

Preparing for the TASP® with

THE BEDFORD HANDBOOK

Sixth Edition



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Instructors who have adopted *The Bedford Handbook*, Sixth Edition, as a textbook for a course are authorized to duplicate portions of this manual for their students.

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Introduction to the TASP®

TASP® REQUIREMENT BY THE STATE OF TEXAS

TASP®, or the Texas Academic Skills Program™, was instituted in 1989 to verify that high school graduates are adequately prepared to succeed in college. In a five-hour period, students are tested for competency in reading, mathematics, and writing. Until students have passed all these sections of the examination, Texas law decrees that they must be enrolled in some form of remediation (“constant remediation” according to the law) provided by their colleges. All students enrolled in public institutes of higher learning and all teacher education students must take the test. Exemptions apply to those who completed a college-level course prior to 1989. Students with disabilities are tested under special conditions.

THE TASP® REGISTRATION BULLETIN

The TASP® Registration Bulletin provides information on registering for the test, taking the test, and scoring. It is available on request from testing offices at Texas colleges and universities. The bulletin, written jointly by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, the Texas Education Agency, and National Evaluation Systems, Inc., follows the Code of Fair Testing Practices (Joint Committee on Testing Practices, Washington, DC, 1988), which sets standards for professionally developed tests in education. The code was written to ensure that such tests are written and scored fairly and that test takers have all the information they need.

HOW THE TESTING WORKS

The TASP® test is administered at testing centers at various colleges and universities throughout the state six times a year: twice in the spring, twice in the summer, and twice in the fall. You may obtain registration materials at a college or university testing center. You will initially take the entire three-part test, but you can repeat parts as needed until you pass all three sections. Score reports will be mailed about three weeks after the test.

SCORING THE TEST

The writing part of the TASP® test consists of an objective test and a writing sample, an essay that you must create in the time provided. The writing sample is much more important than the objective test; in fact, it is the key to passing the writing section of the TASP®. Your score on the objective test is taken into account only if you receive a total score of 5 (out of 8 possible points) on the essay. Students who receive a 6 or higher automatically pass; those who receive a 4 or lower automatically fail. As you can see from the following diagram, two scorers evaluate each essay. Their scores are totaled to arrive at a final score.

The objective test, then, is used as a tie breaker. A student receiving a score of 5 on the writing sample must answer approximately 70 percent of the objective test items correctly to pass the writing section of the TASP® test. Most often, the two readers assign the same score or a score within one point of the other. If, however, the scores differ by more than one point, your paper will be read by a third reader, and the two highest scores will be used for the final calculation.

The teachers and professors scoring your essay are chosen by National Evaluation Systems (NES®) to represent a cross section of Texas educators. All must have a bachelor’s degree, but usually about half of those reading at any session hold a master’s degree or doctorate. NES® also selects readers with an eye to maintaining variety in ethnicity and gender. The readers are trained to consider each paper according to the same standard. Their primary consideration is to give each writer credit for everything he or she does well rather than take off points for errors.

How the Writing Sample Is Scored

The student's writing sample is graded by two readers who score the writing sample on a scale from 0 to 4. The highest possible score from each reader is 4 and the lowest score of 0 is only given under extremely unusual circumstances. The scores from both readers are added together to determine a final pass/fail score for the TASP®:

Score from first reader		Score from second reader		Total score	Does the student pass or fail the objective test? (Blank = the objective test score doesn't matter)	TASP® results
4	+	4	=	8		PASS
4	+	3	=	7		PASS
3	+	3	=	6		PASS
3	+	2	=	5*	+ student PASSES the objective test	PASS
3	+	2	=	5*	+ student FAILS the objective test	FAIL
2	+	2	=	4		FAIL
2	+	1	=	3		FAIL
1	+	1	=	2		FAIL

***A total readers' score of 5 is the only situation when the score on the objective test is used to help determine whether a student passes or fails the TASP®.**

TAKING THE TEST

In the test booklet, reading comes first, followed by mathematics and writing, but you shouldn't let that order dictate the way you take the test. You have the freedom to move back and forth among the parts of the test as you wish, so you should plan your strategy before the morning of the test.

You might begin with the writing test, even though it is placed last in the booklet. Complete your prewriting and drafting of the writing sample and then go to the other portions of the test. Later, you can return to your essay to revise and edit. Following this order can give you some distance from your writing, allowing for more effective revision. A detailed explanation of this plan follows in "Strategies That Work" in Part I of this booklet.

GETTING FURTHER HELP

Many colleges and universities provide classes and labs where you can work with writing instructors or tutors to prepare for the TASP® test. Some schools also offer preparation for the TASP® test through continuing education programs. Contact your writing program office or English Department to see what kinds of help your school offers.

Part I

THE WRITING SAMPLE



WHAT THE TASP® WRITING TEST MEASURES

Following is a list of elements measured in the TASP® writing sample. They overlap with elements measured in the objective portion of the examination (see page 40). As you work through the sample test items in this booklet, you may want to highlight the elements on the list that you have the most problem with. Then review the corresponding sections in *The Bedford Handbook*.

RHETORICAL ELEMENTS	SECTION IN THE BEDFORD HANDBOOK
1. Appropriateness	
a. Establishing a purpose and an audience	1a, 7a
b. Using appropriate language	17
2. Unity and Focus	
a. Focusing with a thesis	1c, 2a, 7b
b. Focusing with topic sentences	4a, e
c. Staying on focus	3a
3. Development	
a. Selecting appropriate evidence	1b, 47e
b. Supplying adequate evidence	4b
c. Refuting opposing arguments	47f
4. Effective Organization	
a. Organizing the whole essay	1d, 3a, 7b
b. Organizing paragraphs	4c
c. Linking ideas clearly	4e
EDITING ELEMENTS	
5. Effective Sentence Structure	
a. Correcting fragments, comma splices, and fused sentences	19, 20
b. Correcting problems with verbs (subject-verb agreement, nonstandard verb forms)	21, 27
c. Correcting problems with pronouns	22–25
d. Balancing parallel ideas	9
e. Untangling mixed constructions	11
f. Repairing misplaced and dangling modifiers	12
g. Eliminating distracting shifts	13
6. Usage	
a. Editing for commonly confused and misused words	Glossary of Usage
b. Choosing appropriate language	17
c. Selecting exact words	18
7. Mechanical Conventions	
a. Editing for punctuation	
1) The period	38a

EDITING ELEMENTS

**SECTION IN
THE BEDFORD HANDBOOK**

2) The question mark	38b
3) The exclamation point	38c
4) The comma	32a-j, 33a-h
5) Quotation marks	37a-g
6) The apostrophe	36a-e
7) The semicolon	34a-d
b. Editing for mechanics	
1) Spelling	43a-d
2) Capitalization	45a-g

Sample Essay Test

In the essay section of the test, you will be provided with a writing assignment to be developed in a 300-to-600-word essay. Scorers will consider how effectively you've argued a position and look at how well you've focused on your purpose and audience. They will also consider how well you have supported and organized your ideas. When you have finished drafting the essay, review your work and revise it as necessary. (You may not use reference materials while taking the test.)

Writing Topic

Because of increasing gang-related violent behavior in the schools, the principal of Central High has forbidden students to wear all black or all red, as rival gangs wear at a nearby school. Certain articles of clothing are also banned. By taking this action she hopes to decrease the risk of violence and hostility and increase genuine school spirit at Central. Those who disagree with her say that the hostility does not come from clothing but from other causes and that the gang members will merely choose different colors. Opponents charge, in addition, that prohibiting students to wear certain colors and articles of clothing is a violation of the First Amendment, which gives everyone the right to freedom of expression.

Write an essay that either supports or opposes the principal's decision to forbid students to wear certain colors and articles of clothing at Central High. Back your argument with relevant points and illustrations, and keep in mind that your audience is an instructor.

STRATEGIES THAT WORK

Knowing what is expected of you on the TASP® before you take the test gives you strength, confidence, and an edge. You have already registered and read the TASP® Test Registration Bulletin. You know, therefore, that you must produce a 300-to-600-word essay on a topic to be presented on the testing day. To find out how many words you produce per page, count a page or two in your handwriting; you cannot afford to waste time on the test day counting words. You also know that the essay must cover the exact topic given, be written in multiple paragraphs, and be legible enough to be read easily.

Getting a good night's rest before the test and getting up early enough in the morning so that you can eat something and not have to rush to the testing center will also be to your benefit. You want to focus your attention on the test itself, not on hassles created by haphazard planning.

USING THE WRITING PROCESS FOR TAKING THE TASP® TEST

As mentioned earlier, you can work through the TASP® test in any order you wish; you don't have to follow the sequence of the test booklet. Thinking ahead about how you want to work through the tasks, however, will help you do your best and probably increase your score, especially on the most important part of the writing test: the essay.

Most of us would agree that good writing takes time — certainly more time than is allowed on the TASP® test; however, organizing what time you have to its best advantage will help you write efficiently and effectively. Perhaps past writing instructors taught you steps of what has been called “the writing process” to create writing that communicates effectively. Even in the limited time you have for the essay, you can use those same steps to organize your writing. Here is a suggested sequence of steps for completing the whole TASP® test:

1. Read the writing assignment and identify the tasks it calls for. Identify the audience to whom your essay will be addressed.
2. Use prewriting strategies.
3. Draft your essay.
4. Complete the rest of the test — the reading, math, and objective writing sections.
5. Reread, revise, and edit the essay.
6. Copy the finished essay into the booklet.

1. Read the Writing Assignment and Identify Tasks

The TASP® test will require you to write an essay that takes a stand on a topic of concern. You will be given a description of a controversy and some arguments for the opposing stands on it. Do not worry that you won't have anything to say about the topic. Test writers choose topics, officially called “writing prompts,” that all test takers can write about. The prompts are meant to get you started on producing a writing sample, not to confuse or stump you. Nonetheless, you must be careful to stick to the exact topic given.

The writing topic will appear in one of three formats, each of which asks you to take and support a stand on an issue. But each format sets up the argument in a different way. Format 1 gives just a brief outline of the argument; format 2 presents the two sides of the argument in more detail and in separate columns; and format 3 outlines the argument in a single paragraph but includes more detail from each side. Following are examples of each format.

The following practice test questions have been selected from those used in the last ten years to show you how students have prepared for and written the essay for the TASP test.

Format 1 Would a shortened workweek help relieve joblessness in this country? France is considering a four-day workweek to cut unemployment and improve workers' quality of life. Germany now has a thirty-seven-hour workweek. Because people would work fewer hours, paychecks would be a little smaller, but more people would be at work. Would such a solution work in the United States?

Write an essay that either supports or opposes shortening the workweek. Back your argument with relevant points and illustrations, and keep in mind that your audience is an instructor.

Format 2**No Pass, No Play: Students Must Earn the Right to Sports and Extracurricular Activities**

More than ten years ago, a growing number of Texans were troubled about the fact that students who were failing classes could still participate in sports and other extracurricular activities. Individuals and groups informed the Texas legislature of their concern that schools were not making learning the first priority for all students. As a result, the legislature passed the No Pass, No Play law, which says that students must be passing in all courses at every grading period in order to participate in sports or other extracurricular activities. The legislature, therefore, enacted the law to help make sure that all students put education ahead of other school activities. Without such a law, can we be sure that learning will remain the top priority for all students in Texas?

Write an essay that either supports or opposes the No Pass, No Play law. Back your argument with relevant points and illustrations, and keep in mind that your audience is an instructor.

Format 3 Even though television programs must be labeled according to appropriateness, should Congress pass laws that ban or place restrictions on violent television shows? More Americans are growing concerned that such shows may cause people — especially children — to copy the violent acts they see. Recently, an Ohio boy who was playing with a lighter started a fire that killed his little sister — allegedly because he was imitating characters on *Beavis and Butt-head*. Researchers from universities and the media have done studies that back such links between violent programming and violent behavior in children. Those who oppose restrictions on programming, however, claim that there is no real proof that viewing violent shows leads to violent behavior. Further, they point out that producers are policing themselves by cutting the more violent episodes and moving shows from prime time to late night. Most important, they say that freedom of expression under the First Amendment must be protected.

Write an essay that either supports or opposes banning or restricting violent television shows. Back your argument with relevant points and illustrations, and keep in mind that your audience is an instructor.

No Pass, No Play: Students “Play It Safe” and Don’t Take the Challenging Courses

The No Pass, No Play law in Texas is again being challenged. Opponents argue that the law has allowed — and maybe even caused — too many students to take safe and easy courses so that they can continue to participate in sports and extracurricular activities. Further, say the critics of No Pass, No Play, it does not make sense to offer advanced courses in science, mathematics, history, and languages and then penalize students for finding them difficult. The critics also point out that the extracurricular activities may help students find their life’s work. The best way to motivate students, they maintain, is to help them pass their courses — not penalize them. Why should a student be kicked off a team for failing Physics II in a single six-week grading period?

First, notice that the writing prompt will require that you take a stand on an issue. That means that you must choose one side or the other and argue for only that one side; an essay that straddles the fence is not acceptable. The readers who will be scoring your writing do not care which side you have chosen, only that you have selected a side and presented an effective argument.

