

Diagnostic Test on Writing and Grammar Skills

Complete this test, following the directions for each section. (Circle the letters for your answer choices.) Then, check your answers using the answer key on page 115 of this booklet. The answer key refers you to sections of *Stepping Stones* that you might want to study if you missed particular questions.

WRITING

For each outline-paragraph pairing below, do the following:

- Read the partial outline, which includes the topic and support points but no main idea.
- Read the paragraph that follows the partial outline.
- Answer the questions after the paragraph.

Pairing 1

TOPIC: My volunteer job at a local women's shelter

SUPPORT POINT 1: I've been able to help women in need.

- giving residents and callers information
- providing a sympathetic ear
- helping with small chores

SUPPORT POINT 2: I've gained career skills.

- communicating
- managing multiple tasks
- finding the right information/resources

SUPPORT POINT 3: I have met people who have changed my life.

- shelter supervisor
- other volunteers
- shelter residents

1. _____
2. In the first place, my work at the shelter has enabled me to help women in need.
3. For example, as a shelter volunteer, I have given residents and callers information about getting restraining orders, finding housing, and more.
4. I have also provided a sympathetic ear when these women just want to talk about their problems; often, they have no one to confide in, so this kind of support is essential.
5. Additionally, I have helped shelter residents with small chores, such as watching their children while they go on errands or assisting them with meal preparation.
6. The kitchen is small and cramped, so I'm hoping that it will be expanded sometime soon.
7. _____, I have gained valuable career skills through volunteering at the shelter.
8. For instance, I have improved my communication skills through my many conversations with the women at the shelter and other shelter workers.
9. I have also gotten a lot of practice in managing multiple tasks at once—an important skill for any career.
10. In addition, I have learned how to be resourceful, finding the information that I need to help a particular woman, regardless of her question or problem.
11. Most

important, Joanie, the supervisor of the shelter, continues to mentor me every day, and she has become a valued friend and role model. 12. I have also learned much from the other volunteers, including how they have dealt with difficult situations that I also face. 13. However, the people who have had the greatest effect on me have been the shelter residents; I am inspired by their strength and their struggles for a better life.

1. Which would be the best topic sentence to fill in blank 1 of the paragraph?
 - A. If you want to build solid career skills, there's no better way than to volunteer at a local women's shelter.
 - B. Volunteering at a local women's shelter has allowed me to help others, and it has also enriched my own life.
 - C. The people I have met through volunteering at a local women's shelter have changed my life.
 - D. Residents of women's shelters are an inspiration to everyone who works with them.
2. Which sentence breaks the unity of the paragraph because it's not related to the topic sentence?
 - A. sentence 6
 - B. sentence 8
 - C. sentence 11
 - D. sentence 12
3. What transitional expression, inserted into the blank in sentence 7, would help readers follow the paragraph's ideas?
 - A. In the first place
 - B. In the second place
 - C. Third
 - D. However
4. What problem do you notice in the paragraph when you compare it with the outline?
 - A. Examples are missing for the first support point.
 - B. Examples are missing for the second support point.
 - C. The second support point is missing.
 - D. The third support point is missing.
5. What would be the best concluding sentence for this paragraph?
 - A. There is no doubt that anyone can benefit from working at a women's shelter.
 - B. As long as you keep an open mind and are willing to work hard, volunteering can be a positive experience.
 - C. Working at a women's shelter can be difficult, but it provides a great opportunity to meet people from different backgrounds.
 - D. Although working at the shelter has been challenging, the experience has changed my life for the better—and I hope it's changed others' lives for the better, too.

Pairing 2

TOPIC: Enjoying an inexpensive vacation

SUPPORT POINT 1: During off-seasons, hotel and condominium accommodations are often less expensive.

- hotels and condos offer up to 50% savings
- many hotels offer an extra day free
- many hotels offer free upgrades

SUPPORT POINT 2: Hotels and condos are often quieter during off-seasons.

- no squealing children in the hotel pool
- no children or teens running up and down the hallways
- no loud television or music late at night

SUPPORT POINT 3: Tourist attractions are more enjoyable during off-seasons.

- no long lines or waiting lists at popular restaurants
- servers are not as busy and are more cheerful
- customers get quicker service from sales clerks in shops

1. _____ 2. During off-seasons, hotel and condominium accommodations are often less expensive. 3. For example, in the winter, hotels and condominiums in popular beach resorts usually rent for up to 50% less than in the summer. 4. To entice more visitors, hotels and condominiums often offer incentives such as a free day with a three-day stay. 5. In addition, free upgrades to larger rooms and better views are commonly offered. 6. In early December, for a total cost of only \$345, my family spent four nights in a modern, fully furnished two-bedroom condominium unit overlooking the Gulf of Mexico. 7. There are also no noisy, squealing children in the hotel pool. 8. In addition, guests are not likely to be kept awake at night by children or teenagers running up and down the hallways. 9. Loud televisions and stereos are also rarely a problem. 10. Finally, tourist attractions are more enjoyable during off-seasons. 11. Visitors will appreciate not having to face long lines or waiting lists at popular restaurants. 12. Because servers are less busy, they are generally more cheerful and attentive to customers. 13. Food servers work chiefly for tips, which often make up the biggest share of their earnings. 14. _____, sales clerks in local shops have fewer customers and can wait on shoppers more quickly.

