

PRACTICE EXAM 24: OSSLT SIMULATION

(37 QUESTIONS)

Session A

Reading Selection: RealLife Narrative (MoodRich)

Read the following narrative and answer questions 1–6.

The house was quieter than it had ever been. For eighteen years it had roared — with cartoons and slammed doors, with arguments and laughter, with the thunder of feet on the stairs. Now my daughter's room stood empty, the bed stripped, the posters gone, a pale rectangle on the wall where her mirror had hung. She was three hours away at university, exactly where she was meant to be. And the silence pressed on me like a weight.

I wandered the house that first evening, not quite knowing what to do with my hands. I made dinner for two out of habit, then sat looking at the second plate. The fridge hummed. A car passed outside. I had imagined this day for years — the freedom, the quiet, the rooms reclaimed — and now that it had come, I felt only the strange ache of a job finished too well.

Then my phone buzzed. A photo: my daughter, grinning, in a dorm room smaller than our pantry, surrounded by new faces. Made friends already! the message read. And the ache, without quite leaving, made room beside itself for something warmer. The silence in the house, I understood, was not emptiness. It was the sound of having done the thing you set out to do. I cleared the second plate, and I smiled.

1. What is the overall mood at the beginning of the narrative?

A. Cheerful and celebratory about a new freedom

- B. Tense and fearful about an unknown danger
- C. Angry and resentful toward the daughter
- D. Quiet and sorrowful at the empty house

2. The description of the house having once "roared" with noise mainly serves to

- A. suggest the family had often argued loudly
- B. contrast the past liveliness with the present silence
- C. explain why the narrator wanted the house quiet
- D. show that the house was poorly built and noisy

3. Why does the narrator make "dinner for two out of habit"?

- A. Years of routine made cooking for two automatic
- B. The narrator expected the daughter to return that night
- C. A guest was coming over for dinner that evening
- D. The narrator could not cook a smaller portion

4. The phrase "the strange ache of a job finished too well" mainly suggests that the narrator

- A. feels both pride and sadness that the parenting is done
- B. regrets having raised the daughter to be independent
- C. is angry that the work of parenting went unrewarded
- D. wishes the daughter had failed to leave home

5. How does the narrator's mood shift after receiving the daughter's message?

- A. From sorrow to anger at being left behind

- B. From contentment to sudden worry
 - C. From pure grief to a warmth mixed with the ache
 - D. From relief to deep regret about the day
6. What does the narrator come to understand about the silence by the end?
- A. That the house will always feel unbearably empty now
 - B. That the daughter should not have moved so far away
 - C. That the silence means the family has fallen apart
 - D. That the silence reflects a job done well, not mere emptiness

Reading Selection: Information Paragraph

Read the following paragraph and answer questions 7–11.

Few colours carry as many contradictions as the colour red. Across human cultures, it has come to mean almost opposite things at once. Red signals danger — stop signs, warning lights, alarm buttons all rely on its power to alert us. Yet the very same colour signals love and celebration: red roses, valentines, festive decorations. In some cultures, red is the colour of good luck and is worn at weddings; in others, it warns of anger or aggression, as in the phrase "seeing red." Even our bodies respond to it: studies suggest that the colour red can quicken the heartbeat and draw the eye faster than any other colour. Whatever its meaning, red is rarely a colour we feel neutral about.

7. What is the main idea of this paragraph?
- A. Red is the most common colour used in warning signs
 - B. Red roses are the traditional symbol of romantic love
 - C. Red carries many contradictory meanings across cultures
 - D. The human eye is drawn to red faster than to other colours

8. According to the paragraph, what does red signal in the case of stop signs and alarms?

- A. Love and romantic celebration
- B. Danger and the need to be alert
- C. Good luck and good fortune
- D. Calmness and reassurance

9. The paragraph mentions red roses and valentines mainly to show that red

- A. is the most popular colour for decorations
- B. is used only on special holidays
- C. can signal love and celebration, not just danger
- D. is more expensive than other colours

10. According to the paragraph, how do human bodies respond to the colour red?

- A. The heartbeat slows and the body relaxes
- B. The colour can quicken the heartbeat and draw the eye
- C. The eyes become tired after looking at it
- D. The body shows no measurable response at all

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

- A. To persuade readers to wear more red clothing
- B. To inform readers about the contradictory meanings of red
- C. To warn readers about the dangers signalled by red
- D. To compare red with other colours of the rainbow

Reading Selection: News Report

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

Town Mourns, Then Rebuilds, After Historic Mill Fire

When fire destroyed the 150-year-old Bedford Mill last spring, many residents feared the heart of their town had been lost forever. The mill, long converted into a community arts centre, had hosted weddings, markets, and concerts for generations. "It felt like losing a member of the family," said longtime resident Carol Tessier.

