

# TESTING ENGLISH PROFICIENCY IN THE CLASSROOM

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## INTRODUCTION

Despite the changing language situation in the Philippines, English continues to play a vital role in the achievement of our national and international objectives. It is the language of international communication, of scholarship, and of business. Global information is increasingly being disseminated in English so that to keep pace with change and new knowledge, we

need English. Also specialists agree that if we are to develop and progress as a nation, we have to raise our level of scientific and technological awareness; the transmission of science and technology is mainly through English. This points to the fact that Filipinos who can maximize their contribution to national development are the Filipinos who are proficient not only in the national language but also in English.

### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Recent developments in the field of linguistics have shown a need for a new approach to teaching English as a second language. Perhaps more important is the recognition of the need to interpret such developments at a workable or practical level both for teachers and students.

If students learn a language for communication, they should be able to use that language for what it is intended—communication. But is this always the case? How many students have gone in and out of English classrooms knowing the language system, knowing how it works, yet have found themselves unable to use the language in actual communication? In other words, how many students have become linguistically competent but communicatively incompetent? Mastery of linguistic forms does not guarantee communicative proficiency. Linguistic competence alone cannot account for language behavior in actual communication. If students are to acquire English as a tool for communication, they should be able to produce utterances which are not only grammatical but also acceptable in the social context. Speaking and writing are communicative acts which depend upon a knowledge of social relationships and social expectations. From this understanding, the speakers or writers then proceed to select ways of speaking or writing which are appropriate or specific to particular situations. They, therefore, need to know more than how to express ideas in grammatical sentences. They also need to know the culturally

acceptable ways of interacting with others, the appropriate levels of language to use in different situations, the strategies to use to negotiate information, the rules of behavior in oral communication, and the conventions of written communication. Furthermore, they need to know the use of English beyond the sentence level and learn the overall organizational plan of discourse whether spoken or written. In short, they must have grammatical, sociolinguistic discourse, and strategic competence. These are the components of communicative competence. Competence is the underlying system of knowledge and skills required for communication. Communication is the realization of that competence.

Canale and Swain (1980) give the contents and boundaries of each of these four areas. What follows is a brief discussion.

Grammatical competence is the mastery of the language itself—features and rules of vocabulary, word formation, sentence formation, pronunciation, spelling, and linguistic semantics. This competence “focuses directly on the knowledge and skill required to understand and express accurately the literal meaning of utterances.”

The key to sociolinguistic competence is appropriateness both of form and of meaning. Appropriateness of form refers to the extent to which a given meaning is represented in a verbal and/or non-verbal form that is acceptable in a given sociolinguistic context. Appropriateness of meaning refers to the “extent to which particular communicative functions, attitudes, and ideas are judged to be proper in a given situation.” The setting, status of participants, purposes of the interaction, and even cultural conventions are crucial factors to know to be sociolinguistically competent.

Discourse competence goes beyond the sentence level. It is the mastery of how to “combine grammatical forms and meanings to achieve a unified spoken or written text” be it a narrative, an essay, a speech, a business letter, or a scientific report. Unity of a

text is achieved through coherence in meaning and cohesion in form. Discourse competence includes mastery of the use of cohesion devices like pronouns, synonyms, ellipsis, conjunctions, and parallel structures. It also includes a knowledge or relationships among different meanings in a text and the logic of their organization.

Strategic competence is needed to do repairs when communication breaks down or to enhance the effectiveness of communication. What to do when one forgets a term or when one wants to facilitate the give and take in conversation, or how to achieve coherence in a text when one is not sure of what cohesive devices to use is part of strategic competence.

These four competencies are not developed separately or one at a time. How they can be made to interact or how they are developed simultaneously in a language teaching program is the task of second language instruction. In other words the application is left to the language teacher who prepares the syllabus and the instructional materials. The implementation of the syllabus in the classroom is reflected in the language tests given by the teacher. The language tests, therefore, can be judged by how well or how effectively they measure communicative competence.

The most recent development in language testing is the growing acceptance of pragmatic tests as valid and reliable measures of language proficiency. Language teachers have long been used to discrete-point testing; that is, the testing of one language item at a time. If we accept that the main purpose of language teaching is to enable learners to communicate in the language they are being taught, we cannot help questioning the validity of discrete-point tests. For instance, if the student gets perfect in the plural formation of nouns, in filling the blanks of isolated sentences with the correct tenses of verbs, or in clearly distinguishing between the use of *some* and *any*, what assurance is there that the student can use these forms in actual communication? Discrete-point tests usually become manipulative, contrived, and artificial. If the teacher

tests for the sake of testing, then her or his test will not trigger the student's internal grammar into activity. In other words, the test will not allow the creative construction process to work. If the teacher really wants to find out how much proficiency the student has achieved, she or he must give tests which call for the use of language in context. The tests must be natural and authentic requiring the use of correct forms in realizing the various language functions in actual communication. This points to the need for pragmatic tests. This does not mean, however, that discrete-point tests should not be given. They are important especially in the focusing on language forms. This means that the teachers should not stop with discrete-point tests, but lead the student from the manipulative to the communicative use of language. The teacher should proceed from the word or the sentence level to the total discourse. The teacher should provide the context or the communication situation in which the forms and functions of language are naturally used. For this reason, pragmatic tests are natural, authentic, and practical.

