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Pre-Professional Skills Test (PPST) - Writing Section

Test Prep PRAXIS-Writing-Section

Version Demo

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QUESTION NO: 1

Determine whether the underlined portion of the sentence below is correct or whether it needs to be revised. Choose the correct option.

Study the ancient fighting art of Hapkido and you will learn to avoid directly matching your strength against your opponents.

A. your strength against your opponents.

B. yours against your opponent.

C. your strength against your opponent.

D. your strength with your opponent.

E. your opponent's strength against one's own.

ANSWER: A

Explanation:

your strength against your opponents. is correct because it expresses a clear, complete comparison: the reader's strength is the thing being matched, and the opponents are the people against whom that strength would be matched. The possessive determiner *your* consistently addresses the reader, while the plural noun *opponents* appropriately allows for one or more adversaries. This construction also fits the meaning of the sentence. The phrase *matching your strength against your opponents* describes confronting opponents through direct force; the sentence explains that studying Hapkido teaches a person to avoid that approach. The wording is concise and grammatically sound, with the preposition *against* clearly showing opposition or direct confrontation. In sentence-revision questions, a correct answer must preserve both grammatical relationships and the intended meaning without creating ambiguity. Here, the noun phrase identifies exactly what belongs to the reader and exactly whom the reader would confront. For guidance on clear pronoun reference and agreement, see the Purdue Online Writing Lab's pronoun-agreement guidance. ETS also provides preparation materials for the Praxis writing assessment at Praxis Preparation Materials.

QUESTION NO: 2

Determine whether the underlined portion of the sentence below is correct or whether it needs to be revised. Choose the correct option.

Most of my favorite movies contain slapstick humor, however physical comedy is not the only way to make me laugh.

A. slapstick humor, however physical comedy is not

B. slapstick humor, but physical comedy is not

C. slapstick humor, and physical comedy is not

D. slapstick humor; physical comedy is not

E. slapstick humor, but it is not physical comedy that is

ANSWER: B

Explanation:

The revision *slapstick humor, but physical comedy is not* is correct because it joins two complete, closely related ideas with a comma followed by the coordinating conjunction *but*. The first clause states that most of the writer's favorite movies include slapstick humor. The second clause states that physical comedy is not the writer's only source of laughter. *But* clearly signals the intended contrast: although the writer enjoys physical humor, the writer can also be amused in other ways. This construction creates a grammatically complete compound sentence and preserves the original meaning in a concise form. A comma before *but* is appropriate here because each side of the conjunction contains an independent clause: "Most of my favorite movies contain slapstick humor" and "physical comedy is not the only way to make me laugh." Standard punctuation guidance recognizes a comma plus a coordinating conjunction as a correct way to connect independent clauses, particularly

when the relationship between them is contrast. See the Purdue Online Writing Lab guidance on commas with independent clauses and the ETS Praxis writing preparation materials.

QUESTION NO: 3

Identify the error in the following sentence:

To who should I mail the payment for our new refrigerator and stove?

A. who

B. I

C. and

D. stove?

E. No error

ANSWER: A

Explanation:

The error is **who**. In this question, the pronoun follows the preposition “to,” so it must be in the objective case. The correct revision is: “To **whom** should I mail the payment for our new refrigerator and stove?” A useful way to verify the form is to restate the sentence as an answer: “I should mail the payment to him.” Because “him,” rather than “he,” is appropriate after “to,” the corresponding interrogative pronoun is “whom,” rather than “who.” The question’s word order does not change the pronoun’s grammatical role: “whom” remains the object of the preposition “to,” even though it appears at the beginning of the question. Standard edited English preserves this distinction, particularly in formal writing and in questions where the pronoun directly follows a preposition. Purdue OWL explains that “whom” is used as the object of a verb or preposition, while “who” is used for subjects: Purdue OWL: Who vs. Whom. Merriam-Webster also notes the traditional objective use of “whom”: Who vs. Whom.

QUESTION NO: 4

Determine whether the underlined portion of the sentence below is correct or whether it needs to be revised. Choose the correct option.

“I didn’t hear you.” she exclaimed.

