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# PRACTICE TEST

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## Writing Subtest (092)

VA-PT-FLD092-02

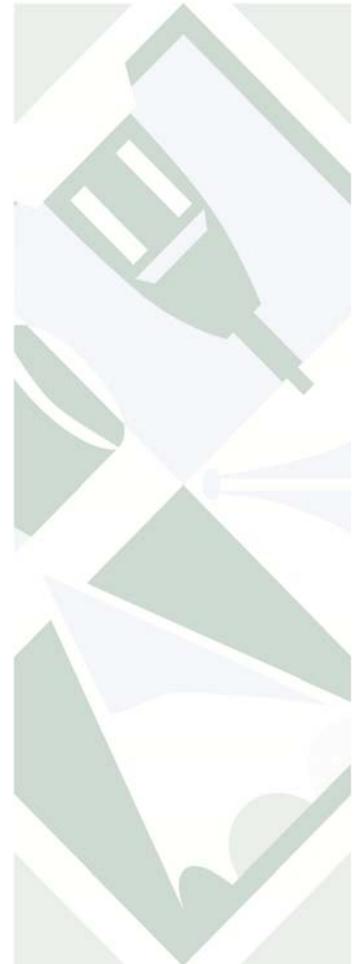
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

EVALUATION SYSTEMS



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## GETTING STARTED

The Virginia Communication and Literacy Assessment® (VCLA™) is composed of two subtests—a reading subtest and a writing subtest. This document provides a full-length sample VCLA writing subtest consisting of 41 multiple-choice questions, 3 short-answer items, a writing summary assignment, and a writing composition assignment.

A practice test for the reading subtest is also available; see the VCLA Web site at [www.va.nesinc.com](http://www.va.nesinc.com).

### ◆ Reviewing the Test Content

The content of each VCLA subtest is documented in the test blueprint, which consists of a set of test objectives. The content of the VCLA writing subtest is defined by the objectives in the "Subtest II—Writing Knowledge and Proficiency" section of the test blueprint.

The test blueprint for the VCLA is available on the VCLA Web site at [www.va.nesinc.com](http://www.va.nesinc.com).

### ◆ Taking the Practice Test

To take the practice test, follow these steps:

- Read the directions for the multiple-choice questions, then read each multiple-choice question carefully and choose the ONE best answer out of the four answer choices provided. Record your answer to each question on the Multiple-Choice Answer Sheet provided.
- Read the directions for the short-answer items, then read and respond to each item using the lines provided below each item.
- Read the directions for the writing summary assignment, then read the assignment carefully. Use scrap paper to make notes, write an outline, or otherwise prepare your response. Write your response on the Writing Summary Response Document provided.
- Read the directions for the writing composition assignment, then read the assignment carefully. Use scrap paper to make notes, write an outline, or otherwise prepare your response. Write your response on the Writing Composition Response Document provided.
- Follow the instructions in "Evaluating Your Performance" to score your test and evaluate and interpret your results.

You may wish to monitor how long it takes you to complete the practice test. When taking the actual VCLA, you will have a four-hour test session. Keep in mind that if you are taking both VCLA subtests at one administration, you will be assigned to complete both subtests during one four-hour test session. If you are taking only one subtest, you will have the full four-hour test session to complete the subtest.



## MULTIPLE-CHOICE SECTION

### ◆ Multiple-Choice Answer Sheet

Use the space provided below to record your responses to the multiple-choice questions that follow.

Question Number	Your Response
1	
2	
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Question Number	Your Response
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41	

## ◆ Grammar and Usage Multiple-Choice Questions

### **DIRECTIONS FOR THE GRAMMAR AND USAGE SECTION OF THE WRITING SUBTEST**

This section of the Writing subtest is based on several passages. In this part of the writing section, the term *error* refers to language use that does not conform to the conventions of Standard English.

Each passage is followed by several multiple-choice items related to the passage. Read each passage carefully and then read the items that refer to that passage. For each item, choose the ONE best answer based on the information contained in the passage you have just read.

**Read the passage below; then answer the three questions that follow.**

<sup>1</sup>Theater has always had an element of crowd participation that transcends polite applause at the end of a play. <sup>2</sup>Audience members may hiss or cheer during a melodrama, decide who is the culprit of a murder mystery, or even, in interactive shows such as *Tony n' Tina's Wedding*, play some of the characters. <sup>3</sup>Until recently, \_\_\_\_\_, the general public had never had the opportunity to make as many decisions about a performance as they could make for a coproduction of The Foundry Theatre and Performance Space 122. <sup>4</sup>Based in part on Alexis de Tocqueville's book by the same name, *Democracy in America* was a political experiment in making art.

<sup>5</sup>The two theater companies hoped to make the concept of a "marketplace of ideas" into reality. <sup>6</sup>Every element of the show was sold as a commodity. <sup>7</sup>Promoters believed the public would find the event as appealing as they did. <sup>8</sup>An investment of \$10 bought a line of dialogue, while for \$25 one could decide what a character were thinking, and for \$125 one could plan a "musical theater moment." <sup>9</sup>After the production's online store closed for business, the performers promised to develop the play based on the purchasers' specifications. <sup>10</sup>Like many experiments, all this came with a risk. <sup>11</sup>If sales were slow, the show would turn out to be a long silence in the dark.

1. Which of the following revisions would improve the focus of the second paragraph?
  - A. Reverse the order of Sentences 6 and 7.
  - B. Delete Sentence 7.
  - C. Reverse the order of Sentences 8 and 9.
  - D. Delete Sentence 9.
  
2. Which word, if inserted into the blank in Sentence 3, would best help the reader understand the sequence of the writer's ideas?
  - A. however
  - B. therefore
  - C. likewise
  - D. moreover
  
3. Which change is needed to correct an error in usage?
  - A. Sentence 4: Change "was" to "were."
  - B. Sentence 6: Change "was" to "were."
  - C. Sentence 8: Change "were" to "was."
  - D. Sentence 11: Change "were" to "was."

**Read the passage below; then answer the three questions that follow.**

<sup>1</sup>Women played a major role in many of the events associated with the American Revolution. <sup>2</sup>Of particular significance in the period leading up to the conflict was their participation in boycotts of consumer goods. <sup>3</sup>Some women also used their literary skills to support the patriot cause, as can be seen in the anti-British poems and plays penned by Boston's Mercy Otis Warren. <sup>4</sup>In addition to conducting spinning bees to produce homespun cloth and draw attention to the boycotts, women organized fund-raisers to help finance protest activities with the money they raised.

<sup>5</sup>With the outbreak of war, women stepped further outside their customary roles as wives and mothers. <sup>6</sup>On many farms, they sowed and plowed the fields and gathered the harvest. <sup>7</sup>Some 20,000 women followed their husbands to the front, where they engaged in everything from nursing the wounded and cooking to spying on British troops and running messages. <sup>8</sup>\_\_\_\_\_

<sup>9</sup>After the war, many American officers readily acknowledged that the army's successes owed much to women's efforts.

