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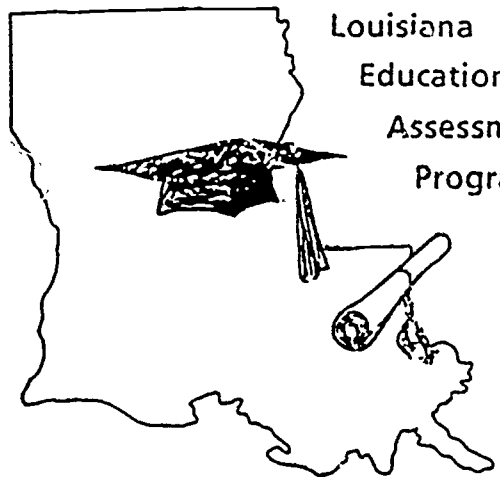
ABSTRACT

This guide, developed by educators and revised by Louisiana teachers and curriculum specialists, provides Louisiana educators with information regarding assessment strategies used on the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP) Grade 11 Test as well as suggested instructional approaches for enhancing student proficiency in the skill areas covered on the examination. Use of this guide should assist Louisiana educators in offering students effective, on-target instruction in these critical skill areas. The guide is organized by skill areas and includes sections on vocabulary, comprehension, composition, mechanics, sentence structure, word usage, and study skills. (MS)



LEAP

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES GUIDE

Grade 11

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Louisiana Department of Education

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Introduction

Recent efforts by the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) to upgrade the state's competency-based educational plan include the establishment of a criterion-referenced high school exit level testing program. The Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP) Grade 11 Test is designed to measure proficiency in four subject areas: English language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science.

In accordance with R.S. 17:24.4 (Act 146 of the 1986 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature), the Grade 11 criterion-referenced test items will be piloted on an approximate 5 percent sample of public school eleventh-grade students during the week of April 11-15 and April 18-22, 1988. The legislation requires statewide implementation of the test in 1988-89.

State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (SBESE) policy, Standard 2.099.00, Bulletin 741, Louisiana Handbook for School Administrators, states that the test will be used as a graduation requirement. The 1990-91 school year was established by the SBESE as the effective date to require satisfactory performance on the test in order to receive a high school diploma. Students who fail to pass the Grade 11 test must be offered retake opportunities. R.S. 17:24.4 states that those students who fail to meet required proficiency levels on the state-administered criterion-referenced tests of the LEAP shall receive remedial education programs that comply with regulations adopted by SBESE.

Developmental activities for the LEAP Grade 11 Test have been substantial. Specific target skills and skill areas were selected by subject area advisory committees after a thorough review of appropriate textbooks and LDE curriculum standards. These skills represent the most salient, testable skills emphasized in the curriculum. The English Language Arts Curriculum Guide, Grades 7-12, Bulletin No. 1795, served as the basis for English language arts test specifications and test items.

Test item specifications, test blueprints, and test items were developed by IOX Assessment Associates of Culver City, California, under the direction of both the LDE and subject area advisory committees composed of local education agency curriculum specialists.

The LEAP Grade 11 English language arts test, to be implemented in the 1988-89 school year, will consist of approximately 45 multiple-choice items* measuring eight skill areas. A separate writing exercise assignment will be used in the skill area of composition. The items were developed under the readability restriction that no words used exceed an eleventh-grade vocabulary level. The LEAP Grade 11 Test assesses nine English language arts skill areas, which test the following skills:

Vocabulary: using context clues to determine the meanings of unfamiliar words;

Comprehension/Details: (1) retrieving specific skills from a reading selection and (2) perceiving sequential relationships among described events;

Comprehension/Main Idea: recognizing a statement of the main idea of a reading passage;

Comprehension/Critical Reading: (1) drawing conclusions and inferences from material read, (2) analysis of fundamental aspects of literary passages, and (3) distinguishing statements of fact from statements of opinion;

Composition: writing an expository or persuasive letter or essay in response to a specific assignment;

Mechanics: demonstrating skills in (1) capitalization, (2) punctuation, and (3) spelling;

Sentence Structure: demonstrating sentence formation and sentence combination skills;

Word Usage: demonstrating knowledge of standard American English usage; and

Study Skills: using common reference books to locate specific pieces of information.

Because of the high stakes associated with the LEAP Grade 11 Test, the LDE is making available to Louisiana educators instructional strategies guides that focus on the examination. These guides are intended to provide: (1) a clear description of the way in which specific skill areas are assessed on the LEAP test and (2) instructional considerations that might be used by Louisiana educators in promoting proficiency of these target skill areas.

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*The exact number of English language arts items to appear on the LEAP Grade 11 Test has yet to be determined.

Components of the Instructional Strategies Guide

The instructional strategies guide for English language arts is organized into separate sections describing each of the nine skill areas. The specific components of eight of the nine skill areas* are briefly described below:

Sample item. An illustrative item (or items) is presented that is representative of the LEAP test items that will be used to assess students' proficiency in a given skill or skill area.

Description of test questions. The essential elements in the questions used in test items, such as format and content, are listed.

Description of answer choices. Basic characteristics of an item's answer choices are presented. In addition to noting the general nature of the correct answer choice, descriptive information is provided for the categories of incorrect answer choices.

Sample item answer choice descriptions. The correct and incorrect answer choices for the sample item(s) are identified. The particular incorrect-answer category represented by each incorrect answer choice is specified.

Instructional analysis. Instructional considerations relevant to preparing students for the various skill areas tested on the LEAP examination are described. These instructional analyses are neither comprehensive nor prescriptive. Rather, they are intended to provide suggestions to Louisiana educators for instructional strategies that might be used to further student competence in the LEAP target skill areas.

Use of the Instructional Strategies Guide

This guide has been developed by experienced educators and revised by Louisiana teachers and curriculum specialists. Its purpose is to provide Louisiana educators with information regarding assessment strategies used on the LEAP Grade 11 Test as well as suggested instructional approaches to enhancing student proficiency in the skill areas covered on the examination. Use of this guide should assist Louisiana educators in providing students with effective, on-target instruction in these critical skill areas.

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*The instructional guide section for Composition is set up as follows: Sample item (consisting of two writing assignments from which the student would select one), Description of writing assignments, Scoring of written responses, and Instructional analysis.

The materials in this guide will be useful in a variety of settings, including regular classes and LEAP-focused review/ remedial classes. The guide is organized in a manner that permits flexible use. Therefore, its sections dealing with individual skill areas are self-contained to facilitate use by educators who choose to focus on a specific skill.

SKILL AREA: VOCABULARY
(Domain III, Standard B)

Using Context Clues to Determine Word Meaning

SAMPLE ITEM:

> French II was a difficult class for John, but he wanted to do well in it. John always completed his homework for that class, even if it took several hours. In addition, he usually spent his study period reviewing French. Finally, John was rewarded for being so assiduous. His teacher gave him an A in French II.

What is the meaning of assiduous as used above?

A. mean

B. hardworking

C. lazy

D. intelligent

DESCRIPTION OF TEST QUESTIONS:

1. The student will be presented with a brief reading selection containing an underlined word that is not likely to be familiar to high-school students. In the selection, context clues will be provided as to the meaning of the underlined word. Synonyms or antonyms for the word will not be directly provided.

2. The reading selection will be followed by the question "What is the meaning of [underlined word] as used above?"

DESCRIPTION OF ANSWER CHOICES:

1. The correct answer choice will be an accurate definition of the underlined word as used in the context of the reading selection.

2. An incorrect answer choice will be one of the following types:

   a. contradicted: a definition that is contradicted by the information presented in the reading selection;

   b. similar: a definition of a word that is similar in spelling or sound to the underlined word;

   c. incomplete: a definition that does not take into account all appropriate information presented in the reading selection; or

   d. irrelevant: a plausible but incorrect definition of the underlined word.

SAMPLE ITEM ANSWER CHOICE DESCRIPTIONS:

A. irrelevant

B. correct

C. contradicted

D. incomplete

INSTRUCTIONAL ANALYSIS:

A wide and varied vocabulary is a valuable asset. A particularly useful vocabulary skill is the ability to use context clues to infer the meaning of a new, unfamiliar word encountered in a reading passage. Although a dictionary is a priceless resource for uncovering the meanings of words, dictionaries are not always readily available when a reader faces an unrecognized word.

Context clues are words, phrases, and punctuation marks within the reading selection that help the reader to understand the meaning of an unfamiliar word in that selection. Transitional words and phrases known as "linking words" are one kind of contextual clue. They establish relationships between the terms that they connect. "But" and "however," for instance, indicate an opposing or contradictory relationship.

Jenny is a gregarious person, but her sister is timid and unfriendly.

I would like to partake of this wonderful feast; however, I've already eaten my lunch.

Other indicators show that a definition or an example is being provided. For example, the term "such as" signals an example, as in the following sentence:

> I have always been fascinated by prestidigitators such as Harry Houdini.

