



Written Exam 101

Diagnostic Quiz and Answer Key

PART I – GENERAL LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

General Vocabulary - Sentence Completion

DIRECTIONS: In each of the following items you are given an unfinished sentence. From the list of four words or phrases following each unfinished sentence, select the one that most appropriately completes the sentence.

1. Witness testimony that alternates between expressions of support for the victim's account of the facts and moments of hesitation displays
 - A. homogeneity
 - B. ambivalence
 - C. unanimity
 - D. parsimony

2. A memoir that is praised for avoiding stereotype and sentimentality in its portrayal of small-town life would be described as
 - A. dismissive
 - B. nuanced
 - C. bombastic
 - D. perfunctory

3. A collection of unrelated studies reaching similar conclusions that are used to strengthen an argument would be considered
 - A. disparate
 - B. discrete
 - C. discretionary
 - D. deficient

General Vocabulary – Synonyms in Context

DIRECTIONS: In each of the following sentences there is an underlined word or phrase. From the list of four words or phrases following each sentence, select the one that is closest in meaning to the underlined word or phrase in the sentence.

4. The politician's answer was equivocal, leaving voters uncertain about his actual position.

- A. ambiguous
- B. idiotic
- C. resolute
- D. jubilant

5. Among the many arguments presented, the committee found the cost-benefit analysis to be the most salient factor in their decision.

- A. scandalous
- B. obscure
- C. prominent
- D. negligible

6. The mediator's intervention helped ameliorate tensions between the departments, restoring a cooperative atmosphere.

- A. worsen
- B. alleviate
- C. shore
- D. inculcate

General Vocabulary - Synonyms

DIRECTIONS: In each of the following items you are given a word or phrase as the premise. From the list of four words or phrases following each premise, select the one that is closest in meaning to the word or phrase in the premise.

7. Admonish

A. commend

B. chastise

C. encourage

D. overlook

8. Spurious

A. authentic

B. bogus

C. verifiable

D. imprudent

9. Correlation

A. polarity

B. incongruence

C. bellicose

D. correspondence

General Vocabulary - Antonyms

DIRECTIONS: In each of the following items you are given a word or phrase as the premise. From the list of four words or phrases following each premise, select the one that is most nearly opposite in meaning to the word or phrase in the premise.

10. Venerate

A. admire

B. revere

C. scorn

D. respect

11. Ostentatious

A. gaudy

B. pretentious

C. understated

D. flamboyant

12. Fastidious

A. sloppy

B. precise

C. punctilious

D. exacting

Idioms

DIRECTIONS: Each of the following sentences contains an underlined idiomatic expression. From the list of four words or phrases that follows each sentence, select the one that is closest in meaning to the underlined idiom in the sentence.

13. When the budget shortfall came to light, management tried to sweep it under the rug instead of informing staff.

- A. address it transparently
- B. hide or ignore it
- C. publicize it widely
- D. analyze it thoroughly

14. During the meeting, she threw him under the bus for the error.

- A. defended him publicly
- B. praised his work
- C. blamed him to protect herself
- D. offered to help him fix it

15. On his first day of work at his new job, he hit the ground running.

- A. started slowly and cautiously
- B. began energetically and effectively
- C. refused to begin working
- D. left the job soon after starting

PART II – COURT RELATED TERMS AND USAGE AND ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Sentence Completion

DIRECTIONS: In each of the following items you are given an unfinished sentence. From the list of four words or phrases following each unfinished sentence, select the one that most appropriately completes the sentence.

16. The plea "nolo contendere" means:

- A. the defendant pleads guilty and admits wrongdoing
- B. the defendant pleads not guilty and requests trial
- C. the defendant does not admit guilt but accepts conviction (no contest)
- D. the defendant asserts an alibi defense

17. To secure a conviction for most crimes, the prosecution must prove both the wrongful act (actus reus) and the defendant's

- A. mens rea
- B. mala fide
- C. habeas corpus
- D. prima facie

18. When the parties agreed that there were no material factual disputes, the defendant moved for _____ to resolve the case without a trial.