4. Which sentence, if added as Sentence 8, would best support the main idea of the second paragraph?
- A. Women who did not support the revolutionary cause were shunned by friends and neighbors.
  - B. Not everyone approved of the role women played in the war.
  - C. Although most of these women patriots remain nameless, some individuals do stand out.
  - D. A few women even put on men's clothing and enlisted as soldiers.
5. Which change would make the sequence of ideas in the passage clearer?
- A. Place Sentence 2 after Sentence 4.
  - B. Reverse the order of Sentences 3 and 4.
  - C. Reverse the order of Sentences 6 and 7.
  - D. Place Sentence 9 after Sentence 5.
6. Which sentence should be revised to eliminate wordiness?
- A. Sentence 3
  - B. Sentence 4
  - C. Sentence 6
  - D. Sentence 7

**Read the passage below; then answer the three questions that follow.**

<sup>1</sup>Many business advisors say that pretending the customer is always right is the key to being successful. <sup>2</sup>Yet one of the biggest business success stories came about because a chef decided to prove a customer wrong. <sup>3</sup>That chef was George Crum. <sup>4</sup>A culinary artist of Native American and African American descent who worked at an exclusive restaurant near Saratoga Springs, New York. <sup>5</sup>Crum knew his business well enough to be a head chef in an elegant resort town during an era of entrenched racial prejudice. <sup>6</sup>One summer day in 1853, a customer complained that the french fries Crum had prepared were too

thick and soggy. <sup>7</sup>A second batch of french fries, thinnest than the first, also met with the customer's disapproval. <sup>8</sup>Not about to let the disgruntled customer have the last word, Crum sliced more potatoes paper-thin and fried them to a crisp. <sup>9</sup>The customer loved them.

<sup>10</sup>Thus it was that a customer's complaint inspired the creation of the Saratoga Chip, which for many years was considered a specialty item. <sup>11</sup>Today the potato chip is probably the most popular snack food in the world. <sup>12</sup>\_\_\_\_\_

7. Which sentence, if added as Sentence 12, would be most consistent with the writer's purpose and intended audience?

- A. As for George Crum, in 1860 he opened his own restaurant and, with a basket of potato chips on every table, ran it successfully for 40 years.
- B. George Crum ended up with his own restaurant, but he'll probably just be remembered as that guy who invented the potato chip.
- C. Not content to rest on the laurels of his daring culinary innovation, chef extraordinaire George Crum became restaurant entrepreneur George Crum.
- D. If he had started a potato chip company, George Crum might have become rich and famous, but he opened his own restaurant instead.

8. Which of the following excerpts from the passage contains an error in sentence structure?

- A. Yet one of the biggest business success stories came about because a chef decided to prove a customer wrong.
- B. That chef was George Crum.
- C. A culinary artist of Native American and African American descent who worked at an exclusive restaurant near Saratoga Springs, New York.
- D. Crum knew his business well enough to be a head chef in an elegant resort town during an era of entrenched racial prejudice.

9. Which change is needed to correct an error in usage?
- A. Sentence 2: Change "biggest" to "bigger."
  - B. Sentence 5: Change "well" to "good."
  - C. Sentence 7: Change "thinnest" to "thinner."
  - D. Sentence 11: Change "most" to "more."

**Read the passage below; then answer the three questions that follow.**

<sup>1</sup>Hail is one of those marvels of nature that we could do without. <sup>2</sup>Every year hail causes about half a billion dollars' worth of damage to crops in the United States. <sup>3</sup>While rain is our friend and snow is a playmate, nobody could argue that hail does more good than harm. <sup>4</sup>Every year seems to bring at least one report of what is referred to as a "freak" hailstorm somewhere in the world. <sup>5</sup>In 2001, a hailstorm cut a swath of destruction across Kansas, Missouri, and Iowa, leaving behind almost two billion dollars in damage as a result of the devastation caused by the falling hail.

<sup>6</sup>Although the idea of ice dropping out of the sky when the weather is hot seems to defy common sense, science does offer a rational explanation. <sup>7</sup>Some storm clouds contain such strong updrafts and cold temperatures that water can freeze solid and be tossed up or suspended in the air inside the cloud, where it collects additional layers of ice. <sup>8</sup>Eventually these hailstones become large enough to fall. <sup>9</sup>Hail is particularly common in midlatitude regions during the early summer months. <sup>10</sup>What science has yet to discover is a way to disrupt this natural process so that the destructive force of hail can be diminished or controlled.

10. Which sentence should be removed from the second paragraph to eliminate a distracting detail?
- A. Sentence 7
  - B. Sentence 8
  - C. Sentence 9
  - D. Sentence 10
11. Which change would make the sequence of ideas in the first paragraph clearer?
- A. Reverse the order of Sentences 1 and 2.
  - B. Reverse the order of Sentences 2 and 3.
  - C. Reverse the order of Sentences 3 and 4.
  - D. Reverse the order of Sentences 4 and 5.
12. Which sentence should be revised to eliminate wordiness?
- A. Sentence 4
  - B. Sentence 5
  - C. Sentence 6
  - D. Sentence 7

**Read the passage below; then answer the two questions that follow.**

<sup>1</sup>Thousands of years ago, someone had the brilliant idea of attaching a sail to a boat on a windy day, and maritime history was made.

<sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
<sup>3</sup>Wind does not always keep a sailboat in motion: if a sailboat is aimed directly into the wind, its sail flaps uselessly, and the boat is at the mercy of the water current. <sup>4</sup>How, then, do sailboats manage to reach a given location regardless of which way the wind is blowing? <sup>5</sup>Sails catch wind coming at an angle to a boat; under ideal conditions, the boat is perpendicular to the wind. <sup>6</sup>A boat's sails are adjustable and can be pulled close to the centerline of the boat or out over the water until they fill with wind.

<sup>7</sup>Under these conditions, a boat is not simply pushed along in the direction of the wind. <sup>8</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, a different physical principle comes into play. <sup>9</sup>When wind flows around both sides of the sail, the air pressure on one side of the sail is lower than the air pressure on the other side. <sup>10</sup>The boat moves in the direction of the lower pressure and the sail may be pulled tight and flat. <sup>11</sup>Because of the physics involved in air pressure, the boat can actually go faster than the speed of the wind.

13. Which sentence, if added as Sentence 2, would be most consistent with the writer's purpose and intended audience?
- A. That mariner of yore no doubt learned that without wind, the boat could languish for days on becalmed seas.
  - B. That clever seaman must have soon figured out how to trim the sail to get the most from the wind.
  - C. That ancient sailor would have known that the sail and the wind were ideal shipmates.
  - D. That old salt probably knew that without the wind he would end up in irons, stalled on the water.
14. Which word or phrase, if inserted into the blank in Sentence 8, would best help the reader understand the sequence of the writer's ideas?
- A. Also
  - B. In fact
  - C. For instance
  - D. Again

**Read the passage below; then answer the three questions that follow.**

<sup>1</sup>The Global Positioning System (GPS) is a group of earth-orbiting satellites that can pinpoint an individual's exact location by calculating the time it takes radio signals to travel to the satellites.

<sup>2</sup>This technology, which was developed for military use, has become very popular with civilians. <sup>3</sup>Its widespread use will have both positive and negative impacts on society. <sup>4</sup>GPS technology has certainly made outdoor activities safer. <sup>5</sup>For example, hikers can find out how much farther they have to continue along a trail. <sup>6</sup>As long as hikers are carrying cell phones outfitted with GPS receivers, emergency response teams can locate them should the need arise. <sup>7</sup>Increasing

numbers of automobiles also come outfitted with GPS receivers. <sup>8</sup> \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>9</sup>GPS receivers make it possible to locate anyone whose car or phone is equipped with a GPS unit. <sup>10</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, these tracking capabilities have the potential to do harm as well as good.

