



**GLENDALE
COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

A MARICOPA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

GCC Test Prep for ACCUPLACER

Sample Questions WritePlacer

Frequently Asked Questions about the ACCUPLACER Placement Test

1. Who needs to take the ACCUPLACER Placement Test?

All new students seeking associates degrees or a transfer to a university are required to take placement tests in person at either GCC Main or North campus. New and current students may choose to retest to improve scores and placement. Effective March 2018, new student course placement will also take into consideration multiple measures, including high school transcripts/GPA and ACT.

2. Do I need an appointment to take the ACCUPLACER Placement Test?

No. The ACCUPLACER Placement Test is available on a walk-in basis. GCC Testing Services website lists operation hours available <http://www.gccaz.edu/testing/accuplacer-celsa>

3. What is required to take the ACCUPLACER Placement Test?

All students requesting to take the ACCUPLACER Placement Test are required to show a current photo identification and must have obtained an eight-digit student number starting with a number “3”.

4. Is the ACCUPLACER Placement Test a “Pass or Fail” Test?

The ACCUPLACER is not a pass or fail test; it simply assesses your knowledge level. Based on multiple measures, an academic advisor will help you select and enroll in the appropriate courses.

5. What kind of a test is the ACCUPLACER Placement Test?

The ACCUPLACER is an untimed computerized test. It takes about three hours to complete all three tests: Reading-20 - 25 questions, WritePlacer-essay, and Math-20 – 25 questions. Reading and Math are multiple choice. WritePlacer is an essay where students will get a topic prompt to write about. All tests are electronically scored, and students will get results immediately following test-taking. Scores will be uploaded to your MCCC Student Center. Some students may need to wait 24-48 hours for the WritePlacer score to upload. This does not mean the score will be low; instead the computer is just taking longer to completely score it.

6. What does it cost to take the ACCUPLACER?

It's FREE!

7. What if I am not satisfied with my ACCUPLACER Placement Test scores and course placement?

Students may retest after 24-hours (or later). Then, wait three months (or later) and retest a second time. Scores are valid for two years. Before retesting, students are encouraged to study and review test preparation materials. GCC Testing Services webpage includes many of these test preparation materials at <http://www.gccaz.edu/testing/accuplacer-celsa>

8. What if I have other questions about the ACCUPLACER Placement Test?

Email GCC Testing Services at testing.services@gccaz.edu or call 623.845.3058 and a Testing Services staff member will be glad to help you.

Introduction to WritePlacer

WritePlacer® assesses the writing skills of new college students. Test scores help colleges determine whether a student is ready for college-level coursework or would benefit from developmental instruction before taking credit-bearing courses.

Students taking WritePlacer are presented with a prompt and asked to write an essay of 300 to 600 words. A prompt consists of a short passage. Following the passage is an assignment that requires the student to focus on the issue addressed in the passage.

WritePlacer prompts are carefully designed to allow the student to respond quickly and in a variety of ways. They are free of technical or specific literary references and don't require specialized knowledge. The prompts are designed to stimulate critical thinking and are relevant to any number of fields and interests. Students will be asked to draw on a broad range of experiences, learning, and ideas to support their point of view on the issue in question. Scores on WritePlacer range from 1 to 8. An essay that is too short to be evaluated, written on a topic other than the one presented, or written in a language other than English will be given a score of zero.

Information for Students

WritePlacer gives you an opportunity to show how effectively you can develop and express your ideas in writing. You will first read a short passage and an assignment question that are focused on an important issue. You will then write an essay in which you develop your point of view on the issue. You should support your position with appropriate reasoning and examples. The position you take will not influence your score.

Your essay will be given a holistic score that represents how clearly and effectively you expressed your position. The following six characteristics of writing will be considered:

- **Purpose and Focus**—The extent to which you present information in a unified and coherent manner, clearly addressing the issue.
- **Organization and Structure**—The extent to which you order and connect ideas.
- **Development and Support**—The extent to which you develop and support ideas.
- **Sentence Variety and Style**—The extent to which you craft sentences and paragraphs demonstrating control of vocabulary, voice, and structure.
- **Mechanical Conventions**—The extent to which you express ideas using Standard Written English.
- **Critical Thinking**—The extent to which you communicate a point of view and demonstrate reasoned relationships among ideas.