A comma is another important context clue. Although synonyms and antonyms will not be directly provided in the LEAP vocabulary test items, a term followed by a comma is often explained or exemplified after the comma.

> The story was quite prosaic, describing a typical morning in the life of an unremarkable man named Fred Smith.

Most often, the meaning of the unfamiliar word can be discerned from the reading selection as a whole. The sentences leading to and from the underlined term guide the reader into an understanding of the new word.

> My little brother, David, has been especially rambunctious this afternoon. First he knocked over a lamp while chasing the dog. Then he tied my shoelaces together as I sat and watched television. After that, he proceeded to turn somersaults through every room in the apartment!

Encourage your students to try to judge the meanings of new words encountered in reading passages before referring to a dictionary. Students may be gratified to discover how often the meanings they discern will resemble actual definitions.

SKILL AREA: COMPREHENSION (DETAILS)
(Domain IV, Standards AB)

The skill area testing details includes two objectives: Understanding Facts and Details and Understanding Sequence of Events and Ideas.

Understanding Facts and Details

SAMPLE ITEM:

One night soon you might be frightened by a strange and beautiful ring of lights sparkling in the sky. Reports of Unidentified Flying Objects (UFOs) will probably pour into various government agencies. However, the creators of this heavenly circle will not be from another galaxy. They will be right here on earth, in France.

Almost a century ago the Eiffel Tower was built for the Paris World's Fair. In honor of its hundredth anniversary, the Eiffel Tower Management Company recently held a contest. The winner was an abstract space sculpture that will orbit 500 miles above the earth's surface. It will consist of 100 shiny, silver balloons, each measuring 19.7 feet in diameter. These balloons will be strung together in a circle approximately 15 miles around. The balloons will be folded into a 35-cubic-foot container and shot into orbit with a rocket. Once in space the container will explode, and the balloons, connected by a tube, will inflate. The luminous sculpture is expected to look like a glowing wreath about the size of the full moon. It will cost 1.5 million dollars to build the space sculpture.

The contest's sponsors chose this entry for its geometric simplicity as well as for its symbolism. The continuous ring of lights will be universally recognized as a representation of humankind united and in harmony. Other entries included a lens-shaped disk and an oversized inflatable "sail." The ring of light was the least expensive of the finalists.

The ring has been designed to destroy itself three years after its launch. A fiery needle will cut the tube, causing it to unroll. The balloons will then

slide off one by one and spiral back to earth. Here, they will burn as they enter the earth's atmosphere. All of us who will marvel at this creation will be disappointed when it makes its final orbit.

According to this selection, how many miles above earth will the circle of lights orbit?

A. 15 miles

B. 100 miles

C. 300 miles

D. 500 miles

DESCRIPTION OF TEST QUESTIONS:

1. The student will be presented with a reading selection drawn from materials such as books, newspapers, and magazines.

2. The reading selection will be followed by a question that begins with the phrase "According to this selection," and asks about a specific detail in the selection.

DESCRIPTION OF ANSWER CHOICES:

1. The correct answer choice will be the specific detail from the reading selection that correctly answers the selection-relevant question.

2. An incorrect answer choice will be one of the following types:

   a. incorrect detail: an accurate description of any detail contained in the reading selection that does not correctly answer the test question;

   b. imprecise: an imprecise or faulty description of any detail contained in the reading selection; or

   c. irrelevant: a description of any detail not contained in the reading selection.

SAMPLE ITEM ANSWER CHOICE DESCRIPTIONS:

A. incorrect detail

B. imprecise

C. irrelevant

D. correct

INSTRUCTIONAL ANALYSIS:

This skill area requires students to extract from a reading passage a specific piece of information pertaining to who, what, when, where, why, how, how much, how many, or which. To identify such a detail in a selection, readers must pay careful attention to (1) exactly what piece of information is requested by the question and (2) which piece of information in the reading selection accurately answers the question.

Basically, concentration and focus are needed in this skill area. Attention to detail in our reading is required not only in our academic pursuits, but in our daily lives. When we read a recipe, an invitation, a television schedule, or the rules of a game, we must know how to extract precisely the piece of information we need for a given purpose. These items entail the same process. When a test question asks, "How many stories tall is the Hamilton Building?", we need to refer back to the reading passage that contains this piece of information. There, we must find the precise and accurate answer to this question; we do not need to know how many rooms the building contains, how many people live there, or how old the Hamilton Building is.

You can foster this kind of careful focus in your students by frequently posing questions that require specific answers based on details presented in reading passages. Whether your class is discussing a story, a newspaper article, or a textbook selection, you can use these opportunities to enhance your students' ability to locate specific details in reading materials.

Understanding Sequence of Events and Ideas

SAMPLE ITEM:

(See reading passage from previous Sample Item.)

According to this selection, what will happen immediately after the tube unrolls?

A. The balloons will all fall to earth at once.

B. The balloons will slide off of the tube one at a time.

C. The circle of light will be pulled toward the moon's surface.

D. A fiery needle will cut the tube.

DESCRIPTION OF TEST QUESTIONS:

1. The student will be presented with a reading selection drawn from materials such as books, newspapers, and magazines. The selection will contain a story sequence of three or more events.

2. The reading selection will be followed by a question that begins with the phrase "According to this selection," and asks about a step in the selection. The question will require the student to identify what comes first, last, immediately before, or immediately after a given event.

DESCRIPTION OF ANSWER CHOICES:

1. The correct answer choice will be the sequential step from the reading selection that correctly answers the selection-relevant question.

2. An incorrect answer choice will be one of the following types:

   a. incorrect step: an accurate description of any step contained in the reading selection that does not correctly answer the test question;

   b. imprecise: an imprecise or faulty description of any step contained in the reading selection; or

   c. irrelevant: a description of any step not contained in the reading selection.

SAMPLE ITEM ANSWER CHOICE DESCRIPTIONS:

A. imprecise

B. correct

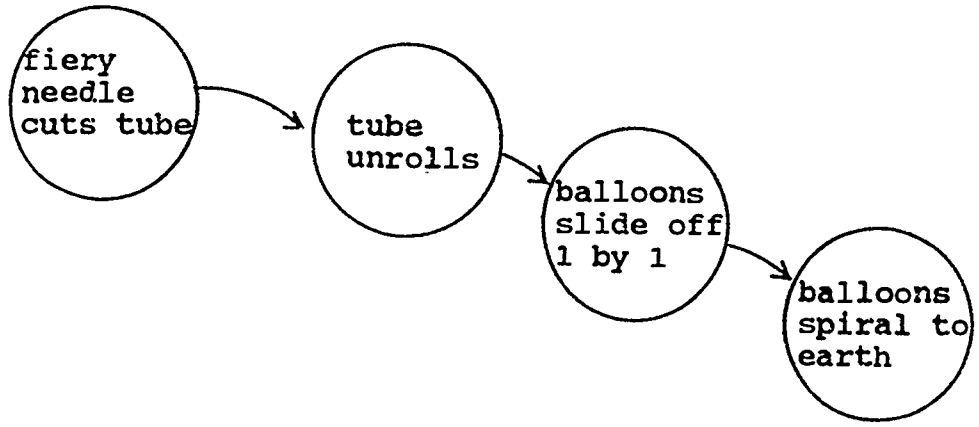
C. irrelevant

D. incorrect step

INSTRUCTIONAL ANALYSIS:

Sequential relationships among described events are sometimes clearly indicated with cue words such as "first," "next," "then," and "finally." Other sequences are implied by logic and by the order in which steps are described, as in: "Brendan and Louisa went out to lunch. They went to a movie theatre and waited in a long line. The film lasted two hours. They arrived at Louisa's house just before five o'clock." Even without sequential cue words, we know in which temporal order the described events occurred.

In a LEAP test question involving sequence, a "key event" can be identified. For example, the key event in the sample item above is "The tube unrolls." The question asks the student to identify which event described in the reading selection comes "immediately after" this key event. To clarify the sequential order of the events including and surrounding this event, we can find the key event in the selection and create a simple diagram of the story sequence in which it appears:



When we examine our diagram, we can easily see which event occurs immediately after our key event: After the tube unrolls, the balloons slide off one by one.

A test question asking for the identification of a first or last event can be similarly analyzed, if necessary. The student can isolate the story sequence from the reading selection and break it into individual steps to identify the first or last step in the sequence. Learning to think about temporal sequences in a clear, logical fashion will help students to identify steps with ease.

As in the other objective in this skill area, this standard requires careful reading of the question, the selection, and the answer choices. The student need not make errors based on careless reading. Encourage your students to read and reread an item until the correct answer has been clearly determined.

