



Language Arts: Writing

Free Half-Length Practice Test – FPT8



Language
English

Released
2024

hiset.org

- Get the HiSET® testing experience.
- Answer questions developed by the test maker.
- Find out if you're ready for the actual subtest.

Copyright © 2025 PSI Services LLC. All rights reserved. PSI, the PSI logo and HiSET are registered trademarks of PSI Services LLC.

Language Arts: Writing

Directions

Multiple-Choice Questions (MC)

**Time – 85 minutes
(MC and Essay Question)**

**25 MC Questions
1 Essay Question**

This is a test of some of the skills involved in revising written material. There are five selections that present draft reports, letters, or articles. Each selection is presented twice, first in a box in a conventional format and then in a spread-out format with certain parts underlined and numbered. You will be asked to correct or improve the underlined and numbered parts. Read quickly through the boxed text to get an idea of its purpose and style. Then go on to the spread-out format.

For some of the underlined parts, there is no corresponding question in the right-hand column; instead, just four alternatives are listed. Choose the alternative that:

- makes the statement grammatically correct;
- expresses the idea in the clearest or most appropriate way;
- is worded most consistently with the style and purpose of the writing;
- organizes the ideas in the most effective way.

In some cases, there may be more than one problem to correct or improve. When you have decided which alternative is best, mark your choice on the answer sheet. If you think the original underlined version is best, choose “No change.”

Other underlined parts have questions about organization or spelling in the right-hand column. In questions about organization, you will probably find it helpful to look at the boxed text. In the questions about spelling, you are to indicate which of three

underlined words is misspelled, if any. If there are no errors in any of the words, choose “None.”

Work as quickly as you can without becoming careless. Do not spend too much time on any question that is difficult for you to answer. Instead, skip it and return to it later if you have time. Try to answer every question even if you have to guess.

Mark all your answers on the answer sheet. Give only one answer to each question. If you decide to change one of your answers, be sure to erase the first mark completely.

Be sure that the number of the question you are answering matches the number of the row of answer choices you are marking on your answer sheet. The answer sheet may contain more rows than you need.

You will have 85 minutes to complete the multiple-choice questions and essay question of the Writing test.

Questions 1 through 5 refer to the following selection.

Read through the student essay about strategic petroleum reserves, abbreviated to SPRs, in salt caverns. Then go on to the suggestions for revision that follow.

Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR) in Salt Caverns

¶1 The idea of resource conservation is not new, nor does it just involve humans. Tiny ants toil to carry grains and store them for later. Bees gather nectar, make honey out of it, and stash the honey in their hives. Other savvy savers, like birds and squirrels, tuck nuts and seeds into their nests, bury them in the ground, or wedge them in tree cracks. These huge reserves of petroleum in salt caverns go by the name of Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPRs). The oil crisis of the 1970s prompted the creation of the first SPRs in the salt caverns along the Gulf Coast. SPRs play a crucial role as they reduce the impact of supply disruptions, stabilize oil prices, and secure energy. Let's explore the methods involved in the creation and operation of these SPRs and explore the advantages and challenges of SPRs.

¶2 The creation of SPRs in salt caverns found deep underground involves a tedious process. A deep well is dug, and pressurized water is injected into the cavern. This action dissolves the salt, creating the necessary storage space for petroleum. Then, petroleum is injected into the caverns with great force. As a result, the petroleum effectively displaces the dissolved salt or brine. This process hinges on the principle that water and oil do not mix, allowing crude oil to replace the brine. The steps are reversed while extracting petroleum from the cavern. The storage and extraction procedures are carried out with the utmost care. The goal is to prevent brine leakage, contaminate groundwater, or damage to the salt formation itself.

¶3 Salt caverns offer several advantages for the storage of petroleum. These advantages include their stability, low permeability, and self-sealing properties. Their high storage capacity, rapid access, and cost-effectiveness are some other features of SPRs. Salt caverns are geologically stable, i.e., they are less prone to leaks or collapses. Additionally, the rocks are impermeable, and in cases of minor leakage, the cracks are self-sealed owing to high pressure. These properties prevent leakage and contamination. They make salt caverns ideal for storing valuable resources such as oil, natural gas, and even nuclear waste. Moreover, their high storage capacity and easy availability during emergencies makes SPRs a strategic measure against oil supply disruptions and import restrictions. Notably, millions of barrels of crude oil were stored in these caverns and exchanged during the COVID-19 pandemic. With the exception of the initial cost of oil drilling and construction, the SPRs have proven to be cost-efficient.

¶4 Besides their high initial costs, SPRs do have some other challenges as well. Firstly, Salt Caverns are not widely available so, finding suitable locations for SPRs, can be difficult. Secondly, despite being comparatively stable, these caverns may collapse or leak due to underground disturbances. Although rare, the chances of brine or oil leakage and groundwater contamination mandate careful management and monitoring of SPRs.

¶5 To conclude, SPRs represent a secure, efficient, and affordable alternative to conventional crude oil storage. Together with their stability, low permeability, and high storage capacity, SPRs prove to be a viable solution to the challenges of energy security and access to fuel

during emergencies. Their advantages exceed their risks and challenges. With the expansion of SPR programs worldwide, these reserves have proven their utility over time.

Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR) in Salt Caverns

¶1 The idea of resource conservation is not new, nor does it just involve humans. Tiny ants toil to carry grains and store them for later. Bees gather nectar, make honey out of it, and stash the honey in their hives. Other savvy savers, like birds and squirrels, tuck nuts and seeds into their nests, bury them in the ground, or wedge them in tree cracks. **1** These huge reserves of petroleum in salt caverns go by the name of Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPRs). The oil crisis of the 1970s prompted the creation of the first SPRs in the salt caverns along the Gulf Coast. SPRs play a crucial role as they reduce the impact of supply disruptions, stabilize oil prices, and secure energy. Let's explore the methods involved in the creation and operation of these SPRs and explore the advantages and challenges of SPRs.

1 _____

Choose a suitable transitional sentence to be placed before the indicated sentence in paragraph 1.

- A. So, some animals and birds are, by nature, inclined to gather and save food resources for future use.
- B. This process may remind you of the ant, from Aesop's fable, who works hard to save grains for winter.
- C. Akin to nature's age-old practices of conserving resources is the storage of petroleum in salt caverns for use in emergencies.
- D. Petroleum is stored in salt caverns so that we can access and exchange the stored oil easily during supply cuts and emergencies.

¶2 The creation of SPRs in salt caverns found deep underground **2** involves a tedious process. A deep well is dug, and pressurized water is injected into the cavern. This action dissolves the salt, creating the necessary storage space for petroleum. Then, petroleum is injected into the caverns with great force. As a result, the petroleum effectively displaces the dissolved salt or brine. This process hinges on the principle that water and oil do not mix, allowing crude oil to replace the brine. The steps are reversed while extracting petroleum from the cavern. The storage and extraction procedures are carried out with the utmost care. The goal is to prevent brine leakage, **3** contaminate groundwater, or damage to the salt formation itself.