Sample Prompt

Passage

Some people claim that each individual is solely responsible for what happens to him or her. But the claim that we ought to take absolute responsibility for the kinds of people we are and the kinds of lives we lead suggests that we have complete control over our lives. We do not. The circumstances of our lives can make it more or less impossible to make certain kinds of choices.

Adapted from Gordon D. Marino, "I Think You Should Be Responsible; I'm Not So Sure."

Assignment

Are we free to make our own decisions or are we limited in the choices we can make?

Plan and write a multiparagraph essay (300–600 words) in which you develop your point of view on the above question. Support your position with reasoning and examples taken from your reading, studies, experience, or observations.

Sample Essays

There are descriptions on the following pages of each of the eight WritePlacer score points followed by two sample essays that were assigned the indicated score. Annotations are provided for each essay explaining why the essay was given the score it received. Studying these sample essays and the accompanying annotations will point out the elements considered during the scoring process.

Score of 1

Description of Score of 1

An essay in this category demonstrates **no mastery** of on-demand essay writing. Severely flawed by **many or most** of the following weaknesses, a typical essay:

- lacks a viable point of view on the issue
- demonstrates no awareness of audience
- fails to present a main idea
- demonstrates flawed reasoning
- demonstrates no complexity of thought
- is disorganized and/or disjointed
- displays fundamental errors in word choice, usage, and sentence structure
- contains pervasive spelling, grammar, punctuation, and mechanical errors

Below are sample essays that received a score of 1. The annotations explain why the essay received the indicated score.

Sample Essay #1 – Score of 1

no i do not think we are free to make our own decisions, because if we were free we wouldnt be able to go to jail if we were to commit a crime. we are limited in the choices we make and we have to be smart about the choices we make also. attacks have been apperaing on the news, they chose to make those decisions but had to pay the consequenses. People make good and bad decisions its up to them wether or not its good or bad. with all that said i do think that we are limited with the choices we make.

Annotations

Although this response occasionally mentions “choices” and “consequenses,” it presents no viable point of view on the prompt’s central question of whether our choices are our responsibility. Instead, the writing contains flawed reasoning (*if we were free we wouldn’t be able to go to jail*) and disjointed statements that reveal a lack of organization (*. . . we have to be smart about the choices we make also. attacks have been apperaing on the news, they chose to make those decisions but had to pay the consequenses*). The response displays numerous errors in word choice, usage, and sentence structure including fused sentences (*People make good and bad decisions its up to them whether or not its good or bad*). Mechanical errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar are also pervasive. This response demonstrates no mastery of on-demand essay writing and receives a holistic score of 1.

Purpose and Focus, Score Point 1

This response lacks clear purpose and focus.

Organization and Structure, Score Point 1

This response presents a series of disjointed statements that are poorly organized.

Development and Support, Score Point 1

This essay needs additional ideas and support.

Continued from previous page

Sentence Variety and Style, Score Point 1

This essay exhibits limited ability to vary sentence length and use appropriate vocabulary.

Mechanical Conventions, Score Point 1

This response doesn't demonstrate control of mechanical conventions.

Critical Thinking, Score Point 1

The essay lacks complexity of thought and displays flawed reasoning.

Sample Essay #2 – Score of 1

if you ask me i think its a little bit of both! you are your own person and you are free to make any decision you want, it just depends on how you veiw life, and want to live your life! yes we are limited with choices these days espesially if its a illigal choice you are willing to make! you can wake up tomorrow an make a decision that you want to do somethimg illigal, with law inforcement will limit the illigal choice your willing to make, but at the end of the day its still your decision, and only you can controll you!

Annotations

Demonstrating flawed reasoning, this response lacks a main idea and fails to present a viable point of view. The essay is disorganized and disjointed, with an attempt to argue both sides of the issue that shows no complexity of thought (*if you ask me i think its a little bit of both! you are your own person and you are free to make any decision you want. . . . at the end of the day its still your decision, and only you can controll you!*). The response contains fundamental errors in word choice (*an* [and]), usage (*its* [it's], *your* [you're]) and sentence structure (comma splices and unnecessary commas). Mechanical errors in spelling (*veiw, espesially, illigal*), punctuation (inappropriate exclamation marks), and grammar are pervasive. This response displays no mastery of on-demand essay writing and receives a holistic score of 1.

Purpose and Focus, Score Point 1

This response lacks clear purpose and focus.

Organization and Structure, Score Point 1

This response demonstrates poor organization of ideas.