A. No error

B. hear you!” she

C. hear you,” she

D. hear you:” she

E. hear you.” She

ANSWER: C

Explanation:

The correct revision is **“I didn’t hear you,” she exclaimed.** The words *she exclaimed* function as a dialogue tag: they identify the speaker and describe how the quoted words were spoken. When a dialogue tag follows a complete spoken statement, standard American punctuation places a comma inside the closing quotation mark before the tag. The tag begins with lowercase *she* because it remains part of the same sentence rather than beginning an independent sentence. Thus, the quotation, comma, closing quotation mark, and attribution work together as one correctly punctuated unit. This convention makes the relationship between the spoken words and the speaker clear and is the form expected in formal edited writing

and on writing-skills assessments. Guidance on punctuating quotations and integrating speaker attributions is available from the Purdue Online Writing Lab's quotation-mark guide and the MLA Style Center's dialogue-punctuation guidance.

QUESTION NO: 5

Determine whether the underlined portion of the sentence below is correct or whether it needs to be revised. Choose the correct option.

Learning a new language can be difficult for people after one reaches a certain age; abilities needed to retain and apply new linguistic information deteriorate with time.

A. after one reaches a certain age

B. after they reach a certain age

C. after they reaches certain ages

D. after it reaches a certain age

E. after you reach a certain age

ANSWER: B

Explanation:

after they reach a certain age is correct because it maintains clear pronoun reference and grammatical agreement with the general plural noun *people*. The sentence discusses people as a group rather than identifying one particular individual. Using *they* appropriately refers back to that general group, and the plural verb *reach* agrees with *they*. The phrase *a certain age* also expresses the intended idea: each person may encounter greater difficulty after reaching an unspecified threshold of age. The individuals need not reach that threshold at the same time or at identical chronological ages; the singular noun phrase works idiomatically to describe a general condition that can apply separately to members of a group. This revision also preserves the sentence's formal, objective tone while avoiding an unnecessary shift from the plural antecedent *people* to an indefinite singular reference. Standard English grammar requires pronouns to have clear antecedents and verbs to agree with their subjects. For guidance on pronoun agreement and reference, see the Purdue Online Writing Lab's pronoun-agreement guidance and the ETS Praxis Writing preparation materials.

QUESTION NO: 6

Identify the error in the following sentence:

He wasn't going to not say anything, until it became clear that this would be impossible.

A. wasn't

B. say anything

C. it became

D. impossible

E. No error

ANSWER: A

Explanation:

The error is *wasn't*, because in this test-preparation context it combines with *not* and *anything* to produce an improper multiple-negative construction: "wasn't going to not say anything." Formal edited English generally avoids stacking negatives when the intended meaning can be stated directly and clearly. The sentence should express the intended positive idea—for example, that he was going to say something—without using *wasn't* together with *not* and the negative-polarity word *anything*. Clear negative construction is important in PPST/Praxis writing questions because unnecessary or nonstandard

multiple negatives can obscure the sentence's meaning and violate conventions of standard written English. The Purdue Online Writing Lab's guidance on negatives explains that double negatives should be avoided in standard English because they can create confusion. For additional grammar guidance on negative expressions and their meanings, see the Cambridge Dictionary Grammar: Negation resource.

QUESTION NO: 7

Identify the error in the following sentence:

When a person is hired at that company, they have to participate in at least six months of orientation with a trainer before working alone.

A. is hired

B. they

C. at least

D. working

E. No error

ANSWER: E

Explanation:

No error is correct. In contemporary standard English, singular *they* is an established and widely accepted pronoun for referring to an individual whose gender is unknown, unspecified, or irrelevant. Here, "a person" identifies an indefinite single employee, and "they have to participate" clearly refers back to that employee. The plural verb form *have* is the standard form used with singular *they*, just as it is with plural *they*. This construction avoids needlessly assigning a gender and reads naturally in a general workplace-policy statement. The sentence is also structurally sound: "is hired" correctly forms the passive verb phrase, "at least six months" correctly expresses the minimum duration, and "before working alone" clearly states when independent work may begin. Modern editorial and academic style guidance recognizes singular *they* as grammatically valid. For example, the APA's style guidance discusses using singular *they* for a person whose pronouns are unknown or who uses *they/them* pronouns, and Merriam-Webster documents its long-standing use for a single person. See APA Style: Singular "They" and Merriam-Webster: A Brief History of Singular 'They'.

