

Writing and Language — Academic Skills

SCORE RANGE 6–14 and 15–19

Students in this score band are beginning to obtain the basic foundational skills to be college ready.

SCORE RANGE 20–24

A typical student in this score band can do the following:

- Use supporting information to achieve a simple purpose (e.g., providing a short list of examples introduced by *for instance*) [COE, EOI]
- Delete information or ideas that are obviously irrelevant to the main focus of a paragraph or passage (e.g., eliminating a detail that has no apparent relationship to a passage's topic) [COE, EOI]
- Order the sentences in a paragraph to achieve a simple purpose (e.g., grouping related information together; establishing a basic chronology) [EOI]
- Introduce a paragraph that has a clear, well-defined focus [EOI]
- Use a transitional word or phrase to establish a simple logical relationship between sentences (e.g., indicating sharp contrast) [EOI]
- Make an effective word or phrase choice in a straightforward situation (e.g., using a common but still appropriate expression instead of an awkward or meaningless one) [WIC, EOI]
- Eliminate obvious wordiness or redundancy within a portion of a sentence (e.g., removing repetition within a short phrase) [WIC, EOI]
- Combine sentences in a relatively simple way (e.g., making a second sentence into a relative clause of the first) or to achieve a relatively simple purpose (e.g., eliminating obvious awkwardness or repetition) [WIC, EOI]
- Form conventional, complete sentences, recognizing and correcting a clear and substantial disruption in structure (e.g., eliminating an obvious comma splice; correcting a lack of parallelism in a simple series; replacing a nonstandard relative adverb or pronoun with a standard one [*a place where* rather than *a place when*]) [SEC]
- Recognize and correct an obviously inappropriate shift in verb tense (e.g., using present tense when the context clearly calls for past tense) [SEC]
- Maintain subject-verb or pronoun-antecedent agreement in a straightforward situation (e.g., ensuring agreement between subject and verb when the number of the subject is clear and the subject and verb appear close together in the sentence) [SEC]
- Use conventional expression in a straightforward situation (e.g., recognizing and correcting a nonsensical expression; choosing a preposition that establishes a logical relationship, such as *with* or *for*); choosing appropriately between common words that are frequently confused, such as *to* and *too*) [SEC]
- Distinguish between singular and plural possessive nouns and between plural and possessive nouns [SEC]
- Appropriately punctuate items in a series (e.g., a three-item series of nouns with accompanying adjectives) [SEC]
- Use commas to set off a simple nonrestrictive element (e.g., a phrase describing the person just named) [SEC]
- Eliminate obviously unnecessary and disruptive punctuation (e.g., between a verb and its direct object) [SEC]

SCORE RANGE 25–29

A typical student in this score band can do the following:

- Clarify an aspect of the structure of a paragraph or passage (e.g., using a phrase to preview examples that follow in subsequent sentences) [COE, EOI]
- Use supporting information to achieve a straightforward purpose (e.g., providing a cause for an effect; offering direct evidence for a claim) [COE, EOI]
- Delete information or ideas that are clearly irrelevant to a paragraph or passage (e.g., eliminating a detail that interrupts an explanation or that significantly digresses from the main topic) [COE, EOI]
- Use a general understanding of an informational graphic, such as a table, graph, or chart, to revise a passage (e.g., drawing on knowledge of what a graph's bars represent to improve the accuracy of a passage's description of the graph) [COE, EOI]
- Order the sentences in a paragraph to achieve a straightforward purpose (e.g., repositioning a supporting detail immediately after a sentence that makes a claim) [EOI]
- Introduce or conclude a paragraph or passage based on a general understanding of its content and purpose (e.g., adding a conclusion that restates the passage's main claim) [EOI]
- Use a transitional word or phrase to establish a straightforward logical relationship between sentences (e.g., indicating a sequence, suggesting a contrast, introducing a definition) [EOI]
- Make an effective word or phrase choice based on vocabulary knowledge and an understanding of the context (e.g., recognizing when a particular adjective does or does not meaningfully describe a person or object) [WIC, EOI]
- Eliminate wordiness or redundancy within a sentence (e.g., recognizing when adjectives with the same meaning or very similar meanings, such as *fast* and *rapid*, are used to describe the same thing) [WIC, EOI]
- Maintain a basic consistency in style and tone within a passage (e.g., revising language that is clearly too informal or formal for the context) [WIC, EOI]
- Combine sentences in a straightforward way (e.g., making a second sentence into a prepositional phrase of the first) or to achieve a straightforward purpose (e.g., establishing a logical arrangement of sentence elements) [WIC, EOI]
- Form conventional, complete sentences, recognizing and correcting a disruption in structure (e.g., eliminating an obvious, rhetorically inappropriate fragment; maintaining parallelism in a simple series of phrases; establishing a clear relationship between an introductory and main clause) [SEC]
- Determine appropriate verb tense or pronoun person and number on the basis of an understanding of the context (e.g., recognizing and correcting an inappropriate shift from past tense to present or past perfect tense; making a needed shift from past to present tense to signal a change in time frame; correcting an inappropriate shift from third person *they* to second person *you*) [SEC]
- Recognize and correct an obviously vague or ambiguous pronoun (e.g., replacing a pronoun without a clear antecedent with the appropriate noun) [SEC]
- Maintain subject-verb or pronoun-antecedent agreement in a somewhat challenging situation (e.g., ensuring agreement between subject and verb when a short phrase intervenes) [SEC]
- Use conventional expression in a somewhat challenging situation (e.g., choosing the preposition that appropriately completes a phrasal verb, such as *call off* rather than *call up* or *call on* to indicate cancellation; selecting appropriately between less common words that are frequently confused, such as *effect* and *affect*) [SEC]
- Distinguish among singular, singular possessive, plural, and plural possessive nouns [SEC]
- Use punctuation to set off a nonrestrictive element (e.g., an interrupting phrase); eliminate punctuation inappropriately setting off a simple restrictive element (e.g., a job title that precedes a person's name) [SEC]
- Eliminate unnecessary punctuation in a somewhat challenging situation (e.g., between a noun and a preposition; between a verb and a clause serving as its object) [SEC]