SKILL AREA: COMPREHENSION (MAIN IDEA)
(Domain IV, Standard C)

Reading for Main Idea and Supporting Details

SAMPLE ITEM:

One night soon you might be frightened by a strange and beautiful ring of lights sparkling in the sky. Reports of Unidentified Flying Objects (UFOs) will probably pour into various government agencies. However, the creators of this heavenly circle will not be from another galaxy. They will be right here on earth, in France.

Almost a century ago the Eiffel Tower was built for the Paris World's Fair. In honor of its hundredth anniversary, the Eiffel Tower Management Company recently held a contest. The winner was an abstract space sculpture that will orbit 500 miles above the earth's surface. It will consist of 100 shiny, silver balloons, each measuring 19.7 feet in diameter. These balloons will be strung together in a circle approximately 15 miles around. The balloons will be folded into a 35-cubic-foot container and shot into orbit with a rocket. Once in space the container will explode, and the balloons, connected by a tube, will inflate. The luminous sculpture is expected to look like a glowing wreath about the size of the full moon. It will cost 1.5 million dollars to build the space sculpture.

The contest's sponsors chose this entry for its geometric simplicity as well as for its symbolism. The continuous ring of lights will be universally recognized as a representation of humankind united and in harmony. Other entries included a lens-shaped disk and an oversized inflatable "sail." The ring of light was the least expensive of the finalists.

The ring has been designed to destroy itself three years after its launch. A fiery needle will cut the tube, causing it to unroll. The balloons will then slide off one by one and spiral back to earth. Here, they will burn as they enter the earth's atmosphere. All of us who will marvel at this creation will be disappointed when it makes its final orbit.

Which one of the following is the best statement of the main idea of the selection?

A. In 1889 the Eiffel Tower was built for the World's Fair in Paris, France.

B. A continuous circle of lights represents the spirit of the French people.

C. Many useful discoveries will result from a unique space object that will be launched into orbit in 1989.

D. A huge ring of shiny balloons will be launched in 1989 to celebrate the anniversary of the Eiffel Tower.

DESCRIPTION OF TEST QUESTIONS:

1. The student will be presented with a reading selection drawn from materials such as books, newspapers, and magazines.

2. The reading selection will be followed by a question asking for the best statement of the main idea of either the passage as a whole or the first or last paragraph in the reading selection.

3. The selection will communicate a central idea that is implied by the passage as a whole or by its first or last paragraph (depending on the question posed). The main idea will not be expressed in a single sentence in the passage; it will have to be inferred by interrelating ideas expressed.

DESCRIPTION OF ANSWER CHOICES:

1. The correct answer choice will be a statement of the main idea of the reading selection or of the designated paragraph that is accurate, relevant, and the most appropriate in scope of the available answer choices.

2. An incorrect answer choice will be one of the following types:

   a. contradicted: a statement that is contradicted by information in the reading selection or designated paragraph;

b. inappropriate in scope: a statement that is (1) too narrow, hence does not account for the important information in the selection/paragraph or (2) too broad, hence covers a more general viewpoint than that presented in the selection/paragraph; or

c. irrelevant: a statement that contains at least one concept from the reading selection but also introduces information not included in the selection/paragraph.

SAMPLE ITEM ANSWER CHOICE DESCRIPTIONS:

A. inappropriate in scope (too narrow)

B. contradicted

C. irrelevant

D. correct

INSTRUCTIONAL ANALYSIS:

The main idea of a reading selection is a summary of the information presented. It is a central, unifying theme or message. On the LEAP examination, students are required to infer a main idea that is not explicitly stated in a sentence; rather, it will be a theme that unifies several sentences in either a single paragraph or a multiparagraph passage.

To help your students grasp the concept of main idea, you may wish to provide instruction and practice in three important subskill areas:

- differentiating between a detail and a generalization;
- mentally coalescing several details into a single theme or message; and
- recognizing paraphrases, or different ways of expressing the same idea.

A common error made by students looking for a passage's main idea is to mistake a supporting detail for a main-idea statement, particularly if the detail is stated at the beginning of the reading selection. Students need to understand that a supporting detail and a main-idea statement differ in degree of specificity. To help students distinguish between the degree of specificity typically contained in a detail as opposed to in a main-idea statement, present examples of statements such as the following:

Main-Idea Statement:

Steven's life reflects a concern for animals.

Supporting Details:

Steven works for a veterinarian after school and on Saturdays.
He has two cats, a dog, and four birds.
He belongs to three animal-protection organizations.
He helps place stray animals in good homes.

Together, the three details about Steven's life provide support for the generalization that he cares about animals; each individual detail is not, however, a main-idea statement.

The ability to summarize a collection of details in a general, unified statement is an important thinking skill. A student must be able to see the forest, not only the individual trees; if a forest contains oaks, sycamores, and poplars, then we can summarize these details by classifying the forest as deciduous. Similarly, we can look at the details we have been given about Steven and make a generalized statement about his life and his character.

The main-idea statement about Steven's life could be said in several different ways; that is, it can be paraphrased. For example:

> Steven's interests and activities show that he cares about animals.
>
> Steven demonstrates his love of animals in many ways.

Students should be familiar with how paraphrasing is accomplished. Paraphrasing is achieved by using synonyms ("care" for "concern," "shows" for "demonstrates"), changing word order, and replacing terms with others that are conceptually similar though not synonymous ("interests and activities" for "life").

These three critical reading skills--understanding degree of specificity (detail vs. generalization), generalizing from provided details, and paraphrasing--form a foundation from which students can become skilled at recognizing the main-idea statement that best summarizes a particular reading selection.

SKILL AREA: COMPREHENSION (CRITICAL READING)
(Domain IV, Standards DEF)

The skill area testing critical reading includes three objectives: Drawing Conclusions and Inferences, Analyzing Material Read, and Evaluating Material Read.

Drawing Conclusions and Inferences

SAMPLE ITEM:

One night soon you might be frightened by a strange and beautiful ring of lights sparkling in the sky. Reports of Unidentified Flying Objects (UFOs) will probably pour into various government agencies. However, the creators of this heavenly circle will not be from another galaxy. They will be right here on earth, in France.

Almost a century ago the Eiffel Tower was built for the Paris World's Fair. In honor of its hundredth anniversary, the Eiffel Tower Management Company recently held a contest. The winner was an abstract space sculpture that will orbit 500 miles above the earth's surface. It will consist of 100 shiny, silver balloons, each measuring 19.7 feet in diameter. These balloons will be strung together in a circle approximately 15 miles around. The balloons will be folded into a 35-cubic-foot container and shot into orbit with a rocket. Once in space the container will explode, and the balloons, connected by a tube, will inflate. The luminous sculpture is expected to look like a glowing wreath about the size of the full moon. It will cost 1.5 million dollars to build the space sculpture.

The contest's sponsors chose this entry for its geometric simplicity as well as for its symbolism. The continuous ring of lights will be universally recognized as a representation of humankind united and in harmony. Other entries included a lens-shaped disk and an oversized inflatable "sail." The ring of light was the least expensive of the finalists.

The ring has been designed to destroy itself three years after its launch. A fiery needle will cut the tube, causing it to unroll. The balloons will then

slide off one by one and spiral back to earth. Here, they will burn as they enter the earth's atmosphere. All of us who will marvel at this creation will be disappointed when it makes its final orbit.

Which one of the following conclusions can most reasonably be drawn from this selection?

A. The lens-shaped disk would have cost more than 1.5 million dollars to construct.

B. The circle of lights is expected to remain in orbit for an undetermined length of time.

C. Every day, government agencies around the world receive numerous reports of UFO sightings.

D. A committee of French and American scientists and engineers selected the winning entry.

DESCRIPTION OF TEST QUESTIONS:

1. The student will be presented with a reading selection drawn from materials such as books, newspapers, and magazines.

2. The reading selection will be followed by the question "Which of the following conclusions can most reasonably be drawn from this selection?"

3. The reading selection will provide sufficient information for the student to make one of the following inferences:

   a. determine cause and effect;

   b. predict outcomes; or

   c. draw other logical conclusions, including making comparisons, arriving at generalizations from a series of details, and making judgments.

DESCRIPTION OF ANSWER CHOICES:

1. The correct answer choice will be an inference that can be reached solely from information provided in the selection. It will be accurate, relevant, and logically supported by the selection.

2. An incorrect answer choice will be one of the following types:

   a. contradicted: a statement that is contradicted by information presented in the reading selection;

   b. unsupported: a statement for which insufficient supporting evidence is presented in the reading selection; or

   c. irrelevant: a statement that contains at least one concept from the reading selection but for which no supporting evidence is presented in the reading selection.