Development and Support, Score Point 1

This essay needs additional ideas and support.

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Sentence Variety and Style, Score Point 1

This essay exhibits limited ability to vary sentence length and apply appropriate vocabulary.

Mechanical Conventions, Score Point 1

This response shows poor control of mechanical conventions such as grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

Critical Thinking, Score Point 1

The essay lacks complexity of thought and displays flawed reasoning.

Score of 7

Description of Score of 7

An essay in this category demonstrates **consistent mastery** of on-demand essay writing, although it may have occasional minor errors. A typical essay:

- effectively and insightfully develops a point of view on the issue
- addresses an appropriate audience and demonstrates a clear purpose for writing in the thesis statement
- demonstrates outstanding critical thinking, using appropriate examples, reasons, and other evidence to support its position
- is well organized and focused, demonstrating clear coherence and smooth progression of ideas
- exhibits appropriate language, using a varied and accurate vocabulary
- demonstrates varied sentence structure
- is practically free of errors in sentence structure, grammar, spelling, and punctuation

Below are sample essays that received a score of 7. The annotations explain why the essay received the indicated score.

Sample Essay #1 – Score of 7

The decisions we make on a daily basis shape the type of person we are along with the type of person others see us as, when a child is young they are guided and do not have much of a say in decision making however as an individual gets older they are expected to start making their own decisions. Decision making can be complex for some individuals while on the other hand for some deciding what they want is something that comes naturally. Every one makes different decisions and thus lead different lives based on the choices they take however we are not always free in the choices we make there is a variety of different components which shape our ability to make decisions.

The choices an individual makes on a daily basis have a lot to do with cultural or religious beliefs, different cultures have different teachings and different outlooks on what is acceptable and what is forbidden. Parents raise their children according to the way they think and the type of person they would like their child to become. Many parents have certain expectations from their children regarding the decisions they make based on cultural beliefs that the parents or other family members expect their child to follow and abide by. The society one lives in also has a huge impact on the decisions you make, individuals are expected to act in certain ways in certain societies and not doing so may cause conflicts. Thus, cultural and societal teachings and expectations impact a large amount of our ability to make choices and often leave us with limited to no choice at all.

The circumstances we are in is another factor which often limits the decisions we make and we do not always have a choice in the circumstances we are put into. An example of this is when a child is born into a very poor family which hardly has enough food to put on the table they automatically are limited to making many decisions in their life such as if they would like to have a proper education. They may not be able to pursue their dreams of having an education due to the circumstances of their family which may not be able to afford giving their child an education at all. Someone with completely different circumstances on the other hand would have a completely different set of choices in their lives which would allow them to make completely different decisions.

Laws and regulations have an immense amount of control on the decisions one can make, most of the time there are consequences when the law is broken or bent. In Canada we have many rules and regulations which every individual is suppose to

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follow and not question since it is meant for the well being of everyone. An example of how strong a hold laws can have on a person's decision making can be seen when an individual is interested in starting their own business in Canada. There are many strict rules and a number of expectations one must complete in order to begin their own business. These regulations and restrictions often have a great impact on the decisions one makes and can affect one's ability to be able to start a business at all if they are not able to live up to these expectations. Since there are usually harsh consequences when a rule or law is broken, people are scared to think or do anything other than what is set for them by the government. All in all laws and regulations limit the choices we have on a daily basis.

To conclude, decision making is shaped by a number of different aspects such as cultural and societal beliefs, individual circumstances and laws and regulations. We may not see it or feel it however we do not always have a choice and often our decisions have already been made for us. An individual may be confronted with many problems if they do not take anything into consideration when they make decisions, thus wanting to avoid this and the fear of consequences we do not always have a choice or say in every decision we make throughout life.

Annotations

This response takes the thoughtful position that we are not always free in the choices we make because of the *"variety of different components"* that shape our decisions. The writing demonstrates outstanding critical thinking throughout, from the initial idea that control over decisions evolves as we age to the astute observation that *"societal teachings and expectations"* can dictate our choices and behaviors. In the third paragraph, the writer continues to grapple with the complexity of the prompt, offering insight into the ways outside influences (economic circumstances in particular) can shape our decision making. Appropriate examples, such as a discussion of how regulations in Canada limit the daily choices of business owners, provide extended support that deepens the reader's understanding of the topic. The organized and focused essay features a clear progression of ideas. Language use is appropriate throughout, exhibiting varied vocabulary (*forbidden, abide, immense*) and a variety of sentence structures. Demonstrating a consistent mastery of on-demand essay writing, this response receives a holistic score of 7.

