

Our Lady of Holy Cross College

English Placement Examination Preparation Guide

Students who enter the College without valid ACT scores or college credit in a course comparable to ENG 101 (Applied Grammar and English Composition I) must take the English Placement Examination. The English Placement Examination is **a computer-based test of writing skills**. Students who are unable to satisfy the criteria for the English Placement Examination in two attempts will be required to take ENG 100 (Developmental English).

Suggestions for preparation for the English Placement Examination:

1. **DO NOT** take the exam without reviewing and studying **all** topics in this study guide.
2. You will not be allowed to bring any items into the test.
3. You may **only** attempt the exam **twice**. If you fail to pass the test on your second attempt, you will be required to pass ENG 100 at OLHCC.
4. If you have any questions about the exam or need assistance in preparation, contact Dr. Julie Cooper at 398-2236.

The exam will include items requiring the following English skills:

1. Usage/Mechanics Items
 - a. Punctuation
 - i. Punctuating breaks in thought
 - ii. Punctuating relationships and sequences
 - iii. Avoiding unnecessary punctuation
 - b. Basic grammar and usage
 - i. Assuring grammatical agreement
 - ii. Forming verbs
 - iii. Using pronouns
 - iv. Observing usage conventions
 - c. Sentence structure
 - i. Relating clauses
 - ii. Using modifiers
 - iii. Avoiding unnecessary shifts in construction
2. Rhetorical Skills Items
 - a. Making decisions about the appropriateness of expressions for audience and purpose
 - b. Making decisions about adding, revising, or deleting supporting material
 - c. Making decisions about cohesion devices: openings, transitions, and closings
 - i. Selecting an effective statement relative to the essay as a whole
 - ii. Selecting an effective statement relative to a specific paragraph or paragraphs
3. Organization
 - a. Establishing logical order
 - b. Judging relevancy
4. Style
 - a. Managing sentence elements effectively
 - b. Editing and revising effectively
 - c. Choosing words to fit meaning and function
 - d. Maintaining the established level of style and tone
5. Relationships of Clauses
 - a. Avoiding faulty subordination and coordination
 - b. Avoiding run-on (fused) sentences
 - c. Avoiding sentence fragments
 - d. Constructing sentences so that antecedents are clear and unambiguous

6. Shifts in Construction
 - a. Avoiding shifts in person, number, voice, tense, and mood
7. Organization
 - a. Choosing the appropriate transitional word or phrase
 - b. Placing sentences in a logical order
 - c. Sequencing phrases in a logical order

SAMPLE SCREEN SHOT, ESSAY, AND ITEMS FROM ENGLISH PLACEMENT

The screenshot shows a software interface for the COMPASS/ESL Writing Test. At the top left, the text "COMPASS/ESL Writing Test" is displayed. At the top right, there is a "HELP" button. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column contains a reading passage with a "MORE" button above it and another "MORE" button below it. The right column is titled "Question 1" and contains five multiple-choice options, each with an unchecked checkbox. At the bottom right of the interface, there is a button labeled "Finished editing essay".

COMPASS/ESL Writing Test **HELP**

MORE

An increasing number of lakes and rivers in the northern United States invaded are being by a mussel no larger than a fingernail.

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.

MORE

Question 1

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

Finished editing essay

An increasing number of lakes and rivers in the northern United States invaded are being by a mussel no larger than a fingernail.

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.

Others concerned by the invading species are industry, public utilities, and boat owners. Zebra mussels cluster in huge colonies, being anchored themselves to any hard surface. These colonies can clog your water intake pipes of electric and water treatment plants. Fishery specialists are currently casting about and baiting their hooks to gun down control methods that will cause the lowest amount of damage to water supplies and other aquatic species. Two of the alternatives exploring are interrupting the species reproductive cycle and finding a bacterium harmful only to zebra mussels. *(End of Essay)*

1. (Strategy: Making Decisions about Cohesive Devices)

Item 4 (end-of-passage)

The writer wishes to add a sentence at the end of Paragraph 1 that will serve as a transition between Paragraphs 1 and 2 and will establish the main focus of the essay. Which of the

- A. The zebra mussel will provide a difficult challenge for public utility managers.
- B. The zebra mussel is only the latest in a series of newly introduced species to thrive in the U.S.
- C. No one knows how far south and west the zebra mussel is likely to spread, but scientists think they may be on the trail of important clues.
- D. Although small in size, the zebra mussel may become a huge problem for pleasure boat owners in North American waterways.
- E. Despite its size, however, the zebra mussel may have a dramatic effect on North American waterways.

2. (Basic Grammar and Usage: Ensuring Grammatical Agreement)

Segment 1

- A. An increasing number of lakes and rivers
- B. An increasingly number of lakes and rivers
- C. A number increasing of lakes and rivers
- D. A number increasingly of lakes and rivers
- E. An increasing of lakes and rivers

3. (Style: Avoiding Redundancy)

Segment 2

- A. was preyed upon by very few native predators in its new environment.
- B. found very few predators in its new environment.
- C. found very few native predators and was seldom eaten in its new environment.
- D. was preyed on by very few native predator species in its new environment
- E. was seldom eaten or preyed on by native predator species in its new environment.

4. (Sentence Structure: Relating Clauses)

Segment 3

- 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
- F. Scientists are concerned as if the mussels

5. (Organization: Establishing Logical Order of Sentences)

Which of the alternatives places the following group of sentences in the most logical order?

(1) When I arrived, fifty customers were waiting outside. (2) I read in the newspaper that Bill's Furniture Mart was having a big sale. (3) "The store hasn't opened yet," one of them said. (4) I got in my car and drove to the store.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. 1,4,3,2
- C. 2,4,1,3
- D. 4,3,2,1

6. (Relationship of Clauses: Avoiding Squinting Modifiers)

In which of the following sentences is the meaning most clear?

- A. Hiking in the mountains, thunder was heard in the distance
- B. While hiking in the mountains, we heard thunder in the distance.
- C. In the mountains while hiking, thunder could be heard in the distance.
- D. When on a hike in the mountains, in the distance sounded a clap of thunder.

Answers:

- 1. E
- 2. A
- 3. B
- 4. D
- 5. C
- 6. B