SAMPLE ITEM ANSWER CHOICE DESCRIPTIONS:

A. correct

B. contradicted

C. unsupported

D. irrelevant

INSTRUCTIONAL ANALYSIS:

The skill area testing students' ability to draw conclusions and inferences involves various types of inference skills, including: determining cause and effect, predicting outcomes, making comparisons, arriving at generalizations, arriving at logical deductions, and making judgments. These skills represent possible ways to interrelate pieces of information provided in a reading selection to answer the test question, "Which of the following conclusions can most reasonably be drawn from the selection?" Because this question is so general in nature, the student cannot go directly from it to the reading passage to locate the correct answer. Instead, each answer choice statement must be considered individually as to whether the statement can be logically inferred, or concluded, from information provided in the reading selection.

To help students develop these inferential proficiencies, you can provide frequent practice and review in the classroom. When a given reading passage (from a textbook, newspaper or magazine article, or story, for example) is being discussed in class, pose questions that require students to use their critical-thinking skills. As needed, guide students to the answers of these questions logically, step by step. Specific inferential approaches are discussed below; these represent ways

in which inference-item answer choices have been created for the LEAP examination. You may wish to present these to your students and follow this instruction with frequent opportunities for application.

Determining Cause and Effect

A cause/effect relationship between two events means that one event causes another to happen, or brings about its occurrence; this latter event is thereby an effect, or result, of the first event. Certain words and phrases link described events in such a way as to signal such a relationship between events.

> Jane is eating because she was hungry.
> (Cause: hunger. Effect: eating.)
>
> As a result of failing an algebra test, Marty had to repeat a course.
> (Cause: failing test. Effect: repeat course.)
>
> The teacher is ill. Therefore, we have a substitute teacher today.
> (Cause: teacher's illness.
> Effect: substitute teacher.)

You may wish to alert your students to such transitional terms, which signify important relationships between events and/or circumstances. Sometimes a cause/effect relationship clearly exists without the presence of such terms, as in the following pairs of sentences:

> Mr. Henley's dog ran away [illegible] times.
> He finally put a fence around the yard.
>
> Mrs. Jones bought a new car.
> She was having a lot of problems with her old one.

Some LEAP questions calling for inferences involve the recognition of this type of relationship. For example, suppose a test question ("Which one of the following conclusions can most reasonably be drawn from this selection?") referred to a reading passage regarding Mrs. Jones' experiences with her car. One of the four answer choices might be "The reason that Mrs. Jones purchased a new car was that she had been having problems with her old car." This would be a correct conclusion. An incorrect conclusion based on this same set of information might be "Mrs. Jones bought a new car because she wanted to change her lifestyle." However, these two statements would probably not appear as answer choices in the same inference item. Rather, the three remaining answer choices would most likely involve other information taken from the reading selection and other inferential approaches, which we will now discuss.

Predicting Outcomes

In recognizing a cause/effect relationship between two events, we can predict an outcome based on this connection. For example, assume that we know that Mr. Wilson always goes to Lafayette when it rains (in other words, that the rain always causes Mr. Wilson to go to Lafayette); if it rains, we can safely predict that Mr. Wilson will go to Lafayette. Conversely, if we know that Mr. Wilson never goes to Lafayette when the sun is shining, then on a sunny day we can safely predict that Mr. Wilson will not go to Lafayette. Therefore, an incorrect inference pertaining to this set of information might be "Because it is sunny, Mr. Wilson will probably go to Lafayette today." Such a conclusion is contradicted by the information given.

Making Comparisons

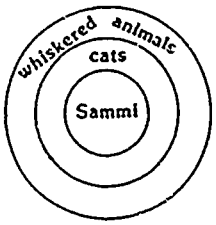
If we know that Jim is taller than Carol and that Carol is taller than Benny, then we know that Jim is taller than Benny (or that Benny is shorter than Carol and shorter than Jim). Making comparisons means using the information that is stated to infer relationships that clearly exist even if they are not stated. You may wish to provide practice for your students in this skill by posing questions in class that require this type of comparison-making. If an article states, for instance, that New Orleans receives more rainfall in July than Birmingham, Alabama, does, and the article later states that, in July, more rain falls in Birmingham than in Memphis, Tennessee, a correct inference would be "In July, less rain falls in Memphis, Tennessee, than in New Orleans, Louisiana." An incorrect inference that is contradicted by the information in the article might be "More rain falls in Memphis than in New Orleans during the month of July."

Arriving at Generalizations

A generalization is a succinct summary of various pieces of information. For example, if we know that a certain park has a clean, clear pond surrounded by a lovely flower garden and many tall, graceful trees, we can "sum up" these facts in a generalization such as "The park is pretty." An incorrect generalization might contradict one or more of these facts by saying, "The park is dirty and unattractive." Another type of incorrect generalization might encompass more than is provided by the details by stating something such as "There are many things to see and to do in the park." The details provided do not mention any possible activities; therefore, there is nothing to support a claim that there are "many things to do" in this particular park.

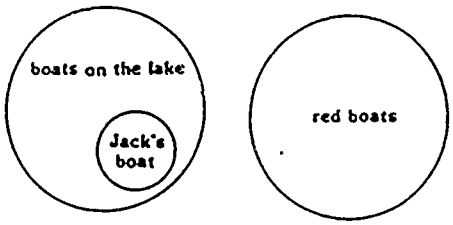
Arriving at Logical Deductions

These inferences involve what logicians refer to as "syllogisms," which pertain to classification, deciding whether something belongs to a set of entities. We can use simple diagrams such as those used by young students when studying "sets." For example:



All cats have whiskers.
Sammi is a cat.

Correct inference:
Sammi has whiskers.



There are no red boats on the lake.
Jack's boat is on the lake.

Correct inference:
Jack's boat is not red.

Incorrect inferences regarding these two sets of information, respectively, might be "Sammi does not have whiskers" and "Jack's boat is red." Help your students to approach written information in a logical way by providing brief examples such as these and then indicating occurrences of similar relationships among events discussed in class.

Making Judgments

This type of inference requires the student to evaluate a given set of information with a particular goal in mind. Knowing what is desired and what is available, a match must be made. Such a judgment is required in the selection of a report topic, an apartment, a bicycle, a car, or a piece of clothing. Students need to be able to see options clearly and make decisions based on those options. Here is an example of such a decision-making process:

> Louis needs a job that is part time, pays well, and is in house construction. He cannot work weekends or evenings.
>
> Job 1: part time job in house construction; pays well.
>
> Job 2: well-paying, full-time job in house construction; some weekend work.

Job 3: part-time, well-paying weekend house construction work.

From this information, we can see that Job 1 best fulfills Louis' requirements. This is a correct inference given the information with which we have been provided. An incorrect conclusion would assess one of the other two jobs as the best job for Louis.

By learning to approach ideas and events in a well-reasoned way, young readers can develop their critical thinking and reading capacities. Cultivate these skills in your students by offering frequent opportunities to infer information that is implied, rather than explicitly stated, in reading materials.

Analyzing Material Read

SAMPLE ITEM:

(See reading passage from previous Sample Item.)

Which one of the following best describes the time when the events in this selection take place?

A. the creation of a memorial to the Eiffel Tower

B. approximately a century ago

C. the present

D. the year when the Eiffel Tower was built

DESCRIPTION OF TEST QUESTIONS:

1. The student will be presented with a reading selection drawn from materials such as books, newspapers, and magazines.

2. The reading selection will be followed by a question that asks about a structural element (character, setting, plot, or point of view) in the reading selection. A test question about character, setting, or plot will ask for the best description of a specified structural element. A test question about point of view will ask, "Who is the narrator of the selection above?"

3. The reading selection will provide sufficient information to provide an analysis of one of the following structural elements:

   a. Character: A person portrayed in a literary selection.

   b. Setting: The time and/or place in which a narrative or drama is enacted.

   c. Plot: The series of events that make up a story line.

   d. Point of view: The perspective from which a story is told.

DESCRIPTION OF ANSWER CHOICES:

1. The correct answer choice will be an accurate description of the structural element asked for by the question.

2. An incorrect answer choice will be one of the following types:

   a. contradicted: an analysis that is inconsistent with information presented in the reading selection;

   b. incomplete: an analysis that does not take into account all of the relevant information presented in the reading selection;

   c. irrelevant: a plausible but incorrect analysis of the structural element asked for by the question; or

   d. incorrect element: an analysis of a structural element listed above (character, setting, plot, or point of view) other than the element asked for by the question.