In addition, keep in mind that you will be writing an essay, not a letter or a speech. You should maintain a tone that is appropriate for the testing situation, the topic given, and the educators who will be reading your argument.

For practice, let's consider the following topic, a format 3 prompt:

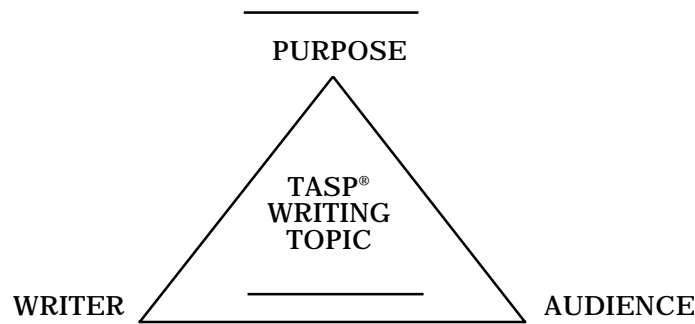
Writing Topic

The Texas State Board of Education recently endorsed a new and more rigorous high school curriculum. Under the new plan, students will be encouraged to take additional courses in areas such as computer literacy, science, math, and foreign language, thereby adding three more credits beyond the minimum currently required for graduation. Although the new curriculum is not yet required, schools are being asked to cooperate and implement it as soon as possible. Some contend that requiring additional courses is too expensive and might cause schools to take money away from other important areas. They also argue that the additional courses are not necessary for many students who do not plan to go on to college. Further, they point out that the new curriculum would require schools to bring in too many new subjects, thus drawing resources away from basic courses. On the other hand, those in favor of the additional courses say that the high school curriculum needs to be tougher because too many (about half) of the students now entering college must take remedial courses, a situation that costs taxpayers a great deal of money. In addition, they say that students will profit from the increased knowledge and ability at college and/or on the job.

Write an essay that either supports or opposes the new high school curriculum. Back your argument with relevant points and illustrations, and keep in mind that your audience is an instructor.

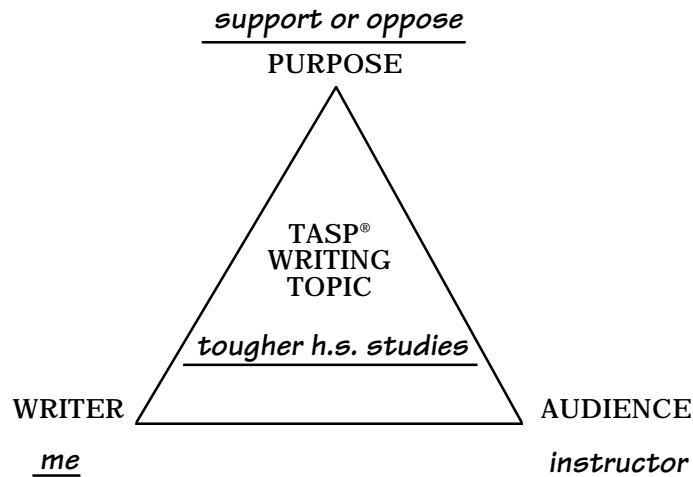
So what do you do next? We have all heard that a picture is worth a thousand words, but sometimes a picture can help you create a thousand words, or at least the necessary 300 to 600 words for the TASP® writing sample. James Kinneavy in *A Theory of Discourse* (1980, Norton) writes about the various ways language works to communicate, and he illustrates his complex theory with drawings. He recalls and elaborates on the original “communication triangle” used by the Greek philosopher Aristotle for his study of rhetoric (communication). Greatly simplified and adapted to your writing assignment, the communication triangle can help you separate writing tasks and give you a chance to see the assignment in a new way: in pictures rather than in words alone. Students have already used this method successfully on the TASP® test.

The TASP® assignment specifies the writing topic, the purpose, and the audience, which is exactly what the triangle illustrates:



Draw the triangle on the scratch paper or preparation area of the test. Then after you have determined what the assignment wants you to do, fill in the specifics.

For the topic about the new and tougher high school curriculum, you would fill in the triangle like this:



2. Use Prewriting Strategies

Now you start thinking about your own high school experiences. You remember the exchange students from Japan and Germany who observed that American high school students spend so little time studying. You remember that even students from other states who enrolled at your school at midterm were ahead in your algebra class. You recall vividly your disappointment as a college freshman at being placed in a math course below college level. You remember also your friend Joe, who had to attend remedial classes in reading and math provided by the large insurance company that hired him.

Whoa. Now you need some help to subdue that chaos of ideas in your brain. You must get active. Write the ideas on paper where they will stop whirling and turning and sit still so you can look at them and make some decisions. Ultimately, what will most impress those instructors you are writing to — and the test scorers — is an essay

written by someone who cares about what he or she is writing and knows enough about the subject to make it interesting. Such an attitude will help you form a logical, well-supported argument.

You begin to think that the high schools need to be more rigorous and that requiring additional courses is a good idea. You quickly jot down your initial thoughts and decide to take the stand that Texas high schools would profit from the new curriculum.

Now that your stand or point of view is selected, you are ready for active prewriting activities. Section 1b of *The Bedford Handbook* suggests a number of ways to get started. Listing, clustering or branching, and asking questions would be most appropriate in this case. You need a simple but effective prewriting activity because you must quickly come up with as many ideas as possible that will support your stand. By choosing a stand, you have already declared the most important part of your thesis, sometimes also called the main idea or statement of purpose. Now you must use some prewriting strategies to generate support for your thesis. Once the planning is complete, you can make the thesis statement more particular with what we might call the “because clause,” the rationale for believing in the new law and the signal or suggestion to the reader about how you will present your argument.

You decide to try listing as a prewriting technique. So you use the practice areas and margins of the test booklet to jot down as many things as you can think of about the drawbacks of the current high school curriculum and the ways in which the new plan will improve students’ education. Your list should look similar to this:

Tougher High School Studies

exchange students say courses too easy
new classmate from Iowa ahead in math class
developmental math class for me — and I got B’s in high school math
lots of my college friends in developmental math, reading, and writing
college courses from the beginning (instead of starting with remedial courses)
college in four years rather than five or six
Joe taking math and reading at work
pictures on hamburger eatery cash register instead of numbers
businesses testing all candidates for jobs and complaining that high school
graduates can’t read, spell, or calculate
relationship between knowledge and pride
better jobs

You decide that the listing has produced plenty to work with, if not too much. Section 1c of *The Bedford Handbook* will help you move from your list to the completion of your thesis.

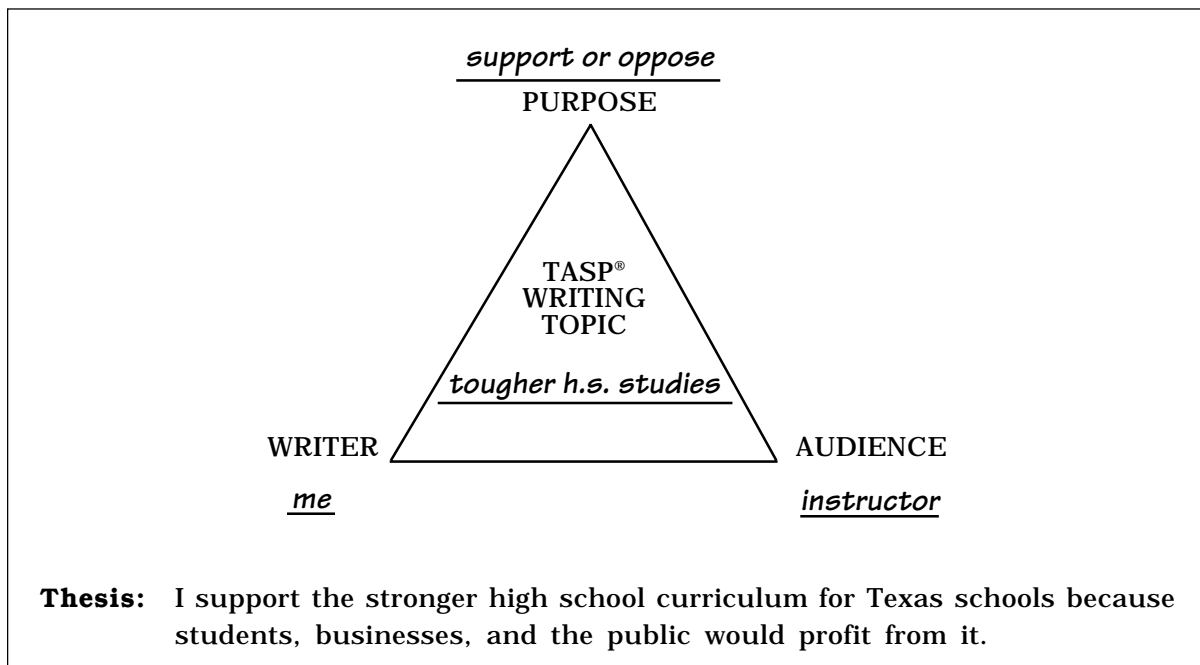
Studying your brainstorming list again, you begin to see categories emerge. For instance, the first ideas on the list show how the new curriculum would benefit students, so you jot down *students* next to them. Then you see that some other ideas on the list could be used to show how the curriculum would benefit businesses. Working through your list, you come up with three groups who would benefit from more chal-

lenging courses being added to the high school curriculum: students, businesses, and the public. The following labeled list has gathered some additions, which happens frequently when writers are working with ideas.

Tougher High School Studies

<i>students/drawbacks of current system</i>	exchange students say courses too easy
<i>students/drawbacks of current system</i>	new classmate from Iowa ahead in math class
<i>students/drawbacks of current system</i>	developmental math class for me — and I got B's in high school math
<i>students/drawbacks of current system</i>	lots of my college friends in developmental math, reading, and writing
<i>students/benefits of change</i>	college courses from the beginning
<i>students/benefits of change</i>	college in four years rather than five (which saves money)
<i>students/benefits of change</i>	high schools truly preparing students for college or the work world
<i>businesses</i>	Joe taking math and reading at work
<i>businesses</i>	errors in reading, writing, and math cause businesses to lose money
<i>businesses</i>	pictures on hamburger eatery cash register instead of numbers
<i>businesses</i>	businesses testing all candidates for jobs and complaining that high school graduates can't read, spell, or calculate
<i>public</i>	citizens complain that high school graduates can't read, spell, or calculate (how, then, can they be knowledgeable voters?)
<i>public</i>	relationship between knowledge and pride (a partnership that makes productive citizens)
<i>public</i>	better jobs (which leads to paying taxes sooner)

When you've finished your labeled list, you might want to go back over it to see if you can cross off any ideas that are not too promising. This will help you focus your thesis. After going over the list, you decide that all three categories of ideas will work well to support your point of view, so you complete your thesis:



3. Draft Your Essay

Many writers try to start out with an introduction, work their way through the body of the essay, and then write a conclusion. If you have a good idea of what the body of your essay will say, however, you may want to skip the introduction for now and start with the body. Begin where you know what you want to say. If you begin with the body, just leave some space for the introduction so that you can come back to it later.

The Introduction Because your audience has no idea who you are and what you are going to talk about, you must provide some background. Don't just throw your thesis at your readers; that would be similar to a stranger coming up to you and saying, "Come on. Let's go." Most likely you would not go along. Likewise, your readers won't be ready to go with you until you draw them in and enlighten them — you have to find a way to get them interested, to hook them into reading the entire essay.

What first? Let's say you saw Steven Spielberg's *Jurassic Park* and ran into a good friend the next day. You probably would not begin by saying, "The dinosaurs were better than I thought they'd be" or "Hammond is sure different in the book." You would start by telling the person that you had been to the movies, had seen *Jurassic Park*, and had or had not liked it. You would also point out that you had read the book before you saw the movie. Having established that information, you could then discuss your thesis "It was a great movie" or "It was a great movie but. . . ." In conversation we ease into what we want to say. Now let's try it in writing with the topic we have been working on. Following is an introduction that you might use:

Texas education has hope now that the State Board of Education is supporting a plan for a high school curriculum that is more in-depth and in tune with today's needs. When students graduate from high school they will know what they need to know. *I support the stronger high school curriculum for Texas schools because students, businesses, and the public would profit from it.*

For additional examples of introductory paragraphs, see 2a and 47c in *The Bedford Handbook*.

The Body In the body of the essay, you develop your thesis, using the ideas you've generated in the prewriting stage. Keep the filled-in communication triangle in front of you to refer to. Each of the main points of the thesis will probably take a paragraph or two to develop. The instructions ask you to use multiple paragraphs, so don't write the entire essay in one. And don't agonize over every word; just get the ideas down. Begin each paragraph with a topic sentence and use specifics to support and prove the topic sentence. (See 4a–d in *The Bedford Handbook* for advice on developing topic sentences.) To keep your readers on track, you will need transitions when moving from one sentence to the next and from one paragraph to the next. (See 4e in *The Bedford Handbook*.) Once you think you have covered everything and you begin to recognize an order in your writing that holds up and makes sense, you are probably ready for the conclusion.

The Conclusion For the TASP® test you must write a concluding paragraph. Without a conclusion, your essay will lose points. The conclusion must do more than merely repeat the thesis (see 2c in *The Bedford Handbook*). It doesn't have to be long; you need only leave the reader convinced of your message and satisfied by a sense that the essay is complete. Once you have drafted the conclusion, begin the rest of the test even though the essay is still in rough-draft form.

