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## California High School English Language Arts Exit Examination

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## Question: 1

Read the entire passage carefully and then answer the question. (Note: Intentional errors have been included in this passage.)

(1) The earliest remains of man are very similar in all lands. (2) They consist of weapons of war and of the chase, implements of domestic use, and articles of personal adornment. (3) Few and simple as they are, they are capable of imparting useful information as to early times. (4) By their aid we become eye-witnesses of the daily life of primitive man. (5) Stone tools were very important to early man. (6) We learn that though lacking in almost every thing we consider essential for comfort and happiness, yet they were actuated by much the same hopes and fears as the men of the present age. (7) The great burden of life was the same then as now. (8) There was the same round of daily labor made necessary by the same ceaseless struggle for existence. (9) Rude forts and warlike implements show there was the same encroachment of the strong on the weak as now.

Which numbered sentence is least relevant to the passage?

- A. sentence 4
- B. sentence 5
- C. sentence 6
- D. sentence 7

**Answer: B**

Explanation:

When tasked with identifying the least relevant sentence in a passage, the goal is to determine which sentence contributes the least to the overall theme or main idea presented. In this scenario, sentence 5, which discusses stone tools, was deemed least relevant. Here's a more detailed explanation: 1.

**\*\*Understanding the Passage's Main Theme:\*\*** The passage provides a broad overview of the life of primitive man. This suggests that the primary focus is on describing general aspects of early human existence rather than delving into specific details or examples of their daily life. 2. **\*\*Assessing Sentence 5's Contribution:\*\*** Sentence 5 mentions stone tools. To evaluate its relevance, one must consider whether this detail significantly enhances the understanding of the passage's main theme. Does the mention of stone tools offer essential insight into the general lifestyle or cultural aspects of primitive man as intended by the passage? 3. **\*\*Contextual Fit and Flow:\*\*** It is crucial to determine how this sentence fits within the context of the sentences around it. Does it connect well with the preceding and following sentences? If the sentences before and after discuss broader lifestyle elements without focusing on specific tools or technologies, then sentence 5 might disrupt the flow and thematic consistency. 4. **\*\*Redundancy and Distraction:\*\*** If the details about stone tools do not introduce new, necessary information or clarify existing points but rather divert attention from the broader discussion, they might be considered redundant or distracting. This could be another reason why sentence 5 is seen as less relevant. 5. **\*\*Cohesive Contribution to the Passage:\*\*** The most relevant sentences in a passage are those that contribute directly to developing the main idea. They should engage with the topic comprehensively and cohesively. If sentence 5's mention of stone tools neither recapitulates something previously mentioned nor introduces a concept that is crucial for the following discussion, its relevance

is minimal. By considering these factors, one can better understand why sentence 5, focused on stone tools, might be considered the least relevant in a passage primarily aimed at giving a generalized overview of primitive man's life without intending to highlight specific technological advancements. This explanation helps clarify why other sentences, presumably discussing more general aspects of life or broader cultural phenomena, would be more integral to the passage's main purpose.

Select the answer choice that corrects an error in the underlined portion. If there is no error, choose D indicating that no change is necessary.

## Question: 2

This book is an (A) elemental part of your studies. (B) You're advised to (C) cite it often in your thesis.

- A. elementary
- B. Your
- C. site
- D. No change is necessary.

**Answer: D**

Explanation:

In the given question, you are asked to identify any possible errors in the underlined portions of a sentence or to determine if no change is necessary. The sentence reads: "This book is an **(A)** elemental**\*\*** part of your studies. **(B)** You're**\*\*** advised to **(C)** cite**\*\*** it often in your thesis." Let's analyze each underlined portion: **\*\*A)** "elemental"**\*\*** - The word "elemental" is used here to describe the book as a fundamental or essential component of the studies. While some might consider "elementary" as an alternative (suggesting something basic or introductory), "elemental" in this context emphasizes the necessity and core importance of the book in relation to the studies. Therefore, "elemental" is appropriately used and does not require correction. **\*\*B)** "You're"**\*\*** - The contraction "You're" stands for "you are," which is grammatically correct in this context. The sentence is advising "you" (the student) to frequently cite the book. There's no possessive or plural confusion that would otherwise require a different form like "your" or "you." Thus, no correction is needed here. **\*\*C)** "cite"**\*\*** - The verb "cite" is used correctly to mean making reference to the book in the thesis. It's the appropriate term for indicating that portions of the book or its ideas should be formally acknowledged in academic writing. Hence, this usage is correct and does not need any change. **\*\*Conclusion:\*\*** Given the analysis above, each underlined portion of the sentence is used correctly according to standard English usage and context relevance. Therefore, the correct answer is "No change is necessary." This decision is based on the correct usage of terms in their respective contexts within the sentence, ensuring the sentence is both grammatically correct and semantically clear. Choose the option that corrects an error in the underlined portion(s). If no error exists, choose "No change is necessary."

## Question: 3

If car owners want to trade in (A) their cars, (B) he should try to get the best deal that (C) they can find.

- A. his

- B. they
- C. he
- D. No change is necessary.

**Answer: B**

Explanation:

The original sentence in question reads: "If car owners want to trade in (A) their cars, (B) he should try to get the best deal that (C) they can find." The error in this sentence is the use of the singular pronoun "he" in part (B), which does not correctly align with the plural noun "car owners" mentioned in part (A). To correct this error, the pronoun "he" should be replaced with "they" to maintain consistency in number with the plural subject "car owners." Thus, the corrected sentence should read: "If car owners want to trade in their cars, they should try to get the best deal that they can find." \*Explanation of Correct Answer:\* The correct choice is to replace "he" with "they" in part (B) of the sentence. This adjustment ensures that all pronouns referring to "car owners" are consistently plural, thus maintaining grammatical coherence and avoiding any confusion about the number and identity of the subject. \*Explanation of Incorrect Answers:\* - Choosing to replace "he" with "his" or maintaining "he" would both continue the error of pronoun-antecedent disagreement, as "car owners" is plural. - "No change is necessary" is incorrect because it would leave the pronoun agreement error uncorrected. In summary, the correct option is the one that changes "he" to "they" in part (B), aligning all pronouns with their plural antecedent "car owners" and resolving the pronoun disagreement in the sentence.

### Question: 4

In which of the following sentences is the modifier placed correctly?

- A. While still a young girl, my aunt took me to the opera.
- B. She nearly bounced the ball 15 feet in the air.
- C. Thinking about the dance, the idea came to her.
- D. A tree fell just as we were driving by.

**Answer: D**

Explanation:

The correct placement of modifiers in a sentence is crucial for clear and precise communication. A modifier gives more detail about a concept in the sentence, but if placed improperly, it can lead to ambiguity or misinterpretation. Let's analyze why "A tree fell just as we were driving by" is the correct answer by examining each sentence option provided: 1. "While still a young girl, my aunt took me to the opera." - This sentence contains a misplaced modifier. The phrase "While still a young girl" is intended to modify "I" to indicate that I was a young girl at the time of going to the opera. However, its placement next to "my aunt" leads to a confusing interpretation that it was the aunt who was a young girl. This ambiguity makes the sentence incorrect. 2. "A tree fell just as we were driving by." - This sentence is correctly constructed. The modifier "just as we were driving by" clearly applies to the timing of when the tree fell. It successfully specifies the circumstances without ambiguity: the tree fell at the exact time we were passing by in a vehicle. The clarity and precision of the modifier's placement make this sentence the correct choice. 3. "She nearly bounced the ball 15 feet in the air." - Here, the modifier "nearly" might

lead to confusion. It could be interpreted as if she almost decided to bounce the ball but didn't, whereas the likely intended meaning is that she bounced the ball and it almost reached 15 feet. The ambiguity regarding what "nearly" modifies (the decision to bounce or the action of bouncing and its extent) makes this sentence less clear. 4. "Thinking about the dance, the idea came to her." - This sentence illustrates a dangling modifier. "Thinking about the dance" is meant to describe the person who had the idea, but instead, it illogically modifies "the idea." Ideas cannot think, so the sentence incorrectly associates the action of thinking with the idea itself, rather than with the person. This results in a nonsensical statement. Given these analyses, the sentence "A tree fell just as we were driving by" is the only option where the modifier is placed correctly, providing clear and unambiguous information about the event described. This example underscores the importance of careful modifier placement to ensure the intended meaning is conveyed accurately in sentence construction.