The underlying assumptions for pragmatic tests constitute the communicative competence theory. A serious consideration of this theory points out that pragmatic tests are a valid and reliable measure of global language proficiency. They provide the opportunity to integrate different language skills, forms, and functions. Thus, pragmatic tests are integrative tests. They bring into action the student's internalized grammar as she or he tries to predict what the speaker will say next in oral interaction or what the next message will be when the printed page is read.

Another theory which bears serious consideration in language testing is a theory of reading which has gained wide acceptance among reading scholars—the schema or organized knowledge of the world which enables him or her to comprehend, learn, and remember ideas and messages. Comprehension goes beyond simply knowing the meaning of a string of words or a group of clauses and sentences. Comprehension of meaning comes only when a reader or listener evolves a schema that explains the whole

message. It is the student's schema that enables him or her to assimilate information, select which items of information deserve more attention, make inferences, search meaning in an orderly way, facilitate editing and summarizing, and do inferential reconstruction in case of memory gaps. The schema theory has important implications in language teaching and provides a convincing argument for integrative pragmatic testing. By providing contexts for language forms and functions, the teacher not only activates the student's knowledge of the world but also avoids a mismatch of perspectives because the frame of reference established is explicit and precise. Care should be taken that there is no mismatch between the phrasing of the question resulting from the teacher's interpretation and the student's interpretation of the passage. If a mismatch takes place, the evaluation of student language proficiency may not be reliable.

Still another important point is that integrative pragmatic tests bring about not only a schema activation but also new schema construction.

## SPECIFICATIONS

### A. The Course

Freshman English continues to be part of the General Education Program of the University of the Philippines. It is mainly a tool course which aims to develop and sharpen student skills necessary for effective communication in the academic and socio-professional world. Effective academic year 1986-1987, its title was changed to Communication I and II (English): Communication Skills. The course description is: The development of communicative competence, with emphasis on reading, writing, and listening skills.

The objectives of the course are:

1. to develop reading skills in the various levels of competence
2. to develop advanced writing skills
3. to further enhance listening skills for academic purposes

B. The Student Profile

The students are college freshmen, 16 to 18 years of age, learning how "to perceive and structure the reality both within and without, and clarify the values and attitudes that characterize the fullness of human dignity, their full worth as persons." They are expected to develop a strong sense of nationalism and internationalism. These they do at the same time that they are developing communication skills necessary in the following communicative activities:

1. taking notes during a lecture, an interview, or a discussion
2. taking part in discussions or topics covering a wide range of subjects
3. studying textbooks and reference materials (like manuals, articles, journals, and monographs) in the classroom, library, laboratory, and private study
4. reading current literature (books, pamphlets, and periodicals) in one's own discipline and other related fields
5. reading to appreciate and evaluate literary works (novels, short stories, poems, plays, and essays)

6. summarizing or evaluating passages of factual, argumentative, or reflective prose
7. writing narrative, descriptive, or expository compositions where close attention must be expressed effectively, and facts and opinions must be handled carefully

C. Skills Usually Tested

1. Listening Skills

- a. Following oral instructions
- b. Determining the main idea of the material heard
- c. Noting significant specific details in the material heard
- d. Getting the meaning through the heard material
- e. Drawing inferences from the material heard
- f. Summarizing the material heard

2. Reading Comprehension Skills

- a. Using context clues to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words
- b. Knowing the different meanings of a word in different contexts (recognizing the precise meaning of a word in different contexts)
- c. Knowing how affixes modify the meanings of word-roots
- d. Getting the central or main idea of the material read
- e. Identifying supporting details
- f. Distinguishing relevant from irrelevant details
- g. Recognizing the pattern of organization of ideas in a text
- h. Drawing inferences from a text
- i. Predicting outcomes



- j. Distinguishing fact from opinion
- k. Distinguishing between formal and informal uses of language
- l. Understanding explicitly stated information
- m. Understanding implicit information found in inferences or in figurative language
- n. Understanding conceptual meaning
- o. Recognizing the communicative value of discourse
- p. Understanding the relations between parts of a text
- q. Understanding relations within sentences
- r. Understanding lexical and grammatical cohesion devices
- s. Extracting important points to summarize
- t. interpreting the text by going outside it
- u. Transcoding information from the material read
- v. Interpreting graphs, tables, or maps

### 3. Writing Skills

- a. Expressing information explicitly
- b. Expressing conceptual meaning
- c. Expressing relations within sentences
- d. Using lexical and grammatical cohesion devices
- e. Expanding the central idea with supporting details
- f. Organizing details in a discourse in their logical sequence
- g. Reconstituting notes into a summary or a discourse
- h. Transcoding information into writing
- i. Making an outline
- j. Writing descriptive, expository, and reflective essays
- k. Writing notes, letters, or posters
- l. Writing reports

D. Characteristics of the Test

1. The test is integrative and pragmatic.
2. It is based on the content and skills as specified in the goals and objectives of Communication I and II.
3. It is prepared within the framework of the theory of communicative competence and the schema theory.
4. It keeps to the naturalness criterion; that is, the items are found in situationalized contexts.
5. A great number of items are on the reading and writing skills since these are the skills that are given more emphasis in the teaching of Communication I and II. (There is a greater need for reading and writing skills among Filipino students.)