4. Complete the Rest of the Test

This advice might surprise you, but it is the key to being successful at writing for this test: Leave the writing that you have worked over heatedly, perhaps even passionately. It needs to cool down. By going on to the math and reading sections and then to the objective writing questions you will be giving yourself some distance from your essay, making it somewhat less familiar to you. When you do return to revise and edit, you will be a better, more objective reader.

5. Reread, Revise, and Edit the Essay

First read the essay through, paying close attention to its voice and message. Does it sound like you as it should? If not, you might want to reword certain passages.

Now that you are almost ready to copy the final essay into the booklet, put yourself in the position of a stranger reading it and try to assume some of a stranger's neutrality and distance. Keep in mind that your readers must be able to follow what you have said and that the essay must make sense and communicate a message. Ask yourself the following questions and see the indicated sections of the chart on pages 4–5 for appropriate advice from *The Bedford Handbook*.

Are you aware of your readers' needs? (1: Appropriateness)

Do you stay focused on the topic throughout the essay? (2: Unity and Focus)

Do you support your thesis? (3: Development)

Can readers follow the organization? (4: Effective Organization)

Answering these questions can help you see where you need to revise your writing. Revision is not as mysterious as it may seem because you have only three choices: (1) put in, (2) take out, or (3) rearrange. Does your writing need any of these important adjustments?

Finally, look at sentence structure, usage, and mechanics — and correct any errors. Look especially for serious errors: fragments, run-ons (comma splices and fused sentences), incorrect verb forms (including missing *-s* and *-ed* endings), and nonstandard usage. Be alert for any other problems that are your particular “demons”: maybe mixed constructions, dangling modifiers, shifts, faulty pronoun references, or missing apostrophes. The charts on pages 60 and 61 of *The Bedford Handbook* list potential problems that you may need to look for.

6. Copy the Finished Essay into the Booklet

Your handwriting does not have to be beautiful, but it does have to be legible. Keep those readers in a good mood. Make it easy for them to appreciate what you have written. Finally, put your pencil down and read what you've copied into the booklet to be sure you didn't leave out a word or even an entire line. Okay. That's it. Hand the booklet to the proctor and celebrate. You survived and probably passed the essay portion of the test.

SAMPLE ESSAYS WITH SCORES

This section of the booklet provides four sample essays, each representing a different score. Word lengths are provided for each essay to help you develop a sense of the 300-to-600-word limit prescribed by the TASP®. Following are descriptions, based on the rhetorical and editing elements listed on pages 4–5, of the four scoring levels.

A 4 PAPER

Effectively makes its point to the audience stated in the writing prompt. The sample is well written, presents a clear purpose, and stays focused on that purpose. Points are developed with relevant details and examples. (In short, the writer has taken into account all the rhetorical and editing elements listed on pages 4–5.)

A 3 PAPER

Shows the writer's effort to make a point to the audience stated in the writing prompt; however, the paper may not be fully developed according to its purpose, and the organization may not be completely effective. Though the writing is adequate, the writer may make minor errors in sentence structure, usage, and mechanics.

A 2 PAPER

Does not present a clear purpose and is poorly developed. The writing is not focused and though the writer may have made an attempt to organize information, that organization is weak. Numerous errors in sentence structure, usage, and mechanics interfere with the writer's message.

A 1 PAPER

Reflects the writer's effort to make a point but does not appropriately address the purpose and audience. The writer may not state his or her main idea, and supporting details are minimal or confusing. Organization may be illogical or virtually lacking. Numerous errors in sentence structure, usage, and mechanics interfere with the writer's message. Finally, the essay may not meet the 300-word minimum.

Writing Topic Even though television programs must be labeled according to appropriateness, should Congress pass laws that ban or place restrictions on violent television shows? More Americans are growing concerned that such shows may cause people — especially children — to copy the violent acts they see. Recently, an Ohio boy who was playing with a lighter started a fire that killed his little sister — allegedly because he was imitating characters on *Beavis and Butt-head*. Researchers from universities and the media have done studies that back such links between violent programming and violent behavior in children. Those who oppose restrictions on programming, however, claim that there is no real proof that viewing violent shows leads to violent behavior. Further, they point out that producers are policing themselves by cutting the more violent episodes and moving shows from prime time to late night. Most important, they say that freedom of expression under the First Amendment must be protected.

Write an essay that either supports or opposes banning or restricting violent television shows. Back your argument with relevant points and illustrations, and keep in mind that your audience is an instructor.

Sample Essay with a High Score (4)

Because freedom of expression is a constitutional right, Americans have access to a wide variety of televised information and entertainment — some of which certain viewers consider violent or offensive. Some Americans believe that Congress should ban or restrict such programs to protect people — especially children — who might be negatively influenced by what they see on television. Such a practice, however, raises serious questions: How will the government decide what to restrict, and how far will it go? How can Americans be sure that one act of Congress won't open up a Pandora's box of restrictions that seriously limit the breadth of information and entertainment that television provides? To protect freedom of expression and variety in programming, the responsibility to restrict any TV shows must continue to rest with individuals — not government. Parents must monitor their children. Producers, under pressure from concerned citizens, must monitor themselves.

Television programs provide us with a way of seeing things that we would not otherwise see, of imagining other lives and situations. Even shows that might be considered violent or offensive can be instructive. Take, for instance, real-life police and rescue shows, which often show shoot-outs, accidents, and other violent scenes. Though such scenes are undoubtedly disturbing, they let viewers see what police officers and rescue workers go through. They also help viewers avoid or cope with dangerous situations. If we allow Congress to restrict violence in shows like *Beavis and Butt-head*, how can we be assured that they won't also restrict shows in which violent scenes are used to a positive end?

In addition, restrictions on programming would rob individuals of the right to decide what they and their children should and shouldn't watch. Parents would be deprived of the responsibility and opportunity to help children learn from what they see. As a child, whenever I was watching TV, so was one of my parents. As I watched different programs, I learned from what I saw and from discussions I had with my parents. If my parents believed that a certain show was too adult for me, they changed the channel or sent me off to play. It is the parents who must keep informed about what is showing and what their children would enjoy and profit from watching as well as what might disturb them. It doesn't take an act of Congress to protect a child from what can be seen on television. It takes an act of responsibility from a loving, caring parent.

Those who support restrictions on certain programs might argue that not all children have responsible, attentive parents; thus, the government must act as a parent. It is not realistic or desirable, however, for government to assume such a role, especially when any good that comes from this is balanced against protection of First Amendment rights and the free flow of information. Citizens who are concerned about programming must act independently, pressuring television stations and producers to curb needless violence in shows. Such pressure does work; *Beavis and Butt-head* was moved to a later time slot after viewers complained about its content.

Despite concerns about how television might negatively affect viewers, decisions about what to air and what to watch are too important to leave to the government. To protect a few, the rights of the majority cannot be legislated away. (555 words)

Explanation: Why the Essay Received a High Score (4) The writer takes a stand in the first paragraph, stating a clear thesis — that, in order to protect the freedom of individuals, the responsibility to monitor and restrict television programming must rest with viewers, not government. The writer develops points fully, sticking to the thesis and providing specific examples to build a logical argument. He even anticipates, and answers, a potential argument from opponents — that not all parents may be able to adequately monitor what their children watch. In addition, the language he uses is appropriate to his topic and audience. Sentences are clear and varied, and the words are well chosen. The writer provides a conclusion that restates the main point and makes a strong statement.

Usage, punctuation, and spelling are correct, with the exception of an error in pronoun-antecedent agreement in the last sentence of the second paragraph: “how can we be assured that they won't also restrict” should be “how can we be assured that it won't also restrict.” The pronoun *it* must agree with its singular antecedent, *Congress*. (See 22 in *The Bedford Handbook*.)

Sample Essay with a Good Score (3)

It should not matter if we are a fan of *Beavis and Butt-head* or any other controversial program on television. The fact still remains that it is the television producers first Amendment right to air these programs. If we the people let Congress change the Constitution of the United States over something like this, then we are allowing government to take away or change our rights as we know them. That should never happen.

I feel it is the legal guardians responsibility to teach, monitor, or edit television for the children. Shows such as *Beavis and Butt-head* are being used as scapegoats for

terrible accidents that have occurred recently. But the fact still remains that the children involved should have been able to use common sense not to perform these horrible acts.

Twenty years ago, you didn't hear about shows being blamed for their viewers' behavior. *Bugs Bunny* was never targeted. Stop and think what some of these *Bugs Bunny* cartoons are about. There was a guy named Elmer Fudd running around with a loaded shotgun with blatant disregard to what or where he was shooting. You didn't hear about the tragic hunting accident that next season with some father telling the reporter "its all Elmer Fudds fault. If my son wouldn't have seen it on *Bugs Bunny* then this accident would have never happened."

Several years ago there was another controversial cartoon that touched a nerve, *The Simpsons*. But once all the media hipe was over, the issue seemed to die out. In fact, that program is still playing.

I am not making fun or taking any of these accidents lightly. I am sorry that they happened and feel bad for the people they touched. However, it's not going to make it any better to blame a television show. We have to accept our responsibilities and stop trying to use television programs as an excuse. We must learn from them and enjoy them, not use them to hide behind. (335 words)

Explanation: Why the Essay Received a Good Score (3) The writer clearly states the topic and the stand he will take, and the language and style are appropriate to the audience and purpose. The essay generally keeps to the topic, and it's fairly well developed, although the fourth paragraph could be fleshed out more and tied more closely to the argument. A questionable argument is presented in paragraph 2, where the author places the responsibility for dealing with the influences of television programs on the children themselves. However, the charge to parents and guardians that precedes this argument might explain and soften it. The writer strengthens his argument by referring to the Bugs Bunny cartoons in paragraph 3. The conclusion effectively reiterates the argument and ends with a strong statement that pulls the entire essay together.

There are some weaknesses in sentence structure and mechanics. Although generally clear, sentences exhibit little variety. The point of view changes from first to second person then back to first, but this problem is not particularly distracting. (See 13a in *The Bedford Handbook*.) The writer leaves out apostrophes where they are needed to form possessives or contractions: *producers* in paragraph 1, *guardians* in paragraph 2, and *its* and *Fudds* in paragraph 3. (See 36 in *The Bedford Handbook*.) The writer also has some problems with spelling and capitalization. The words *blatant* in paragraph 3 and *hype* in paragraph 4 are misspelled. In the first paragraph, both words of *First Amendment* should be capitalized, and in the third paragraph, the *its* beginning the quotation should be capitalized. (See 45 in *The Bedford Handbook*.)

Sample Essay with a Fair Score (2)

I think that Congress should ban the program of *Beavis and Butt-head* for the following reasons.

First of all, the program shows to many violent sceens. The kids who see this program will think it's o.k. for them to do it especially if they don't get punished or get

caught by their parents. One scene that I saw from *Beavis and Butt-head* was very disturbing to me, since I'm an animal lover. In the program they show where the two little kids put a little puddle inside of a dryer, and they push the start button on. The kids laughed while the puddle was going around getting dried in the dryer. If I was a kid I would have done the same thing after I saw the show.

Secondly, why do we want to see a show that teaches us and shows us how to be more destructive and violent. As it is we already have a lot of violence in our streets and in our country. What we need is to have programs that will encourage our children to stay in school and study hard to succeed in life. Although the violence that kids see on television and in the streets making it hard to pay attention to school.

Last, the parents shouldn't let their children watch the program. If the parents see the show, the kids will see their parents are enjoying the show, so the kids will go out and do the same thing since nothing wrong with doing what the kids are doing on television. Because they do what they see.

Finally, I strongly believe that Congress should ban the show *Beavis and Butt-head* for the above reasons that I have said. The last thing we need is for our young children to become destructive and violent at such a young age. We already have too many kids like that in this country. Ban the program. To protect our children from becoming like the characters in the program of *Beavis and Butt-head*. (340 words)

Explanation: Why the Essay Received a Fair Score (2) The writer states her stand on the topic in the first paragraph but provides no introduction. The language and style are appropriate except for minor lapses from the formal to the informal (*o.k.* instead of *all right* or *acceptable* and *kids* rather than *children*), and the writer stays focused on the topic. She attempts to develop the essay with an introductory paragraph, three paragraphs supporting her stand, and a concluding paragraph. It's possible that the essay was stunted by this five-paragraph form, which has been taught in many schools as *the* essay form. If the writer had worked more with ideas rather than trying to make the essay fit the form, the essay might have been more successful. The fourth paragraph is especially unclear. The second sentence doesn't flow logically from the first, and it doesn't necessarily follow that all parents who watch a show like *Beavis and Butt-head* will enjoy it. Also, it's not clear what "the same thing" refers to. The transitional *First*, *Secondly*, and *Last* are somewhat awkward since they are not parallel in construction. Also, using *Finally* for the closing paragraph after using *Last* for the previous paragraph bewilders rather than assists. The writer provides a conclusion but weakens it with the vague phrase "for the above reasons that I have said."