SAMPLE ITEM ANSWER CHOICE DESCRIPTIONS:

A. incorrect element

B. contradicted

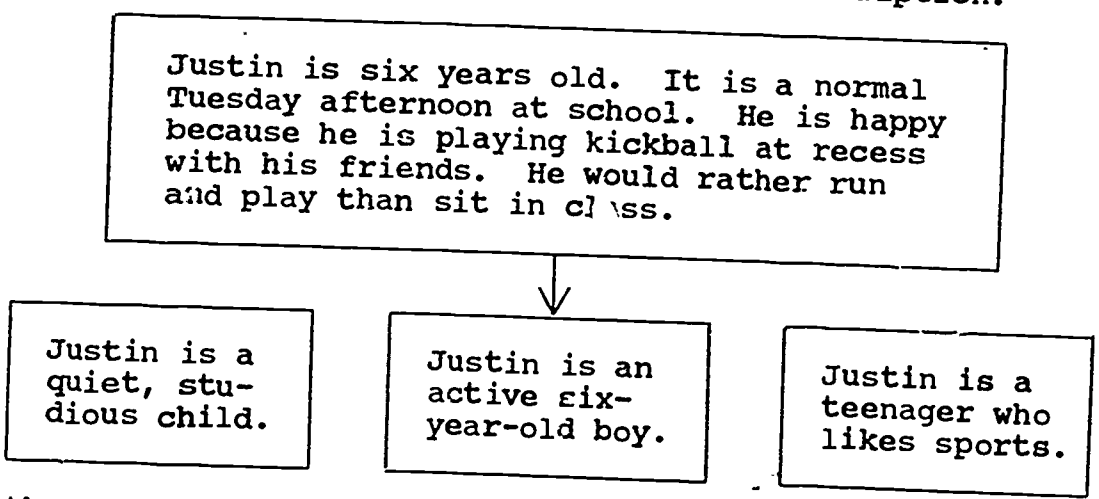
C. correct

D. incomplete

INSTRUCTIONAL ANALYSIS:

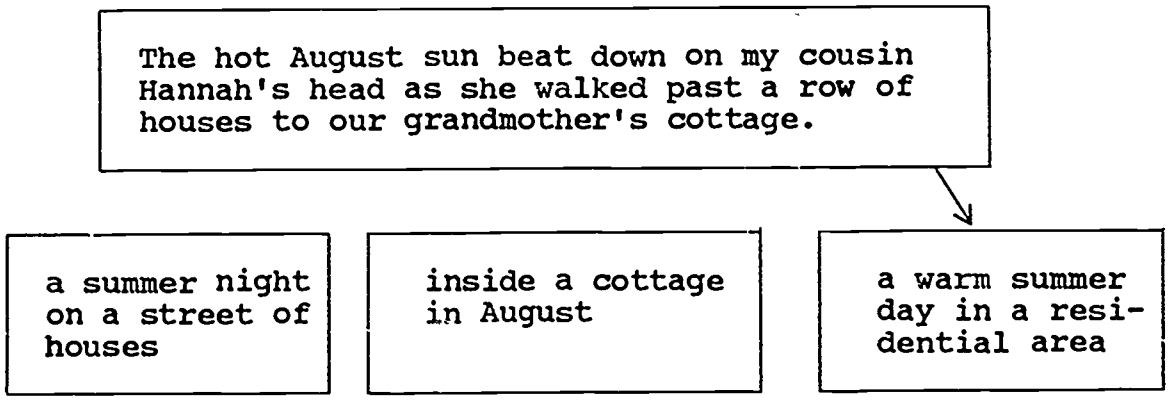
Analyzing Material Read, the second critical-reading objective, involves literary analysis of four structural elements: character, setting, plot, and point of view. You can familiarize your students with these basic literary elements by using examples from reading selections and from students' own stories. With such examples, help students to both identify and differentiate these structural building blocks of literature.

Character: An author may describe characters physically and reveal them through what they do, say, feel, and think. When a LEAP test question asks a student to choose the best description of a given character, the student should read the reading selection and the answer choices carefully to determine which one of the answer choices best captures the personality traits of the person in the story. Critical-reading processes such as generalizing and making judgments (see pp.20-21) play important roles in identifying the correct character description.



On the LEAP test, the description of a different structural element can appear as a distractor, or incorrect answer choice. Therefore, an incorrect answer choice following a question about a character could describe setting, plot, or point of view. For example, "a school playground where children are playing kickball" describes the setting of the above passage, not Justin's character.

Setting: A setting, or context, of a story may be described in terms of time and/or place. The setting in which story events occur can be described directly or revealed by characters' words, actions, and thoughts. As when approaching a character question, a student who reads, "Which of the following best describes the setting in which the story takes place?" must read the passage and the four answer choices carefully to see which description matches the setting of the story.



A description of what happens (plot), Hannah (character), or who the narrator is (Hannah's cousin--point of view) would be incorrect answers to a question regarding setting.

Plot: A plot is a sequence of related events comprising the story line of a literary selection. Usually, a plot involves the resolution of a problem or conflict. A plot statement briefly and succinctly summarizes what happens in a story. You can help your students to be aware of story lines by teaching about plot structure (conflict → complications → action → climax → resolution). However, such a detailed knowledge is not required by LEAP plot questions, which will always ask, "Which of the following best describes the plot of the story?"

Once again, it is important that students do not mistake a statement limited in scope to character, setting, or point of view for a plot description.

Point of view: LEAP items do not require strict literary analysis of point of view; a student need not identify the narrative voice as "first person" or "third person omniscient." The test question will simply ask, "Who is the narrator of the selection above?" Sometimes the narrator is an unidentified outside narrator, as in the following passage:

> A cool breeze blew in through the open door. Amanda heard the leaves rustle on the trees outside.

(Though Amanda's name is mentioned, she is not the narrator.) Other passages are written in the first person. The identity of a first-person narrator can be provided directly or indirectly--by another character, for example:

> "Jack!" Susan cried. I heard her calling me, but I could not respond.

Here, we know that Jack is the narrator, as we do in the following passage.

> I picked up my trophy. "Jack Lloyd," it said on an engraved gold plate.

Encourage your students to ask themselves these simple questions in their own fiction-reading experiences: What is this character like? What is the setting of this story? What was that story about? Whose voice is telling this story? With practice, your students can master this LEAP objective and become more competent readers.

Evaluating Material Read

SAMPLE ITEM:

> (See reading passage from previous Sample Item.)

Which of the following is an OPINION presented in the selection?

A. There is no reason to be frightened of UFOs.

B. Many people will report seeing UFOs when the circle of lights appears in the sky.

C. The ring of lights was the most complex entry that was submitted.

D. The Eiffel Tower was built for the Paris World's Fair in 1889.

DESCRIPTION OF TEST QUESTIONS:

1. The student will be presented with a reading selection drawn from materials such as books, newspapers, and magazines.

2. The reading selection will be followed by the question "Which of the following is [a FACT/an OPINION] presented in the selection?"

3. The reading selection will contain at least one fact (a piece of information that has objective reality) and one opinion (a belief or judgment).

DESCRIPTION OF ANSWER CHOICES:

1. The correct answer choice will be a fact that is presented in the reading selection or an opinion that is presented in the selection, depending on whether the question calls for the identification of a fact or an opinion.

2. For test items requiring the identification of a fact, an incorrect answer choice will be one of the following types:

   a. contradicted fact: a statement presented as a fact but contradicted by information in the reading selection;

   b. irrelevant fact: a statement containing at least one concept from the selection that is presented as a fact but that introduces information not included in the reading selection; or

   c. opinion: a statement of opinion that contains at least one concept from the reading selection.

3. For test items requiring the identification of an opinion, an incorrect answer choice will be one of the following types:

   a. contradicted opinion: a statement presented as an opinion but contradicted by information in the reading selection;

   b. irrelevant opinion: a statement containing at least one concept from the selection that is presented as an opinion but that introduces information not included in the reading selection; or

   c. fact: a statement of fact that contains at least one concept from the reading selection.

SAMPLE ITEM ANSWER CHOICE DESCRIPTIONS:

A. irrelevant opinion

B. correct

C. contradicted opinion

D. fact

INSTRUCTIONAL ANALYSIS:

This standard requires students to discern statements of fact from statements of opinion. Distinguishing between fact and opinion is an essential component of critical thinking. Given the quantity of information to which students are exposed, they must learn to differentiate fact from opinion in order to form their own well-reasoned conclusions.

Emphasize that a fact is a piece of information that is known to be true. Facts have objective reality; that is, they can be supported by evidence through direct observation or measurement. For example:

> The ship reached New Orleans on Friday, May 23. (an observed event)
> Betsy weighs 115 pounds. (a measurable attribute)

Unlike a fact, an opinion is a piece of information that cannot be verified objectively. It is sometimes difficult, however, to distinguish opinions from facts because opinions are often stated so forcefully. There are certain words that signal the statement of a belief ("should," "must," "definitely"), a value judgment ("important," "beautiful," disappointing"), or a prediction ("probably," "possibly," "likely"). For example:

> Students should study for at least an hour each evening. (a belief)
>
> This is an important occasion. (a value judgment)
>
> John will probably arrive on time. (a prediction)

The LEAP items for this skill require the student to select from four statements a statement of fact or opinion (whichever is designated in the test question) expressed in a given reading selection. Thus, students must be able not only to distinguish a statement of fact from that of opinion but also to ascertain that the fact (or opinion) they are considering is stated in the reading selection.