SAMPLE TESTS

A. Listening

*Skill: Following oral instructions*

1. Try this number puzzle. It works.
  - a. Write down the number of the month you were born (For example: If you were born in January, write 1; if you were born in August, 8.)
  - b. Multiply it by 2.
  - c. Add 5.
  - d. Multiply the sum by 50.
  - e. Add your age.
  - f. Subtract 250.

Look at the result. The last two digits on the right will be your age, and the one or two digits on the left will be the month you were born.

2. Directions: A set of directions will be given you. Follow each direction.
  - a. (This test may be useful in finding out the listening ability of students in allotting spaces and performing mechanical tasks.)
    - (1) Do not say a word at any point during this test. Get one-half sheet of pad paper.
    - (2) Observing one-inch margin, write the numbers 1 to 5 down the left hand side of the page, skipping every other line. You now have spaces between numbers.
    - (3) Write the word friend after number 1.
    - (4) Write the name of the high school you graduated from on space 1.
    - (5) Think of a Filipino hero or heroine. Write his or her name after number 2.
    - (6) Write the following numbers on space 4: 7, 18, 21, 53, 102.
    - (7) Ignore the following direction: Crumple your paper and throw it into the waste can.
    - (8) Give your paper to me.
  - b. (This test may be useful in finding out the listening ability of students of science.)
    1. Draw a straight horizontal line AB three centimeters long.
    2. Continue the line AB to point C so that AC is twice as long as AB.
    3. Draw a perpendicular line from point B. Mark this line D.
    4. Now draw a line AD until it meets a perpendicular at point D.
    5. Now join DC.



- (5) What kind of food might they have eaten?
- hamburger and French fries
  - adobo and sinigang
  - pizza and spaghetti
  - chow mien and Peking duck

*Skill: Listening for specific significant details*

4. Directions: You will hear a lecturette about one of our leaders. Listen for the qualities that made him great.

"Manuel Quezon was wise and his judgment was always influenced by facts. He knew and understood his fellow human beings, and the Filipino native sense of honesty and honor. He used that knowledge to direct the nation's affairs decisively and courageously."

"He was a true nationalist. His deeds stood in a way that would give the nation every opportunity to grow with the least interference from external forces."

Which of the following characteristics did Quezon possess?

Check the number.

- wise judgment
- honesty
- decisiveness
- nationalism
- courage
- opportunism
- independence of mind

*Skill: Determining the main idea of the material heard*

5. Read this list of phrases after reading each paragraph below.

- a. the color we cannot see
- b. a prairie fire
- c. millions of atoms in an inch
- d. a special way of feeling
- e. the colors of the rainbow
- f. the origin of the Manobos
- g. loving and sharing
- h. how to start a prairie fire
- i. inside the atom
- j. the first man and woman

You will hear five short paragraphs. Each paragraph will be read twice. As you listen, determine what each paragraph is about (main idea). From the list to be read after each paragraph, choose the letter that corresponds to the main idea of each paragraph.

(1) Love is a special way of feeling. It is the safe way we feel when we sit on our mother's lap with her arms around us tight and close. It is the good way we feel when we talk to someone and he or she wants to listen. It is the happy way we feel when we share our thoughts with a friend.

(2) A rainbow is red on one edge, violet on the other. Outside the violet is another color. It is something we cannot see at all. This invisible color is called the ultra-violet. Between the red and the violet are yellow, green, blue, and orange.

(3) Atoms are very, very small. They cannot be seen even with a powerful microscope. But other instruments can detect them, measure their size

and count them easily. It is easy to say how many atoms there are in any piece of material if we know what it is made of and how much it weighs. It is not easy to think of how many atoms there are all in all. It takes about a hundred million atoms laid in a row to make one inch.

- (4) The Manobo first man and woman were magnificent. They came from a dove's egg. They had three sons and a daughter. From these four children descended the ancestors of the Manobos.
- (5) As the afternoon advanced, the sun grew red like a great ball of fire. A scent of burning grass filled the air. The cattle were uneasy. The sun was a deeper red now. The smell of smoke grew stronger. I knew there was a prairie fire burning to the west.

B. Reading Comprehension

*Skills: Getting the main idea of the material read*  
*Identifying supporting details*  
*Drawing influences from a text*  
*Predicting outcomes*  
*Interpreting a text by going outside it*

1. Read the following paragraph:

Nadia does not seem to have enough time for studying. She says that the only way she can make herself study is right before a test. Otherwise, she does not study and things keep piling up. Most of the time, she is not in the mood to study. Sometimes she promises to spend at least two hours a day on studying. But 95% of the time, she does something else. Then,

she finds herself with only one night to prepare for two exams and a report.

Choose the expression that best completes each statement. Give the letter that corresponds to your choice.

1. The selection tells us that Nadia has trouble
  - a. coping with life
  - b. solving problems
  - c. managing her study time
  - d. dealing with her moods
  
2. With only one night to prepare for two exams and a report, Nadia has to
  - a. review
  - b. cram
  - c. study
  - d. go to bed early
  
3. Nadia is having problems with her studies because
  - a. she does not have enough time
  - b. she does not know how to use her time
  - c. she does not have the right mood
  - d. she has no time
  
4. Nadia is likely to
  - a. get failing grades
  - b. get high grades
  - c. succeed in her studies
  - d. achieve her goal
  
5. Nadia can solve her problem if she
  - a. does not get moody
  - b. learns to study all the time
  - c. learns how to cram
  - d. manages her study time wisely



2. Read this passage carefully and answer the questions that follow.

8:30 P.M.

