

Appropriate Language

Question 1 .

Andrea has been named valedictorian, and she will graduate at the top of her class. The principal of the school has asked Andrea to speak at the commencement ceremony.

Which of the following would be the **most** appropriate opening for her speech?

- ☐ **A.** Hey everybody, they elected me the smartest in the class, so I guess I had better say something smart. Can you believe we're finally free from this place?
- ☐ **B.** Hi. I'm only here 'cause the principal said I gotta say something. Can't believe they even let me graduate—I only took the easy classes so I could get good grades. Guess it worked.
- ☐ **C.** Graduating seniors, parents, teachers, and friends, thank you for coming. I speak to you as a proud member of the graduating class of 2008.
- ☐ **D.** Cool. I never got to use a microphone before. It kinda echoes. Bet y'all wish you were up here!

Question 2 .

Joe wants to sell his old 10-speed so he can buy a better bike. He does not have a lot of money to spend on advertising, so he decides to put up hand-made flyers around the neighborhood. Read the following flyers and answer the question.

Flyer A

I am interested in selling my 10-speed Schwinn boy's bicycle. I purchased it several years ago and have since worn out the brake pads slightly. These will need to be replaced. I hope to part with the bicycle for \$150. The number to call if you would like to view the item is 234-4758. Please ask to speak to Joe.

Flyer B

Hey, you've probably seen my blue Schwinn bike around. If you have, you know it's a beauty. Brake pads are shot, but it's an old bike, so that's no big news. \$150 is a sweet deal, and for that it can be yours. 234-4758 is the number to call. You can ask for Joe, but if you get my mom, you can talk to her about the bike, too. She knows the scoop.

Flyer C

Magnificent, sky-blue Schwinn boy's bike for sale. The brake pads are beginning to wear thin from years of pedaling, but that is to be expected, even for a bicycle of this caliber. Please be prepared to pay \$150 for this worthy specimen, should you find your interest is piqued. Please call 234-4758 and ask for Mr. Joseph Mason.

Flyer D

10-speed Schwinn boy's bike for sale. Needs new brake pads, but overall in good condition. Asking \$150. Call Joe at 234-4758 if interested.

Based on the information provided, which choice would be the **most** appropriate text for the flyer?

- ☐ A. flyer B
- ☐ B. flyer C
- ☐ C. flyer D
- ☐ D. flyer A

Question 3 .

Which of these contains language that is appropriate for a taped interview with an actor?

- ☐ **A.** Most people recognize you as a really neat guy who appears in really funny movies. I mean, every time I see one of your movies, I just can't stop laughing. Why isn't this movie funny, too?
- ☐ **B.** Audiences are familiar with your work in comedies, but your latest film is a heart-wrenching drama. Tell me why you broke away from comedies to work on this type of film?
- ☐ **C.** I hereby acknowledge your outstanding capacity to captivate the audience with a decidedly dramatic turn in your newest movie. What say you?
- ☐ **D.** I saw your latest movie, and it was crazy good. I think everyone in the audience was surprised with how sad it was. I bawled when the mother died. Did you?

Question 4 .

Keith is applying for an internship at an accounting firm. He is in the process of writing his résumé. Over the summer, he worked part-time at a movie theater. Read the following job descriptions and answer the question.

Job Description A

Prepared food in the concession stand. Responsibilities included following proper food-handling procedures and making sure the area was clean. Didn't really like this job because it was kind of dirty, but they promoted me to cashier at the box office, which was much better. Duties at the box office included accurately maintaining the cash drawer while serving customers in an efficient and courteous manner.

Job Description B

Worked there over the summer because my friends worked there too. Made popcorn and hotdogs at the concession stand. I really like popcorn. Had a great time because my friends and I got to goof off a lot when we weren't busy. Also, I got to go to as many free movies as I wanted.

Job Description C

Prepared food in the concession stand. Responsibilities included following proper food-handling procedures and making sure the area was clean. Promoted to cashier at the box office. Duties at the box office included accurately maintaining the cash drawer while serving customers in an efficient and courteous manner.

Job Description D

Executive chef of the concession stand. Enhanced the movie-going experience by preparing scrumptious treats for the guests. Promoted to finance manager of the box office. Was responsible for all of the money at the movie theater.

