GUIDE TO THE CUNY ASSESSMENT TEST IN WRITING

Rev. 1202.20200123
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Welcome
The faculty, staff and students of Baruch College are pleased that you are interested in joining our community. We are confident you will enjoy being a student at Baruch College.

The Office of Testing and Evaluation is a component of the Division for Enrollment Management and Strategic Academic Initiatives. Our mission is to provide quality assessment and evaluation support through the collection and processing of tests and faculty evaluation data. The Office of Testing and Evaluation’s activities incorporate the following values: work meets the needs of the academic department or individual, work is timely, accurate and reliable, information is readily available to those who need it and secure from those who do not. Our staff is committed to the following ideals: professionalism, responsiveness, thoroughness, accessibility, friendliness and sensitivity to data confidentiality.

Contact Information
The Baruch College Office of Testing and Evaluation is located in room 5-220 of the William and Anita Newman Vertical Campus (55 Lexington Avenue, 5th Floor). Our office is open Monday – Friday from 9:00AM to 5:00PM, (please note: that office hours are subject to change depending on activities calendar).

Testing and Evaluation General Phone Number: 646-312-4305
Testing Website: http://www.baruch.cuny.edu/testing
Student Course and Faculty Evaluation Website: https://www.baruch.cuny.edu/evals
Departmental email address: testing.evaluation@baruch.cuny.edu
CUNY Assessment Test in Writing

Description of Examination
The CUNY Assessment Test in Writing is a standardized writing test that measures your ability to do college-level writing in English and assesses your readiness for introductory college courses. In addition, the CUNY Assessment Test in Writing is used to determine when students are ready to exit from developmental writing courses and move on to college-level courses.

The learning skills taught in first year college courses are reflected in the CUNY Assessment Test in Writing. In the test you are required to read, understand and respond to a passage of 250-300 words by:

- identifying key ideas within the reading passage
- writing a brief summary of the key ideas in the reading
- demonstrating basic critical thinking in response to these key ideas
- identifying a key idea in the reading passage and presenting a clearly written response to that idea
- writing an essay that is well organized and shows connections between ideas
- supporting ideas with relevant personal experience, readings, schoolwork, and/or other sources of information
- demonstrating competence in sentence construction, and word choice
- demonstrating correct usage, grammar and mechanics

Time Limit
You will have 90 minutes to complete the examination.

Reference Materials
You may bring a non-electronic dictionary to the test (paperback or hardcover, a paperback dictionary is recommended). The dictionary may be either English only or bilingual.

How is the test scored?
The CATW uses an analytic scoring guide, called a scoring rubric (see below), to evaluate student writing samples. Each test is scored independently by two faculty raters and both raters assign scores in five categories. Scores may range from 1 to 6 points in each category.

The Five Scoring Categories
1. “Critical Response to the Writing Task and Text”: This category emphasizes your ability to complete the writing task and to demonstrate understanding of the main ideas in the reading text, using critical analysis, and integrating your own ideas and experiences to respond to the main ideas in the text.

2. “Development of Writer’s Ideas”: In this category, you are evaluated on your ability to develop your ideas (for example, by using summary, narrative, or problem/solution) in a clear and organized way. Your response should include both general statements and specific details and examples. Specific references to the text must be included with these details and examples.

3. “Structure of the Response”: This category evaluates your ability to organize ideas into a cohesive essay that supports a central focus, or thesis. The structure of your essay is evaluated for evidence of logical connections between ideas and the use of transitions to convey these connections.
4. “Language Use: Sentences and Word Choice”: This category evaluates the degree to which you demonstrate sentence control and variety in sentence structure. This category also evaluates your ability to use appropriate vocabulary to make your ideas clear.

5. “Language Use: Grammar, Usage, Mechanics”: This category evaluates your ability to follow the conventions of standard American English language use in terms of grammar and mechanics, so that your meaning is clear.

Passing Score
The passing score of the CUNY Assessment Test in Writing is a weighted score of 56.

You should notice that the scoring rubric describes levels of performance in each of the scoring categories. You can get anywhere from 6 points from a rater for a very strong performance to 1 point for a very weak performance.