Channel 8

"The Big Fish." Drama. A giant porpoise befriends a group of scuba divers and warns them of an impending tidal wave. Their efforts to stop the tragedy throw light on human intelligence  
Miriam Bass. Robert Trout. Luther Flounder. B & W.  
2hrs.

1. The above is an example of
  - a. a book review
  - b. a want ad
  - c. a TV listing
  - d. an editorial
  
2. The focus of interest of the movie is probably
  - a. the porpoise
  - b. the tidal wave
  - c. the divers
  - d. Miriam Bass
  
3. Miriam Bass most probably plays the role of
  - a. the porpoise
  - b. a scuba diver
  - c. the director
  - d. the producer
  
4. Which of the following is not found on the passage?
  - a. the director
  - b. what the movie is about
  - c. the actors
  - d. the time of the showing

5. According to the above passage, which of the following is not true?
  - a. A porpoise is a fishlike animal.
  - b. The movie will end at 10:30.
  - c. The movie is on Channel 8.
  - d. The movie is in color.

*Skill: Distinguishing fact from opinion*

3. Direction: Which of the following sentences express fact and which opinion? Put a check (✓) in the box.

	Fact	Opinion
1. The President has spent some time studying Philippine industry.		
2. Ramos was right to criticize government priorities.		
3. Ramos criticized government priorities.		
4. Philippine economy is controlled by multinational corporations.		
5. The management of our economy is often compared unfavorably with that of other countries.		
6. The board should spend some time reviewing economic policies.		
7. Many firms in the US practice "open management."		
8. Managers often fail to communicate with their work force.		
9. I question whether open management would improve our economy.		
10. Research has shown that "open management" improved our economy.		

*Skill: Distinguishing relevant from irrelevant details*

4. Directions: You are editing the Features section of a newspaper. Read the following reports. Find the sentences in each report which do not provide relevant details to the narrative. Encircle the letters that correspond to these irrelevant details.

1. (a) At 7:30 A.M. on March 28, 1979, there was a report of a severe accident in the No. 2 reactor at the Three Mile Island Nuclear Power Plant near Middletown, Pennsylvania. (b) Radioactive gases were escaping through the plant's venting system, and there was a large hydrogen bubble in the top of the reactor. (c) Are nuclear plants useful? (d) Nuclear experts announced the possibility of an explosion. (e) On March 30, twenty-three schools in the area were closed, and pregnant women and preschool children were ordered to leave the area. (f) Radiation produced by X-rays is also dangerous to unborn babies. (g) The crisis lasted thirteen days. (h) How is nuclear power produced?

2. (a) On the night of April 14, 1912, during its first trip from England to New York City, the Titanic struck an iceberg in the North Atlantic Ocean and sank. (b) The North Atlantic is now patrolled by the Coast Guard. (c) The tragedy occurred about 1,600 miles northeast of New York City. (d) The 66,000-ton ship was carrying 1,316 passengers and a crew of 891. (e) Have you ever ridden on a big ship? (f) There were not enough lifeboats for everybody, and hundreds of people jumped into the icy waters. (g) No one knew exactly how many people died.

*Skill: Distinguishing between formal and informal use of language.*

5. Directions: The following is made up of two speeches run together. One speech is formal and the other is informal. They were given as part of a ceremony of dedicating a military cemetery. After the selection, indicate by number the sentences which comprise each speech.

(1) I want to tell you folks that it is a great honor and privilege to talk to you folks here today. (2) Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. (3) Not that I'm trying to ask for votes. I never try to get votes on a solemn occasion like this. (4) Now we are engaged in a great civil war; testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and dedicated can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. (5) Of course, I'm running for office, and if you good people want to vote for me, there isn't any way I can stop you. (6) We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that nation might live. (7) It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. (8) I just want to add my two-bits worth to what the Senator, that great and good man, just told you. (9) I want you to think about these boys that are buried here. (10) They were good boys, The kind of boys you and I have for sons, and some of your girls have for sweethearts and husbands.

(11) But in a larger sense we cannot dedicate , we cannot consecrate, we cannot hollow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. (12) The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here; but it can never forget what they did here. (13) Were they highbrow crackpots, the kind of good-for-nothings that get hipped about high-falutin ideas, and go off half-cooked? No. (14) They were the kind of red-blooded Americans that have won every war we've ever fought. (15) It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work, which they who fought have thus far so nobly advanced. (16) One good American like these boys is worse than a dozen Japs, Huns, Krauts, Wops, or Commies. (17) Were they the kind of boys that would send our good American tax dollars out of the country to feed foreigners too lazy to work for a living? No. (18) It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us, that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they give the last full measure of devotion, that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth. (19) They were the kind of young Americans that bled and died for their country, as some young eggheads—puddin' heads, I call them—haven't the guts to do in this day and age. (20) Am I right or am I not right? Let's give the boys a big hand (applause).

