

Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS)

Writing Sample Items

Editing Passages and Multiple-Choice Items

“My Favorite Time of Year” – 8 items

“The Ballet” – 11 items

“Michael Jordan” – 8 items

“A Cat’s Tale” – 10 items

Read this rough draft of a student's composition. Then answer questions 1–8.

My Favorite Time of the Year

(1) Spring is my favorite season. (2) It is a special time of year. (3) Everything around me is coming to life. (4) One thing I love most about this season are the new pail green leaves on the trees. (5) Maple trees have bigger leaves than oak trees. (6) Seeing flowers blooming everywhere lets me know spring is here. (7) I wake up in the morning and I feel as fresh as the budding trees outside my window. (8) This is the one time of the year that Im happy to jump quick out of bed and get my day started.

1. What is the **best** way to combine sentences 1 and 2?
 - A. Spring is my favorite season, yet it is a special time of year.
 - B. Spring is my favorite season, but it is a special time of year.
 - C. Spring is my favorite season because it is a special time of year.
 - D. Spring is my favorite season although it is a special time of year.

(Key = C)

(Voice)

("My Favorite Time of Year")

2. What is the correct way to write sentence 4?
- A. One thing I love most about this season are the new pale green leaves on the trees.
 - B. One thing I love most about this season is the new pale green leaves on the trees.
 - C. One thing I love most about this season is the new pail green leaves on the trees.
 - D. The sentence is correct as written.

(Key = B)
(Conventions)

3. What would be a better choice of wording than **spring is here** in sentence 6?
- A. spring is back
 - B. spring is gone
 - C. spring is coming
 - D. spring is awakening

(Key = D)
(Voice)

4. What is the correct way to edit sentence 7?
- A. I wake up in the morning, and I feel as fresh as the budding trees outside my window.
 - B. I wake up, in the morning and I feel as fresh as the budding trees outside my window.
 - C. I wake up in the morning and I feel as fresh as the budding trees, outside my window.
 - D. The sentence is correct as written.

(Key = A)
(Conventions)

("My Favorite Time of Year")

5. What is the correct way to write sentence 8?
- A. This is the one time of the year that I'm happy to jump quick out of bed and get my day started.
 - B. This is the one time of the year that Im happy to jump quickly out of bed and get my day started.
 - C. This is the one time of the year that I'm happy to jump quickly out of bed and get my day started.
 - D. The sentence is correct as written.

(Key = C)
(Conventions)

6. Where would be the **most** logical place to add this sentence?

Lying in my bed and looking at new life renews my energy.

- A. after sentence 1
- B. after sentence 3
- C. after sentence 4
- D. after sentence 7

(Key = D)
(Organization)

("My Favorite Time of Year")

7. Which sentence shifts focus by adding an irrelevant detail?

- A. sentence 3
- B. sentence 5
- C. sentence 6
- D. sentence 8

(Key = B)
(Content/Development)

8. Which sentence would provide the **best** conclusion to the composition?

- A. Spring is definitely the best season of the year.
- B. Now I have told you about what I think of spring.
- C. There are so many things I can tell you about spring.
- D. I must have spring fever because I am tired of winter.

(Key = A)
(Content/Development)
(revised 10-27-08)

Read this rough draft of a student's composition. Then answer questions 1–11.

The Ballet

1) Some ballet dancers from Columbia College came to our school.
2) They performed a ballet called *Swan Lake* for all the students.
3) The dancers were graceful. 4) The dancers wore different costumes.
5) Costumes, or tutus, are like beautiful skirts with many layers. 6) These costumes helped to tell the story of *Swan Lake*. 7) The performers also wore special shoes. 8) The flat shoes is sturdy and help dancers stand on they're toes. 9) Even with special shoes, I don't know how they stay up for so long! 10) My feet and legs wouldn't last through all that moving around.
11) I'm just not strong enough to move heavy things.

12) They danced on the stage of the auditorium. 13) The dancers' music were on a CD. 14) Our school auditorium isn't large enough for a full orchestra. 15) The stage seemed even smaller as the dancers twirled and leaped high into the air. 16) Their movements and the music took me to a different world.