¶3 Salt caverns offer several advantages for the storage of petroleum. These advantages include their stability, low permeability, and self-sealing properties. Their high storage capacity, rapid access, and cost-effectiveness are some other features of SPRs. Salt caverns are geologically stable, i.e., they are less prone to leaks or collapses. Additionally, the rocks are impermeable, and in cases of minor leakage, the cracks are self-sealed owing to high pressure. These properties prevent leakage and contamination. They make salt caverns ideal for storing valuable resources such as oil, natural gas, and even nuclear waste. Moreover, their high storage capacity and easy availability during emergencies **4** makes SPRs a strategic measure against oil supply disruptions and import restrictions. Notably, millions of barrels of crude oil were stored in these caverns and exchanged

2 _____

Choose the correct idiom that can replace the underlined phrase.

- A. is out of hand
- B. is a long haul
- C. is like flying in the face of danger
- D. is like getting blood out of stone

3 _____

- A. No change
- B. contaminates groundwater, or damages the salt formation itself.
- C. contaminated groundwater, or damage to the salt formation itself.
- D. groundwater contamination, or damage to the salt formation itself.

4 _____

- A. No change
- B. make SPRs a strategic measure
- C. can make SPRs a strategic measure
- D. has made SPRs a strategic measure

during the COVID-19 pandemic. With the exception of the initial cost of oil drilling and construction, the SPRs have proven to be cost-efficient.

¶4 Besides their high initial costs, SPRs do have some other challenges as well. **5** Firstly, Salt Caverns are not widely available so, finding suitable locations for SPRs, can be difficult. Secondly, despite being comparatively stable, these caverns may collapse or leak due to underground disturbances. Although rare, the chances of brine or oil leakage and groundwater contamination mandate careful management and monitoring of SPRs.

¶5 To conclude, SPRs represent a secure, efficient, and affordable alternative to conventional crude oil storage. Together with their stability, low permeability, and high storage capacity, SPRs prove to be a viable solution to the challenges of energy security and access to fuel during emergencies. Their advantages exceed their risks and challenges. With the expansion of SPR programs worldwide, these reserves have proven their utility over time.

5 _____

- A. No change
- B. Firstly, Salt Caverns are not widely available so finding suitable locations for SPRs, can be difficult.
- C. Firstly, salt caverns are not widely available, so finding suitable locations for SPRs can be difficult.
- D. Firstly, Salt caverns are not widely available; so, finding suitable locations for SPRs, can be difficult.

Questions 6 through 10 refer to the following selection.

Read through the student report about personal growth while studying abroad. Then go onto the suggestions for revisions that follow.

My Journey in Bordeaux

¶1 I'm Aulia from Indonesia. Few experiences in my life have left such a profound mark on my personality as studying abroad in Bordeaux, France. Stepping foot on French soil for the first time, little did I know that I was beginning a journey that would not only reshape my career but also challenge my limits.

¶2 The first week was a mix-up of excitement and anxiety. I found myself struggling to communicate with my fellow students due to my unfamiliarity with the French language. Despite my efforts to learn some French prior to the trip, I could only retain a handful of usable phrases. My French vocabulary was limited. It was like a delicate thread connecting me to the world around me. I viewed myself as an outsider among my classmates. It was this vulnerability that compelled me to rely more on body language, gestures, and tone to comprehend others. It was a sink or swim situation. There was no familiar ground to fall back on. Therefore, while slightly daunting, it gradually brought a newfound sense of independence.

¶3 The master's program in product design taught me about different areas of design thinking. It aimed to make students able to analyze current industry trends and anticipate future directions. Midway through my first semester, I found myself immersed in my initial project. It was a collaborative effort with a diverse team comprising students from various nationalities. Our task was to develop a sustainable product concept for a local design competition. The stakes were high this project mattered a lot for my final grade.

¶4 With time running out, I sought assistance from professors and classmates to guide me and improve my language skills. This effort was crucial not only for navigating everyday situations but also for contributing effectively to the project. What was initially perceived as a language barrier gradually transformed into a bridge - an avenue for cooperative understanding and team unity. Along the way, I even managed to pick up more French, fostering a deeper connection with the culture and the people around me.

¶5 Undoubtedly, studying overseas molded me into a more resilient individual, ready to enter the 21st-century workforce. I understood that being a global citizen means more than just traveling or living in another country. It means developing a combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that enables a person to interact respectfully and effectively with people from different cultures, examine local, global, and intercultural issues, and act for collective well-being and sustainable development. These are the key elements of global competence and intercultural competence, which I believe are essential for anyone's personal and professional success in the 21st-century scenario.

¶6 I departed Bordeaux with a heart brimming with gratitude. I felt a newfound enthusiasm for my career. It wouldn't be hyperbole to say that this experience remains in my mind as a reminder of the transformative power of breaking out of my comfort zone. As Eleanor Roosevelt once said, "You must do the thing you think you cannot do."

My Journey in Bordeaux

¶1 I'm Aulia from Indonesia. Few experiences in my life have left such a profound mark on my personality as studying abroad in Bordeaux, France. Stepping foot on French soil for the first time, little did I know that I was beginning a journey that would not only reshape my career but also challenge my limits.

¶2 The first week was a mix-up of excitement and anxiety. I found myself struggling to communicate with my fellow students due to my unfamiliarity with the French language. Despite my efforts to learn some French prior to the trip, I could only retain a handful of usable phrases. **6** My French vocabulary was limited. It was like a **7** delicate thread connecting me to the world around me. I viewed myself as an outsider among my classmates. It was this vulnerability that compelled me to rely more on body language, gestures, and tone to comprehend others. It was a sink or swim situation. There was no familiar ground to fall back on. Therefore, while slightly daunting, it gradually brought a newfound sense of independence.

6 _____

Choose the best way to combine the indicated sentences.

- A. My French vocabulary, connecting me to my classmates, made me an outsider and was like a delicate thread to me in the world.
- B. I viewed myself as an outsider among my classmates due to my limited French vocabulary, a delicate thread connecting me to the world around me.
- C. Because I had a limited French vocabulary, I felt as if I am an outsider and a delicate thread was connecting me to my classmates and the world around me.
- D. Due to a delicate thread connecting me to my classmates and my limited French vocabulary, I was viewed like an outsider in the world.

7 _____

The author describes her limited French vocabulary as “a delicate thread.” Which of the following resources would be most helpful in determining the precise meaning of the phrase “a delicate thread”?

- A. A glossary of literary terms
- B. A workbook on English dialects
- C. A preface of a linguistics book
- D. A documentary on French culture

¶2 The first week was a mix-up of excitement and anxiety. I found myself struggling to communicate with my fellow students due to my unfamiliarity with the French language. Despite my efforts to learn some French prior to the trip, I could only retain a handful of usable phrases. My French vocabulary was limited. It was like a delicate thread connecting me to the world around me. I viewed myself as an outsider among my classmates. It was this vulnerability that compelled me to rely more on body language, gestures, and tone to comprehend others. It was a sink or swim situation. There was no familiar ground to fall back on. **8** Therefore, while slightly daunting, it gradually brought a newfound sense of independence.