- (a) Formal \_\_\_\_\_  
 (b) Informal \_\_\_\_\_

*Skills: Understanding relations between parts of a text  
Understanding lexical and grammatical cohesion  
devices*

6. Directions:

This is the last paragraph of Page 7 of your paper.

There is no greater wonder about sunbeams than photosynthesis, the process by which green leaves transform solar energy into food for all living things. In photosynthesis (synthesizing by means of light) the energies of sunlight are used to combine atoms taken from water and air into nourishing molecules of sugar. As a by-product, free oxygen is released to renew our life-giving atmosphere.

You had misplaced Page 8 and when you have found it on the floor, it had been cut to pieces. You must piece it together. In the space below, write the numbers of the pieces in their proper sequence.

(1)

is certain.

a hydrogen atom or

such as water. Or,

In fact, chlorophyll sets into

collide and bounce, come apart and recombine, gain

all with lightning speed. Oxygen spins off free.

faster the atoms spin until at last, the precious

which has traveled so far pushes carbon, hydrogen

together and comes to rest in this union it has

sugar—that marvelous food which stores the gift

is ready

(2)

(If foliage  
upon them, and

absorbed, it gives the chlorophyll  
spurring it into furious activity.

Many specific details are missing, but the general process  
The excited chlorophyll is able to forcibly extract  
an electron from a miserly hoarder of electrons  
it can give an extra electron to a shy receiver.  
motion a frantic dance. Molecules

(3)

Here's how it works. As waves of light zip down  
through the transparent roof of a leaf, they pierce  
the stacks of chlorophyll embedded in plates from top  
to bottom. The chlorophyll molecules instantly select  
the longer, orange-red rays, and the shorter, blue-violet  
rays of light are reflected out of the leaf. That  
is why leaves look green to us; we see only the reflected  
(or rejected) colors, not the ones that are absorbed.  
And grass absorbed all the light that falls  
Reflected none, they would look black

When the light energy is  
molecule a fantastic jolt,  
that happens?

(4)

or lose electrons,  
Faster and  
solar energy  
and oxygen  
created. Thus  
of the sunbeams-  
to feed all life.  
photosynthesis brings the world to  
lengthen, mature fantastic  
The tightly closed  
pour out their  
lain inert for(5)

(5)

When spring arrives,  
life. As the hours of the daylight  
solar machines spin silently in operation.  
shutters of the buds swing wide with accord to  
treasures of leaves and flowers. Seeds which had  
months crack open and thrust up tiny shoots vigorously that  
push aside tiny stones to break into the sunlight. A stir of  
renewed life fills the air; the great photosynthesis operation  
is in full swing again—as reliable as the  
rising sun!

Numbers \_\_\_\_\_

*Skill: Knowing how affixes modify the meanings of word-roots*



7. Direction: Rewrite the following sentences. Substitute an adjective derived from the noun or verb in the underlined expression. (Avoid using forms ending in "-ed" or "-ing".)

Example: When the object strikes a surface, it gives a sound like that of a metal.

Sentence: When the object strikes a surface, it gives a metallic sound.

- (1) In the leaf are players of cells visible only under a microscope whose function is to trap the energy of sunlight.
- (2) He needs more explanations on the theory about atoms.
- (3) Pressure of the atmosphere weighs down on the surface of the earth.
- (4) Is urine a substance with plenty of nitrogen?
- (5) When a small drop of mercury falls on a surface, it invariably takes a shape that looks like a sphere.
- (6) I wonder if you have read about the latest theory concerning molecules.
- (7) The edge of the sea is a strange place filled with beauty.
- (8) Some experiments reveal certain changes that can be defined.
- (9) The project has not gone beyond the stage of experiments. The delegates will take up problems relating to agriculture and technology.

- Skills: Getting the main idea of the text*  
*Identifying supporting details*  
*Understanding explicitly stated information*  
*Drawing inferences from a text*  
*Recognizing the pattern of the organization of ideas*  
*in a text*

8. Direction: Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow.

The Arctic and Antarctic, geographically at opposite ends of the world, are dissimilar in almost every particular. The Antarctic ice covers a base of rock; the Arctic ice floats on salt water. United States submarines have sailed several times to the North Pole and surfaced there for scientific observations and picture taking; the South Pole can be reached only by air or over the frozen surface. Although the north polar region is almost entirely landlocked, the south polar continent is far removed from most other land masses, a condition that allows the Antarctic current to circle with unhindered ferocity. Arctic storms are tamed by the surrounding continents, but Antarctic ones sweep unimpeded for thousand of miles. The Antarctic spans the big-league icebergs; these sometimes tower 200 feet above and 1500 feet below the water, and stretch for 30 miles.

The most significant difference between the Arctic and Antarctic is the presence or absence of life. Eskimos have dwelt for centuries upon the north polar ice, catching fish and hunting walrus and polar bear. In the Antarctic there is little animal life except for the dinner-jacketed penguin, and man can survive in the hostile environment only by importing tons of supplies.