<sup>11</sup>When tracking someone's movements becomes so easy, the potential for privacy violations is greatly increased. <sup>12</sup>A GPS receiver is only as good as the people using them. <sup>13</sup>We must determine whether GPS technology is used for good or ill.

15. Which sentence, if added as Sentence 8, would be most consistent with the writer's purpose and intended audience?
- A. I can certainly see how anybody who drives around without a road map would want one of these things.
  - B. Such devices facilitate the plotting of inerrant itineraries by affording their users access to maps of manifold scale and type.
  - C. Having amazing intel like this at your fingertips makes even the longest road trip or wilderness hike as easy as a walk to the mailbox.
  - D. These devices permit travelers to confidently navigate unfamiliar territory and markedly reduce their chances of taking a wrong turn.
16. Which word, if inserted into the blank in Sentence 10, would best help the reader understand the sequence of the writer's ideas?
- A. Regardless
  - B. Therefore
  - C. Meanwhile
  - D. Otherwise
17. Which sentence should be revised to correct an error in usage?
- A. Sentence 3
  - B. Sentence 6
  - C. Sentence 11
  - D. Sentence 12

**Read the passage below; then answer the three questions that follow.**

<sup>1</sup>Approximately 180 Native American languages are spoken today, though that number decreases each year. <sup>2</sup>Some languages still have substantial numbers of speakers, particularly in Central and South America. <sup>3</sup>Nearly a million Native Americans in Mexico speak the modern version of the Aztec language, and another two million descendants of the Maya converse in the language of that ancient Mesoamerican civilization. <sup>4</sup>In South America, where most indigenous people are bilingual, the ancient languages of the Inca are still spoken by more than nine million people who are able to communicate in these tongues.

<sup>5</sup>In the United States and Canada, however, many Native American languages have become or are becoming extinct. <sup>6</sup>In all too many cases,

communication in native languages is confined to elderly speakers whose children do not understand them. <sup>7</sup>Some of these languages have subdialects that are widely dispersed over a broad area. <sup>8</sup>Today, active movements in Canada and the United States are underway to revitalize languages that have not been lost altogether. <sup>9</sup>These efforts include the establishment of native language newspapers, radio stations, and Web sites, along with language programs where fluent elders teach younger people. <sup>10</sup>Among the most successful initiatives is a program to revive Navajo, what now boasts almost 150,000 speakers. <sup>11</sup>Even in tribes with so few speakers that preservation is unlikely, elders are working hard to pass on to the younger generation what is still known about their ancient languages.

18. Which sentence should be removed from the second paragraph to eliminate a distracting detail?

- A. Sentence 7
- B. Sentence 8
- C. Sentence 9
- D. Sentence 10

19. Which sentence should be revised to eliminate wordiness?

- A. Sentence 2
- B. Sentence 4
- C. Sentence 6
- D. Sentence 11

20. Which change is needed to correct an error in usage?

- A. Sentence 3: Change "that" to "what."
- B. Sentence 8: Change "that" to "what."
- C. Sentence 10: Change "what" to "which."
- D. Sentence 11: Change "what" to "which."

**Read the passage below; then answer the three questions that follow.**

<sup>1</sup>Julia de Burgos (1914–1953) was one of Puerto Rico's finest writers. <sup>2</sup>A poet and activist, she spent most of her adult life as a teacher in Puerto Rico and eventually emigrated to New York City. <sup>3</sup>Her childhood poverty and her experience teaching economically disadvantaged children made her an impassioned champion of human rights and an outspoken critic of social inequality. <sup>4</sup>These concerns, together with her fierce love for Puerto Rico, inspired her writing, which explored themes of love, nature, and self-identity.

<sup>5</sup>De Burgos published only a few books of poetry, but her work is highly regarded by literary scholars in Puerto Rico and throughout the world.

<sup>6</sup>Not only has her poetry been translated into English, but her name has become a symbol of Puerto Rican culture. <sup>7</sup>\_\_\_\_\_ <sup>8</sup>In Cleveland, the Julia de Burgos Cultural Arts Center had honored her approach to education and encourages a love of learning in a supportive instructional environment for young people. <sup>9</sup>Her name also graces two schools in Philadelphia, and the people of Willimantic, Connecticut, dedicated a small park to her. <sup>10</sup>Complete with an amphitheater for poetry readings and a bench engraved with lines of her verse.

21. Which sentence, if added as Sentence 7, would be most consistent with the writer's purpose and intended audience?
- A. The Taller Boricua Puerto Rican Workshop, Inc., in the Julia de Burgos Latino Cultural Center in East Harlem, has promoted art, art activism, music, and performance for 40 years.
  - B. The Julia de Burgos Latino Cultural Center in East Harlem inspires and celebrates work by contemporary Latino writers, artists, and scholars.
  - C. Graduates of East Harlem's Public School 72 would feel at home at the Julia de Burgos Latino Cultural Center because it is located in the building that formerly housed the school.
  - D. Attend a playwriting workshop or view an art exhibition by day, then dance to live salsa music by night at East Harlem's Julia de Burgos Latino Cultural Center.
22. Which of the following excerpts from the passage contains an error in sentence structure?
- A. A poet and activist, she spent most of her adult life as a teacher in Puerto Rico and eventually emigrated to New York City.
  - B. De Burgos published only a few books of poetry, but her work is highly regarded by literary scholars in Puerto Rico and throughout the world.
  - C. Not only has her poetry been translated into English, but her name has become a symbol of Puerto Rican culture.
  - D. Complete with an amphitheater for poetry readings and a bench engraved with lines of her verse.

23. Which sentence should be revised to correct an error in verb tense?
- A. Sentence 3
  - B. Sentence 4
  - C. Sentence 6
  - D. Sentence 8

**Read the passage below; then answer the three questions that follow.**

<sup>1</sup>A blend of spoken lyrics, instrumental music, and break dancing, hip-hop originated during the 1970s in the Bronx in New York City. <sup>2</sup>Within two decades, the music had entered the mainstream. <sup>3</sup>As it became more popular, the genre incorporated elements of jazz, soul, and other musical forms. <sup>4</sup>It also adopted more politically charged lyrics that went beyond the urban realism of its beginnings to comment on pressing social issues. <sup>5</sup>The Sugarhill Gang's song "Rapper's Delight" was the first rap song to make it onto the Top 40 list of the best-selling records.

