

PRACTICE EXAM 18: OSSLT SIMULATION

(37 QUESTIONS)

Session A

Reading Selection: Real-Life Narrative

Read the following narrative and answer questions 1–6.

> My brother Theo and I had not spoken in three years when our mother fell ill. The silence between us had started small — a disagreement over a loan, words said in anger — and then hardened, the way water hardens into ice if left alone in the cold. Neither of us could remember exactly who owed whom an apology, only that we were both certain it was the other

> We met again in a hospital corridor, summoned by the same phone call. For a long moment we simply stood there, two grown men suddenly shy as boys. Then Theo did something I will never forget. He did not mention the loan, or the three years, or who was right. He just said, "You look tired. Have you eaten?" — and the ice, so carefully maintained, cracked in an instant.

> We took turns at our mother's bedside that week, and in the long hours of waiting, we talked. Not about the argument — we never did sort out who had been wrong — but about everything else: childhood, work, the children Theo now had whom I had never met. The argument, I realized, had never really been the point. The point was the pride that had let it grow.

> Our mother recovered. Theo and I did too. I think of those three lost years now with a particular ache — not for the argument, but for all the ordinary days we threw away guarding a grudge neither of us could even fully remember.

1. What had caused the silence between the narrator and Theo?

- A. Their mother had asked them to stop speaking
- B. They lived too far apart to stay in contact
- C. A disagreement over a loan and angry words
- D. Theo had moved away without telling the narrator

2. The comparison of the silence to water hardening "into ice" mainly suggests that the estrangement

- A. happened suddenly and without warning
- B. could be easily reversed at any time
- C. grew rigid and lasting if left alone
- D. was caused by cold weather between them

3. Why does the narrator describe himself and Theo as "suddenly shy as boys"?

- A. They were embarrassed to be seen in the hospital
- B. They had both become much younger in appearance
- C. They were afraid their mother would overhear them
- D. The long estrangement made the reunion awkward

4. Why was Theo's question "Have you eaten?" so significant to the narrator?

- A. The narrator had not eaten in several days
- B. Theo was changing the subject to avoid their mother
- C. It set aside the conflict and offered simple care
- D. Theo wanted to discuss the loan over a meal

5. What does the narrator come to realize about the argument?

- A. That the pride behind it, not the argument itself, was the real problem
- B. That Theo had been entirely in the wrong all along
- C. That the loan should have been repaid much sooner
- D. That their mother had caused the disagreement

6. What does the narrator most regret by the end of the narrative?

- A. That the loan was never fully repaid
- B. That he never proved he was right
- C. That their mother had to fall ill
- D. The ordinary days lost to a grudge

Reading Selection: Real-Life Narrative

Read the following narrative and answer questions 7–11.

> Ms. Okafor was the strictest teacher I ever had, and the only one who ever told me she expected me to fail. I had coasted through school on easy charm and last-minute effort, and it had always been enough. In her class, it was not. When I handed in a sloppy first assignment, she returned it ungraded with three words across the top: "You can do better."

> I was furious. Other teachers praised me for far less. I decided to prove her wrong by doing the bare minimum and daring her to fail me. But a strange thing happened. Forced to actually try, I discovered I was capable of work I had never bothered to attempt. The bare minimum kept rising, because she kept refusing to be impressed by it.

> Years later I understood what the other teachers, with their easy praise, had never given me: the compliment of being expected to be excellent. Ms. Okafor did not think I would fail. She said it to light a fire — and she had judged, correctly, exactly what kind of student needed to be doubted before he would try.

7. Why had the narrator "coasted through school" before Ms. Okafor's class?

- A. The narrator's earlier teachers had been too strict
- B. Easy charm and last-minute effort had always been enough
- C. The narrator had little interest in any subject
- D. The narrator's family had moved schools often

8. How did the narrator first react to Ms. Okafor's comment "You can do better"?

- A. The narrator was furious and wanted to prove her wrong
- B. The narrator immediately worked harder to please her
- C. The narrator thanked her for the encouragement
- D. The narrator decided to transfer out of her class

9. What "strange thing" happened when the narrator was "forced to actually try"?

- A. The narrator's grades dropped even lower than before
- B. Ms. Okafor finally began praising the narrator's work
- C. The other teachers complained about the change
- D. The narrator discovered a capacity for better work

10. What does the narrator come to realize Ms. Okafor had given him?

- A. The compliment of being expected to be excellent
- B. The easy praise the other teachers offered
- C. A lower grade than his work deserved
- D. Permission to do only the bare minimum

11. Why did Ms. Okafor tell the narrator she expected him to fail?

- A. Because she genuinely believed he would fail
- B. To light a fire in a student who needed to be doubted
- C. To compare him with the other students
- D. Because his charm had annoyed her

Reading Selection: News Report

Read the following news report and answer questions 12–17.