- (1) The North Pole is accessible by submarine because
  - A. it is isolated from land masses
  - B. it is covered by nothing but floating ice
  - C. the surrounding sea is free of iceberg
  - D. there is an opening in its rock base
  
- (2) One might reach the South Pole by
  - A. airplane
  - B. ship
  - C. dog sled
  - D. either A or C
  
- (3) Antarctica has fiercer storms than the Arctic because
  - A. it has lower temperature
  - B. it is a landlocked sea
  - C. few land masses shelter it
  - D. it has no vegetation
  
- (4) Arctic animal includes
  - A. fish
  - B. walruses
  - C. polar bears
  - D. all of the above
  
- (5) When living in Antarctica, man must
  - A. hunt seal and walrus
  - B. import all his food
  - C. gather penguin eggs
  - D. subsist on plant life
  
- (6) The writer believes the Arctic and the Antarctic differ most
  - A. weather
  - B. land structure
  - C. ocean currents
  - D. present with abundant life

- (7) The Arctic and the Antarctic are both
- A. covered with ice
  - B. about the same size
  - C. equally hostile to man
  - D. presence of life
- (8) The writer's main purpose is to
- A. describe the Arctic way of life
  - B. show how the Arctic and the Antarctic differ
  - C. point out hardships in exploration
  - D. paint a bleak picture of the Antarctic
- (9) Implied but not stated:
- A. The Arctic and the Antarctic are different
  - B. Arctic icebergs are smaller
  - C. Submarines may reach the South Pole
  - D. Antarctic storms are fierce but brief
- (10) The selection is developed by
- A. definition
  - B. classification
  - C. enumeration of details
  - D. comparison and contrast

*Skills: Noting significant details*

*Recognizing the communicative value of discourse*

*Understanding the implicit information*

9. Directions: Read this passage and answer the questions that follow.

Floating on the ocean's surface, the Portuguese man-of-war looks like a lump of pale green or blue jelly. Its poisonous tentacles, which are sometimes as long as thirty feet, dangle in the water like the strings. When an unlucky sea creature blunders against these strings, it will be stunned by the poison and on the way to becoming a meal for one of the ocean's strangest inhabitants.

The man-of-war is actually not a single creature, but an interrelated colony of many tiny animals. These animals function in special ways. Broadly, their jobs fall into four categories. One group forms the float that supports the colony in the water; another, the stomach; a third, the stinging tentacles that capture food. A fourth carries on the activities of reproduction. The colony is well organized as a beehive, and each animal performs its function for the common welfare.

The man-of-war has a strange camp follower—the little parasitic *Nomeus grovoni*, which lives among the tentacles. Immune to the poison, it feeds on table scraps from the meals of its unwitting protector.

Adapted from the *Book of Seven Seas*  
By Peter Prouche

- (1) The man-of-war is made up of
- A. hundreds of unlike animals
  - B. many animals with four types of functions
  - C. four distinct animals
  - D. four separate body organisms

- (2) The man-of-war's float supports the
- A. tentacles
  - B. stomach
  - C. parasites
  - D. entire creature
- (3) Getting food for the man-of-war is an important function of the
- A. float
  - B. parasites
  - C. tentacles
  - D. both B and C
- (4) According to the article, each member of the man-of-war works
- A. for the common good
  - B. only for its own benefit
  - C. at cross purposes with other members
  - D. for other sea creatures
- (5) The writer compares the appearance of the man-of-war to
- A. a sponge
  - B. a lump of jelly
  - C. a mass of seaweed
  - D. an octopus
- (6) The man-of-war's tentacles may dangle as deep as
- A. 10 feet
  - B. 15 feet
  - C. 30 feet
  - D. 60 feet

- (7) A creature that touches the tentacles is
- A. entangled
  - B. stunned
  - C. squeezed to death
  - D. all of the above
- (8) In relation to the man-of-war, the Nomeus grovoni is a
- A. guest
  - B. host
  - C. servant
  - D. protector
- (9) The author compares the man-of-war to a beehive on the basis of its
- A. size
  - B. appearance
  - C. organization
  - D. defense mechanism
- (10) The essay is mainly
- A. narrative
  - B. descriptive
  - C. expository
  - D. argumentative

*Skill: Eliminating irrelevant items*

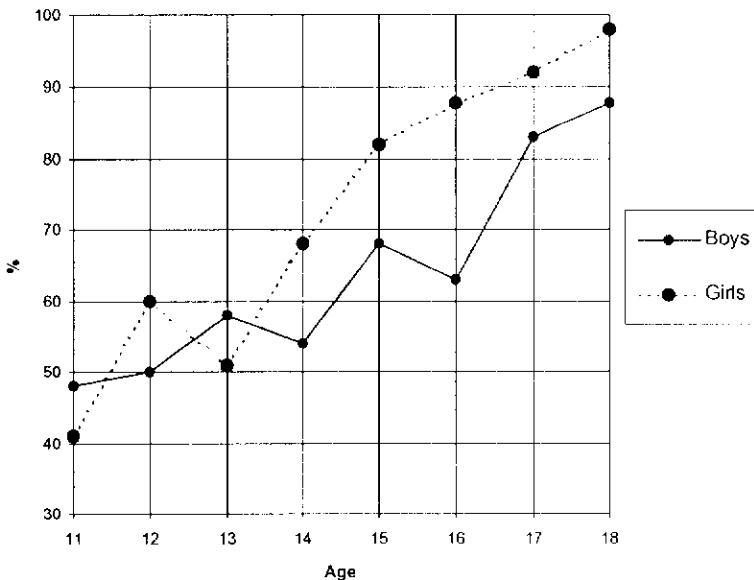
10. Directions: The following paragraph defines a friend. Cross out the words that do not belong to the paragraph.

