



Michigan

TEST FOR TEACHER CERTIFICATION
STUDY GUIDE

96 Basic Skills



TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART 1: General Information About the MTTC Program and Test Preparation

OVERVIEW OF THE TESTING PROGRAM	1-1
Contact Information	
Test Development Process	
Characteristics of the Tests	
Test Administration	
Score Reporting	
HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE TESTS	1-4
Plan Your Course of Study	
THE DAY OF THE TEST: HELPFUL HINTS.....	1-5
Preparing for the Test Administration	
Test-Taking Tips	
Test Directions	

PART 2: Test Objectives and Sample Test Questions

ABOUT THE BASIC SKILLS TEST.....	2-1
TEST OBJECTIVES	2-3
SAMPLE TEST DIRECTIONS	2-7
SAMPLE DEFINITIONS AND FORMULAS.....	2-9
SAMPLE MULTIPLE-CHOICE TEST QUESTIONS.....	2-13
ANSWER KEY FOR THE SAMPLE MULTIPLE-CHOICE TEST QUESTIONS.....	2-21
INFORMATION ABOUT THE WRITING SECTION.....	2-23
Writing Assignment Performance Characteristics	
Writing Assignment Scoring Scale	
SAMPLE DIRECTIONS FOR THE WRITING SECTION	2-25
SAMPLE WRITING ASSIGNMENT AND RESPONSES	2-27
Sample Writing Assignment	
Sample Response—Score Point 4	
Sample Response—Score Point 3	
Sample Response—Score Point 2	
Sample Response—Score Point 1	

Readers should be advised that this study guide, including many of the excerpts used herein, is protected by federal copyright law.

Copyright © 2007 Pearson Education, Inc. or its affiliate(s). All rights reserved.
National Evaluation Systems, P.O. Box 226, Amherst, MA 01004

PART 1: General Information About the MTTC Program and Test Preparation

The first section of the study guide is available in a separate PDF file. Click the link below to view or print this section.

[General Information About the MTTC Program and Test Preparation](#)

PART 2: Test Objectives and Sample Test Questions

ABOUT THE BASIC SKILLS TEST

The Michigan Test for Teacher Certification (MTTC) Basic Skills test is designed to measure fundamental communication and mathematical skills. The Basic Skills test consists of approximately 85 multiple-choice questions and one written performance assignment and assesses the following three broad areas of knowledge and skills:

- Reading
- Mathematics
- Writing

You will receive a separate score for each section of the test (i.e., Reading, Mathematics, Writing). A passing score is required for each section in order to pass the Basic Skills test. Examinees who do not pass one or more sections of the Basic Skills test may retake only those sections. Once a section is passed, you do not need to retake that section. Refer to the current MTTC registration bulletin, available on the MTTC Web site at www.mttc.nesinc.com, for more information about retaking sections of the Basic Skills test.

Test Objectives

As noted, the test objectives are broad, conceptual statements that reflect the knowledge, skills, and understanding an entry-level teacher needs in order to teach effectively in a Michigan classroom. These test objectives represent the **only** source of information about what the test will cover and therefore should be studied carefully.

The test objectives are organized into groups known as "subareas." These subareas define the major content areas of the test. You will find a list of subareas at the beginning of the test objective list.

Sample Multiple-Choice Test Questions

The sample multiple-choice test questions included in this section are designed to give the test-taker an introduction to the nature of the test questions included on the MTTC Basic Skills test. The sample test questions represent the various types of test questions you may expect to see on an actual test; however, they are **not** designed to provide diagnostic information to help you identify specific areas of individual strengths and weaknesses or predict your performance on the test as a whole. Use the answer key that follows the sample test questions to check your answers.

In the Reading Section of the Basic Skills test, many test questions are based on reading passages. Consider the strategies below and choose the one that works best for you.

A first strategy is to read the passage thoroughly and carefully and then answer each question, referring to the passage only as needed. A second strategy is to read the questions first, gaining an idea of what is sought in them, and then read the passage with the questions in mind. A third strategy is to scan the passage very quickly to gain an overview of its content, and then answer each question by referring back to the passage for the specific answer. Any of these strategies is appropriate. However, you should not answer the questions on the basis of your own opinions but rather on the basis of the ideas and opinions expressed in the passage.

In the Reading Section, the order of information requested by the questions does not necessarily correspond to the order of information in a given selection. Certain words and phrases within some selections have been underlined for testing purposes only; underlined words do not reflect emphasis intended by the writers.

In the Mathematics Section of the Basic Skills test, a set of mathematical definitions and formulas is provided that may help you perform the calculations on the test. A sample of these definitions and formulas is provided following the sample test directions.

TEST OBJECTIVES

Subarea	Approximate Percentage of Questions on Test
Reading	50%
Mathematics	50%
Writing	one writing assignment

READING

Determine the meaning of words and phrases.

Includes using the context of a passage to determine the meaning of words with multiple meanings, unfamiliar and uncommon words and phrases, and figurative expressions.

Understand the main idea and supporting details in written material.

Includes identifying explicit and implicit main ideas; and recognizing ideas that support, illustrate, or elaborate the main idea of a passage.

Identify a writer's purpose, point of view, and intended meaning.

Includes recognizing a writer's expressed or implied purpose for writing; evaluating the appropriateness of written material for various purposes or audiences; recognizing the likely effect of a writer's choice of words on an audience; and using the content, word choice, and phrasing of a passage to determine a writer's opinion or point of view.

Analyze the relationship among ideas in written material.

Includes identifying the sequence of events or steps; identifying cause-effect relationships; analyzing relationships between ideas in opposition; identifying solutions to problems; and drawing conclusions inductively and deductively from information stated or implied in a passage.

Use critical reasoning skills to evaluate written material.

Includes evaluating the stated or implied assumptions on which the validity of a writer's argument depends; judging the relevance or importance of facts, examples, or graphic data to a writer's argument; evaluating the logic of a writer's argument; evaluating the validity of analogies; distinguishing between fact and opinion; and assessing the credibility or objectivity of the writer or source of written material.

Apply study skills to reading assignments.

Includes organizing and summarizing information for study purposes; following written instructions or directions; and interpreting information presented in charts, graphs, or tables.