The essay has numerous problems with sentence structure, grammar, and mechanics. In fact, much of the confusion in paragraph 4 may be caused by a lack of attention to sentence structure. Sentence fragments are found in paragraphs 3, 4, and 5: "Although the violence that kids see on television and in the streets making it hard to pay attention to school," "Because they do what they see," and "To protect our children from becoming like the characters in the program of *Beavis and Butt-head*." (See 19 in *The Bedford Handbook*.) The writer also has problems with pronouns and antecedents. The second sentence in paragraph 2 uses a pronoun (*it*) without a clear reference to its antecedent, and the fourth sentence of paragraph 2 begins, "In the program they show," with no clear antecedent for *they*. (See 23 in *The Bedford Handbook*.) As for problems

with punctuation, the first sentence in the third paragraph should end with a question mark. Finally, the essay contains spelling errors: *to* instead of *too*, *sceens* instead of *scenes*, and *puddle* instead of *poodle*.

Sample Essay with a Poor Score (1)

First of all, before my younger cousens are four and five they wnt to bung thur heds. Just like Beavis and Butt-head. They make bood on thur heds. Maybe they will loose thur brains. It is danger like they say. I just know that my cousens like that show.

Maybe they should band that show. But I do'nt know. Many peopel who watch the show like my friends. They say is a good show. But kids will learn from the program but they to will show them things like that. Movies show things like that to. Even the ones they are showing bad things and bad langage. Another thing is realty. Kids are good at following peopels step. If they see them doing it or saying it and lead them to.

I do hope that some one wil do some things to fix the bad programs. To me it seems the programs are geting away with it. Not only that violence and accidance will increesing because the kids are the one to do it. (175 words)

Explanation: Why the Essay Received a Poor Score (1) The writer is indecisive and does not take a stand, and his language and style, for the most part, are inappropriate. The essay virtually lacks focus. The writer begins with a concrete example of a concern about the influence of the program on his young cousins but then straddles the fence by talking about how his friends enjoy the show. Thereafter he veers off into a disorganized and illogical discussion of movies and children's inclination to follow the example of adults. Apparently the writer has no plan for development and organization, and as a result the important rhetorical elements are weak.

In fact, communication breaks down entirely in this essay, and sentence-level problems abound. The essay contains numerous fragments: "Just like Beavis and Butt-head," "Many peopel who watch the show like my friends," "Even the ones they are showing bad things and bad langage," "If they see them doing it or saying it and lead them to," and "Not only that violence and accidance will increesing because the kids are the one to do it." (See 19 in *The Bedford Handbook*.) The writer has problems punctuating contractions and possessives: *do'nt* should be *don't* and *peopels* should be *people's*. (See 36 in *The Bedford Handbook*.) Also, there are numerous spelling errors: *cousens*, "wnt . . . bung thur heds," *loose* instead of *lose*, *band* instead of *ban*, *peopel*, *langage*, *realty*, *wil*, *geting*, *accidance*, *increesing*, and *to* instead of *too*. There are other errors too numerous to mention. Finally, the essay does not meet the 300-word minimum.

PRACTICE WITH SCORING SAMPLE ESSAYS

Following are four sample essays without scores for you to read and evaluate. Use the scoring guide and scored essays in the previous section as a reference. Also, you might want to consult the rhetorical and editing elements in the chart on pages 4–5. By studying more essays written for TASP®-type questions and evaluating their significant features, you can begin to train your eye to judge your own writing. The four essays in this section do not necessarily represent four different scores. Following each essay, space is provided for you to evaluate the writing and assign a score. You might

begin by creating a communication triangle for the writing topic — and maybe even by writing an essay on the topic yourself. A discussion of each essay, with suggested scores, concludes the section.

Writing Topic

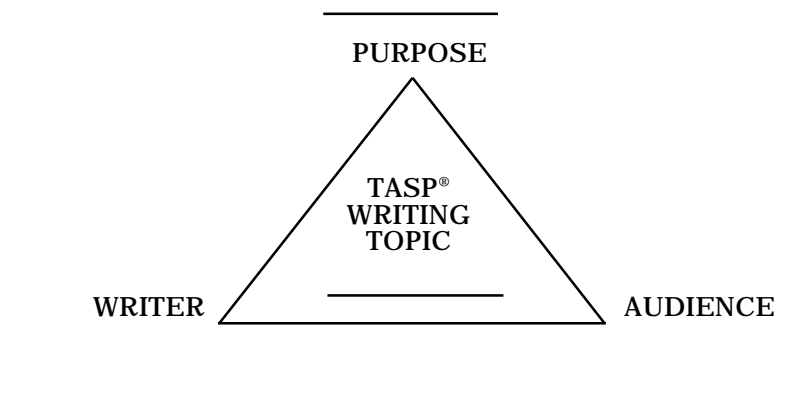
No Pass, No Play: Students Must Earn the Right to Sports and Extracurricular Activities

More than ten years ago, a growing number of Texans were troubled about the fact that students who were failing classes could still participate in sports and other extracurricular activities. Individuals and groups informed the Texas legislature of their concern that schools were not making learning the first priority for all students. As a result, the legislature passed the No Pass, No Play law, which says that students must be passing in all courses at every grading period in order to participate in sports or other extracurricular activities. The legislature, therefore, enacted the law to help make sure that all students put education ahead of other school activities. Without such a law, can we be sure that learning will remain the top priority for all students in Texas?

Write an essay that either supports or opposes the No Pass, No Play law. Back your argument with relevant points and illustrations, and keep in mind that your audience is an instructor.

No Pass, No Play: Students “Play It Safe” and Don’t Take the Challenging Courses

The No Pass, No Play law in Texas is again being challenged. Opponents argue that the law has allowed — and maybe even caused — too many students to take safe and easy courses so that they can continue to participate in sports and extracurricular activities. Further, say the critics of No Pass, No Play, it does not make sense to offer advanced courses in science, mathematics, history, and languages and then penalize students for finding them difficult. The critics also point out that the extracurricular activities may help students find their life’s work. The best way to motivate students, they maintain, is to help them pass their courses — not penalize them. Why should a student be kicked off a team for failing Physics II in a single six-week grading period?



Essay 1

The No Pass, No Play issue has become controversial again over the last couple of years. I think it has even caused our students to put too much stress on themselves to pass certain classes. I am against the No Pass, No Play rule for several reasons.

One of my main reasons is that many students are taking easy or under average classes so they don't have all the stress on themselves. Many of the students would do really well in advanced classes, but they are afraid that they might have a failing grade one six weeks and not be able to continue in their extracurricular activities. We ask these students not to do their best by forcing them just to get passing grades however they can.

We also need to consider something else. Students who are in advanced classes are trying to get the best education they possibly can, so why should they be punished if they have some minor problems for one six-week grading period? It can be really hard for some of these students with two or three honors classes to keep above-average grades. Most of them are striving to get into the best possible college they can plus have a social life. If the student is taking a heavy load and gets behind in one subject, say Calculus, they should not be punished for a whole six weeks for a little mistake or weakness that they will probably make up for later.

Many students have dreams in some of the extracurricular activities that they participate in. It can range from sports (football-golf), band or music, livestock judging, and even coaching or teaching careers. If these students are not able to participate they may never have the chance to follow those dreams. In high school I studied food technology. I was one of the best judges on our meat judging team, and was set to go to Texas A & M University to a meat judging contest. I was hoping to get a scholarship to study food technology at Tarleton State University in Stephenville. My dreams where shatered because I had a bad six weeks in algebra II, one of my hardest subjects. I was even going to a private tutor.

As you can see this rule does put alot of stress and unecessary regulations on these students. This rule is just making the education level of our students just decrease dramatically. If the state wants to help the students they need to put more teachers with the students and help the students to pass instead of forcing them. (436 words)

Strengths of the Essay

Weaknesses of the Essay

Your Score _____

Essay 2

The policy of No Pass, No Play was a start in the right direction for the Texas legislature. Ten years have gone by and it seems to be a real success. In my opinion, it teaches a young student/athlete that there is more out there in life than sports. It gives the youths more responsibility and teaches the athletes that sports are extracurricular activities, not mandatory. One must work to have extra benefits.

As a athlete myself the law came into affect when I was in middle school. Sports kept me out of trouble and kept me entertained while other did misdoings. I was not that smart, but I could play sports and I knew I was good at it. My future was depending on sports (basketball). The thing now was that I had to do just as well in class than in the gym. The policy pushed me and it helped me out in the long run preparing me for the future. The policy even made the athletes get closer because we had to push each other so we could play together. Everyone had to pass. The team got together and made sure that whoever was struggling in school got help. I know through my experience that the team overcame the policy. As the year went by, all the athletes thought about was passing instead of worrying about the No Pass, No Play policy. We knew that it was something simple that could be overcome. Sports helped me grow up in life, but if it was not for the policy of No Pass, No Play, I might not be where I am today. Basketball was over for me because of an injury, but life still had a future for me. I had to go live life and finish my schooling. The policy put me where I am today and will put me in a better place when I recieve my degree. I am proud of the legislature for have the No Pass, No Play policy.

Adoloscents seem to always find a new way to get in trouble. Extracurricular activities keep most children out of trouble, most of the time. These extracurricular activities are helpful in many ways. It makes the kids feel like they belong to something. The extracurricular activities are benefits to the schools. Schools are there to teach, not to learn how to play sports. That is the main priority for schools. Now that I have grown up, I will make sure when I have children that their grades are good so they can particpate in extra activities. The extra activities make people get closer and help children unite with one another and that is the way they should attack the No Pass, No Play policy.

Students should not go the easy route. This is where parents should come into effect. Make sure your child is taking the correct cources. I feel that ethics somes into effect here. Teach the children the difference between right and wrong and teach them that school is a priority number One, while everything else is priority number two. Students have to be taught that extra activities will be gone one day but one's education will be with you forever. After high school most athletes turn into full-time students and that is a fact. Sports and other activities are hard to continue. If the student is able to continue, that is great. The student has to have something he or she can fall back upon though. What about life after these activities are over. What will these students be. They cannot play sports or be in band for the rest of their lifes.

I say keep the policy it helps kids in the long run. The policy pushes athletes to grow up quicker. Teaches responsibility and makes one learn, which is the main reason we go to school for. There is more in life than extracurricular activities and its too late to find out that one should have tried harder in school when one had the opportunity. The opportunity comes once so you must teach these kids to take advantage of it. (695 words)

Strengths of the Essay

Weaknesses of the Essay

Your Score _____

Essay 3

The No Pass, No Play rule is a sound policy and necessary for effective education in Texas. Too many high school students are inclined to put their efforts into excelling at sports and other activities. Academic studies are therefore ignored.

Sporting events are fun and great exercise; however, studies show that only about two percent of the students involved in these events actually move on to careers based on their expertise on the playing field. When students are challenged intellectually, however, infinite possibilities emerge. For instance, if Joe enjoys playing golf but also does well in algebra, geometry, and perhaps even physics, he could become a sought-after developer of contemporary golf courses. Imagine how much more fulfilling it would be for Joe to play his favorite game on a course of his own design.

Another student — Ray — lives for the game of basketball, but he is talented in academic areas as well. His forte seems to be the mathematics and drawing plus the imagination needed in architecture. If Ray puts intense effort into the study of architecture, he could well be the sports arena designer of the future. He could shoot hoops in a building he designed himself.

On the other hand, I remember Debbie the cheerleader. Before No Pass, No Play, Debbie was allowed to live for cheerleading alone. She had trouble concentrating on her academic courses, so she opted for the easier courses and applied herself very little if at all. Anyway, most teachers graded on the curve for athletes and cheerleaders, so she didn't have to worry. In the spring, when the rest of the class was planning for graduation, Debbie decided to marry and quit school. Unfortunately, she did not live happily ever after. Now she is divorced and the mother of two children whom she supported with minimum-wage jobs while she completed her GED. She is struggling with college and a job to provide for herself and her children. No Pass, No Play might have helped her.

If students are allowed to play sports while their grades suffer, they will not learn to distinguish between what is fun and what is truly important. Therefore, I applaud the Texas legislature for its action. All the Joes, Rays, and Debbies will profit from this policy by learning to create a balance between their academic and extracurricular activities, with some combining them into their life's work.

To everything there is a season. There's a time to laugh, a time to cry, a time to live a time to die, and — yes — a time to play and a time to study. The No Pass, No Play

rule has helped make partners of the academic and extracurricular sides of high school. Such a partnership can only benefit students. (460 words)

Strengths of the Essay

Weaknesses of the Essay

Your Score _____

Essay 4

After ten years, I see that the No Pass, No Play rule is an effective way of getting students to do well in school. Of course at the time I disagreed with the rule, but now, as a young adult, I can see that education is much more important than scoring the winning touchdown.

I support No Pass, No Play because students are in school to receive an education. That's what school is for. Yup, that's it. There's no way around it. And schools, whether high school, college, technical, vocational, or even beauty school are there to provide students with an education and extracurricular activities are merely a privilege. It's not mandatory for schools to have a football team, cheerleading squad, or chess club. These organizations are there to boost the school. No team will go to any competition on their own. They go to represent the school.

So it shouldn't be a problem if Johnny the star quarterback fails a class, right? After all, he's there to go on to college. Unfortunately, parents, teachers, students, and coaches have a tendency to lose it when he fails. After all, Johnny wants to go to college to play ball. He will be recruited by major universities, get entertained like there's no tomorrow, and then take off for the pros. He'll be a millionaire by the time he's thirty. It doesn't matter if Johnny doesn't know how many zeros are in a million.

