

TASC Test Writing Practice Items

Use these items to practice for the TASC Writing subtest. Once you reach the end of the test, check your responses against the answer key provided. Take the time to read the information preceding the answers to learn what you'll need to know and be able to do to pass the TASC test. In the following multiple-choice questions, please circle the correct answer.

Good luck preparing for the TASC Test!

1 Read these sentences.

Waiting for news about the flight delay, Sam looked for a quiet place in the noisy terminal to make a phone call. Jordan tried to find an outlet where she could plug in her computer.

Which revision most clearly combines the two sentences?

- A** Waiting for news about the flight delay, Sam, while Jordan tried to find an outlet where she could plug in her computer, looked for a quiet place in the noisy terminal to make a phone call.
- B** Waiting for news about the flight delay, Sam and Jordan looked for a quiet place in the noisy terminal to make a phone call and tried to find an outlet where she could plug in her computer.
- C** Waiting for news about the flight delay, Sam looked for a quiet place in the noisy terminal to make a phone call, while Jordan tried to find an outlet where she could plug in her computer.
- D** Waiting for news about the flight delay, Sam looked for a quiet place in the noisy terminal to make a phone call, although Jordan tried to find an outlet where she could plug in her computer.

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2 Which of these sentences includes a misspelled word?

- A** Bobby was ecstatic about heading into the city with his friends for a baseball game this weekend.
- B** He also reassured his brother that he would bring him an extraordinary souvenir from the ballpark's gift shop.
- C** The spring weather was already getting warm but had not become miserably hot yet—perfect weather for a baseball game!
- D** Bobby had promised his little brother that he would take pictures of some of the star players, as well as attempt to aquire their autographs.

3 Read this sentence.

There was an effortlessnness with which Barry played his guitar, and it was making it appear as if he and his instrument had—because of something almost impossible to describe—miraculously merged together into a single, music-producing unit.

Which revision of the sentence best expresses the idea precisely and concisely?

- A** He and his instrument were a miraculous music-producing unit, impossible to describe.
- B** Miraculously merged together, Barry played his guitar with an effortlessnness as if he and his instrument were a single, music-producing unit.
- C** The effortlessnness with which Barry played his guitar made it appear as if he and his instrument had miraculously merged into a single, music-producing unit.
- D** There was an effortlessnness in how Barry played his guitar—because of something almost impossible to describe—and it was making it appear as if he and his instrument had miraculously merged together into a single, music-producing unit.

Writing



TASC Test Writing Practice Items

Read the paragraph.

An everyday hero is the average person who responds out of a sense of urgency to a situation that demands immediate action. The everyday hero recognizes that complacency is not an option. Risk to self is considered, but generally only after the fact.

- 4** Which sentence best concludes this paragraph?
- A** The world is filled with many different kinds of heroes.
 - B** The actions define the hero as a giver, touching humanity in the process.
 - C** The everyday hero is the next-door neighbor who rescues the child from the oncoming car.
 - D** The size of the risk taken is of no matter to the hero because there is little time to consider the consequences.

Writing



Read this excerpt of a draft of an essay. Then answer the questions.

¹All across the United States, there are cities known for their “specialty” dishes. ²Each dish has a unique flavor and story, and people travel from all across the country just to try it out. ³Chicago is famous for its deep-dish pizza. ⁴New York-style cheesecake is one of New York City’s claims to fame.

⁵Pat and Harry were born in South Philadelphia. ⁶Pat was born in 1907, and Harry was born nine years later. ⁷When Harry was but a lad of three, the family Olivieri transported themselves to Italy. ⁸The family stayed in Italy a short time before returning to Philadelphia. ⁹Harry took up carpentry. ¹⁰He worked after school. ¹¹He also worked at the Navy shipyard. ¹²Pat began building sleds. ¹³Harry and Pat wanted to earn a better living so they decided to open a hot dog stand and sell hot dogs at night. ¹⁴In 1930, the brothers opened a hot dog stand at the corners of 9th Street, Wharton Street, and Passyunk Avenue.

- 5 Which sentence best completes the first paragraph in order to create a good transition between the two paragraphs?**
- A** Philly cheesesteaks were invented by the Olivieri brothers.
 - B** Pat and Harry Olivieri, who once lived in Philadelphia, invented the Philly cheesesteak.
 - C** The Olivieri brothers invented the Philly cheesesteak in order to bring publicity to the city they called home.
 - D** Thanks to two brothers, Pat and Harry Olivieri, Philadelphia has its own famous food as well: the Philly cheesesteak.

Writing



TASC Test Writing Practice Items

- 6** Which revision most effectively combines the ideas of Sentences 9 through 12 into one sentence?
- A** Because Pat built sleds, Harry worked at carpentry after school as well as at the shipyard.
 - B** Pat built sleds, and Harry worked after school, taking up carpentry and working at the shipyard.
 - C** The brothers worked after school at carpentry (Harry), at the shipyard (Harry), and at building sleds (Pat).
 - D** Harry kept busy after school, taking up carpentry and working at the shipyard, while Pat began building sleds.