BASIC SKILLS

MATHEMATICS

Fundamental Mathematics

Use number concepts and computation skills.

Includes adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing fractions, decimals, and integers; using the order of operations to solve problems; solving problems involving percents; performing calculations using exponents and scientific notation; estimating solutions to problems; and using the concepts of "less than" and "greater than."

Solve word problems involving integers, fractions, or decimals (including percents, ratios, and proportions).

Includes determining the appropriate operations to solve word problems; and solving word problems involving integers, fractions, decimals, percents, ratios, and proportions.

Interpret information from a graph, table, or chart.

Includes interpreting information in line graphs, bar graphs, pie graphs, pictographs, tables, charts, or graphs of functions.

Algebraic Graphing, Equations, and Operations

Graph numbers or number relationships.

Includes identifying points from their coordinates, the coordinates of points, or graphs of sets of ordered pairs; identifying the graphs of equations or inequalities; finding the slopes and intercepts of lines; and recognizing direct and inverse variation presented graphically.

Solve one- and two-variable equations.

Includes finding the value of the unknown in one-variable equations; expressing one variable in terms of a second variable in two-variable equations; and solving a system of two linear equations in two variables.

Solve word problems involving one and two variables.

Includes solving word problems that can be translated into one-variable linear equations or systems of two-variable linear equations; and identifying the equation or equations that correctly represent the mathematical relationship(s) in word problems.

Understand operations with algebraic expressions.

Includes factoring quadratics and polynomials; adding, subtracting, and multiplying polynomial expressions; and performing basic operations on and simplifying rational expressions.

Geometry and Reasoning**Solve problems involving geometric figures.**

Includes identifying the appropriate formula for solving geometric problems; solving problems involving two- and three-dimensional geometric figures; and solving problems involving right triangles using the Pythagorean theorem.

Apply reasoning skills.

Includes drawing conclusions using the principles of similarity, congruence, parallelism, and perpendicularity; and using inductive and deductive reasoning.

WRITING**Communicate in connected writing to a specified audience, with attention to appropriateness, unity and focus, development, organization, sentence structure, usage, and mechanical conventions.**

All candidates at a given administration will respond to a writing assignment, following standardized directions. Candidates will be asked to prepare writing samples of about 300 to 600 words, which will be scored on the basis of how effectively they communicate a whole message to a specified audience for a stated purpose.

SAMPLE TEST DIRECTIONS

A sample of the general directions for the MTTC Basic Skills test is shown below.

YOU SHOULD HAVE IN FRONT OF YOU:

- (1) a test booklet;
- (2) an answer sheet and a written response booklet (be sure you have filled in the required information); and
- (3) a pencil.

IF YOU DO NOT HAVE ALL THESE MATERIALS, PLEASE INFORM THE TEST ADMINISTRATOR.

GENERAL DIRECTIONS

The test booklet contains a Reading Section (questions 1 to 42), a Mathematics Section (questions 43 to 83), and a Writing Section (a writing assignment). The Reading and Math sections contain multiple-choice questions with four answer choices. The Writing Section consists of a writing assignment.

Read each multiple-choice question carefully and choose the ONE best answer. Record your answer on the answer sheet in the space that corresponds to the question number. Completely fill in the space having the same letter as the answer you have chosen. *Use only a No. 2 lead pencil.*

Sample Question:

1. What is the capital of Michigan?
 - A. Grand Rapids
 - B. Marquette
 - C. Lansing
 - D. Detroit

The correct answer to this question is C. You would indicate that on the answer sheet as follows:

1. Ⓐ Ⓑ ● Ⓓ

For the writing assignment of the test, you will be asked to prepare a writing sample on an assigned topic using some or all of the pages in your written response booklet. You may use only one written response booklet for your writing sample. You may either print or write, as long as your handwriting is legible. You must use a pencil. Make sure that you have time to plan, write, review, and revise what you have written. Your writing sample should be long enough to cover the assigned topic and to provide an adequate demonstration of your writing skills, but it need not fill all four pages.

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

BASIC SKILLS

Once the test has begun, you may start with any of the three sections in the test booklet. You may use the margins and other blank areas of the pages of the test booklet for scratch paper, for computations, and for notes to prepare your writing sample. You may NOT use any type of calculator or any reference materials during the test.

All of your answers, including your writing sample, must be recorded on the appropriate answer document. Answers that are written in this test booklet will not be scored.

The words "End of Section" indicate that you have come to the end of a test section. You may go back and review your answers. You need not stop at the end of a section, but may go on to another section.

Try to answer all questions. In general, if you have some knowledge about a question, it is better to try to answer it. You will NOT be penalized for guessing.

If you are NOT taking all three sections of the test today, leave completely blank the written response booklet and/or the section(s) of the answer sheet that correspond to the section(s) you are not taking. Unnecessary marks in those sections may result in a score for a section you did not want to take.

Recheck all the information on your answer documents, particularly your identification information, before you raise your hand for dismissal. Your test materials must be returned to a test administrator when you finish the test.

FOR TEST SECURITY REASONS, YOU MAY NOT TAKE NOTES OR REMOVE ANY OF THE TEST MATERIALS FROM THE ROOM.

This testing session will last four and one-half hours. You may use the time available to complete one, two, or all three sections of the test. If you have any questions, please ask them now before beginning the test.



