This TECEP® tests content covered in a one-semester course and focuses on the process of writing an effective research paper. Topics include how to gather and organize information, write in clear prose, and formally document sources in an appropriate format. (3 s.h.)

- Test format: 5 tasks described in the sample tasks section on the next page
- Passing score: 70% (70/100 points). Your grade will be reported as CR (credit) or NC (no credit).
- Time limit: 3 hours

You may use a dictionary and a writer’s handbook during the exam.

Topics on the test and their approximate distribution
Below are the topics covered by this exam. The percentages indicate how much of the test is made up of questions on that topic. Following each line are links to free and openly-licensed review materials that could help augment your prior knowledge on that topic. These materials have been selected by our subject matter experts and should supplement your understanding of the topics covered in this exam. Make sure, though, to compare what is covered in these materials to what will be covered on the exam—what is important is that you are knowledgeable on the exam topics as described below.

1. WRITING A RESEARCH PROPOSAL  (10%) 
   
   Key concepts: Writing a thesis statement; knowing your audience; addressing counter-arguments; using research to support your position and understanding how different types of research can be used in a research paper

   - Steps in Developing a Research Proposal
   - Organizing Research Plans
   - Purpose, Audience, Tone, and Content
   - Writing the Research Paper (Page 177 writing a proposal; page 180 sample proposal)
   - Consider Your Audience
   - Writing Documents for Classes/Proposals
   - Thesis Statements
   - Developing a Strong, Clear Thesis Statement
   - Finding and Evaluating Research Sources
   - Textual Research
   - Empirical Research

2. WRITING AN ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY  (35%) 
   
   Key concepts: Writing an introduction including an essay blueprint; writing a body that supports the thesis; acknowledging objections and limitations; writing a conclusion

   - Persuasion
   - Persuasive Essay
   - All Writing is Argumentative
   - Thesis Statements
   - “Writing the Research Paper” (Page 188 provides a good example of an argumentative researched essay with commentary and a good example of an MLA Works Cite Page.)
   - “Think Rhetorically” (Explanation of Rhetoric—Audience, Purpose, Context)
3. USING PROPER IN-TEXT CITATION  (15%)

*Key concepts:* Summarizing sources; quoting; paraphrasing; demonstrating understanding of the mechanics of in-text (parenthetical) citation

*A Guide to Reference and Documentation* (Pages 202 and 203 distinguishing paraphrase, summary, direct quotation; page 204 how to punctuate when using references; page 209 in-text citations; page 212 MLA formatting; page 216 APA formatting)

*In-text citation*

*Anatomy of a Well-Cited Paragraph*

*Paraphrasing: The Author’s Thoughts in your Words*

*Summarizing: The Author’s Main Ideas*

*Blending Source Material with Your Own Work*

4. CITING REFERENCE SOURCES  (15%)

*Key concepts:* Using either MLA or APA format; alphabetizing sources; citing print and online sources

- **Acknowledging Sources and Avoiding Plagiarism**
- **Citing Websites**
- **Style Guide Resources**
- **Formatting a “Works Cited” Page**

5. RECOGNIZING AND CORRECTING ERRORS  (25%)

*Key concepts:* Recognizing and correcting grammar, punctuation, and mechanical errors. Error types: noun/pronoun agreement, subject/verb agreement, colon/semicolon usage, comma usage, quotation mark usage, verb usage, verb tense, sentence fragment, fused sentence, punctuation, possessive, parallelism, spelling, capitalization

- **“Improving Your Style**
- **“Grammar and Mechanics”**
- **“Punctuation”**
- **“Punctuation, Mechanics, Capitalization, and Spelling”**
- **“Writing Basics: What Makes a Good Sentence?”**
- **“Sentence Building”**
- **“Help for English Language Learners”**  (All links on this page are useful for ESL students as well as for understanding common mistakes for all students)
**Resource Licensing Guide**

This is a comprehensive list of the materials used in this test description. We encourage you to explore these resources to make sure that you are familiar with multiple perspectives on the topics above. All of these resources are openly licensed, which means that they are free to be revised, remixed, reused, redistributed, and retained, so long as their unique terms are followed. You can learn more about open licensing [here](#).

