

PRACTICE EXAM 27: OSSLT SIMULATION

(37 QUESTIONS)

Reading Selection 1 — RealLife Narrative

The Wrong Bus

I had taken the same bus home for three years, so when I climbed aboard halfasleep one grey afternoon, I never thought to check the number. I put in my earbuds, leaned my head against the window, and let the familiar route blur past. It was only when the bus turned onto a bridge I had never crossed that a small alarm went off somewhere behind my comfort.

I told myself I was wrong. The route couldn't have changed; I had ridden it a thousand times. I stayed seated through two, three, four unfamiliar stops, more willing to doubt my own eyes than to admit I had made a mistake. By the time I finally pulled the cord, the city outside the window was one I did not recognize at all.

Standing on a strange corner in the cold, waiting to be told which bus would carry me back, I felt foolish. But I also noticed things I never saw from my usual route: a mural of painted birds across an entire wall, a bakery with a handlettered sign, an old man feeding pigeons as though he had all the time in the world. I had ridden the wrong bus for forty minutes. I would not have traded the trip back for anything.

1. What does the phrase "a small alarm went off somewhere behind my comfort" mainly suggest?
 - A. A growing unease was beginning to break through the narrator's ease
 - B. The bus had triggered an actual alarm as it crossed the bridge
 - C. The narrator was frightened of crossing the unfamiliar bridge
 - D. The narrator's earbuds had begun playing a warning sound
2. Why did the narrator stay seated through several unfamiliar stops?

- A. The narrator was waiting for a friend to board at a later stop
- B. The narrator had fallen asleep and missed the correct stop entirely
- C. The narrator preferred to doubt his own eyes rather than admit a mistake
- D. The narrator wanted to explore a part of the city he had never seen

3. Which statement best describes how the narrator's feelings change over the passage?

- A. From comfortable, to uneasy, to unexpectedly grateful for the detour
- B. From excited, to bored, to disappointed by an unremarkable trip
- C. From anxious, to calm, to angry at the bus driver's mistake
- D. From confident, to embarrassed, to determined never to return

4. The ending suggests that the narrator believes the wrong bus

- A. showed him beauty he would have otherwise missed
- B. taught him to always check the bus number first
- C. wasted forty minutes he could not afford to lose
- D. proved that his usual route was the better choice

5. Which lesson does the narrative most clearly support?

- A. People should trust their instincts and act on them immediately
- B. Unplanned experiences can reveal value we did not expect to find
- C. Familiar routines are always safer than unfamiliar ones
- D. Mistakes usually cost more than they could ever be worth

Reading Selection 2 — Persuasive Paragraph

The Case for School Gardens

Every school should plant a garden. Critics will say that gardens are a distraction from "real" subjects, but this objection misunderstands what a garden teaches. A student who plants a seed, waters it for weeks, and finally harvests a vegetable learns patience, responsibility, and the science of how living things grow — lessons no worksheet can match. Gardens also improve what students eat: research has found that children who grow vegetables are far more willing to try them. Best of all, a garden costs little. A few raised beds, some seeds, and donated tools are enough to begin. The only real expense is a willingness to let students get their hands dirty in the name of learning. Schools that ignore this opportunity are not protecting academics; they are simply missing one of the cheapest and richest teaching tools available.

6. What is the writer's main argument in this paragraph?

- A. School gardens are too expensive for most schools to maintain
- B. Schools should plant gardens because they teach valuable lessons cheaply
- C. Worksheets are a more reliable teaching tool than gardens
- D. Students dislike vegetables until they are forced to grow them

7. How does the writer respond to the objection that gardens distract from "real" subjects?

- A. By admitting the objection is partly correct and offering a compromise
- B. By ignoring the objection and changing to a different topic
- C. By agreeing that academics should always come before gardening
- D. By arguing that gardens teach real lessons a worksheet cannot

8. Which piece of evidence does the writer use to support the claim that gardens improve eating habits?

- A. A personal story about the writer's own childhood garden

- B. Research showing children who grow vegetables will try them more
- C. A quotation from a wellknown nutrition expert
- D. A comparison between garden costs and worksheet costs

9. The writer's tone in this paragraph can best be described as

- A. uncertain and cautious about whether gardens truly help
- B. neutral, presenting both sides without taking a position
- C. confident and persuasive in favour of school gardens
- D. angry and dismissive toward students who dislike vegetables

Reading Selection 3 — Persuasive Letter (Companion Text)

Letter to the Editor: "Not So Simple"

To the Editor,

I read the recent argument for planting gardens at every school, and while I admire the enthusiasm, I think it overlooks some hard realities.