But grief soon turned to determination. Within weeks, residents formed a rebuilding committee and launched a fundraising campaign that has now raised over half a million dollars. Local trades workers have volunteered their time, and an architect has offered free designs that preserve the mill's historic appearance while making it safer and more accessible.

"We can't replace what burned," said committee chair David Owens. "But we can build something our grandchildren will love just as much." Construction is set to begin in the autumn.

The town plans to mark the reopening, expected in two years, with a festival celebrating the mill's long history.

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

- A. A town is rebuilding a historic mill after a fire
- B. The Bedford Mill was 150 years old when it burned
- C. Local trades workers have volunteered their time
- D. The mill had hosted weddings and concerts for years

13. How did residents feel immediately after the fire?

- A. Relieved that no one had been injured
- B. Eager to replace the mill with a modern building
- C. Indifferent to the loss of the old mill
- D. Fearful that the heart of their town was lost

14. Carol Tessier's quotation mainly conveys

- A. how much money the rebuilding would cost
- B. the design plans for the new building
- C. the deep emotional loss the fire caused
- D. the schedule for the reopening festival

15. What does the report say about the architect's design?

- A. It preserves the historic look while improving safety and access
- B. It replaces the mill with a completely modern structure
- C. It reduces the size of the original building
- D. It was rejected by the rebuilding committee

16. David Owens's quotation "We can't replace what burned, but we can build something our grandchildren will love" mainly expresses

- A. regret that the rebuilding ever began
- B. doubt that the mill can be rebuilt at all
- C. hope for the future despite the loss
- D. anger at those responsible for the fire

17. How does the town plan to mark the reopening?

- A. With a festival celebrating the mill's history
- B. By renaming the mill after a resident
- C. With a quiet, private ceremony
- D. By closing the building to the public

Reading Selection: Dialogue

Read the following dialogue and answer questions 18–22.

Sam: Read my college essay? Be honest.

Ms. Vance: (reading) ...It's well written. Clean sentences, no errors. But Sam — where are you in it?

Sam: What do you mean? It's all about me. My achievements, my goals—

Ms. Vance: It lists you. It doesn't sound like you. This reads like a résumé wearing a costume. Polished, impressive, and cold. I've read a hundred of these. So have the admissions officers.

Sam: So it's too formal?

Ms. Vance: It's too guarded. You wrote what you thought they wanted to hear, in the voice you thought they wanted to hear it in. But they don't want a brochure. They want a person. Tell me — why do you actually want to study marine biology?

Sam: ...Because when I was seven, I found a tide pool and didn't move for three hours.

Ms. Vance: (smiling) That. That's your first line. Everything before it was the costume. Now take it off.

18. What is Ms. Vance's main criticism of Sam's essay?

- A. It contains too many grammatical errors
- B. It is well written but does not sound like Sam
- C. It is far too short for a college application
- D. It focuses too much on Sam's personal feelings

19. What does Ms. Vance mean by calling the essay "a résumé wearing a costume"?

- A. The essay is dishonest about Sam's achievements
- B. The essay should be rewritten as an actual résumé
- C. It lists accomplishments but hides Sam's real voice
- D. The essay is too casual and informal in tone

20. When Sam asks "So it's too formal?" Ms. Vance responds that the real problem is the essay is

- A. too long and detailed
- B. too focused on emotions
- C. too full of errors
- D. too guarded

21. Why does Ms. Vance react with a smile to the tidepool story?

- A. She finds the story amusing and unserious
- B. She is relieved the conversation is over
- C. It reveals the genuine voice the essay was missing
- D. She thinks Sam should not study marine biology

22. What does Ms. Vance mean by "Now take it off"?

- A. Sam should drop the guarded, costumelike voice and write authentically
- B. Sam should remove the tidepool story from the essay
- C. Sam should make the essay even more formal and polished
- D. Sam should start the entire application over from scratch

Session B

Writing — Conventions and Sentence Skills (Tone, Formality, and Consistency)

Answer questions 23–35.