Purpose and Focus, Score Point 3

This response displays a clear purpose and consistent focus.

Organization and Structure, Score Point 3

This response demonstrates strong organization of ideas.

Development and Support, Score Point 3

This essay is logically developed and well supported.

Sentence Variety and Style, Score Point 3

This essay demonstrates skillful control of sentence structure and style.

Mechanical Conventions, Score Point 3

This response exhibits strong control of the mechanical conventions of writing.

Critical Thinking, Score Point 3

This essay shows clear and reasoned analysis of the issue.

Sample Essay #2 – Score of 7

Everyone must start somewhere. Despite living in one of the most upwardly mobile countries in history, Americans do not have equality of origin. For example, some are born into wealth and prosperity with the whole world seemingly laid before them. They are easily able to chart a course for their life and, having the resources at hand, they can pursue that course and rise to even greater wealth and prosperity. Others are born into poverty. Their choices are more narrow and are mainly focused on surviving day to day. This second group however, does not have to remain in the circumstances of their beginnings forever. By recognizing their situation & making the best of the choices they can make, and tenaciously pursuing goals and opportunities as they come up, they can expand their options and TAKE responsibility for their future.

The beginning of overcoming a poor beginning is recognizing your position. In my own case, being the son of an abusive father, I was raised in poverty by my single mother. There was always a sense of hopelessness around. Not knowing it, this feeling defined my childhood and teenage years – As far as I knew, my life was heading nowhere. At 15, however, I recognized that I had a choice to make in the outcome of my life. I began to ask for help from some of my teachers and I began to look for chances pursue my interests by taking classes in computers and technology. It wasn't much but by steadily making decisions that expanded my options, little by little, I began to escape the fog of hopelessness.

At 16 I realized that I would need to make a clean break from my past if I was to have any chance at a brighter future. I was in my second year of high school and my mother was going through her third divorce with an alcoholic and abusive husband. He got arrested and sent to jail for drunk driving, and she decided that she could have a better life if she uprooted my sister and I by moving to Florida with her sister. I knew this would be the path to ruin for me. I decided to take a chance on myself and tell my mother that I was not going with her. I spoke with my guidance counselor and asked for her help in telling my mother what I was going to do. Mrs. Lewis set the appointment, called an Aunt of mine who lived in the area, and set it up so I could stay with her family until I finished high school. On the day of the meeting she encouraged me to speak my heart about my decision and stood by me when I laid things out for my mom. In the end, my mother agreed to allow me to stay with my aunt while she moved away.

The two and a half years of high school that followed were very trying. However, by standing up for myself, and choosing to break from my past, I chose a path that ultimately led to my having a happy marriage with a wife I love and 3 amazing children. I also have a career in a field I can be successful in as long as I want.

In summary, by recognizing my position, making the best of the decisions I had, and with tenacity taking risks on myself, I broke away from a hopeless future. I started with nothing, but today my horizons are broad and my future is bright.

Annotations

This response establishes an insightful point of view that, through a combination of perseverance and awareness, people can take responsibility for their future despite circumstances that encumber them. Support consists of a thorough personal account of how the writer overcame an impoverished and abusive environment. Incorporating appropriate examples and specific details, this anecdotal evidence strengthens the position and lends credibility to the writer's claims. The essay is well organized and focused, exhibiting a smooth progression of ideas across the

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three body paragraphs, as the writer moves through the chronology of the personal example. Language use is appropriate, with accurate and varied vocabulary (*chart a course, prosperity, fog of hopelessness, tenacity*). Varied sentence structures enhance the fluency of the writing. Demonstrating a consistent mastery of on-demand essay writing, this response receives a holistic score of 7.

Purpose and Focus, Score Point 3

This response displays a clear purpose and strong focus.

Organization and Structure, Score Point 3

This response demonstrates strong organization of ideas.

Development and Support, Score Point 3

This essay is logically developed and well supported.

Sentence Variety and Style, Score Point 3

This essay demonstrates skillful control of sentence structure and style.

Mechanical Conventions, Score Point 3

Control of mechanical conventions is strong.

Critical Thinking, Score Point 3

This essay shows clear and reasoned analysis of the issue.