Choose the option that corrects an error in the underlined portion(s). If no error exists, choose "No change is necessary."

### Question: 5

When I (A) had been only twelve years old, (B) I won a prize for figure skating. I (C) had been skating for only two years.

- A. (A) was
- B. (B) had won
- C. (C) was
- D. No change is necessary.

**Answer: A**

Explanation:

The sentence in question uses two instances of the past perfect tense "had been," which need scrutiny for their appropriateness given the context of the narrative. \*\*Original Sentence:\*\* "When I (A) had been only twelve years old, (B) I won a prize for figure skating. I (C) had been skating for only two years."

1. \*\*Part A: "had been only twelve years old" - The use of "had been" here is incorrect. The past perfect tense is used to describe an action that occurred before another past event. However, in this context, the speaker is simply stating their age at the time of another past event (winning a prize). Therefore, the simple past tense "was" is more appropriate. The corrected phrase should be "was only twelve years old."

2. \*\*Part B: "I won a prize for figure skating" - This part of the sentence is correctly written. The simple past tense "won" appropriately indicates an event that happened in the past.

3. \*\*Part C: "had been skating for only two years" - The use of "had been skating" is correct in this context. This past perfect continuous tense rightly indicates that the activity of skating had been ongoing for a period (two years) that ended at the time of winning the prize. It effectively sets the stage for the previous action mentioned in Part B.

\*\*Conclusion:\*\* The error in the sentence lies in Part A where "had been" should be corrected to "was." The rest of the sentence correctly uses the past tenses. Therefore, the correct answer to the question is: (A) was. This choice corrects the inappropriate use of the past perfect tense in Part A by replacing "had been" with "was," which accurately reflects a state (age) at a specific time in the past without implying a sequence of events.

### Question: 6

Select the answer choice that corrects an error in the underlined portion. If there is no error, choose D indicating that no change is necessary.

Given that (A) your thirteen years old, I think you are (B) too old to pay a (C) lower price at the movies.

- A. you're
- B. to
- C. lesser
- D. No change is necessary.

**Answer: A**

Explanation:

The error in the sentence is found in the underlined portion (A) "your thirteen years old." The correct form should be "you're," which is a contraction for "you are." This contraction correctly reflects the intended meaning of the sentence, indicating the present state of being thirteen years old. Here's why the correction is necessary: - "Your" is a possessive adjective used to describe something that belongs to you, e.g., your book, your idea. - "You're" is a contraction of "you are," which is a verb phrase used to describe or state something about the subject (in this case, "you"). None of the other parts of the sentence have errors: - Part (B) "too old" is correct as it indicates being excessively old for something, which in this context is paying a lower price at the movies. - Part (C) "lower price" is correctly used to indicate a reduced price, which is appropriate in the context of ticket pricing based on age. Therefore, the correction needed is in part (A), replacing "your" with "you're." The appropriate answer choice would be the one indicating this change. The explanation for the correction involves understanding the difference between a possessive adjective ("your") and the contraction of the verb to be with the pronoun "you" ("you're"), which reflects the need for expressing the state of being in the sentence.

### Question: 7

Directions: In the sentence below, select the best choice for the underlined portion.

