

PRACTICE EXAM 23: OSSLT SIMULATION

(37 QUESTIONS)

Session A

Reading Selection: Argument-Driven Information Text

Read the following text and answer questions 1–6.

Does playing music make children smarter? The claim is everywhere, repeated by parents, teachers, and instrument companies alike. The evidence, however, is more tangled than the confident headlines suggest. Some studies have found that children who take music lessons score slightly higher on certain tests than children who do not. This is real, but it does not prove that music causes the higher scores. Children whose families can afford music lessons often have other advantages — more books at home, more support, more time to study — any of which might explain the gap.

A few carefully designed studies have tried to separate these factors by randomly assigning children to music lessons or other activities. Their results have been mixed: some show small benefits to certain skills, while others show no lasting effect on general intelligence at all. What seems clearest is that music training improves the specific skills it practises — listening closely, reading notation, coordinating hands — rather than making children broadly "smarter."

None of this means music lessons are not worthwhile. Music has value in itself: joy, discipline, and a lifelong skill. But that is a different and stronger claim than the shaky promise that it will raise a child's intelligence. When a benefit is real, it does not need to be oversold.

1. What is the main argument of this text?

- A. The claim that music makes children smarter is weakly supported by evidence
- B. Music lessons are a waste of time and money for families
- C. Children who take music lessons always score higher on tests

D. Only wealthy families should enrol their children in music lessons

2. Why does the author say that higher test scores do not "prove that music causes the higher scores"?

A. The tests used were not accurate measures of intelligence

B. Music lessons actually lower scores in most studies

C. Children rarely take the same tests more than once

D. Children with music lessons often have other advantages too

3. What does the author say about the "carefully designed studies" that randomly assigned children?

A. They proved music makes children broadly smarter

B. They were never actually completed by researchers

C. They all showed large gains in general intelligence

D. Their results were mixed, with small or no lasting effects

4. According to the text, what does music training most clearly improve?

A. A child's general intelligence across all subjects

B. The specific skills the training itself practises

C. A child's performance on every standardized test

D. A family's overall income and resources

5. What is the author's view of music lessons overall?

- A. They are harmful and should be discouraged
- B. They are pointless unless they raise intelligence
- C. They are worthwhile for reasons other than raising intelligence
- D. They benefit only children from wealthy families

6. The final sentence — "When a benefit is real, it does not need to be oversold" — mainly suggests that

- A. music lessons have no real benefits at all
- B. the genuine value of music is weakened by exaggerated claims
- C. parents should never trust studies about music
- D. music should be sold at a higher price

Reading Selection: Information Paragraph

Read the following paragraph and answer questions 7–11.

"Lightning never strikes the same place twice" is one of the most persistent myths about weather, and it is simply false. Lightning is drawn to the tallest, most conductive points in an area, and those points do not move. A tall building, a hilltop, or a lone tree is just as likely to be struck again as it was the first time — often more so. The CN Tower in Toronto, for example, is struck dozens of times every year. The myth likely survives because being struck by lightning is rare for any one person, making it feel like a onetime event. But for a tall structure standing in the same spot storm after storm, repeated strikes are not the exception; they are the rule.

7. What myth does the paragraph correct?

- A. That lightning is attracted to tall objects
- B. That the CN Tower is struck every year
- C. That lightning never strikes the same place twice
- D. That lightning is dangerous to people outdoors

8. Why is a tall building or hilltop likely to be struck more than once?

- A. Such points are repainted after each strike
- B. Lightning avoids moving toward open ground
- C. Lightning is drawn to tall, conductive points that do not move
- D. Tall structures attract storms toward their location

9. What example does the paragraph use to support its point?

- A. A lone tree on a hilltop
- B. The CN Tower in Toronto
- C. A person struck by lightning
- D. A storm passing over a city

10. According to the paragraph, why does the myth likely survive?

- A. Being struck is rare for any one person, so it feels like a onetime event
- B. Most people have never seen lightning strike at all
- C. Scientists have only recently studied lightning
- D. Tall buildings are rarely struck in reality

11. What is the author's main purpose in this paragraph?

- A. To warn readers to stay away from tall buildings
- B. To correct a common misconception about lightning
- C. To persuade readers to visit the CN Tower
- D. To compare lightning with other weather events

Reading Selection: News Report

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

School's "Walking Bus" Cuts Morning Traffic

A program in which students walk to school together in a supervised group — nicknamed the "walking bus" — has noticeably reduced car traffic around Elmwood Public School, according to staff. Each morning, adult volunteers lead groups of students along set routes, picking up more children at marked stops along the way.