SKILL AREA: COMPOSITION
(Domain V, Standards DEG)

SAMPLE ITEM:

Read the two assignments presented below. Then, pick one assignment and prepare a response. Do not respond to both assignments.

1. Expository Composition: You have a pen pal in a foreign country. In order to give your pen pal a clearer idea of what your life is like, write a letter that discusses something you do often. You can write about something enjoyable (such as a hobby or sport) or a responsibility (such as homework or a cleaning task).

   In your letter, you might want to describe all the steps involved in this activity. Perhaps you might include how you feel about this activity and why you do it. You may wish to organize your response (mentally or on scratch paper) before you begin writing. Be sure to proofread the final version of your response to make certain that you have committed no careless errors.

2. Persuasive Composition: Your school is deciding whether to adopt a new student dress code; that is, a set of rules regarding acceptable clothing to be worn by students when at school. Write a short essay supporting your opinion, pro or con, regarding a basic dress code.

   In your essay, you might want to discuss the feelings, rights, and responsibilities of students, parents, and school officials. You might wish to consider how rules regarding what students wear to school might be enforced or if students would face greater clothing costs to maintain a dress code. You may wish to organize your response (mentally or on scratch paper) before you begin writing. Be sure to proofread the final version of your response to make certain that you have committed no careless errors.

GENERAL DIRECTIONS TO THE STUDENT

Your response should be two or more paragraphs and approximately 200-300 words in length. It must respond to one of the two assignments described above. It must be written in English. Responses will be scored on the bases of responsiveness to the assignment, support/elaboration, organization, mechanics, sentence formation, and word usage. Letter format conventions (such as salutation) may be used but will not be scored. You may write in cursive or print, but your writing must be legible.

Scratch paper has been provided as well as lined space for practicing or writing a rough draft. The rough draft will not be scored. The final response for each topic must be written on the appropriate page(s) of the answer booklet. Students must write the final draft with a No. 2 lead pencil so that scorers can read the papers.

Remember to select one of the writing assignments presented above.

DESCRIPTION OF WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:

1. The student will be presented with two writing assignments. The student will be asked to respond to one of the two assignments. Each assignment will specify the purpose and audience for the written communication requested.

2. One assignment will call for expository writing in one of the following forms:

   a. an expository letter on a topic

   b. an essay arranging ideas in a given expository order

3. The other assignment will call for persuasive writing in one of the following forms:

   a. a persuasive letter on an issue

   b. an essay on an issue of personal, social, or political interest

4. In each assignment, the first paragraph will establish a central writing purpose and the intended recipient of the communication. The second paragraph of the directions will provide content suggestions and recommendations regarding organization and proofreading.

5. General directions to the student will follow each pair of assignments.

6. Dictionaries must be available to the students during the writing session.

SCORING OF WRITTEN RESPONSES:

1. The following criteria will be used to evaluate writing responses:

   A. Responsiveness to assignment

      (1) Purpose
      (2) Audience

   B. Support/Elaboration/Organization

      (1) Details
      (2) Reasons
      (3) Structure
      (4) Clarity

   C. Sentence Formation

      (1) Correct sentence structure
      (2) Varied sentence structures

   D. Usage

      (1) Agreement

         (a) Subject/verb agreement
         (b) Pronoun and antecedent agreement

      (2) Selection

         (a) Noun usage
         (b) Verb usage
         (c) Pronoun usage
         (d) Adjective usage
         (e) Adverb usage
         (f) Appropriate vocabulary for the specified audience

E. Mechanics

(1) Capitalization
(2) Punctuation
(3) Spelling

2. A special adaptation of the domain scoring model will be used to evaluate responses. The Louisiana model provides for each paper to be independently scored by two readers. Each reader assigns five different scores, one for each of the following dimensions:

A. responsiveness to assignment
B. support, elaboration, organization
C. sentence formation
D. usage
E. mechanics

A detailed description of the Louisiana model is currently being developed and will be provided as a supplement prior to implementation of the LEAP program.

INSTRUCTIONAL ANALYSIS:

The writing of any given composition is a process that can be thought of as involving four steps:

1. prewriting--ideas for the written piece are generated;

2. draft writing--an initial version of the composition is written in an organized form;

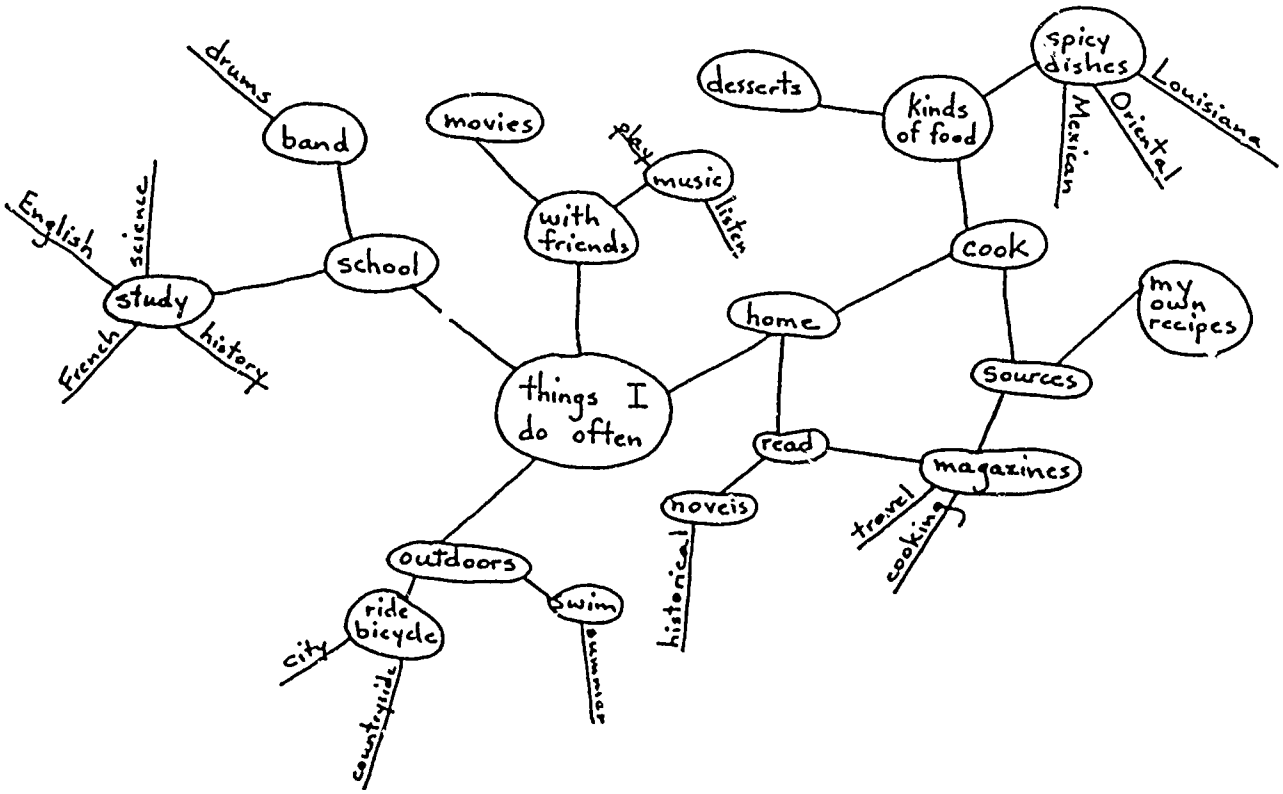
3. revision--mechanical and organizational problems are resolved; and

4. final writing--the composition is produced in its corrected form.

Suggestions for Teaching the Writing Process

Some students approaching such an assignment use a "stream-of-consciousness" strategy, writing thoughts spontaneously and without a sense of organization. This brainstorming is an important part of the writing process; however, it should be considered the prewriting phase, not the entire process. During this phase, thoughts should be allowed to flow freely. An easy and effective way to generate and record this information as it comes to mind is called "clustering." This technique involves beginning with a topic, which is placed at the center of a blank page, and allowing related ideas to flow in branches from this central theme. We can use the first sample assignment to

generate ideas. The assignment calls for a letter describing "something you do often," a "hobby" or a "responsibility." Beginning with a central theme, "things I do often," a cluster can be used to generate a topic for the student's letter:



From this unrestrained "clustering" of ideas, we can see that "cooking" might be a suitable topic for our student's composition because it has generated various ideas for potential material.

Another way to generate ideas for our composition is by simply writing rapidly, freely, without lifting the pen from the paper. A student might write free-flowing thoughts beginning:

"Things that I do often . . . I get up, I go to school, I come home, I cook. I love to cook. Someday I will be a great chef. I like to cook spicy Louisiana dishes and Oriental dinners from places like China and Thailand, and I like to make up my own recipes combining ingredients used in different cuisines."