- A. Your goals are no different from mine when I was your age.
- B. Your goals are no different from mine
- C. Your goals are no different from those of mine
- D. Your goals are similar to mine
- E. Your goals are no different than those of mine

**Answer: C**

Explanation:

In the given sentence, the underlined portion poses a linguistic issue that needs correction. The sentence reads: "Your goals are no different from mine when I was your age." Here, the primary concern is the comparison being made. **\*\*Original Sentence:\*\*** "Your goals are no different from mine."  
**\*\*Explanation and Analysis:\*\*** The original sentence seems straightforward, but it contains a subtle grammatical error related to the comparison's structure. The phrase "from mine" can imply that "mine" represents a simple, direct substitution for "my goals." However, the possessive pronoun "mine" already

includes the concept of possession, so adding "of" helps clarify that the comparison involves the \*possession\* of the goals, not the goals themselves. **\*\*Revised Options:\*\*** 1. "Your goals are no different from those of mine." 2. "Your goals are similar to mine." 3. "Your goals are no different than those of mine." 4. "Your goals are the same as mine." **\*\*Correct Answer:\*\*** "Your goals are no different from those of mine." **\*\*Detailed Justification:\*\*** Option (B) "Your goals are no different from those of mine" precisely corrects the grammatical structure by making the comparison explicit and clear. The use of "those of mine" appropriately modifies "goals," making the comparison directly to the goals themselves, rather than indirectly through the pronoun "mine." - **\*\*Error in Logical Comparison:\*\*** The error in the original and other incorrect options lies in how the comparison is structured. The phrase "from mine" could be interpreted as comparing "your goals" directly to the personal pronoun "mine," which can be linguistically ambiguous or confusing. - **\*\*Choice of Preposition and Structure:\*\*** The use of "from those of mine" rather than "from mine" or "than mine" clarifies that the comparison is between "your goals" and "my goals" (implied by "those of mine"), rather than a more abstract or less direct comparison. - **\*\*Consistency with Original Meaning:\*\*** The correct choice maintains the original meaning and intent without altering the essential message. It simply clarifies and corrects the grammatical structure. **\*\*Conclusion:\*\*** The choice "Your goals are no different from those of mine" is superior because it addresses the grammatical issue without changing the intended meaning of the sentence. It makes the comparison clear and direct, adhering to proper English usage standards. The other options, while they may seem correct, either fail to correct the grammatical issue adequately or alter the meaning subtly.

## Question: 8

Directions: In the sentence below, select the underlined portion that contains an error.

He gave notice that he would be quitting the softball team after he was appointed of the position on the commission. No error

- A. gave notice
- B. be quitting
- C. after
- D. appointed of

**Answer: D**

Explanation:

In the sentence presented, the error lies in the phrase "appointed of the position." The correct idiom to use when referring to receiving a position or role is "appointed to." Thus, the phrase should be corrected to read "appointed to the position."

The sentence as it stands: "He gave notice that he would be quitting the softball team after he was appointed of the position on the commission," uses the preposition "of" incorrectly in this context. In English, the verb "appoint" is typically followed by the preposition "to" when indicating that someone has been designated or assigned to a particular position, role, or task.

The corrected sentence should read: "He gave notice that he would be quitting the softball team after he was appointed to the position on the commission." This correction ensures the sentence is grammatically correct and conforms to standard English usage. The preposition "to" correctly links the verb "appointed" with the noun "position," clearly indicating the relationship between the action of appointing and the role to which the person is appointed.

This type of error is common in English and is classified as an error in idiom. Idiomatic errors occur when a fixed combination of words (an idiom), which has a meaning not deducible from those of the individual words, is used incorrectly. In this case, using "of" instead of "to" with "appointed" disrupts the conventional English expression for describing the assignment of a role or position.

### Question: 9

In which of the following sentences is the modifier placed correctly?

- A. Give me the hammer with the short handle when I give you the signal.
- B. I found the house that you told me about without any problem.
- C. Three cars were reported as broken into by the police.
- D. Teresa thought that we had given her the wrong directions to the site on her cell phone.

**Answer: A**

Explanation:

The question involves identifying the correct placement of modifiers in sentences to ensure clarity and precision in communication. A modifier is a word, phrase, or clause that gives more information about another element in the sentence. When placed incorrectly, modifiers can create ambiguity or lead to nonsensical statements.