The article calls gardens "cheap," but cost is not only about seeds and raised beds. Gardens need care all year — including over the summer, when schools are closed and students are gone. Who waters the plants in July? Too often the answer is "no one," and the garden dies, leaving behind disappointment and wasted effort.

I do not oppose gardens. I oppose pretending they run themselves. A garden is a longterm commitment that requires staff time, summer volunteers, and a realistic plan. Schools that plant one without that plan are setting students up to watch their work wither.

Let us encourage gardens — but honestly, with open eyes about what they truly demand.

— J. Okafor

10. What is the main concern raised in this letter?

- A. Gardens fail to teach students any useful or lasting lessons
- B. Gardens are far too expensive for any school to consider
- C. Gardens require ongoing care that schools may fail to plan for
- D. Gardens should never be planted on any school grounds

11. The letter writer's phrase "pretending they run themselves" is mainly a criticism of

- A. students who refuse to help care for the school garden
- B. the cost of seeds, raised beds, and donated tools
- C. teachers who do not want gardens at their schools
- D. the original article's view that gardens are simple and cheap

12. Which best describes the letter writer's overall position on school gardens?

- A. The writer strongly opposes school gardens in every form
- B. The writer believes gardens are too costly to ever succeed
- C. The writer supports gardens but insists on realistic planning
- D. The writer thinks gardens should be cared for only by students

13. Compared with the paragraph "The Case for School Gardens," this letter

- A. challenges the claim that gardens are cheap and effortless to maintain
- B. fully agrees that gardens are an inexpensive teaching tool

- C. argues that gardens teach no real academic lessons at all
- D. claims that worksheets are superior to gardens for learning

14. A reader who wanted to plant a successful school garden would find the letter most useful for

- A. understanding the longterm care a garden actually requires
- B. learning which vegetables are easiest for children to grow
- C. discovering how gardens improve students' eating habits
- D. finding research that proves gardens are worth the cost

Reading Selection 4 — Dialogue

The Deadline

PRIYA: Did you submit the application? It closes tonight.

WES: I'm... going to. I have time.

PRIYA: It closes at midnight, Wes. It's nine.

WES: Three hours is plenty. I work best under pressure anyway.

PRIYA: You say that every time. Then something goes wrong — the website crashes, your file won't upload, the power blinks.

WES: That happened once.

PRIYA: It happened twice. The scholarship and the contest.

WES: (quietly) ...The contest was the website's fault.

PRIYA: Submit it now, Wes. You can polish it for the next two hours and fifty-nine minutes after it's safely in.

WES: That's... actually not a bad idea.

15. What is Priya trying to convince Wes to do?

- A. Spend more time polishing his application before sending it
- B. Submit his application now rather than waiting until later
- C. Withdraw from the scholarship and the contest entirely
- D. Blame the website for his past missed deadlines

16. Wes's claim "I work best under pressure anyway" is undercut by

- A. Priya's reminder that things have gone wrong for him before
- B. Wes admitting that he never actually works under pressure
- C. the application closing at midnight rather than at nine
- D. Priya offering to submit the application on his behalf

17. When Wes says "(quietly) ...The contest was the website's fault," the stage direction "(quietly)" suggests that he

- A. is confident that Priya will agree with his explanation
- B. is whispering so that others nearby cannot overhear them
- C. is angry at the website for crashing during the contest
- D. recognizes his excuse is weak even as he makes it