A friend girl is a special person. A friend was can be anybody—a boy or a girl, young or old, rich and or poor. Even without words, we understand how when a friend feels, and he understands how we feel. We know

we have been found a friend because we are not alone anymore, and but there is no sadness inside us.

*Skill: Interpreting graphs*

11. Directions: Study this line graph. It shows the relationship between the person's chronological age and the percentage of boys and girls who chose the same person as their best friend on two occasions separated by a month's interval. The 1000 subjects used in this study came from families in Metro Manila who are of approximately average socio-economic status.





Indicate whether the statement is *True* or *False* according to the graph.

- (1) The greatest difference between boys and girls in their ability to maintain stable friendships occurs at the age of 16.
- (2) The smallest difference between boys and girls in their ability to have lasting friendships occurs at the age of 11.
- (3) The overall and most significant conclusion that can be drawn from the graph is that as boys and girls grow older, they show a marked tendency toward increased stability in friendship.
- (4) Girls of age 13 have more lasting friendships than boys of the same age.
- (5) At the age of 15, boys and girls are almost equal in their ability to keep friends.

*Skill: Carrying out a communicative function. (parallel writing)*

### C. Writing

1. Directions: The following paragraph from an advice column in a popular newspaper uses reverse psychology. You do not believe it will work with most students in college. Positive advice works better. Change the paragraph so that it gives advice on how to pass a test.

" You will surely fail a test if you follow some simple advice. First, you should read the textbook only because

you are forced to do it. Do not look for important ideas in the text. Do not take any notes. Then, when you read the material, you should be distracted by noise around you. You should watch television or listen to loud music while studying. Finally, you should show up for the test late, and forget to bring a pen or pencil. Keep telling yourself you will not pass the test."

2. Directions: First, read this short composition about earthquakes. Then, rewrite Paragraph 3 so that instead of describing what happens, you predict what will happen?
  - (1) According to modern scientists, earthquakes can be explained by mobile platelike segments which cover the surface of the earth.
  - (2) There are a dozen or more of these large, restless plates, which are each about seventy miles thick. They move slightly each year due to unknown forces deep within the earth. The places where these plates meet are called fault lines and are generally earthquake areas.
  - (3) What happens when there is an earthquake? First, two or more plates bump against each other with great force. If the plates lock together, as they often do, pressure builds up. When the pressure becomes very strong, the earth cracks. The energy is then released in a burst of shocks, which can often be felt for great distances. Then, it results in collapse of buildings, landslides, floods, fires, tidal waves, and other destructive phenomena.

*Skill: Using cohesion devices effectively*

3. Direction: After reading this paragraph, write the appropriate connector or transition word on each blank. Choose your connector from this list.

Then                      Finally                      Later  
First                      Next

\_\_\_\_\_, Emil skimmed through Chapter 3. \_\_\_\_\_, he read it over again carefully. As he read, he looked for the main idea of each paragraph. \_\_\_\_\_, he skimmed through Chapters 1 and 2 in his textbook and reviewed his notes. \_\_\_\_\_, he tried to imagine what questions the teacher would ask.

*Skill: Expressing the topic sentence explicitly in writing*

4. Directions: Read each passage carefully. From the list following the paragraph, encircle the letter that corresponds to the topic sentence that best expresses the main idea of that paragraph. Then, put an asterisk (\*) on the place in the paragraph where the topic sentence should be written.

(1) People attending his eight lectures with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra on CBS-TV this year will probably total well over seventy-five million. His viewers include musical know-nothings and know-it-alls, long-hairs and crew-cuts, distinguished professional musicians and year-olds-all equally fascinated by Bernstein, who may in one hour touch on the blues as well as Bach, ragtime show tunes, as well as Verdi operas and Beethoven symphonies. Half the programs are for young people, half for adults.

- a. Thus, Leonard Bernstein has become music teacher to the whole nation.
- b. In short, Leonard Bernstein has made himself very popular.
- c. Leonard Bernstein loves music—from Bach to boogie woogie.

2. Nothing else that man builds ever lasts. Monuments fall, nations perish, civilizations grow old and die out, and after an era of darkness, new races build others. In the world of books, however, are volumes that have seen this happen again and yet live on, still young, still as fresh as the day they were written, still telling men's hearts of the hearts of men centuries dead.

- a. Books are more lasting than monuments and nations.
- b. The world of books is the most remarkable creation of man.
- c. Men write books for other men to read.

*Skill: Reconstituting notes into a text on discourse*

5. Directions: Here are some notes written by your mother before she was hospitalized. She has asked you to write the letter for her. Without adding any information, rewrite the notes in the form of a letter. Each line of notes should be a single complete sentence.

Dear Jan,

Not seen you long time

We happy moved to farm

fed up with the city

in city—traffic, noise, no time relax

on farm—life slower, more peaceful  
walk across fields, swim in river  
children enjoy fresh air  
they climb trees, make new friends  
people helpful, kind, friendly  
but we miss friends in Manila  
we miss you, especially  
come see us soon  
we all look forward see you again

Love

*Skill: Organize details or parts of a text in logical sequence*

6. Directions: Arrange the following sentences into a paragraph:
- (1) Then, there is the national stage when a country becomes aware of its many possibilities in music in the interpretation of national ideals.
  - (2) There is the educational stage when composers learn their art from other countries.
  - (3) Finally, there is the universal stage when a nation, with a fully developed national style, expresses humanity as a whole.
  - (4) According to Felipe de Leon, there are three stages in the musical growth of a nation.
7. Direction: You are the editor. This story was given to you for final approval before it is featured in your magazine. You discover the layout is wrong. Put the paragraphs in their proper order.