The program began as a response to congestion and safety concerns at the school's dropoff zone. "The street outside was chaos every morning — cars everywhere, kids darting between them," said parent

volunteer Rosa Lim. "Now a lot of those families just join the walking bus instead." Staff estimate that morning car dropoffs have fallen noticeably since the program began.

Beyond easing traffic, organizers say the walking bus gives children exercise and a chance to socialize before class. Parents appreciate the supervised, predictable routine.

The school hopes to add more routes as additional volunteers come forward.

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

- A. A "walking bus" program has reduced car traffic at a school
- B. The dropoff zone at the school was dangerous and chaotic
- C. Adult volunteers lead students along set routes each morning
- D. Children need more exercise before the school day begins

13. What prompted the start of the walking bus program?

- A. A request from the local transit authority
- B. Congestion and safety concerns at the dropoff zone
- C. A shortage of school bus drivers in the area
- D. Parents wanting their children to lose weight

14. How does the walking bus operate?

- A. Children ride a special small bus along set routes
- B. Parents drive children to a central meeting point
- C. Volunteers lead groups along routes, picking up children at stops
- D. Students walk to school individually on marked paths

15. Rosa Lim's quotation mainly describes

- A. how many volunteers the program needs
- B. the exercise benefits of walking to school
- C. the routes the walking bus follows
- D. the chaotic dropoff scene before the program

16. Besides easing traffic, what other benefits does the report mention?

- A. Lower costs for the school and parents
- B. Higher test scores for participating students
- C. Shorter school days for the children
- D. Exercise and a chance for children to socialize

17. What does the school hope to do next?

- A. Add more routes as additional volunteers come forward
- B. Replace the program with a fleet of school buses

C. Require every student to join the walking bus

D. End the program once traffic improves

Reading Selection: Dialogue

Read the following dialogue and answer questions 18–22.

Priya: My essay says screen time causes poor grades. I have a source — this article.

Mr. Hale: Let's look at it. What does the article actually show?

Priya: That students who use screens more tend to have lower grades.

Mr. Hale: "Tend to" — so it's a pattern, a correlation. Does the article show that the screens caused the lower grades?

Priya: ...It says they're connected.

Mr. Hale: Connected, yes. But maybe students who are already struggling turn to screens to escape. Or maybe a third thing — like little sleep — causes both. Your source supports "screen time is linked to lower grades." It does not support "screen time causes lower grades."

Priya: So my claim is bigger than my evidence.

Mr. Hale: Exactly. Match the claim to what the evidence actually shows, and your argument becomes unbreakable. Overreach, and one good question topples it.

18. What does Priya's essay claim?

- A. That screen time causes poor grades
- B. That screens have no effect on grades
- C. That poor grades cause more screen time
- D. That sleep affects students' grades

19. What does Mr. Hale point out about Priya's source?

- A. The source is unreliable and should not be used
- B. The source shows a correlation, not that screens caused lower grades
- C. The source actually disproves Priya's claim entirely
- D. The source is too old to be useful in an essay

20. What alternative explanation does Mr. Hale suggest?

- A. Screens always improve students' grades
- B. Grades have no connection to screen use
- C. A third factor like little sleep could cause both
- D. The article's data was completely invented

21. When Priya says "my claim is bigger than my evidence," she means that

- A. her essay is too long for the assignment
- B. her source is more detailed than her claim
- C. she needs to find a much larger study
- D. she has claimed more than her evidence proves

22. What is Mr. Hale's main advice to Priya?

- A. To remove all sources from her essay
- B. To make her claim as strong as possible
- C. To find a source that proves causation
- D. To match her claim to what the evidence actually shows

Session B

Writing — Conventions and Sentence Skills (Precise Claims and Logical Connection)

Answer questions 23–35.