18. Priya's final suggestion solves the problem by

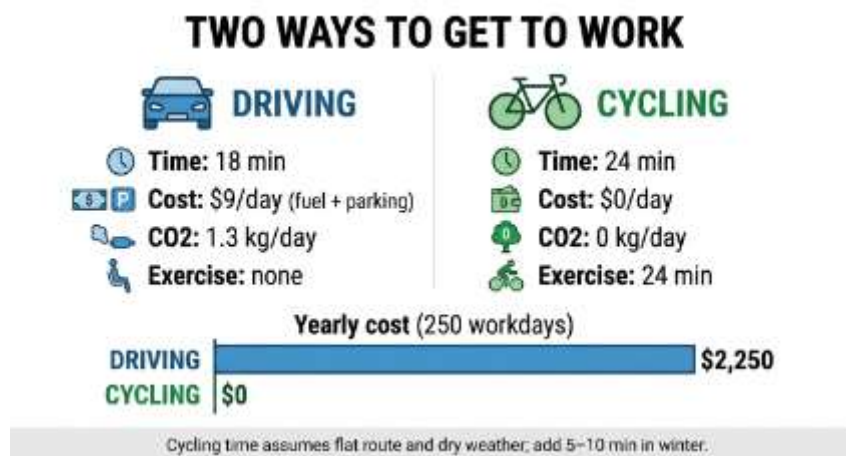
- A. convincing Wes to withdraw before the deadline closes
- B. letting Wes keep improving his work after it is safely submitted
- C. proving that Wes truly does work best under pressure
- D. blaming the website so Wes does not feel responsible

19. What can the reader infer about the relationship between Priya and Wes?

- A. They have only recently met and barely know each other
- B. Priya knows Wes well enough to predict his habits
- C. Priya is Wes's teacher rather than his friend
- D. The two rarely speak and disagree about everything

Reading Selection 5 — Graphic Text

Comparison Chart: "Two Ways to Get to Work"



20. According to the chart, what is one advantage of driving over cycling for this commute?

- A. Driving produces no carbon dioxide emissions each day
- B. Driving costs nothing once fuel and parking are included
- C. Driving provides the commuter with daily exercise
- D. Driving is faster, taking 18 minutes instead of 24

21. Based on the yearly cost bar, how much would the commuter save in a year by cycling instead of driving?

- A. About \$9
- B. About \$250
- C. About \$2,250
- D. Nothing, since both cost the same

22. The footer note about winter weather is included mainly to

- A. argue that cycling is impossible during the winter months
- B. give a realistic qualification to the cycling time estimate
- C. prove that driving is always the better choice in winter
- D. explain why driving produces carbon dioxide emissions

23. Which claim is best supported by the chart as a whole?

- A. Driving is clearly the better option for every commuter
- B. Cycling takes far longer than driving for this commute
- C. The two options cost roughly the same amount per year
- D. Cycling is cheaper, cleaner, and adds exercise, but is slower

24. A reader trying to decide between the two options would find this chart most useful for

- A. learning how to repair a bicycle for winter commuting
- B. finding the fastest driving route between two points
- C. understanding the speed, cost, and health tradeoffs of each option
- D. choosing which car model is most fuelefficient

Grammar, Conventions & Sentence Skills

25. Choose the option that corrects the error: "Neither of the answers seem correct to me."

- A. Neither of the answers seems correct to I.
- B. Neither of the answers seems correct to me.
- C. Neither of the answers seeming correct to me.
- D. Neither of the answers seem correct to myself.

26. Which revision best combines these sentences? "The power went out. We finished our homework by candlelight."

- A. The power went out we finished our homework by candlelight.
- B. The power went out, we finished our homework by candlelight.
- C. When the power went out, we finished our homework by candlelight.
- D. The power went out; and we finished our homework by candlelight.

27. Which sentence is punctuated correctly?

- A. My favourite subjects are biology chemistry, and physics this year.
- B. My favourite subjects, are biology, chemistry, and physics this year.
- C. My favourite subjects are biology chemistry and physics, this year.
- D. My favourite subjects are biology, chemistry, and physics this year.

28. Choose the sentence with the correct word.

- A. The hikers were not aloud to camp beyond the marked trail boundary.
- B. The hikers were not allowed to camp beyond the marked trail boundary.
- C. The hikers were not allowed to camp beyond the marked trail boundary.
- D. The hikers were not aloud to camp beyond the marked trail boundary.

