Note to Users

Welcome to the CAAP Sample Writing Skills Test!

You are about to look at some sample test questions as you prepare to take the actual CAAP test. The examples in this booklet are similar to the kinds of test questions you will see when you take the actual CAAP test. Since this is a practice exercise, you won’t receive a real test score. The aim of this booklet is to give a sense of the kinds of questions examinees will face and their levels of difficulty. An answer key is provided at the end of the booklet.

We hope you benefit from these sample questions, and we wish you success as you pursue your education and career goals!

CAAP Writing Skills Test

The CAAP Writing Skills Test is a 72-item, 40-minute test that measures students’ understanding of the conventions of standard written English in punctuation, grammar, sentence structure, strategy, organization, and style. The test consists of six prose passages, each of which is accompanied by a set of 12 multiple-choice test questions. A range of passages is used to provide a variety of rhetorical situations.

The test questions fall into two major groups: Usage/Mechanics and Rhetorical Skills. Each of these groups contains test questions specific to subskills within the group. The groups and subskills are described below:

Usage/Mechanics: Test questions that measure usage and mechanics offer alternative responses, including “NO CHANGE,” to underlined portions of the passage text. Students must decide which answer option employs the conventional usage and mechanics practice that best fits the context.

• Punctuation: Use and placement of commas, colons, semicolons, dashes, parentheses, apostrophes, and quotation, question, and exclamation marks.
• Grammar: Adjectives and adverbs, conjunctions, and agreement between subject and verb and between pronouns and their antecedents.
• Sentence Structure: Relationships between/among clauses, placement of modifiers, and shifts in construction.

Rhetorical Skills: Test questions that measure rhetorical skills may refer to an underlined portion of the passage text or may ask a question about a passage section or the passage as a whole. Students must decide which answer option is most appropriate in a given situation.

• Strategy: Appropriateness of expression in relation to audience and purpose, strengthening of writing with appropriate supporting material, and effective choice of statements of theme and purpose.
• Organization: Organization of ideas and relevance of statements in context (order, coherence, unity).
• Style: Precision and appropriateness in the choice of words and images, rhetorically effective management of sentence elements, avoidance of ambiguous pronoun references, and economy in writing.

Samples of test questions in the CAAP Writing Skills Test are provided on the following pages.
DIRECTIONS: In the six passages that follow, certain words and phrases are underlined and numbered. In the right-hand column, you will find alternatives for each underlined part. You are to choose the one that best expresses the idea, makes the statement appropriate for standard written English, or is worded most consistently with the style and tone of the passage as a whole. If you think the original version is best, choose “NO CHANGE.” You will also find questions about a section of the passage, or about the passage as a whole. These questions do not refer to an underlined portion of the passage, but rather are identified by a number or numbers in a box.

For each question, choose the alternative you consider best by circling the corresponding answer option. Read each passage through once before you begin to answer the questions that accompany it. You cannot determine most answers without reading several sentences beyond the question. Be sure that you have read far enough ahead each time you choose an alternative.
If you asked most Americans what they thought about television commercials they’d probably, roll their eyes. Many of us resent how commercials disrupt as well as interrupt our favorite programs with messages about products in which we have little interest. When commercials appear, we visit the refrigerator by hitting the mute button or even switch channels.

When we actually sit and watch commercials, we often find them to be silly. If watched or not, commercials seem to work. How is it that commercials can persuade us to buy products which we react to their message with such boredom, indifference, and even scorn?

Some psychologists argue that commercials actually work best when we aren’t paying much attention. When a television viewer’s mind is relaxed and wandering they argue commercials have a better chance of lodging their message somewhere within, almost like a hypnotic suggestion. Attentive viewers, in contrast, might respond so much more critically that they are not found by the advertising message persuasive.
Another theory suggests that if viewers need a particular product, they will get an automatic perk when a commercial featuring that product comes on. Let’s say, for example, that my hair dryer seemed to take forever to do its job. I would then, presumably, start taking a closer look at commercials showing hair dryers doing their work properly.

A third theory has it that commercials work via peer pressure, that the characters in commercials are like people we know, and that we respond to their familiarity. Thus, no matter how silly we find a commercial, we come away with the idea that people who like what they know and use the products shown. Can it be that such peer pressure can make us buy something we never thought of owning? Who knows? Perhaps we need to study television commercials even more closely to see which, if any, of the above theories are most true.

9. A. NO CHANGE
   B. its
   C. it’s
   D. their

10. F. NO CHANGE
    G. who are like what they know will
    H. we know and like
    J. who are like us and

11. A. NO CHANGE
    B. true.
    C. truly true.
    D. truest.

Question 12 asks about the preceding passage as a whole.

