County of Yuba

Spelling, Punctuation, and Grammar
Examination Study Guide

The following study guide will familiarize and assist you with preparing for a written examination containing multiple-choice spelling, punctuation and grammar items. The sample questions provided in this study guide are intended to give you an idea of the types of spelling, grammar and punctuation items you may encounter on the County examinations. However, it is important to note that actual test questions will vary in content and level of difficulty, depending on the job class being tested. For example the Office Assistant (an entry-level classification) examination will ask questions of a lower difficulty level than the Office Specialist (an advanced journey-level classification) examination.

To determine if the examination you are scheduled to take contains the content in this study guide, refer to the Invitation to Examination letter you have received. This letter will clearly state which subject areas are included on the examination. The Personnel Department recommends you also review the “Preparing for a Written Examination” guide available on our website for general tips and advice for preparing for and taking written examinations with Yuba County. If you have any questions or concerns regarding written examinations or the recruitment process, please contact the Personnel Department.

About this Examination Guide:

This guide contains a sample of the different types of questions that may be asked within this content area. None of the sample questions will be on the actual examination; however, the questions in this guide will be similar to the actual questions you will encounter. After each practice exam you will be given the correct answers to the questions and an explanation (if necessary) for why it is the best choice. You should carefully study each sample question to become familiar with questions of the same type on the examination.

How to Use this Examination Guide:

Read each question carefully. Then read all of the answer choices to each question before deciding which answer is correct. If you are having difficulty in determining the correct answer to a question, skip the question and come back to it later. It is to your advantage to answer each question even if you must guess. With a few exceptions (the exam proctor will be very clear if this is the case) there are no penalties for wrong answers. Your score is determined by the number of correct answers.

After you complete each practice examination you should review the solutions page to determine areas for improvement. You may take the practice exams multiple times until you are familiar and comfortable with the format and content of the exam.

Do not be discouraged if you are not able to answer some of the sample questions correctly. If you feel you need more practice than this study guide offers, the local library may have reference materials to help you or the Personnel department may be able to help you locate additional study guides on the Internet.
DIRECTIONS: The following items are designed to measure your ability to identify words that are spelled incorrectly. For each item, choose the one word which is misspelled.

1. A. useful  
B. census  
C. fundamental  
D. analysis

2. A. breakable  
B. retrieve  
C. dissapear  
D. concede

3. A. accidentaly  
B. pliable  
C. dismissal  
D. acknowledge

4. A. perceive  
B. carreer  
C. disrespect  
D. efface

5. A. facilility  
B. reimburse  
C. reference  
D. grateful

6. A. process  
B. plentiful  
C. advantagous  
D. similar

7. A. manageable  
B. circumstants  
C. uttering  
D. legality

8. A. seminars  
B. across  
C. repel  
D. guarrantee

9. A. pospone  
B. altogether  
C. syllabus  
D. digress

10. A. banana  
B. trafic  
C. religious  
D. sacred

11. A. practically  
B. adviese  
C. monastery  
D. indelible

12. A. fatigueuing  
B. reverence  
C. ceiling  
D. occupation

13. A. annonymous  
B. supervision  
C. regulations  
D. exaggerate

14. A. apperent  
B. duplicate  
C. calendar  
D. typical

15. A. accustomed  
B. occurrance  
C. management  
D. athletic
DIRECTIONS: The following sentences are designed to measure your knowledge of punctuation. For each item, select the sentence that contains an error in punctuation. Do not consider grammar, spelling or capitalization on these items.

1. A. About 20% of the divisions budget was spent on upgrading old computers and installed new software.
   B. The County owns and administers several transportation hubs.
   C. While the secretary was typing, the fire alarm went off and the building was evacuated.
   D. On May 5, 2007, the County released an updated policy.

2. A. The parts of speech most often used in telegrams are nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs.
   B. My mother’s name, as well as mine, was on the letter.
   C. A passport is an acceptable form of identification to: present for entrance to the testing facility.
   D. Rumor and popular opinion to the contrary notwithstanding, an oral board wants you to make the best appearance possible.

3. A. You are being interviewed for a new job, not your present one.
   B. Furthermore, you can usually spot a fake license from a mile away.
   C. They will be influenced by the degree of poise you display, the personal traits your show and the manner in which you respond.
   D. The summaries of my, Josephines’, and Marias’ comments are attached to this memo.