29. Which sentence uses the comparison correctly?

- A. Of the two routes, the coastal road is the more scenic by far.
- B. Of the two routes, the coastal road is the most scenic by far.
- C. Of the two routes, the coastal road is more scenic than any.
- D. Of the two routes, the coastal road is the scenicest by far.

30. Identify the sentence that contains no error.

- A. The reports was finished before the meeting, so we relaxed.
- B. The reports were finished before the meeting, so we relaxed.
- C. The reports were finished before the meeting so, we relaxed.
- D. The reports, were finished before the meeting so we relaxed.

31. Which sentence corrects the misplaced modifier? "She served sandwiches to the children on paper plates."

- A. She served the children sandwiches on paper plates.
- B. On paper plates, the children were served sandwiches by her.
- C. She served sandwiches on paper plates to the children sitting.
- D. The children, on paper plates, were served sandwiches by her.

32. Choose the correctly spelled option: "The committee reached a ___ decision after a long debate."

- A. unanimous
- B. unanimus
- C. unaminous
- D. unanamous

33. Which sentence uses a semicolon correctly?

- A. The train was late; because of the heavy snow on the tracks.
- B. The train was late; and we waited inside the warm station.
- C. The train was late; we waited inside the warm station.
- D. The train; was late, we waited inside the warm station.

34. Which sentence is the clearest and most concise?

- A. In the event that it rains tomorrow, the game will be postponed to a later date.
- B. If it should happen to rain tomorrow, then the game is going to be postponed.
- C. If it rains tomorrow, the game will be postponed.
- D. Should rain occur tomorrow, a postponement of the game will take place.

35. Choose the option that best corrects the runon: "The store was crowded we decided to come back later."

- A. The store was crowded, we decided to come back later.
- B. The store was crowded, so we decided to come back later.
- C. The store was crowded we decided, to come back later.
- D. The store, was crowded we decided to come back later.

OpenResponse Writing Tasks

36. Short Writing Task — Paragraph

Some people believe that students learn more from working in groups, while others believe they learn more working alone. Write a paragraph (6–8 sentences) explaining which you think is more effective. Support your opinion with specific reasons or examples.



37. Long OpenResponse Task — Opinion Piece

Your town is deciding whether to spend its limited budget on building a new public library or upgrading its community sports facilities. Write a multiparagraph response (about 3–5 paragraphs) stating which option you support and why. Support your position with clear reasons and specific examples, and organize your ideas with an introduction, body, and conclusion.



That completes Questions 1–37 for Practice Exam 27. Each selected-response item (Q1–35) was written so its correct answer matches the preverified key; Q36–37 are the two open-response writing tasks per the series structure.

Note: this exam introduces a paired-text element (Selections 2 and 3 argue opposite sides of the same issue) with crosstext comparison questions (Q13–14) — a format not used in Exams 20–22, reinforcing the distinctness requirement.

Answer Key with Explanations

Reading Selection 1 — RealLife Narrative

1. A — Unease breaking through ease. The "small alarm behind my comfort" is a figurative stir of worry beginning to disturb the narrator's relaxed state, not a literal alarm, fear, or earbud sound.

2. C — Doubted his eyes rather than admit a mistake. The narrator says he was "more willing to doubt my own eyes than to admit I had made a mistake," keeping his seat through unfamiliar stops. He wasn't waiting for a friend, asleep, or exploring on purpose.

3. A — Comfortable → uneasy → grateful. He begins at ease, grows uneasy as the route turns strange, and ends unexpectedly grateful for what the detour showed him. The other sequences misread the arc.

4. A — Showed him beauty he'd have missed. He says he wouldn't have traded the trip back, having seen the mural, bakery, and old man — the wrong bus revealed beauty he'd otherwise never have seen, not a lesson about bus numbers or wasted time.

5. B — Unplanned experiences can reveal unexpected value. The whole narrative supports the idea that an accidental detour can be worthwhile. It does not endorse acting on instinct, favouring routine, or treating mistakes as pure loss.