KEY: COE = Command of Evidence; EOI = Expression of Ideas; SEC = Standard English Conventions; WIC = Words in Context

Writing and Language — Academic Skills

SCORE RANGE 30–34

A typical student in this score band can do the following:

- Establish and clarify the structure of a paragraph or passage (e.g., adding a sentence to frame a paragraph's discussion or to present a claim that the paragraph subsequently supports) [COE, EOI]
- Use supporting information to develop a point or claim logically (e.g., offering a specific, relevant example; using a quotation that clarifies a concept or observation) [COE, EOI]
- Sharpen the focus of a paragraph or passage by making a thoughtful decision about adding, revising, or deleting information or ideas (e.g., eliminating material that is broadly relevant to a topic but that is poorly placed or integrated) [COE, EOI]
- Locate or interpret data in an informational graphic, such as a table, graph, or chart, and incorporate them in a passage in an accurate, relevant way (e.g., identifying the value in a table that is associated with a particular condition; distinguishing between accurate and inaccurate interpretations and between information relevant and irrelevant to a particular question or issue) [COE, EOI]
- Place or order sentences in a paragraph to address a critical issue of logic or cohesion (e.g., adding a sentence to fill a discernible gap in a chronological sequence; repositioning a sentence to provide a needed transition between ideas) [EOI]
- Introduce or conclude a passage or paragraph based on an understanding of its content and purpose (e.g., ensuring that a passage's conclusion offers an adequate sense of closure; achieving a particular rhetorical aim, such as suggesting implications of the findings discussed in the passage) [EOI]
- Use a transitional word, phrase, clause, or sentence to establish a logical relationship between sentences or paragraphs (e.g., signaling a shift in emphasis or focus) [EOI]
- Make a nuanced word or phrase choice based on well-developed vocabulary knowledge and an understanding of the context (e.g., distinguishing among relatively uncommon words that have similar denotations but differing connotations or uses) [WIC, EOI]
- Eliminate relatively subtle wordiness or redundancy within a sentence or between sentences (e.g., recognizing when information overexplains a concept and correcting accordingly; deleting repetition involving fairly sophisticated language) [WIC, EOI]
- Make a thoughtful decision about style and tone in a passage based on an understanding of the context (e.g., revising language that is too informal or formal in a fairly challenging context; achieving a particular rhetorical aim, such as establishing a particular sentence pattern or choosing language that sets a contextually appropriate mood) [WIC, EOI]
- Combine sentences to accomplish a relatively subtle purpose (e.g., inserting a conjunction to establish a logical relationship; blending elements of two sentences to improve logic and flow) [WIC, EOI]
- Form conventional, complete sentences, recognizing and correcting a relatively subtle disruption in structure (e.g., eliminating a rhetorically inappropriate fragment created by the use of a semicolon; maintaining parallelism in a series of phrases; choosing or eliminating a conjunction based on an understanding of the syntax of a relatively sophisticated or long sentence; correcting an obvious dangling modifier) [SEC]
- Determine appropriate verb tense and mood or pronoun person and number on the basis of a well-developed understanding of the context (e.g., making a needed shift into conditional mood to suggest a possible but not certain outcome) [SEC]
- Recognize and correct a vague or ambiguous pronoun based on an understanding of the context (e.g., replacing an ambiguous pronoun with a noun after a close reading to determine what the appropriate noun should be) [SEC]
- Make careful distinctions among the possessive determiners *its* and *their*, the contractions *it's* and *they're*, and the adverb *there* [SEC]
- Maintain subject-verb or pronoun-antecedent agreement in a challenging situation (e.g., ensuring agreement between subject and verb when a clause or multiple short phrases intervene and possibly suggest a different number for the verb than the subject warrants) [SEC]
- Use conventional expression in a challenging situation (e.g., selecting appropriately between relatively uncommon words that are frequently confused, such as *discrete* and *discreet*) [SEC]
- Make careful distinctions among singular, singular possessive, plural, and plural possessive nouns based on an understanding of the context (e.g., noting that the article *the* establishes that the noun precedes is singular or singular possessive) [SEC]
- Make an informed decision about how or whether to use punctuation to set off one or more sentence elements based on an understanding of the context (e.g., determining whether an element is restrictive or nonrestrictive through a close reading of the context and then punctuating or not punctuating accordingly; using matching punctuation, such as two commas rather than a comma and a dash, to set off a nonrestrictive element) [SEC]
- Eliminate unnecessary punctuation in a challenging situation (e.g., between a long subject and the predicate; after a word or phrase, such as *including*, that sets up a list of examples) [SEC]