Scores in the 1 & 2 point range identify weak responses to the assignment; scores in the 3 & 4 point range identify mid-level responses; scores in the 5 & 6 point range identify very good or superior responses.

Your response will receive a Weighted Total score on the CATW. Weighted Total scores are calculated by adding up the individual rater scores across the five scoring dimensions; however, scores in the three content dimensions – Critical Response, Development of Ideas, and Structure of Response – are weighted twice as much as those in the two language use dimensions – Sentence and Word Choice, and Grammar; and Usage and Mechanics. For example, if your response is rated 4 in each dimension by both raters, the total weighted score would be \[2(4+4) + 2(4+4) + 2(4+4) + (4+4) + (4+4) = 64.\]

A passing score on the CATW is 56, which can be obtained by getting a combination of 3’s and 4’s in each of the scoring categories: \[2(3+4) + 2(3+4) + 2(3+4) + (3+4) + (3+4) = 56.\] Of course, there are other combinations of scores that will add up to a 56, but overall you should think of aiming your writing level at getting at least a 4 from at least one of the raters in each of the scoring categories and having no one give you a 2 in any category.
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<td>6</td>
<td>• A thoughtful and skillful response to the task effectively integrates a critical discussion of ideas in the text with relevant elements of the writer’s reading and experience.</td>
<td>• Ideas are fully developed, and approaches to development (e.g., summarizing, evaluating, narrating) are used skillfully to support and convey the writer’s ideas throughout the response.</td>
<td>• Organization demonstrates a well-designed progression of ideas that supports the writer’s central focus and the clarity of ideas throughout the response.</td>
<td>• Sentences are consistently well controlled, with effective variety in structure.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>• The response effectively integrates a critical discussion of ideas in the text with relevant elements of the writer’s reading and experience.</td>
<td>• Ideas are well developed, and approaches to development (e.g., summarizing, evaluating, narrating) are usually used skillfully to support and convey the writer’s ideas.</td>
<td>• Organization generally demonstrates a clear plan with some progression of ideas that supports the writer’s central focus and the clarity of the writer’s ideas.</td>
<td>• Sentences are usually well controlled, and there is some effective variety in structure.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>• The response competently integrates a critical discussion of the ideas in the text with relevant elements of the writer’s reading and experience.</td>
<td>• Most ideas are competently developed and approaches to development (e.g., summarizing, evaluating, narrating) are competently used to support and convey the writer’s ideas.</td>
<td>• An organizational structure is evident and competently supports the writer’s central focus and the clarity of the writer’s ideas. Relevant ideas are grouped together, and there may be some evidence of progressions of ideas.</td>
<td>• Most sentences demonstrate competent control, and there is enough structural variety to support the clarity of the writer’s ideas.</td>
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| **3**                                            | • The response integrates some ideas from the text with some relevant elements of the writer’s reading and experience, but may do so in an uneven manner.  
• The response demonstrates some understanding of the main ideas in the text, but understating is uneven, superficial, or incomplete. | • Development of ideas is general or uneven, but approaches to development sometimes support the clarity of the writer’s ideas.  
• The response uses some reasons and specific details and examples from the text and from the writer’s reading and experience to develop ideas. | • The response uses a basic or uneven organizational structure that sometimes supports the writer’s central focus and clarity of ideas. For the most part, relevant ideas are grouped together.  
• Some simple and obvious transitions are used to convey relationships among ideas. | • Sentence control is uneven, but there is some structural variety to support the clarity of ideas.  
• Word choice is simple but usually clear enough to convey meaning. | • Command of language is uneven. Grammar, usage, and mechanics are generally correct, but some errors are distracting and may occasionally impede understanding |
| **2**                                            | • There is little integration of ideas from the text with elements of the writer’s reading and experience.  
• The response demonstrates a weak understanding of the main ideas in the text. | • Development of ideas is weak and there may be little use of relevant approaches to development.  
• If present, reasons, details, and examples from the text and from the writer’s reading and experience are brief, general, inadequately developed, or not clearly relevant. | • The response shows and attempt to create a central focus and to put related ideas together, but relationships among ideas may be unclear.  
• Few, if any, transitions are used to convey relationships among ideas. | • Sentences demonstrate weak control, and there is little, if any sentence variety to provide clarity.  
• Word choice is simple, and sometimes meaning is not clear. | • The response demonstrates a weak command of language. Grammar, usage, and mechanics are sometimes correct, but errors are often distracting and some impede understanding |
| **1**                                            | • There is minimal, if any, integration of ideas from the text with elements of the writer’s reading and experience.  
• The response demonstrates little, if any, understanding of the main ideas in the text. | • There is minimal or no development of ideas and little, if any, use of relevant approaches to development.  
• If any reasons, details, and examples from the text or from the writer’s reading and experience are present, these elements are brief, general, undeveloped, or irrelevant. | • There may be an attempt to group related ideas together, but the main focus of the response is unclear.  
• Transitions are rarely used. | • Sentences demonstrate minimal or no control.  
• Word choice is often unclear and often obscures meaning. | • The response demonstrates minimal command of language. Grammar, usage, and mechanics are often incorrect, and errors frequently impede understanding |
Format of the CUNY Assessment Test in Writing
The CUNY Assessment Test in Writing has two parts, a reading passage of 250-300 words and writing directions to guide students in preparing their written responses.