6. Which would be the best topic sentence to fill in blank 1 of the paragraph?
 - Vacations can be expensive and noisy.
 - Excellent bargains are available for tourists.
 - By traveling to popular resorts during off-seasons, tourists can take advantage of reduced lodging rates and a quieter, more relaxed stay.
 - When children and teenagers are allowed to make too much noise, tourists can find an otherwise relaxing vacation quite annoying.
7. Which sentence breaks the unity of the paragraph because it's not related to the topic sentence?
 - sentence 3
 - sentence 5
 - sentence 12
 - sentence 13
8. Which transitional expression, inserted into the blank in sentence 14, would help readers follow the paragraph's ideas?
 - Likewise
 - However
 - In the first place
 - On the other hand
9. What problem do you notice in the paragraph when you compare it to the outline?
 - The first point sentence is missing.
 - Examples are missing for the first support point.
 - The second support point is missing.
 - Examples are missing for the third support point.

10. What would be the best concluding sentence for this paragraph?

- A. When our family goes on vacation, we look for value and a peaceful atmosphere, so we travel during the off-season whenever we can.
- B. Vacations can be very expensive, noisy, and annoying.
- C. Our family vacation at the beach last December was a very enjoyable experience.
- D. In this paragraph, I have discussed the advantages of off-season vacations.

GRAMMAR AND WORD CHOICE

Part 1

For each sentence, identify the type/function of the underlined word.

11. A sudden crack of thunder startled everyone in the room.

- A. noun
- B. verb
- C. adjective
- D. adverb
- E. preposition
- F. conjunction

12. The fountain pen is a gift from Deborah.

- A. noun
- B. verb
- C. adjective
- D. adverb
- E. preposition
- F. conjunction

13. Michael's sense of humor makes him very popular.

- A. noun
- B. verb
- C. adjective
- D. adverb
- E. preposition
- F. conjunction

14. We strolled leisurely through the park.

- A. noun
- B. verb
- C. adjective
- D. adverb
- E. preposition
- F. conjunction

15. The lettuce is brown and wilted.

- A. noun
- B. verb
- C. adjective
- D. adverb
- E. preposition
- F. conjunction

16. Shandra and Antonio were married on Saturday.

- A. noun
- B. verb
- C. adjective
- D. adverb
- E. preposition
- F. conjunction

Part 2

Choose the correct (or best) item to fill in each blank.

17. _____ Lara missed a few notes during her piano recital, nobody seemed to notice.

- A. Because
- B. Unless
- C. Since
- D. Although

18. Tiffany eats _____ for breakfast every morning.
A. really healthful food C. a bran muffin and yogurt
B. fiber and dairy products D. good stuff

19. It's spring break, so we _____ go to Orlando.
A. are going to C. are gonna
B. be going to D. going

20. Mr. Jefferson assigned us _____ algebra problems for Monday.
A. twenty C. tons of
B. lots of D. too many

21. The supervisor walked up to me and _____ me to work late again.
A. asked C. asks
B. had asked D. be asking

22. Everyone guessed the ending of the movie _____ Todd.
A. accept C. except
B. accepting D. excepting

23. By the time Barbara finished remodeling her kitchen, she _____ nearly \$20,000.
A. spent C. had spent
B. spend D. was spending

24. After the opposing team's fifth touchdown, the Eagles fans were very _____.
A. quite C. quited
B. quit D. quiet

25. Marcus and Jennifer recently earned _____ black belts in karate.
A. they're C. there
B. their D. there're

26. Randall wanted a slice of chocolate pie, _____ he was on a diet.
A. but C. and
B. so D. or

27. Stephanie ran out of chocolate chips, _____ she put raisins in the cookies instead.
A. but C. and
B. so D. or

28. Heather's wedding dress was _____.
A. amazing
B. eggshell-colored and covered with tiny fabric flowers
C. gorgeous
D. totally beautiful

29. In the chapel, several children cried loudly _____ Bradley and Teresa said their wedding vows.
A. because C. while
B. since D. even though

30. Franklin isn't at school today; he _____ sick.
A. be C. is
B. been D. being

Part 3

Choose the correct sentence from the options given.

40. A. There are no classes this week; it's spring break.
B. There are no classes this week, it's spring break.
C. There are no classes this week it's spring break.

