



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTINDIES  
Cave Hill Campus  
Department of Language, Linguistics and Literature

## **GUIDELINES FOR THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY TEST**

The English Language Proficiency Test is used to assess whether persons offered places in the undergraduate degree programmes at the UWI, Cave Hill Campus possess a satisfactory level of writing and reading proficiency in English for University academic purposes. The test is used as a diagnostic tool. Entrants who pass the test are allowed to enter directly into the Foundation Language programme. Entrants who fail the test are required to take a remedial English course before going on to take the Foundation language courses. Entrants are allowed to take the test **once** only and results are valid for five years.

### **About the test**

The test lasts for two hours and covers the following areas:

#### Grammar

Candidates are required to answer alternative/ multiple choice items on any or all of the following :

- Grammar of the simple sentence
- Grammar of complex/compound sentences
- Idiomatic usage
- Mechanics of writing and spelling

The focus is on the candidate's ability to distinguish between correct and incorrect structures rather than on their knowledge of formal grammar.

#### Meaning

- Candidates should be able to detect differences in meaning based on punctuation and should also be able to recognise ambiguous sentences and be able to rewrite them in a way that disambiguates their meanings.
- Candidates must demonstrate an understanding of idiomatic English (idioms, proverbs, figurative expressions)

#### Reading

Candidates will be required to read three or four passages and to critically analyse the passages to summarise the main ideas.

#### Writing

Candidates are required to write a 300 word essay in which they have to demonstrate satisfactory performance in the following areas:

- Structure and organisation
  - o Clear coherent thesis
  - o Clear introduction, body and conclusion
  - o Good paragraphing skills
  - o Adequate use of connective devices

- Content
  - o Adequate number of points to address the issue
  - o Coverage of all parts of the question
  - o Originality of ideas or treatment of the topic
  
- Style
  - o Fluency
  - o Appropriate variety and level of formality
  - o Good grammar (few errors)

## SPECIMEN QUESTIONS

### Grammar

1. Instructions:  
Parts of the passage below are underlined and numbered 1(a) to 1(t). Some contain errors; some do not.  
Read the passage and examine the underlined parts for errors. For each underlined item there are four alternative responses, marked A – D, set out below the passage. Choose the correct response from each list:

Where there is an error, choose one of the options presented in A - C.

Where there is no error, choose option D.

For each answer, circle the letter selected ( A,B,C or D ) .

Researchers have found that television have a very large impact<sup>1(a)</sup> on the minds of our youth in society. It makes they minds warp<sup>1(b - c)</sup> and they are less able to reason clearly.

- 1(a).           A.     television had a very large impact  
                  B.     television has a very large impact  
                  C.     television did have a very large impact  
                  D.     No error

- 1(b - c).       A.     It makes there mind warped  
                  B.     It makes they minds warped  
                  C.     It makes their minds warped  
                  D.     No error

2.     Correct the errors in the following sentences:

- (a)     Except for you and I, everyone brought a present to the party.  
  
(b)     He has been laying in bed all day.

3.     Complete the following to produce acceptable sentences.

The rules required that .....

### Meaning

4.     Can you detect any differences in meaning between the following pair of sentences? Explain in the space below.

- (a)     The books which are on the floor in the corner of the room are mine.  
  
(b)     The books, which are on the floor in the corner of the room, are mine.

5. The following sentences are ambiguous. Rewrite each sentence in two ways in order to bring out the different possible interpretations. (You may expand or rearrange the sentence in order to illustrate the various meanings.
- (a) The missionaries were cooking.
  - (b) She didn't like his playing cards.
6. Translate the following idiomatic expressions into plain, concise English so that a foreigner could understand them:
- (a) The proof of the pudding is in the eating.
  - (b) She has an axe to grind.

### Reading

7. **Read the passage below carefully. At the end of the passage are four statements labelled (A), (B), (C) and (D) are given. Select the statement which best summarizes the passage.**

What we perceive also depends on our past experience in terms of how 'educated' our eyes are. Take the case of two people who are watching a football game. One person, who has very little understanding of football, sees merely a bunch of grown men hitting each other for no apparent reason. The other person who loves football sees complex play patterns, daring coaching strategies, effective blocking and coaching techniques, and zone defences with 'seams' that the receivers are trying to 'split'. Both people have their eyes glued to the same event, but they are perceiving two entirely different situations. The perceptions differ because each person is actively selecting, organising and interpreting the available stimuli in different ways.

- (A) Educated people perceive more clearly than those who are uneducated.
- (B) The greater our understanding of an issue, the more likely we are to analyse it correctly.
- (C) Two people watching football may analyse the game in very different ways.
- (D) Our perception is influenced by the level of exposure which we have previously had.

## Writing

8. On the paper provided below, write a composition of 300 words in length on ONE of the following topics:
- (a) The effects of divorce on family life
  - (b) The influence of U.S. culture on Caribbean society.
  - (c) Students should have to pay for tertiary education. Support or refute.
  - (d) How to choose a college major.