¶3 The master's program in product design taught me about different areas of design thinking. It aimed to make students able to analyze current industry trends and anticipate future directions. Midway through my first semester, I found myself immersed in my initial project. It was a collaborative effort with a diverse team comprising students from various nationalities. Our task was to develop a sustainable product concept for a local design competition. The stakes were **9** high this project mattered a lot for my final grade.

8 _____

- A. No change
- B. Thereafter,
- C. Accordingly,
- D. Nevertheless,

9 _____

- A. No change
- B. high! This
- C. high; this
- D. high: this

¶6 **10 [Sentence 1]** I departed Bordeaux with a heart brimming with gratitude.
[Sentence 2] I felt a newfound enthusiasm for my career. **[Sentence 3]** It wouldn't be hyperbole to say that this experience remains in my mind as a reminder of the transformative power of breaking out of my comfort zone. **[Sentence 4]** As Eleanor Roosevelt once said, "You must do the thing you think you cannot do".

10 _____

Which numbered sentence in paragraph 6 contains wording which is redundant?

- A. Sentence 1
- B. Sentence 2
- C. Sentence 3
- D. Sentence 4

Questions 11 through 15 refer to the following selection.

Read through a draft of an article on safety measures and preparation techniques to ensure safety while navigating the Appalachian Trail. Then go on to the suggestions for revision that follow.

Navigating Bear Encounters on the Appalachian Trail

¶1 The Appalachian Trail, a serpentine trail weaving through the eastern United States, entices hikers with its promise of adventure. It snakes its way over 2,190 miles through 14 states, offering anyone brave enough the journey of a lifetime. This makes it the longest continuous hiking footpath in the world! It starts from the sun-dappled forests of Georgia and ends beside the windswept ruggedness of Mount Katahdin. It leads hikers through a morphing landscape of sublime vistas, frothy waterfalls, and dense woodlands. The footpath was carved out of the wilderness by the dedicated hands of passionate hikers, volunteers, and forest rangers. The journey on the trail offers not just a physical challenge but also a passage of self-discovery. It is not uncommon to encounter wildlife along the trail, most of which are harmless. The woods, teeming with deer, coyotes, foxes, raccoons, turkeys, rabbits, and mountain lions, adds to the thrill. However, there is one shy and elusive creature whose strength and moodiness make them a liability. Several thousand black bears lurk in these woods. The sight of which can make one's blood freeze. Hikers need to be aware of safety measures and techniques to minimize risks in the case of an encounter.

¶2 Black bears are deceitful omnivores who eat almost anything from plants, insects, and small mammals to carrion. They have an acute sense of smell, sharp ears, and good vision that help them locate food. Besides their imposing size, most bears are not aggressive towards humans. The percentage of bear encounters that turn violent is extremely low. Most encounters end with the bears retreating into the woods avoiding confrontation. Black bears' psychology is shaped by their survival instincts. Like other animals, they also exhibit either fear or aggression when these reflexes kick in. They are likely to resort to aggression only when they feel threatened or cornered. A majority of bear attacks are usually females protecting their young ones from a perceived dangerous situation. Some attacks occurred when the bear found its path of retreat blocked by physical barriers, causing it to panic.

¶3 Here are a few tips to minimize the chances of confrontations:

- **Be as noisy as possible** – Make sure to talk and sing loudly, play music, or clap your hands in bear territory to alert them of your presence. This would prevent them from being surprised by your sudden appearance.
- **Store food away from the campsite** – Hang your food away from the campsite using a bear-proof line and odor-proof containers to avoid attracting hungry bears.
- **Avoid hiking in low light** – Since bears are most active during the low-light hours, avoid hiking during dawn and dusk. Be sure to get most of your hiking done during daylight hours.
- **Stick to the beaten path** – You're better off sticking to the established trail. Wandering through dense foliage with low visibility may increase your chances of surprising a feeding bear.
- **Travel in groups** – While out on the trail there is safety in numbers. Bears are less likely to aggress larger groups of hikers.

- **Keep bear spray handy** – There have been many instances where charging bears were warded off with bear spray. Always keep the can unsealed and handy in case it needs to be used.

¶4 So, as you don your hiking gear and lace up your boots, remember this mantra: When dealing with bears, give them the space they need and practice the “bear necessities” of safety.

Navigating Bear Encounters on the Appalachian Trail

¶1 The Appalachian Trail, a serpentine trail weaving through the eastern United States, entices hikers with its promise of adventure. It snakes its way over 2,190 miles through 14 states, offering anyone brave enough the journey of a lifetime. This makes it the longest continuous hiking footpath in the world! It starts from the sun-dappled forests of Georgia and ends beside the windswept ruggedness of Mount Katahdin. It leads hikers through a morphing landscape of sublime vistas, frothy waterfalls, and dense woodlands. The footpath was carved out of the wilderness by the dedicated hands of passionate hikers, volunteers, and forest rangers. The journey on the trail offers not just a physical challenge but also a passage of self-discovery. It is not uncommon to encounter wildlife along the trail, most of which are harmless. **11** The woods, teeming with deer, coyotes, foxes, raccoons, turkeys, rabbits, and mountain lions, adds to the thrill. However, there is one shy and elusive creature whose strength and moodiness make them a liability. **12** Several thousand black bears lurk in these woods. The sight of which can make one's blood freeze. Hikers need to be aware of safety measures and techniques to minimize risks in the case of an encounter.

11 _____

- A. No change
- B. Change “adds” to “offers”
- C. Change “adds” to “add”
- D. Insert “which” before “adds”

12 _____

- A. Several thousand black bears lurk in these woods: the sight of which can make one's blood freeze.
- B. Several thousand black bears lurk in these woods, the sight of which can make one's blood freeze.
- C. Several thousand black bears lurk in these woods; the sight of which can make one's blood freeze.
- D. Several thousand black bears lurk in these woods! Which can make one's blood really freeze.

¶2 Black bears are **13** deceitful omnivores who eat almost anything from plants, insects, and small mammals to carrion. They have an acute sense of smell, sharp ears, and good vision that help them locate food. **14** Besides their imposing size, most bears are not aggressive towards humans. The percentage of bear encounters that turn violent is extremely low. Most encounters end with the bears retreating into the woods avoiding confrontation. Black bears' psychology is shaped by their survival instincts. Like other animals, they also exhibit either fear or aggression when these reflexes kick in. They are likely to resort to aggression only when they feel threatened or cornered. A majority of bear attacks are usually females protecting their young ones from a perceived dangerous situation. Some attacks occurred when the bear found its path of retreat blocked by physical barriers, causing it to panic.

13 _____
The writer wants to replace the indicated word with one that is more precise in meaning. Which word would be the best choice?

- A. opportunistic
- B. conniving
- C. sneaky
- D. tricky

14 _____
Which replacement, if any, for the indicated word best maintains the logical flow of the passage?

- A. Despite
- B. However
- C. Nevertheless
- D. Since

¶2 Black bears are deceitful omnivores who eat almost anything from plants, insects, and small mammals to carrion. They have an acute sense of smell, sharp ears, and good vision that help them locate food. Besides their imposing size, most bears are not aggressive towards humans. The percentage of bear encounters that turn violent is extremely low. Most encounters end with the bears retreating into the woods avoiding confrontation. **15** Black bears' psychology is shaped by their survival instincts. Like other animals, they also exhibit either fear or aggression when these reflexes kick in. They are likely to resort to aggression only when they feel threatened or cornered. A majority of bear attacks are usually females protecting their young ones from a perceived dangerous situation. Some attacks occurred when the bear found its path of retreat blocked by physical barriers, causing it to panic.

