

Accuplacer Practice - Reading Comprehension

The reading comprehension portion of Accuplacer's College Placement Test (CPT) consists of 20 questions. There are 25 in this study guide for teaching purposes. There are two main types of questions in the Reading comprehension section. Their description follows:

- Type 1 – Requires that you first read a passage consisting of one or two paragraphs and then you should answer one comprehension question based on the text. The questions asked about in these passages pertain to your ability to identify main ideas, supporting details and inferences.*
- Type 2 – Involves understanding the relationship between two sentences. A question is asked to determine whether you recognize that implied relationship. **

There are several reading strategies (hints, skills, or tricks) that you may find helpful to succeed.

Hints for Type 1

1. Figure out unknown words by looking for clues in prefixes and root words. Try to sound it out in your head. This might clue you in on the word's meaning. Don't let one word "trip" you. Stick in a substitute word that makes sense and continue reading to the end of the sentence. Many times, you can figure out what a word means by all the surrounding words and through context clues.
2. These paragraphs are assembled in the same "good writing practice styles" that many English teachers recommend. There is usually an **I**ntroduction, a **B**ody, and a **C**onclusion. Look for a topic sentence in the *introduction* which lets you know what the reading is about. The *body* of the reading gives supportive arguments to the topic. Often the *concluding* statement will help you to know the author's position. Knowing this in advance will help you to be able to recognize main ideas.
3. Take notes as you read. Writing while you read improves your understanding and it actively engages more of your brain. A good strategy to try is this: jot down the main idea of the whole passage in just 3 to 5 words. This can help you to focus on the topic, find the main idea, and understand the position of the author.
4. If you find that you are not paying enough attention to what you are reading, try to get your imagination involved! Try forming a mental picture or doodle the thought on your scrap paper. Sometimes a reading may have facts and figures that you can perhaps make into a quick chart on your scrap paper. Visualizing it in this way can help you to make it less confusing and more interesting. Does it involve some of your 5 senses like tastes, smells, sights, sounds or touch? Engaging your "figurative senses" may help you to make a reading more interesting. Perhaps you have seen something similar in a movie or a book? This can help you to build an interest in the topic being discussed. People tend to pay more attention to subjects that already know a little bit about. Be careful though and make sure you focus on what the author is expressing and do not add your opinion.
5. Search for words that show order, organization, and how important something is to the author. These words include ones like: *primary*, *next*, *after*, *during*, and *finally*. Sometimes the question might ask for the order in which a process occurs; paying attention to these key words will help you to answer correctly.
6. Did you notice the *italicized* words in question #4 above or the underlined words in question #3 above? The author may use *italics* to make points stand out in a sentence. Underlined words may also be used in the same way. Even if there are no italics or underlined words, try to identify the supporting details by the emphasis that the author puts on certain ideas.
7. Reading is a lot like searching for a buried treasure. To find it you must dig! In other words, look for details or other information in the reading that can help you to identify the correct answer to the question. Remember, you can use (*the question*) as the "map" to follow the path to the "treasure" - (*possibly correct answers*). Toss out the obvious wrong answers to improve your chances of choosing the correct response. Lastly read and re-read to identify the "gold"- (***the correct answer***).

Hints for Type 2

1. As you read each individual sentence, try to understand the purpose and tone of the thoughts conveyed within it. Is it a positive or negative view? Is it pro or con a certain subject?
2. Look for and understand relationships between the two sentences that involve comparison, contrasts, and cause & effect.
3. The question might be, what does the second sentence do? Basically, this means that you must ask yourself if the statement in the second sentence supports the first sentence, contradicts, expands upon, or repeats the same information.

** Please note that on the actual test, there is usually only one question per passage. Multiple questions are shown here on this review for teaching purposes.*

*** On the actual test, Type 1 & 2 questions randomly appear together; here they are separated for teaching purposes.*

Type 1

Sample Questions

This test measures your ability to understand what you read. Some questions will ask you to read a statement or passage and then choose the best answer to the questions, based on what is stated or implied in the passage.

