

MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. Choose the best sentence for publication in a public document.
 - a. The fire department stipulates that every newly hired fireman receive rigorous physical training before he is posted to a firehouse.
 - b. The fire department stipulates that all newly hired firefighters receive rigorous physical training before they are posted to firehouses.
 - c. The fire department stipulates that every newly hired firefighter receive rigorous physical training before they are posted to a firehouse.

ANS: B

CORRECT FEEDBACK: Words such as *fireman* and the “default he” should be avoided when the referent may be either a man or a woman; *they* is plural and should not be used as a substitute for a singular pronoun. (In *The Little Seagull Handbook*, see the section on Words for Building Common Ground/Editing out sexist language and Shifts/Shifts in number.)

INCORRECT FEEDBACK: Words such as *fireman* and the “default he” should be avoided when the referent may be either a man or a woman; *they* is plural and should not be used as a substitute for a singular pronoun. (In *The Little Seagull Handbook*, see the section on Words for Building Common Ground/Editing out sexist language and Shifts/Shifts in number.)

PTS: 1

TOP: Diagnostic: Post-Study Diagnostic on Language

KEY: Words for Building Common Ground | Editing out sexist language and Shifts | Shifts in number

2. Choose the best sentence.
 - a. *Casablanca* is quite possibly the best suspense movie of the last one hundred years.
 - b. *Casablanca* is arguably the very finest suspense film of the twentieth century.
 - c. *Casablanca* is the best suspense movie ever made.

ANS: C

CORRECT FEEDBACK: In matters of opinion, it’s best to make a simple, clear assertion rather than hedge a statement with meaningless expressions such as *quite possibly* and *arguably*; moreover, because movies have only existed since the early 1900s, it is both needless and pretentious to include phrases like *of the last one hundred years* or *of the twentieth century*. (In *The Little Seagull Handbook*, see the section on Unnecessary Words.)

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PTS: 1

TOP: Diagnostic: Post-Study Diagnostic on Language

KEY: Unnecessary Words

3. Choose the clearest sentence.
 - a. Martin, while growing up near Fenway Park, dreamed of playing left field for the Red Sox, idolizing Ted Williams.
 - b. Growing up near Fenway Park, Martin’s dreams were filled with the idea of playing left field for the Red Sox, just like his idol, Ted Williams.
 - c. Growing up near Fenway Park, Martin dreamed of playing left field for the Red Sox, just like his idol, Ted Williams.

CORRECT FEEDBACK: In the sentence that begins **Martin, while growing**, the phrase *idolizing Ted Williams* is misplaced; it should be close to the word it modifies, *Martin*. In the other incorrect answer, the phrase *Growing up near Fenway Park* erroneously seems to modify Martin's dreams. (In *The Little Seagull Handbook*, see the section on Adjectives and Adverbs/Placing modifiers carefully.)

KEY: Adjectives and Adverbs | Placing modifiers carefully

- KEY: Words Often Confused

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- CORRECT FEEDBACK: *Would of* is a common misunderstanding based on the sound of the contraction *would've*—that is, “would have.” (In *The Little Seagull Handbook*, see the section on Words Often Confused.)

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PTS: 1 TOP: Diagnostic: Post-Study Diagnostic on Language
KEY: Words Often Confused

7. Choose the correct words to fill in the blanks in the following sentence.
I feel _____ when I see an animal mistreated; I feel _____ when I recover from a cold; I feel _____ about my love of animals and my robust health.
- bad; well; good
 - badly; good; well
 - badly; well; good

ANS: A

CORRECT FEEDBACK: The adjective *bad* is used to describe an unhappy emotional state; *well* is used as an adjective to describe physical health; and *good* is used as an adjective to describe emotional well-being. (In *The Little Seagull Handbook*, see the section on Adjectives and Adverbs.)

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PTS: 1 TOP: Diagnostic: Post-Study Diagnostic on Language
KEY: Adjectives and Adverbs

8. Choose the most correct sentence.
- Which ballpark has the deep outfield—Fenway Park or Yankee Stadium?
 - Which ballpark has the deeper outfield—Fenway Park or Yankee Stadium?
 - Which ballpark has the deepest outfield—Fenway Park or Yankee Stadium?

ANS: B

CORRECT FEEDBACK: The comparative adjective *deeper* is used to compare two things. (In *The Little Seagull Handbook*, see the section on Adjectives and Adverbs/Using comparatives and superlatives.)

