

PRACTICE EXAM 28: OSSLT SIMULATION

(37 QUESTIONS)

Session A

Reading Selection: Crafted Reflective/Persuasive Text

Read the following text and answer questions 1–7.

Throw away your todo list. I mean it. The one with forty items, the one that makes you feel like a failure by noon. Throw it away, and write a new one with exactly three things on it.

I spent years as a slave to the long list. Each morning I would write down everything I might possibly do, and each evening I would stare at the dozen tasks still undone, feeling that I had lost. The list was not a tool. It was a judge, and it always ruled against me. The more I wrote, the less I seemed to finish, because a list of forty things tells you nothing about what matters. It only tells you that you are behind.

Then a colleague taught me her method: three things. Each morning, choose the three tasks that would make the day a success if you did nothing else. Write only those. Everything else can wait, or live on a separate "someday" page where it cannot shame you.

The change was startling. With three clear targets, I finished them — and often more. The short list did not lower my ambition; it focused it. It turned out I had never lacked the will to work. I had only lacked the clarity to know where to aim it.

So throw away the list of forty. Keep the list of three. You will be amazed how much a person can do once they stop measuring themselves against everything they did not.

1. What is the author's main purpose in this text?

- A. To persuade readers to replace long todo lists with short ones
- B. To explain how to organize a calendar efficiently

- C. To describe a typical day at the author's workplace
- D. To compare different brands of planning notebooks

2. Why does the author begin with the short command "Throw away your todo list"?

- A. To confuse the reader about the topic
- B. To list the steps of a morning routine
- C. To provide a definition of a todo list
- D. To grab attention with a bold, direct opening

3. What does the author mean by calling the long list "a judge"?

- A. The list helped the author make fair decisions
- B. The list made the author feel constantly judged and failing
- C. The list was written by someone in authority
- D. The list decided which tasks were most important

4. According to the author, why did a list of forty things not help?

- A. It was too short to include important tasks
- B. It took too long to write each morning
- C. The author lost the list almost every day
- D. It showed only how far behind the author was

5. What effect does the author say the threeitem list had?

- A. It lowered the author's ambition over time
- B. It made the author abandon work entirely

- C. It focused the author's effort and increased output
- D. It created even more stress than the long list

6. How does the author mainly support the argument?

- A. By citing scientific studies on productivity
- B. By sharing a personal experience of change
- C. By quoting several productivity experts
- D. By listing statistics about wasted time

7. Why does the author repeat "throw away the list of forty. Keep the list of three" near the end?

- A. To restate the central advice for emphasis
- B. To introduce a completely new idea
- C. To admit the method does not really work
- D. To describe the colleague's daily routine

Reading Selection: Information Paragraph

Read the following paragraph and answer questions 8–11.

Why do writers of suspense stories so often end a chapter in the middle of the action? The technique, known as a "cliffhanger," is no accident. By breaking off at a moment of tension — a door creaking open, a phone ringing in an empty house — the writer leaves a question unanswered in the reader's mind. That unanswered question creates a small, almost physical discomfort, an itch the reader is driven to scratch by turning the page. The cliffhanger works precisely because human beings dislike loose ends; we are wired to seek resolution. A skilled writer uses this instinct deliberately, ending not where the action rests, but where it strains hardest, ensuring the reader cannot easily put the book down.

8. What is the main idea of this paragraph?

- A. Suspense stories are more popular than other genres
- B. Cliffhangers always appear at the start of a chapter
- C. Writers should avoid ending chapters with tension
- D. Cliffhangers are a deliberate technique that keeps readers reading

9. According to the paragraph, what does a cliffhanger leave in the reader's mind?

- A. A clear summary of the chapter's events
- B. An unanswered question that creates discomfort
- C. A feeling of complete satisfaction
- D. A list of the story's main characters

10. Why does the cliffhanger work, according to the paragraph?

- A. Because readers prefer long, detailed chapters
- B. Because writers are required to use the technique
- C. Because human beings dislike loose ends and seek resolution
- D. Because suspense stories have no other way to end

11. The paragraph says a skilled writer ends a chapter "where it strains hardest" in order to

- A. give the reader a natural place to stop reading
- B. make it difficult for the reader to put the book down
- C. summarize what has happened so far
- D. introduce a brandnew character

Reading Selection: News Report

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

Author's Surprise Visit Inspires Young Writers

Students at Westwood Secondary School got an unexpected thrill last Thursday when awardwinning novelist Grace Otieno arrived unannounced to lead a writing workshop. The visit, arranged secretly by the school's English department, was kept hidden from students until Otieno walked into the auditorium.