Again, as with the clustering process, the student arrives at a topic for the letter and ways to elaborate on this topic by allowing the mind to wander. Alternatively, the student could

have simply jotted down words and phrases, or even abbreviations. When writing a composition for the LEAP examination, students should be encouraged to make good use of their scratch paper for such a brainstorming session.

This raw material can then have a tentative organizational scheme imposed on it. Organization is of crucial importance to a reader trying to make sense of a written work. There are various ways in which a student can organize a written composition. These organizational approaches include:

Chronological: Events are described in the order in which they occur. ("Here is a typical day in the life of Henri St. Germain: I wake up my brother and head for the kitchen. I remove three eggs and some Swiss cheese from the refrigerator, and an omelette pan from the cupboard.")

General to Specific: The writer moves from a general topic to a specific example(s). ("I enjoy many activities in my busy life. I read novels, I go swimming when the weather's warm, and I play the harmonica. My favorite activity, however, is cooking.")

Compare and Contrast: A topic is discussed in terms of its similarities and differences with something else. "I seem to spend most of my time either studying or cooking. They are similar activities in that they require focus, concentration, and energy. However, for me, studying is boring; you have to learn what other people tell you to learn. Cooking, on the other hand, is fun; you can choose whatever recipes you want to use, and you can even make up your own!"

You may wish to review these and other organizational schemes with your students. Whenever students approach a written assignment, remind them to make a decision regarding organization before they begin writing their first draft. Once an organizational approach has been selected, the student may wish to apply numbers to ideas that have been generated in the prewriting phase. These numbers can indicate the order in which the ideas should appear in the composition. Depending on time constraints, decisions regarding an organizational format can be changed if the material seems to better lend itself to another scheme.

Another important aspect of organization is that a written communication should have a beginning (introduction), a middle (body), and an end (conclusion). These will take different forms depending on the form of the communication. In an essay, an introductory paragraph presents the topic, the body (which can consist of several paragraphs) discusses the subject in more detail, and the conclusion reiterates the focus of the paper in a

succinct way. In a friendly letter, an introduction might consist of, for example, an expression of appreciation ("Thank you for your letter; I enjoyed hearing from you.") followed by a set of personal questions ("How are you? Are you enjoying your classes this semester?"). The body of the letter can contain any number of things; for the purpose of the LEAP composition, it should focus primarily on the given topic. The conclusion, which can echo the introduction, should be a friendly transition toward closing the letter ("Again, thank you for writing. I look forward to your next letter.").

In addition to an organizational approach, a composition must be written with the specified audience and purpose in mind. The tone and vocabulary in a friendly letter will, of course, differ from those used in a business letter or essay. You may wish to provide practice in writing about an identical topic with different forms, audiences, and purposes in mind. For example, you might decide on a topic such as "school dress code" and assign individual students different types of communications to write on this subject: a letter to a friend, complaining about a new dress code that has been imposed at school; a letter to the principal, arguing in favor of (or against) such a dress code; an essay presenting the pros and cons of such a policy; and so on. Emphasize to students that opinions must be elaborated upon and supported, not simply stated.

A first draft should, ideally, be produced and then painstakingly edited for errors in organization, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, sentence formation, and word usage. Due to time limits, a student writing a LEAP composition might wish to go directly from notes to a final draft. If so, this final version should be written carefully and, in addition, should be proofread and corrected after it has been completed. As long as an error is clearly changed and is legible, students will not be penalized for corrections to their compositions. Encourage your students to search for errors and to correct them as best they can.

Offer your students ample opportunity to express themselves in writing. Writing is truly a skill that improves with practice. You may wish to have your students write in a journal for five minutes every day when they arrive in class. You might write a topic on the board and have students spontaneously generate ideas in writing, then discuss as a group how the ideas might be organized in a letter or essay. Help your students to feel comfortable communicating their thoughts and feelings on paper. The establishment of such a practice will serve students well throughout their lives.

SKILL AREA: MECHANICS
(Domain VI, Standards ABC)

The skill area testing mechanics includes three objectives: Capitalization, Punctuation, and Spelling.

Capitalization

SAMPLE ITEM:

[1] Dear Mr. Melvin,

[2] Our staff found the blue sweater that you misplaced during your school's field trip. [3] The sweater is enclosed. [4] I hope that your students enjoyed their stay in Washington, D.c. [5] We will soon be accepting reservations for next year.

[6] Sincerely yours,

[7] Henry Rumboldt
Rumboldt's Travel Lodge

In which part, if any, of this letter is there an error in capitalization?

A. Part [2]

B. Part [4]

C. Part [6]

D. None of the above

DESCRIPTION OF TEST QUESTIONS:

1. The student will be presented with a written communication representing the type of writing likely to be required of high school students and young adults: friendly and business letters as well as narrative, descriptive, and expository essays. Each part (sentence; letter salutation, closing, or signature) of the communication will be identified by a bracketed number.

2. The communication will either be free of errors or will contain a violation of one of the following capitalization conventions:

   a. An initial capital letter is always used in:

      (1) the first word in a sentence

      (2) days, months, and holidays

      (3) streets, towns, states, and countries

      (4) names and titles of persons

      (5) languages, peoples, religions, religious affiliations, political parties, specific clubs, and businesses

      (6) initials and proper-noun abbreviations

      (7) titles of books, poems, stories, courses and reports

      (8) letter headings, salutations, and closings

   b. An initial capital letter is never used in:

      (1) family relationships used alone (not before a name)
      - example of error: I visited my Aunt yesterday.

      (2) compass directions not referring to regions
      - example of error: Let's go North on this road.

      (3) names of seasons (Personified seasons will not be tested.)
      - example of error: The air is cold this Fall.

      (4) prepositions, conjunctions, or articles
      - example of error: The Fourth Of July is here.

      (5) names of subjects not followed by numbers
      - example of error: I am studying Biology.

      Other uses of superfluous initial capitals may also be tested.

3. The communication will be followed by the question "In which part, if any, of this [letter/paragraph] is there an error in capitalization?"

DESCRIPTION OF ANSWER CHOICES:

1. For items containing no error, the correct answer choice will be D, "None of the above." For items containing an error, the correct answer choice will be the one that indicates the communication part in which the error appears.

2. For items containing no error, the incorrect answer choices will be A, B, and C, which will represent communication parts that are free of capitalization errors. For items containing a capitalization error, the incorrect answer choices will be the two answer choices indicating communication parts that are error free and D, "None of the above."

SAMPLE ITEM ANSWER CHOICE DESCRIPTIONS:

A. proper capitalization

B. correct (capitalization error: Washington, D.c.)

C. proper capitalization

D. unidentified error

INSTRUCTIONAL ANALYSIS:

Explain to students that capitalization is not merely an arbitrary array of rules. Capitalization functions as a means of individualization, or specification of a particular entity. As such, capitalization can signal a proper noun or title as well as the beginning of a sentence. Identifiable entities such as "Jason," "Mississippi," and "Catcher in the Rye" are capitalized, unlike the general categories, or classes, to which they belong, namely, man, river, and book.

You may wish to provide practice sheets that require your students to identify which terms in a list of sentences or reading passages should be capitalized. A double underline beneath a letter can be introduced as the proofreading mark that shows that a lower-case letter needs to be capitalized, and a slash through a capitalized letter as indicating that the letter should not be capitalized. Students presented with a passage in which capitalization errors appear can use these symbols to indicate the necessary corrections. You may also want to provide your students with a reference list of capitalization rules. Some secondary students may be unfamiliar with even the most basic capitalization rules. You may find that more intensive instruction will be required for these students.

Punctuation

SAMPLE ITEM:

> [1] Johnny Merchant, a parking meter repairman, announced yesterday that he is running for the office of town mayor. [2] "After working in this city for 30 years," Merchant said, I know what could be accomplished." [3] He is the third candidate to announce campaign plans.

In which part, if any, of this paragraph is there an error in punctuation?

A. Part [1]

B. Part [2]

C. Part [3]

D. None of the above

DESCRIPTION OF TEST QUESTIONS:

1. The student will be presented with a written communication representing the type of writing apt to be required of high school students and young adults: friendly and business letters as well as narrative, descriptive, and expository essays. Each part (sentence; letter salutation, closing, or signature) of the communication will be identified by a bracketed number.

2. The communication will either be free of errors or will contain a violation of one of the following punctuation conventions:

   a. A period is used:

      (1) at the end of a declarative sentence

      (2) at the end of an imperative (command) sentence

      (3) after an abbreviation or initial

      (4) inside closing quotation marks

b. A question mark is used:

(1) at the end of a question

c. A comma is used:

(1) between the month and year in a date

(2) after the salutation in a letter

(3) after the closing in a letter

(4) between a city and its state

(5) with words or simple phrases in a series (the comma before "and" will not be tested)

(6) after a noun of direct address

(7) after a last name that is written before a first name

(8) after an introductory word such as "Well" or "Yes"

(9) before and after an appositive or parenthetical expression

(10) after an introductory clause

(11) inside closing quotation marks

(12) to set off a direct quotation from the rest of the sentence ("Take this stone," Akbar said, "and toss it into the lake.")

