



# **Qatar Secondary School Certificate English**

## **Practice Test**

**2009**

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### **Directions**

- The Practice Test for English has three sections: Listening, Reading, and Writing.
- The Listening section has multiple choice questions. You will listen to a passage, or a question, and then mark the correct answer.
- The Reading section has multiple choice questions and questions that require you to write a short written response.
- The Writing section contains a short writing exercise on one topic and a longer writing exercise, where you select one of two topics to write about.
- You may use these practice questions to prepare for the Secondary School Certificate Test in English.





## **S**ection 1—Listening

**Directions:** In this part of the test, you will hear a dialogue and then answer some questions based on what you heard.

First you have two minutes to read through the questions quickly so that you are familiar with them.

Now listen to the dialogue. You will hear it twice.

**1** Why does Mary look busy?

- A She is working at the bank.
- B She is studying finance.
- C She is filling out an application.
- D She is talking to her parents.

**2** How does Mary hope to spend the summer?

- A writing essays
- B celebrating with her friends
- C preparing for the university
- D being an intern at the bank

**3**

**What is one of the requirements for the internship?**

- A being a good student
- B a letter of recommendation
- C bringing a friend with you
- D understanding finance

**4**

**What is Sarah going to do right now?**

- A fill out an application
- B talk to her parents
- C write an essay
- D plan a summer vacation

**5**

**Why does Mary think the internship is a good opportunity?**

- A She can decide if she wants to study finance.
- B She can attend a celebration.
- C She can spend time with her friends.
- D She thinks it will please her parents.

**Directions:** In this section, you will listen to part of a dialogue. You will hear the dialogue twice. Choose the best response.

**6**

- A I'm sorry. I did not hear what the assignment was.
- B No, I haven't seen it.
- C Yes, I have to take it but not right now.

**7**

- A I didn't even try. I was too busy.
- B I don't have anything planned.
- C I am too busy to go on vacation this year.

**8**

- A Can I call you later? I need to finish my homework first.
- B Yes, I will let her know you are interested.
- C Maybe I can find out about it and write up a report.

9

- A Where do you live?
- B OK. I will talk to you later.
- C I am interested in hearing what you have to say.

10

- A Yes, but you will have to come to my house. I have to do the same homework.
- B I don't know when the library opens. I will find out for you.
- C No, I haven't seen it. Did you look in your bag?

11

- A You should get some rest if you are tired.
- B No, not really. It was just an idea.
- C If you don't call me, I will call you.

## Section 2—Reading

**Directions:** For questions 12 through 15, select the correct word to fill in the blank.

Communication **12**\_\_\_\_\_ humans involves the systematic use **13**\_\_\_\_\_ symbols, signs, or behaviors for **14**\_\_\_\_\_ purpose of exchanging information. The basic types of human communication **15**\_\_\_\_\_ body language, speech, and writing.

**12**      A among                      B to                      C for                      D inside

**13**      A by                      B through                      C to                      D of

**14**      A the                      B an                      C over                      D its

**15**      A is                      B will be                      C are                      D was

**Directions:** Read the article.  
Answer questions 16 through 18.

### **Speech Recognition Technology**

Modern speech recognition software allows humans to communicate directly with computers via the human voice. Speech recognition is based on mathematical calculations that determine statistical relationships between words. These calculations allow machines to predict probabilities that any group of words will appear one after another in speech.

Like many new technologies, the software to recognize speech did not work well at first. Today, however, the most advanced speech-recognition software can convert 160 spoken words into text per minute with an accuracy rate of 95 percent. This is approximately three times faster than most people can type. The accuracy rate can improve to 99 percent if the speaker trains the computer to understand his speech patterns. Speech recognition software can really be useful in many ways. It could help students be more efficient, for example, because they could dictate their papers to the computer instead of typing them.

Several companies now sell versions of speech-recognition software. Carnegie Mellon University has developed one that is free that can be downloaded from the Internet.

It is hard to predict what will happen in the future. The mathematical calculations that make speech-recognition software function today will continue to make this technology better. This may lead to future advances in the areas of artificial intelligence and robotics. Not only will computers be able to transcribe human speech in the future, they may one day understand what we say and engage in conversations.

**16** What is the main idea of this passage?

- A Speech recognition software has made significant advances.
- B Carnegie Mellon has done a lot of work in speech recognition software.
- C Mathematicians have solved many problems such as speech recognition.
- D Robotics and artificial intelligence will depend on speech recognition software.

**17** Which of these statements is a possibility rather than a fact?

- A Soon, computers may understand what we say.
- B Humans can communicate directly with computers via the human voice.
- C Speech recognition software is based on mathematical calculations.
- D Carnegie Mellon developed a free speech recognition tool.

**18** Read this sentence.

Computers will be able to transcribe human speech.

Transcribe means about the same thing as

- A invent
- B write down
- C talk about
- D describe

**Directions:**

A student wrote the first draft of an article on Isaac Newton.  
Read the article. Answer questions 19 through 23.

### Isaac Newton

<sup>(1)</sup>Isaac Newton was born into a family of farmers in the county of Lincolnshire, England, on January 4, 1643. <sup>(2)</sup>He \_\_\_\_\_ to attend and graduate from Cambridge University, where he began teaching in 1669.

<sup>(3)</sup>In 1687, Newton published his most famous book, *The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*. <sup>(4)</sup>The book describes Newton's three laws of motion and the principle of gravity.

<sup>(5)</sup>Contrary to what is commonly believed, a falling apple was not the inspiration for this work. <sup>(6)</sup>\_\_\_\_\_, Newton's insight was based on logical deductions that he made from studying previous scientific work.