<sup>6</sup>Although many people are aware of the controversies surrounding hip-hop, far fewer have been willing to acknowledge its positive

influences. <sup>7</sup>The forceful, compelling language of spoken rap is intended to challenge people's preconceptions and dare them to think about things differently. <sup>8</sup>Performers have encouraged young people to take education seriously and exercise control over their lives; one rapper urges listeners to acquire the organizational skills and capacity for critical thought needed to change their world for the better. <sup>9</sup>In recent presidential elections, hip-hop groups worked to get young people to register to vote and to use ballots to make themselves heard. <sup>10</sup>\_\_\_\_\_

24. Which sentence, if added as Sentence 10, would be most consistent with the writer's purpose and intended audience?
- A. Today, as hip-hop music becomes even faster and more upbeat, the lyrics continue to address significant political and social issues.
  - B. Notwithstanding hip-hop's ongoing stylistic metamorphosis and other manifestations of change, its message is still often conspicuously political.
  - C. Hip-hop artists still rap about heavy stuff, but their music sounds a lot brighter and perkier than it used to sound back in the day.
  - D. Upbeat tempos and intricate rhythms have not dissuaded contemporary hip-hop artists from trying to raise the consciousness of their listeners.
25. Which of the following revisions would improve the focus of the first paragraph?
- A. Delete Sentence 3.
  - B. Reverse the order of Sentences 3 and 4.
  - C. Reverse the order of Sentences 4 and 5.
  - D. Delete Sentence 5.
26. Which sentence should be revised to eliminate redundancy?
- A. Sentence 4
  - B. Sentence 6
  - C. Sentence 7
  - D. Sentence 9

**Read the passage below; then answer the three questions that follow.**

<sup>1</sup>The Code of Hammurabi is named for the king who reigned over the Babylonian empire from 1792 to 1750 BCE. <sup>2</sup>The code marked a major advance in the development of law. <sup>3</sup>In addition to establishing the use of written contracts for a broad range of daily transactions, it provided extensive protection of property rights. <sup>4</sup>Although certain elements of the code may appear strikingly harsh to modern eyes, it had a number of positive features. <sup>5</sup>Even more impressive were its due process provisions. <sup>6</sup>In criminal cases, people could not be punished merely because they were suspected of wrongdoing. <sup>7</sup>Criminals had to be caught in the act in order to be charged. <sup>8</sup>A man accused of stealing, for example, could not be convicted unless the stolen goods were found in his possession.

<sup>9</sup>At a time when theft and disorder were commonly everywhere, the Code of Hammurabi contributed to the development of a stable society in Babylon. <sup>10</sup>People could travel throughout the kingdom without fearing for their safety, and whenever disputes arose, the code provided clear means for their peaceful settlement. <sup>11</sup>Not only did the code survive for more than a thousand years, but it served as a model for other kingdoms and empires when they developed legal codes of their own. <sup>12</sup>\_\_\_\_\_

27. Which sentence, if added as Sentence 12, would be most consistent with the writer's purpose and intended audience?
- A. In fact, the lasting influence of the Code of Hammurabi is still evident in contemporary legal systems.
  - B. Modern governments owe Hammurabi a monumental recompense for his jurisprudential initiatives.
  - C. The code's dusty fingerprints left an indelible mark of ancient Babylonian law on today's law books.
  - D. Believe it or not, plenty of countries around the world still follow the ancient Code of Hammurabi.
28. Which change would make the sequence of ideas in the first paragraph clearer?
- A. Reverse the order of Sentences 2 and 3.
  - B. Reverse the order of Sentences 3 and 4.
  - C. Reverse the order of Sentences 4 and 5.
  - D. Reverse the order of Sentences 5 and 6.

29. Which change is needed to correct an error in usage?
- A. Sentence 4: Change "strikingly" to "striking."
  - B. Sentence 5: Change "impressive" to "impressively."
  - C. Sentence 6: Change "merely" to "mere."
  - D. Sentence 9: Change "commonly" to "common."

**Read the passage below; then answer the three questions that follow.**

<sup>1</sup>It takes no more than a short helicopter ride over New York City to note the jarring presence of Central Park. <sup>2</sup>It is a splash of green in a sea of concrete, a miracle of open space in a city where property values are among the highest in the world. <sup>3</sup>In many large cities, residents are forced to sacrifice a connection with nature for the privileges of urban living. <sup>4</sup> \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>5</sup>Vertical gardens designed by botanist Patrick Blanc offer one of the most interesting solutions to this dilemma. <sup>6</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ horizontal space

in cities is in impossibly high demand, there is a tremendous amount of underutilized vertical space. <sup>7</sup>By combining hundreds of different plant species, Blanc has the uniquely ability to turn any blank wall into an abundant, living work of art. <sup>8</sup>His patented system of drip irrigation allows an entire wall of these plants to last for 30 years with minimal maintenance. <sup>9</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ you cannot take a leisurely stroll through one of Blanc's gardens, they at least provide a pleasant reminder of a world in which such an activity is possible.

30. Which sentence, if added as Sentence 4, would best focus attention on the main idea of the passage?
- A. They enjoy the urban lifestyle and are accustomed to both its conveniences and its inconveniences.
  - B. What this lack of contact with nature means for the general quality of urban life is not altogether clear.
  - C. Instead of communing with nature, city dwellers participate in an exciting array of cultural activities.
  - D. This trade-off has left people wondering how they can experience country living in the city.

31. Which of the following words or phrases, if inserted *in order* into the blanks in Sentences 6 and 9, would best help the reader understand the sequence of the writer's ideas?
- A. In that; Even if
  - B. Since; As
  - C. While; Although
  - D. When; Because

32. Which change is needed to correct an error in usage?
- A. Sentence 5: Change "interesting" to "interestingly."
  - B. Sentence 6: Change "impossibly" to "impossible."
  - C. Sentence 7: Change "uniquely" to "unique."
  - D. Sentence 9: Change "leisurely" to "leisure."

**Read the passage below; then answer the three questions that follow.**

<sup>1</sup>Everyone knows that honeybees make honey. <sup>2</sup>All too often forgotten, however, is the fact that bees and other insects are responsible for pollinating about 1,500 food plants worldwide. <sup>3</sup>These include alfalfa, cucumber, sunflower, and blueberries, in addition to apple, plum, avocado and almond trees, among other species. <sup>4</sup>\_\_\_\_\_ <sup>5</sup>Honeybees' economic value is estimated conservatively at \$1.6 billion per year, with beekeepers earning more from renting bee colonies to pollinate crops than from selling honey.

<sup>6</sup>Since 1971, the population of wild honeybees has decreased dramatically. <sup>7</sup>Domesticated bees are also in decline. <sup>8</sup>The main reason is the spread of a mysterious syndrome called colony collapse disorder, in which adult bees apparently abandon their hives. <sup>9</sup>This has created a serious problem for many farmers their crops are in danger of failing so they have been forced to import bees to avert disaster. <sup>10</sup>Others have resorted to another insect pollinator. <sup>11</sup>At present, it is unclear if bee populations will continue to decline or eventually rebound. <sup>12</sup>\_\_\_\_\_

33. Which sentence, if added as Sentence 12, would be most consistent with the writer's purpose and intended audience?

- A. Such incertitude notwithstanding, there will be no dearth of accolades for the honeybee's manifold merits.
- B. No matter what happens down the line, people in the know will always appreciate the good old honeybee.
- C. Researchers, farmers, and economists who recognize honeybees' true value will do what they can to save them.
- D. Come what may, farmers will forever keep a place in their hearts for their friend the humble honeybee.

34. Which sentence, if added as Sentence 4, would best fit the writer's pattern of development in the first paragraph?

- A. Honeybees also transfer pollen to many domestic flowers grown for decoration or perfume.
- B. Pollen carried back to hives is an important protein source during brood rearing.
- C. Only one honeybee species has been employed extensively for commercial pollination of crops.
- D. Beekeepers use wooden beehives with removable frames for harvesting honey.

35. Which of the following excerpts from the passage contains an error in sentence structure?
- A. All too often forgotten, however, is the fact that bees and other insects are responsible for pollinating about 1,500 food plants worldwide.
  - B. Honeybees' economic value is estimated conservatively at \$1.6 billion per year, with beekeepers earning more from renting bee colonies to pollinate crops than from selling honey.
  - C. The main reason is the spread of a mysterious syndrome called colony collapse disorder, in which adult bees apparently abandon their hives.
  - D. This has created a serious problem for many farmers their crops are in danger of failing so they have been forced to import bees to avert disaster.