23. Which sentence is appropriate for a formal letter to a school principal?

- A. Hey, just wanted to give you a heads up about the trip
- B. I'm writing to bring a scheduling problem to your attention
- C. So there's this huge issue with the trip you gotta know about
- D. Wanted to flag this thing about the trip real quick for you

24. Which sentence maintains a consistent formal tone?

- A. The committee reviewed the data and figured it was all good
- B. The committee reviewed the data and found the results satisfactory
- C. The committee checked out the data and it was totally fine
- D. The committee looked over the data and it seemed okay, honestly

25. Which sentence uses an appropriately casual tone for a text message to a friend?

- A. I hereby inform you that I shall arrive at approximately seven

- B. Running a bit late — see you around seven!
- C. Please be advised that my arrival is anticipated near seven
- D. It is my intention to reach the location at the seventh hour

26. Which sentence has an inconsistent tone?

- A. The report was thorough, well organized, and clearly written
- B. The ceremony was solemn, dignified, and deeply moving
- C. The lecture was scholarly, detailed, and honestly kind of boring
- D. The novel was elegant, thoughtful, and beautifully paced

27. Which word best fits the serious, respectful tone of a memorial speech? "We gather today to _____ the memory of a remarkable woman."

- A. check out
- B. honour
- C. deal with
- D. handle

28. Which sentence matches a neutral, professional tone suitable for a workplace email?

- A. The deadline got moved up, so we gotta hustle now
- B. The deadline has been moved earlier, so please adjust your schedule
- C. Heads up — deadline's way sooner now, don't freak out
- D. The deadline is sooner now, which is honestly a nightmare

29. Which sentence keeps a consistent tone throughout?

- A. The garden was peaceful and serene, a totally chill spot to hang

- B. The presentation was professional, polished, and on point
- C. The museum exhibit was elegant, refined, and thoughtfully arranged
- D. The funeral was solemn and dignified, but the food was awesome

30. Which word choice best suits a light, playful tone? "The puppy ____ across the yard, ears flapping."

- A. bounded
- B. trudged
- C. staggered
- D. limped

31. Which sentence is written in a tone appropriate for a scientific report?

- A. The experiment was a massive success, which is super exciting
- B. We were blown away by how well the experiment turned out
- C. The experiment produced consistent and measurable results
- D. The experiment worked out great, way better than we hoped

32. Which revision makes the tone suitably formal for an essay? "The author's argument is kind of weak and falls apart pretty fast."

- A. The author's argument is sort of shaky and doesn't really hold up
- B. The author's argument is weak and quickly loses coherence
- C. The author's argument is pretty flimsy and basically collapses
- D. The author's argument is a bit of a mess and falls apart fast

33. Which sentence maintains an appropriately respectful tone when disagreeing?

- A. That idea is ridiculous and anyone can see it won't work

- B. Only a fool would believe that approach could succeed
- C. That's the worst plan I have ever heard in my entire life
- D. I see the appeal of that approach, but I have some concerns

34. Which sentence has a tone that matches a cheerful invitation?

- A. You are required to attend the gathering this coming Saturday
- B. We'd love for you to join us for a celebration this Saturday
- C. Attendance at Saturday's function is expected of all parties
- D. Be informed that a gathering will occur on Saturday next

35. Which sentence keeps a formal, objective tone suitable for a news article?

- A. The shocking decision left everyone absolutely furious, as it should
- B. The outrageous decision was a slap in the face to the whole town
- C. The unbelievable decision will obviously ruin everything for good
- D. The council's decision drew criticism from several residents

OpenResponse Writing Tasks

36. Short Writing Task



Headline: "Beloved Teacher Retires After 35 Years at the School"

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 it is important to express your emotions openly. Others believe it is better to keep your emotions private.

