

PART 2

**THE ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
SKILLS SUBTEST**

After you finish the essay, you will have a two-to-three-minute break. Then you will be given a new test booklet and begin an eighty-minute, machine-scored test of (usually) forty writing and forty reading items. Be sure to listen to the general directions and follow the instructions for marking in your answer folder as you would for other standardized tests. You will not be penalized for guessing, but if you must guess, try to do so by process of elimination. Of the forty multiple-choice items in the English language skills test, only thirty-five will be scored. The number of items that must be answered correctly for a passing score will vary from one administration to the next depending on the test's difficulty. To reach a passing scale score of 295 on the English Language Skills Test, you usually must answer from twenty-seven to thirty items correctly.

The sixteen skills to be tested on this part of the CLAST are divided into six sections, each with its own directions. Be sure to read the separate directions for each section carefully, as some of them ask you to select and mark the *correct* word, phrase, or sentence while others ask you to identify the *incorrect* choice. The number of possible answers will also vary from section to section. Ten of the skills will be tested in 150-to-300-word passages. Understanding the test format can help you avoid careless errors as well as provide clues to which skill is being tested.

The following exercises will give you practice in recognizing the separate skills by using them in example items from the six general areas. After reading through the brief discussions, answering the questions, and checking the answers and explanations that follow each set, turn to Part Three and test yourself with further questions that target these skills.

DEMONSTRATING EFFECTIVE WORD CHOICE

a) Using Words with Appropriate Denotations and Connotations (39b)

Remember that the *denotation* of a word is its dictionary definition, and its *connotation* conveys additional overtones, feelings, attitudes, and suggestions. For example, while *house* means a structure to live in or a dwelling, *home* has a similar meaning but suggests warmth and security as well. Thus, *home* has positive connotations.

Your choice of answers to questions testing your understanding of connotation and denotation will depend on your reading of the context of the sentence provided. If the sentence is testing connotation, you must determine whether the context requires a positive, neutral, or negative connotation. If the sentence is testing denotation, you must determine which word's specific meaning is correct for the context.

DIRECTIONS: Choose the most effective word or phrase within the context suggested by the sentence(s).

1. The foreign service was _____ about choosing the trainees who were allowed to enter the secret codes program.
A. weird B. fussy C. selective

2. When hurricane Andrew devastated a portion of Florida in the year 1992, friends as well as strangers offered food and other assistance almost immediately. However, some people believe many were left hungry and homeless for weeks because the federal government was slow to respond to the catastrophe.

- A. a portion of
- B. the year
- C. However
- D. for weeks
- E. federal

ANSWERS: The correct answer for 1 is E. *And erected* is redundant because it means the same as *was built*. A, B, and C all add information to the passage. The word *who* is repeated to provide balance and to establish strong parallel structure.

The correct answer for 2 is B. Since 1992 is given, the phrase *the year* is unnecessary. A, D, and E add information to the passage. C provides a transition showing contrast.

NOTE: This is the only skill tested with these directions. Therefore, you will know to think about avoiding wordiness when you read “unnecessary within the context” in the directions.

USING CONVENTIONAL SENTENCE STRUCTURE

a) *Placing Modifiers Appropriately (32a–d)*

Modifiers are words, phrases, or complete clauses that limit, explain, or describe other elements in a sentence. Because they glue themselves to their nearest companion, modifiers can be a sticky problem, confusing the meaning of a sentence. Look at the following samples to find the sentences in which the modifier is placed correctly.

DIRECTIONS: Choose the sentence that expresses the thought most clearly and effectively and that has no errors in sentence structure.

- 1A. In a glass-bottom boat, tourists can see reef fish swimming around the coral without getting wet.
 - B. In a glass-bottom boat, reef fish are seen swimming around the coral without getting wet.
 - C. Without getting wet, tourists in a glass-bottom boat can see reef fish swimming around the coral.
-
- 2A. Jack spotted a fifty-pound barracuda driving the boat toward the dock.
 - B. Driving the boat toward the dock, a fifty-pound barracuda was spotted.
 - C. Driving the boat toward the dock, Jack spotted a fifty-pound barracuda.