Sample Test

Assignment

Begin by reading the passage below

Hype

Advertisements are the most prevalent and toxic of the mental pollutants. From the moment your alarm sounds in the morning to the wee hours of late-night TV, commercial pollution floods your brain at the rate of about three thousand marketing messages per day. Every day an estimated 12 billion display ads, 3 million radio commercials, and more than 200,000 TV commercials are dumped into North America’s collective unconscious. The increase in commercial advertising has happened so steadily and relentlessly that we haven’t quite woken up to the absurdity of it all. No longer are ads confined to the usual places: buses, billboards, stadiums. Anywhere your eyes can possibly come to rest is now a place that, in corporate America’s view, can and ought to be filled with a logo or product message.

You fill your car with gas, and there’s an ad on the nozzle. You wait for your bank machine to spit out money and an ad scrolls by in the little window. You drive through the countryside and the view of the wheat fields is broken at intervals by enormous billboards. Your kids watch Pepsi and Snickers ads in the classroom. A company called VideoCarte installs interactive screens on supermarket carts so that you can see ads while you shop. (A company executive calls the little monitors “the most powerful micromarketing medium available today.”) There is nowhere to run. No one is exempt and no one will be spared. In the silent moments of my life, I often used to hear Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony play in my head. Now I hear that kid singing the Oscar Meyer wiener song.


Writing Directions

Read the passage above and write an essay responding to the ideas it presents. In your essay, be sure to summarize the passage in your own words, stating the author’s most important ideas. Develop your essay by identifying one idea in the passage that you feel is especially significant, and explain its significance. Support your claims with evidence or examples drawn from what you have read, learned in school, and/or personally experienced.

Remember to review your essay and make any changes or corrections that are needed to help your reader follow your thinking. You will have 90 minutes to complete your essay.

Understanding the CUNY Assessment Test in Writing’s Reading Selection

One way to prepare for the test is to understand the types of readings used on the test. The reading passage that you will be asked to respond to will have the following characteristics:

- The text is 250-300 words in length.
Reading passages are at 10th to 12th grade reading level and appropriate for high school graduates.

Topics are familiar and interesting to high school graduates, and they will come from general knowledge areas (for instance, sociology, psychology, technology, popular culture, etc.).

Readings are clearly written, with the author’s main idea placed early in the passage, so that you can better identify the writer’s central point and write a response based on the text.

Readings come from the following sources: general interest magazines, newspaper articles, speeches, and excerpts of essays from academic anthologies. For example, *The Utne Reader*, *The New York Times*, *The Week* and *Slate.com* are good sources of engaging general interest articles.

Reading passages will appear with a title and author’s name. You are encouraged to refer to the author’s last name and the title of the passage in your response.