41. A. Sylvia, an expert in personnel management.
B. Sylvia is an expert in personnel management.
C. An expert in personnel management.

42. A. We need to arrive at the airport by noon. Because our flight leaves at 1 P.M.
B. We need to arrive at the airport by noon; because our flight leaves at 1 P.M.
C. We need to arrive at the airport by noon because our flight leaves at 1 P.M.

43. A. We are looking for a carpenter who has experience building decks.
B. We are looking for a carpenter, who has experience building decks.
C: We are looking for a carpenter, who, has experience building decks.

44. A. Marcus drove through the night. Although he was very tired.
B. Marcus drove through the night although he was very tired.
C. Marcus drove through the night; although he was very tired.

45. A. Today's forecast calls for heavy rain, therefore, we have canceled our fishing trip.
B. Today's forecast calls for heavy rain; therefore, we have canceled our fishing trip.
C. Today's forecast calls for heavy rain therefore we have canceled our fishing trip.

46. A. Wanted in five states, the criminal turned himself in to the police.
B. The criminal turned himself in to the police, wanted in five states.
C. The criminal turned himself wanted in five states in to the police.

47. A. The man, who usually drives this bus, is on sick leave.
B. The man who usually drives this bus is on sick leave.
C. The man who, usually drives this bus, is on sick leave.

48. A. A very loud man with a squeaky voice.
B. Richard, a very loud man with a squeaky voice.
C. Richard is a very loud man with a squeaky voice.

49. A. Joe was fired yesterday he kept coming to work late.
B. Joe was fired yesterday, he kept coming to work late.
C. Joe was fired yesterday. He kept coming to work late.

50. A. Bill squirted milk from his nose laughing at my joke.
B. Bill squirted milk laughing at my joke from his nose.
C. Laughing at my joke, Bill squirted milk from his nose.

51. A. We found a beautiful vase at an antique store that cost only ten dollars.
B. At an antique store that cost only ten dollars we found a beautiful vase.
C. At an antique store, we found a beautiful vase that cost only ten dollars.

52. A. Bettina has been doing yoga for several years.
B. Bettina doing yoga for several years.
C. Bettina been doing yoga for several years.

53. A. Stranded in the pouring rain, Linda's cell phone refused to work.
B. Stranded in the pouring rain, Linda discovered that her cell phone refused to work.
C. While stranded in the pouring rain, Linda's cell phone refused to work.

54. A. I have pushed every button on the remote control, but the television will not come on.
B. I have pushed every button on the remote control but, the television will not come on.
C. I have pushed every button on the remote control but the television will not come on.

55. A. Although the digital camera was on sale we did not purchase it.
B. Although the digital camera was on sale, we did not purchase it.
C. Although the digital camera, was on sale, we did not purchase it.

56. A. To get the best concert seats, you must purchase the tickets early.
B. To get the best concert seats, the tickets must be purchased early.
C. The concert tickets, to get the best seats, must be purchased early.

57. A. We welcomed the day-long rain, which saved our vegetable garden.
B. We welcomed the day-long rain which saved our vegetable garden.
C. We welcomed the day-long rain which, saved our vegetable garden.

58. A. We went to the awards ceremony, but did not stay for the reception.
B. We went to the awards ceremony but, did not stay for the reception.
C. We went to the awards ceremony but did not stay for the reception.

Part 4

Look at the underlined portions of each of the following items. If you find an error in one of these underlined portions, choose the answer that corrects the problem. If there is no error, choose "No change is necessary."

59. Sharon is my best friend because she's always there for you. She is a gourmet cook, and even though I'm not interested in cooking, I accompanied her to a cooking course in Italy. By the end of the course, each of the class members called Sharon his or her friend as well.
A. me
B. cooks
C. their
D. No change is necessary.

60. The six new kittens in the barn are quite precious. There is one gray kitten, and the others is black and white.
A. is
B. are
C. are
D. No change is necessary.

61. Everybody who plans to go on the field trip must have their permission slip signed by Wednesday.
A
We called the bus company, and an employee advised us that passengers are not allowed to bring food or drinks on the bus, so we must leave our refreshments at home.
B
C
D. No change is necessary.

62. Nobody wants their children to struggle in school; however, not all children get the best education possible.
A. want
B. his or her
C. gets
D. No change is necessary.

63. The girls at my daughter's school tease her constantly.
A. in
B. teases
C. constant
D. No change is necessary.

64. Bernie and Eddie ^Aare cousins. They ^Bhave been in business together since they graduated from high ^Cschool. They ^Csells unfinished furniture and are quite successful.

- A. is
- B. has
- C. sell
- D. No change is necessary.

65. Damien ^Adid everything he could to forget about ^Bit, but nothing ^Cworked.

- A. does
- B. being laid off
- C. works
- D. No change is necessary.