ANSWERS: C is the correct answer for both 1 and 2; in both sentences the modifying phrases *Without getting wet* and *Driving the boat toward the dock* are placed next to the terms they most sensibly modify (*tourists* and *Jack*). As you can see, you must determine who or what didn't get wet or was driving the boat. In both B answers, the use of the passive voice (see later discussion in Part Two) forces the nouns that should be modified out of the sentence.

NOTE: These directions signal items testing either placing modifiers correctly or using parallel expressions.

b) *Creating Coordinate and Subordinate Structures (22a–b)*

Coordinating and subordinating your ideas in sentences can clarify the relationships between those ideas. You can show stronger connections between them, for example, according to time or cause and effect. Subordination and coordination can also help you avoid wordiness and create more varied and complex sentences. In the following samples, look for this smoothing and tightening effect.

DIRECTIONS: For the underlined sentence(s), choose the option that expresses the meaning with the most fluency and the clearest logic within the context. If the underlined sentence(s) should not be changed, choose option A, which shows no change.

1. Average teens watch three hours of TV daily; they are not aware of the emotional appeals in the advertisements they watch. Many of these ads exploit the viewer's desire to be attractive to the opposite sex.
 - A. Average teens watch three hours of TV daily; they are not aware of the emotional appeals in the advertisements they watch.
 - B. Average teens watch three hours of TV daily, and they are not aware of the emotional appeals in the advertisements they watch.
 - C. Average teens watch three hours of TV daily, but they are not aware of the emotional appeals in the advertisements they watch.
 - D. Average teens watch three hours of TV daily, and, therefore, they are not aware of the emotional appeals in the advertisements they watch.

2. Young mothers may find it difficult to continue their education. For example, Sarah has a two-year-old, and she wants to attend college, and she worries about leaving her child with a babysitter.
 - A. For example, Sarah has a two-year-old, and she wants to attend college, and she worries about leaving her child with a babysitter.
 - B. For example, because Sarah has a two-year-old, she wants to attend college; but she worries about leaving her child with a babysitter.

- C. For example, because Sarah has a two-year-old, she worries about leaving her child with a babysitter; and she wants to attend college.
- D. For example, Sarah, who has a two-year-old, wants to attend college, but she worries about leaving her child with a babysitter.
3. My friend Henry once helped catch a burglar. Although he knew his neighbors were on vacation, Henry called the police when he heard the sound of glass breaking in their backyard.
- A. Although he knew his neighbors were on vacation, Henry called the police when he heard the sound of glass breaking in their backyard.
- B. Because he knew his neighbors were on vacation, Henry called the police when he heard the sound of glass breaking in their backyard.
- C. Henry knew his neighbors were on vacation, and he heard the sound of glass breaking in the backyard, and he called the police.
- D. Henry knew his neighbors were on vacation because he heard the sound of glass breaking in their backyard, so he called the police.

ANSWERS: The correct answer for 1 is C because it balances (or coordinates) the two ideas and links them with *but*. This term signals a contrast rather than merely stringing the clauses together as the conjunction *and* does in B. Answer A produces a choppy effect and provides no indication of the relationship between the parts. The *therefore* in D suggests a causal relationship that does not exist.

The correct answer for 2 is D since it effectively subordinates one clause and uses the conjunction *but* to show the contrast between the two main clauses. The other options do not use appropriate or effective subordination.

The correct answer for 3 is B since it uses subordination appropriately and effectively to demonstrate the relationship of the clauses to each other. C strings the clauses together with coordinating conjunctions that do not convey the appropriate relationship between the parts. A and D use inappropriate subordination.

NOTE: This is the only skill tested with these directions. Therefore, you will know to think about coordination and subordination when you read “the most fluency and the clearest logic.”

c) *Creating and Maintaining Parallel Structures (23a–c)*

Parallel words, phrases, and clauses match their partners grammatically, creating a rhythmic and harmonious effect that often appears in powerful and memorable expression. You may have noticed this effect in speeches, poetry, and song lyrics, but parallel structure can improve the clarity and resonance of any kind of writing. Look for this effect in the following samples.

DIRECTIONS: Choose the sentence that expresses the thought most clearly and effectively and that has no errors in structure.