Directions: Read the passages and answer the questions that follow:

The entire year of 1989 marked the grand return of the restored steam locomotive to northern Vermont; but people especially loved attending the Steam Train festival during autumn best. During that festival, when the train arrived into the station, the 150 ticketed passengers were transported back in time and treated to the sound of a strong welcoming whistle and the blast of heat from the boiler (if you were standing close enough on the platform) which was very welcome in the crisp cool air. A thrilling tour awaited them. Once everyone boarded the train; the opened windows in the passenger cars afforded passengers an exquisite fragrance of fall leaves and a coal burning steam engine would delight your nostrils in a way that no diesel engine could. If the passengers were not excited enough at this point, they certainly were when they experienced the power of the train reaching its leisurely cruising speed of 40 mph and time seemed to slow down. Of note were the six passenger cars that were restored to exhibit the craftsmanship of 1918. Even the seats displayed the time honored and historically accurate period details of the early twentieth century. If the fortunate riders could manage to take their eyes away from this wonder of engineering and craftsmanship; the breathtakingly beautiful natural view of 30 miles of Vermont's fall foliage was theirs to behold, just a glance away out the window. At the furthest destination, an apple orchard awaited guests who disembarked. Here they could purchase the very apples that they hand-picked from the trees. It is no wonder that this steam train tour sold out quicker during the autumn than at any other time of the year. The only downside was that it was only a 3-hour round-trip excursion.

1. What is the main idea of this passage?
A: People enjoy smelling leaves.
B: Why especially people loved to ride this steam train in the fall.
C: Coal pollutes the environment.
D: This steam train tour would be better if it were shorter.
2. Which word best defines the function of the passage?
A: interrogative
B: exclamatory
C: descriptive
D: defaming
3. It can be implied by the passage that:
A: after 1989 people got tired of riding the steam train.
B: the apples were less expensive when you handpicked them.
C: the author recommends taking this ride in the Fall.
D: 3 hours on the steam train tour was too long.

Many people can recite that $E=mc^2$ and some may even know the value of “c” the constant speed of light in a vacuum (299,792,458 m/s); but what does it really mean? The equation $E=mc^2$ is also known as the mass-equivalence. Simply stated it is the concept that the mass of an object is a measure of its energy content. The mass–energy equivalence arose originally from special relativity as a paradox described by Henri Poincaré. Therefore, Albert Einstein was not the first to propose a mass–energy relationship. However, Einstein was the first scientist to propose the $E = mc^2$ formula and the first to interpret mass–energy equivalence as a fundamental principle that follows from the relativistic symmetries of space and time.

4. According to the paragraph “c” is:
A: dangerous from a nuclear standpoint.
B: the constant speed of light in a vacuum.
C: a discovery of Henri Poincaré
D: the mass-energy equivalence.
5. Which word best defines the function of the passage?
A: interrogative
B: exclamatory
C: derogative
D: informative

In a director’s effort to produce movies on time and under budget, the quality of said movie is sometimes lacking. Imagine watching a movie 10 times or more with a specific purpose. That purpose is not to memorize the lines or to relive the dazzling special effects. Instead, the goal is to find movie mistakes. This is exactly what Jon Sandys began doing in 1996 after watching the Steven Spielberg film entitled Jurassic Park and James Cameron’s movie called True Lies while still in grammar school in England. He noticed several glaring errors in both. When he pointed them out to other people he found that the subject was of interest to many. People found it fascinating that even with the best of editors, mistakes make it to the final movie. Sandys eventually authored books and made regular appearances on a television show’s segment that highlighted these movie mistakes. Currently, Sandys focuses primarily on the following types of cinema errors: ones that reveal the movie making process, audio problems, continuity problems, visible crew members, visible equipment, factual errors, plot holes, and character mistakes. He has built this interest into a profitable and very popular internet website. A good example of a movie mistake in Jurassic Park is evident when the T-rex does not leave or make any footprints in the soft mud during his attack on a car. Be observant the next time you watch a movie, perhaps you might spot a mistake!

6. Which of the following describe the Author’s view?
A: Film makers are not professionals.
B: Rushing to meet production deadlines can produce movie errors that you can find.
C: Editors need to return to film maker’s college to learn new techniques.
D: It is better to just enjoy a movie the way it is presented.
7. It can be inferred from the passage, Jon Sandys acknowledged that most movies are not perfect and
A: found ways to turn his interest in those mistakes into a career.
B: made satirical short movies to ridicule the directors.
C: tried to improve movies.
D: was bitter about the mistakes.
8. According to the passage Steven Spielberg:
A: has made some of the best action movies of all time.
B: fired his editors to improve his films.
C: made some errors in his film Jurassic Park.
D: consulted with James Cameron to make perfect movies.
9. Which of the following is not considered a movie mistake?
A: When an actor’s lips do not move when he is heard speaking a line.
B: If a microphone is seen above an actor’s head in a movie set in 1776.
C: During one scene, the hair style of a character mysteriously goes from combed to uncombed repeatedly.
D: A boring plotline.