Reading passages always appear with the following standard writing directions:

*Read the passage above and write an essay responding to the ideas it presents. In your essay, be sure to summarize the passage in your own words, stating the author’s most important ideas. Develop your essay by identifying one idea in the passage that you feel is especially significant, and explain its significance. Support your claims with evidence or examples drawn from what you have read, learned in school, and/or personally experienced.*

*Remember to review your essay and make any changes or corrections that are needed to help your reader follow your thinking. You will have 90 minutes to complete your essay.*

Understanding the CUNY Assessment Test in Writing’s Directions

There are two parts to the CUNY Assessment Test in Writing. The first is the reading passage and the second, Writing Directions, follows the reading. The Writing Directions reflect the five categories of the scoring rubric, as illustrated below. (The Writing Directions are in quotation marks.)

“Read the passage above and write an essay responding to the ideas it presents.”

*This sentence instructs you to respond directly to the reading passage and reminds you that your response must address the ideas presented in the text.*

“In your essay, be sure to summarize the passage in your own words, stating the author’s most important ideas.”

*This direction focuses on your understanding of the reading passage, and your ability to demonstrate this understanding in an organized response, emphasizing the key ideas in the reading passage.*

“Develop your essay by identifying one idea in the passage that you feel is especially significant, and explain its significance.”

*This direction instructs you to develop an organized piece of writing that focuses on a specific idea in the reading passage. You are free to choose any “significant idea” and develop your response to this idea by using one or more ways of organizing (for example, summarizing, analyzing, personal narrative, cause and effect, persuasion).*
“Support your claims with evidence or examples drawn from what you have read, learned in school, and/or personally experienced.”

Here you are reminded that the ideas you present in the essay must be supported with details, examples, or personal experiences. You may use supporting details from a variety of sources, but whatever you use should demonstrate some ability to combine supporting details and examples to discuss specific ideas from the reading passage. You must always refer to ideas from/in the reading in your response.

“Remember to review your essay and make any changes or corrections that will help your reader follow your thinking.”

You are reminded that you must edit and proofread the response for clarity and correctness.

“You will have 90 minutes to complete your essay.”

You should be careful to manage your time so that you can complete your response.

Writing the CUNY Assessment Test in Writing Response
To be successful on this test, you need to understand some basic ideas about the CATW response.

The Nature of the Test
The CUNY Assessment Test in Writing is a text-based writing sample that reflects the kinds of writing done in introductory college-level courses. (“Text-based writing sample” simply means that you are writing a response to a passage you have read.) The CUNY Assessment Test in Writing assesses your readiness for writing in English in college composition courses and other introductory college-level courses.

Your Response Should ...
To prepare for the CUNY Assessment Test in Writing you should be aware of the required components of the response, as described in the scoring rubric.

You should be able to:

• Read and understand a short (250-300 words) reading passage written at the 10th to 12th grade reading level.
• Identify the author’s main ideas—and important supporting ideas—in the reading passage.
• Read and understand the writing directions that accompany the reading passage, and address all parts of the writing task.

Your response should:

• Include a brief summary of the author’s main ideas and supporting ideas (two or three key points in the reading). This summary can be written either at the beginning of your response to the reading passage or throughout your essay.
• Make direct reference to ideas in the reading passage, either with direct quotes or paraphrasing.
• Be organized in a clear and logical way, with appropriate use of transitions to connect your ideas, supporting details, and examples.
• Demonstrate your ability to write an essay that has a clear beginning, middle, and end.
• Combine ideas from the reading passage with your own ideas about the text.
• Demonstrate the ability to identify and address a specific idea in the reading passage that you feel is “significant” (it needn’t be the author’s main idea) and develop an essay in response to that idea, expanding through the use of explanation, supporting details, personal experience, and/or other reading you may have done.
• Demonstrate the ability to write clear and varied sentences, and use vocabulary that clearly and effectively communicates your ideas.