12. The writer has been asked to expand upon the theory that we respond to commercials only if we need a certain product being advertised. If the writer follows this suggestion, it would be logical to add such material after Paragraph:
    F. 1, because that paragraph introduces the subject of this essay.
    G. 2, because that paragraph shows how we think of commercials as silly unless they appeal directly to something in our lives.
    H. 4, because the point of that paragraph is to demonstrate how commercials work only if the product interests us on a practical level.
    J. 4, because hair dryers are something many people use daily and they are also a product that the essay tells us needs to be replaced frequently.
PASSAGE II

[1] The cat has several characteristics that makes it an undeniably superior creature: it is wild and cunning, it is an original thinker, it can change shape of will, and it has an idiosyncratic sense of vision.

[2] First, it must be understood that there is no such thing as a tame cat. Once cats in the wild realized that they could be trained to meet their needs, they allowed themselves to become pets for humans, but in name only. All cats (and some perceptive cat owners) know who's really in charge.

[3] An example of the cat's original thinking is its conviction that although a straight line may be the shortest path between two points, that it is certainly not the *best* path. Otherwise, a cat will take many interesting detours before arriving at its destination.

13. A. NO CHANGE
   B. make it
   C. make them
   D. makes them

14. F. NO CHANGE
   G. upon
   H. at
   J. with

15. A. NO CHANGE
   B. it could be trained by humans
   C. training was possible for humans
   D. they could train humans

16. F. NO CHANGE
   G. points. That it
   H. points, it
   J. points. It

17. In the preceding sentence, the word *best* is italicized in order to:
   A. provide an example of the cat's original thinking.
   B. clarify the distinction between *best* and *path*.
   C. emphasize the distinction between *best* and *shortest*.
   D. contradict the point that cats take many detours.

18. F. NO CHANGE
   G. Consequently,
   H. Nonetheless,
   J. Similarly,
Cats too have the advantage of natural camouflage, becoming nearly invisible when they flatten out. And, because they consist of nothing but skin and fur only they can assume the shape of almost any object, by curling and stretching, a cat can easily become a footstool or a rug.

In addition, cats have highly developed eyesight. Humans are wrong to accuse cats of seeing things that are not there—such as mice under the coffee table or birds in the bedroom. No wonder people need eyeglasses; they can’t see half the doings that make a cat’s life so superior.
PASSAGE III

The dust storm raised out of the west and rolled toward our rickety wooden house on the prairie. At the peak of it’s force, they wrenched branches off the elms, tore sheets of corrugated tin off the barn roof, and caused the old house to creak and moan.

Inside, Mother switched on a lamp to dispel the gloom of the strange afternoon darkness.

Dust motes hung in the air while her breathing became labored. She draped a wet washcloth over her face to make breathing easier. My brother and I removed the curtains from the windows and replaced them with damp sheets. Meanwhile, the soggy sheets sagged from the weight of the mud that clung to them. The floor was covered with dirt, but when we walked across the linoleum, the soles of our shoes made a rasping sound as though we were walking on sandpaper.

25. A. NO CHANGE
   B. rose
   C. raises
   D. rises

26. F. NO CHANGE
   G. its force, they
   H. it’s force, the wind
   J. its force, the wind

27. A. NO CHANGE
   B. elms;
   C. elm’s
   D. elm’s;

28. The word inside is used in this sentence to:
   F. suggest movement from one scene to another.
   G. indicate the passing of time.
   H. ease the transition to a seemingly unrelated topic.
   J. show that the rest of the passage will be told from the mother’s point of view.

29. A. NO CHANGE
   B. air, because
   C. air, and
   D. air,

30. F. NO CHANGE
   G. Within minutes,
   H. Therefore
   J. However

31. A. NO CHANGE
   B. dirt when
   C. dirt, when
   D. dirt. When

32. Suppose the writer ended the preceding sentence with a rasping sound, deleting the final phrase. What effect would the revision have on the sentence?
   F. It would eliminate a comparison that helps the reader imagine the sound being described.
   G. It would eliminate evidence that the floor was covered with dirt.
   H. It would reinforce the idea of how devastating the storm was.
   J. It would have no effect on the sentence.
The wind blew and blew. As day passed into night, we slept upright in our chairs, more comfortable in our company than in our beds. I dreamed (sometimes I have nightmares) the storm would never end. Only the next morning we woke to a crystal-blue sky, and a gentle breeze was the only reminder of the wind that had blown as fiercely yesterday.

33. A. NO CHANGE  
   B. (I sometimes have nightmares)  
   C. (I have nightmares sometimes)  
   D. OMIT the underlined portion.