**DO NOT GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE
UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD TO DO SO**

SAMPLE DEFINITIONS AND FORMULAS

Definitions and Formulas

Definitions

$=$ equal to	\nless not less than or equal to	\sim similar to
\neq not equal to	$\pi \approx 3.14$	\cong congruent to
\approx approximately equal to	\sphericalangle angle	$\not\cong$ not congruent to
$>$ greater than	$m\angle$ measure of angle	\pm plus or minus
$<$ less than	\perp right angle	\overline{AB} line segment AB
\geq greater than or equal to	\triangle triangle	\overleftrightarrow{AB} line AB
\leq less than or equal to	\perp perpendicular to	mAB measure of \overline{AB}
\nless not greater than or equal to	\parallel parallel to	$\frac{a}{b}$ or $a : b$ ratio of a to b

Abbreviations for Units of Measurement

	U.S. Standard		Metric				
Distance	in.	inch	m	meter	Time	sec.	second
	ft.	foot	km	kilometer		min.	minute
	mi.	mile	cm	centimeter		hr.	hour
			mm	millimeter			
Volume	gal.	gallon	L	liter			
	qt.	quart	mL	milliliter			
			cc	cubic centimeter			
Mass	lb.	pound	g	gram			
	oz.	ounce	kg	kilogram			
			mg	milligram			
Temperature	$^{\circ}\text{F}$	degree Fahrenheit	$^{\circ}\text{C}$	degree Celsius			
Speed	mph	miles per hour					

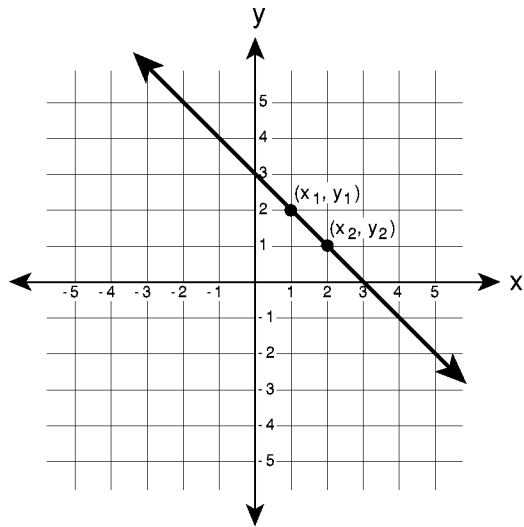
Formulas

Distance = Rate \times Time

Quadratic formula

If $ax^2 + bx + c = 0$, and $a \neq 0$,

$$x = \frac{-b \pm \sqrt{b^2 - 4ac}}{2a}$$



Line

$$\text{Slope} = m = \frac{y_2 - y_1}{x_2 - x_1}$$

Slope-intercept form for the equation of a line

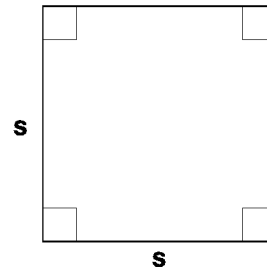
$$y = mx + b$$

Point-slope form for the equation of a line

$$y_2 - y_1 = m(x_2 - x_1)$$

$$\text{Distance} = \sqrt{(x_2 - x_1)^2 + (y_2 - y_1)^2}$$

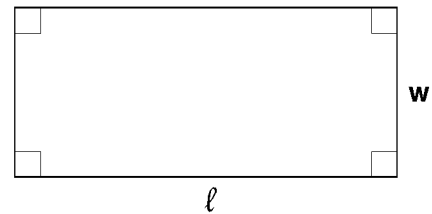
$$\text{Midpoint} = \left(\frac{x_1 + x_2}{2}, \frac{y_1 + y_2}{2} \right)$$



Square

$$\text{Area} = s^2$$

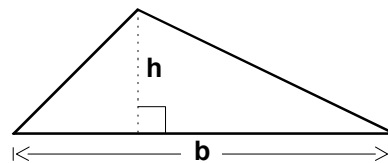
$$\text{Perimeter} = 4s$$



Rectangle

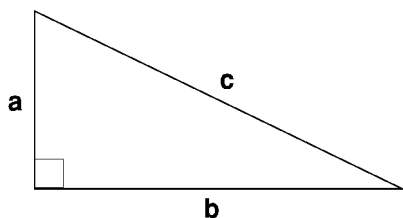
$$\text{Area} = lw$$

$$\text{Perimeter} = 2l + 2w$$



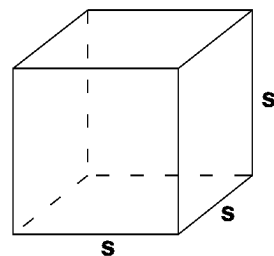
Triangle

$$\text{Area} = \frac{1}{2}bh$$



Right triangle

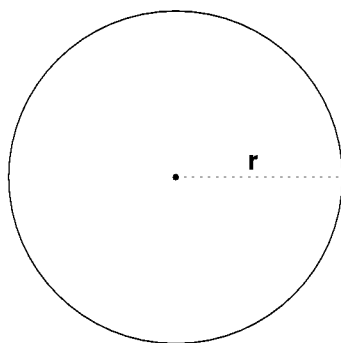
Pythagorean formula: $c^2 = a^2 + b^2$



Cube

Surface area = $6s^2$

Volume = s^3

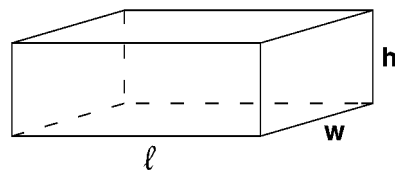


Circle

Area = πr^2

Circumference = $2\pi r$

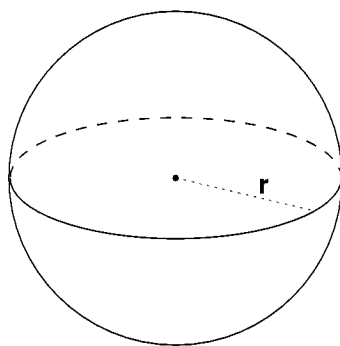
Diameter = $2r$



Rectangular solid

Surface area = $2lw + 2lh + 2wh$

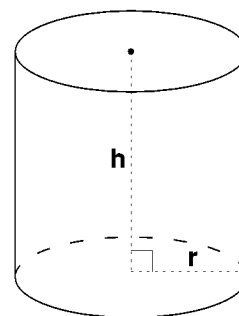
Volume = lwh



Sphere

Surface area = $4\pi r^2$

Volume = $\frac{4}{3}\pi r^3$



Right cylinder

Surface area = $2\pi rh + 2\pi r^2$

Volume = $\pi r^2 h$

End of Definitions and Formulas

SAMPLE MULTIPLE-CHOICE TEST QUESTIONS

Read the passage below. Then answer the six questions that follow.

