



The Betty East Tutoring Center at Victoria College

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TSI Writing Exam Skills

The TSI Writing Section is composed of two parts: a multiple-choice section and an essay question. Keep in mind that you can stop and finish your exam within two weeks and that the test is untimed.

Multiple-Choice Section:

Overview:

- Composed of passages of writing
- The sentences or sentence fragments are numbered
- 2 or 3 multiple choice questions follow each passage

Passages May Be:

Selections from textbooks, in the style of a popular magazine or letter to an editor, or in the style of a student essay.

This Sections Tests:

How well you can identify effective focus, organization, and development as well as the author's point of view and purpose. This section also identifies how well you recognize correct English grammar, usage, and mechanics.

Test Strategies:

As you read the passages you may notice obvious errors or inconsistencies. Make notes of these on your scratch paper. Do not over-analyze, simply write down what is obvious. Answer all the questions for one passage before moving on to the next one. If you do not know an answer, try using the process of eliminating the answers you know are incorrect before guessing. Do not leave any answers blank.

Essay Section:

Grading:

Your essay will be judged on its:

- Being on topic—have you addressed the topic and is your language appropriate for the audience?
- Clarity of purpose—is your main idea clearly expressed in your introduction?
- Organization—does each paragraph have a topic sentence and stay focused on that one idea?
- Development—are your points and ideas supported with specific details and examples?
- Grammar, usage, and mechanics—focus on this when you edit.

Test Strategies:

Read the topic assignment at least twice. Organize your thoughts with an outline before you begin writing. Do not let spelling or punctuation slow down your writing; go back and correct that later. Leave plenty of time after you write the essay to reread and edit it.