34. F. NO CHANGE  
   G. But  
   H. So  
   J. Until

35. A. NO CHANGE  
   B. crystal-blue sky  
   C. crystal-blue sky,  
   D. crystal-blue sky

36. F. NO CHANGE  
   G. so fiercely yesterday.  
   H. as fiercely the day before.  
   J. so fiercely the day before.
When Dr. H. Nelson Jackson went into and entered the San Francisco University Club in May of 1903, he had no aspirations to become a motoring pioneer. And while he was there, he overheard club members belittling the automobile. Jackson, an ardent motorist who responded by betting that he could cross the continent by car.

Jackson bought a Winton Motor Carriage for the trip and chose as a traveling companion a young mechanic named Sewell Croker, whose skills would prove invaluable to the success of the venture. Jackson carefully stocked the car with everything he thought they would need: spare parts, tools, cooking utensils, and camping gear. As the vehicle crawled up the steep paths of the Sierra Nevadas and pots and pans fell out like dandruff along the way, but backing up to retrieve them was impossible.

37. A. NO CHANGE
B. went into, entering
C. entered, going into
D. entered

38. If the phrase *aspirations to become a motoring pioneer* were changed to *idea what was about to happen*, what effect would the change have on the passage?
F. It would delay the introduction of the specific topic of the passage.
G. It would create an appropriately ominous tone.
H. It would alert the reader to expect the surprise ending.
J. It would make the author’s opinion of Jackson more clear.

39. A. NO CHANGE
B. But
C. So
D. Although

40. F. NO CHANGE
G. motorist, who
H. motorist
J. motorist,

41. A. NO CHANGE
B. will need:
C. would need,
D. will need,

42. F. NO CHANGE
G. Nevadas, pots
H. Nevadas. Pots
J. Nevadas, and pots

43. A. NO CHANGE
B. like raindrops
C. like autumn leaves
D. OMIT the underlined portion.
As the cyclometer fell off, Jackson and Croker could no longer tell how fast they were going or how far it had went. Their most valuable piece of equipment proved to be the block and tackle they used to pull the car from mudholes and cranking it up steep ascents.

The trip took sixty-three days, covered 6,000 miles, and was punctuated by hundreds of flat tires. After its successful conclusion, Jackson returned to his hometown of Burlington, Vermont, where he was arrested a few months later for exceeding the city’s speed limit of six miles an hour.

44. F. NO CHANGE
   G. Then
   H. When
   J. Later

45. A. NO CHANGE
   B. they had went.
   C. they had gone.
   D. it had gone.

46. Should the writer define the word cyclometer for readers who may not know what it means?
   F. Yes, because it is a technical term unfamiliar to most readers.
   G. Yes, because words can have more than one meaning.
   H. No, because its meaning is clear in the context of the sentence.
   J. No, because it was defined earlier in the paragraph.

47. A. NO CHANGE
   B. cranked
   C. cranks
   D. crank

48. How would the conclusion of the passage change if the reference to Jackson’s arrest were deleted?
   F. It would be less humorous.
   G. It would be more ironic.
   H. It would be more sarcastic.
   J. It would be less serious.
PASSAGE V

Being June of 1987, I traveled to Italy for a week’s vacation. As I boarded the plane, made my travel arrangements, and packed my bags, I frequently thought (to myself) of my Italian grandmother’s advice to “see Rome and then die.” It was hard to believe I was actually fulfilling the dream we had so often discussed.

When I arrived at the Rome airport, a feeling of excitement flowed through me as I realized I am in the city of my dreams. The sounds of the musical Italian language spoken by the attendants at the airport signaled that I was, at last, in the country of my ancestors. When I spoke choppy Italian, I decided to greet the attendants using it anyway. They looked astonished. What had I said? Had I offended them? But then they smiled, their looks turning to recognition, then to understanding. They shook my hand vigorously and, picking up my bags, helped me find the train into the heart of the city.

49. A. NO CHANGE
   B. Being that it was
   C. In the month of
   D. In

50. F. NO CHANGE
   G. boarded the plane, packed my bags, and made my travel arrangements,
   H. packed my bags, boarded the plane, and made my travel arrangements,
   J. made my travel arrangements, packed my bags, and boarded the plane,

51. A. NO CHANGE
   B. to myself
   C. myself
   D. OMIT the underlined portion.

52. Which of the following would be most appropriate to the subject of the passage?
   F. NO CHANGE
   G. old
   H. dear
   J. OMIT the underlined portion.

53. A. NO CHANGE
   B. was
   C. will be
   D. had been

54. F. NO CHANGE
   G. Although
   H. If
   J. OMIT the underlined portion.

55. In the preceding sentence, the writer is considering omitting the word vigorously. What would be the effect of this change?
   A. It would strengthen the sense of astonishment expressed by the attendants.
   B. It would lessen the sense of welcome in the attendants’ shaking the narrator’s hand.
   C. It would be unclear why the attendants picked up the narrator’s bags.
   D. There would be no effect because the word adds no significant information to the sentence.
Bafflement at my pronunciation of Italian and gestures of welcome typical were reactions of the Italians during my first few days in Rome. But everywhere I went I was immersed in friendly conversation. Within the week I was speaking with a Roman accent. I felt so at ease during my stay in Italy that, aboard the plane on my way home I wasn’t exactly sure where “home” really was.