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**Outcomes assessed on the test**

- Formulating the thesis for an essay or research paper
- Composing a short research proposal
- Composing effective introductory, body, and concluding paragraphs
- Demonstrating and understanding of college-level research and how to apply it
- Using quotations and paraphrased information to support the thesis in essays and research papers
- Compiling a Works Cited (MLA) or References (APA) list correctly
- Correcting common grammatical, punctuation, and mechanical errors
Study materials

You can prepare for this exam with a writer’s handbook, which you can use while testing. Use a current edition. Whatever handbook you select, make sure to familiarize yourself with the sections that cover the test topics.


Purdue OWL (Online Writing Lab)

Sample tasks

The specific tasks below are similar to the tasks in the test but will not be used in the test.

Task 1
Choose one of the topics and write a three-paragraph proposal for a research paper about the topic. The proposal should include a working thesis statement, supporting arguments, information about your potential audience, a plan for addressing counter arguments, and an explanation of how you would use research in the paper.

*Besides eating a healthy diet and exercising regularly, what are the most important habits for leading a healthy lifestyle?*

*Some people argue that countries with severe human rights violations should not receive aid from developed “leader” nations. Other people disagree. Defend a position on either side of this issue.*

Task 2
Write an argumentative essay of at least four paragraphs, using the same thesis you used in your research proposal. Be sure to include at least two supporting arguments and to address potential objections to your thesis. Your essay should be written in a formal, academic style and should include an introduction, body, and conclusion.

Task 3
Write a two-paragraph essay based on the two passages. In the first paragraph, summarize both of the passages. In the second paragraph, provide your own commentary on the topic. You must quote word for word at least two times, and you must paraphrase at least once. What is primarily being measured in this task is your ability to use in-text (parenthetical) citation.

Passage 1: The following passage is adapted from an article titled “The Nightmare of School Lunches” by Ann Cooper. The article was published in *Progressive* in 2010. The passage below is taken from page 25 of the original article.

*We’re in the throes of an obesity crisis, and diet-related illness is on the rise. The CDC has stated that of children born in the year 2000—those ten-year-old kids in fourth or fifth grade this year—one out of every three Caucasians and almost one out of every two African American and Hispanics will contract diabetes in their lifetime, most before they graduate high school.*
All because of what we feed them!

And what we do feed children in most schools is certainly not the beautiful food of the farmers' markets. In most schools, the fare is a mix of chicken nuggets, tater tots, corn dogs, and more depressing stuff (not really food) than I care to mention. Cheap, cheap food that costs less than $1 a day.

As parents and caregivers, we buy our kids the best. The best sneakers, certainly the best car seats, jeans that can cost $50–$100 a pair. We buy our kids swimming lessons, music lessons—I could go on and on.

But for some reason, as a nation we seem unwilling to invest more money into the National School Lunch Program. In bills to reauthorize the National School Lunch Act, both the Senate and the House are proposing an increase of a measly six cents for school lunch, and still reauthorization hasn't happened. You can't buy an apple at any of the farmers' markets for twenty-five cents, yet we seem resistant to increase our children's school lunches by even that much.

Our children's health is a priority. We want, we demand, that Congress increase funds for school meals.

Passage 2: The following passage was taken from an article titled “The Feud over Food: The Truth about the School Lunch Wars” by Stephane Johns. The article was published in District Administration in 2010. The passage below is taken from pages 21-22 of the original article.

A 2008 survey of middle- and high-school principals in 40 states conducted by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that the number of schools limiting carbonated soft drinks had increased to 63 percent from 38 percent in 2006.

While there has been progress, the survey also found large variations in access to junk food in public schools. Self-reported data from the CDC survey found that, in some states, such as Connecticut, Hawaii and Maine, students could not purchase candy and salty snacks at more than 80 percent of schools; however, this was true in only 18 percent of schools in Utah. To bridge that gap, some factions are fighting to increase prohibitions and block student access to less healthy snack foods and beverage options.