You should:

• Manage your time during the exam period (90 minutes) to allow for proofreading and editing
• Check your response for errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

Strategies for Taking the CUNY Assessment Test in Writing
The CATW is a 90-minute test that measures your ability to write a college-level essay. Keep in mind that this test focuses on the following criteria:

• Addressing all parts of the Writing Directions in an essay that summarizes the main ideas in the reading passage;
• Discussing a significant idea from the reading passage in a clear and coherent essay;
• Integrating references to specific ideas and details in the reading passage with your own ideas about the text;
• Constructing a written response that has a clear beginning, middle and end;
• Writing sentences that are constructed correctly and use correct word choices;
• Understanding and using good grammar and mechanics to convey your ideas clearly.

When you take the test, you may find the following strategies helpful in planning how to use your time:

Reading
Spend about 20 minutes reading the passage and underlining significant ideas. You should decide which ideas in the reading you will use to write your summary.

Planning and Pre-Writing
Spend about 10 minutes planning and pre-writing. Your test booklet gives you two blank pages for planning notes or writing an outline. Briefly write down the key idea from the passage that you will develop in your response, along with some significant details and/or examples. Make a note about the order you might use to present your ideas most clearly and effectively. The planning work you do on these pages will not be evaluated.

Writing the Response
Spend about 50 minutes writing your response. Be sure to use the lined pages in your test booklet. Refer to your plan, or outline, and remember that the Writing Directions require you to include a summary of key ideas in the reading, select one idea and explain its significance, make specific references to the reading in your response, and develop your response with relevant details and examples, using standard edited American English.
You may begin with a summary of the key ideas in the reading passage. Be sure to write it in your own words; do not copy it word-for-word from the text. Then identify at least one significant idea in the reading passage. Explain why you think that idea is significant, using appropriate supporting details and examples from your personal experience or from your own reading.

**Revising and Editing**

When you have finished writing your response, spend about 10 minutes proofreading and editing your response, and making any necessary changes. Consider the following questions when you review your response:

- Did you complete all parts of the Writing Directions?
- Did you include a summary of the reading passage?
- Did you clearly identify at least one significant idea from the reading and discuss it in detail?
- Are the details and examples you present in your response clear and relevant?
- Is there any unnecessary repetition of ideas in your response?
- Is your response written in clear well-constructed sentences, using correct grammar and punctuation?
Practice Exercises for the CUNY Assessment Test in Writing

How to Understand the Reading and Get Started
Before you start to write your response, we recommend you spend 20 minutes reading and underlining significant ideas and 10 minutes planning and prewriting. The more time you spend understanding the reading and getting ideas before you write, the easier it will be to write.

1. Below is a practice reading, “How to Do One Thing at a Time.” Read it and underline significant ideas. Make notes of how you plan to organize your response.

   **How to Do One Thing at a Time**
   By now, we all know that multi-tasking can be a losing proposition. Talking on the phone while driving? Dumb idea. Texting while driving? Really dumb idea. But even seemingly harmless multi-tasking—like chatting with a friend while sending out an office e-mail—isn’t as harmless or efficient as we’d like to believe. A recent article published in the science journal *NeuroImage* revealed that when we attempt demanding tasks simultaneously, we end up doing neither as well as we should because our brains have cognitive limits.

   What’s more, we’re also less efficient after we’ve shut down e-mail and turned off our phones. In a recent experiment at Stanford University, a group of students was asked to spend 30 minutes simultaneously compiling a music playlist, chatting, and writing a short essay. A second group focused on each task individually for 10 minutes each. Afterward, they were given a memory test. The single-taskers did significantly better than their multi-tasking peers.

   “A tremendous amount of evidence shows that the brain does better when it’s performing tasks in sequence rather than all at once,” says Clifford Nass, Ph.D., a professor of communication at Stanford University. “We still don’t know the long-term effects of chronic multi-tasking, but there’s no question we’re bad at it, and it’s bad for us.”

   Many experts believe, however, that it’s possible to repair your power of concentration. Through solutions such as yoga and acupuncture, experts believe we can break our multi-tasking habit and sharpen our focus.

   *Adapted from Women’s Health Magazine, May 2010*
How to Do One Thing at a Time

By now, we all know that multi-tasking can be a losing proposition. Talking on the phone while driving? Dumb idea. Texting while driving? Really dumb idea. But even seemingly harmless multi-tasking—like chatting with a friend while sending out an office e-mail—isn’t as harmless or efficient as we’d like to believe. A recent article published in the science journal NeuroImage revealed that when we attempt demanding tasks simultaneously, we end up doing neither as well as we should because our brains have cognitive limits.