> Rival Schools Team Up to Build Community Playground

> Students from Northgate and Southview Secondary Schools — longtime sports rivals — set aside their competition last weekend to build a playground together in a neighbourhood that had been without one for years. More than sixty students from both schools worked side by side to assemble the equipment in a single day.

> The unusual partnership began when students from both schools volunteered separately at the same community centre and discovered a shared goal. "We've spent years trying to beat each other on the field," said Northgate student Aaron Bell. "It turned out we made a pretty good team off it." Southview's Priya Nair agreed: "The rivalry's fun, but this mattered more."

> A local hardware store donated materials, and parents from both schools provided lunch for the volunteers. Neighbourhood children tested the new slides and swings before the workers had even finished.

> The two schools say the project may become an annual tradition, alternating neighbourhoods each year.

12. What is the main idea of this news report?

- A. Two rival schools built a community playground together
- B. Northgate and Southview are longtime sports rivals
- C. A hardware store donated playground materials
- D. A neighbourhood had been without a playground for years

13. What is notable about the two schools working together?

- A. They had never met before the project
- B. They are longtime sports rivals
- C. They are located in the same neighbourhood

D. They share the same students and teachers

14. How did the partnership between the schools begin?

A. A teacher from each school arranged it

B. The community centre required them to work together

C. The two schools competed to build the playground first

D. Students from both schools volunteered at the same centre

15. Aaron Bell's quotation mainly shows that the students

A. still consider the other school their enemy

B. found they worked well together off the field

C. wanted to win a competition against Southview

D. were forced to participate in the project

16. According to the report, who provided lunch for the volunteers?

A. The local hardware store

B. Parents from both schools

C. The community centre staff

D. The neighbourhood children

17. What do the two schools say may happen next?

A. The project may become an annual tradition

B. They will end their sports rivalry permanently

C. They will merge into a single school

D. They will stop volunteering at the community centre

Reading Selection: Dialogue

Read the following dialogue and answer questions 18–22.

> Grandmother: You're angry with your father. I can see it.

> Sam: He missed my recital. Again. He always has "work."

> Grandmother: He did. And it hurt you. I won't pretend otherwise.

> Sam: You're supposed to take his side. He's your son.

> Grandmother: I can love my son and still see clearly. He works the way he does because his own father never provided, and he swore you'd never go without. It's not an excuse, Sam. It's a reason. There's a difference.

> Sam: (quietly) ...So he hurts me by trying not to.

> Grandmother: Sometimes the people who love us most fail us in the very act of trying to protect us. Understanding why doesn't fix it. But it can soften it.

> Sam: I'm still angry.

> Grandmother: Good. Be angry and understand. They can live in the same heart.

18. Why is Sam angry with the father?

- A. The father missed Sam's recital, as he often does
- B. The father refused to let Sam attend the recital
- C. The father criticized Sam's performance
- D. The father forgot Sam's birthday

19. What distinction does the grandmother draw about the father's behaviour?

- A. Between love and duty

- B. Between work and family
- C. Between a reason and an excuse
- D. Between anger and sadness

20. What can the reader infer about the grandmother from this conversation?

- A. She can love her son while still acknowledging he hurt Sam
- B. She refuses to admit her son did anything wrong
- C. She believes Sam has no right to be angry
- D. She is angrier at her son than Sam is

21. When Sam says "So he hurts me by trying not to," Sam is beginning to

- A. forgive the father completely for everything
- B. blame the grandmother for the situation
- C. understand the painful contradiction in the father's actions
- D. decide never to speak to the father again

22. What does the grandmother mean by "Be angry and understand"?

- A. Sam should stop being angry once he understands
- B. Sam should choose between anger and understanding
- C. Understanding the father excuses his behaviour entirely
- D. Anger and understanding can coexist in the same heart

Session B

Writing — Conventions and Sentence Skills (Pronouns, Reference, and Perspective)

Answer questions 23–35.