In your opinion, is it better to express your emotions openly or to keep them private? 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. D — The opening mood is quiet and sorrowful: the house is "quieter than it had ever been," and "the silence pressed on me like a weight." Grief, not celebration, fills the scene. The other options misread the mood.

2. B — The house having once "roared" with noise contrasts the past liveliness with the present silence. The memory of sound deepens the quiet. The other options misread the purpose.

3. A — The narrator makes "dinner for two out of habit" — years of routine made it automatic. Habit, not expectation, drives it. The other options misstate the reason.
4. A — "The strange ache of a job finished too well" suggests both pride and sadness that the parenting is complete. Success and loss mingle. The other options misread the feeling.
5. C — After the message, "the ache, without quite leaving, made room beside itself for something warmer" — a shift from pure grief to warmth mixed with the ache. The sorrow softens, not vanishes. The other options misstate the shift.
6. D — The narrator understands the silence "was not emptiness" but "the sound of having done the thing you set out to do" — a job done well. The quiet signals success. The other options contradict this.
7. C — The paragraph's main idea is that "few colours carry as many contradictions" as red, which means "almost opposite things at once." Its contradictory meanings are the focus. The other options are supporting details.
8. B — Red signals "danger" through "stop signs, warning lights, alarm buttons." Alertness is its meaning there. The other options name red's other meanings.
9. C — Red roses and valentines show that red "signals love and celebration," not just danger. They illustrate the opposite meaning. The other options misstate the point.
10. B — The paragraph says red "can quicken the heartbeat and draw the eye faster than any other colour." The body responds with arousal. The other options contradict this.
11. B — The paragraph informs readers about the contradictory meanings of red, so its purpose is to inform. It presents the contrasts neutrally. The persuasive, cautionary, and comparative readings miss the aim.
12. A — The report centres on a town "rebuild[ing] a historic mill after a fire." That rebuilding is the main idea. The other options are supporting details.

13. D — Right after the fire, "many residents feared the heart of their town had been lost forever." Fear of loss was the immediate feeling. The other options misstate it.

14. C — Tessier's quotation — "like losing a member of the family" — conveys the deep emotional loss the fire caused. It expresses grief. It does not address cost, design, or schedule.

15. A — The architect's design "preserve[s] the mill's historic appearance while making it safer and more accessible." It keeps the look and improves safety. The other options contradict the report.

16. C — Owens's words — "we can build something our grandchildren will love just as much" — express hope for the future despite the loss. Optimism, not regret or anger, drives it. The other options misread the tone.

17. A — The town plans to mark the reopening "with a festival celebrating the mill's long history." That is the stated plan. The other options contradict the report.

18. B — Ms. Vance's main criticism is that the essay is "well written" but "doesn't sound like you" — it lacks Sam's voice. Polish without personality is the problem. The other options misstate it.

19. C — "A résumé wearing a costume" means the essay lists accomplishments but hides Sam's real voice behind a polished front. It is impressive yet impersonal. The other options misread the phrase.

20. D — Ms. Vance corrects "too formal" to "too guarded" — Sam wrote what he thought they wanted to hear. The essay holds back the real person. The other options misstate her point.

21. C — Ms. Vance smiles because the tidepool story reveals the genuine voice the essay was missing. The authentic detail is what she wanted. The other options misread her reaction.

22. A — "Now take it off" means Sam should drop the guarded, costumelike voice and write authentically. Removing the "costume" means writing as himself. The other options reverse or misread the advice.

23. B — "I'm writing to bring a scheduling problem to your attention" suits a formal letter to a principal. The other options use casual phrasing ("hey," "gotta," "real quick"). Formal contexts call for formal tone.

24. B — "The committee reviewed the data and found the results satisfactory" maintains a consistent formal tone. The other options drop into casual phrasing ("figured it was all good," "totally fine," "honestly"). Consistency of register is the rule.

25. B — "Running a bit late — see you around seven!" fits a casual text to a friend. The other options are stiffly formal ("I hereby inform you," "please be advised"). Tone should match the audience.

26. C — "Scholarly, detailed, and honestly kind of boring" shifts from formal to casual, breaking tone. The other options stay consistent. The casual closer clashes with the formal list.

27. B — "Honour the memory" fits the serious, respectful tone of a memorial speech. The other options ("check out," "deal with," "handle") are too casual. Solemn occasions call for dignified diction.