17) After their show, the dancers came to our classroom. 18) The class had a chance to ask many questions. 19) We learned a lot from them.
20) Dancers practice every day for many hours. 21) Many said they started ballet lessons when they were young. 22) They realized early in life that a dancer must be in very good athletic condition. 23) Ballet is like a sport. 24) Dancers must eat properly and exercise daily to strengthen their bodies.

25) Those dancers were as strong as basketball players and as graceful as figure skaters. 26) One of my favorite basketball players is Michael Jordan. 27) After seeing the dancers from Columbia College, I think that I'd like to take ballet lessons!

("The Ballet")

1. What is the **best** way to combine sentences 3 and 4?
 - A. The graceful dancers wore different costumes.
 - B. The different costumes were on graceful dancers.
 - C. The dancers were graceful but wore different costumes.
 - D. The dancers were graceful and they wore different costumes.

(Key = A)
(Voice)

2. What is the correct way to edit sentence 8?
 - A. The flat shoes are sturdy and help dancers stand on they're toes.
 - B. The flat shoes are sturdy and help dancers stand on their toes.
 - C. The flat shoes is sturdy and help dancers stand on their toes.
 - D. The sentence is correct as written.

(Key = B)
(Conventions)

3. Which sentence shifts focus by adding an irrelevant detail?
 - A. sentence 2
 - B. sentence 6
 - C. sentence 9
 - D. sentence 11

(Key = D)
(Content/Development)

("The Ballet")

4. What is the correct way to write sentence 13?

- A. The dancers music was on a CD.
- B. The dancers' music was on a CD.
- C. The dancer's music were on a CD.
- D. The sentence is correct as written.

(Key = B)
(Conventions)

5. Which sentence, if added, would be **best** to conclude the second paragraph?

- A. I thought the music was quite good.
- B. The auditorium lights seemed very bright.
- C. I applauded loudly at the end of the thrilling performance.
- D. One dancer almost lost her balance and fell off the stage.

(Key = C)
(Content/Development)
(revised 10/17/08)

6. What would be a more precise way of phrasing sentence 19?

- A. We learned a great deal of information from the dancers.
- B. We learned many different things from what they said.
- C. They had a bunch to tell us about dancing.
- D. They told us lots of stuff about ballet.

(Key = A)
(Voice)

("The Ballet")

7. What would be the **best** way to begin sentence 20?

- A. For example
- B. Of course
- C. Next
- D. Last

(Key = A)
(Organization)

8. Which sentence would make the **best** supporting detail for sentence 20?

- A. Each dancer tries to be at practice on time.
- B. At practice, they have to try on new costumes.
- C. During practice, they must learn new routines for each show.
- D. Sometimes dancers get sick and cannot practice for very long.

(Key = C)
(Content/Development)

9. What would be the **best** way to combine sentences 22 and 23?

- A. They realized early in life that a dancer must be in very good athletic condition when ballet is like a sport.
- B. They realized early in life that a dancer must be in very good athletic condition because ballet is like a sport.
- C. They realized early in life that a dancer must be in very good athletic condition, but ballet is like a sport.
- D. They realized early in life that a dancer must be in very good athletic condition, and ballet is like a sport.

(Key = B)
(Voice)

("The Ballet")

10. Which transitional word would **best** introduce sentence 24?

- A. First
- B. Instead
- C. However
- D. Therefore

(Key = D)
(Organization)

11. Which sentence shifts focus by adding an irrelevant detail?

- A. sentence 20
- B. sentence 22
- C. sentence 25
- D. sentence 26

(Key = D)
(Content/Development)

Read this rough draft of a student's report. Then answer questions 1–8.

Michael Jordan

1) If you were to ask everyone to identify a few of their favorite American athletes Michael Jordans name would surely be on this very short list. 2) Born in Brooklyn in 1963, he was raised with his four siblings in North Carolina. 3) As a child, Michael played basketball with his older brother Larry. 4) Larry often did better than him when they played one-on-one. 5) As a sophomore at Laney high school Michael played basketball. 6) Ironically, he was cut from the varsity team. 7) Michael never gave up. 8) His motto has always been "I can accept failure, but I cant accept not trying. 9) Every morning before school he practiced in the school gym until the coach noticed him. 10) Between his tenth and eleventh grade year, his dedication and willingness to work hard paid off. 11) He grew four inches, improved his game, and earned a place on the team.

