

# **Academic Placement Assessments**

## **Assessment #1**

### **Reading Comprehension**

**Time Allowance: 45 minutes**

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*Complete Canadian GED preparation.* (2003). Canada: Steck-Vaughn.

# Assessment #1: Reading Comprehension

## Instructions:

This test contains excerpts from fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama. Each excerpt is followed up by multiple-choice questions about the reading.

You have **45 minutes** to complete this test.

Answer your questions on the answer sheet provided.

**Questions 1 – 3 refer to the following excerpt from a short story**

### WHAT ARE THIS FATHER'S VIEWS?

- I am not unsympathetic, Jack, to your views on the war. I am not unsympathetic to your views on the state of the world in general. From the way you wear your hair and from the way you dress I do find it difficult to decide whether you or the
- (5) young girl you say you are about to marry is going to play the male role in your marriage – or the female role. But even that I don't find offensive. And I am not trying to make crude jokes at your expense. You must pardon me, though, if my remarks seem too personal. I confess I don't know you as well as a
- (10) father *ought* to know his son, and I may seem to take liberties. ...

- I don't honestly know when I decided to go into college teaching, Jack. I considered doing other things – a career in the army or navy. Yes, I might have gone to Annapolis or
- (15) West Point. Those appointments were much to be desired in the Depression years, and my family did still have a few political connections. One thing was certain, though. Business was just as much out of the question for me as politics had been for my father. An honest man, I was to understand, had
- (20) too much to suffer there. Yes, considering our family history, an ivory tower didn't sound like a bad thing at all for an honest man and a serious man.

Peter Taylor, "Dean of Men," *The Collected Stories*.

**Questions 1 – 3 refer to the previous excerpt from a short story**

1. Which of the following is most likely true of the narrator's past?
  - a. He became a college teacher reluctantly
  - b. He was extremely conventional.
  - c. He had a brief career in the army.
  - d. He did not follow in his father's footsteps.
  - e. His father was dishonest.
  
2. What is the main effect of the phrase "ivory tower" (lines 20-21)
  - a. It emphasizes that the narrator wanted to escape into a safer world.
  - b. It shows how much the narrator reveres the college where he works.
  - c. It shows that the narrator realizes he has not been a good father.
  - d. It reflects that the narrator's opinion that Jack is not facing real life.
  - e. It shows how much the narrator and his son have in common.
  
3. If Jack told his father that he was becoming a vegetarian, how would his father most likely react, based on the information in the excerpt?
  - a. He would tell Jack he was being illogical.
  - b. He would conclude that Jack was acting out of rebellion.
  - c. He would assume that Jack's wife was pushing him into it.
  - d. He would predict that Jack would soon change his mind.
  - e. He would do his best to accept Jack's views.

**Questions 4 – 6 refer to the following excerpt from an autobiography**

**WHAT WAS IT LIKE TO BE A SLAVE DURING THE WAR?**

- I had no schooling whatever while I was a slave, though I remember on several occasions I went as far as the schoolhouse door with one of my young mistresses to carry her books. The picture of several dozen boys and girls in a schoolroom engaged in study made a deep impression upon me, and I had the feeling that to get into a schoolhouse and study in this way would be about the same as getting into paradise.
- (5)
- So far as I can now recall, the first knowledge that I got of the fact that we were slaves, and that freedom of the slaves was being discussed, was early one morning before day, when I was awakened by my mother kneeling over her children and fervently praying that Lincoln and his armies might be successful, and that one day she and her children might be free. In this connection I have never been able to understand how the slaves throughout the South, completely ignorant as were the masses so far as books or newspapers were concerned, were able to keep themselves so accurately and completely informed about the great National questions that were agitating the country. From the time that Garrison, Lovejoy, and others began to agitate for freedom, the slaves throughout the South kept in close touch with the progress of the movement. Though I was a mere child during the preparation for the Civil War and during the war itself, I now recall the many late-at-night whispered discussions that I heard my mother and the other slaves on the plantation indulge in. These discussions showed that they understood the situation, and that they themselves informed of events by what was termed the "grape-vine" telegraph.
- (10)
- (15)
- (20)
- (25)

Booker T Washington, *Up from Slavery*.