And what about Yvonne the head cheerleader who doesn't know the capital of her own state? Who cares if Julie the drum major can't name all of Jupiter's moons? Does it matter if the president of the chess club doesn't know who Hercules is?

The question is whether the bottom line is to give these kids a good time or an education to better themselves. It's not about who can bring home a state or district championship. It's about kids receiving a chance to better themselves. Here I am five years out of high school and I don't give a damn about the homecoming queen or if the soccer team won against South San. Sure, extracurricular activities may provide good memories, but memories won't get anybody very far in college, put a roof over anyone's head, or provide food for the table.

Face it: knowing math, history, science, literature, and other subjects is very important. The knowledge is helpful even to someone who doesn't go to college. Unlike state championships, a diploma and education are things that can be remembered and never taken away. (425 words)

Strengths of the Essay

Weaknesses of the Essay

Your Score _____

DISCUSSION OF SAMPLE ESSAYS

Comments on Essay 1

The essay's introduction shows awareness of the audience and makes clear the writer's stand on the issue. The language and style are suitable, and the essay is fairly focused. The writer wants the reader to know the problems with the No Pass, No Play rule: that students are taking easy classes in order to participate in extracurricular activities, that students taking advanced classes are not given the special consideration they deserve, and that the activities themselves help some students find a career. The conclusion ties the ideas together. Though the organization and development of the essay are adequate, they show some ambiguities and weaknesses. For example, paragraph 3, which generally points out the disadvantages of the new curriculum to students who take advanced classes, is interrupted by an unrelated sentence about the students' college aspirations and social life. The last sentence in paragraph 2 — stating that students are being asked to do less than their best — is hard to believe. However, changing the order of words so that the sentence reads, "We force these students into not doing their best by asking them just to get passing grades . . ." might bring the meaning closer to what the writer intended.

Though sentences are fairly well formed, some have structural problems. For instance, the list of activities in paragraph 4 is not parallel. (See 9 in *The Bedford Handbook*.) And in the last paragraph, an awkward sentence weakens an otherwise good conclusion: "This rule is just making the education level of our students just decrease dramatically." Word choice is generally good, though it's not clear what the writer means by "under average classes." The essay contains errors in pronoun-antecedent agreement: "If the student . . . they" in paragraph 3 and "Many students have dreams. . . . It" in paragraph 4. (See 22 in *The Bedford Handbook*.) There are also errors in spelling: *where*

shatered, alot, and unnecessary. There are minor problems with capitalization. The writer capitalizes *calculus*, which does not name a specific course, but not *Algebra II*, which does. (See 45 in *The Bedford Handbook*.) Score = 3.

Comments on Essay 2

The introduction of the main idea and the writer's stand on No Pass, No Play are clear, and, generally, the language and style are appropriate. Although the essay begins well, its main focus — that studies should come before other activities — is not maintained. Paragraph 3 speaks of the value of extracurricular activities but does not relate this point to the No Pass, No Play condition that studies and grades should come first. In addition, two consecutive sentences in paragraph 3 contradict each other, perhaps because they lack a transitional device (“The extracurricular activities are benefits to the schools. Schools are there to teach, not to learn how to play sports”). Note also how the clause “not to learn how to play sports” seems to refer to *schools*. The lack of unity is particularly noticeable in paragraph 4, where the argument becomes preachy and takes an abrupt turn to the prescriptive. In addition, the audience appears to change from an instructor to parents with school-age children. Notice, too, how the writer shifts to the *you* point of view. (See 13a in *The Bedford Handbook*.) The second paragraph does a good job of describing how athletes can use teamwork to succeed in class, but after this paragraph, the essay's plan of development breaks down, and the writer provides few transitional words and phrases to help the reader. The rest of the essay does not address the thesis — that the rule benefits students because it demands more responsibility from them. A conclusion is attempted but is not effective.

The essay has many problems with grammar and mechanics. For example, the first sentence of the second paragraph contains four errors: two errors in usage (“a athlete” and “came into affect”), a missing comma, and a dangling modifier. (See the Glossary of Usage, 32b, and 12e in *The Bedford Handbook*.) The second sentence of the same paragraph lacks a needed -s ending on the word *other*. And in the third sentence the pronoun *it* lacks a clear antecedent. (See 23 in *The Bedford Handbook*.) In the fourth sentence the word *depending* is misused in an odd way; perhaps the writer meant *dependent*, but a better sentence would be “My future depended on sports (basketball).” At the end of the second paragraph and in the middle of the third paragraph, the writer also misuses words: “for have the No Pass, No Play policy” instead of “for having the No Pass, No Play policy” and “activities are benefits to the schools” instead of “activities are beneficial to the schools” or “activities benefit the schools.” Other serious errors are the fused sentence that begins the last paragraph and the fragment and mixed construction in the same paragraph: “Teaches responsibility and makes one learn, which is the main reason we go to school for.” (See 11, 19, and 20 in *The Bedford Handbook*.) There are other problems too numerous to mention specifically, but they include shifts in point of view, faulty pronoun agreement and reference, missing apostrophes, misspellings, and incorrect capitalization. (See 13a, 22, 23, 36, 43, and 45 in *The Bedford Handbook*.) Finally, the essay exceeds the 600-word limit. Score = 2.

Comments on Essay 3

The thesis is clearly stated and the language and style are appropriate. The focus is clear, and all the examples work to prove the main point that attention needs to be

placed on academics so that all students will get a good education. The essay is developed with case studies: two examples of successful students who combined sports and academics and another example of a student who was ultimately unsuccessful because she emphasized cheerleading over her studies. Transitional devices such as “Another student” and “On the other hand” direct the reader through the argument. The conclusion reiterates the main ideas and is enhanced with wording adapted from the Bible. The essay communicates a thorough understanding of the No Pass, No Play rule and its effects. Sentences are varied, interesting, and correct. Score = 4.

Comments on Essay 4

The thesis is clearly stated, and the writer has taken a stand. The style and language, however, show lapses into extremely colloquial expressions unsuitable for the writing test. In writing to another student, expressions such as “Yup, that’s it,” “lose it,” “get entertained like there’s no tomorrow,” and “I don’t give a damn” might be perfectly acceptable. However, because the TASP® essay is to be written for an instructor, not for someone the writer knows, such expressions are not appropriate. Nonetheless, the essay is fairly well focused, developed, and organized, and it contains an effective introduction and conclusion. It is fairly successful at making the point that “education is much more important” than extracurricular activities. It is not immediately clear, however, that paragraphs 3 and 4 are intended to be ironic, and at first they may seem to contradict the thesis.

Errors in sentence structure are fairly minor, and word choice, other than the expressions discussed previously, is good. The fifth sentence of paragraph 2 shows problems with parallel structure. (See 9 in *The Bedford Handbook*.) The last two sentences in paragraph 2 should be revised because *team* is singular: “No team will go on to any competition on its own. It goes to represent the school.” (See 22 in *The Bedford Handbook*.) Several words are spelled incorrectly: *recieve* and *recieving*, *privlege*, and *Unfortunatly*. This essay presents a problem in scoring. Some might give it a 2 because it neglects one of the important rhetorical considerations: appropriateness to the audience. Others might decide that the essay should earn a 3 because it communicates an idea well and presents a clear argument. Score = 2 or 3. (If this essay were to receive a combined score of 5, the objective test would be taken into account to determine whether this student would pass or fail the writing test.)

Part II

THE OBJECTIVE TEST



Sample Objective Test

DIRECTIONS: Read the following passage, taken from a college economics textbook. Then answer the questions after it.

Note: The errors in this paragraph have been introduced for the sake of this exercise. None of these errors appears in the original text.

(1) The broad economic objective of the American people appears to be the achievement of high and rising levels of income and consumption under conditions that afford opportunity for individual advancement and free choice. (2) _____, we could debate whether having more goods and services will bring greater happiness or greater welfare. (3) In economics, however, the amount of goods and services produced and consumed is generally regarded as one suitable measure of economic welfare. (4) This does not mean that economists believe that material goals are more important than other goals. (5) Because they usually proceed on the assumption that each of us is the best judge of what will best serve his own welfare. (6) They assume that our actions indicate how we seek our goals. (7) _____, _____, the economist assumes that income and consumption can be used as one measure of human welfare because man has shown that he is usually willing to use his effort and ingenuity to produce things for his material satisfaction.

— MARSHALL A. ROBINSON, HERBERT C. MORTON, AND JAMES D. CALDERWOOD,
AN INTRODUCTION TO ECONOMIC REASONING

1. Which of the following parts of the passage, if any, displays ineffective sentence construction?
 - A. part 3
 - B. part 4
 - C. part 5
 - D. none of these parts
2. Which words or phrases, if inserted in order into the blanks in the paragraph, would help the reader understand the sequence of the writer's ideas?
 - A. To illustrate; In contrast, also
 - B. Of course; In general, therefore
 - C. In contrast; To conclude, therefore
 - D. For example; In effect, similarly
3. Which of the following phrases would be more specific than the underlined phrase "than other goals"?
 - A. the kinds of goals that some people think are important
 - B. goals of any other particular nature
 - C. moral, spiritual, or cultural goals
 - D. nonmaterial goals

DIRECTIONS: Read the following passage, taken from a college anthropology textbook. Then answer the questions after it.

Note: The errors in this paragraph have been introduced for the sake of this exercise. None of these errors appears in the original text.

(1) Cultural identity is achieved by access to the elements of culture of a national or ethnic group. (2) The cultural identity of a group is kept up by the constant reference to the reservoir of it's culture. (3) The term "culture" itself, taken to mean more than the cultivation of the mind, is applied to a system which informs the whole social activity of a nation, people, or group. (4) In comparative anthropology, cultural identity is used to designate a distinctive way of life — a lived culture within political, economic, or more specific educational and social structures. (5) Culture is, thus, a major element of social order itself; it does not derive from it.

— COLIN BROCK AND WITOLD TULASIEWICZ, EDS.,
CULTURAL IDENTITY AND EDUCATIONAL POLICY

4. What is the writer's purpose in this paragraph?
 - A. to compare culture with cultural identity
 - B. to argue that culture is a major element of social order
 - C. to define the concept of cultural identity
 - D. to analyze the identifying structures of ethnic groups
5. Which of the underlined words in the paragraph should be replaced?
 - A. part 1: access
 - B. part 2: it's
 - C. part 3: whole
 - D. No change is needed.
6. Which part, if any, demonstrates incorrect or unnecessary punctuation?
 - A. part 3
 - B. part 4
 - C. part 5
 - D. None of the parts is incorrect.

DIRECTIONS: Read the following passage, taken from an introduction to drama textbook. Then answer the questions after it.

Note: The errors in this paragraph have been introduced for the sake of this exercise. None of these errors appears in the original text.

(1) _____. (2) For the Greeks, drama developed partly in reaction to the period of barbarism from which the society was emerging and reinforced and affirmed the moral values of civilization. (3) The Greek experience of drama was centered in their religious festivals. (4) Which coincided with the agricultural cycle of the year. (5) Some of the rituals that took place at those festivals were pretty bizarre, if you ask me. (6) As the Greeks established themselves as communities, their drama became an important focus for their communal lives.

— LEE A. JACOBUS, *THE BEDFORD INTRODUCTION TO DRAMA*

7. Which of the following parts of the paragraph is NOT appropriate for the writer's purpose and audience?
 - A. part 2
 - B. part 3
 - C. part 5
 - D. part 6
8. Which of the words in the paragraph should be replaced by a more appropriate word?
 - A. part 2: barbarism
 - B. part 3: religious
 - C. part 4: coincided
 - D. part 6: themselves
9. Which of the following parts of the paragraph displays ineffective sentence structure?
 - A. part 2
 - B. part 3
 - C. part 4
 - D. part 5
10. Which of the following sentences would best replace the blank line in part 1 of this paragraph?
 - A. In all ages, drama and culture have been closely linked.
 - B. Drama played an important part in ancient Greek culture.
 - C. The arts have had a great influence on history.
 - D. Greek history is absolutely fascinating.

DIRECTIONS: Read the following passage, taken from a college logic textbook. Then answer the questions after it.

Note: The errors in this paragraph have been introduced for the sake of this exercise. None of these errors appears in the original text.

(1) _____. (2) Some people have maintained that logic is the study of the laws of thought. (3) This definition is problematic since it includes many mental activities such as daydreaming and imagining which are outside the domains of logic; logicians are concerned with only one type of thinking, known as reasoning. (4) However, I have always believed that logic is the study of the laws of reasoning. (5) Nonetheless, this definition might cause one to confuse logic with the discipline of psychology, because of the different meanings of the word "law." (6) Psychology is concerned with the descriptive laws of reasoning; that is, it seeks to describe the way people reason. (7) Logic is concerned with prescriptive laws of reasoning; that is, it seeks to set standards for the way in which people ought to reason if they wish to reason well. (8) As a prescriptive discipline, logic attempts to provide criteria for evaluating the processes of reasoning which are used to make inferences and reach conclusions as well as techniques for applying these criteria to concrete arguments.

