ESL Reading Skills

'The ESL Reading Skills test measures your ability to read English. Specifically, it assesses your comprehension of short passages. It contains brief passages of 50 words or less and moderate length passages of 50 to 90 words. Half of this test contains straightforward comprehension items (paraphrase, locating information, vocabulary on a phrase level, and pronoun reference). The other half assesses inference skills (main idea, fact versus opinion, cause/effect logic, identifying irrelevant information, author's point of view and applying the author's logic to another situation).

ESL Reading Skills Sample Questions

Read the information below, then choose the best answer.

1. Television has been introduced to almost every country in the world, reaching a large number of viewers on every continent. About 600 million people saw the first person walk on the moon, and a billion people watched the twentieth Olympic Games. Television has in many ways promoted understanding and cooperation among people. It does this by showing educational and cultural programs.

   From this passage, a reader can most reasonably conclude that the author believes that

   A. people spend too much time watching television
   B. not every country needs to have television
   C. television can unify people from around the world
   D. television is as important as schools

2. People have different ways of learning. Some are better at making mental pictures of new ideas. Others are more comfortable with writing lists of things to memorize. Certain people can learn best when listening to music, while others need silence to concentrate.

   Which of the following is the main idea of the passage?

   A. Mental pictures help many to learn.
   B. Some people prefer lists to making mental pictures.
   C. To learn well you need to be comfortable.
   D. Different individuals have different ways of acquiring information.

3. If you hold a piece of copper wire over the flame of a wooden match, heat will be conducted by the copper wire to your fingers, and you will be forced to drop the wire. You will, however, still be able to hold the match because wood is a poor conductor of heat.

   Which of the following is implied in the passage above?

   A. Copper is a good conductor of heat.
   B. Wood and copper conduct heat equally.
   C. Wood is an excellent conductor of heat.
   D. Matches should be made of copper.

4. Many people own different pets. Dogs, cats, birds, and fish are common household pets. Others pets are considered to be exotic animals. These include snakes, lizards, and hedgehogs.

   According to the passage, snakes are

   A. uncommon pets
   B. likely to be found in a household with dogs
   C. found only in zoos
   D. not allowed in people's homes

5. Cesar Chavez was an influential leader for farmworkers. He fought for their rights and better working conditions. Chavez led many strikes that angered farm owners. Eventually he succeeded in getting increased wages and better living situations for farmworkers.

   The passage indicates that Chavez changed lives by

   A. helping to end the farmworkers' strikes
   B. fighting for the rights of farm owners
   C. working on the farms every day
   D. improving the conditions for farmworkers

6. When cartoonist Charles M. Schulz was a boy in elementary school, other boys teased him for being small and not very good at sports, and his art teacher told him he had no talent for drawing. He had few friends and was too shy to talk to a red-haired girl he admired. Later in life, Schulz used his childhood experiences in his comic strip *Peanuts:* the strip's main character. the sad and lonely Charlie Brown, represents Shulz as a little boy. *Peanuts* was unique at the time because it contained no adult characters. Readers fell in love with Charlie Brown, and *Peanuts* eventually became one of the most popular comic strips of all time.

   What is the main idea of the passage?

   A. *Peanuts* was the world's most widely read comic strip.
   B. Schulz was a very famous cartoonist.
   C. Schulz turned the pain of his youth into success as an adult.
   D. The comic strip *Peanuts* featured children as its only characters.

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7. Money has been used for thousands of years in nearly every culture as a means of exchange. However, today, the use of cash is becoming less and less common in modern societies all over the world. Every year, a higher percentage of purchases are made online, and even in stores customers are now using credit cards more often than cash. Many people today do all of their banking on the Internet rather than going to the bank in person.

   The author of the passage probably assumes that

   A. cash will become virtually obsolete in the near future
   B. using cash will become popular again
   C. paying with credit cards all the time is dangerous
   D. societies that do business online will struggle

8. Before giving first aid to an accident victim, you should obtain his or her consent. Asking for consent takes a simple question. Say to the victim, "I know first aid, and I can help until an ambulance arrives. Is that okay?"

   According to the passage, it is wrong to

   A. use first aid on an accident victim without medical training
   B. attempt to help an accident victim without permission
   C. help a victim before an ambulance arrives
   D. call for an ambulance instead of helping the victim

9. Dr. Ellen Ochoa is an inventor and is also the first female Hispanic astronaut. Her inventions include technology to help robots inspect equipment in space to maintain safety and quality control on spacecraft. Before retiring, she logged more than 1,000 hours in space across several space missions.