**Questions 4 – 6 refer to the previous excerpt from an autobiography**

4. Who were Garrison and Lovejoy, based on the information in the excerpt?
  - a. Friends of the author
  - b. Members of Lincoln's cabinet
  - c. Well-known slavery opponents
  - d. Wealthy slaveholders
  - e. Troublemakers
  
5. Based on the context in which it is used, what is "the 'grape-vine' telegraph" (lines 28-29)?
  - a. Telegraph messages sent from the North to the South
  - b. Telegraph wires that looked like grapevines
  - c. A person-to-person means of transmitting information
  - d. A direct pipeline from the Union forces' command posts
  - e. A means of communicating using secret codes
  
6. The author of this excerpt, Booker T. Washington, build Tuskegee Institute into a respected and important college. What quality exhibited in this excerpt does this accomplishment reflect?
  - a. The author's fervent desire for freedom
  - b. The author's desire for fame
  - c. The author's lack of schooling
  - d. The author's deep interest in education
  - e. The author's exposure to knowledgeable slaves.

**Questions 7 – 9 refer to the following poem**

**HOW DO YOU DESCRIBE A KITE?**

A Kite is a Victim

- A kite is a victim you are sure of.  
You love it because it pulls  
gentle enough to call you master,  
strong enough to call you fool;
- (5) because it lives  
like a desperate trained falcon  
in the high sweet air,  
and you can always haul it down  
to tame it in your drawer.
- (10) A kite is a fish you have already caught  
In a pool where no fish come,  
so you play him carefully and long,  
and hope he won't give up,  
or the wind die down.
- (15) A kite is the last poem you've written  
so you give it to the wind,  
but you don't let it go  
until someone finds you  
something else to do.
- (20) A kite is a contract of glory  
That must be made with the sun  
so you make friends with the field  
the river and the wind,  
then you pray the whole cold night before,
- (25) under the travelling cordless moon,  
to make you worthy and lyric and pure.

Leonard Cohen, "A Kite is a Victim," *Stranger Music*.

**Questions 7 – 9 refer to the previous poem**

7. The poet uses a number of images to describe. To which of the following images does he *not* compare the kite?
- A fish you've already caught
  - A victim you are sure of
  - The wind
  - The last poem you've written
  - A contract (of glory)
8. To what is the kite further compared in lines 5 – 9?
- To the high sweet air of the skies
  - To a desperate trained falcon
  - To a drawer
  - To a tamed, caged pet
  - To a stuffed bird you can pull down from a shelf
9. The kite is finally contrasted to the moon in lines 25 to 26 by the use of one word. Which word is it?
- Cordless
  - Travelling
  - Worthy
  - Lyric
  - Pure

**Questions 10 and 11 refer to the following excerpt from an insurance policy**

**WHAT DOES RENTERS INSURANCE COVER?**

- Renters insurance is an important commodity that too many renters overlook. Two key terms that are used in discussing renters insurance are *peril* and *risk*. Perils are the potential causes of a loss, such as a fire, windstorm, hail,
- (5) theft, and vandalism. Risk is the chance of experiencing a loss. Two other key terms that pertain to renters insurance are *actual cash value* and *replacement cost coverage*. Both have to do with ways in which a claim to a property loss can be settled.
- (10) *Actual cash value* means, in many provinces, that if a loss occurs, you will be paid the current replacement cost minus depreciation (wear and tear due to age and use). The total amount to be paid is subject to the terms of your policy. *Replacement cost coverage* means that in case of loss, you
- (15) will be repaid for the cost you incur to replace the damaged property with comparable new property, subject to the terms of your policy. Other key terms in a renters insurance policy are
- (20) *deductible*, the portion of the loss the insured is willing to pay out of pocket, and coverage *limits*, the maximum amounts the insurer will pay a policyholder for a covered loss. Keeping the coverage limits low correspondingly keeps the cost of the insurance low.
- Renters insurance offers the following coverage options:
- (25) personal property protection, family liability protection, and guest medical protection. Personal property protection is protection against loss to *movable* property. Family liability protection is protection against certain liability claims brought against you because of property damage or bodily injury you
- (30) may have accidentally caused. Guest medical protection is reimbursement for expenses incurred if visitors to your home are injured, regardless of who was at fault.