Otieno, whose novels are studied in classrooms across the country, spent two hours sharing her writing process and answering questions. "I told them the secret no one tells young writers," she said. "Your first draft is supposed to be bad. The work is in the rewriting." Students described the advice as freeing.

The English department said it had planned the surprise for months, hoping to show students that authors are real, working people rather than distant names on book covers. Several students said the visit made them want to take their own writing more seriously.

Otieno has invited the school to send her their best short stories, which she has offered to read personally.

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

- A. Grace Otieno's novels are studied across the country
- B. The English department plans many events each year
- C. Students at the school enjoy writing short stories
- D. A surprise author visit inspired students at the school

13. Why was the visit kept secret from students?

- A. The department planned it as a surprise for months
- B. Otieno did not want any publicity for the event
- C. The students had misbehaved earlier that week
- D. The auditorium was being used for another purpose

14. What advice did Otieno give the young writers?

- A. That writing should always come easily
- B. That they should never rewrite their work
- C. That a first draft is supposed to be bad
- D. That only some people can become writers

15. Why did the English department arrange the visit?

- A. To raise money for new library books
- B. To show students that authors are real, working people
- C. To replace a regular English lesson that day
- D. To advertise Otieno's newest novel

16. How did students react to Otieno's advice?

- A. They described it as freeing
- B. They found it discouraging and harsh
- C. They said they had heard it before
- D. They disagreed with most of it

17. What did Otieno offer to do after the visit?

- A. Return to teach a full writing course
- B. Read the students' best short stories personally
- C. Donate copies of her novels to the school
- D. Help the school hire a writing teacher

Reading Selection: Dialogue

Read the following dialogue and answer questions 18–22.

Editor: Your article opens with three paragraphs of background before anything happens. Why?

Writer: I wanted readers to understand the context first.

Editor: And how many of them will still be reading by paragraph four?

Writer: ...Fewer than I'd like.

Editor: Right. Look at where your story actually catches fire — the moment the factory workers walked out. That's your opening. Start there. Hook them, then feed them the background once they care.

Writer: But they won't understand the walkout without the context.

Editor: They'll tolerate a paragraph of context after they're hooked. They won't tolerate three before. The order isn't about logic — it's about attention. You earn the right to explain by first making them want to know.

Writer: So the most dramatic moment goes first, even if it happened last.

Editor: Now you're thinking like a writer instead of a notetaker.

18. What problem does the editor identify in the writer's article?

- A. It opens with too much background before the action
- B. It contains too many spelling and grammar errors
- C. It is far too short to cover the topic
- D. It includes no background information at all

19. Where does the editor suggest the article should begin?

- A. With a definition of the key terms
- B. With three paragraphs of context
- C. At the dramatic moment of the walkout
- D. At the very end of the story's events

20. What does the editor mean by "you earn the right to explain by first making them want to know"?

- A. Writers should never include background information
- B. Readers should pay to read the full article
- C. Capturing interest first makes readers willing to read context
- D. Explaining everything first is always the best approach

21. According to the editor, the order of an article is mainly about

- A. following strict chronological logic
- B. holding the reader's attention
- C. including as much detail as possible
- D. matching the length of other articles

22. What does the writer come to understand by the end?

- A. The most dramatic moment can open the article, even if it happened last
- B. Background information should always come first
- C. Articles should be arranged in the order events occurred
- D. The article should be made much longer overall

Session B

Writing — Conventions and Sentence Skills (Sentence Variety and Rhetorical Control)

Answer questions 23–35.

23. Which short sentence would create the most emphasis after a long, detailed one?

- A. The plan, which had taken months of careful preparation and the work of dozens of people, finally came together on the morning of the launch. It worked.
- B. The plan, which had taken months of careful preparation, finally came together, and it worked out well in the end for everyone involved.
- C. The plan took months and lots of people worked on it and then it came together and it worked and everyone was happy about it.
- D. The plan worked, which was good, after months of careful preparation and the work of dozens of people who helped.