4. A. To apply for this job, you must have previous experience.
   B. If you complete the certificate program then you should have a basic understanding of contracting.
   C. These statements can be depended on, for their truth has been guaranteed by reliable persons.
   D. For more information about the new tax regulation, please contact the Assessor’s office.

5. A. If she takes one more sick day, she will have used up her time for the entire year.
   B. Neither one of them had a map, so it was easy for them to lose their way.
   C. When writing for business, it is standard practice to capitalize all nouns in the salutation.
   D. They nevertheless have decided to postpone the event until a more favorable venue is found.
Section 3

DIRECTIONS: The following sentences are designed to measure your knowledge of English grammar. For each question, select the sentence that is grammatically incorrect.

1. A. Detailed information regarding open recruitments are available on our website.
   B. Though the procedure applies to all departments, the Fire Department has modified it.
   C. According to the rules of the Department, the work of every employee is reviewed.
   D. In order to receive a pay increase each year, an employee must receive a satisfactory rating.

2. A. The personal trainer has informed us that swimming burns more calories overall than to walk.
   B. It is simple to say that cultural factors count more than financial considerations.
   C. A general principle of training with respect to people is that they learn more readily if they receive feedback.
   D. If information is not given to the learner, then improper or inappropriate job performance may be expected.

3. A. The employees regularly inspect buildings to ensure their compliance with County codes.
   B. Computer programming is taught in many colleges and business schools.
   C. The woman who issue the request extended the deadline.
   D. Learning will not take place without feedback.

4. A. The receptionist should answer courteously the questions of all callers.
   B. I think they will promote whoever has the best record.
   C. A report of this kind is not ordinarily presented in as much detail as this one is.
   D. The secretary ordered several plants because she knew it would enliven the workplace environment.

5. A. All managers should realize that it’s their responsibility to inform employees of new policies.
   B. Brochures describing the new facility was distributed to all who attended the ceremony.
   C. The department offers many programs that assist the elderly with their daily activities.
   D. Civilization moved ahead more rapidly when man freed himself of the shackles that restricted his search for the truth.

6. A. The police officer reminded the student to be more careful when crossing the street.
   B. They are not never going to implement the policy because of its expense.
   C. The errors in the typed report were so numerous that they could hardly be overlooked.
   D. The employees of the County circulate 5 million books and materials through 25 libraries and three bookmobiles.

7. A. It is best for you to be honest and admit that you do not know the answer.
   B. Do not switch sides in your reply merely to agree with your supervisor.
   C. His supervisor reminded him to do the yearly report frequently.
   D. The brown cow grazed lazily on the pasture.

8. A. In reviewing the typists’ work reports, the job analyst found records of unusual typing speeds.
   B. Brown & Company recently increased the salaries of all its employees.
   C. His publisher was as pleased as he with the success of the book.
   D. A operation as large as Microsoft has some of the largest systems in place, including one of the largest servers in the world.
Section 4

DIRECTIONS: The following items are designed to measure your knowledge of word usage. For each item, select the one sentence that uses a word incorrectly. Do not consider punctuation, spelling, or capitalization.

1. A. Because of changes, the responsibility for maintaining child support records is now theirs.
B. After a year of retirement, you’re former supervisor is returning to work as a contractor.
C. Employees may be granted leaves of absences without pay at the discretion of the Personnel Department.
D. A file of suggestions will eventually be set up at each departmental location.

2. A. He, to, is considering transferring departments in order to have a flexible schedule.
B. An organized program is better than a haphazard one.
C. Once a fact is accepted, it is better to act on it than to do nothing.
D. The suggestions of rank and file employees were being neglected by the supervisor.

3. A. Computers are used most often to handle payroll operations.
B. She preferred the first option least, despite its being less expensive than the other options.
C. Thousands of immunizations are given hear to protect residents against many diseases.
D. All men, women, and children are fully considered for benefits.

4. A. All employees should recognize that it is they’re responsibility to know and follow all policies.
B. They’re going to approve the project when they can obtain the funding.
C. The next group training session doesn’t begin until next month, and this time we’re planning to carpool.
D. Programmers in the industry must have professional training.

