



# PRAXIS-WRITING-SECTION<sup>Q&As</sup>

Pre-Professional Skills Test (PPST) - Writing Section

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## QUESTION 1

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

McCarthyism was an ideology and an applied pursuit that arose in the middle of the twentieth century and targeted communists in the United States state department.

- A. McCarthyism was an ideology and an applied pursuit that arose in the middle of the twentieth century and targeted communists in the United States state department
- B. McCarthyism was an ideology, an applied pursuit that arose in the middle of the twentieth century, targeted communists in the United States state department
- C. McCarthyism was an ideology and an applied pursuit that arose in the middle of the twentieth century and targeted Communists in the United States state department
- D. McCarthyism will be an ideology and an applied pursuit that arose in the middle of the twentieth century and targeted communists in the United States
- E. McCarthyism was an ideology and an applied pursuit that arose in the middle of the twentieth century and targeted communists in the United States State department

Correct Answer: E

Explanation: The original choice is wrong strictly for the lack of capitalization of "State Department." Choice "McCarthyism was an ideology, an applied pursuit that arose in the middle of the twentieth century, targeted communists in the United States state department" complicates problems more than "McCarthyism was an ideology and an applied pursuit that arose in the middle of the twentieth century and targeted communists in the United States state department" by deleting certain words that turn the sentence into a run-on sentence. Choice "McCarthyism was an ideology and an applied pursuit that arose in the middle of the twentieth century and targeted Communists in the United States state department" fails to capitalize "State Department" (it needs to be capitalized because it is a proper noun -- the United States State Department, not just "a state department"). Although choice "McCarthyism will be an ideology and an applied pursuit that arose in the middle of the twentieth century and targeted communists in the United States" corrects the capitalization error, it changes "was" to "will be," which is an illogical verb tense (i.e. future) because later in the sentence it is stated that the ideology arose "in the middle of the twentieth century," which has already passed. Choice "McCarthyism was an ideology and an applied pursuit that arose in the middle of the twentieth century and targeted communists in the United States State department" corrects the capitalization error and leaves the sentence as it is. Sometimes just minor changes are needed.

## QUESTION 2

Identify the error in the following sentence:

Adam\\'s scissors isn\\'t sharp enough to cut the fabric correctly.

- A. Adam\\'s
- B. isn\\'t
- C. enough
- D. correctly



E. No error

Correct Answer: B

Explanation: The correct answer is "isn't" because the verb "isn't" doesn't agree with the subject "scissors." It's pretty obvious that "scissors isn't" doesn't sound correct when spoken aloud; you would naturally say "scissors aren't" if you were describing the condition of Adam's scissors. However, you've undoubtedly learned from other examples that you can't always trust what sounds right to your ear. This sentence is especially tricky because "scissors" is singular noun, so you might be tempted to think that "isn't" is the correct verb. However, there are a few words, like "scissors" and "pants," that act like plural nouns even when there is just one of them. Like all grammar rule exceptions, these singular nouns that behave like plural nouns have to be memorized.

### QUESTION 3

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

The final two competitors were Susan, that was considered the challenger, and Gail, the defending champion.

- A. No error
- B. Susan, whom was considered the challenger,
- C. Susan, which was considered the challenger,
- D. Susan, considered the challenger,
- E. Susan, who was considered the challenger,

Correct Answer: E

Explanation: Susan is a person, so the appropriate pronoun is who.

### QUESTION 4

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

At seventeen he shipped as a cabin boy, bound for Liverpool.

- A. No error
- B. a cabin boy; bound
- C. a cabin boy: bound for
- D. a cabin boy -- bound for
- E. a cabin boy -- for bound

Correct Answer: A

Explanation: Comma is required to separate the clause.

**QUESTION 5**

Identify the error in the following sentence:

Because Juan had never been stung before, he had no way to foresee the life-threatening effect the bee sting would have on him.

- A. had never been stung
- B. he
- C. effect
- D. him
- E. No error

Correct Answer: E

Explanation: The correct answer is "No error" because there is no error in this sentence. One commonly misused word found in this example is "effect," which is often confused with "affect." In general, "effect" is a noun and "affect" is a verb. In this sentence "effect" is used correctly as a noun: it is the thing that happened to Juan after he was stung by the bee.

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**QUESTION 6**

Identify the error in the following sentence:

Its very important to read and absorb the stories of classic dramas written by the Greek and English playwrights for the universal messages of humanity and ambition.

- A. Its
- B. written by
- C. playwrights
- D. messages of
- E. No error

Correct Answer: A

Explanation: Part A is wrong as it is the incorrect form of it/its/it's. "Its" is the way to discuss possession. For example, if you were talking negatively about your local government you could say "Its last two years in office were spent drowning in corruption and inefficiency." However, if you use "it's" then you are using the contracted form (when an apostrophe and s are used) to mean "it is." This contract form is necessary here because the sentence should read "It is very important..."