## ◆ Mechanics Multiple-Choice Questions

### DIRECTIONS FOR THE MECHANICS SECTION OF THE WRITING SUBTEST

This section of the Writing subtest consists of one passage. The passage contains errors in spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. The passage is followed by six multiple-choice items, one for each sentence in the passage. For each item, you will be directed to determine if the sentence contains an error in spelling, punctuation, or capitalization or if the sentence is correct as written. Each sentence should be considered as a single sentence. For each item, choose the ONE best answer.

**Use the passage below to answer the six questions that follow. The passage contains errors in spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.**

Henry David Thoreau developed an interest in the natural world during his youth, when he spent time exploring the woods and ponds near his home in Concord, Massachusetts. Influenced by Ralph Waldo Emerson's 1836 essay *Nature*, young Thoreau hoped to combine his love of the outdoors with a career as a writer. When Emerson offered Thoreau the use of land at Walden Pond, he quickly accepted and got to work chopping down pine trees to build himself a simple cabin. He lived there from July of 1845 to September of 1847 and wrote about the experience in *Walden, or Life in the Woods* (1854). The 18 essays in *Walden* include beautifully written observations of wildlife, descriptions of the seasons, and philosophical musings that still inspire people, who are committed to preserving the natural environment. While at Walden, he also completed the first draft of *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, which described a trip he had taken to the White mountains with his brother nearly a decade earlier. Walden remains much as it was in the mid-nineteenth century, but it no longer offers the complete solitude that Thoreau enjoyed, it is a popular destination for readers of *Walden*.

36. If one of the underlined segments of the sentence below contains an error in spelling, capitalization, or punctuation, select the type of error. If there is no error, select D, "sentence correct."

Henry David Thoreau developed an interest in the natural world during his youth, when he spent time exploring the woods and ponds near his home in Concord, Massachusetts.

- A. spelling error
- B. punctuation error
- C. capitalization error
- D. sentence correct

37. If one of the underlined segments of the sentence below contains an error in spelling, capitalization, or punctuation, select the type of error. If there is no error, select D, "sentence correct."

Influenced by Ralph Waldo Emerson's 1836 essay Nature, young Thoreau hoped to combine his love of the outdoors with a carear as a writer.

- A. spelling error
- B. punctuation error
- C. capitalization error
- D. sentence correct
38. If one of the underlined segments of the sentence below contains an error in spelling, capitalization, or punctuation, select the type of error. If there is no error, select D, "sentence correct."

When Emerson offered Thoreau the use of land at Walden Pond, he quickly acepted and got to work chopping down pine trees to build himself a simple cabin.

- A. spelling error
- B. punctuation error
- C. capitalization error
- D. sentence correct

39. If one of the underlined segments of the sentence below contains an error in spelling, capitalization, or punctuation, select the type of error. If there is no error, select D, "sentence correct."

The 18 essays in *Walden* include beautifully written observations of wildlife, descriptions of the seasons, and philosophical musings that still inspire people, who are committed to preserving the natural environment.

- A. spelling error
- B. punctuation error
- C. capitalization error
- D. sentence correct
40. If one of the underlined segments of the sentence below contains an error in spelling, capitalization, or punctuation, select the type of error. If there is no error, select D, "sentence correct."

While at Walden, he also completed the first draft of *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, which described a trip he had taken to the White mountains with his brother nearly a decade earlier.

- A. spelling error
- B. punctuation error
- C. capitalization error
- D. sentence correct

41. If one of the underlined segments of the sentence below contains an error in spelling, capitalization, or punctuation, select the type of error. If there is no error, select D, "sentence correct."

Walden remains much as it was in the mid-nineteenth century, but it no longer offers the complete solitude that Thoreau enjoyed, it is a popular destination for readers of *Walden*.

- A. spelling error
- B. punctuation error
- C. capitalization error
- D. sentence correct



## CONSTRUCTED-RESPONSE SECTION

### ◆ Short-Answer Items

#### **DIRECTIONS FOR THE SHORT-ANSWER SECTION OF THE WRITING SUBTEST**

This section of the Writing subtest consists of three items. For each item you are asked to revise text that contains two errors (e.g., in grammar, usage, construction, spelling, capitalization, punctuation). For each item, rewrite the text so that the errors are addressed and the original meaning is maintained. In addressing the errors, you may restructure the syntax of the original text, but the essential elements (e.g., names, places, actions) and relationship among those elements (e.g., cause/effect, before/after) must be maintained. Your rewrite should be a single sentence and should not introduce any new errors in grammar, usage, construction, spelling, punctuation, or capitalization. Note that proper names of people are correctly spelled within the text.

Write your response to each item on the lines provided below the item. Be sure to write or print legibly. The space provided reflects the amount of space available on an actual test.

42. **The following text contains two errors (e.g., in grammar, usage, construction, spelling, capitalization, punctuation). Rewrite the text so that the errors are addressed and the original meaning is maintained. Your rewrite should be a single sentence.**

Please forward my mail to the Corcoran department of History, Randall Hall University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA 22904.

43. **The following text contains two errors (e.g., in grammar, usage, construction, spelling, capitalization, punctuation). Rewrite the text so that the errors are addressed and the original meaning is maintained. Your rewrite should be a single sentence.**

The governor and her assistant meets everyday to discuss major bills before the legislature.

44. **The following text contains two errors (e.g., in grammar, usage, construction, spelling, capitalization, punctuation). Rewrite the text so that the errors are addressed and the original meaning is maintained. Your rewrite should be a single sentence.**

As a young boy, my grandfather took me to visit Yorktown the site of a decisive battle of the American Revolution.

## ◆ Writing Summary Assignment

### **DIRECTIONS FOR THE WRITING SUMMARY SECTION OF THE WRITING SUBTEST**

This section of the Writing subtest presents a passage for you to summarize in your own words. The passage can be found on the next page. Prepare a summary of approximately 150 to 200 words.

Your summary should effectively communicate the main idea and essential points of the passage. You are expected to identify the relevant information and communicate it clearly and concisely in your own words.

On the actual VCLA writing subtest, your summary will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- **FIDELITY:** Fidelity is the extent to which the response accurately and clearly represents in your own words the essential meaning, content, and point of view of the original passage.
- **CONCISENESS:** Conciseness is the extent to which the response is of appropriate length, depth, and specificity to convey the essential meaning, content, and point of view of the original passage.
- **ORGANIZATION:** Organization is the extent to which your sequencing and paragraphing of ideas convey the essential meaning, logical structure, and point of view of the original passage.
- **MECHANICS, GRAMMAR, AND WORD CHOICE:** Mechanics, grammar, and word choice are the extent to which words are spelled correctly and your writing follows the conventions of punctuation and capitalization; the effectiveness of the sentence structure and the extent to which the sentences are free of structural errors; and the extent to which your writing shows care and precision in word choice and is free of usage errors.

The final version of your summary should conform to the conventions of Standard English, should be written legibly, and should be in your own words.

Use the passage below to prepare a summary of 150 to 200 words.

### Reward or Punishment?

Are people motivated more by the promise of reward or the threat of punishment? Managers, teachers, and other professionals have long debated the question. Those who favor rewards point to clear improvements in cooperation when good behaviors are noticed and praised. Those who favor punishment counter that focusing only on the positive conveys a false sense of achievement. They contend that quicker results can be achieved when individuals are threatened with negative consequences. Although both arguments have merit, recent research suggests that combining rewards with the threat of mild punishment can attain the best outcomes.