- 1A. The dropout rate for African American teens has decreased steadily, but for Hispanics it has increased sharply.
 - B. The dropout rate for African American teens has decreased steadily, but many more Hispanics are dropping out.
 - C. The dropout rate has increased for Hispanic teens, but the African American rate has fallen.
- 2A. Besides promising financial aid for college, the foundation, which sponsors entire classes in low-achieving elementary schools, also gets involved with the students' lives and families.
 - B. The foundation sponsors entire classes in low-achieving elementary schools, promising financial aid for college and getting involved with the students' lives and families.
 - C. The foundation sponsors entire classes in low-achieving elementary schools, promising financial aid for college; they also get involved with the lives of the students and the students' families.

NOTE: These directions signal items that test either placing modifiers correctly or using parallel expressions.

ANSWERS: The correct answer for 1 is A since it matches the phrases *for African American teens* and *for Hispanics* and parallels *decreased steadily* with *increased sharply*.

The correct answer for 2 is B because it parallels *promising* and *getting involved with*. It also uses the balanced wording *lives and families*, while C breaks up this balance unnecessarily.

FINDING ERRORS IN PASSAGES

Ten of the skills will be tested using two or three passages, each no longer than 300 words. The passages will contain embedded errors from among the following areas:

- a. sentence structure (limited to comma splices, fused sentences, and fragments)
- b. standard verb forms
- c. subject-verb agreement
- d. pronoun-antecedent agreement
- e. pronoun case forms
- f. adjectives and adverbs
- g. inappropriate shifts in tense
- h. spelling
- i. punctuation (limited to commas, semicolons, colons, apostrophes, and quotation marks)
- j. capitalization

The CLAST emphasizes certain skills by testing them with more items. A total of twenty-two multiple-choice items may be related to the passages (for example, eleven items for each of two passages). Of the twenty-two, sixteen (two per skill) will be related to the following categories:

1. comma splices and fused sentences
2. fragments
3. standard verb forms
4. subject-verb agreement
5. pronoun-antecedent agreement
6. inappropriate shifts in tense
7. spelling
8. commas

The remaining six items will be related to the following categories. A range of three to six of the categories may appear on each CLAST, so do not worry if you do not find all six kinds of errors in the passages.

9. pronoun case forms
10. adjectives and adverbs
11. semicolons or colons
12. apostrophes
13. quotation marks
14. capitalization

Potential errors will be identified in one of two ways. In format A, one part of the sentence(s) will be underlined. The item will provide three possible answers as well as an option indicating “No change is necessary.” In format B, three parts of the sentence(s) will be underlined. In both cases, the items may address more than one kind of error. You will, for example, have to look at spelling, comma use, and verb forms at the same time. This part of the test, then, is related to proofreading your own papers. In fact, when you are working on this part of the test, you may need to reread portions of the entire passage to check the context for items such as pronoun references or shifts in verb tense.

To give you a sense of what this part of the test is like, two passages with test items are presented here. A discussion of the skills and correct answers follows the passages.

DIRECTIONS: The passage below contains several errors. Read the passage. Then answer each test item by choosing the option that corrects an error in the underlined portion(s). Refer to the passage as necessary. No more than one underlined error will appear in each item. If no error exists, choose “No change is necessary.”

Passage A

Some scientists whom favor continued research to advance the technology of genetic engineering argue that they are only refining the process of selective breeding that has benefited society for many years. For centuries they claim scientists have recognized variations in plant and animal species from generation to generation. In the early nineteenth century, scientists explained those variations as part of an evolutionary process that they called natural selection. Later, scientists found ways to duplicate this process of natural selection. Not wanting to leave the process to chance. They developed the technique of selective breeding.

This technique has practical applications. For example, dairy farmers use selective breeding to increase production from its herds. The farmers choose the best milk-producing cows for breeding; these cows genetic traits make the animals top producers. Breeding these cows selectively increase the chance that the offspring will inherit those same genetic traits and become top producers too. For the same reasons, farmers identify the cows that are not producing good and choose not to use them for breeding.

Scientists argue that genetic engineering, which is not much different from selective breeding, can produce similar positive results, society, they say, should support their research because society can only benefit, as it has in the past. These scientists also know that society is accustom to having the best, so they believe their research will receive further funding.

1. Some scientists whom favor continued research to advance the technology of genetic engineering argue that they are only refining the process of selective breeding that has benefited society for many years.

- A. scientists,
B. who
C. argues
D. No change is necessary.

2. For centuries they claim scientists have recognized variations in plant and animal species from generation to generation.