56. F. NO CHANGE
   G. (Place before reactions)
   H. (Place before during)
   J. (Place before first)

57. A. NO CHANGE
   B. because,
   C. then,
   D. OMIT the underlined portion.

58. F. NO CHANGE
   G. home—
   H. home,
   J. home.

59. In the final sentence, the word home is in quotation marks to indicate that the word:
   A. has become ambiguous in meaning for the writer.
   B. has been used before in the sentence.
   C. was originally a foreign word.
   D. is being used sarcastically.

60. Is the writer’s use of the pronoun “I” appropriate in the passage?
   F. No, because as a rule one avoids “I” in personal writing.
   G. No, because it weakens the passage’s focus on Rome.
   H. Yes, because the experience related is a personal experience.
   J. Yes, because as a rule “I” is appropriate in any writing.
On December 17, 1903, Orville Wright fulfilled one of humanity's fondest dreams: he flew. Although the flight lasted only twelve seconds, it eventually made Wright famous for the first person to fly a powered craft heavier than air. At the time, consequently, few newspapers reported the event, and none realized that the age of aviation began. Although airplanes were used in World War I, during the two decades following Orville Wright’s flight, “flying machines” were generally considered novelties, devices for either daredevils or acrobats. Aviation advanced significantly in 1927 when a young pilot, Charles Lindbergh, made the first nonstop flight from New York to Paris and unlike Wright’s earlier performance, Lindbergh’s was universally acclaimed and made him an instant hero.

The major acceleration in aircraft development, however, came with World War II: when new levels of performance and utility were demanded by pilots, who were eager to control the air and defeat the enemy. Extraordinary improvements ensued in aircraft size, speed, and range. More dramatically, advances in jet propulsion would lead to the development of today’s intercontinental missiles and orbiting satellites.

61. A. NO CHANGE
   B. as being
   C. for being
   D. to be

62. F. NO CHANGE
   G. then,
   H. therefore,
   J. however,

63. A. NO CHANGE
   B. age, of aviation, began.
   C. age of aviation had begun.
   D. age, of aviation, had begun.

64. F. NO CHANGE
   G. novelties devices
   H. novelty’s, devices
   J. novelty’s. Devices

65. A. NO CHANGE
   B. Paris, unlike
   C. Paris. Unlike
   D. Paris unlike

66. F. NO CHANGE
   G. II. When new
   H. II, new
   J. II. New

67. If the writer were to omit the phrase who were eager to control the air and defeat the enemy and end the sentence with pilots, what effect would the change have on the sentence?
   A. It would not be explicitly clear why these pilots demanded new levels of performance and utility.
   B. It would emphasize more the importance of airplanes during World War II.
   C. It would make unclear whether performance or utility was more important for the pilots.
   D. It would have no effect because the phrase adds no significant information to the sentence.

68. F. NO CHANGE
   G. More to the point,
   H. In conclusion,
   J. In short,
Few human endeavors have progressed as rapidly as
with aviation. In 1903, Orville Wright could hardly have
imagined that his flying machine would evolve, in just
sixty-six years into a powerful vehicle capable of carrying
people to the moon.

69. A. NO CHANGE
B. aviation has.
C. aviation is.
D. had aviation.

70. F. NO CHANGE
G. had evolved,
H. has evolved,
J. will have evolved,

71. A. NO CHANGE
B. years, into
C. years to
D. years, to

72. Which of the following sentences would provide the
best introduction to this passage?
F. An event that would profoundly affect the course
of aviation history received little attention when it
occurred.
G. Orville Wright, the first person to fly, was born on
August 19, 1871, in Dayton, Ohio.
H. The Wright brothers designed their airplane by
watching buzzards fly.
J. Many aviation pioneers were ridiculed for
believing that people would someday fly.
Correct Answers for
Sample Writing Skills Test Questions

Sample Passage 1
Television Commercials
Informational Passage

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<th>Correct Answer</th>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>Rhetorical Skills–Style</td>
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<td>12</td>
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Sample Passage 2
Cat Superiority
Essay

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<td>16</td>
<td>H</td>
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Sample Passage 3
Dust Storm
Fiction

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Sample Passage 4
Crossing the Continent
Informational Passage

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### Sample Passage 5
**Seeing Rome**
*Personal Narrative*

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### Sample Passage 6
**Advent of Aviation**
*Informational Passage*

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