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PTS: 1 TOP: Diagnostic: Post-Study Diagnostic on Language
KEY: Adjectives and Adverbs | Using Comparatives and Superlatives

9. Choose the most effective sentence.
- As soon as Ilsa (Ingrid Bergman) and Rick (Humphrey Bogart) see each other, it is obvious that they will rekindle the passion of their time in Paris.
 - As soon as Ilsa (Ingrid Bergman) and Rick (Humphrey Bogart) see each other, they rekindle the passion of their time in Paris.
 - As soon as Ilsa (Ingrid Bergman) and Rick (Humphrey Bogart) see each other, there is every reason to expect that they will rekindle the passion of their time in Paris.

ANS: B

CORRECT FEEDBACK: Using the expletives *it is* or *there is* often results in wordy, cumbersome sentences. (In *The Little Seagull Handbook*, see the section on Unnecessary Words.)

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PTS: 1 TOP: Diagnostic: Post-Study Diagnostic on Language
KEY: Unnecessary Words

10. Choose the most effective sentence.
- In spite of the fact that the transit papers are hidden in Sam's piano, Rick maintains his composure at the point of time when the Gestapo search the café.
 - Even in the event of the Gestapo searching his café for the transit papers, Rick doesn't lose his cool as far as their hiding place in Sam's piano is concerned.
 - Although the transit papers are hidden in Sam's piano, Rick remains calm when the Gestapo search the café.

ANS: C

CORRECT FEEDBACK: Common phrases like *in spite of the fact that* or *as far as . . . is concerned* can easily be replaced by much more concise ways of expressing the same ideas. (In *The Little Seagull Handbook*, see the section on Unnecessary Words/Wordy phrases.)

INCORRECT FEEDBACK: Common phrases like *in spite of the fact that* or *as far as . . . is concerned* can easily be replaced by much more concise ways of expressing the same ideas. (In *The Little Seagull Handbook*, see the section on Unnecessary Words/Wordy phrases.)

PTS: 1 TOP: Diagnostic: Post-Study Diagnostic on Language
KEY: Unnecessary Words | Wordy phrases

11. Choose the most effective sentence.
- Most simple banking transactions can be conveniently accomplished at an ATM machine.
 - Most simple banking transactions can be conveniently accomplished at an automated teller machine.
 - Most simple banking transactions can be conveniently accomplished at an ATM.

ANS: C

CORRECT FEEDBACK: The word *machine* is redundant after the *M* in *ATM*; the phrase *automated teller machine* is unnecessarily wordy in an age when *ATM* is instantly understood, even by people who don't know what each letter stands for. (In *The Little Seagull Handbook*, see the section on Unnecessary Words/Redundancies.)

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PTS: 1 TOP: Diagnostic: Post-Study Diagnostic on Language
KEY: Unnecessary Words | Redundancies

12. Choose the most precise and effective sentence.
- People who do research usually find that students are better off in schools that are wide-ranging in what they have for students who have different interests and abilities.
 - Research consistently shows that students learn more in schools that accommodate a broad range of student interests and abilities.
 - Research keeps indicating with great consistency that student learning is enhanced and intensified by schools that appeal to a broad, expansive range of student interests and abilities.

ANS: B

CORRECT FEEDBACK: The sentence that begins **People who do** is wordy and dull because of an overreliance on expressions containing forms of *be*, *do*, and *have*; the sentence that begins **Research keeps indicating** is wordy and dull because of redundancies such as *enhanced* and *intensified*. (In *The Little Seagull Handbook*, see the sections on Precise Words/*Be* and *do* and Appropriate Words/Pretentious language.)

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PTS: 1

TOP: Diagnostic: Post-Study Diagnostic on Language

KEY: Precise Words | Be and do and Appropriate Words | Pretentious language

13. Choose the sentence that is most appropriate for academic writing.
- Despite some intriguing differences in neural circuitry, males and females seem to be equally suited to the complex cognitive challenges presented by the game of chess.
 - The intriguing differences in the neural circuitry of males and females seem to be no big deal when it comes to the complex cognitive challenges presented by the game of chess.
 - Despite some incredible differences in neural circuitry, males and females seem to be equally suited to the awesome cognitive challenges presented by the game of chess.