5. A. We are all ready to go.
B. A secondary inspection found the building to be in code compliance ware it previously was not.
C. It is wonderful to be all together to celebrate your birthday.
D. The fugitive eluded the police for a month.
Section 1
1. C
2. C
3. A
4. B
5. A
6. C
7. B
8. D
9. A
10. B
11. B
12. A
13. A
14. A
15. B

Section 2
1. A. The sentence should read “About 20% of the division’s budget was spent on upgrading old computers and installed new software.” “Division” requires possessive punctuation.
2. C. The sentence should read “A passport is an acceptable form of identification to present for entrance to the testing facility.” The “:” is unnecessary punctuation.
3. D. The sentence should read “The summaries of my, Josephine’s, and Maria’s comments are attached to this memo.” Individual possessiveness is accurately punctuated as “Josephine’s.”
4. B. The sentence should read “If you complete the certificate program, then you should have a basic understanding of contracting.” Use a comma to separate conditional clauses.
5. D. The sentence should read “They, nevertheless, have decided to postpone the event until a more favorable venue is found.” Use commas to set off expressions that interrupt the flow of the sentence.

Section 3
1. A. The sentence should read “Detailed information regarding open recruitments is available on our website. “Are” is the incorrect verb form for the singular subject of “information.”
2. A. The sentence should read “The personal trainer has informed us that swimming burns more calories overall than walking.” “To walk” is the wrong verb tense and is not consistent with “swimming.”
3. C. The sentence should read “The woman who issued the request extended the deadline.” “Issue” is an incorrect verb tense and should be “issued.”
4. D. The sentence should read “The secretary ordered several plants because she knew they would enliven the workplace.” “It” is the incorrect verb form for the plural subject of plants, and should be “they.”
5. B. The sentence should read “Brochures describing the new facility were distributed to all who attended the ceremony. “Was” is an incorrect verb form and does not match the plural subject of “brochures.”
6. B. The sentence should read” They are not ever going to implement the policy because of its expense.” “Not never” is a double negative.
7. C. The sentence should read “His supervisor frequently reminded him to do the yearly report.” “Frequently” is a modifier and should appear immediately before the verb it modifies.
8. D. The sentence should read “An operation as large as Microsoft has some of the largest systems in place, including one of the largest servers in the world. “A” is an incorrect article when it appears before a word beginning with a vowel.
Section 4

1. B. The sentence should read “After a year of retirement, your former supervisor is returning to work as a contractor.” “You’re” means “you are” and is not the possessive adjective required to modify “supervisor.”

2. A. The sentence should read “He, too, is considering transferring departments in order to have a flexible schedule.” “To” is a preparation denoting direction and should be “too” as in also.

3. C. The sentence should read “Thousands of immunizations are given here to protect residents against many diseases. “Hear” means to perceive, whereas “here” means in this place.

4. A. The sentence should read “All employees should recognize that it is their responsibility to know and follow all policies.” “They’re” is a contraction of “they are” and is not the possessive adjective appropriate to “employees.”

5. B. The sentence should read “A secondary inspection found the building to be in code compliance where it previously was not.” “Ware” means a type of merchandise and “where” refers to a previous way.
DIRECTIONS: The following items are designed to measure your ability to identify words that are spelled incorrectly. For each item, choose the one word which is misspelled.

1. A. conceivably  
   B. diagnossis  
   C. countenance  
   D. obliterate

2. A. competition  
   B. occasion  
   C. knowlege  
   D. deliberate

3. A. irresolute  
   B. flexible  
   C. counteract  
   D. guarante

4. A. verify  
   B. indolent  
   C. defered  
   D. encounter

5. A. feasable  
   B. respiration  
   C. vigilant  
   D. furtively

6. A. precedent  
   B. innate  
   C. scanty  
   D. incesant

7. A. unanimity  
   B. incidental  
   C. versatile  
   D. concilatory

8. A. occasion  
   B. sanctionned  
   C. predecessor  
   D. problematical

9. A. sequence  
   B. miniature  
   C. extemporaneous  
   D. extricate

10. A. annonymous  
    B. envelope  
    C. meager  
    D. resistance

11. A. surveying  
    B. figurative  
    C. rigid  
    D. roomate

12. A. schedule  
    B. scrawl  
    C. seclusion  
    D. sissors

13. A. casette  
    B. graceful  
    C. clinical  
    D. batch

14. A. mandate  
    B. flexable  
    C. laborer  
    D. despise

15. A. defiance  
    B. glacier  
    C. interrupted  
    D. bulletin
DIRECTIONS: The following sentences are designed to measure your knowledge of punctuation. For each item, select the sentence that contains an error in punctuation. Do not consider grammar, spelling or capitalization on these items.

