Introduction to the CLAST

The College Level Academic Skills Test (CLAST) was developed in 1982 to ensure that students in Florida’s public colleges and universities receive an education of uniform quality. All college sophomores in Florida must pass the test before graduating with an associate in arts degree or entering an upper-division program at a state university. It is a four-hour exam, but you should allow an extra hour for check-in, test distribution, and the break. The test is given three times a year at colleges across the state. You can pick up an exam schedule at your school.

The CLAST includes four tests: an essay; an objective test of grammar, usage, and sentence structure; a reading test; and a mathematics test. This booklet will help you prepare for the essay test and the objective English test. The following chart lists at the left the specific skills that will be tested and on the right the relevant sections of *The Everyday Writer* that you can use to review and practice the skills.

**ESSAY AND GRAMMAR SKILLS**

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All of these skills will be considered in the holistic evaluation of the essay. In addition, the skills marked * will be tested on the multiple-choice English Language Skills subtest.

**USING THIS BOOKLET**

The preceding list of so many complex skills may seem overwhelming to you at first. However, a planned review of grammar and timed practice will help reduce your anxiety. Because the CLAST covers such a broad spectrum of writing skills, cramming will not be helpful. In fact, it may harm you by further raising your anxiety level and filling your head with isolated bits of information. Instead of cramming, try responding with a positive attitude and a positive approach: a planned review period where you can target any weak areas for special study.

This booklet is divided into three sections. Part One gives step-by-step suggestions for writing the essay. Part Two describes the skills tested on the objective test (the English Language Skills Subtest), accompanied by sample directions and example test items with
suggested answers. Part Three consists of a sample essay test and two objective tests that you can use to pinpoint troublesome areas for further study. All three parts indicate the section of *The Everyday Writer* that will be helpful for your review.

If you use this booklet and *The Everyday Writer* to review for the test, you should be familiar not only with the skills to be tested but also with the way the questions are set up on the actual test. An organized plan for studying, as well as a familiarity with the content and appearance of the test, should help decrease your anxiety and increase your confidence and skills.