The Road to Civil Rights

1 The period immediately following the Civil War was a time of great hope for African Americans. It was also a time of momentous constitutional change, as the nation sought to extend those liberties enshrined in the Bill of Rights to all Americans, Black and White. The Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery, the Fourteenth Amendment guaranteed all citizens equal protection of the laws, and the Fifteenth Amendment declared that no one could be denied the right to vote "on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude." In subsequent decades, however, it became all too apparent, at least to African Americans and an unfortunately small number of concerned White Americans, that the promises contained in these amendments were not being honored. By century's end, racial segregation was still an inescapable fact of American social life, in the North as well as the South. At the same time, most southern states had adopted devices such as the poll tax, literacy test, and White primary to strip African Americans of their right to vote.

2 The struggle to close the gap between constitutional promise and social reality would pass through two important stages. In the first stage, organizations such as the NAACP worked through the courts to restore the meaning of the Reconstruction-era amendments. These efforts culminated in the 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, which outlawed segregation in public schools. The decision also stated that separate facilities were inherently unequal, thus providing a legal basis for subsequent suits to desegregate other kinds of public accommodations.

3 As it turned out, the principles enunciated in the *Brown* decision were more easily stated than enforced. Court orders to desegregate public schools often encountered massive resistance. Seeing this, African Americans and their supporters began to adopt new tactics. As they did, the struggle for African American rights entered its second stage, a stage that would be characterized by direct action rather than legal challenges and would be played out in the streets rather than the courts. In turning to civil disobedience, leaders such as Martin Luther King, Jr., made it possible for all victims of racial injustice to take action in a way that was direct and forceful, but also peaceable. And through the power of their moral example, they soon won widespread support for their cause. In response to these developments, Congress took steps to restore the full meaning of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments by passing the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

4 The enactment of these measures by no means marked the end of the civil rights movement. There was still much to be done. Yet the passage of these acts nevertheless had far-reaching significance. The acts not only helped correct social inequities that had persisted far too long, they also showed that the Constitution means something, however long it may sometimes take to give substance to that meaning. This is no small matter in a nation of laws.

BASIC SKILLS

1. Which of the following best defines the word culminated as it is used in paragraph 2 of the selection?
 - A. initiated a lengthy process
 - B. completed the initial phase of a project
 - C. began a period of decline
 - D. reached the highest point of achievement

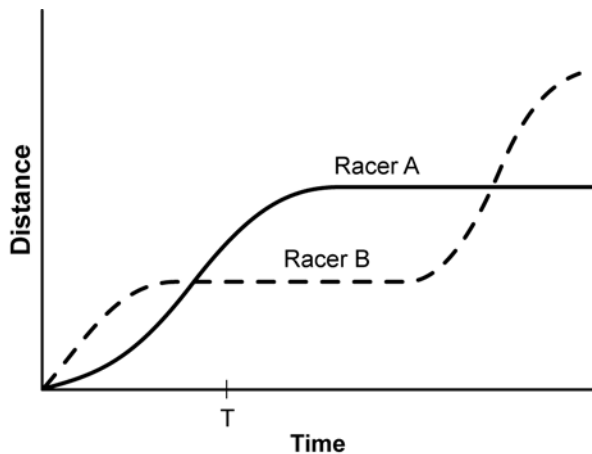
2. Which of the following statements from the selection best expresses the main idea of the *first paragraph*?
 - A. The period immediately following the Civil War was a time of great hope for African Americans.
 - B. The Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery, the Fourteenth Amendment guaranteed all citizens equal protection of the laws, and the Fifteenth Amendment declared that no one could be denied the right to vote "on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude."
 - C. In subsequent decades, it became all too apparent, at least to African Americans and an unfortunately small number of concerned White Americans, that the promises contained in the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments were not being honored.
 - D. Most southern states had adopted devices such as the poll tax, literacy test, and White primary to strip African Americans of their right to vote.

3. The content of paragraph 3 indicates the writer's belief that:
- A. the first stage of the civil rights movement was a failure.
 - B. Supreme Court decisions have less influence on U.S. society than Congressional actions.
 - C. social movements are able to influence the political process.
 - D. the costs of civil disobedience sometimes outweigh its benefits.
4. According to the selection, many communities refused to enforce the *Brown* decision. African Americans and their supporters tried to overcome this problem by:
- A. demanding that Congress pass additional civil rights legislation.
 - B. engaging in nonviolent direct action.
 - C. selecting new leaders for the civil rights movement.
 - D. requesting the assistance of the Supreme Court.
5. Which of the following assumptions most influenced the views expressed by the writer in this selection?
- A. Nations that profess a belief in the rule of law should ensure that all laws are observed.
 - B. Social injustice can be eliminated most effectively through amendments to the Constitution.
 - C. As a rule, people must be forcibly compelled to respect the rights of others.
 - D. Without forceful leaders, social movements are unlikely to gain broad support.

6. Which of the following statements best summarizes the information presented in the selection?
- A. After the Civil War, the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments were adopted to protect and extend the rights of African Americans. By century's end, however, racial segregation was still an inescapable fact of American social life. It would remain so until the 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, which called for the full desegregation of all kinds of public accommodations.
 - B. During the past century, there have been significant changes in the leadership of the civil rights movement. Organizations such as the NAACP spearheaded the initial phase of the struggle for African American rights. As legal action gave way to direct action, however, leadership came primarily from individuals like Martin Luther King, Jr.
 - C. Adopted immediately after the Civil War, the Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery, the Fourteenth Amendment guaranteed African Americans equal protection of the laws, and the Fifteenth Amendment gave African Americans the right to vote. African Americans and their supporters have long struggled to give meaning to these amendments.
 - D. Efforts by African Americans and their supporters to close the gap between the constitutional promises of the Reconstruction-era amendments and the realities of American social life passed through two important stages. The first stage, which focused on legal action, culminated in the *Brown* decision of 1954. This stage was followed by a direct action phase that resulted in the passage of the civil rights acts of the sixties.

7. Which of the following is largest?
- A. $\frac{1}{4}$
 - B. $\frac{3}{5}$
 - C. $\frac{1}{2}$
 - D. $\frac{9}{20}$
8. A town planning committee must decide how to use a 115-acre piece of land. The committee sets aside 20 acres of the land for watershed protection and an additional 37.4 acres for recreation. How much of the land is set aside for watershed protection and recreation?
- A. 43.15 acres
 - B. 54.6 acres
 - C. 57.4 acres
 - D. 60.4 acres

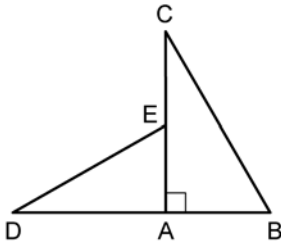
9. Use the graph below to answer the question that follows.