Writing



7 Essay Prompt

There is an ongoing debate in the public domain as to whether free public libraries are still practical in today’s world. What are the implications for society of a “free” public library system? Has the time come for cities to consider requiring patrons to pay a fee to use library services?

Weigh the claims on both sides, and then write an argumentative essay supporting either side of the debate in which you argue for or against the free library system. Be sure to use information from both texts in your argumentative essay.

Before you begin planning and writing, read the two texts:

1. The Worthwhile Investment in Free Public Libraries
2. Can We Afford “Free” Libraries?

As you read the texts, think about what details from the texts you might use in your argumentative essay. You may take notes or highlight the details as you read.

After reading the texts, create a plan for your argumentative essay. Think about ideas, facts, definitions, details, and other information and examples you want to use. Think about how you will introduce your topic and what the main topic will be for each paragraph.

Now write your argumentative essay. Be sure to:

- Introduce your claim.
- Support your claim with logical reasoning and relevant evidence from the passages.
- Acknowledge and address alternate or opposing claims.
- Organize the reasons and evidence logically.
- Use words, phrases, and clauses to connect your ideas and to clarify the relationships among claims, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
- Establish and maintain a formal style.
- Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

Writing

The Worthwhile Investment in Free Public Libraries

According to the *Fiscal Year 2010 Report on Public Libraries in the United States*, public libraries are anchors in the community, serving a broad constituency with both traditional services and new ones that reflect the changing needs of populations. Free public libraries return a big bang for a small tax-dollar buck, providing services that many citizens would find cost-prohibitive if they had to pay a fee for them. Mindy Rice Withrow, writing in the blog *The Discarded Image*, gives three practical reasons public libraries should be supported by public funds.

1. Libraries fight brain drain: in many communities young people leave town for college, never to return because they find better opportunities in college towns and bigger cities. Libraries offer the opportunity for self-education, both to those who cannot afford college and to those who have made a commitment to their home communities. This helps combat brain-drain of a community and contributes to long-term survival and growth.
2. Libraries are repositories of local history: the more a community knows about its own story, the more likely people are to work together to keep it a great place to live and work and to raise the next generation. Participating in a bigger story inspires innovation, collaboration, and a desire to invest in those around you.
3. Libraries provide community services: many local libraries offer tax-filing help, provide meeting space for various support groups, teach *SAT* prep classes, hold cultural heritage clubs, lead CPR and babysitting classes, and more. At the library, one can learn how to look for a job, the proper way to fill out an application, and interview skills. Libraries are a hub of community activity and vitality.

Education, though, involves more than just reading books. Libraries provide access to cultural treasures in music and film, and they underscore the fact that we live in a global society by exposing people to languages and cultures they may not otherwise know exist. Eric Riley, of *Wordpress* blog, points out that public libraries are free and public for a reason. Our society believes that social mobility is gained by access to education, and barriers to access keep our population impoverished. In a day and age when the average children's picture book costs \$12 to \$17, paying a fee for library service amounts to such a barrier.

Writing

Can We Afford “Free” Libraries?

In a period of economic recession, one way that municipal governments can lower the tax burden across the base is to charge fees for services used by specific groups, such as library services. Although about 85% of library funding comes from federal, state, and local taxes, the majority of taxpayers in a municipality do not use the public library. More frequently, the gathering of information is done at home over the Internet, and so some could argue that the public library is losing some of its relevance. That is not to say that such services should not be offered, only that government baseline funding should be offset by an operational revenue collected in fees. The model for today’s nonprofit public library is well over 100 years old, but paying for these services has remained unchanged.

Calling public libraries “free” is a misnomer since they cost their communities (composed of taxpayers, tuition payers, and donors) a substantial amount of money in acquiring collections, facilities, personnel, and technology. And not to be overlooked is the fact that authors and publishers are deprived of potential income because they make less revenue from books that are borrowed than they do from books that are purchased. In order to be relevant to communities today, libraries must provide so much more than books to its patrons: they must amass large collections of newspapers, magazines, periodicals, films, music, and computer terminals and software—none of which are “free.” And then, these items must be updated with each new technological advancement.

These tax dollars could be spent on projects and services that better serve the community. When governments are looking at major budget cuts to law enforcement, EMT and fire services, and cuts in public works employees, is it completely unfounded to ask users of the library to pay nominal fees when borrowing items? The collection of these monies could save valuable jobs and services in other areas of a community and allow the library to continue to operate without absorbing funds that could better serve other areas.

Writing

Answer Key

After taking these practice tests, you can check your answers with the following answer key. For your added benefit, answers come with explanations to help you understand why they're right. If you do well on the practice test, then you know you may be prepared to take the official TASC Readiness Test. If you struggle on the practice test, then you know you may still have more work to do to get prepared.

1. This selected-response item will provide evidence regarding your proficiency in using various types of phrases (noun, verb, adjectival, adverbial, participial, prepositional, absolute) and clauses (independent, dependent; noun, relative, adverbial) to convey specific meanings and add variety and interest to writing or presentations. The item requires you to recognize correct and incorrect examples of various types of phrases (among them noun and prepositional phrases) and clauses and determine how their arrangement best conveys meaning and adds interest in a specific sentence. You will also apply your knowledge of appropriate syntax.

