**English Sample Questions**  
Information Guide for the English Placement Test

Although we call the placement exam a test, there is no way you can fail the test. Instead, it is a method to determine your skill levels in grammar and reading. Knowing your skill levels helps the English department place you in the appropriate English class. The following are sample questions. Look the questions over to prepare yourself for the test.

**SECTION I - Reading Comprehension**

Directions: The passage is followed by questions based on its content. After reading the passage, choose the best answer to each question. Answer all questions on the basis of what is stated or implied in the passage.

Easter Island is without doubt the enigma of Polynesia. On the one hand it has the most magnificent stone monuments and statues in the whole of Oceania; but on the other hand, its prehistoric culture was utterly destroyed before outsiders had any chance to make reliable records. Records of course there are, but because they are so unreliable and contradictory they have allowed Easter Island to be the subject of unprecedented batterings by the lunatic fringe, and to have its name linked with such garbled trivia as sunken continents and astronauts. Fortunately, however, not all is at the level of the “popular” press, and some of the research carried out on the island since 1914 has been of excellent standard, particularly that by the Franco-Belgian expedition in 1934-35 and by the Norwegian team under Thor Heyerdahl in 1955-56.

What is the main point of this passage?

(A) Research reveals nothing of significance about Easter Island.
(B) Easter Island may have been occupied by astronauts.
(C) The Franco-Belgian and Heyerdahl expeditions are providing some answers about Easter Island.
(D) The monuments and statues on Easter Island are not fully understood because the island's prehistoric culture has been destroyed.

From the way it is used in line 1, “enigma” most likely means...

(A) puzzle
(B) example
(C) source
(D) frustration

The use of the phrase “battering by the lunatic fringe” in line 4 serves to emphasize...

(A) that senseless wars have been fought over Easter Island
(B) that many people have been stubbornly irrational in discussing Easter Island
(C) that Easter Island is probably imaginary
(D) that Easter Island has been the subject of much science fiction
Why was Thor Heyerdahl referred to?

(A) He is the most recent researcher.
(B) He discovered records from the prehistoric culture of Easter Island.
(C) He is an example of more valid and productive research than has usually been conducted on Easter Island.
(D) He represents a kind of research which the press does not report.

SECTION II - Sentence Skills Part I

Directions: In each of the following sentences find out what is wrong, if anything. In deciding whether there is something wrong with a sentence, consider the way a sentence should be written in standard written English, the kind of English usually found in textbooks. Remember that this is sometimes different from the kind of English that you use in talking with your friends.

Some sentences are acceptable without change. No sentence contains more than one error. If the sentence has an error, you will find that the error is in Italics and lettered. Assume that all other parts of the sentence are acceptable and cannot be changed. When you find an error, select the one italicized part that must be changed in order to make the sentence acceptable.

(A) Tom ate the (B) hamburger, it was (C) good. (D) No error.

Next week Mrs. Wilson (A) has visited (B) her sister (C) in Chicago. (D) No error.

(A) Bill gave his tickets to his (B) guests; he (C) had seen the play already. (D) No error.

All my life (A) I have been interested in (B) teaching, and now I am preparing (C) to be one. (D) No error.

When we (A) moved to our new apartment, we painted the walls, (B) cleaned the floors, and (C) the yard was weeded. (D) No error.

SECTION II - Sentence Skills Part II

Directions: In each of the following sentences some part of the sentence or the entire sentence is bold. Beneath each sentence you will find four ways of writing the bold text. The first of these repeats the bold text in the original sentence, but the other three are all different. If you think the original sentence is better than any of the suggested changes, you should choose answer (A); otherwise you should mark one of the other choices. Select the best answer.

In choosing your answers, follow the requirements of standard written English, the kind of English usually found in textbooks. Remember that it is sometimes different from the kind of English you use talking with your friends. Pay attention to how clearly ideas are expressed, whether the words convey the meaning they are supposed to convey, and how the sentence is constructed and punctuated. Choose the answer that produces the most effective sentence, clear and exact, without awkwardness or ambiguity. Do not make a choice that changes the meaning of the original sentence.

Caroline is studying mathematics because she has always wanted to become it.

(A) it
(B) one of them
Because Mr. Thomas was angry, he spoke in a loud voice.

(A) he spoke
(B) and speaking
(C) and he spoke
(D) as he spoke

Being a tall person, the low ceiling was a problem for me.

(A) the low ceiling was a problem for me
(B) I had a problem with the low ceiling
(C) being a low ceiling was a problem for me
(D) it was a problem for me

Sue was more accurate than William's research, which was based on opinion.

(A) than William's research, which was based on opinion
(B) than William, whose research was based on opinion
(C) than the opinions of William
(D) than William's method of research based on opinion

Twelve prize cats were lined up; each having an equal chance to win the award.

(A) lined up; each having an equal chance to win the award
(B) lined up. Each having an equal chance to win the award
(C) lined up, each having an equal chance to win the award
(D) lined up each having an equal chance to win the award

**Answer Key**

Section I - Reading Comprehension: 1. (D) 2. (A) 3. (B) 4. (C)

Section II - Sentence Skills Part I: 1. (B) 2. (A) 3. (D) 4. (C) 5. (C)

Section II - Sentence Skills Part II: 1. (C) 2. (A) 3. (B) 4. (B) 5. (C)