ANS: A

CORRECT FEEDBACK: In one incorrect answer, the expression *no big deal* is too informal for academic prose; in the other incorrect answer, the words *incredible* and *awesome* are both too informal and too imprecise. (In *The Little Seagull Handbook*, see the section on Appropriate Words/Formal and informal words.)

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PTS: 1

TOP: Diagnostic: Post-Study Diagnostic on Language

KEY: Appropriate Words | Formal and informal words

14. Choose the sentence that is most appropriate for academic writing.
- In an ever-increasing manner, social psychologists are interpolating neuroscientific breakthroughs in order to elucidate contradistinctions in male and female behavior.
 - More and more, social psychologists are drawing upon breakthroughs in neuroscience to illuminate the differences in male and female behavior.
 - Social psychologists are all over breakthroughs in neuroscience to get a handle on the differences in male and female behavior.

ANS: B

CORRECT FEEDBACK: The sentence that begins **In an ever** is pretentious and wordy; in the sentence that begins **Social psychologists and** the expressions *all over* and *get a handle on* are too informal in tone and imprecise in meaning to be appropriate in academic writing. (In *The Little Seagull Handbook*, see the section on Appropriate Words/Formal and informal words and Appropriate Words/Pretentious language.)

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PTS: 1

TOP: Diagnostic: Post-Study Diagnostic on Language

KEY: Appropriate Words | Formal and informal words and Appropriate Words | Pretentious language

15. Choose the sentence that is most appropriate for academic writing.
- Optimal outcomes are achieved in developmentally appropriate learning centers utilizing appropriate metrics.
 - Good schools pump out smart kids with high test scores—it's as simple as that.
 - Students are most likely to excel in schools that make judicious use of tracking and assessment.

ANS: C

CORRECT FEEDBACK: The sentence that begins **Optimal outcomes are** is unnecessarily wordy and laden with jargon (*outcomes, learning centers, metrics*); the sentence that begins **Good schools pump** is excessively informal in tone (*pump out*) and overly breezy in its unsubstantiated assertions (*simple as that*). (In *The Little Seagull Handbook*, see the section on Appropriate Words/Jargon.)

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PTS: 1

TOP: Diagnostic: Post-Study Diagnostic on Language

KEY: Appropriate Words | Jargon

16. Choose the sentence that is most appropriate for academic writing.
- Educational administrators should observe this simple rule of thumb: well-disciplined students are happy students.
 - Letting students control schools is like putting the fox in charge of the henhouse.
 - School authorities should strive to create an atmosphere that balances discipline and freedom.

ANS: C

CORRECT FEEDBACK: In the sentence that begins **Educational administrators should** the expression *rule of thumb* is a cliché; in the sentence that begins **Letting students control** the expression *fox in charge of the henhouse* is a cliché and may not mean exactly what the writer intends. (In *The Little Seagull Handbook*, see the section on Appropriate Words/Clichés.)

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PTS: 1

TOP: Diagnostic: Post-Study Diagnostic on Language

KEY: Appropriate Words | Clichés

17. Choose the words that best fill in the blanks in the following sentence.
- The first shock occurred _____ precisely 5:04 PM _____ a beautiful, cloudless afternoon _____ May.
- at; on; in

- b. around; on; of
- c. on; on; in

ANS: A

CORRECT FEEDBACK: Prepositions that express situations of time or place are mainly a matter of idiomatic usage; most dictionaries include usage information alongside definitions. (In *The Little Seagull Handbook*, see the section on Prepositions.)

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PTS: 1 TOP: Diagnostic: Post-Study Diagnostic on Language

KEY: Prepositions

18. Select the articles (or no article) that best fill the blanks in the following passage.
Everyone seemed to have _____ different opinion as to _____ best outfielder of the 1940s: Ted Williams or Joe DiMaggio. Even all _____ leading sports writers of the era were divided on the subject.
- a. a; the; [no article]
 - b. a; the; the
 - c. the; the; [no article]

ANS: B

CORRECT FEEDBACK: The first blank in the sentence calls for the indefinite article *a* because the noun *opinion* is not specific; the second blank calls for *the* because *best* takes a definite article; the third blank requires *the* because the phrase *of the era* specifies the identity of the sports writers. (In *The Little Seagull Handbook*, see the sections on Articles/When to use *a* and *an* and Articles/When to use *the*.)

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PTS: 1 TOP: Diagnostic: Post-Study Diagnostic on Language

KEY: Articles | When to use a and an and Articles | When to use the