24. Which revision combines choppy sentences into one varied, flowing sentence? "The storm hit. The power went out. We lit candles. We waited."

- A. The storm hit and the power went out and we lit candles and waited
- B. The storm hit. And the power went out. So we lit candles and waited.
- C. The storm hit, the power went out, we lit candles, we waited then
- D. When the storm hit and the power went out, we lit candles and waited

25. Which sentence uses a deliberate short sentence for dramatic effect?

- A. After everything that had happened over the long and difficult year, and despite all the doubts that everyone had carried, somehow they had won.
- B. They had won, after everything, despite the doubts and the difficulties of the long hard year that everyone had somehow managed to endure.
- C. It had been a long and difficult year, full of doubts and hardships, but in the end, after all of it, the team had finally won the game.
- D. After a long, difficult year full of doubt, they faced the final game. They won.

26. Which sentence shows effective variety in sentence beginnings?

- A. The runner trained daily. The runner ate carefully. The runner slept well.
- B. Determined to win, the runner trained daily, ate carefully, and slept well.
- C. The runner trained daily and the runner ate carefully and slept well.
- D. The runner, the runner trained, the runner ate, the runner slept well.

27. Which passage best varies sentence length for effect?

- A. The negotiations dragged on for hours as both sides argued every point. Then, suddenly, an agreement. Relief filled the room.

B. The negotiations dragged on for hours. Both sides argued. An agreement came. Relief filled the room after that happened.

C. The negotiations dragged on for hours and both sides argued every single point and then an agreement came and relief filled the room.

D. The negotiations, which dragged on, with both sides arguing, then an agreement, and relief, filled the room for everyone.

28. Which sentence uses a question deliberately for rhetorical effect?

A. The committee met and discussed the budget for several hours that day.

B. The report listed three options that the council would need to consider.

C. The survey gathered responses from five hundred local participants.

D. Could anyone really expect a different result after such careful planning?

29. Which revision turns a string of simple sentences into a single, wellstructured sentence? "The bridge was old. It was rusted. Engineers closed it. They feared a collapse."

A. The bridge was old and rusted and engineers closed it and feared collapse

B. The bridge was old, it was rusted, engineers closed it, they feared a collapse

C. The bridge was old. Rusted. Closed by engineers. They feared collapse then.

D. Fearing a collapse, engineers closed the old, rusted bridge

30. Which sentence uses repetition deliberately for emphasis?

A. We will not quit. We will not falter. We will not fail.

B. We will not quit and we won't falter and we also will not fail at all.

C. We will not quit, falter, or fail, which is our plan going forward now.

D. Quitting, faltering, failing — we will not do these things in the future.

31. Which passage best uses a short sentence to land a key point?

- A. There were many reasons to be cautious, and the team weighed each of them carefully before they made what turned out to be the right decision in the end.
- B. The team weighed many reasons to be cautious, carefully considering each one, and eventually arrived at a decision that proved to be correct over time.
- C. Many reasons for caution existed, and the team, after weighing them all with great care, finally reached a decision that was, in hindsight, correct.
- D. The team weighed every reason for caution. Carefully. Then they decided. They were right.

32. Which sentence combines ideas with varied structure rather than simple addition?

- A. The festival was popular and it was crowded and it lasted all weekend
- B. The festival was popular and crowded and it lasted all weekend long
- C. Wildly popular, the festival drew crowds all weekend long
- D. The festival was popular, the festival was crowded, it lasted all weekend

33. Which revision improves a monotonous passage by varying sentence type? "The hikers reached the summit. They were tired. They were proud. They took photos."

- A. The hikers reached the summit and they were tired and proud and took photos
- B. The hikers reached the summit, they were tired, they were proud, they took photos
- C. Tired but proud, the hikers reached the summit and took photos
- D. Reaching the summit tired and proud the hikers then took some photos there

34. Which sentence uses a deliberate contrast in length for effect?

- A. The crowd waited through the long, slow countdown, every second stretching unbearably. Then the rocket rose.
- B. The crowd waited through the countdown and then the rocket rose into the sky above them all at last.
- C. The crowd waited a long time and the countdown was slow and finally the rocket rose up into the sky.