— NICHOLAS L. FALLETA, WILLIAM F. BRIEL, EDS., *LOGIC WORKBOOK*

11. Which of the following sentences would serve best as the topic sentence in part 1 of this paragraph?
 - A. Logic is a requirement to graduate in our college.
 - B. Logic is a complicated course.
 - C. There are many advantages in studying logic.
 - D. Defining logic is not a simple task.
12. Which of the underlined words is spelled incorrectly?
 - A. part 3: imagining
 - B. part 5: discipline
 - C. part 6: descriptive
 - D. part 8: techniques
13. Which of the following parts, if any, unnecessarily shifts the writer's point of view?
 - A. part 2
 - B. part 4
 - C. part 7
 - D. None of the parts is incorrect.

DIRECTIONS: Read the following passage, taken from a Russian history textbook. Then answer the questions after it.

Note: The errors in this paragraph have been introduced for the sake of this exercise. None of these errors appears in the original text.

(1) In the seventeenth century the Russians swept rapidly across the whole of Siberia, with an impetus that was later to carry them onward through Alaska and to the vicinity of what is now San Francisco. (2) Their advance was only blocked along the Valley of the Amur River by the great cultural and practical power of China, which diverted their colonization towards the northeast. (3) The Chinese were later recognized as fierce warriors themselves. (4) In the eighteenth century the Russians elaborated their *osvoyenie* of Siberia. (5) This term, beloved of Tsarist and Soviet patriots alike, meaning appropriation, acquisition, or absorption, etymologically conveys "making (it) one's own." (6) In the nineteenth century the entry into Alaska — risking confrontation there with the Western powers — was perceived to be an over-extension. (7) The territory was sold very cheaply to the United States, to concentrate the Russians' attention more effectively on their "own" Siberia.

— E. STUART KIRBY, *RUSSIAN STUDIES OF JAPAN*

14. Which of the underlined words in the paragraph, if any, has been capitalized incorrectly?
 - A. part 2: Valley
 - B. part 5: Soviet
 - C. part 6: Western
 - D. None is incorrectly capitalized.
15. In what order are the details presented in this paragraph?
 - A. spatial
 - B. chronological
 - C. order of importance — least important to most important
 - D. order of importance — most important to least important

16. Which of the following parts draws attention away from the main idea of the paragraph?
- A. part 1
 - B. part 2
 - C. part 3
 - D. part 4

DIRECTIONS: Read the following passage, taken from an American history textbook. Then answer the questions after it.

Note: The errors in this paragraph have been introduced for the sake of this exercise. None of these errors appears in the original text.

(1) Education in the early days was a problem that troubled all of the colonies. (2) In the more compact settlements of New England, schools could be maintained with greater effectiveness than in the agrarian colonies where plantations were far apart. (3) However, the plantations were essential for the production of major exports such as cotton and tobacco. (4) But some effort was made everywhere to provide the rudiments of education. (5) Soon after the establishment of Massachusetts Bay Colony, Harvard College was founded in 1636 to ensure a supply of ministers and, it was hoped, to provide education for Christian Indians, a dream that did not materialize. (6) The College of William and Mary in Virginia was established in 1693 and it had some of the same objectives. (7) William Penn and the Quakers of Philadelphia thought of education in more practical and more vocational terms.

— LOUIS B. WRIGHT AND ELAINE W. FOWLER, EDS.,
ENGLISH COLONIZATION OF NORTH AMERICA

17. Which of the following parts of the passage displays ineffective sentence construction?
- A. part 1
 - B. part 3
 - C. part 6
 - D. part 7
18. The writer's main purpose in this paragraph is to
- A. explain the importance of education.
 - B. summarize the extent of formal education in early America.
 - C. analyze the early settlers' beliefs about education.
 - D. convey the difficulty of colonial life.
19. Which of the following most clearly represents the writer's pattern of development?
- A. statistics
 - B. examples
 - C. reasons
 - D. comparison and contrast
20. Which of the following parts draws attention away from the main idea of the paragraph?
- A. part 5
 - B. part 4
 - C. part 3
 - D. part 2

ANSWER SHEET

Sample Objective Test

1 A B C D
 ○ ○ ○ ○

2 A B C D
 ○ ○ ○ ○

3 A B C D
 ○ ○ ○ ○

4 A B C D
 ○ ○ ○ ○

5 A B C D
 ○ ○ ○ ○

6 A B C D
 ○ ○ ○ ○

7 A B C D
 ○ ○ ○ ○

8 A B C D
 ○ ○ ○ ○

9 A B C D
 ○ ○ ○ ○

10 A B C D
 ○ ○ ○ ○

11 A B C D
 ○ ○ ○ ○

12 A B C D
 ○ ○ ○ ○

13 A B C D
 ○ ○ ○ ○

14 A B C D
 ○ ○ ○ ○

15 A B C D
 ○ ○ ○ ○

16 A B C D
 ○ ○ ○ ○

17 A B C D
 ○ ○ ○ ○

18 A B C D
 ○ ○ ○ ○

19 A B C D
 ○ ○ ○ ○

20 A B C D
 ○ ○ ○ ○

ANSWER KEY

Sample Objective Test

ITEM #	ANSWER	COMMENTS	SECTION IN THE BEDFORD HANDBOOK
1	C	Part 5 is a fragment, a subordinate clause unattached to any independent clause.	19a
2	B	<i>Of course</i> is the most logical introduction to part 2, for part 2 is not an illustration or an example of a point made in part 1, nor is it in contrast to part 1. <i>In general, therefore</i> leads smoothly into the closing statement of the paragraph.	4e
3	C	The words <i>moral, spiritual, and cultural</i> indicate specific types of goals. All of the other responses are more general.	18b
4	C	The writer is attempting to demonstrate how people gain their cultural identity. First he clarifies what the term means and thus defines it. He makes no comparison between culture and cultural identity, so answer A can be rejected. He concludes that culture is a major element of social order in part 5 and mentions the structures common to ethnic groups in part 4, but these are simply points used to advance the definition. They do not serve as the central focus of the paragraph itself.	1a
5	B	<i>It's</i> is the contraction for <i>it is</i> . <i>Its</i> is the possessive form of the pronoun <i>it</i> . In this sentence the group possesses the culture; thus, <i>its culture</i> is the correct usage.	36c, Glossary of Usage
6	C	There is no need for the commas to set off the word <i>thus</i> . (See "Exception" in 32f in <i>The Bedford Handbook</i> .) In part 4 the comma appropriately sets off an introductory phrase. In part 3 the two commas set off a nonrestrictive element.	32f, 33e
7	C	The paragraph is written in the third person in a neutral, informative tone. In part 5 the tone changes (<i>if you ask me</i>) and the level of language drops from formal to colloquial (<i>pretty bizarre</i>).	1a, 17e
8	D	<i>Theirselves</i> is nonstandard. <i>Themselves</i> is the correct word.	Glossary of Usage

ITEM #	ANSWER	COMMENTS	SECTION IN THE BEDFORD HANDBOOK
9	C	Part 4 is a fragment, a subordinate clause unattached to any independent clause. A simple correction is to attach it to the previous sentence.	19a
10	B	Answer B is the best topic sentence for the paragraph because it is more specific than the other choices. Answer A speaks of “all ages,” far too broad to cover in only a paragraph. C also is too broad, for it speaks of “the arts,” not only drama. D is a generality that gives the paragraph no direction. Only B refers to the single art, drama, during a particular period in Greece.	4a
11	D	The writer of this paragraph points out that the definition of logic is “problematic” and that it is concerned with “prescriptive laws of reasoning.” In part 8 he continues by elaborating on the function of logic; all of these points indicate definition. Answer D addresses the difficulty of defining the term; thus it represents the focus of the paragraph. Answer A doesn’t work because it is merely a restatement of fact and does not relate to the development of the rest of the paragraph. B is an opinion, but there are no statements relating to the difficulty of the course in the paragraph. C should be rejected because there are no advantages mentioned in the paragraph.	4a
12	C	The correct spelling is <i>descriptive</i> . The other three choices are spelled correctly.	43
13	B	Part 4 demonstrates an unnecessary shift from the third-person point of view that dominates the paragraph to the first person (<i>I</i>).	3a, 13a
14	A	As used in this paragraph, <i>valley</i> is a common noun and thus should not be capitalized. The other two choices, <i>Soviet</i> and <i>Western</i> , are adjectives derived from proper nouns and require capitalization.	45a
15	B	Movement from the seventeenth to the eighteenth and ultimately to the nineteenth century indicates chronological or time order.	4d
16	C	This paragraph focuses on the movements of the Russians throughout history. A sentence that speaks of the Chinese as “fierce warriors” deviates from the paragraph’s unity. The other three choices all pertain directly to the Russian colonization.	4a

ITEM #	ANSWER	COMMENTS	section in THE BEDFORD HANDBOOK
17	C	Part 6 shows ineffective coordination, since the information in the first clause is more important than that in the second. The second could easily be reduced to a phrase, <i>with some of the same objectives</i> .	14c
18	B	Answers A and D are too broad in scope: The former speaks of education in general, and the latter addresses colonial life, not just a particular aspect of it. C should be rejected since the early settlers' beliefs concerning education are not clearly established. The writer mentions the schools in New England, in the agrarian colonies, then "everywhere," before discussing the earliest colleges. Thus B represents the writer's main purpose in the paragraph.	1a
19	B	Several examples are given: Harvard College, the College of William and Mary, and William Penn and the Quakers are all specific examples. There are no statistics (A) and only minor comparison and contrast (D). A reason for difficulty in education in the agrarian colonies is hinted at (C), but the focus is on the examples of efforts made to provide education within the colonies.	4c
20	C	The main idea of this paragraph is to describe the attempts made by the colonies to provide education for the people. Part 3 shifts the attention away from the idea of education to exports, a break in the unity. Parts 2, 4, and 5 all relate directly to the focus, education.	4a

STRATEGIES THAT WORK

Keep in mind the following principles in taking the objective portion of the test.

1. *Read and follow all directions carefully.* You will find general directions explaining all the test procedures at the beginning of the test booklet and more specific directions at the introduction to each component of the test. If some directions confuse you, raise your hand and the test administrator will explain them.

2. *Read each passage carefully.* Some students choose to read the questions before reading the passage. This helps them focus their reading on the most significant information. Others prefer to read the passage before considering the questions. Another strategy is to scan the passage quickly and then answer the questions by returning to the passage for details when necessary. You might want to practice all of the strategies in this booklet to find which one works best for you. Don't be dismayed if you have to read some passages two or three times; some passages are more complex than others.

Work through the questions, doing the simplest first and returning to the more difficult. (The TASP® test is designed in a straightforward manner, so you will not find “trick questions.”) In thinking about the more difficult questions, try to eliminate one or two choices. Then guess intelligently, since your score depends on the total number of correct responses.

3. *Be careful how you mark the answer sheet* because it is scored electronically. Any stray marks or partially erased answers could cost you points. Check the answer sheet carefully after you complete the test to make sure that each question has only one circle filled in completely and darkly. Be certain that if you skip a question you also skip that number on the answer sheet.

4. *Work at a steady pace.* There are generally fifty objective questions. Do not spend too much time on any one question; if you are debating an answer, skip it if you wish, being certain to skip the corresponding number on your answer sheet. Then after completing the objective portion, return to mark your best guess for that question.

5. *Check your work carefully.* Make sure that you have responded to every question and that your answers are marked clearly. Use the generous time allowance to achieve as high a score as possible.

Sample Exercises

The objective portion of the writing test gauges your ability to recognize several elements of composition — elements that overlap with those measured in the writing test. The elements, which are specified in the *Official TASP® Test Study Guide* (National Evaluation Systems, Inc., 1991), are as follows:

- A. Purpose and audience
- B. Unity, focus, and development
- C. Effective organization
- D. Effective sentences
- E. Edited American English

Following are practice test items for each element, with answers keyed to sections of *The Bedford Handbook*, Sixth Edition.

A. PURPOSE AND AUDIENCE

(Handbook section 1a)

The test will pose questions that gauge your ability to recognize writing that suits the purpose and audience. You might be given the piece of writing and be asked about those two elements. Or the question might start with one of the elements and ask you to match it with the appropriate piece of writing.

Practice Exercises

DIRECTIONS: Read the following passage, taken from a college anthropology textbook. Then answer the questions after it.

Note: The errors in this paragraph have been introduced for the sake of this exercise. None of these errors appears in the original text.

(1) Culture is inferred from cultural objects, as nature is inferred from natural objects. (2) Everyone knows that observing cultural objects means you have to make inferences at several levels, however. (3) Institutions, art objects, roles, beliefs, actions — all these cultural phenomena must be inferred from other phenomena, frequently from the way people use language. (4) Language itself cannot be simply observed; it has to be interpreted if it is to be understood. (5) Observers must learn the language before they can observe it accurately. (6) Even after a language has been learned, an observer must realize that informants may mean more by what they say than they reveal, or than they consciously realize. (7) Observers of cultural phenomena must interpret what they observe from the beginning.

— JOHN WARNOCK, ED., *REPRESENTING REALITY*

1. The writer's main purpose in this passage is to
 - A. compare and contrast culture with nature. 1a
 - B. stress the role that language plays in the process of understanding culture.
 - C. teach the reader how to interpret language so that culture and nature are clarified.
 - D. argue in favor of learning foreign languages.