A special hidden surprise in a movie is called Easter Eggs. These are “extra features” that are placed in the movie by the people who make them. Although they do not add to the plot or flow of a movie, they can have a significant meaning to the director or even to fans who seek them out. In many Pixar movies, fans seek out a Pizza Planet Pizza delivery truck (they have appeared in every Pixar full-length movie since the first Toy Story movie). Or if you are observant, you can usually find an “A113” emblazoned on something because it is an insider’s reference to the animation classroom at California Institute of the Arts (many Pixar animation artists attended school there). An easy to spot Easter Egg can be seen in the Pixar movie UP when Carl’s house first takes flight and the little girl notices it aloft outside of her window. In the bedroom, there are toys scattered around including the Luxo ball (the same ball in Pixar’s first short film). Often Easter Eggs appear on the DVD release of movies where short movies can even be hidden in the actual DVD menus. Many Pixar DVDs have these embedded in their menus. Perhaps with a keen eye, you can find one in a movie.

10. Which of the following is considered an Easter Egg?
- A: When a pizza is delivered to a character’s home.
 - B: When a character’s home is untidy.
 - C: A secret short movie clip placed in a DVD menu that can be accessed by clicking on a hidden icon.
 - D: When the DVD menu repeats over and over.
11. According to the passage which is true about Easter Eggs?
- A: They are beautifully decorated to celebrate the arrival of spring and new movie releases.
 - B: They are not important for the flow of the movie or the plot line.
 - C: They are distracting to the casual viewer.
 - D: They appear in every movie ever made.

Convoys are defined as a group of vehicles (trucks, cars, ships etc.) that travel together for mutual protection and support. Sometimes the military deploys in convoys especially when travelling through remote areas. During Super Storm Sandy, the power companies brought linemen in from around the country via convoys to get the embattled northeastern portion of the United States powered and back to normal. Not all convoys operate above the law, however. Years ago, convoys were conducted in opposition to speed limit restrictions, speed traps and to keep tight delivery deadlines. These ran well above the posted speed limit and thus were illegal. They organized and maintained their plan of action, “in code” with communication over CB radios. Their hopes were that law enforcement could only ticket a few of the perpetrators while the majority were never caught. Current U.S. Department of Transportation (D.O.T.) regulations have greatly reduced such recklessness on the nation’s highways. Today, 18-wheeler’s convoys are operated at legal speeds to help truckers to maintain driver alertness on the road.

12. The author implies a switch in the motive behind trucker’s convoy over the years can be expressed as being what?
- A: From beating the system in an unsafe manner to keeping safe on the road.
 - B: From arriving late to arriving on time.
 - C: From a military to civilian origin.
 - D: From being helpful to harmful.
13. The main subject of this passage is:
- A: the only thing truckers talk about on their CB radios.
 - B: why the army does not dispatch just one soldier against invading forces.
 - C: the various types of convoys and the reasons for their use.
 - D: how the D.O.T. took away the joy of driving for truck drivers with its rules and regulations.

In English, an onomatopoeia is a word that phonetically imitates, resembles, or suggests the source of the sound it describes. You have probably been using these words since childhood in songs like Old McDonald where the cow says “moo-moo”, the duck says “quack-quack”, or the pig says “oink-oink.” Interestingly, in various languages the onomatopoeia is different for these same animals. For instance, in French the same cow says “myrrh-myrrh”, the duck says “kwan-kwan” and the pig says “grwan-grwan.” One of two factors may explain the differences. 1) Although a sound is heard similarly by people of different cultures, it is often expressed by different consonant strings in different languages. 2) Even though these are the same animals making the same noises, some languages may hear it differently or emphasize one part of the sound that we don’t hear or we ignore in English.

14. The main idea of the paragraph maintains that onomatopoeia
- A: is a word learned in childhood.
 - B: is always the same cross-culturally.
 - C: can result in children saying that animals make different sounds based on the way it is heard in their language.
 - D: makes cows, ducks and pigs have French accents in France.

Shabu-shabu is a dish you can order in Japanese restaurants. It usually consists of thinly sliced raw beef, although chicken, crab, duck, lobster, or pork can also be used. Your uncooked protein of choice will be brought to your table along with a boiling hot cooking pot containing a (dashi & kombu) broth. It is placed on a heat source. There will usually also be a selection of tofu, cooked rice, and raw vegetables (Chinese cabbage, chrysanthemum leaves, nori, onions, carrots, shiitake mushrooms, and enokitake mushrooms) as an accompaniment. A dipping sauce is often given on the side that is made from a blend of sesame seeds, miso paste, soy sauce, sugar, and rice vinegar. A ponzu sauce and soy sauce are also usually provided. Although it is tempting to dump everything into the pot at once; that will surely result in overcooking and you will miss the flavor profile of the properly prepared dish. This is how you should eat it. First, with your chopsticks dip the meat into broth; swish it around for a few seconds and taking care not to overcook it. Shabu shabu is the sound it makes to Japanese speaking people as you move it to cook it (“swish-swish” in English). Next, enjoy the cooked meat with the accompaniments of vegetable and sauces in any combination that you would like. Lastly, remember to enjoy the leftover hot broth as a soup to finish your meal.