D. After the countdown, which was long and slow and unbearable, the rocket finally rose into the sky.

35. Which passage demonstrates the most effective rhetorical control?

A. The plan failed and we learned from it and we tried again and we succeeded the second time around eventually.

B. The plan failed. We learned. We tried again. And the second time, we succeeded.

C. After the plan failed, we learned from our mistakes and tried again, succeeding eventually on our second attempt.

D. The plan, having failed, taught us lessons, and trying again, we succeeded on our second attempt at it.

OpenResponse Writing Tasks

36. Short Writing Task



Headline: "Grade 11 Student Publishes First Novel"

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 a powerful story can change the way people think more effectively than facts and statistics. Others believe that facts and evidence are more convincing than any story.

In your opinion, is a story or are facts more effective at changing how people think? 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 with Explanations

1. A — The author's purpose is to persuade readers to replace long todo lists with a short threeitem list. The whole text argues for this change. The other options misstate the aim.
2. D — The blunt opening "Throw away your todo list" grabs attention with a bold, direct command. It hooks the reader immediately. The other options misread its function.
3. B — Calling the long list "a judge" means it made the author feel constantly judged and failing — "it always ruled against me." The metaphor conveys selfcondemnation. The other options read it too literally.
4. D — A list of forty "tells you nothing about what matters. It only tells you that you are behind." It showed how far behind the author was. The other options misstate the problem.
5. C — The threeitem list "did not lower my ambition; it focused it," increasing output. Focus, not reduced effort, was the effect. The other options reverse it.
6. B — The author supports the argument "by sharing a personal experience of change" — years on the long list, then the switch. Personal narrative is the method. The other options describe support the text does not use.
7. A — Repeating "throw away the list of forty. Keep the list of three" restates the central advice for emphasis. The repetition drives the point home. The other options misread it.

8. D — The paragraph's main idea is that cliffhangers are "no accident" — a deliberate technique that keeps readers reading. Craft, not coincidence, is the focus. The other options misstate it.

9. B — A cliffhanger "leaves a question unanswered in the reader's mind," creating "discomfort." That unanswered question is what it leaves. The other options contradict the text.

10. C — The cliffhanger works "because human beings dislike loose ends; we are wired to seek resolution." That instinct drives the pageturn. The other options misstate the reason.

11. B — Ending "where it strains hardest" ensures "the reader cannot easily put the book down." The strain keeps them reading. The other options reverse the intent.

12. D — The report centres on "a surprise author visit" that inspired students. That visit is the main idea. The other options are supporting details.

13. A — The visit was kept secret because the department "had planned the surprise for months." It was a deliberate surprise. The other options misstate the reason.

14. C — Otieno's advice was that "your first draft is supposed to be bad. The work is in the rewriting." Bad first drafts are normal. The other options misstate it.

15. B — The department arranged it "hoping to show students that authors are real, working people." That was the goal. The other options are not the stated purpose.

16. A — Students "described the advice as freeing." That was their reaction. The other options contradict the report.

17. B — Otieno "offered to read personally" the school's best short stories. That is what she offered. The other options are not mentioned.

18. A — The editor objects that the article "opens with three paragraphs of background before anything happens." Too much frontloaded context is the problem. The other options misstate it.

19. C — The editor says to start "at the moment the factory workers walked out" — the dramatic moment. That is the suggested opening. The other options contradict the advice.

20. C — "You earn the right to explain by first making them want to know" means capturing interest first makes readers willing to read the context. Hook, then explain. The other options misread it.

21. B — The editor says "the order isn't about logic — it's about attention." Holding attention governs the order. The other options misstate his point.

22. A — The writer realizes "the most dramatic moment goes first, even if it happened last." Impact, not chronology, sets the opening. The other options reverse this insight.

23. A — Following a long, detailed sentence with the two-word "It worked," option A uses the contrast in length for maximum emphasis. The abrupt short sentence lands hard. The other options bury the point in more words.

24. D — "When the storm hit and the power went out, we lit candles and waited" combines the choppy sentences into one varied, flowing sentence. The other options merely string clauses with "and" or commas. Subordination creates the flow.