2. Which of the following parts of the paragraph is NOT appropriate for the writer's purpose and audience?
- A. part 2
 - B. part 3
 - C. part 4
 - D. part 7

DIRECTIONS: Read the following passage, taken from a college library guide. Then answer the questions after it.

(1) Most books circulate for two weeks during regular semesters and one week during summer session, or to the end of the current semester if that is less than two weeks or one week respectively. (2) Borrowers from district institutions are subject to the district cut-off date. (3) Books circulate to faculty, professional staff, and other qualified borrowers until the end of the semester. (4) Books that do not circulate are marked "Room Use Only or Noncirculating." (5) Books located in Special Collections are available for students to use only after they complete a registration form available at the circulation desk.

3. What is the writer's main purpose in this paragraph?
- A. to clarify the difference between circulating and noncirculating books
 - B. to explain how students can borrow books from other district institutions
 - C. to present the periods of time for which books may be borrowed
 - D. to define Special Collections holdings
4. Who would most likely be the audience for this passage?
- A. anyone qualified to borrow books
 - B. graduate students
 - C. majors in library science only
 - D. faculty
5. Which of the following sentences, if added after part 5 in the paragraph, would be consistent with the writer's purpose and intended audience?
- A. You can pick up a Special Collections user's card if you want to.
 - B. A Special Collections user's card will be issued that allows students to borrow the books for two-hour sessions.
 - C. These Special Collections books are very valuable, so be very careful not to harm them.
 - D. The library is a wonderful place to do research and to study.

ANSWER KEY

ITEM #	ANSWER	COMMENTS	SECTION IN THE BEDFORD HANDBOOK
1	B	The writer points out that culture can be learned only through observing cultural phenomena, one of which is language. Language must be interpreted to be understood. The focus is clearly on understanding lan-	1a

ITEM #	ANSWER	COMMENTS	
		guage as a means of observing cultural phenomena. Answer A is incorrect because the paragraph does not suggest comparing culture with nature, except as an introductory statement. C is appealing but should be eliminated because the writer does not attempt to teach the audience how to interpret language. D is incorrect because the writer makes no attempt to persuade the reader to learn a foreign language.	
2	A	In part 2, the writer shifts to a casual tone that is not in keeping with the rest of the paragraph.	3a, 17e
3	C	This paragraph informs readers how long they may borrow books from the library. It reads as a policy statement. Answer A is mentioned, but as only one point, not the major concern of the writer. B is not explained in this paragraph. D, like A, is only mentioned.	1a
4	A	This basic information would be useful to anyone qualified to borrow books. The audiences in B, C, and D are too specific.	1a
5	B	This sentence continues the idea begun in part 5 pertaining to the Special Collections and the idea of the whole paragraph about borrowing time for library books. Answer A has a more informal tone than the rest of the passage and switches to the second-person point of view (<i>you</i>).	1a, 13a

B. UNITY, FOCUS, AND DEVELOPMENT**(Handbook sections 3a, 4a, 4b–c, 4e)**

You will be asked to decide if a piece of writing has turned away from its main idea, changed its point of view, or brought in details that don't belong. You also might be given a piece of writing with one or more of these weaknesses and be asked to choose a revision that would improve the writing.

DIRECTIONS: Read the following passage, taken from an American government textbook. Then answer the questions after it.

Note: The errors in this paragraph have been introduced for the sake of this exercise. None of these errors appears in the original text.

(1) Until the late nineteenth century, most men — and most women, as well — believed that women had a proper “place” in society, and that place did not include full-fledged participation as citizens. (2) Former president Grover Cleveland stated in 1905 that “sensible and responsible women do not want to vote”; in his view “a

higher intelligence” had assigned the relative positions of men and women. (3) In Cleveland’s time, belief in such “a higher intelligence,” or God, was much more common than it seems to be today. (4) Political life was not entirely out of bounds to women—for example, some women participated in political campaigns in the early part of the nineteenth century—but equal participation was regarded as a violation of the natural order of things. — LEWIS LIPSITZ, *AMERICAN DEMOCRACY*

1. Which of the following numbered parts draws attention away from the main idea of the paragraph?
 - A. part 1
 - B. part 2
 - C. part 3
 - D. part 4
2. Which of the following sentences, if added after part 4, would best support the main idea of the paragraph?
 - A. Grover Cleveland’s views have been ridiculed.
 - B. Women were to play a domestic role, maintaining the home and rearing children.
 - C. Needless to say, some women objected to this view.
 - D. Several modern-day cultures still cling to such beliefs.

DIRECTIONS: Read the following passage, taken from a student essay. Then answer the questions after it.

Note: The errors in this paragraph have been introduced for the sake of this exercise. None of these errors appears in the original text.

(1) Vegetarians can be divided into three major classes. (2) Lacto-ovo-vegetarians are those whose diets contain no meats, poultry, or fish. (3) _____. (4) Those whose diets contain no meat, milk, or eggs are called strict or pure vegetarians, or vegans. (5) Those vegans refuse not only the consumption of animal food but also the use of any animal product. (6) Thus, they would never wear wool clothing, leather shoes, or certain cosmetics. (7) I once went on a vegetarian diet like that, but it lasted only two weeks. (8) Regardless of the type of vegetarian a person becomes, unless he or she understands nutrition, that person could well become an unhealthy vegetarian.

3. Which of the following sentences would best replace the blank line in part 3 of this paragraph?
 - A. Obviously they cannot eat hamburgers or pizza, so they probably have a healthful diet.
 - B. Vegetarianism has been practiced for many centuries and is now becoming more popular in the United States.
 - C. People who choose not to eat meat or milk products are called ovo-vegetarians.
 - D. It’s probably very difficult for these people to eat out or with their friends.

4. In which part does the writer unnecessarily shift the point of view?
- A. part 5
 - B. part 6
 - C. part 7
 - D. part 8

Answer Key

ITEM #	ANSWER	COMMENTS	SECTION IN THE BEDFORD HANDBOOK
1	C	Part 3 shifts the focus of this paragraph away from the idea of women's roles in politics during the early 1900s to belief in God.	3a
2	B	Answer B supports the main idea of the passage: that women's roles were constricted by society. A, C, and D — though perhaps true — do not support the main idea.	4a
3	C	The topic sentence indicates that there will be three classes presented in the paragraph. Parts 2 and 4 are two of them, so the intervening one, part 3, should also be a class of vegetarians. Answers A, B, and D comment on vegetarianism but do not give one of the classes.	4a, 4c
4	C	Part 7 shifts unnecessarily from third person to first person (<i>I</i>).	3a, 13a

C. EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION (Handbook sections 1d, 3a, 4c, 4e, 7b)

The test will ask you to recognize various elements of paragraph organization, including topic sentences and transitions. You may be asked to reorganize sentences to improve paragraph construction and to make changes that help readers follow the sequence of ideas.

Practice Exercises

directions: Read the following passage, taken from a college zoology textbook. Then answer the questions after it.

Note: The errors in this paragraph have been introduced for the sake of this exercise. None of these errors appears in the original text.

- (1) Animals, and indeed plants, are composed of microscopic bricks called cells. (2) The cells found in different organs and tissues of the same creature are of quite different sizes and shapes — bones are made from angular cells, kidneys from spherical cells, nerves from long, narrow cells. (3) The nerve cells carry impulses to the brain. (4) All cells, however, are made from similar components. (5) Around the outside of each cell is a skin, the cell membrane, enclosing the gelatinous cytoplasm which

carries a number of small structures called organelles. (6) The most important of these is the cell nucleus, which lies at the center of the cell and carries the information from which the entire organism is built.

— DOUGAL DIXON, *after man: a zoology of the future*

1. What part of the paragraph interrupts the writer's pattern of development?
 - A. part 2
 - B. part 3
 - C. part 4
 - D. part 5
2. Which of the following most clearly represents the writer's main pattern of development?
 - A. definition
 - B. examples
 - C. narration
 - D. reasons

DIRECTIONS: Read the following passage, taken from a student essay. Then answer the questions after it.

(1) Bonsai is a 2000-year-old art form. (2) The first recorded evidence of bonsai came from Chinese scrolls that date back to A.D. 200. (3) _____. (4) Taoist monks were instrumental in the development of this amazing art form. (5) They believed that by miniaturizing objects, they could manipulate their magical qualities. (6) They dwarfed and extended the lives of trees by slowing the sap, much the same as they slowed their own pulse and breathing to extend their lives. (7) This art form was taught to the Japanese in the eleventh century, and they have become world-renowned masters at bonsai.

3. Which of the following sentences, if used in place of the blank line in part 3, would best develop the main idea of the paragraph?
 - A. Bonsai tends to prolong the life expectancy of trees because their every need is attended to.
 - B. Contrary to what many people believe, bonsai refers to a form of horticulture, not a type of tree.
 - C. Japan presented the United States with a 350-year-old white pine bonsai as a bicentennial gift.
 - D. To learn the art of bonsai, you could purchase the video entitled *The Art of Training Dwarf Potted Trees*.
4. Which of the following most clearly represents the writer's main pattern of development?
 - A. statistics
 - B. cause and effect
 - C. anecdote
 - D. definition

DIRECTIONS: Read the following passage, taken from an introduction to film textbook. Then answer the questions after it.

Note: The errors in this paragraph have been introduced for the sake of this exercise. None of these errors appears in the original text.

(1) Colorization, a practice that began in 1986, is the use of a computer-aided process to apply color to black-and-white movies. (2) The colors of the opening frames must be determined first by consulting sketches, memos, and set designs if they are available. (3) Colorization requires the film to be analyzed shot by shot and scene by scene, so that the colorization is consistent. (4) Once the colors for the opening frames are selected, a computer applies the same colors throughout, varying the hues in terms of the lighting pattern in the original. (5) _____, there is no guarantee that a color sketch provided for a black-and-white film would be valid if the studio had decided to shoot the film in color. (6) _____, the claim that a colorized version of a black-and-white film would have proved satisfactory if the filmmaker had the opportunity to shoot it in color is false.

— BERNARD F. DICK, *ANATOMY OF FILM*, 2ND EDITION

5. Which words or phrases, if inserted in order into the blanks of the paragraph, would help the reader understand the sequence of the writer's ideas?
 - A. For example; Besides
 - B. Nevertheless; In contrast
 - C. Next; To illustrate
 - D. Even so; Therefore
6. Which of the following changes would make the sequence of ideas in the paragraph clearer?
 - A. Delete part 1
 - B. Reverse the order of parts 2 and 3
 - C. Place part 2 after part 6
 - D. Delete part 5

DIRECTIONS: Read the following passage, taken from a student essay. Then answer the questions after it.

(1) Through a simple process you can create your own "signature" potpourri. (2) First, gather petals from any flowers you choose. (3) Allow them to dry out completely, at least a month, in a warm, dry environment. (4) _____, measure a half ounce of orris (a powder available in most crafts stores) per eight large petals. (5) Be certain to use the correct proportions of orris, or the petals could mildew. (6) Place the petal and orris mixture in a metal container, cover, and shake well. (7) Remove the lid and add approximately a half ounce of the fragrance you prefer. (8) _____, cover the container and shake vigorously once again. (9) This process is inexpensive yet easy, and your finished product will reflect your own individuality as the "wimpy" prepackaged varieties can never do.

7. In what order are the details in this paragraph presented?
 - A. spatial
 - B. chronological
 - C. order of importance — most important to least important
 - D. order of importance — least important to most important

8. Which words, if inserted in order into the blanks in the paragraph, would help the reader understand the sequence of the writer's ideas?
- A. Next; Finally
 - B. Second; Third
 - C. Then; Now
 - D. Afterward; Last

Answer Key

ITEM #	ANSWER	COMMENTS	SECTION IN THE BEDFORD HANDBOOK
1	B	The paragraph describes the structure of a basic cell. Part 3 moves away from general description and gives information about a specific cell.	4c
2	A	Through descriptive details, the writer presents a definition of a cell. Calling them "microscopic bricks," he includes their physiological characteristics and their components.	4c
3	B	The writer of this paragraph defines an ancient art form through facts and historical details. Answer B adds a fact that gives historical background. A, C, and D do not follow the developmental pattern of historical details used to define.	4c, d
4	D	The topic sentence establishes the developmental pattern by indicating that the writer is planning to tell readers what the bonsai is. There is no evidence of statistics (A) or of anecdote (C). Although part 6 does indicate a cause and effect relationship, it is the only part that does.	4c
5	D	<i>Even so</i> fits in the first blank because it highlights the contrasting point developed in the sentence. The final sentence is a concluding result of the previous explanatory statements; thus the transitional word <i>Therefore</i> is the only appropriate choice.	4e
6	B	You would not want to delete part 1 because it is the topic sentence to be developed. Part 6 should not be deleted either, for it serves as a concluding statement for the paragraph. For that reason, too, you would not place part 2 after part 6. However, the paragraph would be more logically organized if you reversed parts 2 and 3, since part 3 continues the definition of colorization.	4d

ITEM #	ANSWER	COMMENTS	
		Part 2 focuses on the colors themselves, an idea continued in part 4.	
7	B	Most processes are best organized in chronological order, since the steps are performed one after another.	4d
8	A	Look carefully at the first words of each pair. You would immediately eliminate D, <i>Afterward</i> , for it appears awkward in the connecting position. You would also eliminate B, since the step at part 4 is actually the third step in the sequence. C could work, because <i>Then</i> and <i>Now</i> both logically introduce their respective sentences. A, however, is preferable because <i>Finally</i> indicates the conclusion of the process.	4e

D. EFFECTIVE SENTENCES (Handbook sections 4e, 9, 11–12, 16–21)

The test will present sentences, generally with errors, and ask you to choose the best way to correct them. The sentences will include sentence fragments, comma splices and fused sentences, and misplaced and dangling modifiers, as well as problems with parallelism, subject-verb agreement, word choice, and repetitious language.