- A. , they claim,
B. they claimed
C. they claim:
D. No change is necessary.

3. In the early nineteenth century, scientists explained those variations as part of an evolutionary process that they called natural selection.

- A. nineteenth
B. have explained
C. call
D. No change is necessary.

16. In Atlanta, a two-and-a-half-year-old pygmy chimpanzee's mother was taken away for breeding; the young chimp amazed researchers by revealing that he had been learning by watching.
- A**
B
C
- A. In Atlanta:
B. breeding, the
C. revealing: that he
D. No change is necessary.
17. The chimp had learned symbols that were being taught to their mother.
- A**
B
C
- A. learnt
B. was
C. his
D. No change is necessary.
18. He hit the symbols for both apple and ball on a computerized keyboard, and pointed to the objects.
- A**
B
C
- A. cymbols
B. keyboard
C. points
D. No change is necessary.
19. These and hundreds of similar incidents recorded over the past twenty-five years illustrates that the great apes (chimpanzees, pygmy chimpanzees, gorillas, and orangutans) resemble humans in language abilities more than had been believed previously.
- A**
B
C
- A. illustrate
B. resembles
C. previous
D. No change is necessary.
20. Just how far that resemblance extends, though, is a matter of some controversy.
- A**
B
C
- A. resemblance
B. through
C. contraversy
D. No change is necessary.

21. Researchers agree that apes have acquired large vocabularies however, these scientists differ sharply in interpreting the uses to which these vocabularies have been put.
- A. vocabularies, however;
 - B. vocabularies, however,
 - C. vocabularies; however,
 - D. No change is necessary.
22. Overall, the evidence suggests—despite the objections of some skeptics—that apes have used symbols spontaneously and creatively and have even learned to conceptualize with them.
- A. have suggested
 - B. are suggesting
 - C. had suggested
 - D. No change is necessary.

Corrected Passage A

Some scientists who favor continued research to advance the technology of genetic engineering argue that they are only refining the process of selective breeding that has benefited society for many years. For centuries, they claim, scientists have recognized variations in plant and animal species from generation to generation. In the early nineteenth century, scientists explained those variations as part of an evolutionary process that they called natural selection. Later, scientists found ways to duplicate this process of natural selection. Not wanting to leave the process to chance, they developed the technique of selective breeding.

This technique has practical applications. For example, dairy farmers use selective breeding to increase production from their herds. The farmers choose the best milk-producing cows for breeding; these cows' genetic traits make the animals top producers. Breeding these cows selectively increases the chance that the offspring will inherit those same genetic traits and become top producers too. For the same reasons, farmers identify the cows that are not producing well and choose not to use them for breeding.

Scientists argue that genetic engineering, which is not much different from selective breeding, can produce similar positive results. Society, they say, should support their research because society can only benefit, as it has in the past. These scientists also know that society is accustomed to having the best, so they believe their research will receive further funding.

Corrected Passage B

Choosing from among the eighty signs in American Sign Language that she had learned, a chimpanzee named Lucy selected three and signaled to her trainer, “Roger tickle Lucy.” When Roger failed to respond to her request and signaled instead, “No, Lucy tickle Roger,” the chimpanzee jumped onto his lap and began to tickle him. The gorilla Koko was often bored with language lessons. One afternoon, she stubbornly and repeatedly signaled “red” when asked the color of a white towel, even though she had correctly identified the color white many times before. At last the gorilla produced a small piece of red lint that had been stuck to the towel. In Atlanta, a two-and-a-half-year-old pygmy chimpanzee’s mother was taken away for breeding; the young chimp amazed researchers by revealing that he had been learning by watching. The chimp had learned symbols that were being taught to his mother. He hit the symbols for both apple and ball on a computerized keyboard and pointed to the objects.

These and hundreds of similar incidents recorded over the past twenty-five years illustrate that the great apes (chimpanzees, pygmy chimpanzees, gorillas, and orangutans) resemble humans in language abilities more than had been believed previously. Just how far that resemblance extends, though, is a matter of some controversy. Researchers agree that apes have acquired large vocabularies; however, these scientists differ sharply in interpreting the uses to which these vocabularies have been put. Overall, the evidence suggests — despite the objections of some skeptics — that apes have used symbols spontaneously and creatively and have even learned to conceptualize with them.