15 _____
Choose the best way to combine the indicated sentences.

- A. Like other animals, black bears' psychology is shaped by their survival instincts, who elicit a flight or fight reflex when in danger.
- B. Black bears' psychology is shaped by their survival instincts, that also cause them to exhibit either fear or aggression when these reflexes kick in.
- C. Black bears' psychology is shaped by their survival instincts, and like other animals, they also exhibit either fear or aggression when these reflexes kick in.
- D. Black bears' psychology is shaped by their survival instincts, leading to the exhibition of either fear or aggression, just like other animals, when these reflexes kick in.

Questions 16 through 20 refer to the following selection.

Read through the draft of a magazine article that highlights the benefits of agroforestry and explains why its adoption is progressing slowly. Then go on to the suggestions for revision that follow.

Agroforestry: Its Benefits and Adoption

By Aalia Powell

Published: September 5, 2023

¶1 Step back to pre-industrial times before the era of machines and industrial landscapes. Picture a farmland where trees and crops intermingled, livestock roamed freely in the pastures, and every element had a role to play. It was a realm where every element wove a story of give and take and mutual support. This is known as agroforestry: the intentional integration of trees, crops, and livestock, resolving three main environmental problems. These are low crop productivity, low water tables, and land degradation. Each of the three elements, trees, livestock and crops, have a role to play.

¶2 Trees are more than just shade. Here's how:

- They offer nutritious food for livestock.
- Hidden beneath the earth's surface, their roots work to prevent soil erosion.
- Otherwise, by keeping the soil covered, trees stop rain from washing away valuable nutrients.
- The fallen fruits, leaves, and branches of a tree decompose over time, adding nutrients back into the soil. Thus, trees improve the nutrient cycle, an essential defense against nature's forces.
- When trees help recycle nutrients, a healthier ecosystem where crops and cattle can thrive is created.
- In areas with low water tables, trees can help alter the balance between groundwater and surface water. By consuming water through their roots and releasing it through transpiration, trees can contribute to a more sustainable water balance.

¶3 Similarly, livestock also helps the crops to grow:

- Animal manure is like a natural booster for the soil.
- When farmers spread manure on their fields, it's like giving the soil natural fertilizer.
- Using manure reduces the need for synthetic chemicals.

¶4 Forest trees and shrubs, fruit orchards, and meadows can capture a lot of carbon, which help with climate action. On the other hand, growing crops in fields produces more greenhouse gasses due to soil disturbance. Just one big tree can take in about 50 pounds of CO₂ every year. This is how an agroforest can effectively capture and store significant amounts of carbon emissions.

Moreover, this climate-smart cultivation has manifold benefits:

- boosting biodiversity

- increasing annual crop
- creating habitats for various species
- improving soil health
- making ecosystems resilient

It serves to underscore the pressing importance of adopting agroforestry practices - an age-old yet regrettably less-adopted method of safeguarding the planet's future.

¶5 For some unfortunate reasons, agroforestry became disjointed over time; let's discuss them:

- **Rise of mono-cropping:** As societies shifted toward more intensive agricultural practices, mono-cropping became the prevailing norm. Thus, the practice of integrating trees on farms faded away.
- **Diminished knowledge:** Over time, the traditional wisdom surrounding the benefits of agroforestry began to fade. This resulted in a decline in incorporating agroforestry into modern agricultural systems.
- **Lack of understanding:** Many farmers aren't fully familiar with the benefits of agroforestry.
- **Cost barriers:** Farmers often have limited assets or no start-up capital. Subsequently, they can't manage the establishment cost. In some cases, farmers do not plant trees on their lands as the maintenance costs erode their economic returns.

¶6 This is why governments and other groups should help small farmers in using agroforestry practices. This need for support is exemplified by Kenya. Kenya has taken proactive steps like:

- The National Adaptation Plan (NAP 2015-2030)
- Kenya Climate Smart Agriculture Strategy (KCSAS 2017-2026)
- Bringing on the International Centre for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF) to focus on the sustainable management of tropical rainforests and natural reserves

Also, collaborations, like those between Kenyan farmers and ICRAF, showcase the potential of regreening lands while concurrently contributing to carbon storage efforts.

Agroforestry: Its Benefits and Adoption

By Aalia Powell

Published: September 5, 2023

¶1 Step back to pre-industrial times before the era of machines and industrial landscapes. Picture a farmland where trees and crops intermingled, livestock roamed freely in the pastures, and every element had a role to play. It was a realm where every element wove a story of give and take and mutual support. This is known as agroforestry: the intentional integration of trees, crops, and livestock, resolving three main environmental problems. These are low crop productivity, low water tables, and land degradation. Each of the three elements, trees, livestock and crops, have a role to play.

¶2 Trees are more than just shade. Here's how:

- They offer nutritious food for livestock.
- Hidden beneath the earth's surface, their roots work to prevent soil erosion.
- **16** Otherwise, by keeping the soil covered, trees stop rain from washing away valuable nutrients.
- The fallen fruits, leaves, and branches of a tree decompose over time, adding nutrients back into the soil. Thus, trees improve the nutrient cycle, an essential defense against nature's forces.

When trees help recycle nutrients, a healthier ecosystem where crops and cattle can thrive is created.

16

-
- A. No change
 - B. Hence,
 - C. Anyhow,
 - D. Moreover,

- In areas with low water tables, trees can help alter the balance between groundwater and surface water. By consuming water through their roots and releasing it through transpiration, trees can contribute to a more sustainable water balance.

¶3 Similarly, livestock also helps the crops to grow:

- Animal manure is like a natural booster for the soil.
- When farmers spread manure on their fields, it's like giving the soil natural fertilizer.
- Using manure reduces the need for synthetic chemicals.

¶4 **17** Forest trees and shrubs, fruit orchards, and meadows can capture a lot of carbon, which help with climate action. On the other hand, growing crops in fields produces more greenhouse gasses due to soil disturbance. Just one big tree can take in about 50 pounds of CO₂ every year. This is how an agroforest can effectively capture and store significant amounts of carbon emissions.

Moreover, this climate-smart cultivation has manifold benefits:

- boosting biodiversity
- increasing annual crop
- creating habitats for various species
- improving soil health
- making ecosystems resilient

It serves to underscore the pressing importance of adopting agroforestry practices – an age-old yet regrettably less-adopted method of safeguarding the planet's future.

17 _____

Which revision should be made to the indicated sentence?