The Recital

1. Not knowing what to do, she finally decided to see Liszt and tell him the truth. Nervously, she gained admittance to his room and with tears streaming down her face and with her hands clasped, began her confession, explaining that she was an orphan, that her only means of earning a livelihood was her musical ability, and that she had pretended to be his pupil in order to win recognition.

2. Very timidly the girl obeyed. She faltered at first, but she grew confident as she went on. She played marvelously, but Liszt corrected her on one or two points, and then said: "My dear, I have now taught you a little. You are a pupil of Liszt. You may go on with your concert; since you tell me that program is not yet printed, you may add that the last piece will be played, not by the pupil, but by the teacher."

3. A young girl in a small German town had advertised a piano recital, and on the posters she had added the information (quite untrue) that she was a pupil of Franz Liszt.

4. Liszt looked at her with kindly eyes. "You have done wrong," he said. "But we all make mistakes, and then the only thing left for us to do is to be sorry. I think you are sorry. Let me hear you play."

5. The day before the recital, the great composer himself arrived in town. The young pianist was terrified. For months she had been masquerading as his pupil. Now her deception would be discovered, and all her hopes of making a living would inevitably be lost.

8. Directions: Mario wrote this letter of application. Fortunately his small sister cut it up into pieces. Write the letter again and put the parts in their proper places.

I would be very glad to call you at your office for an interview at any time convenient for you. Should you prefer to call me up, my telephone number is 922-44-66.

Mr. Casimiro Santos  
Institute of Technology  
Far Eastern University  
Manila

*13 Sto. Sepulcro  
Paco, Manila*

Mr. Alberto Campa  
Bert's Caltex Station and Garage  
Sta. Ana, Manila  
663 Herran St.

*Dear Mr. Gomez*

Mr. Manuel Agena  
Acme Builders, Inc.  
Makati, Rizal

Yours very truly,

February 29, 1992

Mr. Carlos Dumarán, one of the engineers on your staff, has informed me that you will need several truck drivers for your road construction jobs this summer. I wish to apply for a job as gravel truck driver.

I am twenty years old, five feet five inches tall, and in excellent health. I am single .

I am finishing my second year in Mechanical Engineering at Far Eastern University. I have been doing very well in my Mathematics and Physics subjects. After my graduation from high school, I spent my weekends and vacations working for

Bert's Caltex Station and garage, where I learned a great deal about the operation, service, and maintenance of various types of trucks. Then last summer, I had a job with the Acme Builders for whom I drove gravel trucks and cement mixers. I believe that my experience should qualify me for the job I am applying for.

Mr. Antonio M. Gomez  
Personal Manager  
Private Development Corporation of the Philippines  
2729 Pasong Tamo  
Makati, Rizal

MARIO SALASAR

Regarding my character and ability, the following have given me permission to use their name as references.

*Skill: demonstrate global proficiency*

### Cloze Test

Directions: After the second sentence, every seventh word is deleted. Complete the essay by supplying the missing words. Remember that only one word is needed in each blank.

### The University Library

One of the most important resources of any university is the library. Every student, therefore, should make it a point to familiarize himself with it. First of all, he should be \_\_\_\_\_ with its location. Where is it \_\_\_\_\_? Every \_\_\_\_\_ should know the different sections \_\_\_\_\_ the library. Where is the card \_\_\_\_\_ placed? Where are the periodicals? How \_\_\_\_\_ the general references? He can learn \_\_\_\_\_ of these by studying the floor \_\_\_\_\_ of the library if there is \_\_\_\_\_.



Second, the student should know what \_\_\_\_\_ library offers. If he needs a \_\_\_\_\_, all he has to do is \_\_\_\_\_ the card catalog, using either the \_\_\_\_\_, the title, or the subject as \_\_\_\_\_ point of reference. If on the \_\_\_\_\_ hand, he needs a newspaper, he \_\_\_\_\_ to consult the periodical index. Both \_\_\_\_\_ these are alphabetically arranged to make \_\_\_\_\_ easier for him to find what \_\_\_\_\_ needs.

Third, every student should know \_\_\_\_\_ rules and regulations. How can he \_\_\_\_\_ books? How many can he borrow \_\_\_\_\_ a time? How long can he \_\_\_\_\_ them? What happens if he loses a \_\_\_\_\_ or returns it after the due \_\_\_\_\_? Every student should know these rules \_\_\_\_\_ regulations. Should he break any of \_\_\_\_\_ rules, he will have to suffer \_\_\_\_\_ penalty, which is either paying a \_\_\_\_\_ or losing his privileges.

Finally, the \_\_\_\_\_ needs to know how he can \_\_\_\_\_ his privileges. What steps does \_\_\_\_\_ follow to check out a book overnight? Every student must know the answers to these questions if he wants to enjoy the library privileges he is entitled to as a student of the university.

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