**Questions 10 and 11 refer to the previous excerpt from an insurance policy**

10. According to the information in this excerpt, which of the following types of insurance should a person with a large collection of valuable dolls buy?
- a. Replacement cost coverage renters insurance
  - b. Actual cash value renters insurance
  - c. A policy with a high deductible
  - d. A family liability policy
  - e. Fire insurance
11. Which of the following best describes the style in which this excerpt is written?
- a. Legal and technical
  - b. Informative and direct
  - c. Scholarly and dull
  - d. Casual and conversational
  - e. Light and breezy

**Questions 12 and 13 refer to the following excerpt from a novel**

**WHY IS JOHN DISTRACTED BY HIS NEW TEACHER?**

- When he was young, John had paid no attention in Sunday school, and always forgot the golden text, which earned him the wrath of the father. Around the time of his fourteenth birthday, with all the pressures of church and home uniting to drive him to the altar, he strove to appear more serious and therefore less conspicuous.<sup>1</sup> But he was distracted by his new teacher Elisha, who was the pastor's nephew and who had but lately arrived from Georgia. He was not much older than John, only seventeen, and he was already saved and was a preacher. John stared at Elisha all during the lesson, admiring the timbre of Elisha's voice, much deeper and manlier than his own, admiring the leanness, and grace, and strength, and darkness of Elisha in his Sunday suit, wondering if he would ever be holy as Elisha was holy. But he did not follow the lesson, and when, sometimes, Elisha paused to ask John a question, John was ashamed and confused, feeling the palms of his hands become wet and his heart pound like a hammer. Elisha would smile and reprimand him gently, and the lesson would go on.
- Roy never knew his Sunday school lesson either, but it was different with Roy – no one really expected of Roy what was expected of John. Everyone was always praying that the Lord would change Roy's heart, but it was John who was expected to be good, to be a good example.

James Baldwin, *Go Tell It on the Mountain*.

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<sup>1</sup> Conspicuous means "noticeable"

**Questions 12 and 13 refer to the previous excerpt from a novel**

12. What does the author mean by the phrase “with all the pressures of the church and home uniting to drive him to the altar” (lines 4-5)?
- The pressure from his parents is driving John from his home.
  - The church has been pressuring John to become a member.
  - John’s parents have been pressuring him to join the church.
  - John is being pressured to become a preacher.
  - John is being pressured to get married.
13. The style of the excerpt is characterized by which of the following?
- Use of many descriptive words
  - Frequent use of figurative language
  - Reliance on dialect
  - Sprinkles of humour throughout
  - Use of first-person narration throughout

**Questions 14 - 16 refer to the following excerpt from a play**

**WHAT DECISION HAS MRS. BROOKS MADE AND WHY?**

- (5) RUBY: (RUBY and MRS. BROOKS enter through the front door.) Girl, I sure wish I could get my hands on whoever that is that keeps pushing every one of them buttons on the elevator before they get off. The old elevator door banging shut on every floor just about drove me out of my mind. I don't see how you can be so good-natured about it. Gladys.
- MRS. BROOKS: Sometimes I think that's my trouble, I'm too good-natured about everything.
- (10) RUBY: Ah, girl
- MRS. BROOKS: It's true, and you know it. I just let everybody push me around.
- RUBY: Don't be so hard on yourself Gladys.
- MRS. BROOKS: But, girl, this morning I made up my mind, I'm leaving Mr. Brooks.
- (15) RUBY: Gladys, it's not that bad, is it? Remember it ain't the easiest thing in the world to leave a man after all these years.
- MRS. BROOKS: Humph. Telling me I couldn't buy a new dress for Gail's wedding; that was the last straw.
- (20) RUBY: You know, Gladys, there is such a thing as going from the refrigerator into the frying pan.
- MRS. BROOKS: Oh Ruby, be serious.
- RUBY: I am just as serious as cancer. I mean, it's not as though the man won't work. Everybody knows that he ain't known to mess up a piece of money.
- (25) MRS. BROOKS: A lot of good it does me. Everything in the house is in his name. My name don't appear on nothing except the income tax deductions. ...
- (30) MRS. BROOKS: Last week I overspent buying groceries, and talking about a man carrying on! You'd have thought that seventeen cents was going to cause a panic down on Wall Street.
- RUBY: Now, Gladys, you know sometimes he does have good intentions.
- (35) MRS. BROOKS: My granny always said that the road to hell is paved with good intentions.
- RUBY: My granny always said that there's some good in everybody.

(40) MRS. BROOKS: If there's some good in Mr. Brooks he done done a Houdini with it, and made it disappear. 'Cause you sure can't see it.