28. B — "The deadline has been moved earlier, so please adjust your schedule" keeps a neutral, professional tone. The other options use slang or emotion ("gotta hustle," "don't freak out," "nightmare"). Workplace email calls for measured wording.

29. B — "Professional, polished, and on point" keeps a consistent tone. The other options end with a clashing casual or jarring phrase ("chill spot to hang," "food was awesome"). Consistency holds the tone together.

30. A — "Bounded across the yard" suits the light, playful image of a happy puppy. The other options ("trudged," "staggered," "limped") carry heavy or pained tones. Word choice must match the mood.

31. C — "The experiment produced consistent and measurable results" fits a scientific report's neutral tone. The other options use excited, casual language ("massive success," "blown away," "way better"). Reports call for objective wording.

32. B — "The author's argument is weak and quickly loses coherence" is suitably formal for an essay. The other options use casual phrasing ("sort of shaky," "pretty flimsy," "a bit of a mess"). Academic writing calls for formal diction.

33. D — "I see the appeal of that approach, but I have some concerns" disagrees respectfully. The other options are insulting ("ridiculous," "only a fool," "the worst plan ever"). Respectful disagreement keeps a civil tone.

34. B — "We'd love for you to join us for a celebration this Saturday" matches a cheerful invitation. The other options are cold or commanding ("required to attend," "expected of all parties"). A warm tone suits an invitation.

35. D — "The council's decision drew criticism from several residents" keeps a formal, objective news tone. The other options use charged language ("shocking," "slap in the face," "ruin everything"). News articles report neutrally.

OpenResponse Writing Tasks — Model Responses and Scoring Notes

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

A beloved teacher said farewell to the school community on Friday after 35 years in the classroom, honoured at a packed assembly in the school gymnasium. Mr. Alvarez, who taught generations of students, stood at the podium holding a bouquet of flowers as students and staff rose in sustained applause beneath a banner thanking him for his decades of service.

Colleagues and former students returned to mark the occasion and share memories of his influence. "He didn't just teach the subject — he made you believe you could do it," said former student and now fellow teacher Renée Caron. The school announced that a scholarship would be created in Mr. Alvarez's name to support graduating students each year.

Scoring notes (rubricaligned): A strong response leads with the 5 Ws (who: Mr. Alvarez/the school community; what: retirement after 35 years; when: Friday; where: school gymnasium; why: honour his long service), keeps a neutral thirdperson tone, and includes at least one realistic quotation. Midlevel

responses cover the basic facts but may omit a W, slip into firstperson or opinion, or lack a quotation. Lowlevel 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 OpenResponse Task — Opinion Piece (Model Response)

It is better to express your emotions openly than to keep them private, as long as it is done thoughtfully. While there are times for privacy, openly sharing how we feel strengthens our relationships, supports our mental health, and helps others understand and support us.

The strongest reason is that expressing emotions builds stronger relationships. When we share what we feel, we let others truly know us, and honesty creates trust and closeness. For example, a person who tells a friend they felt hurt by something gives that friendship a chance to grow, while someone who hides the hurt may quietly drift away instead. Open emotion, shared with care, deepens the bonds between people.

A second reason is that expressing emotions is healthier than bottling them up. Feelings that are kept inside do not simply disappear; they often build until they come out as stress, anger, or sadness. A student who admits they are overwhelmed and talks to someone is far more likely to cope well than one who hides the pressure until it becomes too much. Letting emotions out, in healthy ways, eases the burden of carrying them alone.

Some argue that keeping emotions private shows strength and avoids burdening others. This is a fair point, and there are certainly moments — a formal setting, or a situation that is not ours to react to — when restraint is wise. However, choosing the right time and place to share is different from hiding emotions entirely. The goal is not to pour out every feeling everywhere, but to be open with the people and in the moments that matter.

For these reasons, it is better to express emotions openly than to keep them constantly private. Thoughtful openness builds trust, protects our wellbeing, and lets others support us, while constant silence leaves us isolated with feelings we were never meant to carry alone.

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 conventional 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 "express openly" side for illustration; an equally well-developed response arguing for privacy would score just as highly.)