23. Which sentence makes a claim that matches reasonable evidence rather than overgeneralizing?

- A. All teenagers spend too much time on their phones every day
- B. Many teenagers spend a significant amount of time on their phones
- C. Every single teenager is addicted to their phone without exception
- D. No teenager can survive a day without using a phone

24. Which sentence uses an accurate qualifier rather than overstating?

- A. Some studies suggest that exercise can improve mood
- B. All studies prove that exercise completely cures sadness
- C. Exercise always eliminates every form of stress instantly
- D. Everyone who exercises is guaranteed to feel perfectly happy

25. Which sentence clearly links evidence to a conclusion?

- A. The bridge is unsafe, also the inspection report exists somewhere
- B. The bridge is unsafe and the report and the traffic and the cost
- C. Because the inspection found cracks in the supports, the bridge was closed
- D. The bridge is unsafe, cracks, supports, closure, report findings

26. Which sentence avoids an unsupported overgeneralization?

- A. The survey suggests that some residents support the new park
- B. Clearly, the entire town is thrilled about the new park plan

- C. Without question, everyone wants the new park to be built
- D. It is obvious that no one could oppose the new park at all

27. Which sentence connects cause and effect logically and clearly?

- A. The roads were icy, and also the meeting and the schedule
- B. The roads were icy, the meeting, cancelled, the schedule changed
- C. Icy roads, a cancelled meeting, a changed schedule, all of it
- D. Because the roads were icy, the meeting was cancelled

28. Which sentence states a claim that the word "proves" would be too strong to support?

- A. The data confirms the exact measurement recorded by the device
- B. One student's experience suggests the method might help others
- C. The calculation proves that two plus two equals four
- D. The dictionary proves that the word is spelled this way

29. Which sentence uses qualifiers accurately?

- A. This single example proves that the program works for everyone
- B. All experts agree completely on every detail of the issue
- C. Every person who tried the method succeeded without fail
- D. This early result hints that the method may be worth studying

30. Which sentence draws a conclusion that fits its evidence?

- A. Since attendance rose after the change, the change may have helped
- B. Attendance rose, therefore the change definitely caused it alone
- C. Attendance rose, proving the change is the only possible reason
- D. Because attendance rose once, the change works in all schools

31. Which sentence avoids overstating what the evidence shows?

- A. This proves beyond all doubt that the diet works for everyone
- B. The study guarantees the diet will work for every single person
- C. The study found that participants lost some weight on average
- D. The study proves the diet is the best one ever created

32. Which sentence links its ideas with clear, logical connection?

- A. The team practised hard, the trophy, the season, the coach proud
- B. The team practised hard and also the trophy and the season too
- C. Practising hard, the trophy, won by the team, proud was the coach
- D. Because the team practised hard, they won the championship

33. Which sentence makes a appropriately limited claim?

- A. This book is the greatest novel ever written by anyone
- B. Many readers have found this book moving and memorable
- C. Everyone who reads this book is changed forever by it
- D. No one could ever dislike this remarkable book

34. Which sentence connects evidence to its conclusion most clearly?

- A. The plant died, sunlight, water, the soil, the pot, all factors
- B. Because the plant received no water for two weeks, it died
- C. The plant died and also there was no water for a while there
- D. No water, the plant, two weeks, then it died in the end somehow

35. Which sentence states a claim its evidence could reasonably support?

- A. Because one bridge failed, all bridges of this type are unsafe
- B. Since the test passed once, the system will never fail again
- C. The single trial suggests the approach may deserve further testing
- D. One success proves the method works in every possible situation

OpenResponse Writing Tasks

36. Short Writing Task



Headline: "School Cuts Energy Use by 30 Percent in StudentLed Challenge"

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, thirdperson tone. You may invent reasonable details as long as they fit the headline and image.

37. Long OpenResponse Task

Some people believe that you should not believe a claim unless there is strong evidence to support it. Others believe that personal experience is enough to trust a claim.

In your opinion, should people require strong evidence before believing a claim, or is personal experience enough? Write a multiparagraph 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.

Answer Key and Explanations

1. A — The text's main argument is that the popular claim music makes children smarter is weakly supported — "more tangled than the confident headlines suggest." The whole piece scrutinizes that claim. The other options overstate or misstate it.