Positive reinforcement through praise or rewards generally yields great benefits. As social animals, people seek to make themselves liked by a group. In the workplace, new employees may enjoy acceptance once they have demonstrated their willingness to cooperate with others. When they perform jobs well, appropriate praise will motivate them to repeat the performance. Good managers know this and use it to motivate employees.

Experience further shows that punishment by itself creates an atmosphere of fear and inhibits creativity. If severe enough, punishment will curb unwanted behavior, but people living under the threat of serious punishment are likely to perform poorly because of their fear of making mistakes. Thus supervisors who are quick to criticize mistakes will generally see the errors corrected, but they frequently do not see the negative effects that such criticism has on employee enthusiasm and motivation.

Nevertheless, believers in punishment insist that managers cannot ignore unacceptable behavior. Positive reinforcement, they argue, works well only as long as everyone in a group is cooperative. But what happens, they ask, when one group member is hostile or sits back and lets everyone else do the work? In such cases, some form of punishment may persuade resistant or lazy group members to change their attitude. Just as well-adjusted group members need assurances that any rewards they receive truly reflect good behavior and hard work, uncooperative people need to understand that their behavior has consequences.

Researchers have found that the most effective managers combine ample rewards with mild punishments. Above-average performers deserve to have their good work noticed and rewarded. Below-average performers should also be praised when they do something well, while being made aware of areas where improvement is needed. Very often, consistent praise combined with a steady push for improvement will yield the desired results. Some employees are so unmotivated that they are slow to respond to positive or negative feedback. These individuals require special attention. Sometimes threats will motivate them to do their best. If a threat proves ineffective and the individual still shows no change in attitude, then the promised punishment needs to be carried out quickly and without apology.





## ◆ Writing Composition Assignment

### DIRECTIONS FOR THE COMPOSITION SECTION OF THE WRITING SUBTEST

This section of the Writing subtest consists of one writing assignment. The assignment can be found on the next page. You are asked to prepare a multiple-paragraph composition of approximately 300 to 600 words on an assigned topic.

Your composition should effectively communicate a whole message to the specified audience for the stated purpose. You will be assessed on your ability to express, organize, and support opinions and ideas. You will not be assessed on the position you express.

On the actual VCLA writing subtest, your composition will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- **APPROPRIATENESS:** Appropriateness is the extent to which your response addresses the topic and uses language and style appropriate to the given audience, purpose, and occasion.
- **ORGANIZATION:** Organization is the clarity of the writing and the logical sequence of your ideas.
- **FOCUS AND UNITY:** Focus and unity are the clarity with which you state and maintain focus on the main idea or point of view.
- **DEVELOPMENT:** Development is the extent to which your response provides statements of appropriate depth, specificity, and/or accuracy.
- **USAGE:** Usage is the extent to which your writing shows care and precision in word choice and is free of usage errors.
- **SENTENCE STRUCTURE:** Sentence structure is the effectiveness of the sentence structure and the extent to which the sentences are free of structural errors.
- **MECHANICAL CONVENTIONS:** Mechanical conventions are the extent to which words are spelled correctly and your response follows the conventions of punctuation and capitalization.

The final version of your composition should conform to the conventions of Standard English, should be written legibly, and should be your own original work.

**COMPOSITION EXERCISE**

Read the passages below about public universities charging higher tuition for certain majors; then follow the instructions for writing your composition.

**Charging Higher Tuition for Certain Majors:  
A Reasonable Policy**

In an era of rising costs and reduced public funding, many public universities have cut programs and services and reduced the size of their faculty, thus reducing the scope and quality of education they offer. To reverse this trend, public universities should charge higher tuition for majors that carry higher operating costs and/or provide graduates with higher-than-average earning power. Undergraduates who major in computer science or marketing will no doubt go on to earn much more than students who major in the liberal arts. Students would surely be willing to pay more for an education that leads to a high-paying job.

**Charging Higher Tuition for Certain Majors:  
An Unreasonable Policy**

Assigning greater monetary value to certain academic disciplines violates basic educational ideals. In addition, charging higher tuition for certain majors would discriminate against students who could not afford to pay for the major in which they had the greatest aptitude and interest. Finally, undergraduate majors are not accurate predictors of students' future earning power. An undergraduate who goes on to medical school may choose to practice in a nonprofit health clinic, while an English major may become a best-selling author. No one, least of all university officials, can predict the future.

Your purpose is to write a persuasive composition, to be read by a classroom instructor, in which you take a position on whether or not public universities should charge higher tuition for certain majors. Be sure to defend your position with logical arguments and appropriate examples.











## EVALUATING YOUR PERFORMANCE

This section describes how to evaluate your performance on this practice test for the VCLA writing subtest. Your practice test results may provide helpful information regarding your preparedness in the content tested on the actual VCLA writing subtest.

In this section you will find:

- ◆ an Answer Key providing the correct response for each multiple-choice question and a column for tracking your results
- ◆ a Results Worksheet organized by objective that will help you interpret your multiple-choice section results
- ◆ sample strong responses to the short-answer items
- ◆ scoring criteria, including performance characteristics and a scoring scale, that will help you evaluate your response to the writing summary assignment
- ◆ a sample strong response to the writing summary assignment
- ◆ scoring criteria, including performance characteristics and a scoring scale, that will help you evaluate your response to the writing composition assignment
- ◆ a sample strong response to the writing composition assignment

Use the resources provided in this section and the VCLA test blueprint (available free of charge at [www.va.nesinc.com](http://www.va.nesinc.com)) to help determine your preparedness for the actual VCLA writing subtest. Although your results on this practice test cannot be used to determine your score on the actual subtest, your results may help you gauge your readiness to test and help identify any areas for further study.

## ◆ Answer Key

Determine which multiple-choice questions you answered correctly and incorrectly by comparing the answers you recorded on your Multiple-Choice Answer Sheet to the correct responses listed on the Answer Key below. Circle "Y" or "N" in the "Correct?" column to keep track of your results. For the questions you answered incorrectly, review these questions and their correct responses.

Question Number	Correct Response	Correct?	
1	B	Y	N
2	A	Y	N
3	C	Y	N
4	D	Y	N
5	B	Y	N
6	B	Y	N
7	A	Y	N
8	C	Y	N
9	C	Y	N
10	C	Y	N
11	B	Y	N
12	B	Y	N
13	C	Y	N
14	B	Y	N
15	D	Y	N
16	B	Y	N
17	D	Y	N
18	A	Y	N
19	B	Y	N
20	C	Y	N

Question Number	Correct Response	Correct?	
21	B	Y	N
22	D	Y	N
23	D	Y	N
24	A	Y	N
25	D	Y	N
26	C	Y	N
27	A	Y	N
28	B	Y	N
29	D	Y	N
30	D	Y	N
31	C	Y	N
32	C	Y	N
33	C	Y	N
34	A	Y	N
35	D	Y	N
36	D	Y	N
37	A	Y	N
38	A	Y	N
39	B	Y	N
40	C	Y	N
41	B	Y	N

## ◆ Results Worksheet

Use the Results Worksheet below and the VCLA test blueprint to determine whether there are objectives for which you should further prepare before taking the actual VCLA writing subtest.

Transfer your results from the Answer Key to the Results Worksheet by totaling the number of questions you answered correctly for each objective.