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Notes

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<th>Text/Sum</th>
<th>Development</th>
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<td>1) 2 things at once</td>
<td>a) can’t do 2 things</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brain limits</td>
<td>b) brain limited</td>
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<td>2) less effective</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concentrate</td>
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<td>Sequence</td>
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<td>Solutions</td>
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On line

What kind of test?

habitual

Is this true?

nerves

Open door, hold coffee cup

Worry about memory loss

Permanent damage?

Brother – reads a lot – what kind of memory test?

Like climbing a mountain

Exercise – clears mind
Sample Response

Read the partial response below and identify the idea the writer has chosen to focus on. How does the writer develop the idea? Does the writer use examples and details from his/her reading, previous school learning, or personal experience? Notice also what the writer does in the first paragraph.

SAMPLE RESPONSE

The article says we’re less efficient even after we stop emailing and get off the phone. This conclusion was based on an experiment where students were asked to do three things at once for 30 minutes—create a playlist of music, chat on email, and write an essay. A second group was asked to do the same three things but one at a time, for ten minutes each. At the end, students in the second group performed better on a memory test than those who tried to multitask.

I am not surprised the second group performed better. I can imagine chatting on email at the same time I’m fooling around with an iPod, but I certainly couldn’t write an essay as well. Writing an essay takes (me) a lot of time and concentration. I once had a teacher who made us practice writing 10-minute essays so we would be ready for a timed test. We did it every class for a couple of weeks before the test, and it was effective for training the class to concentrate and write fast enough to do a 50 minute test. He called it “special case” writing, something to do for a timed test to get ideas down quickly. He never said it was the way to really write. Writing an essay involves reading, thinking, and revising, not while doing other things. That’s why we have libraries and quiet study areas. I envy the person who can write an essay while doing other things—but only if the person gets an A on the essay. Otherwise, I’ll stick to my slow, single-minded approach.

Students who think they can multitask are in for a big surprise when they get to difficult subjects and demanding assignments. This carries beyond school to many activities in life, driving, parenting, getting promoted for doing a job well....

[Note: This response is not finished. It needs further development and an ending.]
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[Note: This response is not finished. It needs further development and an ending.]

Code table:
A  Summary of passage  
B  Personal response overall to summary  
C  One idea writer wants to develop  
D  Personal experience that develops idea  
E  Conclusion/lesson of personal experience  
F  Continuing development  

How to Demonstrate Connections Between Ideas
In the CUNY Assessment Test analytic scoring rubric, the category “Structure of the Response” looks at how well you organize your response and “demonstrate connections between ideas.” In other words, it is important that your sentences and paragraph connect one to the next, so the reader can follow your thinking. You don't want the reader to fall into a hole between sentences or paragraphs.

Example
As an example, here are two sets of sentences: A and B. In which set are the two connected? Explain your answer.
A. It is safe to say that advertisements are a person’s guideline in life. After the Industrial Revolution almost everyone wants to transfigure the modernized individual.
B. Although it may be irritating to see an ad come on in the middle of your favorite show, the information supplied by that ad may not be available to you anywhere else. Corporations create ads to keep us updated on what is new.

**Answer** The sentences in B are connected. The second sentence provides a specific detail/example as a restatement of the first. It “opens up” the first sentence. In contrast, the sentences in A seem unconnected. You cannot be sure of the connection, and the meaning is not clear.

**Additional practice questions for this topic are available on the Office of Testing and Evaluation website at http://www.baruch.cuny.edu/testing**

**How to Write a Summary for the CUNY Assessment Test in Writing Response**

In the Writing Directions for the CUNY Assessment Test in Writing response, you are required to “summarize the passage in your own words, stating the author’s most important ideas.” It is important that you do not copy the author’s ideas directly from the passage when writing your summary. Your goal in this part of the CUNY Assessment Test in Writing’s writing task is to demonstrate how well you understand the reading passage, using your own words.