15. The main idea of the paragraph maintains that Shabu-shabu:
- A: has a non-sense name.
 - B: has a specific procedure to enjoy properly.
 - C: is only made from beef.
 - D: is fully cooked and prepared by a chef for you before it is served to you.
16. It may be inferred from the passage that:
- A: Italian Restaurants will probably serve Shabu-Shabu too if you ask them nicely.
 - B: Cooking the protein with the vegetable and sauces for an hour is the tastiest way to enjoy tender and authentic Japanese Shabu-Shabu.
 - C: you will probably be given a lot of broth, to have enough left for soup afterward.
 - D: Shabu-Shabu is a great fast food meal to eat while driving a car.

Type 2

Sample Questions

Directions: In these questions, two underlined sentences are followed by a question or statement. Read the sentences and then choose the best answer to the question or the best completion of the statement.

17. A soft drink is a beverage that usually contains carbonated water, some form of sweetener and natural or artificial flavoring.

Soft drinks may also contain caffeine, coloring, or preservatives.

How are the two sentences related?

- A: It expands on the first.
- B: They contradict each another.
- C: It explains what is stated in the first.
- D: It draws a conclusion about what is stated in the first.

18. History shows that the first person known to have viewed the Grand Canyon was García López de Cárdenas from Spain, who arrived in 1540.

For thousands of years prior to our day, the Grand Canyon has been continuously inhabited by Native Americans who built settlements within the canyon and its many caves.

What does the second sentence do?

- A: It explains what is stated in the first.
- B: It states an effect.
- C: It expands on the first.
- D: They contradict each another.

19. Freezing rain is the name given to rain that falls when surface temperatures are below freezing.

Freezing rain can be defined as rain that freezes shortly after striking a surface that is at or below freezing.

How are the two sentences related?

- A: They contradict each another.
- B: It states a predicament.
- C: It conceals the first.
- D: It defines what is stated in the first.

20. Looking out the window of the soaring airplane at the metropolis below, one can see cars patiently lined up along the highway.

Sitting in one of those cars for 45 minutes while crawling at a snail's pace can wear on anyone's patience.

What does the second sentence do?

- A: It expands on the first.
- B: It states an effect.
- C: It defines what is stated in the first.
- D: It presents an image that contrasts with the one presented in the first.

21. A focused individual, Olympic Gold Medalist Scott Hamilton practiced skating with diligence and determination.

Scott Hamilton was a hard-working athlete who steadily pursued excellence in his sport.

What does the second sentence do?

- A: It restates roughly the same information offered in the first sentence.
- B: The two sentences represent an apparent contradiction.
- C: It explores a negligence of the first.
- D: It resolves a conflict.

22. Attacks by red wolves on livestock have reached an all-time high.

Wolves are currently on the endangered species list.

How are the two sentences related?

- A: It reinforces the first.
- B: It explains what is stated in the first.
- C: It contradicts the first.
- D: It analyzes a statement in the first.

23. Walt Disney World is testing a new wearable ticket system that allows guests to simply swipe their wrists to enter the theme parks, redeem a Fastpass, open their hotel room door, and make purchases.

The new wearable checkout system is intended to be more convenient for guests by reducing: the loss of tickets, the need for credit cards and the use of hotel keys when staying on Disney property.

What does the second sentence do?

- A: It expands on the first.
- B: It states an effect.
- C: It contrasts with the first.
- D: It gives an example.

24. Coffee cupping is the practice of observing the aromas and tastes of brewed coffee.

A standard coffee cupping procedure involves first deeply sniffing the coffee, next loudly slurping the coffee so it spreads to the back of the tongue to experience its flavor and lastly spitting it out into a spittoon.

These sentences go together because

- A: The first sentence states a cause and the second sentence states an effect.
- B: One is long and the other is short.
- C: The second sentence precedes the first one from the standpoint of time.
- D: The second sentence gives an example of what is talked about in the first.

25. The US Interstate a network of U.S. highways connecting the 48 contiguous states and most of the cities with populations above 50,000.

Since Hawaii and Alaska have interstates and yet they do not connect to any other state by a common border; maybe the definition for the Interstate Highway should be redefined.

How are the two sentences related?

- A: It proposes a solution.
- B: They are not related.
- C: They express roughly the same idea.
- D: They establish a result.

Answers Key: 1B, 2C, 3C, 4B, 5D, 6B, 7A, 8C, 9D, 10C, 11B, 12A, 13C, 14C, 15B, 16C, 17A, 18D, 19D, 20D, 21A, 22C, 23B, 24D, 25A