Which of the job descriptions would be **most** appropriate for his résumé?

- ☐ **A.** job description B
- ☐ **B.** job description D
- ☐ **C.** job description C
- ☐ **D.** job description A

Question 5 .

Mario is working for a TV station, and his boss has asked him to write a rejection letter to someone who applied for an announcer position but did not get the job. Read the following introductory paragraphs and answer the question.

Paragraph A

Thank you for interviewing for the announcer position at KRPM-TV. Mr. Ames was impressed with your skills and experience. However, he is seeking someone with an advanced degree, and he recommends that you look into a Masters in Broadcasting program at a local college or university. Once you have a Masters in the field, he would be happy to speak with you again. Good luck to you.

Paragraph B

Hi. Thanks for stopping by. Mr. Ames said to tell you to get some more education and then maybe apply again. Nice résumé, though—very spiffy. Wish mine looked like that. Anyway, it's too bad you didn't get the job. Better luck next time!

Paragraph C

Announcing has all the perks you could want in a broadcasting job. You sure picked the right field; I can tell you that from personal experience. And the staff here is great. They treat you like a real human being. I'm just an intern, but I get to sit in on staff meetings and watch tapings and everything. But I'm sorry to say, you didn't get the job. Mr. Ames says to say we're sorry. Hang in there, though.

Paragraph D

Yo, dude, Ames said "no can do." You ain't got the schooling to back you up. Yeah, you look great on paper, but he needs someone who knows what's shakin'. Know what I mean? So go back to school and get the degree. Then come back and check us out.

Which of the opening paragraphs exhibits the **most** appropriate style and tone for such a letter?

- ☐ A. paragraph B
- ☐ B. paragraph A
- ☐ C. paragraph D
- ☐ D. paragraph C

Question 6 .

Libby has begun to write a story for her 5-year-old sister, Abigail, who loves dragons. Read the following opening to the story and answer the question.

Once upon a time, there was a very lonely dragon named Oscar. Oscar lived in a big cave in the mountains. Every spring, when the weather got warm, he would come out of his cave to look for other dragons. He wanted to make friends with them so he wouldn't be so lonely.

How is the style of this story appropriate for its purpose?

- ☐ **A.** The story is factual and intended to inform her sister about dragons.
- ☐ **B.** The story will convince her sister that dragons are friendly creatures.
- ☐ **C.** This story will persuade Libby's sister that dragons are dangerous.
- ☐ **D.** The story is imaginative and is designed to entertain Libby's sister.

Question 7 .

Amy's family is about to leave for a month-long vacation. Before they leave, her mother asks her to write a note to the house sitter explaining which plants need to be watered, where to find the dog food, etc.

Which choice **best** explains the type of letter Amy should write?

- ☐ **A.** The letter should be persuasive and convincing.
- ☐ **B.** The letter should be entertaining and witty.
- ☐ **C.** The letter should be conversational and informative.
- ☐ **D.** The letter should be somber and serious.

Question 8 .

Dear Dr. Whitaker:

(1) My junior biology class read about your research on the importance of frogs to the ecosystem. (2) We would very much like you to come and talk to us about frogs and to answer the many questions we have on this interesting subject. (3) Me and my classmates chipped in and we got 50 bucks we can pay you—I know that's cheap, but it's all we got. (4) Do you think you could make it? (5) Anytime in October would be fine. (6) If you're willing to do this, please respond to the address below, and my teacher will arrange a date for your talk. (7) We hope you can come.

Sincerely,

Philip Wendt

Philip has written the above letter to a respected biologist on behalf of his biology class. Which choice **best** describes the overall contribution of Sentence 3 to the letter?

- ☐ A. The sentence is too informal for the tone of this letter.
- ☐ B. The sentence is acceptable because a student wrote it.
- ☐ C. The sentence is appropriate for such an informal letter.
- ☐ D. The sentence is authentic because that is how kids talk.

Question 9 .

Which passage would be **best** to include in a memo to a boss explaining progress on a project for work?