12) At the University of North Carolina, he was selected as college player of the year. 13) During his career with the Chicago Bulls, he was named Most Valuable Player four times. 14) He became the team's top scorer, who averaged 30 points per game in each season. 15) He was also a member of our country's Olympic team. 16) It was called the Dream Team. 17) They won the gold medal at the 1992 Olympics. 18) He has also endorsed many products, including Nike.

19) His parents raised Michael to have a concern for others. 20) I learned that he has supported several charitable organizations. 21) He created the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education. 22) They provide additional funds for public schools. 23) A talented athlete and a generous person who donates both time and money to many causes, Michael Jordan has become one of the most admired sports celebrities in the world.

("Michael Jordan")

1. What is the correct way to write sentence 1?
 - A. If you were to ask everyone to identify a few of their favorite American athletes; Michael Jordan's name would surely be on this very short list.
 - B. If you were to ask everyone to identify a few of his favorite American athletes; Michael Jordan's name would surely be on this very short list.
 - C. If you were to ask everyone to identify a few of their favorite American athletes, Michael Jordan's name would surely be on this very short list.
 - D. If you were to ask everyone to identify a few of his favorite American athletes, Michael Jordan's name would surely be on this very short list.

(Key = D)
(Conventions)

2. What would be a better choice of wording than **did better than** in sentence 4?
 - A. trashed
 - B. outscored
 - C. did lots better than
 - D. got way more points than

(Key = B)
(Voice)

3. What is the correct way to write sentence 5?
 - A. As a sophomore at Laney High School, Michael played basketball.
 - B. As a sophomore at Laney high school, Michael played basketball.
 - C. As a sophomore at Laney High School Michael played basketball.
 - D. The sentence is correct as written.

(Key = A)
(Conventions)

("Michael Jordan")

4. Which transitional word would **best** introduce sentence 7?

- A. Eventually
- B. Therefore
- C. However
- D. Perhaps

(Key = C)
(Organization)

5. What is the correct way to write sentence 8?

- A. His motto has always been; "I can accept failure, but I can't accept not trying."
- B. His motto has always been, "I can accept failure, but I can't accept not trying."
- C. His motto has always been; "I can accept failure, but I can't accept not trying".
- D. His motto has always been, "I can accept failure, but I can't accept not trying".

(Key = B)
(Conventions)

6. Which topic sentence would be **best** to begin the second paragraph?

- A. Since his high school days, Jordan has won more awards than any other player.
- B. Jordan is a versatile athlete who has played many sports, including baseball and golf.
- C. Michael has always been the kind of athlete who cares about the other members of his team.
- D. In 1984, Michael played his first professional game and proved that he belonged among the best.

(Key = A)
(Content/Development)

("Michael Jordan")

7. Which sentence adds an irrelevant detail?

- A. sentence 9
- B. sentence 13
- C. sentence 18
- D. sentence 21

(Key = C)
(Content/Development)

8. What is the **best** way to combine sentences 21 and 22?

- A. He created the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education, since they provide additional funds for public schools.
- B. He created the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education, and he provides additional funds for public schools.
- C. He created the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education, and they provide additional funds for public schools.
- D. He created the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education, an organization that provides additional funds for public schools.

(Key = D)
(Voice)

Read this rough draft of a student's report. Then answer questions 1–10.

A Cat's Tale

1) I have been a cat observer for many years. 2) Although some believe that cats, unlike dogs, are unsociable loners, I would like to set the record straight. 3) Cats have the most varied forms of expression. 4) They speak with their ears, their tails, and even their fur.

5) A cat has a flair for drama. 6) For example, if it fears an attack, its ears turn back and its eyes stay glued on its "enemy." 7) The motions of a cat's tail is also a sign of it's moods. 8) A cat wags its tail when it is in a state of conflict. 9) The cat wants to do two things at once, but each impulse blocks the other. 10) For example, your cat may be standing in the doorway waiting to go outside. 11) When you open the door, only to find it is raining, your cat's tail may wag because of internal conflict. 12) The cat wants to go outside, but doesn't want to go out into the rain. 13) Once the cat makes a decision to stay in or go out, the tail will stop wagging. 14) When a cat waves its tail quickly, it shows high excitement. 15) An unmoving, raised tail is a friendly greeting. 16) If a cat is afraid, hair stands up all over its body. 17) If a cat is ready to attack, hair stands up only in a narrow band along the spine and tail.