- A. interlocutory appeal
- B. bifurcation
- C. summary judgment
- D. dismissal

Court Related Questions

DIRECTIONS: From the list of four possible answers to the questions that follow, choose the one that best answers the question.

19. Which of the following best describes a "capias"?

- A. A court order directing the seizure of a defendant's property to satisfy a judgment
- B. A writ directing law enforcement to arrest and bring a person before the court, often issued for failure to appear or contempt
- C. A subpoena compelling a witness to produce documents at trial
- D. An order setting the amount of bail for a charged defendant

20. An objection that a question is "speculative" means:

- A. the question asks the witness to repeat hearsay
- B. the question is no longer relevant to the case
- C. the question asks the witness to guess or conjecture rather than state facts
- D. the question duplicates prior testimony

21. What does the term "in camera" refer to?

- A. a public courtroom procedure open to media
- B. a private review by the judge, often in chambers
- C. a unanimous jury verdict
- D. an evidentiary hearing before witnesses testify

Sequence

DIRECTIONS: Following each of the four questions below there are four sequences of events. Only one of the four sequences correctly describes the order in which specific events occur in court settings. Choose the one that has the correct sequence.

22. Which of the following is the correct sequence in a typical criminal prosecution? beginning with an arrest?

- A. arraignment, arrest, trial, sentencing
- B. arrest, arraignment, trial, sentencing
- C. trial, arrest, arraignment, sentencing
- D. sentencing, trial, arrest, arraignment

23. Which of the following is the correct sequence for a civil lawsuit from filing to final judgment?

- A. complaint filed, discovery, answer filed, trial, judgment
- B. complaint filed, service of process, answer filed, discovery, trial, judgment
- C. answer, complaint filed, trial, discovery, judgment
- D. trial, complaint filed, answer filed, judgment, discovery

24. Which of the following is the correct sequence of a bench trial?

- A. opening statements, voir dire, presentation of evidence, closing arguments, jury nullification, deliberation, verdict
- B. voir dire, opening statements, presentation of evidence, closing arguments, jury instructions, deliberation, verdict
- C. opening statements, presentation of evidence, closing arguments, deliberation, verdict
- D. presentation of evidence, verdict, closing arguments, voir dire, deliberation

Professional Responsibility and Ethics Questions

DIRECTIONS: From the list of four possible answers to the questions that follow, choose the one that best answers the question.

25. An attorney asks the interpreter to coach the limited English proficient witness on how to answer questions. The interpreter should:

- A. Comply if the request will expedite testimony.
- B. Agree only if the party pays an additional fee.
- C. Decline and advise the attorney that interpreters cannot directly communicate with LEP parties, nor can they give legal advice or serve as an advocate.
- D. Provide coaching quietly in the hallway so that it is not noticed.

26. If an interpreter realizes they omitted critical testimony during a consecutive interpretation, the interpreter should:

- A. Continue and hope the omission is not material.
- B. Address the Court immediately to report the error, explain the omission on the record, and request permission to correct it.
- C. Ask the witness to repeat the entire testimony at the end of the hearing without informing the court.
- D. Add the omitted material later during closing arguments.

27. Which of the following best describes appropriate use of interpreting modes in court?

- A. Use simultaneous interpreting for all witness testimony because it is faster.
- B. Use simultaneous interpreting when the only LEP party(ies) involved in the case is/are the party(ies) for whom the interpreter is interpreting, except if/when an LEP party testifies.
- C. Always use sight translation for legal documents during testimony to save time.
- D. Alternate modes depending on the personal preference and skill of the interpreter.

Scenarios

DIRECTIONS: In all of the test items that follow, you are provided with a brief scenario that describes a situation and poses a problem that you might encounter while working as an interpreter. Following the scenario is a question that asks you what you should do, or how you should solve the problem. Choose the best solution or course of action.