Refer to the VCLA test blueprint to assist you in evaluating your performance. The test blueprint contains the objectives and descriptive statements that describe the content assessed by the VCLA.

Objective	Questions	Number Correct by Objective
6. Understand the influence of purpose and audience in written communication.	1, 8, 10, 14, 15, 24	_____ of 6
7. Apply principles of unity, focus, and development in writing.	2, 11, 13, 16, 18, 27, 30, 35	_____ of 8
8. Apply principles of organization in writing.	4, 7, 19, 22, 25, 31, 34	_____ of 7
9. Apply principles of sentence and paragraph construction in writing.	5, 9, 17, 21, 26, 28, 33	_____ of 7
10. Apply correct usage in Standard English.	3, 6, 12, 20, 23, 29, 32	_____ of 7
11. Apply knowledge of mechanical conventions in Standard English.	36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41	_____ of 6
<i>Performance on Writing Subtest Multiple-Choice Section: Total</i>		_____ of 41

## ◆ Sample Strong Responses to the Short-Answer Items

The following are examples of strong responses to the sample short-answer items. Review the sample strong responses and compare them to your responses. You may also want to ask a mentor, advisor, or teacher to evaluate your responses to the short-answer items.

The content assessed by the short-answer items is described in objective 12 of the VCLA test blueprint.

42. **The following text contains two errors (e.g., in grammar, usage, construction, spelling, capitalization, punctuation). Rewrite the text so that the errors are addressed and the original meaning is maintained. Your rewrite should be a single sentence.**

Please forward my mail to the Corcoran department of History, Randall Hall University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA 22904.

Please forward my mail to the Corcoran Department of History, Randall Hall,  
University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA 22904.

43. **The following text contains two errors (e.g., in grammar, usage, construction, spelling, capitalization, punctuation). Rewrite the text so that the errors are addressed and the original meaning is maintained. Your rewrite should be a single sentence.**

The governor and her assistant meets everyday to discuss major bills before the legislature.

The governor and her assistant meet every day to discuss major bills before  
the legislature.

44. **The following text contains two errors (e.g., in grammar, usage, construction, spelling, capitalization, punctuation). Rewrite the text so that the errors are addressed and the original meaning is maintained. Your rewrite should be a single sentence.**

As a young boy, my grandfather took me to visit Yorktown the site of a decisive battle of the American Revolution.

When I was a young boy, my grandfather took me to visit Yorktown, the site  
of a decisive battle of the American Revolution.

## ◆ Criteria for Scoring Your Response to the Writing Summary Assignment

Review your response to the writing summary assignment using the scoring criteria below. You may find it useful to review the sample strong response that follows. You may also want to ask a mentor, advisor, or teacher to evaluate your response to the assignment.

The content assessed by the summary assignment is described in objective 13 of the VCLA test blueprint.

### Performance Characteristics

Each response will be evaluated based on the following criteria.

<b>Fidelity</b>	The extent to which the candidate accurately and clearly represents in his or her own words the essential meaning, content, and point of view of the original passage.
<b>Conciseness</b>	The extent to which the candidate's response is of appropriate length, depth, and specificity to convey the essential meaning, content, and point of view of the original passage.
<b>Organization</b>	The extent to which the candidate's sequencing and paragraphing of ideas convey the essential meaning, logical structure, and point of view of the original passage.
<b>Mechanics, Grammar, and Word Choice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The extent to which words are spelled correctly and the candidate's writing follows the conventions of punctuation and capitalization.</li> <li>• The effectiveness of the sentence structure and the extent to which the sentences are free of structural errors.</li> <li>• The extent to which the candidate's writing shows care and precision in word choice and is free of usage errors.</li> </ul>

### Scoring Scale

Each response is rated on a four-point scale. The four points of the scale correspond to varying degrees of performance that are related to the performance characteristics. The scoring scale for the writing summary assignment is shown on the next page.

Score Point	Score Point Description
4	<p><b>A well-formed written response</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using his or her own words, the candidate accurately and clearly represents the essential meaning, content, and point of view of the original passage. The candidate does not distort or misrepresent the original meaning or substitute his/her own ideas or opinions for those expressed in the original text.</li> <li>The candidate's response is concise, but provides enough statements of appropriate depth and specificity to represent the essential meaning, content, and point of view of the original passage.</li> <li>The response exhibits control and organization; the sequencing and paragraphing of ideas clearly represent the essential meaning, logical structure, and point of view of the original passage.</li> <li>The candidate shows mastery of mechanical conventions (i.e., spelling, punctuation, and capitalization). The candidate uses correct and effective paragraph and sentence structure. The candidate's usage and choice of words are careful and precise.</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>A generally well-formed written response</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using his or her own words, the candidate generally represents most of the meaning, content, and point of view of the original passage without distortion or misrepresentation.</li> <li>The candidate's response may be too long or too short, but generally provides enough statements of appropriate depth and specificity to convey most of the meaning, content, and point of view of the original passage.</li> <li>The candidate's organization of ideas may be somewhat unclear, incomplete, or partially ineffective, but sequencing and paragraphing of ideas generally represent the essential meaning, logical structure, and point of view of the original passage.</li> <li>The candidate may make some errors in the use of mechanical conventions (i.e., spelling, punctuation, and capitalization). The candidate uses adequate paragraph and sentence structure, but minor errors may be present. The candidate's usage and choice of words may display minor errors.</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>A partially formed written response</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The candidate represents only some of the meaning, content, and point of view of the original passage. The candidate may substitute his or her own ideas and opinions for those expressed in the original passage. The candidate may distort or misrepresent some of the original meaning. The candidate may rely heavily on the language of the original passage to express the essential ideas and meaning of the original passage.</li> <li>The candidate's response may be too long or too short, or lack appropriate depth or specificity, to convey the essential meaning, content, and point of view of the original passage.</li> <li>The candidate's organization, paragraphing, and sequencing of ideas may compromise or distort the meaning, logical structure, and/or point of view of the original passage.</li> <li>The candidate makes frequent errors in the use of mechanical conventions (i.e., spelling, punctuation, and capitalization). Sentence and paragraph structure are poor, with noticeable and distracting errors. Imprecision in usage and word choice is distracting.</li> </ul>
1	<p><b>An inadequately formed written response</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The candidate fails to represent the meaning, content, and point of view of the original passage in his or her own words. The original meaning is distorted, misrepresented, or merely copied.</li> <li>The candidate's response fails to convey the depth or specificity of meaning conveyed by the original passage.</li> <li>The candidate's organization, paragraphing and sequencing of ideas fail to convey the meaning, logical structure, and point of view of the original passage.</li> <li>The candidate makes serious and numerous errors in the use of mechanical conventions (i.e., spelling, punctuation, and capitalization). Sentence and paragraph structure are ineffective, and few sentences are free of errors. Imprecision in usage and word choice interferes with meaning.</li> </ul>
U	<p><b>The response is unrelated to the assigned topic, illegible, primarily in a language other than English, not of sufficient length of original work to score, or merely a repetition of the passage.</b></p>
B	<p><b>There is no response to the assignment.</b></p>

### ◆ Sample Strong Response to the Writing Summary Assignment

Studies show that mixing a liberal amount of rewards with the threat of light punishment is the most effective means of motivating people. Effective managers know that positive reinforcement motivates employees to do well, especially when it is clearly tied to performance. Providing feedback only on positive aspects of job performance, however, may give workers an unrealistic idea of their abilities and accomplishments.