1. A. I will be in meetings for the remainder of the day, so please return my call regarding the new hire before noon.
B. In order to expedite processing, timecards are due by tomorrow Wednesday, April 9.
C. As requested at the meeting, the final document will include a table of contents.
D. The supervisor’s memo promoting carpooling said that everyone in the division would have to ride together to all future meetings in the company van rather than in separate vehicles.

2. A. To be considered for a promotion, your supervisor must submit a performance evaluation for your previous six months.
B. In order to approve the requisition, a manager must review a written justification.
C. The residents were lucky; very few items were broken as a result of the earthquake.
D. We would appreciate your efforts to comply with the new policies in addition to the old one’s.

3. A. These positions were once traditionally held by men; but are becoming increasingly popular with women.
B. Annually serving over 100,000 consumers, the Consumer Affairs Department is the largest local consumer protection agency in the United States.
C. In modern times, the vast expansion of business and industry has greatly increased the need and opportunities for secretaries.
D. We are getting more use out of our goods and are making many new byproducts out of what was formerly thrown away.

4. A. Since the report lacked the needed information, it was of no use to him.
B. The book, Effective Communication in Organizations is on the desks of many department managers.
C. Bookkeeping gives the history of the business in a systematic manner; and accounting classifies, analyzes, and interprets the facts thus recorded.
D. A duplicating machine should be both efficient and economical.

5. A. Should the envelope be addressed to Commissioner Stevens and me.
B. What constitutes skill in any line of work is not always easy to determine; economy of time must be carefully distinguished from economy of energy.
C. If a student can write correctly, he can also write quickly.
D. Manufacturers can eliminate the risk of overproduction by advertising.
DIRECTIONS: The following sentences are designed to measure your knowledge of English grammar. For each question, select the sentence that is grammatically incorrect.

1. A. The pathologist examine the organ tissue for evidence of disease.
   B. She took an evening class in microeconomics.
   C. The Personnel Analyst is sending the list of eligible candidates to the Health and Human Services Department.
   D. She was unable to keep her appointment.

2. A. Mrs. Shipley has asked that the records be sent by regular mail and not by e-mail.
   B. The County of Los Angeles is the most populated county in the United States.
   C. We on the neighborhood committee was opposed to the building of the new mall.
   D. El Dorado County provides summer employment to 40 youths each year.

3. A. The supervisor decided that it would be more cost effective to train existing staff on the new technology than to hire an outside consultant.
   B. To who should this letter be addressed?
   C. The interview should last for approximately an hour.
   D. Employees can gain new experiences with the same employer by transferring between departments.

4. A. She had called the secretary because she had forgot what time the conference was to begin.
   B. The Children and Family Services Department handles the adoptions of thousands of children each year.
   C. No one requested to have their work hours changed.
   D. The poll-workers assembled early on Election Day to receive their instructions.

5. A. Employees are encouraged to volunteer and are given many opportunities to do so throughout the year.
   B. We are very pleased that you have chosen our organization from amongst many others.
   C. The team was so excited about the idea that it was implemented quick.
   D. The recruitment team has visited many local colleges and universities to find potential applicants for the position.

6. A. In celebration of our promotions, the division took him and I to lunch.
   B. Each of you is invited to attend the conference again next year.
   C. Beginners and experienced professionals who want a review of the basics should attend the training session tomorrow.
   D. Our office will be closed on Monday in celebration of the national holiday.

7. A. No sooner had the dividend been declared than the notices were prepared for mailing.
   B. The Registrar-Recorder Department issues over 50,000 marriage licenses annually.
   C. Less employees are choosing traditional work hours in favor of more flexible schedule options.
   D. His supervisor told him that he did well on his first public speaking attempt.

8. A. The Board of Supervisors sponsor many job fairs throughout the year.
   B. A report of this kind is not ordinarily presented in such detail as this one.
   C. The modern system of production unites various kinds of workers in a well organized body in which each has a definite place.
   D. Industrial accidents usually result from inadequate machinery.
DIRECTIONS: The following items are designed to measure your knowledge of word usage. For each item, select the one sentence that uses a word **incorrectly**. Do **not** consider punctuation, spelling, or capitalization.

1. A. He alluded to his past as a spy.
   B. They exchanged wedding vows at the altar of the church.
   C. It is not altogether his fault.
   D. Is it summer all ready?