Reading Selection 2 — Persuasive Paragraph

6. B — Plant gardens; they teach cheaply. The writer's central claim is that schools should plant gardens because they teach valuable lessons at low cost. The other options invert or distort the argument.

7. D — Gardens teach real lessons a worksheet can't. The writer answers the "distraction" objection by arguing a garden teaches patience, responsibility, and science that worksheets cannot, not by conceding or changing topic.

8. B — Research on willingness to try vegetables. The writer cites research that children who grow vegetables are far more willing to try them. No personal story, expert quote, or cost comparison supports that particular claim.

9. C — Confident and persuasive. The forceful language ("Every school should," "Best of all," "simply missing") shows a confident, persuasive tone in favour of gardens, not uncertainty, neutrality, or anger.

Reading Selection 3 — Persuasive Letter

10. C — Gardens need ongoing care schools may not plan for. The letter's main worry is year-round maintenance, especially over summer when no one tends the garden. It does not deny gardens' lessons or call them too costly outright.

11. D — The original article's "simple and cheap" view. "Pretending they run themselves" criticizes the first article's claim that gardens are easy and inexpensive, not students, seed costs, or reluctant teachers.

12. C — Supports gardens but insists on planning. The writer states plainly, "I do not oppose gardens. I oppose pretending they run themselves," favouring gardens with realistic planning. He is not an outright opponent.

13. A — Challenges the "cheap and effortless" claim. Compared with the first paragraph, the letter pushes back on the idea that gardens are cheap and run themselves, stressing hidden upkeep. It neither fully agrees nor argues gardens teach nothing.

14. A — Understanding the longterm care required. A wouldbe gardener would value the letter most for its realistic warning about ongoing maintenance. The eatinghabits research and cost claims come from the other text, not this one.

Reading Selection 4 — Dialogue

15. B — Submit now rather than wait. Priya urges Wes to submit immediately ("Submit it now, Wes"), not to keep polishing first, withdraw, or blame the website.

16. A — Priya's reminder of past failures. Wes's "I work best under pressure" is undercut by Priya pointing out that things have gone wrong before — the crashed website, missed scholarship and contest. He doesn't admit he never works under pressure.

17. D — He knows the excuse is weak. Saying it "(quietly)" after Priya corrects him signals he recognizes "the website's fault" is a flimsy excuse, not confidence, secrecy, or anger.

18. B — Keep improving after safe submission. Priya's fix is to submit now and polish during the remaining hours, removing the risk of a lastminute failure. It doesn't involve withdrawing, proving his claim, or shifting blame.

19. B — Priya knows Wes's habits. Priya predicts his pattern ("You say that every time") and recalls specific past incidents, showing she knows him well — not strangers, a teacherstudent pair, or people who rarely talk.

Reading Selection 5 — Graphic Text

20. D — Driving is faster (18 vs 24 min). The chart shows driving at 18 minutes against cycling's 24, making speed driving's advantage. Zero emissions, zero cost, and exercise all belong to cycling.

21. C — About \$2,250. The yearly cost bar shows driving at \$2,250 and cycling at \$0, so cycling saves about \$2,250 a year — not \$9 (one day) or \$250 (the number of workdays).

22. B — A realistic qualification of the cycling time. The footer notes cycling time assumes flat, dry conditions and to add time in winter — a realistic caveat, not a claim that cycling is impossible or that driving always wins.

23. D — Cheaper, cleaner, adds exercise, but slower. Across all rows, cycling wins on cost, emissions, and exercise while losing on speed — the balanced reading. The other options overstate one side or claim equal cost.

24. C — Speed, cost, and health tradeoffs. The chart is most useful for weighing the time, cost, and exercise tradeoffs between the two options, not bike repair, driving routes, or car models.

Grammar, Conventions & Sentence Skills

25. B — "Neither" is singular, so "seems" is correct, and the object pronoun "me" follows "to." Option A misuses "I," C drops the verb, and D adds the reflexive "myself" incorrectly.

26. C — Subordinating with "When" makes one correct complex sentence. Option A is a runon, B is a comma splice, and D misuses a semicolon with "and."