- A. Change “help” to “helps”
- B. Change “which” to “who”
- C. Change “capture” to “captures”
- D. Change “a lot” to “a great deal of”

¶5 **18** For some unfortunate reasons, agroforestry became disjointed over time; let's discuss them:

- **Rise of mono-cropping:** As societies shifted toward more intensive **19** agricultural practices mono-cropping became the prevailing norm. Thus, the practice of integrating trees on farms faded away.
- **Diminished knowledge:** Over time, the traditional wisdom surrounding the benefits of agroforestry began to fade. This resulted in a decline in incorporating agroforestry into modern agricultural systems.
- **Lack of understanding:** Many farmers aren't fully familiar with the benefits of agroforestry.
- **Cost barriers:** Farmers often have limited assets or no start-up capital. Subsequently, they can't manage the establishment cost. In some cases, farmers do not plant trees on their lands as the maintenance costs erode their economic returns.

¶6 This is why governments and other groups should help small farmers in using agroforestry practices. This need for support is exemplified by Kenya. Kenya has taken proactive steps like:

- The National Adaptation Plan (NAP 2015-2030)
- Kenya Climate Smart Agriculture Strategy (KCSAS 2017-2026)
- Bringing on the International Centre for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF) to focus on the sustainable management of tropical rainforests and natural reserves

18 _____

- A. No change
- B. Let's quickly peek into the fast-declining popularity of agroforestry.
- C. Let's understand why agroforestry was overlooked over time.
- D. Let's understand the bitter-sad reasons why agroforestry flopped.

19 _____

- A. No change
- B. agriculture practices. Mono-cropping
- C. agricultural practices, mono-cropping
- D. agricultural practices – mono cropping

20 Also, collaborations, like those between Kenyan farmers and ICRAF, showcase the potential of regreening lands while concurrently contributing to carbon storage efforts.

20 _____

- A. No change
- B. Also while aiding carbon storage, such as those among Kenyan farmers and ICRAF, collaborations showcase the potential of regreening the farmlands.
- C. Also, which regreening the farmlands, such as those of Kenyan farmers and ICRAF, collaborations showcase the potential of carbon storage.
- D. Also, the potential of regreening the farmlands, such as those among Kenyan farmers and ICRAF, which aiding carbon storage and showcase the collaborations.

Questions 21 through 25 refer to the following selection.

Read through a draft of an opinion-based article written by a student. Then go on to the suggestions for revision that follow.

Cautionary Words for the Overly Inquisitive

¶1 The English saying, “Curiosity killed the cat,” warns about the possible dangers of pointless investigation. Curiosity may have its undesirable results. Why is being curious bad? Curiosity is the means to learning, discovery, and growth. Curiosity gives the person mastery in critical thinking. It opens new possibilities and enables the person to discover the unexplored. It is essential to remove fear to let curiosity work to discover and uncover new opportunities. One must adopt and seize curiosity and use it to gain knowledge. So, it’s good to be curious, but not too much!

¶2 Scientific curiosity arises from a driving force that originates from the yearning to learn more about our surroundings. Galileo Galilei and Marie Curie discovered remarkable findings through scientific curiosity. Through his telescope, Galilei, the well-known astronomer, detected the moons of Jupiter and the laws of nature. However, it also led to his disapproval by the Catholic Church. Another example is 20th century physicist Marie Curie, who was driven by her curiosity to explore the elements polonium and radium. Similarly, she discovered radioactivity and created mobile X-ray units as she was also driven by scientific curiosity. But Marie Curie's scientific curiosity also led to her death, as she was exposed to high levels of radiation during her research.

¶3 However, scientific curiosity has its negative consequences. Scientific curiosity can be disastrous if it is not handled with caution. One instance that illustrates the potential dangers of unbridled scientific exploration is the development of the atomic bomb. This led to the ruin of two Japanese cities, namely, Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This tragic atomic bombing killed countless innocent people and caused widespread destruction. The radiation from these bombings also caused long-lasting health problems and deaths. The aftermath of the destruction of these two cities serves as an evident reminder being over-curious is highly dangerous.

¶4 Curiosity brings out new and creative experiences that enrich and impact our personal lives. However, being curious all the time does not bring meaning to life. Binge-watching, internet surfing, and overuse of social media are examples of futile curiosity. This easy access to data leads to whims and deviation from goals. For example, a person who spends many hours on the internet watching videos on social media is not learning anything. Instead, they are only fulfilling their curiosity for needless entertainment. It's wise to avoid such time-wasting distractions. Instead, we should do what matters the most.

¶5 So, curiosity is a mixed blessing that has both ups and downs in terms of personal growth. However, too much curiosity can lead to harmful effects. As exemplified by Marie Curie's death, it can harm the life of an overly curious person, while also motivate them to make new scientific findings. So, though over-inquisitiveness may not seem dangerous, it can lead to destructive inventions and distractions. However, the rewards of curiosity outweigh the risks

when used wisely and cautiously. Whenever finding new interests, it's vital to be cautious and take steps to prevent any potential risks. As Samuel Johnson once said, "Curiosity is one of the most permanent and certain characteristics of a vigorous intellect. But it must be regulated by reason, and directed to a noble end."

Cautionary Words for the Overly Inquisitive

¶1 The English saying, “Curiosity killed the cat,” warns about the possible dangers of pointless investigation. **21** Curiosity may have its undesirable results. Why is being curious bad? Curiosity is the means to learning, discovery, and growth. Curiosity gives the person mastery in critical thinking. It opens new possibilities and enables the person to discover the unexplored. It is essential to remove fear to let curiosity work to discover and uncover new opportunities. One must adopt and seize curiosity and use it to gain knowledge. So, it’s good to be curious, but not too much!

¶2 **22** Scientific curiosity arises from a driving force that **22** originates from the **22** yearning to learn more about our **22** surroundings. Galileo Galilei and Marie Curie discovered remarkable findings through scientific curiosity. Through his telescope, Galilei, the well-known astronomer, detected the moons of Jupiter and the laws of nature. However, it also led to his disapproval by the Catholic Church. Another example is 20th century physicist Marie Curie, who was driven by her curiosity to explore the elements polonium and radium. Similarly, she discovered radioactivity and created mobile X-ray units as she was also driven by scientific curiosity. But Marie Curie’s scientific curiosity also led to her death, as she was exposed to high levels of radiation during her research.

21 _____

Should the writer retain or delete the indicated sentence?

- A. Keep it because it provides a relevant question that follows the previous sentence.
- B. Keep it because it introduces an interesting perspective on curiosity’s potential drawbacks.
- C. Delete it because it creates confusion by abruptly shifting the topic from curiosity to an unrelated subject.
- D. Delete it because it lacks a connection to the preceding sentence and assumes that being curious is a bad trait.

22 _____

One of the four indicated words is misspelled. Which change in spelling corrects the error?

- A. scientific
- B. originaetes
- C. surroundings
- D. yearening

¶3 However, scientific curiosity has its negative consequences. Scientific curiosity can be disastrous if it is not handled with caution. One instance that illustrates the potential dangers of unbridled scientific exploration is the development of the atomic bomb. This led to the ruin of two Japanese cities, namely, Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This tragic atomic bombing killed countless innocent people and caused widespread destruction. The radiation from these bombings also caused long-lasting health problems and deaths. **23** The aftermath of the destruction of these two cities serves as an evident reminder being over-curious is highly dangerous.