ANSWER KEY

ITEM NUMBER	SKILL TESTED
1. B	pronoun case forms
2. A	punctuation — commas
3. A	spelling
4. D	shifts in tense
5. B	fragments
6. C	pronoun-antecedent agreement
7. C	punctuation — apostrophes
8. B	subject-verb agreement
9. B	adjectives and adverbs
10. A	comma splices
11. C	standard verb forms
12. C	punctuation — quotation marks
13. C	standard verb forms
14. A	capitalization
15. A	fragments
16. D	semicolons and colons
17. C	pronoun-antecedent agreement
18. B	punctuation — commas
19. A	subject-verb agreement
20. A	spelling
21. C	fused sentences
22. D	shifts in tense

The discussion on the next few pages, grouped by grammatical category, explains each of the answers and describes the skills being tested. Note that the format of the test requires proofreading skills in addition to grammar skills, so you must draw on your knowledge of all the skills when you select an answer.

d) *Identifying Fragments (35a–c), Comma Splices, and Fused Sentences (34a–e)*

Statistics show that questions containing these errors are among the most frequently missed on the English skills test. These errors are easy to overlook, partly because when we read, we subconsciously correct fragments and separate comma splices so that they make sense.

ITEMS FROM PASSAGES:

5. Not wanting to leave the process to chance. They developed the technique of selective breeding.
- A. chance; they
 - B. chance, they
 - C. chance, so they
 - D. No change is necessary.
10. Scientists argue that genetic engineering, which is not much different from selective breeding, can produce similar positive results, society, they say, should support their research because society can only benefit, as it has in the past.
- A. results. Society,
 - B. results society,
 - C. results, society
 - D. No change is necessary.
15. One afternoon, she stubbornly and repeatedly signaled “red” when asked the color of a white towel. Even though she had correctly identified the color white many times before.
- A. towel, even though
 - B. towel; even though
 - C. towel. Eventhough
 - D. No change is necessary.

21. Researchers agree that apes have acquired large vocabularies however, they differ sharply in interpreting the uses to which these vocabularies have been put.
- A. vocabularies, however;
 - B. vocabularies, however,
 - C. vocabularies; however,
 - D. No change is necessary.

ANSWERS: The answer for 5 is B because it connects a participial phrase, a fragment, to the main clause. A is incorrect because a semicolon should be used only between independent clauses. C is incorrect because the coordinating conjunction *so* cannot be used to connect a phrase with a main clause.

The answer for 10 is A. The passage contains a comma splice, two main clauses joined by a comma. B creates a fused sentence. C repeats the comma splice and adds another error by omitting the comma after *society*.

The answer for 15 is A because it connects a main clause and a subordinate clause, a fragment, with a comma. B is incorrect because a semicolon cannot separate a main clause and a subordinate clause. C repeats the fragment in the original passage and adds another error by spelling *Even though* as one word.

The answer for 21 is C. B creates a comma splice, and A misplaces the semicolon after the conjunctive adverb *however*. When a semicolon is used with a conjunctive adverb between two main clauses, the semicolon should be placed after the first clause, and a comma should follow the conjunctive adverb.

EMPLOYING EFFECTIVE SENTENCE STRUCTURE

- a) *Varying Sentence Structures (27a–b)*
- b) *Avoiding Overuse of Passive Constructions (29f–g)*

These skills are tested on the essay subtest only. Review the sections in *The Everyday Writer*, and when you write your essay try to use a variety of sentence patterns and avoid overusing passive constructions.

OBSERVING THE CONVENTIONS OF STANDARD AMERICAN ENGLISH GRAMMAR AND USAGE

- a) *Using Standard Verb Forms (29b–d)*

The samples in this section should alert you to nonstandard and other troublesome verb forms. CLAST tests problems such as errors in the use of regular verbs, errors in the use of irregular verbs, and use of nonstandard verb forms. Sometimes an error is a matter of a transposed or missing letter or syllable, so examine the spelling of each choice as you determine which is correct.

19. These and hundreds of similar incidents recorded over the past twenty-five years illustrates that the great apes (chimpanzees, pygmy chimpanzees, gorillas, and orangutans) resemble humans in language abilities more than had been believed previously.
- A**
B
C
- A. illustrate
B. resembles
C. previous
D. No change is necessary.