27. D — The series "biology, chemistry, and physics" takes commas between items with the serial comma before "and." The other options drop needed commas or insert stray ones.

28. B — "Allowed" (permitted) and "boundary" are both correct. "Aloud" means spoken out loud, and "boundery" is a misspelling.

29. A — With only two routes, the comparative "more scenic" is correct, and "the more" fits a two-item comparison. The superlatives "most" and "scenicest" and the phrase "than any" all misapply to two items.

30. B — "Reports" is plural, so "were finished" agrees, and the comma before "so" correctly joins the clauses. A uses "was," and C and D misplace the comma.

31. A — Rewriting as "She served the children sandwiches on paper plates" makes clear the plates hold the sandwiches, not the children. The other versions keep or worsen the illogical placement.

32. A — "Unanimous" is the correct spelling. "Unanimus," "unaminous," and "unanamous" are all misspellings.

33. C — A semicolon correctly joins two independent clauses ("The train was late" / "we waited inside the warm station"). A and B wrongly precede a dependent clause or "and," and D breaks the subject from its verb.

34. C — "If it rains tomorrow, the game will be postponed" states the condition plainly. The others pad it with "in the event that," "should happen to," or passive wording.

35. B — Adding ", so" joins the two independent clauses correctly, showing cause and effect. A is a comma splice, and C and D misplace commas without fixing the runon.

OpenResponse Model Responses & Rubric Notes

36. Short Writing Task — Model Response

In my view, students usually learn more from working in groups than from working alone. When students explain an idea to one another, they have to understand it well enough to put it into their own words, which deepens their own learning. A group also brings together different strengths: one student

may grasp the math while another is better at writing up the results, so the work improves and everyone picks up skills they lacked. Of course, group work can fail when one person does everything while others coast, and that is a real weakness. Even so, learning to divide tasks and resolve disagreements is itself a valuable skill that solo work never teaches. Most jobs in the real world depend on teamwork, not solitary effort. For these reasons, I believe group learning offers more than working alone.

Rubric note (EQAOaligned): Topic Development — clear opinion sustained with specific, relevant reasons (explaining deepens learning, complementary strengths, realworld relevance) and a counterpoint that is addressed. Organization — controlling idea, logical flow, concluding sentence. Conventions — varied sentence structure, accurate grammar and spelling. Upperlevel performance. A midlevel response would state an opinion with thinner support; a lowerlevel response would drift off topic or rely on vague claims.

37. Long OpenResponse — Model Response

Faced with a choice between a new public library and upgraded sports facilities, my town should invest in the library. While both serve the community, a library reaches a wider range of people and offers benefits that last a lifetime.

A library serves residents of every age and background. Young children attend story times, students use it to study and access the internet, job seekers print résumés, and older adults borrow books and join programs. Sports facilities, by contrast, mainly serve those already able and inclined to play, and many of their offerings require a level of fitness or interest that not everyone shares. A library welcomes everyone through the same door.

A library also addresses needs that go beyond recreation. For families who cannot afford books or reliable internet at home, it provides free access to information and technology that are now essential for school and work. In this way a library helps close gaps in opportunity, doing more than entertain — it helps people improve their lives.

Supporters of sports upgrades will argue, fairly, that physical activity is vital to health and that better facilities encourage exercise. This is true, and it matters. However, a town can promote fitness in less costly ways, such as maintaining public parks and walking trails, while the services a library provides are much harder to replace.

For these reasons, I believe the town should build the new library. It serves people of all ages, expands access to learning and technology, and meets needs that nothing else in the community can. A library is an investment not only in recreation but in the future of every resident.

Rubric note (EQAOaligned): **Topic Development** — clear position stated in the introduction and maintained throughout, developed with distinct reasons (broad access, closing opportunity gaps) and a counterargument that is acknowledged and answered. **Organization** — strong introduction, separate body paragraphs each with one main idea, and a conclusion that reinforces the position without simply repeating it. **Conventions** — sentence variety, accurate punctuation, appropriate vocabulary. Upperlevel model. A midlevel response would take a position but develop fewer reasons with looser organization; a lowerlevel response would list unsupported assertions or stray from the prompt.