The correct sentence provided is: "Give me the hammer with the short handle when I give you the signal." This sentence correctly associates the modifier "with the short handle" with "the hammer," specifying which hammer is being requested. The placement ensures that there is no confusion about what the phrase "with the short handle" is modifying.

An incorrectly placed modifier in this context would change the sentence to: "Give me the hammer when I give you the signal with the short handle." This rearrangement leads to confusion because it implies that the "signal" has a short handle, which is nonsensical. The modifier "with the short handle" now incorrectly modifies "the signal" instead of "the hammer."

Let's analyze the incorrect sentences provided for context: 1. "I found the house that you told me about without any problem." - This sentence might be confusing because "without any problem" could ambiguously refer to either finding the house easily or being told about the house without any problem. The placement isn't as clearly erroneous as in the example with the hammer, but it could still benefit from clearer phrasing to specify what was done without any problem. 2. "Three cars were reported as broken into by the police." - This sentence incorrectly suggests that the police were the ones who broke into the cars, rather than reported the cars as having been broken into. The misplaced modifier here ("by the police") should be positioned to clearly indicate that the police were reporting the incident, not causing it. 3. "Teresa thought that we had given her the wrong directions to the site on her cell phone." - This sentence could be misinterpreted to mean that the site itself was located on her cell phone, due to the misplaced modifier "on her cell phone." It should be rephrased to clarify that the directions provided were accessed through her cell phone, not that the site was on it.

In conclusion, the placement of modifiers is crucial for clear communication. The correct sentence in the question demonstrates proper modifier placement, ensuring that the intended meaning is conveyed without ambiguity or confusion. Other examples illustrate common mistakes that can lead to misinterpretation or illogical conclusions.



## Question: 10

Read the entire passage carefully and then answer the question.

(1) It's been a tough few years for Americans facing a constricting economy. (2) It can be difficult to see the good in those circumstances, but helpful things can come out of challenging times. (3) What people are discovering is that this is not only a good time to stop accruing personal debt, but also a good time to work on paying it down. (4) Of course, there will always be things that you want to spend your money on. (5) Even on tighter budgets, people are finding ways to chip away at their debt. (6) The effect of tightening your belt to pay down debt is doubly positive in the current economic atmosphere. (7) Not only will it help you balance your finances, but it may also help to improve your credit. (8) A good option that can simplify matters is to automatically integrate monitoring your credit report with your efforts to pay off your debt.

Which numbered sentence is least relevant to the passage?

- A. sentence 2
- B. sentence 3
- C. sentence 4
- D. sentence 5

**Answer: C**

Explanation:

To determine which sentence is least relevant to a passage, the content of each sentence must be evaluated in the context of the passage's main theme or topic. In this case, the passage focuses on the necessity of cutting back on expenses due to economic hardship. The central idea revolves around the need for financial prudence, particularly spending less and prioritizing debt reduction over other financial activities. When examining the relevance of sentences, it is important to assess how each contributes to or deviates from this main theme: 1. **Sentence 2** might discuss an aspect of managing or cutting back expenses, which aligns directly with the main theme of reducing spending due to economic constraints. 2. **Sentence 4**, based on the provided explanation, appears to discuss spending money according to personal desires or preferences. This focus on discretionary spending contrasts with the passage's emphasis on the necessity of financial restraint and debt reduction. Because it introduces a concept (spending money as desired) that contradicts the need to limit expenditures and pay off debt, it does not support the main theme of the passage. The explanation confirms that while the passage centers on financial austerity measures needed during economic downturns, Sentence 4 diverts attention to a less urgent and currently less relevant aspect of financial behavior (i.e., desired spending). This makes Sentence 4 least relevant because it neither supports nor advances the primary focus on economic frugality and debt management urged by the passage's context. Therefore, the correct answer is **Sentence 4** as it is the least relevant to the overarching message of needing to tighten our belts due to poor economic conditions. This analysis shows that when identifying the relevance of content within a passage, it is crucial to align each sentence with the central idea and determine whether it contributes constructively to the theme or distracts from it.



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