“We know that states with laws regulating the competitive food environment are doing well,” writes American Heart Association President Clyde Yancy. “Strong public policy initiatives could close the gap in areas that have yet to improve nutrition standards.”

On the other hand, some critics decry overarching policies, such as the recent New York City ban on school bake sales. According to various published news reports and blogs on the subject, many parents resent the intrusion the so-called “food police” have made into some classrooms across the nation where birthday cupcakes are now forbidden.

In truth, tackling obesity is more complicated than creating lists of foods that “thou shalt not eat.” No studies prove that children who eat more fruits and vegetables are thinner than classmates who eat only french fries and milkshakes. “Poor diet and physical inactivity may not be primary causes of the current obesity epidemic,” writes Tom Baranowski in the International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity (2009). Ethnicity, genetics and geography also play a role.
Task 4
Compile a four-source Works Cited page (MLA) or References list (APA) from the information below. Use your writer’s handbook to help with this task. If you are testing online, use the underscore function just before and after the words you want to italicize (e.g., _italicized words_).

The Works Cited page or References list should be alphabetized by the last names of the source authors.

*Life is a Rebellion* is a book of articles that examine the life and times of many of the radicals from the 1960’s. John Gray collected these articles and McMillan Publishers in New York City published the 2013 collection. The website for the publisher is mcmillanpub.com.

*Business Communication*’s current issue (May 2014) focuses on leadership with the first article, “Leading Around the World,” discussing the challenges of intercultural communication and the leadership issues that result. Following the “Letters to the Editor,” the article begins on page five and concludes on page twenty-six. This sixth volume, seventh issue of *Business Communication* has been recommended for an award from several professional societies.

If students use Google Scholar, they often can find books that have expired copyright dates. Adam Johnson’s 1905 book, *The Rules of Grammar*, is an example of such a book. This book, located entirely on the web, was originally printed by Newmann Printing in Boston, Massachusetts. Later editions were printed by Millhouse Printing in New York City.

Many web pages have no authors or dates of publication. These web pages are less reputable as sources because oftentimes, only the web address and web title appear in a References list. *Healthy Eating*, located at healthyeating.com is an example of this kind of web page.

Task 5
The paragraphs contain 10 common grammatical, punctuation, and mechanical errors. Correct the errors. If you are testing online, you will make the corrections in a textbox. If you are testing on paper, you will make the corrections in the test booklet.

Distance education classes for college begins as mail-order courses that had books and tests which were mailed to students. After completing the requirements students would mail there work to the college for grading. This form of education evolved into class lectures recorded audibly onto tapes that students played in their homes or workplaces. With the advent of video recordings, students received the class lecture in a film format and were able to watch lectures as well as hear it. The Internet, however, changed the approach of distance education so that students who do not have access to local colleges began taking college classes via Internet.

Since their inception, Internet classes have changed the face of American college education. In todays world, anyone is able to take college classes as long as they can access the Internet. Ivy League schools, state universities and local community colleges are targeting adult learners with free or for credit classes. Many companies are successfully marketing their learning platforms to these schools so that students are able to complete the following tasks from the comfort of their own homes; exams, writing assignments, discussion forums, and they can view videos about the subject matter of the lesson for that week.
Grading

The graders will be grading the following features of your work.

Task 1  Writing a research proposal

- Including a clear thesis statement and appropriate supporting arguments
- Identifying an appropriate audience
- Identifying potential counter arguments and a plan for addressing them
- Identifying what research is needed and how different types of research are used
- Grammar, punctuation, mechanics

Task 2  Writing an argumentative essay

- Including appropriate content in the introduction
- Presenting at least two logical supporting arguments
- Including potential objections to the thesis and arguments for/against objections
- Grammar, punctuation, mechanics

Task 3  Using proper in-text citation

- Writing a summary paragraph and a response paragraph
- Correctly quoting at least twice and paraphrasing at least once
- Grammar, punctuation, mechanics

Task 4  Citing reference sources

- Using a consistent citation style (APA or MLA)
- Creating complete citations
- Arranging entries in alphabetical order
- Grammar, punctuation, mechanics

Task 5  Recognizing and correcting errors

- Correcting 10 errors in two paragraphs that will be provided