Which of the following is true at time T ?

- A. Both racer A and racer B are running.
 - B. Racer A is running and racer B is resting.
 - C. Racer B is running and racer A is resting.
 - D. Both racer A and racer B are resting.
10. The sum of the three angles of a triangle is 180 degrees. The second angle is 20 degrees larger than the first angle. The third angle is twice the measure of the first angle. If n represents the number of degrees in the smallest angle, which equation correctly represents the relationship among the three angles?
- A. $n + (n - 20) + 2n = 180$
 - B. $n + (n + 20) + 2n = 180$
 - C. $n + (n - 20) + 2(n - 20) = 180$
 - D. $n + (n + 20) + 2(n + 20) = 180$

11. Use the diagram below to answer the question that follows.



If $\overline{CA} \perp \overline{DB}$, $\overline{AE} \cong \overline{AB}$, and $\angle D = \angle C$, which of the following must be true?

- A. $\overline{AB} = \frac{1}{3} \overline{DB}$
- B. $\overline{DE} \cong \overline{CA}$
- C. $\overline{AE} = \frac{1}{2} \overline{AC}$
- D. $\overline{DA} \cong \overline{CA}$
12. Bess, Tara, Gerard, and Clifton all work for the same company. One is a writer, one a researcher, one an artist, and one an engineer. Use the statements below to answer the question that follows.
- I. Bess and Gerard eat lunch with the engineer.
 - II. Clifton and Tara carpool with the researcher.
 - III. Gerard works in the same building as the writer and researcher.

Who is the researcher?

- A. Tara
- B. Bess
- C. Clifton
- D. Gerard

ANSWER KEY FOR THE SAMPLE MULTIPLE-CHOICE TEST QUESTIONS**Reading**

Item Number	Correct Response	Objective
1.	D	Determine the meaning of words and phrases.
2.	C	Understand the main idea and supporting details in written material.
3.	C	Identify a writer's purpose, point of view, and intended meaning.
4.	B	Analyze the relationship among ideas in written material.
5.	A	Use critical reasoning skills to evaluate written material.
6.	D	Apply study skills to reading assignments.

Mathematics

Item Number	Correct Response	Objective
7.	B	Use number concepts and computation skills.
8.	C	Solve word problems involving integers, fractions, or decimals (including percents, ratios, and proportions).
9.	B	Interpret information from a graph, table, or chart.
10.	B	Solve word problems involving one and two variables.
11.	D	Solve problems involving geometric figures.
12.	B	Apply reasoning skills.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE WRITING SECTION

The Writing Section of the Basic Skills test consists of one writing assignment. Each candidate's written response to the Basic Skills writing assignment will be scored using a method known as focused holistic scoring. In this method, scorers judge the overall effectiveness of each response in meeting specified criteria. Each response is scored by at least two scorers and is assigned a score based on a holistic scale. The score points on the holistic scoring scale reflect the extent to which the candidate demonstrates the knowledge and skills included in the set of performance characteristics that have been defined as important for the assignment. Although this method *focuses* on the specific performance characteristics, it is *holistic* in that each assigned score describes the overall effectiveness of these characteristics working in concert in response to the assignment.

Writing Assignment Performance Characteristics

APPROPRIATENESS	the extent to which the writer addresses the topic and uses language and style appropriate to the given audience, purpose, and occasion
UNITY AND FOCUS	the clarity with which the writer states and maintains the main idea or point of view
DEVELOPMENT	the amount, depth, and specificity of the supporting details
ORGANIZATION	the clarity of the writing and the logical sequence of the writer's ideas
SENTENCE STRUCTURE	the effectiveness of the writer's sentence structure and the extent to which the writing is free of errors in sentence structure
USAGE	the extent to which the writing is free of errors in usage and shows care and precision in word choice
MECHANICAL CONVENTIONS	the demonstrated ability to spell common words and to use the conventions of capitalization and punctuation

BASIC SKILLS**Writing Assignment Scoring Scale**

The four points of the scoring scale correspond to varying degrees of performance. The following statements describe typical responses at each score point.

Score	Score Point Description
4	<p>The "4" response is a well-formed writing sample that effectively communicates a whole message to a specified audience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The writer maintains unity of a developed topic throughout the writing sample and establishes a focus by clearly stating a purpose.• The writer exhibits control in the development of ideas and clearly specifies supporting detail.• Sentence structure is effective and free of errors.• Choice of words is precise, and usage is careful.• The writer shows mastery of mechanical conventions such as spelling and punctuation.
3	<p>The "3" response is an adequately formed writing sample that attempts to communicate a message to a specified audience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The focus and the purpose of the writing sample may be clear; however, the writer's attempts to develop supporting details may not be fully realized.• The writer's organization of ideas may be ambiguous, incomplete, or partially ineffective.• Sentence structure within paragraphs is adequate, but minor errors in sentence structure, usage, and word choice are evident.• There may also be errors in the use of mechanical conventions such as spelling and punctuation.
2	<p>The "2" response is a partially developed writing sample in which the characteristics of effective written communication are only partially formed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The statement of purpose is not clear, and although a main idea or topic may be announced, focus on the main idea is not sustained.• Ideas may be developed by the use of specific supporting detail, and the writer may make an effort to organize and sequence ideas, but development and organization are largely incomplete or unclear.• Paragraphs contain poorly structured sentences with noticeable and distracting errors.• The writer exhibits imprecision in usage and word choice and a lack of control of mechanical conventions such as spelling and punctuation.
1	<p>The "1" response is an inadequately formed writing sample that fails to communicate a complete message.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The writer attempts to address the topic, but language and style may be inappropriate for the given audience, purpose, and/or occasion.• There is often no clear statement of a main idea, and the writer's efforts to present supporting detail are confused.• Any organization that is present fails to provide an effective sequence of ideas.• Sentence structure is ineffective and few sentences are free of errors.• Usage and word choice are imprecise.• The writer makes many errors in the use of mechanical conventions such as spelling and punctuation.
U	<p>The response is unscorable because it is off topic, illegible, primarily in a language other than English, or not of sufficient length to score.</p>
B	<p>The writing response form is completely blank.</p>

SAMPLE DIRECTIONS FOR THE WRITING SECTION

A sample of the directions for the Writing Section of the MTTC Basic Skills test is shown below.