¶4 Curiosity brings out new and creative experiences that enrich and impact our personal lives. However, being curious all the time does not bring meaning to life. Binge-watching, internet surfing, and overuse of social media are examples of futile curiosity. This easy access to data leads to whims and deviation from goals. For example, a person who spends many hours on the internet watching videos on social media is not learning anything. Instead, they are only fulfilling their curiosity for needless entertainment. It's wise to avoid such time-wasting distractions. Instead, we should do what matters the most.

23 _____
Which relative pronoun should be used to complete the sentence in the passage?

- A. that
- B. which
- C. whose
- D. whom

¶5 So, curiosity is a mixed blessing that has both ups and downs **24** in terms of personal growth. However, too much curiosity can lead to harmful effects. As exemplified by Marie Curie’s death, **25** it can harm the life of an overly curious person, while also motivate them to make new scientific findings. So, though over-inquisitiveness may not seem dangerous, it can lead to destructive inventions and distractions. However, the rewards of curiosity outweigh the risks when used wisely and cautiously. Whenever finding new interests, it’s vital to be cautious and take steps to prevent any potential risks. As Samuel Johnson once said, "Curiosity is one of the most permanent and certain characteristics of a vigorous intellect. But it must be regulated by reason, and directed to a noble end."

- 24** _____
- A. No change
 - B. for personal growth
 - C. about personal growth
 - D. between personal growth

- 25** _____
- A. it can harm the life of an overly curious person while also motivate them to make new scientific findings.
 - B. it can harm the life of an overly curious person while also motivates them to make new scientific findings.
 - C. it can harm the life of an overly curious person while also motivated them to make new scientific findings.
 - D. it can harm the life of an overly curious person, while also motivating them to make new scientific findings.

Below you will find two passages in which the authors put forth differing perspectives on the advantages of pursuing advanced degrees versus enhancing professional development for career growth. Read both passages carefully, noting the strengths and weaknesses of each discussion. Then you will write an essay in which you explain your own opinion on the issue.

Both articles appeared in a recent issue of a career magazine. The author of the first piece argues that pursuing a degree has no alternative as far as landing a high position is concerned, while the author of the second article contends that professional development has an upper edge over traditional degrees, given current trends in technology and the job market.

The Enduring Value of Degrees versus Short-Term Professional Courses

¶1 Acquiring education and skills has become essential for landing a good job and advancing one's career in today's competitive world. In light of this, many find themselves weighing the prospects of two common paths: acquiring a full-time college degree or enrolling in a short-term professional course. In my opinion, both options have merits and drawbacks.

¶2 Firstly, degree programs offer a well-rounded quality education. They follow rigorous academic standards and curricula. They impart critical thinking, problem-solving, research, and communication skills. These abilities are valued across industries and enable one to adapt to the changing job market. Also, degrees prepare students for a wider perspective and make them versatile professionals. Moreover, degrees often include internships and projects where one can apply theoretical knowledge. Contrarily, short-term professional courses may lack the same quality and rigor as degree programs. They may not help inculcate a diverse skill set that degrees help develop. Short-term courses also lack the interdisciplinary approach that degrees offer. This may limit a professional's adaptability.

¶3 Secondly, degrees from reputed colleges open numerous job opportunities by equipping graduates with expertise in the field. Degrees enable them to access diverse career options across industries. Employers value professionals with degrees from acclaimed institutions. Also, many jobs have specific educational requirements. Having a degree and subject expertise makes one eligible for them. Conversely, short-term professional courses may not offer the same level of career opportunities and credibility as degrees. Short-term courses without full-time degrees indicate that the students have only acquired superficial or narrow skills. Unlike degrees, courses cannot make students eligible for further education or doctoral research.

¶4 Some may argue that short-term courses provide relevant and updated skills as per the market demand. However, degree programs too are regularly customized to keep pace with the fast-changing world. Moreover, degrees offer more opportunities for networking, mentoring, and collaboration. These are essential for career growth.

¶5 To conclude, despite rapid changes, degrees remain valuable. While short professional courses have their merits, degrees offer a holistic education, credibility, and career opportunities. So, earning degrees is a better choice to ensure long-term success.

The Advantages of Pursuing Continued Professional Development (CPD) over Earning a Degree

¶1 Have you experienced growing competition at your workplace? How can working professionals sail through the competition and climb the career ladder? This is where Continued Professional Development (CPD) comes into play. It involves training workshops and short-term courses – a quick way to acquire expertise and stay ahead of the curve!

¶2 There's a prevailing notion that traditional degrees help land high-position jobs. However, the reality is that in some dynamic industries, like IT and fashion, degrees alone are becoming less feasible. Over time, CPD has emerged as the preferred avenue to enhance skills, make professional advancement, and stay relevant. They are preferred because of their flexibility, relevance, cost, and time efficiency. The benefits also include increased employability and networking opportunities.

¶3 A clear advantage of CPDs is that they are relevant and are designed to be flexible. They teach specific skills tailored to industry demands. Also, they equip one with the latest knowledge and skills, applicable to their roles. For example, a software developer can enroll in a CPD course to learn about the latest in-demand programming languages. This targeted approach helps people hone skills and enhance their professional value.

¶4 Additionally, the CPD option is ideal for working individuals who cannot afford long-term degrees. Compared to university degrees, CPD courses are more cost-effective and time-efficient. Furthermore, one can choose specific courses that directly address their skill gaps, leading to faster career growth.

¶5 Also, CPD provides networking opportunities. One can meet professionals from their industry while attending workshops and webinars. These interactions open doors to job

opportunities, collaborations, and mentorships. Besides, professional networks help one gain exposure and a deeper understanding of industry trends. And these together contribute to professional growth and make CPDs a preferred choice over degrees.

¶6 To conclude, while earning a degree holds merit, the dynamic job market and rapid skill development needs make CPD a significant alternative. Its flexibility, relevance, cost-efficiency, and emphasis on practical skills make CPD vital for career growth. Adopting this approach helps professionals stay competitive and find long-term success.

Write an essay in which you explain your position on the issue of whether traditional degrees or short professional development courses are more valuable for career progression.

Be sure to use specific reasons and examples from your own experience and knowledge to support your position. Evidence from the passages provided should also be used to support your ideas. Remember that every position exists within the context of a larger discussion of the issue, so your essay should, at minimum, acknowledge alternate and/or opposing ideas. When you have finished your essay, review your writing to check for correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

Scored Sample Responses

Note: All responses are reproduced exactly as written, including errors, misspellings, etc., if any.

SCORE OF 6

Can one succeed without a college degree? People ask this question based on the success stories of some successful business owners. They say Bill Gates and Steve Jobs did not have college degrees, yet they excelled in their career because of their experience. However, these success stories are just exceptions and not the rule. Some others prefer continuing professional development (CPD). They argue that short-term professional courses up-skill professionals and help them gain a competitive edge.

In my opinion, although pursuing advanced degrees requires time and money, they can be preferred over time- and cost-efficient skill development courses and certifications. Those preferring continuing professional development (CPD) over earning degrees overlook the importance of degrees in landing a good job in today's competitive job market. Though CPD has its benefits, possessing a university degree has no parallel when considering the parameters of employability, credibility, key leadership roles and long-term success.