28. You are assigned to interpret for an LEP defendant in a felony DUI case but later discover a potential conflict: a family member of the defendant is a close friend of yours. What should you do?

- A. Ignore it and proceed, since personal relationships do not matter.
- B. Disclose the potential conflict to the court or appointing authority and, if necessary, recuse yourself.
- C. Ask the friend for permission to continue working.
- D. Attempt to remain neutral without disclosing to avoid delaying the case.

29. Midway through a criminal trial, the forensic pathologist testifies using a technical term you do not recognize. You are interpreting consecutively, and the witness is speaking quickly. You realize you cannot confidently render the term into the target language. What should you do?

- A. Continue interpreting and offer your best guess for the term so that the proceeding is not delayed.
- B. Omit the unfamiliar term and summarize the rest of the testimony to avoid drawing attention to your uncertainty.
- C. Politely request a brief pause or ask the judge for the opportunity to clarify or define the term (or request replacement if you cannot interpret it), then resume only after you understand how to render it accurately.
- D. Replace the term with a simpler, nontechnical word that seems close in meaning and that the defendant probably understands better anyway and keep interpreting.

30. After a long, emotional trial, a party approaches you and offers a small, culturally significant gift as a gesture of thanks. In their culture, refusing the gift would be considered rude and insulting. What should you do?

- A. Accept the gift to avoid causing offense, and do not mention it to anyone to prevent drawing attention.
- B. Accept the gift but immediately disclose the gift to the judge and the parties, explaining its cultural significance.
- C. Politely decline the gift, briefly explain your role requires strict impartiality and court policy about gifts, and ask the judge for guidance if the party persists or if you are unsure how to proceed.
- D. Accept the gift and later donate it or discard it so there is no appearance of personal gain.

ANSWER KEY

PART I – GENERAL LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

General Vocabulary – Sentence completion

1. B. ambivalence

Explanation: "Ambivalence" means mixed or conflicting feelings, which makes a later unanimous decision unexpected. "Homogeneity" and "unanimity" imply agreement (the opposite), and "parsimony" (stinginess) is irrelevant.

2. B. nuanced

Explanation: "Nuanced" means showing subtle distinctions and complexity, which fits the idea of avoiding stereotype and sentimentality. The other choices do not convey subtlety.

3. A. disparate

Explanation: "Disparate" means coming from different sources or showing diversity; citing disparate studies that agree makes the argument stronger. "Discrete" means separate but does not imply diversity in findings or origin in the same way.

General Vocabulary – Synonyms in Context

4. A. ambiguous

Explanation: "Equivocal" means unclear or open to more than one interpretation — synonymous with "ambiguous."

5. C. prominent

Explanation: "Salient" means most noticeable or important — similar to "prominent."

6. B. alleviate

Explanation: "Ameliorate" means to make better or to relieve — synonymous with "alleviate."

General Vocabulary - Synonyms

7. B. chastise

Explanation: "Admonish" means to scold or warn firmly, similar to "chastise."

8. B. bogus

Explanation: "Spurious" means not genuine or false; "bogus" is a close synonym. Options A and C are opposites, and D means unwise or foolish.

9. D. correspondence

Explanation: "Correlation" is the relation between things that happen or change together; "correspondence" is a close synonym. Options A and B are opposites, and C means demonstrating aggression.

General Vocabulary - Antonyms

10. C. scorn

Explanation: "Venerate" means to regard with great respect or reverence; "scorn" means to treat with contempt, the opposite attitude.

11. C. understated

Explanation: "Ostentatious" describes showy display intended to attract notice; "understated" describes avoiding exaggeration or flashiness, or not showy, the antonym.

12. A. sloppy

Explanation: "Fastidious" means very attentive to detail or overly particular. "Sloppy" describes the opposite – lacking care or attention to detail. The other choices are synonyms.

Idioms

13. B. hide or ignore it

Explanation: "Sweep under the rug" means to conceal a problem rather than confront it.