23. Which sentence has a clear pronoun reference?

- A. When Maria called Sara, she said she was running late
- B. When Maria called Sara, Maria said she was running late
- C. She called her and said she would be late again today
- D. When they spoke, she told her that she was late

24. Which sentence corrects the vague pronoun reference? "Liam told Noah that his bike had a flat tire."

- A. Liam told Noah that his own bike had a flat
- B. He told him that his bike had a flat tire today
- C. Liam told Noah that the bike had a flat tire
- D. Liam told Noah that Noah's bike had a flat tire

25. Which sentence uses pronoun–antecedent agreement correctly?

- A. Each of the runners crossed their own finish line
- B. Every student must bring their textbook to class
- C. Neither of the boys remembered his water bottle
- D. One of the women left their umbrella behind

26. Which sentence keeps a consistent point of view?

- A. When a person studies hard, they earn better grades
- B. When you study hard, one earns better grades
- C. When a person studies hard, you earn better grades
- D. When one studies hard, you earn better grades

27. Which sentence makes clear who performed the action?

- A. After arguing with his brother, the room felt tense to Sam
- B. Arguing with his brother, the tension filled the whole room
- C. After Sam argued with his brother, the room felt tense
- D. The room, after arguing with his brother, felt tense to him

28. Which sentence corrects the unclear pronoun? "The coach told the player that he needed more practice."

- A. The coach told the player that he himself needed practice
- B. He told the player that he needed more practice today
- C. The coach told him that he needed more practice
- D. The coach told the player, "You need more practice"

29. Which sentence uses pronouns correctly?

- A. Between you and I, the test was harder than expected
- B. The prize was shared between he and his partner
- C. The teacher praised both her and me for the project
- D. Him and his friends arrived late to the meeting

30. Which sentence has a clear antecedent for the pronoun "it"?

- A. The committee rejected the proposal because it was unrealistic
- B. When the cup hit the plate, it shattered into pieces
- C. She put the book on the shelf after she finished it
- D. They removed the sign from the wall because it was old

(Choose the sentence in which "it" clearly refers to one specific noun.)

31. Which sentence keeps consistent point of view throughout?

- A. If a driver is tired, you should pull over and rest
- B. If you are tired while driving, you should pull over and rest
- C. When one drives tired, you should pull over to rest
- D. If drivers are tired, you should pull over and rest

32. Which sentence corrects the shift in person? "When students prepare well, you feel more confident on test day."

- A. When students prepare well, one feels more confident on test day
- B. When students prepare well, they feel more confident on test day
- C. When you prepare well, students feel more confident on test day
- D. When a student prepares well, you feel more confident on test day

33. Which sentence clearly identifies who said what?

- A. Maria told Dana that she had won the contest, surprising her
- B. After the meeting, she told her that she would lead the project
- C. They informed them that the decision had finally been made
- D. The director told the actor, "You have earned the lead role"

34. Which sentence uses the correct pronoun case?

- A. The award was given to my partner and I last evening
- B. Me and her finished the project before the deadline
- C. The teacher asked my partner and me to stay after class
- D. Her and I worked together on the science assignment

35. Which sentence has clear and consistent pronoun use?

- A. When the manager met the client, she explained her plan clearly
- B. When the manager met the client, the manager explained the plan clearly
- C. She met the client and she explained her plan to her then
- D. When they met, she told her about her plan for the project

Open-Response Writing Tasks

36. Short Writing Task



Headline: "Students and Seniors Connect at 'Generations Together' Event"

Using the headline and image above, write a short news report (one to two paragraphs) about this event. Open with a strong lead that answers the key questions (Who, What, When, Where, and, where it fits, Why and How), include at least one realistic quotation, and keep a factual, third-person tone. You may invent reasonable details as long as they fit the headline and image.

37. Long Open-Response Task

Some people believe that it is better to have a few close friends. Others believe it is better to have a large group of friends.

In your opinion, is it better to have a few close friends or a large group of friends? Write a multi-paragraph response (an opinion piece) in which you state your position clearly and support it with reasons and specific examples. Be sure to organize your response with an introduction, body paragraphs that each develop one reason, and a conclusion.

That's the complete set of 37 questions for Practice Exam 18 — 35 selected-response items written to match the locked key, plus the 2 open-response writing tasks. The character-and-relationship focus (the estrangement and reconciliation narrative at Q1–Q6, the teacher-student dynamic at Q7–Q11, the layered "reason vs. excuse" family dialogue at Q18–Q22) and the pronoun-reference/agreement/point-of-view conventions cluster keep this exam distinctly different in emphasis from Exams 1–17.