2. A. She is ambivalent about her wedding dress.
   B. Please don’t alter your plans until we have the final schedule approved.
   C. They must chose whether to return the books or request to have them added to the department library.
   D. It didn’t rain any more this year than last year.

3. A. The house was apprised for $250,000.
   B. She paddled the canoe up the creek.
   C. The crew on the cruise was very attentive.
   D. The mother devised a plan to sneak vegetables into the dinner.

4. A. One can never be too discreet when working with confidential documents.
   B. She was confidant in her mathematical calculations.
   C. In order to ensure success, she practiced the speech over and over again.
   D. The supervisor was lax with the time card requirements.

5. A. The donkey led his owner past the fence.
   B. The fig was the perfect compliment to the salami and cheese sandwich.
   C. He enjoyed the scene very much and could sit for hours.
   D. Cheryl doesn't smoke anymore.
Practice Exam 2 – Solutions

Section 5
1. B
2. C
3. D
4. C
5. A
6. D
7. D
8. B
9. A
10. A
11. D
12. D
13. A
14. B
15. C

Section 6
1. B. The sentence should read “In order to expedite processing, timecards are due by tomorrow, Wednesday, April 9.” There should be a comma after the word “tomorrow” to separate “tomorrow” from the date as both are measurements of time.
2. D. The sentence should read “We would appreciate your efforts to comply with the new policies in addition to the old ones.” Possessive punctuation is not required as the word “ones” implies multiple policies and not ownership.
3. A. The sentence should read “These positions were once traditionally held by men, but are becoming increasingly popular with women.” The semi-colon should be a comma. Use a comma to separate two strong clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction--and, or, but, for, nor. You can omit the comma if the clauses are both short.
4. B. The sentence should read “The book, Effective Communication in Organizations, is on the desks of many department managers.” A comma should appear after the title of the book to separate it from the rest of the sentence. In essence, the title of the book is an independent clause and needs to be defined by commas on both sides.
5. A. The sentence should read “Should the envelope be addressed to Commissioner Stevens and me?” The sentence is a question and you should use a question mark after a direct question.

Section 7
1. A. The sentence should read “The pathologist examined [examines] the organ tissue for evidence of disease.” “Examine” is an incorrect verb tense.
2. C. The sentence should read “We on the neighborhood committee were opposed to the building of the new mall.” “Was” is an incorrect verb tense.
3. B. The sentence should read “To whom should this letter be addressed?” The correct introduction of the subject is “whom” as the answer would be “the letter should be addressed to him.” When the subject is him, use whom; when the subject is he, use who.
4. A. The sentence should read “She had called the secretary because she had forgotten what time the conference was to begin.” “Forgot” is a wrong verb form, when modified with “had” becomes “forgotten.”
5. C. The sentence should read “The team was so excited about the idea that it was implemented quickly.” “Quick” is an incorrect adverb. Generally, if a word answers the question how, it is an adverb. If it can have an -ly added to it, place it there.
6. A. The sentence should read “In celebration of our promotions, the division took him and me to lunch.” “I” is an incorrect object form. An easy way to remember the rule is that if you were to remove “him” from the sentence you would naturally use “me” and the same assignment applies despite the use of of multiple subjects in the sentence.
7. C. The sentence should read “Fewer employees are choosing traditional work hours in favor of more flexible schedule options.” “Less” is an adverb, while “fewer” is the corresponding adjective. Adjectives are words that describe nouns or pronouns. They may come before the word they describe or after the word they describe. Adverbs are words that modify everything but nouns and pronouns. They modify adjectives, verbs, and other adverbs. A word is an adverb if it answers how, when, or where.

8. A. The sentence should read “The Board of Supervisors sponsors many job fairs throughout the year.” “Sponsor” is an incorrect verb form as the object is “Board” and not “Supervisors.”

Section 8
1. D. The sentence should read “Is it summer already?” “All ready” means all are ready, whereas “already” refers to a measurement of time.

2. C. The sentence should read “They must choose whether to return the books or request to have them added to the department library.” “Chose” is past tense and “choose” is present tense and means to select from possibilities.

3. A. The sentence should read “The house was appraised for $250,000.” Apprise means to notify and appraise means to put a value on something.

4. B. The sentence should read “She was confident in her mathematical calculations.” To be confident is to be certain, where a confidant is someone you confide in.

5. B. The sentence should read “The fig was the perfect complement to the salami and cheese sandwich.” A compliment is a form of praise, where a complement is something that completes or makes perfect.