Answer: C

Explanation for Correct Response:

Only choice C effectively combines the ideas by subordinating the 2nd sentence with an appropriate conjunction and placement of the clause.

2. This selected-response item will provide evidence regarding your proficiency in spelling. The item requires you to distinguish between correctly spelled and misspelled words in the context of sophisticated sentences.

Answer: D

Explanation for Correct Response:

Only choice D has a misspelled word: acquire. Other choices contain words which may draw students who are not proficient in the construct being measured (spelling): ecstatic, reassured, extraordinary, souvenir, and miserably.

3. This selected-response item will provide evidence regarding your proficiency in choosing language that expresses ideas precisely and concisely, recognizing and eliminating wordiness and redundancy. The item requires you to recognize language that is superfluous to a sentence's intended meaning, as well as identify sentences in which the content is too sparse to convey the intended meaning.

Answer: C

Explanation for Correct Response:

Only choice C eliminates the unnecessary (the idea that it is impossible to describe) while maintaining the same meaning as the original. The switch to active voice tightens up the text.

4. This selected-response item will provide evidence regarding your proficiency in providing concluding statements in writing. The item requires you to recognize the role of conclusions in writing and assess which responses are relevant and cohesive, as well as which responses do not provide the necessary information and finality.

Answer: D

Explanation for Correct Response:

Speaking to the risk and there being little time to consider consequences offers a conclusive statement that is both relevant and cohesive to the tenor of the paragraph.

Answer Key (cont'd)

5. This selected-response item asks you to demonstrate the correct way to transition between paragraphs, calling for attention to syntax, clarity, and cohesion. The answer choices focus on your understanding of transitions, and how to correctly link seemingly unrelated ideas within a written work by using relevant details to create the connection.

Answer: D

Explanation for Correct Response:

The first paragraph introduces the specialty dishes of several cities. The introduction of the two brothers before concluding with Philadelphia's specialty cohesively transitions into the second paragraph about the two brothers.

6. This selected-response item is a traditional approach to measuring revision skills. The answer choices focus on the use of concise word choice to enhance clarity and effect. You are expected to analyze sentences and then identify the sentence that is most clear and coherent.

Answer: D

Explanation for Correct Response:

Choice D effectively combines the sentences into two clear, independent clauses about each brother. Interest is also added by subordinating Harry's jobs to the statement about him keeping busy.

7. TASC test requires you to write an argumentative essay and support your claim using details and examples associated with the prompt.

Explanation for Correct Response:

A scoring rubric is a tool used to evaluate a piece of writing. The score you receive on your essay is based on how well your writing sample aligns to the criteria referenced in the rubric. Read your essay and assign it a score based on the measures in the scoring rubric below.

Scoring Rubric—Argumentative Essay

Score: 4

The response is a well-developed essay that develops and supports an argument.

- Effectively introduces a claim
- Uses logical, credible, and relevant reasoning and evidence to support claim
- Uses an organizational strategy to present reasons and relevant evidence
- Acknowledges and counters opposing claims, as appropriate
- Uses precise and purposeful word choice
- Uses words, phrases, and/or clauses that effectively connect and show relationships among ideas
- Uses and maintains an appropriate tone
- Provides a strong concluding statement or section that logically follows from the ideas presented
- Has no errors in usage and conventions that interfere with meaning

(Scoring Rubric—Argumentative Essay
continued on next page)

Answer Key (cont'd)

Scoring Rubric—Argumentative Essay (cont'd)

Score: 3

The response is a complete essay that develops and supports an argument.

- Clearly introduces a claim
- Uses reasoning and evidence to support claim
- Uses an organizational structure to present reasons and relevant evidence
- Attempts to acknowledge and/or counter opposing claims, as appropriate
- Uses clear word choice
- Uses words and/or phrases to connect ideas
- Uses an appropriate tone
- Provides a concluding statement or section that follows from the ideas presented
- Has few, if any, errors in usage and conventions that interfere with meaning

Score: 2

The response is an incomplete or oversimplified essay that develops and supports an argument.

- Attempts to establish a claim
- Develops, sometimes unevenly, reasons and/or evidence to support claim
- Attempts to use an organizational structure
- Makes little, if any, attempt to acknowledge or counter opposing claims
- Uses simple language, which sometimes lacks clarity
- Provides a weak concluding statement or section
- May have errors in usage and conventions that interfere with meaning

Score: 1

The response provides evidence of an attempt to write an essay that offers an argument.

- Weakly states or alludes to a claim
- Has minimal support for claim
- May be too brief to demonstrate an organizational structure
- Makes no attempt to acknowledge or counter opposing claims
- Uses words that are inappropriate, overly simple, or unclear
- Provides a minimal or no concluding statement or section
- Has errors in usage and conventions that interfere with meaning

Score: 0

The response is completely irrelevant or incorrect, or there is no response.