One transparency note, flagged as I write: Q30 carries a parenthetical clarifying note because several options have technically clear references and the question turns on identifying the clearest single-noun case. The key (A) is correct, but the parenthetical is inconsistent with the clean stem format — flag it if you'd prefer it removed (same situation as the earlier flagged items; I'd recommend handling all of them consistently across the series).

On your go, I'll produce the Answer Key with Explanations for Q1–Q35, model responses with rubric-aligned scoring notes for Q36–Q37, and the mandatory error report. Say PROCEED when ready.

Answer Key and Explanations

1. C — The silence "started small — a disagreement over a loan, words said in anger." That conflict caused the estrangement. The other options are not the stated cause.

2. C — Comparing the silence to water hardening "into ice if left alone in the cold" suggests the estrangement grew rigid and lasting when left untended. The image conveys hardening over time. The other options misread it.
3. D — The brothers were "suddenly shy as boys" because the long estrangement made the reunion awkward. Years of silence created the discomfort. The other options misstate the reason.
4. C — Theo's "Have you eaten?" mattered because it set aside the conflict and offered simple care instead of reopening the argument. The everyday kindness "cracked" the ice. The other options misread its significance.
5. A — The narrator realizes "the pride that had let it grow," not the argument itself, was the real problem. Pride sustained the rift. The other options miss this insight.
6. D — The narrator most regrets "all the ordinary days we threw away guarding a grudge." The lost everyday time is the ache. The other options are not the focus of the regret.
7. B — The narrator coasted because "easy charm and last-minute effort... had always been enough." That habit explains the coasting. The other options are unsupported.
8. A — The narrator "was furious" and "decided to prove her wrong." Anger was the first reaction. The other options contradict the text.
9. D — Forced to try, the narrator "discovered I was capable of work I had never bothered to attempt." A hidden capacity emerged. The other options misstate the outcome.
10. A — The narrator realizes Ms. Okafor gave "the compliment of being expected to be excellent." That expectation was her gift. The other options describe what others gave or what she withheld.
11. B — She said she expected him to fail "to light a fire" in a student "who needed to be doubted before he would try." It was strategy, not genuine belief. The other options misread her intent.

12. A — The report centres on two rival schools building a playground together. That partnership is the main idea. The other options are supporting details.

13. B — What is notable is that the schools are "longtime sports rivals" who set aside competition to cooperate. Their rivalry makes the teamwork striking. The other options are untrue.

14. D — The partnership began when "students from both schools volunteered separately at the same community centre and discovered a shared goal." That meeting sparked it. The other options misstate the origin.

15. B — Bell's quotation — "we made a pretty good team off it" — shows the rivals worked well together off the field. It highlights unexpected cooperation. The other options reverse his meaning.

16. B — The report states "parents from both schools provided lunch." That is who fed the volunteers. The hardware store donated materials, not lunch.

17. A — The schools say the project "may become an annual tradition, alternating neighbourhoods." That is the possible next step. The other options contradict the report.

18. A — Sam is angry because the father "missed my recital. Again." The repeated absence is the cause. The other options are unsupported.

19. C — The grandmother distinguishes "a reason" from "an excuse": the father's hard work has a reason, though it is not an excuse. That is the distinction she draws. The other options misname it.

20. A — The grandmother says, "I can love my son and still see clearly," acknowledging he hurt Sam. She holds both love and honesty. The other options misread her.

21. C — "So he hurts me by trying not to" shows Sam beginning to grasp the painful contradiction in the father's actions. Sam sees the irony. It is understanding, not forgiveness or blame.

22. D — "Be angry and understand" means the two "can live in the same heart" — they coexist. Understanding need not erase anger. The other options force a choice the grandmother rejects.

23. B — "When Maria called Sara, Maria said she was running late" names Maria, removing the ambiguity of "she." The other options leave it unclear who was late. Repeating the name clarifies the reference.

24. D — "Liam told Noah that Noah's bike had a flat" specifies whose bike, fixing the vague "his." The other options keep the ambiguity or change the meaning. Naming the owner clears it up.

25. C — "Neither of the boys remembered his water bottle" matches the singular "neither" with the singular "his." The other options pair singular subjects ("each," "every," "one") with plural pronouns. Singular antecedents take singular pronouns.

26. A — "When a person studies hard, they earn better grades" keeps the perspective consistent (person/they). The other options shift between "you," "one," and "a person." Consistency of person is the rule.

27. C — "After Sam argued with his brother, the room felt tense" gives the action a clear subject (Sam). The other options leave the room or tension doing the arguing. A clear actor fixes the modifier.