14. C. blamed him to protect herself

Explanation: "Throw someone under the bus" means to sacrifice or blame someone else to save oneself.

15. B. began energetically and effectively

Explanation: "Hit the ground running" means to begin a task with immediate energy and effectiveness.

PART II – COURT RELATED TERMS AND USAGE AND ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Sentence Completion

16. C. the defendant does not admit guilt but accepts conviction (no contest)

Explanation: Nolo contendere means accepts conviction without an admission of guilt.

17. A. mens rea

Explanation: "Mens rea" refers to the criminal intent or mental state required for many offenses.

18. C. summary judgment

Explanation: "Summary judgment" is granted when the court finds no genuine issue of material fact and one party is entitled to judgment as a matter of law.

Court Related Questions

19. B. A writ directing law enforcement to arrest and bring a person before the court, often issued for failure to appear or contempt

Explanation: A writ of arrest is typically issued to secure a person's presence in court (for example, after failing to appear) or to address contempt—rather than a document seizure, subpoena, or bail determination.

20. C. the question asks the witness to guess or conjecture rather than state facts

Explanation: "Speculative" objections target conjecture rather than factual testimony.

21. B. a private review by the judge, often in chambers

Explanation: In camera proceedings occur outside the public record for confidentiality.

Sequence

22. B. arrest, arraignment, trial, sentencing

Explanation: Generally, arrest is first, followed by arraignment (formal charges/plea), then trial (if no plea), then sentencing if convicted.

23. B. complaint filed, service of process, answer filed, discovery, trial, judgment

Explanation: After the complaint is filed and served, the defendant answers, parties conduct discovery, then trial and judgment.

24. C. opening statements, presentation of evidence, closing arguments, deliberation, verdict

Explanation: Since there is no jury present during a bench trial, voir dire is not a part of the trial process.

Professional Responsibility and Ethics Questions

25. C. Decline and advise the attorney that interpreters cannot directly communicate with LEP parties, nor can they give legal advice or serve as an advocate.

Explanation: Court interpreters must remain impartial and may not provide legal advice, coaching, or advocacy.

26. B. Address the Court immediately to report the error, explain the omission on the record, and request permission to correct it.

Explanation: Interpreters must correct or clarify errors or omissions promptly and on the record when they affect accuracy or fairness.

27. B. Use simultaneous interpreting when the only LEP party(ies) involved in the case is/are the party(ies) for whom the interpreter is interpreting, except if/when an LEP party testifies.

Explanation: Mode selection should serve accuracy and the needs of the proceeding—the simultaneous mode is used primarily when LEP speakers are listening but not speaking during the proceeding. The consecutive mode is used when an LEP witness or party is testifying; sight translation is for documents but used carefully.

Scenarios

28. B. Disclose the potential conflict to the court or appointing authority and, if necessary, recuse yourself.

Explanation: Interpreters must disclose actual or potential conflicts of interest and, where appropriate, withdraw to preserve impartiality and the integrity of the proceedings.

29. C. Politely request a brief pause or ask the judge for the opportunity to clarify or define the term (or request replacement if you cannot interpret it), then resume only after you understand how to render it accurately.

Explanation: Professional interpreter ethics prioritize accuracy and impartiality. If you cannot accurately interpret a term, you should disclose the limitation and request clarification or a brief pause so you can ensure an accurate rendering (or ask to be replaced if you do not feel comfortable handling this unfamiliar terminology). Guessing,

omitting, or substituting without disclosure risks serious misinterpretation and undermines fairness.

30. C. Politely decline the gift, briefly explain your role requires strict impartiality and court policy about gifts, and ask the judge for guidance if the party persists or if you are unsure how to proceed.

Brief explanation: Interpreters must avoid actions that create an appearance of bias or obligation. The safest course is to politely decline while showing respect, explain that court rules on impartiality restrict accepting gifts, and seek the judge's guidance if needed. If a culturally sensitive situation makes refusal difficult, disclose the offer immediately to the court and follow the judge's direction rather than accepting privately.