ANSWERS: The correct answer for 8 is B. The subject of the sentence is the gerund *breeding*, not *cows*, so the sentence requires a verb that agrees with a singular subject. Answer A suggests substituting an adjective where an adverb is needed. C uses an incorrect comma.

The correct answer for 19 is A. The verb *illustrate* agrees with the plural subject *these and hundreds*. In B, *resemble* already agrees with *apes*, so no error exists. In C, *previously* is correctly used as an adverb modifying the verb.

Items that test pronouns and their antecedents will draw from the following: the absence of a clearly expressed antecedent; consistency in point of view; singular or plural nouns or pronouns; compound subjects joined by *and* or *both . . . and*; compound subjects joined by *or*, *either . . . or*, or *neither . . . nor*; and reflexive pronouns.

ITEMS FROM PASSAGES:

6. For example, dairy farmers use selective breeding to increase production from its herds.
- A** **B** **C**
- A. diary
B. farmers'
C. their
D. No change is necessary
17. The chimp learned symbols that were being taught to their mother.
- A** **B** **C**
- A. learnt
B. was
C. his
D. No change is necessary.

ANSWERS: The correct answer for 6 is C. The antecedent for the pronoun is *farmers*, a plural noun; therefore, *their* is the correct pronoun choice. Answer A is misspelled. The possessive in B is incorrect.

The correct answer for 17 is C. The antecedent for the pronoun is the singular noun *chimp*. Therefore, *his* is the correct pronoun choice. Answer A is a standard verb form error. B is a subject-verb agreement error. The subject of the subordinate clause is *that*, a relative pronoun whose antecedent is *symbols*.

c) *Understanding Pronoun Case (33a)*

The pronoun case forms are the subjective, objective, and possessive. The CLAST emphasizes the following situations for proper use of pronoun case: subject of verb, object of verb, object of preposition, possessive forms (without apostrophes), and reflexive forms. Secondary emphasis may be placed on these additional uses: subject of understood verb at the end of a sentence, predicate nominative, and use in appositives. The passages, therefore, might contain sentences with the following kinds of choices.

1. David asked both Susan and *I* to the prom, so we both turned him down. [*Me* should be substituted for *I* because the pronoun is the object of the verb *asked*: *David asked me*.]
2. My mother bought presents for my brother and *me* when she went to Europe. [Although some students may be tempted to choose *I* here, *me* is correct because the pronoun is the object of a preposition: *for me*.]
3. *His* grades are better than *mine*, but together *ours*' are better than Tom's. [The possessive *ours* has no apostrophe. The other sentence elements are correct.]

ITEM FROM PASSAGE:

1. Some scientists whom favor continued research to advance the technology of genetic engineering argue that they are only refining the process of selective breeding that has benefited society for many years.
A B
C
- A. scientists,
B. who
C. argues
D. No change is necessary.

ANSWER: The correct answer for 1 is B. The pronoun *who* is the subject of the subordinate clause *who favor continued research to advance the technology of genetic engineering*. Therefore, the nominative form of the pronoun must be used. A incorrectly uses a comma. C introduces an error in subject-verb agreement; the subject for *argue* is *scientists*.

d) *Maintaining a Consistent Point of View (9, 24c)*

This skill is tested on the essay subtest only. Review the sections in *The Everyday Writer*. When you proofread your essay, check for any inconsistencies in the use of point of view.

e) *Using Adjectives and Adverbs* (31)

While both adjectives and adverbs are modifiers, adjectives usually describe only nouns and pronouns, and adverbs can modify verbs, adjectives, other adverbs, and even independent clauses. Although looking for an *-ly* ending to identify an adverb works sometimes, it is not a reliable test. For example, the adjective *lovely* ends in *-ly*, while *fast* can be used as either an adjective (*a fast car*) or an adverb (*the car goes fast*). To determine whether you should select an adjective or an adverb, you need to examine how the word functions in the sentence.

ITEM FROM PASSAGE:

9. For the same reasons, farmers identify the cows that are not producing good and choose not to use them for breeding.
- A** **B**
C
- A. farmers'
B. well
C. chose
D. No change is necessary.

ANSWER: The correct choice is B. The adverb *well* must be used to modify the verb *are producing*. *Good* is an adjective. A is incorrect because *farmers* is the subject of the sentence and is not possessive. C is a shift to past tense.