On the other hand, while punishment used without rewards motivates employees to correct errors and stop targeted behaviors, this approach results in overall inferior performance because employees are so afraid of making mistakes. Harshly criticizing and punishing mistakes without praising good work creates an atmosphere of fear that stifles creativity and lowers morale.

For most employees, regular praise and encouragement to improve often eliminate any need for punishment. But while positive reinforcement may work for cooperative employees, punishment advocates argue, it may be ineffective for group members who are antagonistic or lazy. These individuals need to realize that their behavior has negative consequences. For unmotivated employees who respond to neither rewards nor threats, punishment must be carried out as promised.

## ◆ Criteria for Scoring Your Response to the Writing Composition Assignment

Review your response to the writing composition assignment using the scoring criteria below. You may find it useful to review the sample strong response that follows. You may also want to ask a mentor, advisor, or teacher to evaluate your response to the assignment.

The content assessed by the composition assignment is described in objective 14 of the VCLA test blueprint.

### Performance Characteristics

Each response will be evaluated based on the following criteria.

<b>Appropriateness</b>	The extent to which the candidate addresses the topic and uses language and style appropriate to the given audience, purpose, and occasion.
<b>Organization</b>	The clarity of writing and the logical sequence of the candidate's ideas.
<b>Focus and Unity</b>	The clarity with which the candidate states and maintains focus on the main idea or point of view.
<b>Development</b>	The extent to which the candidate provides statements of appropriate depth, specificity, and/or accuracy.
<b>Usage</b>	The extent to which the candidate's writing shows care and precision in word choice and is free of usage errors.
<b>Sentence Structure</b>	The effectiveness of the sentence structure and the extent to which the sentences are free of structural errors.
<b>Mechanical Conventions</b>	The extent to which words are spelled correctly and the candidate follows the conventions of punctuation and capitalization.

### Scoring Scale

Each response is rated on a four-point scale. The four points of the scale correspond to varying degrees of performance that are related to the performance characteristics. The scoring scale for the writing composition assignment is shown on the next page.

Score Point	Score Point Description
4	<p><b>A well-formed written response</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The candidate addresses the assignment fully and uses appropriate language and style.</li> <li>The candidate exhibits control in the organization of ideas.</li> <li>The candidate clearly states a main idea and/or point of view, and maintains focus and unity throughout the response.</li> <li>The candidate develops the response fully by providing ample statements of appropriate depth, specificity, and accuracy.</li> <li>Usage and choice of words are careful and precise.</li> <li>Sentence structure is effective and free of errors.</li> <li>The candidate shows mastery of mechanical conventions (e.g., spelling, punctuation, and capitalization).</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>A generally well-formed written response</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The candidate generally addresses the assignment and for the most part uses appropriate language and/or style.</li> <li>The organization of ideas is generally clear and logical, but there may be occasional ambiguity or partial ineffectiveness.</li> <li>The main idea and/or point of view of the response is generally clear, and focus and unity are generally maintained.</li> <li>The response is generally developed through the use of statements of appropriate depth, specificity, and accuracy.</li> <li>Minor errors in usage and word choice may be evident.</li> <li>Sentence structure is generally correct, although minor errors may be present.</li> <li>There may be some errors in the use of mechanical conventions (e.g., spelling, punctuation, and capitalization).</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>A partially formed written response</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The candidate partially addresses the assignment and may use inappropriate language and/or style.</li> <li>The candidate may make an effort to organize and sequence ideas, but organization is largely unclear.</li> <li>The main idea and/or point of view is inconsistent and/or the focus and unity of the discussion are not sustained.</li> <li>The response includes very few statements that contribute effectively to the development of the response.</li> <li>Imprecision in usage and word choice is distracting.</li> <li>Sentence structure is poor, with noticeable and distracting errors.</li> <li>The candidate makes frequent errors in the use of mechanical conventions (e.g., spelling, punctuation, and capitalization).</li> </ul>
1	<p><b>An inadequately formed written response</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The candidate attempts to address the assignment, but language and style are generally inappropriate for the given audience, purpose, and/or occasion.</li> <li>Any organization that is present fails to present an effective sequence of ideas.</li> <li>The main idea and/or point of view of the response is not identified.</li> <li>The candidate fails to include statements that contribute effectively to the development of the response.</li> <li>Imprecision in usage and word choice interferes with meaning.</li> <li>Sentence structure is ineffective, and few sentences are free of errors.</li> <li>The candidate makes serious and numerous errors in the use of mechanical conventions (e.g., spelling, punctuation, and capitalization).</li> </ul>
U	<p><b>The response is unrelated to the assigned topic, illegible, primarily in a language other than English, not of sufficient length of original work to score, or merely a repetition of the assignment.</b></p>
B	<p><b>There is no response to the assignment.</b></p>

## ◆ Sample Strong Response to the Writing Composition Assignment

In an ideal world, public universities would receive sufficient funding to allow them to provide students with a high-quality education at little or no expense to students. Unfortunately, we do not live in such a world. Rising costs and reduced funding have forced increasing numbers of public universities to make difficult choices about which services, programs, and faculty they can afford to retain. If we are seriously committed to maintaining the quality of education provided by these schools, we must ask students to shoulder a greater portion of the cost of their education.

Public universities should charge higher tuition for academic majors that carry heavy operating costs and/or provide graduates with above-average earning potential. After all, students who major in business, computer science, engineering, and related fields can expect to secure employment that provides a comfortable income upon graduation, while many liberal arts majors will have difficulty finding work in their fields. Students who anticipate substantial monetary rewards from their education should pay more for it than those who are unlikely to derive similar benefits from their schooling. Although raising tuition for majors with higher-than-average operating costs may not be quite as equitable, asking students to pay for what they receive can hardly be considered unreasonable.

Charging higher tuition for certain majors would also be an effective way for public universities to separate the wheat from the chaff. Only the most talented, dedicated, and disciplined students will pursue the costliest majors. Students who know what they want to do in life will not be deterred by higher tuition; they will see it as a challenge to overcome on the way to realizing their goals. Students need not come from wealthy families to afford higher tuition costs; however, they must be sufficiently resourceful and determined to complete the arduous process of applying for financial aid and scholarships. They must also be hardworking, taking on part-time jobs as needed. Such students would clearly have what it takes to succeed in their chosen professions, and they would consider

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tuition as money well spent. Students who choose a particular major because of its high earning potential are even less likely to change their course of study just because it costs a bit more. One need not be an economics major to understand the basic principle of cost-benefit analysis. If students think they will reap future benefits from their education, they will pay what they think those benefits are worth.

Some people might argue that undergraduate majors are not always reliable indicators of graduates' future earning power. This may be true in some cases, such as the software designer who works for a charitable organization or the theatre major who becomes a famous movie star. But these are rare exceptions to the general rule that students' undergraduate majors are a significant determinant of post-graduation income. Of course, today's most lucrative careers could become much less lucrative over time. Therefore, university administrators would periodically need to revise their list of high-income fields and adjust tuition accordingly.

While charging higher tuition for certain majors is not a perfect solution to the funding crisis in higher education, the consequences of doing nothing would be even worse. All public university students lose when their schools are forced to cut services, programs, and faculty in order to balance their budgets. Asking some students to bear a greater financial burden for the benefit of all may not be the best solution to the problem, but it is a fair and reasonable one.