identifying summaries or paraphrases of supporting ideas
- organization questions involve recognizing how a reading selection is organized, how it uses language, how the ideas in a selection are related to one another, or how key phrases and transition words are used in a reading selection
- vocabulary questions involve identifying the meanings of words as they are used in the context of a reading selection

II. Critical and Inferential Comprehension

Critical and inferential comprehension content measures the ability to evaluate a reading selection and its messages. There are three types of questions:

- argument evaluation questions involve determining the strengths and weaknesses of arguments in a reading selection, determining the relevance of evidence presented in the reading selection to the assertions made in the selection, or judging if material presented is fact or opinion
- inferential reasoning questions involve drawing inferences and implications from the directly stated content of a reading selection, determining the logical assumptions underlying a selection, or determining the author's attitude toward the material discussed
- generalization questions involve recognizing situations that are similar to the material in a reading selection, drawing conclusions about the material in a selection, or applying ideas from the selection to new situations

Sample Test Questions

4. Alice Fletcher, the Margaret Mead of her day, assisted several American Indian nations that were threatened with removal from their land to the Indian Territory. She helped them in petitioning Congress for legal titles to their farms. When no response came from Washington, she went there herself to present their case.

According to the statement above, Alice Fletcher attempted to

- (A) imitate the studies of Margaret Mead
- (B) obtain property rights for American Indians
- (C) protect the integrity of the Indian Territory
- (D) become a member of the United States Congress
- (E) persuade Washington to expand the Indian Territory

5. One promising energy source is sophisticated development of the basic windmills that have ground grain, drained land, and pumped water for centuries. *Line* Coupled with advanced storage batteries, very large (5) windmills might satisfy total energy needs for rural areas, towns, and even small cities in locales where strong and prevalent winds can be counted on. Wind power has several advantages. First, no new technology is really required. Second, the energy (10) source is inexhaustible and one hundred percent clean. Third, relatively little capital investment is needed to install or operate windmills.

But wind power has major disadvantages, too. Most obviously, it will work only in limited geographical (15) areas. Less obviously, large-scale deployment of huge windmills might have unforeseen atmospheric and environmental effects. And forests of giant windmills might turn into ugly eyesores. Finally, the amount of electricity that could be generated by wind power (20) would simply be insufficient to meet major nationwide energy needs.

However, a network of sea-based windmills, placed on deep-ocean buoys and driven by the same prevailing winds that once powered sailing vessels all over the (25) world, could provide a substantial fraction of the world's electrical energy — especially if the buoy-based windmills could be linked to land by loss-free superconducting power transmission cables.

Which of the following best describes the organization of the passage?

- (A) A series of interrelated events is arranged chronologically.
- (B) A controversial theory is proposed and then persuasively defended.
- (C) An unforeseen problem is described and several examples are provided.
- (D) A criticism is summarized, evaluated, and then dismissed.
- (E) A problematical issue is discussed and a partial solution suggested.

Go on to the next page.

Sample Test Questions



8. Recently, increasing attention has been called to the fact that the four freedoms of universities — the freedom to determine who may teach, what will be taught, how it will be taught, and who may study what is taught — are being threatened by the many regulations imposed on universities by the federal government.

Surprisingly, much of this criticism of governmental regulation has come from the universities themselves. After all, universities eagerly accepted the money that was made available for research and scholarships by the National Defense Education Act, which was a governmental response to the launching of Sputnik I in 1957 by the Soviet Union. As its name implies, the National Defense Education Act was concerned with a governmental goal, the national defense. Moreover, the federal government made it clear from the very beginning that it intended to control how such money was spent. Similarly, universities actively supported the Higher Education Act of 1965, which was part of a governmental attempt to end discrimination — a goal that can accurately be described as political.

Clearly, any attempt by the federal government to limit the four freedoms of universities is undesirable. But it is also important to remember that the federal government became involved in university education because it was seeking admirable goals, goals that were also sought by universities.

The author would be LEAST likely to agree with which of the following statements about governmental regulation and universities?

- (A) Universities are better able to define their four freedoms than is the federal government.
- (B) Universities are going to continue to criticize governmental regulation in the near future.
- (C) The federal government should consult with university personnel before imposing new regulations.
- (D) The federal government passed the National Defense Education Act in order to attain a desirable goal.
- (E) The federal government should limit the four freedoms of universities if the goal it seeks is a desirable one.

Answers

1. The passage is about the different approaches of Johnson and Kennedy to the presidency. In explaining how each approached the office and how they differed in this respect, the author is necessarily making a comparison. The correct answer is B.
2. The “occult” power described in the first sentence is clearly not a power that people ordinarily have. It could, therefore, best be described as “supernatural.” Choice E is the best answer.
3. The author presents an educational problem that confronted Florida schools in 1959 — the need to make an important decision about whether to require Spanish-speaking children to learn English before entering school. However, in addition to conveying this information, the author wishes to convey approval of the decision made by the Florida school boards because of its positive influence on the acceptance of bilingual education. The last two sentences of the passage demonstrate the author’s positive attitude toward the school boards’ decision. This attitude toward the decision is reflected in choice D, the correct answer.
4. The passage states that Alice Fletcher helped American Indians secure legal title to their land so they would not be forced to abandon it. This idea is expressed in B, which is therefore the correct answer.
5. Choice E is the correct answer. “A problematical issue is discussed” summarizes the first two paragraphs, in which both the pros and cons of a complicated situation are examined. They are followed, in the third paragraph, by the suggestion of “a partial solution,” which partially remedies some of the problems of using windmills to generate electricity.
6. In making the comment about Michelangelo’s greatness, the author relies on information Vasari has supplied. If Vasari’s claims that Michelangelo worked with great care and was inspired by his work are not correct, the author’s claim about Michelangelo may not be valid. It would therefore be useful to know the information represented by choice C. Choice A may appear at first glance to be relevant, but it is not as good a choice as C, since Vasari might have known Michelangelo quite well but not have supplied accurate information in his biography. Choice B is even less satisfactory since we are concerned only with how Vasari described Michelangelo, not how he described other painters. Choice D, while it might confirm statements about Michelangelo’s skill, does not help us evaluate the author’s claim in the last sentence of the passage. Choice E can be eliminated for similar reasons. C is, therefore, the best answer to this question.
7. Choice B is clearly supported by the last sentence of the passage. Because the fund-raisers had to insist that Johns Hopkins admit women, it can be inferred that the author believes the admission of women was directly caused by their insistence and would otherwise not have taken place.
8. In the first sentence of the third paragraph, the author expresses the opinion that all attempts by the government to limit the four freedoms of universities are undesirable. Thus, the author would be least likely to agree with E, the best answer, which states that the federal government should limit university freedoms if the goal it plans to achieve by doing so is desirable.