For more practice with using adjectives and adverbs correctly, look at the adjectives and adverbs underlined in the following paragraph.

Of the two pieces of apple pie, Randall chose the largest one to eat after lunch. The little boy was delighted that his mother hadn't measured each half so exact as to make an even split. His choice worked well for his mother too, since she was trying to stay on a diet. A small piece, she thought, would certainly contain less calories. Everyone else at McDonald's could see that both mother and son looked happily about the special treat.

ANSWERS: The correct choice for A is *larger*. In a comparison between two things, the adjective must be in the comparative form (*larger*). In a comparison of three or more things, the superlative (*largest*) would be correct.

The correct choice for B is *exactly* because the sentence requires an adverb to modify the verb, *had measured*.

C is correct. *Well* is an adverb that modifies the verb *worked*. Remember that *good* is always used as an adjective and *well* as an adverb (except that *well* is used as an adjective in references to health).

The correct choice for D is *fewer*. Although both *less* and *fewer* are adjectives, *fewer* is used for countable items, *less* for things that can't be counted. Other pairs of adjectives that make the same distinction between noncount and count nouns include *many* before count nouns (*many cups*) and *much* before noncount nouns (*much coffee*). See Section 64a in *The Everyday Writer* for a discussion of common noncount nouns.

The correct choice for E is *happy*. In this case, *looked* is a linking (rather than an action) verb that joins the subject *mother and son* to the subject complement *happy*. (A subject complement completes the idea of the subject with either a noun that renames the subject or an adjective that describes it — never an adverb.) Thus, the adjective *happy* describes how the mother and son seemed or appeared rather than an action they were doing with their own eyes. (In the sentence *Mother and son looked happily at each other*, the verb *looked* is an action verb, so the adverb *happily* is correct.) (See 28a in *The Everyday Writer* for a discussion of sentence patterns containing subject complements.)

f) *Recognizing Shifts in Tense (24a, 16)*

Using a consistent verb tense will help you maintain unity in your sentences and paragraphs. The CLAST will test inappropriate shifts between present and past tense, inappropriate use of perfect tenses, and failure to change tenses when the context requires a change.

ITEMS FROM PASSAGES:

4. Later, scientists found ways to duplicate this process of natural selection.
- A. are finding
 - B. had found
 - C. have found
 - D. No change is necessary.
22. Overall, the evidence suggests — despite the objections of some skeptics — that apes have used symbols spontaneously and creatively and have even learned to conceptualize with them.
- A. have suggested
 - B. are suggesting
 - C. had suggested
 - D. No change is necessary.

ANSWERS: No change is necessary in 4. The entire paragraph is in the past tense, as is this sentence. Sometimes it is necessary to reread the test sentence along with the sentences that surround it in the paragraph to be certain of the correct tense for the context.

No change is necessary for 22 either. The evidence still exists, so the present tense is appropriate. A and B create subject-verb agreement errors, and C creates a shift to past perfect tense.

g) *Making Logical Comparisons (21a)*

Sentences that make comparisons must be written carefully. A comparison should be made between like items, and the comparison must be complete and logically consistent. Because we often fill in the logical connection ourselves, we may not always notice an incompletely constructed comparison. The following examples test logical comparisons.

DIRECTIONS: Choose the sentence that logically and correctly expresses the comparison.

- 1A. The Bensons, who poured their life savings into the stock market, worry more about the economy than their children.
- B. The Bensons, who poured their life savings into the stock market, worry more about the economy.
- C. The Bensons, who poured their life savings into the stock market, worry more about the economy than about their children.
- 2A. Joanne believes that learning French is as easy, if not easier than, learning English.
- B. Joanne believes that learning French is as easy as, if not easier than, learning English.
- C. Joanne believes that learning French is easy as, if not easier than, English.
- 3A. Jerry was upset because his new room was smaller than his sister.
- B. Jerry was upset because his new room was smaller.
- C. Jerry was upset because his new room was smaller than his sister's.

ANSWERS: The answer for 1 is C. A is ambiguous. Do the Bensons worry more than their children worry, or do the Bensons worry more about the economy than they worry about their children? B is incomplete. The Bensons worry more about the economy than about what?