18) Purring is a non-vocal sound originating from the young cat to tell the mother that it is content. 19) When adult cats purr, they are saying "all is well and I'm feeling fine". 20) Hissing is another common non-vocal sound. 21) When cats hiss, they open their mouths about halfway, draw back their upper lips, and expel their breath very hard. 22) A kitten will meow if it is separated from its mother. 23) A grown cat will meow to signal some kind of discontent. 24) Another familiar cat sound is caterwauling. 25) Tomcats often vocalize this noise, most often a song of threat and war. 26) Rival cats emit these sounds as they approach each other in slow motion and on stiff legs.

("A Cat's Tale")

27) This brief discussion of body language and sounds suggests that cats have their own communication system. 28) Even a kitten that is born deaf develops this entire range of sounds. 29) Oskar Heinroth, a scientist who studied zoology, was once asked why animals do not develop a language. 30) Zoology is the study of animal life. 31) He replied, "Because they have nothing to say to each other." 32) However, his answer may have been too hasty. 33) Cats have tons to say to each other and to their human owners. 34) Who, indeed, can claim that their totally incapable of expressing ideas?

1. What is the **best** way to combine sentences 3 and 4?
- A. Cats have the most varied forms of expression, although they speak with their ears, their tails, and even their fur.
 - B. Cats have the most varied forms of expression because they speak with their ears, their tails, and even their fur.
 - C. Cats have the most varied forms of expression when they speak with their ears, their tails, and even their fur.
 - D. Cats have the most varied forms of expression, and they speak with their ears, their tails, and even their fur.

(Key = B)
(Voice)

("A Cat's Tale")

2. What is the correct way to write sentence 7?
- A. The motions of a cat's tail are also a sign of it's moods.
 - B. The motions of a cat's tail are also a sign of its moods.
 - C. The motions of a cat's tail is also a sign of its moods.
 - D. The sentence is correct as written.

(Key = B)
(Conventions)

3. Which transitional word would **best** introduce sentence 17?
- A. However
 - B. Then
 - C. Still
 - D. Next

(Key = A)
(Organization)

4. Which topic sentence should begin the third paragraph?
- A. A grown cat sounds different from a kitten.
 - B. Cats display many fascinating behaviors.
 - C. Cats have been both valued and feared.
 - D. A cat also has its own unique sounds.

(Key = D)
(Content/Development)

("A Cat's Tale")

5. What is the correct way to write sentence 19?

- A. When adult cats purr, they are saying "All is well, and I'm feeling fine."
- B. When adult cats purr, they are saying, "all is well, and I'm feeling fine."
- C. When adult cats purr, they are saying, "All is well, and I'm feeling fine."
- D. The sentence is correct as written.

(Key = C)
(Conventions)

6. Where would be the **most** logical place to add this sentence?

Of all the cat noises, however, meowing is the most familiar sound.

- A. after sentence 19
- B. after sentence 20
- C. after sentence 21
- D. after sentence 23

(Key = C)
(Organization)

7. What would be a better choice of wording than **tons** in sentence 33?

- A. much
- B. bunches
- C. a lot of stuff
- D. loads of things

(Key = A)
(Voice)

("A Cat's Tale")

- 8.** What is the correct way to write sentence 34?
- A. Whom, indeed, can claim that they're totally incapable of expressing ideas?
 - B. Who, indeed, can claim that they're totally incapable of expressing ideas?
 - C. Who indeed can claim that their totally incapable of expressing ideas?
 - D. The sentence is correct as written.

(Key = B)
(Conventions)

- 9.** Which of these sentences is complex?
- A. sentence 4
 - B. sentence 20
 - C. sentence 22
 - D. sentence 27

(Key = C)
(Voice)

- 10.** Which sentence shifts focus by adding an irrelevant detail?
- A. sentence 10
 - B. sentence 20
 - C. sentence 25
 - D. sentence 30

(Key = D)
(Content/Development)