   According to the passage, Dr. Ochoa is the first

   A. Hispanic person to travel into space
   B. inventor to travel into space
   C. woman to travel into space
   D. Hispanic woman to travel into space

10. Dogs and cats make very different types of pets. Before deciding whether to buy or adopt a dog or a cat, prospective owners need to carefully consider their own lifestyles and personalities. Dogs may make more affectionate companions, but they require more care and attention. They must be taken out several times a day and should not be left alone for more than a few hours. Larger dogs require significant exercise to remain fit and healthy. Cats are usually more independent in nature and interact less with their owners. Also, a cat can be left on its own all day, or even for several days, as long as it has food and clean water to drink.

    From this passage a reader can conclude that

    A. owning a cat requires less work than owning a dog
    B. people who are away from home during the day should not own a cat
    C. people who like to play with their pets should own a cat
    D. owning a cat is more responsibility than owning a dog

ESL Sentence Meaning

The ESL Sentence Meaning test measures how well you understand the meaning of sentences in English. It assesses the understanding of word meanings in one- or two-sentence contexts. The sentences are drawn from the subject areas of natural science, history/social studies, arts/humanities, psychology/human relations, and practical situations. There are four content areas measured: (a) Particle, Phrasal Verbs, Prepositions of Direction; (b) Adverbs, Adjectives, Connectives Sequence; (c) Basic Nouns and Verbs; and (d) Basic and Important Idioms.

ESL Sentence Meaning Sample Questions

Directions for questions 1-8

The *sentence below has a blank space. Choose the word or phrase that makes the sentence meaningful and correct.*

1. Shikibu Murasaki, who wrote almost a thousand years ago, was one of the world's _____ novelists.

   A. most early
   B. too early
   C. more early
   D. earliest

2. The Chang children _____ their parents by making sandwiches for the whole family.

   A. helped out
   B. helped with
   C. helps for
   D. helps to

3. As demonstrated by his last album, which was released after his death, Ibrahim Ferrer _____ one of the most beautiful voices in Latin music.

   A. had
   B. have
   C. have had
   D. having

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4. After we saw the play, we had different opinions ___ Vincent's performance.
   A. about
   B. at
   C. for
   D. to

5. Having recorded many of the most beloved songs of the 1940s, jazz singer Ella Fitzgerald ___ one of the most prominent musical performers of her time.
   A. had been
   B. has been
   C. was
   D. will be

6. As we drove through the darkness, we saw another car coming ____ the bend in the road.
   A. through
   B. under
   C. over
   D. around

7. Sonia is so determined and stubborn that she never ___ until she gets exactly what she wants.
   A. gives up
   B. gives out
   C. gave in
   D. gave away

8. At only 43, John F. Kennedy was the ___ American president ever to be elected.
   A. most young
   B. more young
   C. youngest
   D. younger

Directions for questions 9-15

Each problem contains one or two sentences followed by a question. Choose the correct answer to the question.

9. Elena found a tomato that was much bigger than all the others in the garden.

   How did the tomato compare to the others in the garden?
   A. It was the smallest.
   B. It was not very large.
   C. It was larger than some.
   D. It was the largest.

10. When the popular entertainer canceled her appearance, the Latin American festival was postponed indefinitely.

    When will the festival likely take place?
    A. Tonight
    B. Tomorrow
    C. Next week
    D. Many weeks later

11. Jasmine is never late to meet her friends, and sometimes arrives a few minutes early.

    Which best describes Jasmine?
    A. Lonely
    B. Punctual
    C. Talkative
    D. Tardy

12. Bram Stoker is best known for his classic horror novel *Dracula,* which was published in 1897.

    What did Bram Stoker do?
    A. He was a doctor.
    B. He was a merchant.
    C. He was a writer.
    D. He was an engineer.

13. Exhausted from her transatlantic flight, Judy could not stay up past 9 p.m.

    What did Judy do at 9 p.m.?
    A. Leave work
    B. Corne home from the airport
    C. Get on an airplane
    D. Go to bed

14. Eliot sleeps late whenever he can, leaves work early, and never does anything unless he absolutely has to.

    Which best describes Eliot?
    A. Boring
    B. Lazy
    C. Selfish
    D. Tired.