- ☐ **A.** So far, I have finished the storyboards and hired the actors working on the commercial. We're going to start shooting the commercial soon, so this project keeps rocking on. You will flip when you see the finished product.
- ☐ **B.** For two months, I have been making a commercial for our client. I have finished the plan and storyboard. I also have hired the actors and director. Next, I will monitor the production of the commercial. I am on schedule to meet the deadline.
- ☐ **C.** I've been working very, very hard, and I think my work so far really shows that. I have a lot of the planning stuff done, so now I just have to hang out with the director as he shoots the film. The commercial will be awesome when it is done.
- ☐ **D.** The project is on schedule. You should see what I've finished already. I have the plans made and the actors hired. Now, we will start the fun part—filming. It's been a blast, and I feel like I have learned a lot of new things.

Question 10 .

Gracie is writing an essay to apply for a summer internship at Sea World. Which sentence is **least** appropriate for her essay?

- ☐ **A.** Sea World has fostered a fun learning environment that has been a big influence on my desire to study and work with marine life.
- ☐ **B.** My friends and I think bottlenose dolphins are so cool, and I would love to hang out with them during my summer break from school.
- ☐ **C.** I have learned about dolphins through books, but I think the best learning tool would be through a summer internship at Sea World.
- ☐ **D.** Last year I participated in a two-week program that gave me an in-depth look at your company's animal conservation efforts.

Answers

1. C
2. C
3. B
4. C
5. B
6. D
7. C
8. A
9. B
10. B

Explanations

1. Considering the audience is very important when writing a speech. If the words are inappropriate or even insulting, it could embarrass the speaker or hurt his or her reputation. In this situation, Andrea has been awarded a scholastic honor and has been given the additional honor of speaking at graduation. The appropriate thing is to speak respectfully and to acknowledge those people who helped her to succeed.
2. The most appropriate text for the flyer uses short phrases that cover all the vital details in a conversational way. The conversational tone is important because the audience Joe wants to reach is other boys his age. If the language is too formal (such as "this worthy specimen"), kids like Joe will lose interest, and they will not call about the bike.
3. A televised interview with an actor is supposed to be more formal. Even though people are talking together in an interview, the interviewer should be careful to avoid using slang and inappropriate language. Conduct an interview with the same speech that you would use when speaking to an important adult.
4. A résumé should be professional in tone, and it should contain an accurate description of job duties that were performed. Do not exaggerate the description of a job to make it sound like the position was more important than it actually was. A person who prepares hotdogs and popcorn at a concession stand during a summer job does not deserve the title "executive chef." Offering opinions about what is liked and disliked about a previous job is inappropriate.
5. The most appropriate opening paragraph is one that uses a businesslike style and a relatively formal tone. No one likes to be turned down for a job, so the letter should be as tactful as possible. Notice that this letter does not use slang, and the grammar and punctuation are flawless. This is a letter between professionals in the field, so it should be polite and respectful.
6. Libby is writing a fictional story about a dragon for her sister. The reader can assume that the purpose of such a story is simply to entertain Abigail. Making the story imaginative, by inventing the character of Oscar the lonely dragon, will probably entertain and delight Libby's little sister.

7. The house sitter is probably doing Amy's family a favor by watching over their house and belongings while they are gone. Amy will want to be friendly and conversational in her note so the message is easily readable, but she also has genuine information to convey. She might first greet the person (Hi, Mrs. Greene) and then provide an ordered list (1. Please water the jade plant in the master bedroom 2. Jake's dog food is kept in the cupboard under the kitchen sink). Make sure to thank the sitter at the end of the note!
8. Sentence 3 may reflect how kids talk, but sloppy grammar is not appropriate for an invitation written on behalf of a class. The letter to the biologist should be formal and respectful and not use slang such as "50 bucks." It would be better if Philip said, "Our class has raised a small amount of money, which we hope will be sufficient for your fees."
9. A memo to a boss in a professional environment should contain formal language, not slang. Using words like "awesome," "rocking on," and "a blast" is not appropriate. The correct answer summarizes the overall project and lists what has been completed. It closes with a description of what will be done next.
10. An essay written for an internship opportunity should have formal language. In this case, Gracie should avoid using informal language such as "so cool" and "hang out." Instead she could have said, "I am greatly interested in learning more about bottlenose dolphins and would appreciate the opportunity to participate in your summer internship program."