WRITING SECTION

The Writing Section of the Basic Skills test consists of one writing assignment. You are asked to prepare a writing sample on an assigned topic using some or all of the pages in your written response booklet. The assignment can be found on the next page. You may use the time available to plan, write, review, and edit what you have written.

Read the assignment carefully before you begin to write. Think about how you will organize what you plan to write. You may use any blank space provided in this test booklet to make notes or to prepare a rough draft of your paper. Your score will be based solely on the version of your writing sample written in the written response booklet.

Your writing sample will be scored on the basis of how effectively it communicates a message to the specified audience for the stated purpose. Pay particular attention to the seven characteristics listed below when preparing your writing sample. These seven characteristics will be used in scoring your writing sample.

- **APPROPRIATENESS**—the extent to which you address the topic and use language and style appropriate to the given audience and purpose.
- **UNITY AND FOCUS**—the clarity with which you state and maintain your main idea or point of view.
- **DEVELOPMENT**—the amount, depth, and specificity of your supporting details.
- **ORGANIZATION**—the clarity of your writing and the logical sequence of your ideas.
- **SENTENCE STRUCTURE**—the effectiveness of your sentence structure and the extent to which your writing is free of errors in sentence structure.
- **USAGE**—the extent to which your writing is free of errors in usage and shows care and precision in word choice.
- **MECHANICAL CONVENTIONS**—your ability to spell common words and to use the conventions of capitalization and punctuation.

Be sure to write about the assigned topic and use multiple paragraphs. Please write legibly. You may not use any reference materials during the test. Remember to save some time to review what you have written and make any changes you think will improve your writing sample. The final version of your essay should conform to the conventions of edited American English. Your written response should be your original work, written in your own words, and should not be copied or paraphrased from some other work.

SAMPLE WRITING ASSIGNMENT AND RESPONSES**WRITING ASSIGNMENT**

It has been said that "any persons who take it upon themselves, on their own private authority, to break a bad law thereby authorize everyone else to break the good ones." In an essay to be read by a history teacher, state whether you agree or disagree that breaking a law—even a bad one—is never justified. Support your position with reference to your own reading and knowledge of history or current events in the United States or elsewhere. Your purpose is to persuade your reader to accept your position.

Sample Response—Score Point 4

There are many kinds of laws, including those that are designed to define citizens' rights, those that give prescriptions for social order, those that are used in criminal courts, and those that are needed to keep our government running. In an ideal world, laws would be good and their application fair: abiding by them would lead to the general welfare of humanity and other living things. In an ideal world, there would be no bad laws. In actuality, however, laws are crafted by humans, and humans are fallible, often prompted by self-interest or fear, and hindered by shortsightedness. For this reason, I think that there are times when breaking laws is justified.

First of all, American history can be seen as an attempt to overcome bad laws in order to fulfill the promise of a true democracy. In the 1770s, on the east coast of what is now the United States of America, several men threw hundreds of pounds of tea into the Boston Harbor. Their actions were against the law, but they wanted to protest the unreasonably high taxes levelled against them by the ruling British, who denied the colonists any representation. A series of British retaliations and colonial resistances ensued that eventually led to the American Revolution. It can be argued that, had the colonists meekly abided by the tax laws, this country would not have been born.

Toward the middle of the next century, an unassuming writer by the name of Henry Thoreau refused to pay his poll tax as a protest against slavery: the government was using the taxes to fund the Mexican War, which in turn would expand slavery in the American South. Thoreau was thrown in jail. He later wrote "Civil Disobedience," an essay that argues that it is the individual's moral responsibility to resist the government's immoral laws and acts. Although not a lot of people sit around today reading Thoreau, his ideas have had a lasting effect on American culture because they suggest that the thoughtful individual is capable of affecting vast institutions.

In the middle of the twentieth century, this notion of civil disobedience was the foundation of the Civil Rights movement and of other sorts of protests. A famous example is Rosa Parks, who refused to abide by segregation laws that relegated Black people to the back of buses. If hundreds of people had not transgressed the laws and customs of segregation, minority citizens would not have basic rights and freedoms today. They would not even have access to educational institutions, one of the avenues for self-betterment, because schools were segregated before the Civil Rights Movement occurred. As a nation, we would not have made social progress without breaking bad laws.

(continued on next page)

Sample Response—Score Point 4 (continued)

The idea that an individual is capable of knowing what is right and has the moral obligation to express it has become an essential part of American culture. Even when we are not acting on this idea in the real world, we still champion the lone, right individual in our movies and our songs. For example, the movie Open Range (starring Robert Duvall and Kevin Costner) illustrates this point most recently. In the movie, two cattlemen are the only ones brave enough to confront the sheriff, a weak man who does the bidding of a rich, malicious landowner. In other words, "the law" is in the hands of "business." The movie was not a blockbuster because the story is so predictable; the story is predictable because it's so American. As long as the law is shaped by humans, we will have bad laws. And it will take thoughtful, brave citizens to correct bad laws by breaking them.

This writing sample is scored a "4" because it is a well-formed writing sample that effectively communicates a whole message to a specified audience.

Appropriateness: The writer addresses the prompt in language that is appropriate for the specified audience—"a history teacher." The style is suitably formal for the purpose, which is writing a persuasive essay as part of a teacher certification examination.

Unity and Focus: The main idea of the essay is clearly stated in the first paragraph: "I think that there are times when breaking laws is justified." The writer remains focused on this thesis throughout the response, citing three examples from American history and one from American popular culture as support. Each example is explicitly linked to the main idea of the essay.

Development: The writer relies on historical examples to develop the argument because (1) the audience is identified as "a history teacher" and (2) because the assignment suggests that the writer should support the position taken with "reference to reading and knowledge of history or current events." If the assignment had been different, then such historical examples would not have been necessary.