**Practice Exercise:**

Write the following ideas from the sample reading, “How to Do One Thing at a Time”, in your own words:

1. “When we attempt demanding tasks simultaneously, we end up doing neither as well as we should because our brains have cognitive limits.”

2. “What’s more, we’re less efficient after we’ve shut down e-mail and turned off our phones.”

3. “The single-taskers did significantly better than their multi-tasking peers.”

4. “A tremendous amount of evidence shows that the brain does better when it’s performing tasks in sequence rather than all at once.”
5. “We still don’t know the long-term effects of chronic multi-tasking, but there’s no question we’re bad at it, and it’s bad for us.”

6. “Through solutions such as yoga and acupuncture, experts believe we can break our multi-tasking habit and sharpen our focus.”
**Answers: Summarizing Key Ideas in a CUNY Assessment Test in Writing Reading Passage**

In this section, you will find examples of how to paraphrase these key ideas in the reading passage. Study them and see how closely your own answers resemble the sample answers.

1. “When we attempt demanding tasks simultaneously, we end up doing neither as well as we should because our brains have cognitive limits.”
   
   **Sample paraphrase:** The reading passage mentions an article in the journal Neuralmage that says when we try to do too many things at once, we end up not doing any of them well because our brains can’t handle it.

2. “What’s more, we’re less efficient after we’ve shut down e-mail and turned off our phones.”
   
   **Sample paraphrase:** Furthermore, the reading says that even after we stop multi-tasking, we’re not as efficient as we could be.

3. “The single-taskers did significantly better than their multi-tasking peers.”
   
   **Sample paraphrase:** In addition, a study showed that students who did one thing at a time did better than students who did many things at once.

4. “A tremendous amount of evidence shows that the brain does better when it’s performing tasks in sequence rather than all at once.”
   
   **Sample paraphrase:** In the reading, a researcher is quoted as saying that there’s a lot of evidence that the brain works better doing one thing at a time.

5. “We still don’t know the long-term effects of chronic multi-tasking, but there’s no question we’re bad at it, and it’s bad for us.”
   
   **Sample paraphrase:** The reading passage also mentions that even though multi-tasking is bad for us, the long-term effects aren’t known.

6. “Through solutions such as yoga and acupuncture, experts believe we can break our multi-tasking habit and sharpen our focus.”
   
   **Sample paraphrase:** Experts say that we can use things like yoga and acupuncture to break the habit of multi-tasking and learn to focus better.
How to Refer to the Reading Passage in Your CUNY Assessment Test in Writing Response
The first two scoring categories on the CUNY Assessment Test in Writing scoring rubric evaluate your ability to understand the reading passage, and to use your own ideas and experiences to write about specific ideas in the reading passage. You are required to make specific references to the reading passage in your CUNY Assessment Test in Writing response. Therefore, it is important that you know how to correctly refer to the text.

There are two ways in which you can refer to the reading passage:

**Indirect reference or paraphrase:**
This is when you take an idea from the reading passage and put it into your own words.

For example, in the sample passage *How to Do One Thing at a Time*, the author writes: “A tremendous amount of evidence shows that the brain does better when it’s performing tasks in sequence rather than all at once.” If you wanted to paraphrase this idea, you could write:

*In the reading, Clifford Nass, a professor of communication at Stanford University, is quoted as saying that the brain does better when it handles one task at a time.*

**Direct reference or direct quotation:**
This is when you use the author’s words exactly as they are written in the reading passage. You must use quotation marks around the author’s exact words.

For example, if we use the same quote as above, a direct quotation would be written like this:

*In the reading, Clifford Nass, a professor of communication at Stanford University, states, “A tremendous amount of evidence shows that the brain does better when it’s performing tasks in sequence rather than all at once.”*

Notice that in both cases recognition is given to the author of the idea, regardless of whether direct or indirect reference is used. You must always give credit to the original writer of the idea taken from the reading passage if you decide to use it in your CUNY Assessment Test in Writing response, and it is important always make a distinction between your ideas and ideas taken from the reading passage.