2. D — Higher scores don't prove causation because "children whose families can afford music lessons often have other advantages." Those factors could explain the gap. The other options misstate the reasoning.
3. D — The carefully designed studies had "mixed" results — "some show small benefits... while others show no lasting effect." They did not prove broad gains. The other options misread the findings.
4. B — Music training most clearly "improves the specific skills it practises... rather than making children broadly 'smarter.'" The benefit is specific, not general. The other options overstate it.
5. C — The author holds that music lessons "are worthwhile" for "joy, discipline, and a lifelong skill" — reasons other than raising intelligence. Their value is real but different. The other options misstate the view.
6. B — "When a benefit is real, it does not need to be oversold" means the genuine value of music is weakened by exaggerated intelligence claims. Overselling undercuts the true benefit. The other options misread the line.
7. C — The paragraph corrects the myth that "lightning never strikes the same place twice." That false belief is its target. The other options are facts the paragraph affirms, not the myth.
8. C — Tall points are struck repeatedly because "lightning is drawn to the tallest, most conductive points... and those points do not move." Their fixed height invites repeat strikes. The other options misstate the cause.
9. B — The paragraph cites "the CN Tower in Toronto," struck dozens of times a year, as support. That example proves repeat strikes. The other options are not the example used.
10. A — The myth survives because "being struck by lightning is rare for any one person, making it feel like a onetime event." Personal rarity creates the false impression. The other options misstate the reason.
11. B — The paragraph corrects a common misconception about lightning, so its purpose is to inform by debunking. It sets the record straight. The persuasive and comparative readings miss the aim.

12. A — The report centres on a "walking bus" that "has noticeably reduced car traffic." That reduction is the main idea. The other options are supporting details.

13. B — The program began "as a response to congestion and safety concerns at the school's dropoff zone." Those concerns prompted it. The other options are not the cause.

14. C — The walking bus has "volunteers lead groups of students along set routes, picking up more children at marked stops." That is how it operates. The other options misdescribe it.

15. D — Lim's quotation — "cars everywhere, kids darting between them" — describes the chaotic dropoff scene before the program. It paints the prior problem. It does not address volunteer numbers or routes.

16. D — Besides easing traffic, the report says the walking bus "gives children exercise and a chance to socialize before class." Those are the added benefits. The other options are not mentioned.

17. A — The school "hopes to add more routes as additional volunteers come forward." That is the stated next step. The other options contradict the report.

18. A — Priya's essay claims "screen time causes poor grades." That is her stated claim. The other options reverse or misstate it.

19. B — Mr. Hale points out the source shows a correlation — students "tend to" have lower grades — not that screens caused them. It supports "linked to," not "causes." The other options misstate his point.

20. C — Mr. Hale suggests "a third thing — like little sleep — causes both." An outside factor could explain the link. The other options contradict his reasoning.

21. D — "My claim is bigger than my evidence" means Priya has claimed more (causation) than her evidence (correlation) proves. The claim overreaches the proof. The other options misread it.

22. D — Mr. Hale's advice is to "match the claim to what the evidence actually shows." Fitting claim to evidence makes the argument sound. The other options reverse or misstate the advice.

23. B — "Many teenagers spend a significant amount of time on their phones" uses the accurate qualifier "many" rather than overgeneralizing. The other options claim "all," "every," or "no," which the evidence cannot support. Accurate qualifiers avoid overstatement.

24. A — "Some studies suggest that exercise can improve mood" uses cautious qualifiers ("some," "can"). The other options overstate with "all," "always," or "guaranteed." Honest claims match the strength of the evidence.

25. C — "Because the inspection found cracks... the bridge was closed" clearly links evidence (cracks) to conclusion (closure). The other options are sentence fragments or word lists with no logical connection. A clear conclusion follows from stated evidence.

26. A — "The survey suggests that some residents support the new park" avoids overgeneralizing with "suggests" and "some." The other options claim "entire town," "everyone," or "no one," which is unsupported. Limited claims fit the evidence.

27. D — "Because the roads were icy, the meeting was cancelled" connects cause and effect logically. The other options are fragments or strings of nouns with no clear link. "Because" makes the relationship explicit.

28. B — "One student's experience suggests the method might help others" is a tentative claim where "proves" would be far too strong. A single experience cannot prove anything for others. The other options describe genuinely provable facts.