Charlie Russell, *Five on the Black Hand Side*

**Questions 14 - 16 refer to the previous excerpt from a play**

14. Which of the following sentences best describes what Mrs. Brook's grandmother meant by "the road to hell is paved with good intentions" (lines 36-37)
- Never trust people who say that they mean well.
  - Bad things can result even when someone means well.
  - It is obvious that Mr. Brooks was always an evil person.
  - Spending too much money will get you into trouble.
  - All good things will eventually disappear.
15. Based on this excerpt, which of the following statements can you infer about Mrs. Brooks?
- She has thought for a long time about leaving Mr. Brooks.
  - She needs Ruby's approval before she will leave Mr. Brooks.
  - She will not leave Mr. Brooks until she has found a job.
  - She will probably not leave Mr. Brooks at all.
  - She will probably move in with Ruby.
16. Which of the following best describes the theme of this excerpt?
- Spouses sometimes complain unnecessarily.
  - People who work hard often do not like to spend money.
  - Disagreements over money can affect relationships.
  - Friends are not always supportive.
  - Wealthy people have problems too.

**Questions 17 – 20 refer to the following excerpt from a short story**

**WHY IS THE WOMAN WEARING BLACK?**

I should have known the minute I saw her, holding court in her widow's costume, that something had cracked inside Doña Ernestina. She was in full *lato*-black from head to toe, including a mantilla. ...

- (5) Doña Ernestina simply waited for me to join the other two leaning against the machines before she continued explaining what had happened when the news of Tony had arrived at her door the day before. She spoke calmly, a haughty expression on her face, looking like an offended duchess in her beautiful
- (10) black dress. She was pale, pale, but she had a wild look in her eyes. The officer had told her that – when the time came – they would bury Tony with “full military honors”; for now they were sending her the medal and a flag. But she had said, “*No gracias*,” to the funeral, and she sent the flag and medals back
- (15) marked *Ya no vive aqui*: Does not live here anymore. “Tell the Mr. President of the United States what I say: *No gracias*.” Then she waited for our response.

- Lydia shook her head, indicating that she was speechless. And Elenita looked pointedly at me, forcing me to be the one
- (20) to speak the words of sympathy for all of us, to reassure Doña Ernestina that she had done exactly what any of us would have done in her place: yes, we would have all said *No, gracias*, to any president who had actually tried to pay for a son's life with a few trinkets and a folded flag.

Judith Ortiz Cofer, “Nada,” *The Latin Deli: Prose and Poetry*.

**Questions 17 – 20 refer to the previous excerpt from a short story**

17. Why does the narrator begin to believe Doña Ernestina has “cracked”?
- She spoke of her son’s death too calmly.
  - She was dressed too beautifully for such a sad occasion.
  - She was dressed as a widow in mourning.
  - Her only son was killed in Vietnam.
  - She sent the flag and the medals back to the military.
18. Based on the information in this excerpt, if the president invited Doña Ernestina to a ceremony to honour war heroes, how would she most likely react?
- She would
- wear her widow’s costume to the ceremony
  - refuse to attend the ceremony
  - implore him to end the war
  - ask to give a speech about her son
  - thank the president for honouring her son
19. Which of the following descriptions best indicates Doña Ernestina’s state of mind?
- She was dressed in black from head to toe.
  - She had a haughty expression on her face.
  - She looked like a duchess.
  - She had a wild look in her eyes.
  - She wore a beautiful dress.
20. In this excerpt, what technique does the author use to add authenticity?
- Third-person narration
  - A president’s name
  - Formal language
  - Spanish phrases
  - Figurative language





# Academic Placement Assessments

## Assessment #1, Reading Comprehension

### Answer Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Record your answers on this sheet.

- |     |   |     |   |
|-----|---|-----|---|
| 1.  | <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E | 11. | <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E |
| 2.  | <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E | 12. | <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E |
| 3.  | <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E | 13. | <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E |
| 4.  | <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E | 14. | <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E |
| 5.  | <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E | 15. | <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E |
| 6.  | <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E | 16. | <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E |
| 7.  | <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E | 17. | <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E |
| 8.  | <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E | 18. | <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E |
| 9.  | <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E | 19. | <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E |
| 10. | <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E | 20. | <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D <input type="radio"/> E |

How do you feel you did on this test?