SCORE RANGE 35–40

A typical student in this score band can do the following:

- Make a sophisticated decision relating to the structure of a paragraph or passage (e.g., using a clause to set up information when the content is complex, the language is challenging, and the linkage is subtle) [COE, EOI]
- Use supporting information to develop a point or claim logically on the basis of a thorough understanding of a challenging context (e.g., indicating the last step in a complex sequence; including an example that is similar in content to one or more other examples in a paragraph) [COE, EOI]
- Sharpen the focus of a paragraph or passage by making a sophisticated decision about adding, revising, or deleting information or ideas (e.g., adding or retaining optional but relevant material because it enhances meaning and clarity) [COE, EOI]
- Interpret, paraphrase, or summarize data in an informational graphic, such as a table, graph, or chart, and incorporate them in a passage in an accurate, relevant way (e.g., encompassing multiple data points in a single relevant general statement) [COE, EOI]
- Place or order sentences in a paragraph to address a subtle or complex issue of logic or cohesion (e.g., deciding to reposition rather than delete a sentence that, when properly placed, improves the flow of ideas in a paragraph) [EOI]
- Use a transitional word, phrase, clause, or sentence to establish a subtle or complex logical relationship between sentences or paragraphs; recognize when such a device is not needed or is problematic (e.g., drawing on an understanding of the context to eliminate a word or phrase, such as *therefore*, that wrongly suggests a cause-effect relationship) [EOI]
- Make a sophisticated word or phrase choice based on highly developed vocabulary knowledge and a thorough understanding of a challenging context (e.g., distinguishing among uncommon words that have similar denotations but differing connotations or uses when the distinctions are subtle) [WIC, EOI]
- Eliminate subtle wordiness or redundancy within a sentence or between sentences and paragraphs (e.g., recognizing that a seemingly sophisticated but wordy expression is less effective than a simpler and more economical one; eliminating the second appearance of the same detail in successive paragraphs) [WIC, EOI]
- Make a sophisticated decision about style and tone in a passage based on a thorough understanding of the context (e.g., achieving a subtle rhetorical aim, such as closely matching a sentence pattern already established in a passage) [WIC, EOI]
- Combine sentences to accomplish a subtle or complex purpose (e.g., drawing on an understanding of the context to place a blended sentence's emphasis on its most important idea) [WIC, EOI]
- Form conventional, complete sentences, recognizing and correcting a subtle or complex disruption in structure (e.g., ensuring the completeness of a sentence with an uncommon structure, such as a sentence containing a subject clause beginning with *that*; correcting a minor and easily overlooked violation of parallelism, such as an extraneous or omitted preposition in a series of phrases) [SEC]
- Maintain subject-verb or pronoun-antecedent agreement in a highly challenging situation (e.g., ensuring agreement between subject and verb when the two are widely separated and when intervening text suggests a different number for the verb than the subject warrants) [SEC]
- Draw logical comparisons using like terms (e.g., *The cost of living in the city differs from that in the suburbs* instead of *The cost of living in the city differs from the suburbs*) [SEC]
- Use conventional expression in a highly challenging situation (e.g., selecting appropriately between uncommon words that are frequently confused, such as *defuse* and *diffuse*) [SEC]
- Use a semicolon to join two closely related independent clauses [SEC]
- Use a colon to introduce an elaboration (e.g., a list of examples; a noun phrase renaming a previously mentioned concept; an independent clause explaining a point introduced earlier in a sentence) [SEC]

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