<sup>(7)</sup>Newton's discoveries helped revolutionize science. <sup>(8)</sup>His theory of the universe \_\_\_\_\_ other scientists for more than 300 years.

<sup>(9)</sup>Toward the end of his life, Newton was knighted by Queen Anne. <sup>(10)</sup>Although Newton's work is the basis of modern engineering, he received royal recognition not for his scientific contributions, but for his work in reforming the monetary system of England.

**19**

**Which is the correct form of the verb to be used in sentence (2)?**

- A goes on
- B going on
- C went on
- D has gone on

**20**

**The word this in sentence (5) refers to**

- A Newton's book
- B the force of gravity
- C Newton's university
- D the falling apple

**21**

**Which word or phrase best fills in the blank in sentence (6)?**

- A Because of this
- B Since then
- C Therefore
- D Actually

22

Which verb form best completes sentence (8)?

- A will influence
- B influences
- C has influenced
- D is influencing

23

The writer could improve sentence (10) by replacing is with:

- A has
- B forms
- C communicates
- D performs

**Directions:** Read this article.  
Answer questions 24 and 25.

### The Importance of Discipline

There is an old saying that “practice makes perfect.” This saying is a useful one and can be applied to almost any situation. It is particularly true for high school students who are about to begin careers in the outside world.

“Why is that?” you may ask. You may know someone who is naturally skilled at a sport or in a particular subject. You may think that being athletic or intelligent is enough. However, this is not always true. If you examine the lives of top performers in any field, you will find that behind their success lies a great deal of hard work and persistence. Those people who are talented—but who don’t practice their skills—generally don’t make it very far.

Many studies have shown that students enter university and find themselves unprepared, and therefore overwhelmed, by the quantity and complexity of the work they are expected to do. If they have taken advantage of their high school years, and have learned to be persistent and hard-working, they will still find the university work hard, but not unmanageable.

24

**According to the author, what is the best preparation for university work?**

**Answer:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

25

**Based on the article, what are two things about the work in a university that might be overwhelming to high school students?**

**Answer:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Read this article.  
Answer questions 26 through 28.

### The Completed Assignment

- I Have you ever had one of those assignments that you just can't seem to get started? I sure have. Recently, my English class was assigned to write a short essay. I know that doesn't sound like a tough assignment. But, instead of having certain topics that we could write about, our teacher told us that we could write about anything we wanted. I had the whole world from which to choose, and somehow this made it seem impossible for me to make a decision. As the due date approached, I began asking my family and friends for help.
- II The first person I asked to help me was my father. We sat down together with a sheet of paper. He had me draw five circles. "Write down five of your favorite subjects in each of these circles," my father said. "Then, pick the two that you know the most about, draw five lines from those circles, and write down five things you like about these subjects." I wrote in a few circles but for some reason, I just couldn't think of what to put in the other circles. I thanked my father and told him that I would keep working on it.
- III In the meantime, I went to my mother and asked for her advice. "Take a notebook and a pencil to the mall and sit down at a coffee shop," she said. "As people are walking by, listen for funny things

that they say, and then write it down. This will give you some good ideas to write about.” The next day, after school, I tried it out. Sure enough, I wrote down some funny things, but still, none of it gave me any idea about what I should write for the assignment.

IV At this point, I had a paper with some circles and lines and a list of funny things people said. Surely, I could pull the two together and come up with something to write. I showed what I had to my friend at school. “I have a great idea for your essay,” he said. “Write about writing an essay! Talk about the different things you have tried and how each has led you to where you are now.” I told him he was a genius and he agreed.

V Finally, as you can now clearly see, I have written a short essay about a writing assignment. Thanks to my father, my mother, and my good friend, I not only completed the assignment, but I have new ways to help me find a topic for my next assignment. I thank them all for helping, and I thank you all for listening.

**Tell how the writer used other characters in the essay to make the story interesting. Use examples from the essay.**

**Answer:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

A student made an outline of the key points from this passage. Complete the outline below by filling in the blanks.

**I. Introduction**

**II. Father's advice**

**A. Drawing circles**

**B. Filling in circles**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. **Unable to complete all five**

**III. Mother's advice**

**A. Listening and making notes**

**B. Trying it out**

**IV. \_\_\_\_\_**

**A. Showing my friend what I had**

**B. Suggestion to write about what I had**

**V. Conclusion**

Retell the end of the story from the friend's perspective (point of view). The beginning has been done for you. Complete the story in 5–7 sentences.

Father:

"My friend came to me and asked for help with an assignment. I looked at what he had, . . .

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**Directions:** Choose ONE of the topics below to write about. You will be scored on:

- how well you develop your ideas (2 points)
- how well you organize your ideas (2 points)
- your grammar, spelling, and punctuation (2 points)

30

**Topic 1:**

**Situation**

Your school is considering adding new courses to the curriculum and has asked students to submit recommendations.

**Task**

Write a letter to the school administration, making a recommendation on one or two courses that would improve the school curriculum. Be as persuasive as you can, so that your recommendation will be accepted.

**Topic 2:**

**Situation**

The key elements for success in today's world, according to some studies, are:

- business and financial skills
- service to society
- decision-making skills
- computer literacy
- awareness of world problems

**Task**

Pick one of the elements above and write a short essay explaining why you think the element you chose is an important skill for success.

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A large rectangular area with a grey header bar at the top and 20 horizontal lines for writing below it. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across most of the width of the page.

A page with a grey header bar at the top. Below the header bar, there are 20 horizontal lines for writing, spaced evenly down the page.

A large rectangular area with a grey header bar at the top and 20 horizontal lines for writing below it. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across most of the width of the page.