Practice Exercises

DIRECTIONS: Read the following passage, taken from an American history textbook. Then answer the questions after it.

Note: The errors in this paragraph have been introduced for the sake of this exercise. None of these errors appears in the original text.

(1) The Puritans believed that even when man's conduct was judged to be good by his neighbors it might be wrongly motivated — by self-interest, for example, rather than by a desire to please God — and was consequently evil. (2) Thus, man after the Fall is by nature sinful, and for sinning against the just God man is deserving of eternal damnation. (3) *All men deserve damnation* — This was a central belief of the Puritan, confirmed by his observation of his fellows and by his awareness of the darker impulses of his own nature. (4) But, even so, a gracious God in his benevolence generously chose to save some men in spite of their wretched, evil unworthiness. (5) His choice was arbitrary, it was also unnecessary. (6) Such was the gulf that divided the almighty God from depraved man that nothing in man's nature or in his conduct required God to reprieve any man from the sentence merited by his sins.

— FRANCIS J. BREMER, *THE PURITAN EXPERIMENT*

1. Which of the following parts should be revised to reduce repetition and improve the effectiveness of the paragraph?
 - A. part 2
 - B. part 3
 - C. part 4
 - D. part 6
2. Which of the following parts of the paragraph, if any, displays ineffective sentence construction?
 - A. part 5
 - B. part 1
 - C. part 3
 - D. None of these parts displays ineffective sentence construction.

DIRECTIONS: Read the following passage, taken from a biology textbook. Then answer the questions after it.

Note: The errors in this paragraph have been introduced for the sake of this exercise. None of these errors appears in the original text.

(1) The common names of plants and animals have arisen through long traditions of folklore and popular usage. (2) Many reflect some aspect of an organism's appearance, natural history, or relevance to human life: lady's slipper, hedgehog, bedbug, horsehair worm, liverwort. (3) Being that so many common names are in existence, they cannot always be depended upon for accuracy. (4) Ladybugs, strictly speaking, are not bugs (Hemiptera) but beetles (Coleoptera), and club mosses (Lycopsida) are not true mosses (Musci). (5) Because common names are not universally agreed upon. (6) A single species may be called by different names in different localities. (7) Also, the same common name may be used for two or more taxonomically unrelated organisms.

— VICTORIA McMILLAN, *WRITING PAPERS IN THE BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES*

3. Which of the following parts, if any, displays ineffective sentence structure?
 - A. part 2
 - B. part 4
 - C. part 5
 - D. None of these parts displays ineffective sentence structure.
4. Which is the best way to revise part 3, if any revision is needed?
 - A. Undoubtedly, such names are charming.
 - B. However, common names can also be misleading.
 - C. I would not put too much scientific stock in common names, though.
 - D. No revision is needed.

Answer Key

ITEM #	ANSWER	COMMENTS	SECTION IN THE BEDFORD HANDBOOK
1	C	Although each sentence is rather long, only part 4 bogs down in repetition. <i>But</i> and <i>even so</i> ; <i>gracious</i> , <i>benevolence</i> , and <i>generously</i> ; and <i>wretched</i> , <i>evil</i> , and <i>unworthiness</i> are all redundancies that should be eliminated.	16a–e
2	A	Part 5 is a comma splice, two independent clauses joined only by a comma. A coordinating conjunction or a semicolon should be added.	20a–d
3	C	Part 5 is a fragment; it is a subordinate clause unattached to any independent clause. (It can easily be corrected by attaching it to part 6.)	19a
4	B	The transitional word <i>However</i> alerts the reader to the contrast spelled out in part 4. Answer C shifts unnecessarily to the first person and changes the neutral tone of the scientific paragraph. Answer A does not work as a transition and, in fact, breaks the flow of the passage. Also, a word like <i>charming</i> is not appropriate in scientific writing.	4e, 13a, 17e

E. EDITED AMERICAN ENGLISH (Handbook sections 27, 28, 32–38, 43, 45)

The test will pose problems with various parts of speech including verbs, adverbs, adjectives, and nouns and pronouns and their possessives. Your knowledge of spelling and punctuation will also be tested.

Practice Exercises

DIRECTIONS: Read the following passage, taken from a novel. Then answer the questions after it.

Note: The errors in this paragraph have been introduced for the sake of this exercise. None of these errors appears in the original text.

(1) Mr. Pontellier had prepared for bed, but he slipped on an extra garment. (2) He opened a bottle of wine, of which he kept a small and select supply in a buffet of his own. (3) He drunk a glass of wine and went out on the gallery and offered a glass to his wife. (4) She did not wish any. (5) He drew up a rocker, hoisted his slippers on the rail, and proceeded to smoke a cigar. (6) He smoked too cigars; then he went inside and drank another glass of wine. (7) Mrs. Pontellier again declined to accept a glass when it was offered to her. (8) Mr. Pontellier once more seated himself with elevated feet, and after a reasonable interval of time smoked some more cigars.

— KATE CHOPIN, *THE AWAKENING*

1. Which of the following parts of the paragraph displays a commonly confused word?
 - A. part 1
 - B. part 5
 - C. part 6
 - D. part 7
2. Which of the following changes is needed in the paragraph?
 - A. Part 6: Change *smoked* to *was smoking*.
 - B. Part 1: Change *had prepared* to *has prepared*.
 - C. Part 3: Change *drunk* to *drank*.
 - D. Part 7: Change *was offered* to *was being offered*.
3. Which of the following parts of the paragraph, if any, displays nonstandard usage?
 - A. part 2
 - B. part 4
 - C. part 8
 - D. No change is needed.

DIRECTIONS: Read the following passage, taken from an American history textbook. Then answer the questions after it.

Note: The errors in this paragraph have been introduced for the sake of this exercise. None of these errors appears in the original text.

(1) Of the new industries being developed in the 1920s, the most spectacular was the automobile industry. (2) The breakthrough here had come with Henry Ford's mass-produced, inexpensive Model T, and through elaborations and improvements on the Ford system the industry continued to combine extraordinary gains in productivity with steadily mounting sales and more and more customers. (3) Hours per unit of output declined steadily, falling on the average more than seven percent a year. (4) Sales raised from about 1,500,000 vehicles in 1921 to over 5,000,000 in 1929, and automobile ownership was now rapidly extended to include nearly 60 percent of all American families. (5) More than any other, the industry became the showpiece of the new capitalism. (6) And although some historians now question whether the new "automobility" really improves the quality of mass life, there were few questioners at the time. (7) The industry was widely regarded as a progressive social force, engaged in fulfilling a long-standing popular dream and helping in the process to heal social divisions, stimulate social improvements, and satisfy social needs.

— ELLIS W. HAWLEY, *THE GREAT WAR AND THE SEARCH FOR A MODERN ORDER*

4. Which one, if any, of the following changes is needed in the paragraph?
 - A. Part 3: Change *declined* to *decline*.
 - B. Part 4: Change *raised* to *rose*.
 - C. Part 5: Change *became* to *becomes*.
 - D. No change is needed.

5. Which of the following parts of the paragraph displays nonstandard usage?
- A. part 1
 - B. part 3
 - C. part 6
 - D. part 7

DIRECTIONS: Read the following passage, taken from a college writing textbook. Then answer the questions after it.

Note: The errors in this paragraph have been introduced for the sake of this exercise. None of these errors appears in the original text.

(1) There are two major types of reader-oriented writing: persuasion and direction. (2) Often called argumentation, persuasion is designed to create a want or to motivate an action. (3) The politician who wants your vote and the advertizer who wants your money are most likely to use persuasive techniques, but persuasion can also be a tool of scientists and philosophers. (4) Persuasion relies heavily on the appeals to emotions. (5) It often uses the same linguistic resources as poetry to achieve its end: vivid images, careful control of connotations, repetition, rhythm, even rhyme. (6) In our society, strong persuasion is so frequently encountered and so skillfully deployed that every citizen should understand it thoroughly, if only to avoid being victimized by it.

— ROBERT SCHOLLES AND NANCY R. COMLEY, EDS., *THE PRACTICE OF WRITING*

6. Which of the following words in the paragraph is spelled incorrectly?
- A. writing
 - B. advertizer
 - C. thoroughly
 - D. rhythm
7. Which one of the following changes, if any, is needed in the paragraph?
- A. Part 5: Change the colon after *end* to a semicolon.
 - B. Part 6: Add a comma after *deployed*.
 - C. Part 2: Omit the comma after *argumentation*.
 - D. No change is needed.
8. Which one of the following changes, if any, is needed in the paragraph?
- A. Part 6: Capitalize *society*.
 - B. Part 3: Capitalize *philosophers*.
 - C. Part 5: Capitalize *linguistic*.
 - D. No change is needed.

DIRECTIONS: Read the following passage, taken from a student essay. Then answer the questions after it.

Note: The errors in this paragraph have been introduced for the sake of this exercise. None of these errors appears in the original text.

(1) Unfortunately, even the educational shows made especially for children contain sex-role stereotypes. (2) During one hour of “Sesame street” I watched last Saturday, only two adult females were shown: one worked in the back of the dry cleaner’s, washing and ironing shirts, while the other tried unsuccessfully to fix a car. (3) Meanwhile, men managed the shops, learned to play the flute, helped puppets find

the letter “O”, played the guitar, and narrated the entire program. (4) A male puppet, kermit the frog, did a news break in which a mailman, a salesman, and a woodsman all came to rescue little Red Riding Hood. (5) When asked what a square could be used for, a man said, “Building things,” while a girl said, “It would make a nice picture frame.” (6) While the show might have taught the children about the letters “O” and “R” and how to count to five, it also reinforced many sex-role stereotypes.

— PATRICIA KLEIN, “SATURDAY MORNING SEXISM”

9. All of the following words should be capitalized EXCEPT
 - A. *street* in part 2.
 - B. *kermit/frog* in part 4.
 - C. *little* in part 4.
 - D. *the* in part 4.
10. Which one of the following changes is needed in the paragraph?
 - A. Part 2: Omit the apostrophe in *cleaner’s*.
 - B. Part 3: Place the comma inside the quotation marks.
 - C. Part 6: Change the comma after *five* to a semicolon.
 - D. Part 1: Omit the comma after *Unfortunately*.
11. Which of the following words in the paragraph has been spelled incorrectly?
 - A. part 1: educational
 - B. part 6: reinforced
 - C. part 3: guitar
 - D. part 2: unsuccessfully

Answer Key

ITEM #	ANSWER	COMMENTS	SECTION IN THE BEDFORD HANDBOOK
1	C	The word <i>too</i> means <i>also</i> or serves as an intensive. In this sentence, the correct word is the number <i>two</i> .	Glossary of Usage
2	C	<i>Drank</i> is the past-tense form of <i>drink</i> . The verbs in the other sentences are all written in appropriate sequence of tenses.	27a, 28a
3	C	<i>Hisself</i> is nonstandard usage and should be changed to <i>himself</i> .	Glossary of Usage
4	B	<i>Raised</i> is a transitive verb that means “to move or cause to move upward.” It must have a direct object, and there is none in this sentence. <i>Rose</i> , the past tense of the intransitive verb <i>rise</i> , means “to go up.”	27a, Glossary
5	C	<i>Improves</i> should be <i>improved</i> because the author is speaking of the past.	27d
6	B	The correct spelling is <i>advertiser</i> .	43

ITEM #	ANSWER	COMMENTS	SECTION IN THE BEDFORD HANDBOOK
7	D	None of the changes called for in A–C is needed. The colon in part 5 signals a forthcoming list. In part 6 no comma is needed because it would set off an adverbial clause that is essential to the meaning of the sentence. And finally, the comma after <i>argumentation</i> is correct because it sets off an introductory phrase.	32b, 33f, 35a
8	D	None of these words needs to be capitalized because the words are all common nouns.	45a
9	D	If not the first word of a title, the articles <i>a</i> , <i>an</i> , and <i>the</i> are not capitalized. <i>Street</i> and <i>little</i> are parts of proper nouns and thus should be capitalized. <i>Kermit the Frog</i> is a proper name, so it should be capitalized.	45a, c
10	B	Commas and periods <i>always</i> go inside quotation marks. The apostrophe is used in <i>dry cleaner's</i> to show possession. In part 6, the comma after <i>five</i> is correct because it sets off an introductory adverb clause. The comma after <i>Unfortunately</i> is also correct because it sets off an introductory word.	32b, 36a, 37f
11	D	The correct spelling is <i>unsuccessfully</i> .	43