28. D — Using direct speech — the coach told the player, "You need more practice" — removes the ambiguity of "he." It is clear who needs practice. The other options keep the unclear pronoun.

29. C — "The teacher praised both her and me" correctly uses object pronouns after the verb. The other options misuse "I," "he," or "him" in the wrong case. Objects of a verb take object pronouns.

30. A — "it" clearly refers to the proposal, the only thing that could be unrealistic. In the other options, "it" could refer to either of two nouns. The clear single referent makes A correct.

31. B — "If you are tired while driving, you should pull over" keeps "you" consistent throughout. The other options shift between "driver," "one," and "you." Consistent point of view is the rule.

32. B — "When students prepare well, they feel more confident" keeps "students/they" consistent, fixing the shift to "you." The other options still shift person. Matching the pronoun to the antecedent corrects it.

33. D — Direct speech — the director told the actor, "You have earned the lead role" — makes clear who said what to whom. The other options leave "she/her" or "they/them" ambiguous. Quotation removes the confusion.

34. C — "The teacher asked my partner and me to stay" correctly uses the object pronoun "me." The other options misuse "I," "me and her," or "her and I" in the wrong case. Objects take object pronouns.

35. B — "When the manager met the client, the manager explained the plan clearly" names the manager, removing the tangle of "she/her." The other options leave the pronouns ambiguous. Repeating the noun clarifies who acted.

Open-Response Writing Tasks — Model Responses and Scoring Notes

36. Short Writing Task — News Report (Model Response)

> Teenage students and elderly residents came together at the local community hall on Saturday for the first "Generations Together Day," an event designed to bridge the gap between young and old through shared activities. Seated side by side at long tables, students helped seniors with a craft project while the two groups traded stories, advice, and laughter throughout the afternoon.

> The event was organized by a student volunteer group hoping to ease the isolation many older residents feel. "My grandmother lives far away, so this felt like spending time with her," said student volunteer Mei Lin. Several seniors said they hoped the event would return, and organizers say they are already planning a second gathering for the spring.

Scoring notes (rubric-aligned): A strong response leads with the 5 Ws (who: students and seniors; what: Generations Together Day; when: Saturday; where: community hall; why: bridge generations / ease isolation), keeps a neutral third-person tone, and includes at least one realistic quotation. Mid-level responses cover the basic facts but may omit a W, slip into first-person or opinion, or lack a quotation. Low-level responses read as a personal story, drift from the headline, or contain frequent conventions errors that interfere with meaning. Reward journalistic structure and factual tone over length.

37. Long Open-Response Task — Opinion Piece (Model Response)

- > It is better to have a few close friends than a large group of friends. While a wide circle has its appeal, a small number of deep friendships offers greater trust, stronger support, and more genuine connection than a crowd of acquaintances.
- > The strongest reason is that close friendships offer real trust and understanding. A friend who has known you for years and shared your ups and downs understands you in a way a casual acquaintance never could. For example, when something goes wrong, a close friend knows your history and can offer advice that truly fits your situation, while a large group may offer only quick, surface-level sympathy. That depth of understanding is something only close friendship provides.
- > A second reason is that a few close friends provide more dependable support. In a small circle, friends show up when it matters — in a crisis, a disappointment, or a celebration. A person with one or two true friends rarely faces hard times alone, while someone with a hundred casual contacts may find that none of them is truly there when needed. Quality of support matters more than the number of names in a contact list.
- > Some argue that a large group of friends brings more fun, more opportunities, and a wider range of experiences. This is a fair point, and a big social circle can certainly be enjoyable and exciting. However, breadth often comes at the cost of depth: it is hard to truly know dozens of people well. A person can still enjoy a wide circle of acquaintances while relying on a few close friends for what matters most.
- > For these reasons, it is better to have a few close friends than a large group. The trust, support, and genuine connection that deep friendships provide outweigh the variety of a large circle, and they are what people value most when life gets difficult.

Scoring notes (rubric-aligned): A strong response takes a clear, consistent position, develops two or three reasons each in its own paragraph using the Reason–Explanation–Example pattern, acknowledges and rebuts the opposing view, and restates the position in fresh words at the close. Conventions are controlled, with varied sentences. Mid-level responses give a position and reasons but may under-develop them (listing rather than explaining), show weaker organization, or contain conventions errors that occasionally distract. Low-level responses fail to take a clear position, drift off the prompt, or contain frequent errors that interfere with meaning. Reward depth of development and clear organization over length. (The model takes the "few close friends" side for illustration; an equally well-developed response arguing for a large group would score just as highly.)