29. D — "This early result hints that the method may be worth studying" uses accurate, cautious qualifiers ("hints," "may"). The other options overclaim with "proves," "all," or "every... without fail." Honest qualifiers match the evidence.

30. A — "Since attendance rose after the change, the change may have helped" draws a cautious conclusion that fits the evidence. The other options overreach with "definitely," "proving," or "all schools." A measured conclusion respects the limits of the data.

31. C — "The study found that participants lost some weight on average" reports the finding without overstating. The other options claim "beyond all doubt," "guarantees," or "best ever," which the study cannot support. Accurate reporting avoids hype.

32. D — "Because the team practised hard, they won the championship" links cause and effect clearly. The other options are word lists or loose strings with no logical connection. "Because" provides the clear link.

33. B — "Many readers have found this book moving and memorable" makes a limited, supportable claim. The other options overclaim with "greatest ever," "everyone," or "no one." A bounded claim is defensible.

34. B — "Because the plant received no water for two weeks, it died" clearly connects the cause (no water) to the effect (death). The other options are fragments or vague strings. The causal link is explicit.

35. C — "The single trial suggests the approach may deserve further testing" makes a claim the limited evidence can support. The other options overgeneralize from one case ("all bridges," "never fail," "every situation"). A modest claim fits a single trial.

OpenResponse Writing Tasks — Model Responses and Scoring Notes

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

Students at Crestwood Secondary School cut the building's energy use by 30 percent over a single semester through a studentled Energy Savings Challenge, results unveiled this week show. Gathered around a display of charts and graphs in the school courtyard, students reviewed the data — including a steadily falling line graph — that tracked the savings achieved by simple changes like switching off unused lights and adjusting classroom heating.

The challenge was organized by the school's environmental club to involve every class in reducing waste. "We thought small changes wouldn't add up to much, but the numbers proved us wrong," said club member Dele Adeyemi. School officials say the savings have also lowered energy costs, and the club hopes to repeat the challenge next year with an even higher target.

Scoring notes (rubric-aligned): A strong response leads with the 5 Ws (who: Crestwood students/environmental club; what: cut energy use by 30 percent; when: over a semester / unveiled this week; where: the school; why: a student-led challenge to reduce waste), keeps a neutral third-person tone, and includes at least one realistic quotation. Midlevel responses cover the basic facts but may omit a W, slip into first-person or opinion, or lack a quotation. Lowlevel responses read as a personal story, drift from the headline, or contain frequent conventional errors that interfere with meaning. Reward journalistic structure and factual tone over length.

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

People should require strong evidence before believing a claim, rather than relying on personal experience alone. While personal experience matters and can be a starting point, it is too easily mistaken or limited to be trusted on its own, whereas solid evidence offers a far more reliable path to the truth.

The strongest reason is that personal experience can easily mislead us. A single person sees only a small slice of the world, and our memories and impressions are often shaped by chance or bias. For example, someone might take a herbal remedy, happen to feel better the next day, and conclude the remedy worked — when in fact they would have recovered anyway. Strong evidence, drawn from many cases, can distinguish a real effect from a lucky coincidence in a way one person's experience cannot.

A second reason is that requiring evidence protects us from false or harmful claims. People who believe things on personal experience alone are vulnerable to scams, myths, and misinformation that "feel" true but are not. A consumer who demands proof before believing a product's bold promise is far less likely to waste money or risk harm than one who trusts a single glowing story. Evidence is a defence against being fooled.

Some argue that personal experience is powerful and immediate, and that waiting for proof can mean ignoring something we have seen with our own eyes. This is a fair point — experience can alert us to something worth investigating. However, an experience should be the beginning of inquiry, not the end of it. The wise response to a striking experience is to seek evidence that confirms or corrects it, not to accept it without question.

For these reasons, people should require strong evidence before believing a claim. Personal experience can spark our curiosity, but only solid evidence can reliably tell us what is true, and trusting experience alone leaves us open to error and deception.

Scoring notes (rubricaligned): 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. Midlevel responses give a position and reasons but may underdevelop them (listing rather than explaining), show weaker organization, or contain conventions errors that occasionally distract. Lowlevel 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 "require evidence" side for illustration; an equally welldeveloped response arguing for personal experience would score just as highly.)