The answer for 2 is B because both terms used in the comparison are complete: *as easy as, easier than*. A is grammatically incomplete. In a comparison, *as* must be paired with another *as*: *as easy as*. C is also grammatically incomplete; it is missing the first *as*. In addition, C is illogical because it compares *learning French* with *English*. It should specify *learning English*.

The answer for 3 is C. A is illogical because it compares Jerry's room with his sister rather than with his sister's room. B is incomplete. It does not indicate what the room is being compared with.

NOTE: This is the only skill tested with these directions. Therefore, you will know to look for complete comparisons when you read "correctly expresses the comparison."

USING STANDARD PRACTICE FOR SPELLING, PUNCTUATION, AND CAPITALIZATION

Spelling (40)

Although English spelling is notoriously inconsistent, you can improve your chances of correct spelling for both the CLAST essay and the English skills test by an organized review of the most commonly misspelled words in Section 40a of *The Everyday Writer*, and of homonyms in Section 40b. The words to be tested on CLAST may reflect the use or misuse of the following spelling conventions: doubled consonants, reversed letters, omitted letters, inserted letters, substituted letters, and words confused because they look or sound like other words.

Punctuation (42–47)

The CLAST tests the use of commas, semicolons, colons, quotation marks, and apostrophes. The *comma* (in 42 of the *Everyday Writer*) may be tested in the following situations: between main clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction, after long introductory elements, with explanatory or parenthetical elements, with transitional words and adjacent words, with a direct quotation, with contrasting elements, and with nonrestrictive words, phrases, and clauses. The *semicolon* (43) may be tested with independent clauses not joined by a coordinating conjunction and with independent clauses joined by a conjunctive adverb. The *colon* (47d) may be tested after complete sentences announcing a formal list or a quotation and between a title and subtitle of a cited work. *Quotation marks* (46) may be tested with direct quotations and with the title of a poem, a short story, an article, or an essay. The *apostrophe* (45) may be tested when indicating possessive case, contractions, or omissions.

Capitalization (48)

The CLAST may test the following principles of capitalization: use in direct quotations, use with proper nouns, and use in titles. Proper nouns to be tested may include regions of the country; names and titles of persons; names of specific places; names of days, months, holidays, and commonly recognizable periods of history; names of commonly recognizable nonprofit businesses and organizations; names of nationalities and languages; and names of school subjects that are specific courses (*Economics 200, Psychology 101*).

ITEMS FROM PASSAGES:

2. For centuries they claim scientists have recognized variations in plant and animal species from generation to generation.
 - A. , they claim,
 - B. they claimed
 - C. they claim:
 - D. No change is necessary.

18. He hit the symbols for both apple and ball on a computerized keyboard, and pointed to the objects.

A

B

C

- A. cymbols
- B. keyboard
- C. points
- D. No change is necessary.

20. Just how far that resemblance extends, though, is a matter of some controversy.

A

B

C

- A. resemblance
- B. through
- C. contraversy
- D. No change is necessary.

ANSWERS: The correct answer for 2 is A. The explanatory element *they claim* must be set off with commas at the beginning and end. B creates a tense shift. C misuses the colon.

The correct answer for 3 is A; *nineteenth* is the correct spelling. B creates an illogical tense shift. C is incorrect because the event occurred in the nineteenth century, so the past tense (*called*) is required.

The correct answer for 7 is C. *Cows* should be plural possessive: *cows'*. A creates a tense shift to past and uses a nonstandard verb form (*choosed* for *chose*). B creates a comma splice.

The correct answer for 12 is C because it places the period inside the quotation marks. A is incorrect because the direct quotation is not introduced with a comma and because the period is outside the quotation marks. B is incorrect because the direct quotation is not in quotation marks.

The correct answer for 14 is A. The word *gorilla* is not a proper noun and should not be capitalized. B uses a comma incorrectly. C is a misspelling.

No change is necessary in 16. The sentence as written demonstrates the use of a semi-colon between main clauses that are not joined by a coordinating conjunction. Answer A misuses the colon. A colon should be preceded by a complete sentence. B creates a comma splice. C misuses the colon.

The correct answer for 18 is B because it removes the unnecessary comma separating the two parts of the compound predicate: *hit* and *pointed*. Answer A is a spelling error. C creates a tense shift.

The correct answer for 20 is A. B is an incorrect word for the context, and C is a misspelling.