The support shows depth in that each example is described and its relevance explained. The reader is told, for instance, why Thoreau refused to pay his tax: in Thoreau's estimation, the money supported an immoral war. The writer also supplies specific information, such as the details of the movie discussed in the last paragraph.

Organization: The writing sample is well formed. The essay is structured so that the examples follow a chronological sequence, which is appropriate for a broad, historical perspective on the topic. The first sentence of every body paragraph orients the reader to a specific time and place so that the reader is never "lost." Sentences within paragraphs are also sequenced logically. There is no needless repetition of ideas.

Sentence Structure: The writer successfully creates sentences of varying lengths and complexities. This level of control is effective because the variation prevents the sentences from sounding monotonous in tone and rhythm, and it also allows the writer to create emphasis. For example, the simple sentence "Thoreau was thrown in jail" seems to gain emphasis because it is surrounded by longer, more complicated constructions. If all of the sentences were declarative and only five words long, however, then the writing would sound simplistic.

Usage: Word choice is careful and precise. Uncommon words ("abiding," "retaliations," "ensued," "transgressed," "malicious," etc.) are used correctly and contribute to the writer's credibility. As with sentence structure, variation in word choice also makes the essay more effective.

Mechanical Conventions: The writer exhibits control over spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. Very few errors occur ("fallible" and "relegated" are misspelled as "fallable" and "relagated").

Sample Response—Score Point 3

Laws are there for a reason. They remind everyone of the difference between right and wrong. They tell us how to behave in society.

Some people may think it is ok to break some of them because they think nobody will get hurt, but I don't agree. We must respect all laws (big or small) the same or what's the point.

First, some people I know play with the numbers so they can pay a little less or include some shady deductions on their taxes. They just want to save a few bucks. They don't think they are breaking the law. They figure rich people pay more taxes. They will make up the difference anyway, so no harm done. I think taxes are too high already and I am not the only one who thinks so. I wish my congressman would do something about some of the pork in the government budget. I don't cheat on my taxes and I still don't think anyone else should either. The government needs our money because there are many really important programs and projects. Every dollar a citizen does not send can make a difference. Second, illegal cable causes problems like this too. The illegal cable you sneak every month means fewer profits for the cable company. It could cost someone their job. Actions have consequences. What if everyone does this?

Third, I see people break the speed limit all the time. Maybe you need to get home fast because you need to do something, the sign for the speed limit says 40 miles per hour, but you decide that your needs are more important, so you go 50. Something jumps in front of your car and you can't stop in time. Something terrible could happen because you thought you can bend the law. One of my aunts was in an accident like this and she never got over it, it changed her life forever. Sure, there is a good chance you will get away with speeding or just get a ticket. How would you feel if your loved one was in an accident because of speeding? Maybe you should think twice.

Everyone knows murder and other violent crimes are wrong and that is why there are laws against them. We may think we can get away with breaking minor laws and no one will know. Someone could get hurt anyway. We should treat all laws the same way.

This writing sample is a "3" because it is an adequately formed writing sample that attempts to communicate a message to a specified audience.

Appropriateness: The writer addresses the topic and generally uses language that is appropriate. However, the essay's tone is often informal given its audience ("a history teacher"), due to the writer's colloquial word choices.

Unity and Focus: The writer announces a main idea in the first paragraph and generally maintains focus on the main idea throughout the response. The writer compromises this focus in the third paragraph by briefly shifting to a negative assessment of high taxes.

Development: The writer includes three subtopics to support the main idea, but development, while present, is not fully realized. Supporting evidence for the first subtopic (cheating on taxes) lacks specifics. Some relevant details that are needed to fully elaborate the second subtopic (breaking the speed limit) are missing ("Maybe you need to get home fast because you need to do something . . . Something jumps in front of your car and you can't stop in time. Something terrible could happen because you thought you could bend the law."). The third subtopic about stealing cable television also needs more, and more specific, elaboration.

Organization: The essay does have an overarching plan, including an introduction, body and conclusion, but, overall, the essay's organization is partially ineffective. The first two paragraphs are short and would be more effective if combined. While a third subtopic (stealing cable television) is introduced at the end of the third paragraph, the reader must occasionally infer the sequence of ideas due to the lack of transitions between some sentences ("The government needs our money. . . . There are many really important programs and projects. Every dollar a citizen does not send can make a difference.").

Sentence Structure: Sentence structure in the essay lacks variety: the writer favors simple, rather than more complex, sentences. In addition, there are minor sentence structure errors ("Maybe you need to get home fast because you need to do something, the sign for the speed limit says 40 miles per hour, but you decide that your needs are more important, so you go 50."). Overall, however, sentence structure is adequate.

Usage: There is a variety of minor usage problems. Some of the writer's word choices contribute to the essay's informal tone ("They just want to save a few bucks," "pork in the budget"). Others could be more precise (using "really" instead of "truly" in the third paragraph). Some language is repetitive ("Some people I know play with the numbers so they can pay a little less or include some shady deductions on their taxes") and there are occasional misuses of word forms ("It could cost someone their job."). However, none of these errors impedes communication of the writer's message.

Mechanical Conventions: There are some minor spelling errors ("shadey," "goverment"), and the writer uses a period instead of a question mark ("We must respect all laws (big or small) the same or what's the point.").

Sample Response—Score Point 2

I think that breaking the law, is not a good thing. For anyone to do. It is wrong. There's reasons for the laws that are made. They are made so that people will do the right thing. People should do, the right thing. I think maybe this is about when people who didn't like the law, they would break it. Like I heard once about someone who decide that they want to go faster than 65, they drive faster so they aren't late to a party. Just because they want to not because its the right thing to do, its not. The law wasn't bad it was just that they didn't want to be late. I was in the car, it made me afraid. I didn't want the cops stopping us and giving a ticket, call my parents, get me in truble.

Another time a long time ago I read, there were these people who marched downtown for Dr. M. L. King Jr. Making the laws change that was what the march was for. I think the laws that said their couldn't be black people here and white over there. This one is a harder one for me to decide. Being that places wouldn't let some people in, makes me think that was not a good thing to have on the books. In the march there were people got hurted, that wasn't a good thing too. There was lots of police and cars and broke windows and people right in the street and must have been TV because I saw a movie of it a few years back. They carry signs and they are many, many of them in the streets that day. Why would they like to get hurt if they can just obey the law and leave it alone, is what I don't know about. I do think that people should be able to go anyplace they want. They shouldn't say you over here and you over there. That's not right too.