15. Juanita rushed to her dance class and burst through the door in the nick of time.

    When Juanita got to her dance class, she was
    A. Very early
    B. very late
    C. nearly late
    D. a little late

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ESL Language Use

The ESL Language Use test measures your proficiency in using correct grammar in English sentences. There are five content areas measured on this test: (a) Nouns, Pronouns, Pronoun Case Structure; (b) Subject-Verb Agreement; (c) Comparatives, Adverbs, Adjectives; (d) Verbs; and (e) Subordination/Coordination.

ESL Language Use Sample Questions

Directions for questions 1-10

The sentence below has a blank space. Choose the word or phrase that makes a grammatically correct sentence.

1. ___ washing his sweater, Jacob hung it up to dry.
   A. After
   B. Before
   C. By
   D. Until

2. Dr. O'Hara is certain that some day, men and women will _____ to Mars.
   A. travel
   B. travels
   C. traveling
   D. traveled

3. Water ___ at a temperature of zero degrees Celsius.
   A. having frozen
   B. freezing
   C. freeze
   D. freezes

4. ___ you get a new haircut?
   A. Have
   B. Does
   C. Are
   D. Did

5. Jacques Cousteau will be remembered for his inventions and for _____ to marine science.
   A. dedication
   B. his dedication
   C. being dedicated
   D. his being dedicated

6. 'The children, who were tired of traveling, kept asking, "When _____ we get to the hotel?"
   A. have
   B. will
   C. did
   D. are

7. Galileo is most famous _____ that Earth revolves around the Sun, rather than the other way around.
   A. for having discovered
   B. for discovery
   C. his discovery
   D. in discovering

8. Men and women sometimes have difficulty understanding each other because they ___ differently.
   A. communicate
   B. communicated
   C. have communicated
   D. communicates

9. ___ you can speak more than one language, you have the opportunity to make more new friends.
   A. So
   B. Before
   C. When
   D. Though

10. Light _____ faster than sound, which is why you see lightning before you hear the thunder.
    A. traveling
    B. travels
    C. having traveled
    D. will travel

Directions for questions 11-15

Read the two sentences below and choose the best way of combining them.

11. Lisa plays the piano. Her sister Kelly plays the piano, too.
    A. Lisa and her sister Kelly plays the piano.
    B. Both Lisa and her sister Kelly play the piano.
    C. Lisa plays the piano and Kelly plays the piano.
    D. Lisa and Kelly too play the piano.

12. Kazuko took her dog for a walk. They went to the park.
    A. Kazuko, going to the park, took her dog for a walk.
    B. Kazuko took her dog for a walk to the park.
    C. Kazuko took her dog for a walk because they went to the park.
    D. Kazuko and her dog went to the park, where she and the dog walked.

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13. We knew it might gel chilly at the football game. We brought along some extra blankets.
    A. We knew it might get chilly at the football game when we brought along some extra blankets.
    B. Bringing along some extra blankets, we knew it might get chilly at the football game.
    C. We brought along some extra blankets because we knew it might get chilly at the football game.
    D. It got chilly at the football game and we brought along some extra blankets.

14. Juan loves to play baseball. His friend Miguel enjoys baseball, too.
    A. Both Juan and his friend Miguel enjoy playing baseball.
    B. Juan and his friend Miguel enjoys playing baseball.
    C. Juan enjoys playing baseball and his friend Miguel, too.
    D. Juan loves baseball and Miguel too enjoys baseball.

15. Wolves are pack animals. They are rarely spotted alone.
    A. Wolves are rarely spotted alone if they are pack animals.
    B. Being pack animals, wolves are rarely spotted alone.
    C. After being pack animals, wolves are rarely spotted alone.
    D. Wolves are rarely spotted alone, although they are pack animals.

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Answer Key

ESL SENTENCE MEANING	
QUESTION NUMBER	CORRECT ANSWER
1	D
2	A
3	A
4	A
5	C
6	D
7	A
8	C
9	D
10	D
11	B
12	C
13	D
14	B
15	C

ESL LANGUAGE USE	
QUESTION NUMBER	CORRECT ANSWER
1	A
2	A
3	D
4	D
5	B
6	B
7	A
8	A
9	C
10	B
11	B
12	B
13	C
14	A
15	B

ESL READING SKILLS	
QUESTION NUMBER	CORRECT ANSWER
1	C
2	D
3	A
4	A
5	D
6	C
7	A
8	B
9	D
10	A

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