25. D — "They won." after a long setup sentence uses a deliberate short sentence for dramatic effect. The brevity delivers the payoff. The other options bury the climax in a long sentence.

26. B — "Determined to win, the runner trained daily, ate carefully, and slept well" varies the opening with a participial phrase. The other options repeat "the runner" monotonously. The varied beginning reads better.

27. A — Option A varies length — a long sentence, then "Then, suddenly, an agreement," then a short one — for effect. The rhythm mirrors the shift. The other options are uniformly long or run-on.

28. D — "Could anyone really expect a different result?" uses a rhetorical question for effect. The question engages the reader. The other options are plain statements.

29. D — "Fearing a collapse, engineers closed the old, rusted bridge" combines the simple sentences into one wellstructured sentence with a participial opening. The other options string clauses or fragment them. The single sentence flows.

30. A — "We will not quit. We will not falter. We will not fail." uses deliberate repetition of structure for emphasis. The parallel repetition builds force. The other options flatten the effect.

31. D — Option D — "Carefully." and "They were right." as short sentences — uses brevity to land the key points. The clipped sentences add punch. The other options dilute the emphasis in long sentences.

32. C — "Wildly popular, the festival drew crowds all weekend long" combines ideas with a varied opening structure. The other options merely add clauses with "and" or commas. The participial phrase varies the structure.

33. C — "Tired but proud, the hikers reached the summit and took photos" varies the sentence type by opening with a phrase. The other options repeat the subject or run on. The varied structure breaks the monotony.

34. A — Option A contrasts a long, drawnout sentence with the short "Then the rocket rose" for effect. The length shift mirrors the release of tension. The other options keep an even, longer rhythm.

35. B — "The plan failed. We learned. We tried again. And the second time, we succeeded." uses short, building sentences for rhetorical control. The rhythm drives the arc. The other options blur the effect in longer constructions.

OpenResponse Writing Tasks — Model Responses and Scoring Notes

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

A Grade 11 student at Lakeshore Secondary School celebrated the launch of her first published novel at a library event this week, drawing classmates, teachers, and family to mark the achievement. Copies of the paperback were stacked beside a poster bearing the title and the young author's name, and a line formed as she signed copies for fellow students.

The student wrote the novel over two years, working in the evenings and on weekends before finding a small publisher willing to take a chance on a teenage writer. "I never thought anyone outside my family would read it," she said. "Seeing my classmates holding it feels unreal." Her English teacher said the accomplishment had inspired other students to take their own writing seriously.

Scoring notes (rubricaligned): A strong response leads with the 5 Ws (who: the Grade 11 student author; what: published and launched her first novel; when: this week; where: school library; why: to celebrate the achievement), 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)

A powerful story can change the way people think more effectively than facts and statistics alone. While facts are essential and should never be ignored, stories reach people emotionally, make ideas memorable, and move them to act in ways that numbers rarely do.

The strongest reason is that stories connect with people emotionally, and emotion drives change. A list of statistics about hardship can inform us, but it rarely moves us the way a single person's story does. For example, a statistic stating that thousands of families lack clean water may be quickly forgotten, while the story of one child walking miles each day to fetch it can stay with a listener for years. That emotional connection is what turns awareness into action.

A second reason is that stories make ideas memorable and easy to understand. People naturally think in narratives, remembering events with characters and meaning far better than abstract figures. A complicated issue, when told through the experience of one person, becomes clear and human in a way a chart cannot match. Long after the numbers fade, the story remains, carrying its message with it.

Some argue that facts and evidence are more convincing because they are objective and cannot be dismissed as one person's experience. This is a fair and important point — facts provide the proof that a story alone cannot, and a story without facts behind it can mislead. However, the most powerful persuasion combines the two: a story to make people care, and facts to show the problem is real and widespread. The story opens the door; the facts give the listener reason to walk through it.

For these reasons, a powerful story changes how people think more effectively than facts alone. Stories reach the heart and stay in the memory, and when paired with solid evidence, they become the most convincing tool of all for changing minds.

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 "story" side for illustration; an equally welldeveloped response arguing for facts would score just as highly.)