As I say, there are laws and there are laws. Laws are suppose to help us all be better people to do the right thing. Laws are good things that keep us from being rob and hurt. And keep us on the straight path foreward into the future of our lives. To do good things and help the community into a better place for the children and for the freedom of our country.

This writing sample is scored a "2" because it is a partially developed writing sample in which the characteristics of effective written communication are only partially formed.

Appropriateness: The writer attempts to address the topic by calling upon personal anecdote and knowledge of history. The language and style are only partially appropriate, however: the colloquial nature of word choice and use of contractions contribute to an informal tone ("Like I heard once," and "not a good thing to have on the books").

Unity and Focus: The writer broadly maintains unity by making "law" the topic of the entire response, but a purpose tied to the assignment remains unclear. The writer also initially takes a clear position, that breaking the law "is not a good thing, for anyone to do. It is wrong." However, the writer's inability to distinguish between good and bad laws and the uncertainty in the second paragraph about breaking laws that seem unjust ("This one is a harder one for me to decide") introduces ambiguity. In addition, the writer does not discuss the relevance of the march to the purpose of the writing assignment. Finally, the last paragraph generalizes about law instead of summarizing the writer's reasons for believing that breaking the law is wrong. These approaches dull rather than sharpen the focus of the response and, as a result, the focus that appeared to exist in the first few lines is not sustained.

Development: Support consists of one example about speed limits and a second about segregation. The reader must infer much: that the first example represents good law and the second represents bad law and that the writer believes that breaking the first is worse than breaking the second. Inference is needed because the writer does not make these distinctions. Development consists of personal response ("it made me afraid" and "Why would they like to get hurt . . .") instead of analysis of or reasons for the stated position. While the writer makes an effort to develop ideas using specific details (what the "cops" might do; what the writer saw at the march), these details do not contribute to a persuasive argument. Therefore, development is largely incomplete.

Organization: The response consists of three paragraphs that only partially contribute to the formation of an essay. The first paragraph, instead of serving as an introduction, contains both opening thoughts and a discussion of the first example. This paragraph would have been improved by being turned into two. In addition, sentence structure, discussed below, obscures meaning.

Sentence Structure: Sentences, when they are correct, are primarily declarative sentences, indicating the writer has not mastered other kinds. Several sentences contain errors such as subject-verb disagreement ("There's reasons for the laws"), comma splices ("I was in the car, it made me afraid"), faulty parallelism ("I didn't want the cops stopping us and giving a ticket, call my parents, get me in trouble"), and imprecise pronoun reference ("They carry signs and there are many, many of them . . . Why would they like to get hurt if they can just obey the law"). These errors are noticeable and distracting.

Usage: Word choice is colloquial and consists primarily of simple one- and two-syllable words. The writer misuses words, such as "broke" instead of "broken," "they" instead of "there," "too" instead of "either," "suppose" instead of "supposed," "rob" instead of "robbed," and "into" instead of "become." However, this imprecision is not of such severity that meaning cannot be made.

Mechanical Conventions: The writer adds superfluous commas ("breaking the law, is not a good thing," "a long time ago I read, there were these people") and misspells "trouble" ("truble"), "hurt" ("hurted"), and "forward" ("foreward").

Sample Response—Score Point 1

I don't usually break a law either bad or good but if I did it would be a bad one. Don't get me wrong I'm not about to say go ahead and break a law its OK. But can see some sence if a law is really unfare like the speed limit some places. If the road is safe why can't I go 80 my car's tight and I'm in controle. Some driver break a law all the time by going to slow and that is real dangerous. There no justifie for be a danger on the road. Another law that bug me is the drug test at work I mean give me break. I work hard and it not there buisness what I do at partying after work. But if I stay late and the next morning they say here your cup I could be out of luck. Now that a law that's OK to break to keep my job. I know you agree with me cause you have work to. If there a law that hurt you work you going to think about break it so can keep on work. Anybody that do not is not very brave and should get some guts or just bow down to all the law good or bad.

There are some good law to like don't Kill anybody and stealing stuff. I'd hate if some creep stoled my car SAT radio so that kind is a good law and everbody should say yes to that. I mean there looking out for our good and that the sort of a law that you should not break.

Just wait till somebody rip you off then you'll know there some good law and some bad law and it just depend on what you think.

This response is a "1" because it is an inadequately formed writing sample that fails to communicate a complete message.

Appropriateness: The writer attempts to address the topic by discussing laws and breaking them, but fails to present a persuasive argument for a specific position. Language is too informal given the audience, purpose, and occasion—taking a teacher certification examination.

Unity and Focus: There is no clear statement of a main idea. The writer mentions both "bad" laws that could be broken and "good" laws that should be obeyed ("everybody should say yes to that") but does not focus on any single position.

Development: Although some personal narrative is presented, the discussion involving good and bad laws does not focus on any central position. As a result, the details that are present ("why can't I go 80 my car's tight and I'm in control") seem to be random thoughts and are confused.

Organization: The response is divided into three paragraphs but this attempt at organization fails to present an effective sequence of ideas. The first paragraph combines two major subtopics while the last paragraph is a single sentence. Sentences within these paragraphs are not logically sequenced. The writer interjects new ideas or conflicting points of view without transition or focus on a central theme. Clarity is also affected by numerous sentence structure and usage errors.

Sentence Structure: Sentence structure is ineffective and few sentences are free of errors. There are many examples of subject-verb disagreement ("Some driver break a law . . .") and run-on constructions (second and fourth sentences in the first paragraph, first sentence in second paragraph.)

Usage: Severe usage errors exist throughout this response. Omitted words, use of "your" for "you're," "there" for "their" and "they're," and use of "law" for "laws" all interfere with communication and affect the clarity of the writing.

Mechanical Conventions: There are numerous mechanical errors including spelling ("unfare," "controle," "buisness," "everbody") and a lack of punctuation that contribute to this being an inadequately formed writing sample.