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**QUESTION 7**

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

Correct Answer: C

Explanation: A comma is necessary if an attribution is going to be made.

### QUESTION 8

Identify the error in the following sentence:

Although James would rather walk to work then ride the bus, the sidewalks in his neighborhood were still covered with ice from the most recent winter storm.

- A. would rather
- B. then
- C. were still covered
- D. most recent E. No error

Correct Answer: B

Explanation: The correct answer is "then" because the word "then" has been used instead of "than." Though many people use these words interchangeably, the two words have different functions and cannot be used in place of each other in grammatically correct writing. "Then" is a measure of time; it tells the reader when something will occur. For example, I'll eat lunch and then go to the store. "Than" is used to compare people or things. For example, Mary likes Pedro more than Edward. To correct the sentence above, change "then" to "than" to show the comparison between walking to work and riding the bus.

### QUESTION 9

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

Who knows who will be the winner?

- A. No error
- B. Whom knows who



- C. Who knew whom
- D. Who knows whom
- E. Whom knows whom

Correct Answer: A

Explanation: Since in both cases who is being used as the subject of a clause, this form is correct.

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### QUESTION 10

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

Lindsey knows that the reason people dislike her is because of her being a Philadelphia Phillies fan.

- A. is because of her being a
- B. is because she is a
- C. is that she is a
- D. is her being a
- E. is that of her being a

Correct Answer: C

Explanation: "is because of her being a", "is her being a", and "is that of her being a" all use "being" incorrectly. "is because she is a" is redundant and therefore not concise: you don't need to say "the reason" and "because," one or the other will do.

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### QUESTION 11

Identify the error in the following sentence:

Every farmer knows that baling wet grass is dangerous because heat can build in a tightly packed bale and starts a fire.

- A. Every
- B. baling
- C. tightly
- D. starts
- E. No error

Correct Answer: D

Explanation: The correct answer is "starts" because the tense of the verb "starts" doesn't agree with the rest of the sentence, even though it may seem to agree with "knows" at first glance. Note, however, that "know" has to agree with



"farmer" while "starts" describes the action of "heat" and must agree with that noun instead. Changing "starts" to "start" will correct the problem.

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### QUESTION 12

Identify the error in the following sentence:

Julia loves working for that particular company, but finds her actual job duties rather boring, and she thinks she would enjoy transferring to a different department.

- A. company,
- B. actual
- C. boring,
- D. would enjoy transferring
- E. No error

Correct Answer: C

Explanation: The correct answer is "boring," because the comma after "boring" isn't sufficient to join these two independent clauses. The result is a run-on sentence. To correct this example, you could place a period after "boring," remove the next "and," and make the rest a new sentence starting with "She thinks." You could also replace the comma after "boring" with a semicolon and remove the next "and" to join the two parts together correctly and show their close relationship to each other. Remember that adding a comma to a run-on sentence doesn't correct the run-on: it just creates a run-on with a comma.

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### QUESTION 13

Identify the error in the following sentence:

Listening to music while working on homework is a dubious habit that many students have and do not want to break.

- A. Listening to music
- B. working on
- C. dubious
- D. break
- E. No error

Correct Answer: E

Explanation: This sentence is correct as written.

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### QUESTION 14



Identify the error in the following sentence:

Even though I worked all day to clean the house and leave it in immaculate condition, my mother was not satisfied about the job that I completed diligently.

- A. leave
- B. immaculate
- C. about
- D. diligently
- E. No error

Correct Answer: C

Explanation: The proper idiom is "to be satisfied with" and not "to be satisfied about." Knowing this proper idiom, one can see why choice "about" is erroneous. It is okay to say, "leave it..." because it is in the same infinitive form as "to clean" so pick choice "about".

#### QUESTION 15

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

Since the work force is becoming increasingly competitive in light of technological advances and outsourcing, therefore, it is even more basic for students to complete high school and attain at least a bachelor's degree.

- A. therefore, it is even more basic for students to complete high school and attain at least a bachelor's degree.
- B. moreover, it is even more basic for students to complete high school and attain at least a bachelor's degree.
- C. but, it is even more basic for students to complete high school and attain at least a bachelor's degree.
- D. so it is even more basic for students to complete high school and attain at least a bachelor's degree.
- E. it is even more basic for students to complete high school and attain at least a bachelor's degree.

Correct Answer: E

Explanation: This sentence is a run-on sentence and can be fixed with the deletion of one word: "therefore." By beginning with a conjunction such as "Since" the sentence already has a descriptive clause in motion and just needs to be followed by a succinct (brief) statement of what the background of the first clause was describing. All of the choices except choice "it is even more basic for students to complete high school and attain at least a bachelor's degree." use this erroneous second conjunction (i.e. therefore, moreover, but, so), so they must be eliminated. Choice "it is even more basic for students to complete high school and attain at least a bachelor's degree" is grammatically sound.

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