Advanced degrees provide individuals with expertise in a specific field required for high positions. Specializations and high qualifications can make individuals highly sought after in the job market, enhance their professional reputation, and open doors to higher-level positions.

Besides helping with landing a key leadership position, the critical thinking abilities and diverse skill sets developed while pursuing degrees help one perform well and nicely execute one's job functions. Displaying the use of skills and expertise to manage projects and accomplish goals adds to a professional's worth before the employer. Developed skills and good execution of one's duties at work give one a competitive edge over others and provide a sense of accomplishment. These together contribute to one's growth on the corporate ladder. Advanced degrees also make a professional ideal for doing research in the concerned field and coming up with highly insightful ideas that can contribute to the organization and society.

SCORE OF 5

People doing job searches know how competitive the job market is today. Attaining relevant degrees helps one gain an edge over others in the job market. Employers consider applicants with degrees credible and resourceful. On the other hand, pursuing professional skills is also significantly required for those working in fast-changing industries, such as the IT industry. To maintain a competitive edge and ensure career growth, besides degrees, professionals need to regularly update their skills with the evolving technology. They pursue courses and attend workshops and seminars to upgrade and hone their skills. Employers observe their initiative, and the professionals gain and grow in the workplace.

In general, degrees can help one land a good job. On the other hand, continuing to attain professional skills can help with career growth. So, earning degrees and enhancing professional skills are both significant for career growth. Striking a balance or blending the two approaches is advisable.

Furthermore, while choosing between specializations or refining professional skills, it is good to consider factors such as career goals and the type of industry.

For individuals seeking expertise in a field or aiming for research-oriented careers, advanced degrees provide a strong foundation. However, in industries, such as technology and digital marketing, where rapid advancements and evolving trends are common, and where practical skills are highly valued, focusing on enhancing professional skills can yield immediate results and career growth.

to conclude, both choice have their benefits and their scope depends on the aforementioned factors.

SCORE OF 4

While advanced degrees have their benefits, enhancing professional skills holds a distinct advantage in today's job market. Unlike specializations, continued professional development programs (CPDs) are immediately available and cost-efficient besides yielding career growth. CPD refers to all sorts of short courses and training undertaken to upgrade one's professional skills. Successful people like Bill Gates and Steve Jobs also preferred growing professional knowledge to pursuing advanced degrees. You must have heard of many successful people who were college dropouts, yet they could achieve success. They identified their interests and honed and upgraded their skills in some way or the other to better themselves in their profession. Despite having a college degree, they could become an inspiration for job aspirants and working professionals who could not afford to go to college.

Unlike advanced degrees, CPD courses are cost-effective and time-efficient. Some of the courses and certifications are online courses that are flexible in terms of schedule and duration. Those who cannot afford expensive college degrees have CPD as a good option. Also, CPDs do not involve entrance tests nor do they demand eligibility criteria as university degrees do. Moreover, unlike degrees, CPDs are customized for a specific target group of professionals. They can identify the gaps in their skills and choose the right course or training.

CPDs emphasize honing practical skills, raising critical thinking abilities and diversifying their skill set. Working professionals can put these skills into practice to take their abilities and work qualities to the next level. These features of continued professional skills development directly contribute to career advancement.

SCORE OF 3

There are two avenues for those who are determined to advance their career and climb the ladder of success. They can earn relevant college degrees from reputed institutions over a period or they can regularly do short courses suitable to their profession. Some consider the first avenue as a traditional approach, while the other one is a modern approach. However, others refute this division because college or university degrees would always have bright prospects when it comes to employability and long-term success. Earning degrees helps individuals gain expertise, develop aptitude and expertise for a specific field, and gain credibility. Professionals possessing degrees have an edge over other job aspirants. They are often more desirable candidates for high-paying jobs and key positions.

Regular or continued professional development (CPD) has its benefits. CPDs involve short customized courses, brief online programs, and certifications. These are designed as per the demand of the job and the current technology. Since technology and industries keep evolving, CPDs do benefit professionals in such fields as information and communication technology, and the fashion industry, among others. However, CPDs cannot be considered a substitute for comprehensive degree programs.

SCORE OF 2

To make your resume stand out in the competitive job market, you need to develop your professional skills and subject expertise. To gain a competitive edge over other job aspirants, people entering the workforce often discuss two options – taking professional development courses or obtaining a degree in higher education. While both routes can help one reach one’s ideal position, there are benefits to each that differ from one another. Let us compare the two so you can make an informed decision on what might serve you best.

Remember that college and university degrees cannot be replaced by short-term courses. However, there have been many successful people who had to drop out of college for some reason, yet they were able to succeed. They focused on honing their skill and the experience they gained helped them move up the career ladder. However this are not very common. Degrees help you land a good job. At the same time, doing short-term courses does help. So a blend of degree programs and regular professional skills enhancement courses would be better in today’s scenario.

SCORE OF 1

You must ofheard of people doing online courses and earning certifications. Employers value such professionals for their determination to improve their skills. They practice their newly learned skills and apply them to their jobs. These experience increase their confidence level, critical thinking abilities, hard skills, and work quality. These produce positive outcomes in terms of overcoming challenges and managing one’s work better. In this way, professional skills development helps professionals who could not attained a regular university degree.

But university degrees have advantages. These degree programs are comprehensive, time-consuming, and sometimes quite expensive. Despite these facts, degrees hold far better prospects than certifications.

Scoring Your Essay

The Scoring Guide used for scoring essay responses is given below. One way to see how well you did on your essay in this practice test is to ask someone with experience in scoring essays to score your response using this scoring guide. We also provide sample responses to the practice prompt that have been scored by trained essay raters. You can compare your essay to these scored responses and estimate your score that way.

Please remember that you must achieve a score of at least 2 on the essay portion of the Language Arts – Writing test to pass the test as a whole.

Scoring Guide

Score of 1 – *Essays at this score point demonstrate inadequate competence in writing an argument on a given topic.*

A typical response in this category exhibits ONE OR MORE of the following characteristics:

- provides little or no evidence of understanding the topic
- may present a position on the topic but provides little evidence of the ability to develop or organize a response
- copies and/or paraphrases all ideas from the provided texts
- has severe problems in language and sentence structure that persistently interfere with meaning
- contains pervasive errors in grammar, usage, or mechanics that result in incoherence

Score of 2 – *Essays at this score point demonstrate limited competence in writing an argument on a given topic; their positions may be unclear, and they may develop their positions with little relevant reasoning or support.*

A typical response in this category exhibits ONE OR MORE of the following characteristics:

- is unclear or seriously limited in presenting or developing a position on the topic
- provides few relevant reasons or examples in support of its claims and/or may rely too heavily on the texts without integrating or interpreting the text information
- is poorly focused and/or poorly organized
- has serious problems in language and sentence structure that can interfere with meaning
- contains serious errors in grammar, usage, or mechanics that may obscure meaning

Score of 3 – *Essays at this score point demonstrate some competence in writing an argument on a given topic and develop their positions with reasoning that may lack clarity and with support that may lack development or that is vague.*

A typical response in this category exhibits ONE OR MORE of the following characteristics:

- has an evident position on the topic, but it may be vague
- presents generalizations without specific support or reasons simplistically when developing a position; may use examples from the provided texts, but fails to integrate or misconstrues the meaning of some of them
- may lack focus and/or clear organization in places or may lack connections or transitions between ideas
- has problems in language and sentence structure that result in a lack of clarity
- contains occasional major errors or frequent minor errors in grammar, usage, or mechanics that can interfere with meaning

Score of 4 – *Essays at this score point demonstrate competence in writing an argument on a given topic and develop their positions with generally clear reasoning and relevant support.*

A typical response in this category largely accomplishes all of the following:

- presents a generally clear position on the topic
- develops a position using some relevant reasons or examples from the provided texts and/or personal experience, although some support may be uneven
- maintains adequate focus and organization, although transitions may be simple
- demonstrates satisfactory control of language, conveying ideas with acceptable clarity
- generally demonstrates competent control of the conventions of standard written English but may have some errors

Score of 5 – *Essays at this score point demonstrate clear competence in writing an argument on a given topic and develop their positions with valid and reasoned support.*

A typical response in this category largely accomplishes all of the following:

- articulates a generally clear and considered position on the topic
- develops a position well, using generally sound reasoning or examples integrated from the provided texts and/or personal experience
- presents a focused and generally well-organized position, connecting ideas appropriately
- conveys ideas clearly, using appropriate vocabulary and sentence variety
- demonstrates clear competency with the conventions of standard written English but may have minor errors

Score of 6 – *Essays at this score point demonstrate a high degree of competence in writing an argument on a given topic and develop their positions with effective and well-reasoned support.*

A typical response in this category largely accomplishes all of the following:

- articulates a clear and well-considered position on the topic
- develops a position effectively and sufficiently, using generally persuasive reasoning or examples integrated from the provided texts and/or personal experience
- presents a coherently organized position, connecting ideas effectively
- conveys ideas precisely, using effective vocabulary and sentence variety
- demonstrates a high degree of competence with the conventions of standard written English (i.e., grammar, usage, and mechanics) but may have minor errors

HiSET Answer Key and Rationales

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
1	C	I. Organization of Ideas	Medium
Rationale			
<p>Option C is correct because the sentence in Option C acts as a suitable transitional or linking sentence. This connects the ideas of how birds and animals in nature conserve food and how SPRs deal with the same idea.</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
2	B	II. Language Facility	Easy
Rationale			
<p>Option B is correct because the idiom in Option B is the closest to the underlined phrase in terms of meaning and context.</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
3	D	II. Language Facility	Easy
Rationale			
<p>Option D is correct because it corrects the error of parallel structure. The words “contamination” and “damage” are the same part of speech (noun), as is the word “leakage.” Therefore, they have a parallel structure.</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
4	B	III. Writing Conventions	Hard
Rationale			
Option B is correct because the sentence has a plural or compound subject: “high storage capacity and easy availability.” It agrees with the plural verb “make.”			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
5	C	III. Writing Conventions	Medium
Rationale			
Option C is correct because it correctly uses a comma before the coordinating conjunction “so.” It corrects the capitalization error in the phrase “salt caverns.” It also removes the unnecessary comma before “can.”			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
6	B	II. Language Facility	Medium
Rationale			
Option B is correct because it is the closest to the indicated sentences in terms of meaning and maintains a clear and concise expression, making it the best choice among the options provided.			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
7	A	III. Writing Conventions	Easy
Rationale			
<p>Option A is correct because it identifies the most relevant resource for determining the precise meaning of the metaphorical phrase “delicate thread” in a literary context.</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
8	D	I. Organization of Ideas	Easy
Rationale			
<p>Option D is correct because it provides a logical contrast between the two statements. The sentence transitions from describing the challenging situation of relying on non-verbal communication to the positive outcome of newfound independence.</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
9	C	III. Writing Conventions	Hard
Rationale			
<p>Option C is correct because it corrects the inappropriate run-on structure by using a semicolon (;) and suitably separates the two closely related independent clauses.</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
10	C	II. Language Facility	Hard
Rationale			
<p>Option C is correct because sentence 3 contains redundancy with the phrase “It wouldn’t be hyperbole to say that this experience remains in my mind...” which adds unnecessary repetition and length to the sentence.</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
11	C	III. Writing Conventions	Medium
Rationale			
<p>Option C is correct as it addresses the subject-verb agreement issue by changing “adds” to “add,” making it grammatically correct.</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
12	B	III. Writing Conventions	Medium
Rationale			
<p>Option B is correct because it uses a comma to isolate the non-restrictive relative clause (“the sight of which can make one’s blood freeze”).</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
13	A	II. Language Facility	Hard
Rationale			
<p>Option A is correct because “opportunistic” means taking advantage of opportunities as they arise, especially with regard to food. It conveys the idea that black bears are flexible in their food choices, eating whatever is available, which aligns with the context of the sentence.</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
14	A	I. Organization of Ideas	Medium
Rationale			
<p>Option A is correct because “despite” is the most suitable replacement for “besides” in this context. “Despite” is generally used to contrast two ideas and fits perfectly when you want to emphasize that the first condition (bear’s imposing size) doesn't necessarily lead to the second condition (aggressiveness).</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
15	C	II. Language Facility	Hard
Rationale			
<p>Option C is correct because it correctly combines the two sentences to form a compound sentence using the conjunction “and.”</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
16	D	I. Organization of Ideas	Easy
Rationale			
<p>Option D is correct because “moreover” logically connects the benefit of the tree roots preventing soil erosion with the subsequent idea about keeping the soil covered.</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
17	A	III. Writing Conventions	Medium
Rationale			
<p>Option A is correct because it fixes the subject-verb disagreement by changing “help” to “helps” to agree with the singular noun “ability.”</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
18	C	II. Language Facility	Hard
Rationale			
<p>Option C is correct because it aligns with the informative and neutral tone of the passage, providing a clear direction without emotionally charged words.</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
19	C	III. Writing Conventions	Medium
Rationale			
<p>Option C is correct because it places a comma after “agricultural practices,” which helps to separate the introductory dependent clause from the main independent clause. This correction fixes the fused (run-on) sentence error.</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
20	A	II. Language Facility	Medium
Rationale			
<p>Option A is correct because no change is required; the indicated sentence has both clarity and coherence.</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
21	D	I. Organization of Ideas	Hard
Rationale			
<p>Option D is correct because the sentence “Why is being curious bad?” lacks a connection to the preceding sentence and presents an assumption that being curious is bad. It does not add anything to this discussion.</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
22	C	II. Language Facility	Easy
Rationale			
Option C is correct because the correct spelling of the word is “surroundings.”			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
23	A	II. Language Facility	Easy
Rationale			
Option A is correct because the relative pronoun “that” is the most specific pronoun, introducing the essential information “being over-curious is highly dangerous.”			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
24	A	II. Language Facility	Easy
Rationale			
Option A is correct because the preposition “in terms of” is used to indicate the context or perspective in which something is being considered. In this case, the context is “personal growth.”			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
25	D	II. Language Facility	Easy
Rationale			
<p>Option D is correct because the present participle “motivating” is appropriate to show the ongoing effect of being overly curious.</p>			