How to Proofread and Edit Your CUNY Assessment Test in Writing Response
The *Writing Directions* instruct you to: “Remember to review your essay and make any changes or corrections that are needed to help your reader follow your thinking.” This means that you should spend about 10 minutes at the end of the exam period looking over your work and correcting errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. You should also read over your entire response to determine if there are any sentences that are unclear or incomplete. Are all of your ideas clearly and fully explained? Have you made specific references to the reading passage throughout your response? Is there a summary of the key points in the reading? Have you used transitions where they are necessary to connect related thoughts and examples?

**Practice Proofreading and Editing Exercise**
Below is part of a written response to the reading passage “How to Do One Thing at a Time.” Read the response carefully and identify the grammatical and content errors. Then circle or underline the errors and write the
corrections above them. Here’s a hint: There are fifteen grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors in the response.

Now think about what kinds of additional details and/or examples might be added to make the writer’s paragraphs stronger and clearer for a reader. Is there an adequate summary of the key points in the reading? Is it clear which idea from the reading the writer is trying to explain in the response? Is the response well organized, and does the writer use transitions to connect ideas?

1The article have some good point. 2It talks about why it’s a bad idea to do too many things at one time because we end up doing everything wrong. 3Because our brain has limits. 4The author says that when you try to do many things simultaneous, we end up not doing any of them good. 5The article also says it better for our brain to do one thing at a time and many researches show this is true.

6Like the Stamford University expriment. 7The reading says we can repair our multi-tasking through experts and concentration. 8I think this is true I go to yoga class every weak. 9In conclusion, multi-tasking is bad for you and we should stop doing it.

Now, write a few additional details that would make this writer’s response clearer and more specific:

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

Answers to Proofreading and Editing Exercise
Sentence 1 has one subject-verb agreement error: “article have” should be “article has”.

Sentence 2 is correct.
Sentence 3 is an incomplete sentence. There are two ways to correct this error: Join the incomplete sentence to the sentence before it, using a comma before “because”; OR add what’s missing to the incomplete sentence so that it is a complete sentence, in this case a subject and a verb. For example, it should read: “This is because our brains have limits”.

Sentence 4 has three grammatical errors. The adjective “simultaneous” is incorrect; the correct word form is the adverb “simultaneously”. Secondly, “good” is the wrong word to use in this case; it should be “well”. Finally, there is a pronoun agreement error: The writer uses both “we” and “you” in the sentence but should use one pronoun or the other, not both. So, the correct way to write the sentence is, “When we try to do too many things simultaneously, we end up not doing any of them as well as we can.”

Sentence 5 has three grammatical errors. The verb “is” is missing at the beginning of the sentence; “it better” should be “it is better”. Also, there is a plural/singular agreement error: “our brain” should be written “our brains”. Lastly, “many researches show” is incorrect since “research” is an uncountable noun; therefore, the clause should be written as, “and research shows this is true”.

Sentence 6 has three errors. It is an incomplete sentence because it is missing a verb. In addition, there are two spelling errors: “Stamford University” should be written “Stanford University”, and “expriment” should be written “experiment”. One way to correct the incomplete sentence, or sentence fragment, is to add what is missing, in this case a verb. An example of how the corrected sentence might be written is, “One experiment was done at Stanford University”. By adding the verb “was done”, the sentence is now complete and grammatically correct.

Sentence 7 is incorrect because it doesn’t make grammatical sense and the writer’s meaning is unclear. The way to correct this sentence is to re-write it so that it is clear and grammatically correct. For example, the writer’s original sentence—“The reading says we can repair our multi-tasking through experts and concentration”—could be re-written to read: “The reading says that by using experts and increasing our concentration, we can stop multi-tasking”.

Sentence 8 has two grammatical errors. First, the sentence is a run-on; this is when two or more sentences are written together without the punctuation or use of conjunctions necessary to separate the different ideas they contain. In this case, “This is true I go to yoga class every weak” should instead be written: “This is true because I go to yoga class every weak”. Secondly, “weak” is the wrong word to use here; it should be “week”.

Sentence 9 has a pronoun agreement error: “multi-tasking is bad for you and we should stop doing it” should be written “multi-tasking is bad for us and we should stop doing it”.

So, how did you do?