QUESTION NO: 8

Determine whether the underlined portion of the sentence below is correct or whether it needs to be revised. Choose the correct option.

In the last fifty years, those who from the ground up built the business have been replaced by a new generation.

A. No error

B. those whose business was ground up

C. those who built the business from the ground up

D. in which the business was built from the ground up

E. those who built the business ground

ANSWER: C

Explanation:

those who built the business from the ground up is the best revision because it presents the relative clause in a clear, natural order: the pronoun *who* is followed directly by its verb, *built*, and then by the verb's object, *the business*. The idiomatic prepositional phrase *from the ground up* follows the complete action it modifies, making its connection to *built*

immediate and easy to understand. This order avoids interrupting the core subject-verb relationship within the clause and gives the sentence a smoother rhythm. In formal edited prose, placing modifying phrases where readers can readily identify the word or action they describe promotes clarity and readability. The revised wording preserves the intended meaning: these individuals established and developed the business from its earliest stages. Guidance on effective modifier placement and sentence clarity is available from the Purdue Online Writing Lab's sentence-clarity resources. The use of a relative pronoun such as *who* to introduce a clause describing people is also consistent with the Merriam-Webster grammar guidance on who.

QUESTION NO: 9

Determine whether the underlined portion of the sentence below is correct or whether it needs to be revised. Choose the correct option.

For homes in typically colder geographic regions, it is particularly important to have effective and efficient heating systems.

A. For homes in typically colder geographic regions

B. For people in homes in typically colder geographic regions

C. For homes in typically cold geographic regions

D. People in typically colder geographic regions

E. Homes in typically colder geographic regions

ANSWER: C

Explanation:

"For homes in typically cold geographic regions" is correct because *cold* describes the usual climate of the regions without requiring any stated basis for comparison. The sentence is making a general statement about homes located in regions that are characteristically cold, so the descriptive adjective precisely conveys the intended meaning. By contrast, a comparative form such as *colder* normally calls for an explicit or clearly established comparison—for example, colder than coastal regions or colder than the surrounding areas. In this sentence, no comparison group is supplied, so the noncomparative adjective is the appropriate choice.

The revised opening also maintains the sentence's logical focus on homes and their heating systems. The introductory phrase identifies the homes affected by the statement, while the main clause explains the importance of those homes having heating systems that work effectively and use energy efficiently. This produces a clear, idiomatic construction appropriate for formal written English. Guidance on adjective comparison notes that comparative adjectives are used to compare two items or groups; see Purdue OWL's discussion of adjectives and adverbs. The Cambridge Dictionary grammar guide on comparative adjectives likewise explains the role of comparative forms in expressing comparison.

QUESTION NO: 10

Determine whether the underlined portion of the sentence below is correct or whether it needs to be revised. Choose the correct option.

Listen to you're parents; they know more than you might think.

A. No error

B. you're parents

C. you're parents, "

D. your parents,"

E. your parents;

ANSWER: E

Explanation:

your parents; is correct because *your* is the possessive determiner needed to show that the parents belong to or are associated with the listener. In the sentence, it modifies the noun *parents*: “your parents.” The apostrophe form *you’re* is a contraction meaning “you are,” so it cannot correctly function as the possessive modifier before *parents*. The revised punctuation is also appropriate. “Listen to your parents” is an imperative independent clause with an understood subject, *you*, and “they know more than you might think” is another independent clause. A semicolon properly joins these closely related complete thoughts without adding a coordinating conjunction. This creates a clear relationship between the advice to listen and the reason supporting that advice. Standard English usage distinguishes possessive pronouns and determiners from contractions, and standard punctuation permits a semicolon between closely connected independent clauses. See the Purdue OWL guidance on semicolons and the Merriam-Webster explanation of “your” versus “you’re”.