(13) to avoid ambiguity or misreading

d. An exclamation mark is used:

(1) at the end of a sentence to convey intensity

e. A colon is used:

(1) between the hours and minutes in the time of day

(2) in the salutation of a business letter

f. A semicolon is used:

(1) to separate clauses of a compound sentence when there is no conjunction or when clauses contain commas

(2) in a series of elements that contain commas

g. An apostrophe is used:

(1) in a singular or plural possessive noun

(2) in a contraction

h. Quotation marks are used:

(1) to show the exact words of a speaker

(2) in titles of articles, essays, short stories, short poems, chapters, songs, and television programs

i. An underline is used:

(1) with words that would be italicized in print (titles of books, plays, magazines, newspapers)

j. A hyphen is used:

(1) to syllabicate a word that is divided at the end of a line

(2) in certain compound words and spelled-out numbers

DESCRIPTION OF ANSWER CHOICES:

1. For items containing no error, the correct answer choice will be D, "None of the above." For items containing an error, the correct answer choice will be the one that indicates the communication part in which the error appears.

2. For items containing no error, the incorrect answer choices will be A, B, and C, which will represent communication parts that are free of punctuation errors. For items containing a punctuation error, the incorrect answer choices will be the two answer choices indicating communication parts that are error-free and D, "None of the above."

SAMPLE ITEM ANSWER CHOICE DESCRIPTIONS:

A. proper punctuation

B. correct (punctuation error: missing set of quotation marks before "I")

C. proper punctuation

D. unidentified error

INSTRUCTIONAL ANALYSIS:

You may wish to emphasize the function of punctuation to your students, who may view this system of written symbols as an arbitrary and annoying set of rules to be memorized. Provide students with examples of how punctuation marks can really make a difference in the meaning of a sentence. For example, the statement "Father Joe has arrived" can bear various messages depending on how it is punctuated.

Father Joe has arrived.	(Someone named Father Joe is here.)
Father, Joe has arrived.	(The speaker is telling his father that someone named Joe has arrived.)
Father Joe has arrived! Father, Joe has arrived!	(Excitement has been added to the above statements.)

Review and practice in the use of punctuation conventions eligible for testing on the LEAP examination can help your students to recognize errors when approaching the items in this standard.

Spelling

SAMPLE ITEM:

Which of the following three words is misspelled?

A. turnament

B. sufficient

C. utensil

D. None of the above

DESCRIPTION OF TEST QUESTIONS:

1. The student will be presented with the question "Which of the following three words is misspelled?" followed by four answer choices as described below.

DESCRIPTION OF ANSWER CHOICES:

1. The four answer choices will consist of three words, one of which may be misspelled, and "None of the above."

2. For items containing no misspelled word, the correct answer choice will be D, "None of the above." For all other items, the correct answer choice will be the misspelled word.

3. For items containing no error, the incorrect answer choices will be A, B, and C, which will correspond to words that are spelled correctly. For items containing a misspelled word, the incorrect answer choices will be the two properly spelled words and D, "None of the above."

SAMPLE ITEM ANSWER CHOICE DESCRIPTIONS:

A. correct (misspelled word)

B. proper spelling

C. proper spelling

D. unidentified error

INSTRUCTIONAL ANALYSIS:

Spelling in English presents a challenge to many writers. Sound-letter correspondences are generally vague and inconsistent. In addition, a multitude of words and affixes have been borrowed from other languages and will defy spelling patterns. While some people have little trouble mastering this skill, others understandably find English spelling a constant source of frustration.

A writer can approach spelling from two directions: learning whatever spelling patterns do exist in English and memorizing individual words and affixes. Spelling "rules" are listed in most composition textbooks. These can be used as a reference when spelling questions arise, and reviewed from time to time. Even though they do not fully account for the spellings of most English words, knowledge of such patterns can help a speller to use the dictionary effectively. This invaluable reference source is the single most important tool for spellers; encourage your students to use it often. Reassure students who find dictionary searches difficult that practice not only makes the process easier, but also improves spelling skills.

To conquer difficult spelling words, foster students' familiarity with these words. Words whose spellings are

problematic for many students can be posted in large letters around the classroom. Students can designate a notebook section to their own particular spelling problems. For example, students can write a difficult word in their notebook along with a sentence containing the word whenever they encounter such a word in reading materials. As with most types of problems, identifying one's difficulties is the first step toward overcoming them.

SKILL AREA: SENTENCE STRUCTURE
(Domain VII, Standards ABCE)

The skill area testing sentence structure includes two objectives: Sertence Formation and Sentence Combination.

Sentence Formation

SAMPLE ITEM:

> [1] Everyone has a job to do to get ready for this party. [2] Hubert will sweep the floors. [3] Mary will wash the windows. [4] For Terrence, cleaning the bathrooms. [5] We have only three hours to finish; every moment counts.

In which part, if any, of this paragraph is there an error in forming sentences?

A. Part [1]

B. Part [4]

C. Part [5]

D. None of the above

DESCRIPTION OF TEST QUESTIONS:

1. The student will be presented with a written communication representing the type of writing apt to be required of high school students and young adults: friendly letters and business letters as well as narrative, descriptive, and expository essays. Each part (sentence; letter salutation, closing, or signature) of the communication will be identified by a bracketed number.

2. The communication will either be free of errors or contain a run-on sentence or a sentence fragment.

3. The boxed communication will be followed by the question "In which part, if any, of this [letter/paragraph] is there an error in forming sentences?"

DESCRIPTION OF ANSWER CHOICES:

1. For items containing no error, the correct answer choice will be D, "None of the above." For items containing an error, the correct answer choice will represent the communication part that is a fragment or a run-on.

2. For items containing no error, the incorrect answer choices will be A, B, and C, which will represent communication parts that are free of sentence-formation errors. For items containing a fragment or a run-on, the incorrect answer choices will represent communication parts that are error-free and D, "None of the above."

SAMPLE ITEM ANSWER CHOICE DESCRIPTIONS:

A. proper formation

B. correct (sentence fragment)

C. proper formation

D. unidentified error

INSTRUCTIONAL ANALYSIS:

This objective assesses the student's ability to recognize sentence fragments and run-ons. Many students need review and practice in this skill area. Some maintain popular misconceptions regarding sentence formation, such as: (1) a complete sentence is any group of words that begins with a capital letter and ends with a period; (2) a sentence fragment is always a short group of words; or (3) a run-on is a sentence that is "too long." In fact, you may wish to point out to students that a run-on can be shorter than a sentence fragment, as in the following examples:

Hannah is tall Freddie is short. (run-on)

Because there are many students in Mr. Delaney's first-period English class. (fragment)

To recognize such constructions, students need to understand what constitutes a complete, properly formed sentence. Emphasize to your students that a sentence needs to contain a subject and a predicate; in addition, it must express a complete thought. A group of words that does not meet these conditions is a sentence fragment. Sentence fragments leave the reader with thoughts such as "Well, what about it?" or "Who did?" You may wish to review types of sentence fragments with your students, for example,

(1) a subject (with or without an appositive or appositive phrase) or predicate standing alone; (2) a clause beginning with a conjunction; and (3) a phrase or string of phrases (prepositional, participial, gerund, appositive, or infinitive). For clarification of these terms, have students refer to their composition books. Although a review of such types may prove helpful to students, it is not necessary to identify a sentence fragment by type in order to recognize it as a fragment.

An exception to the subject/predicate rule is the imperative statement, or command, in which the subject is understood to be the person being addressed by the speaker. ("Come here.") Such a statement is considered a complete sentence despite the fact that it contains no expressed subject. Although LEAP sentence formation items will not generally contain imperative sentences, students should be aware of this distinction.

Students should know that a run-on sentence consists of two or more complete sentences that have been inadequately joined. Two sentences can be combined into one either with a semicolon or, more commonly, with a comma followed by a conjunction. This can be a coordinating conjunction, such as "and" or "but," or a subordinating conjunction, such as "because" or "although." If two sentences run together without any punctuation or with only a comma to separate them, they create a run-on sentence. Both types of run-ons will appear as errors on the LEAP examination.

One way to reinforce the distinctions among sentence fragments, run-ons, and properly formed sentences is to present students with lists containing some of each type of statement. For each statement, ask students to identify whether it is a sentence fragment, run-on, or properly formed sentence. Have students justify their answers.

Once students recognize sentence fragments and run-ons, they may notice that authors sometimes use sentence fragments and run-ons to achieve certain effects in their writing. Authors sometimes use a fragment for emphasis, for example ("He ate the entire pie. The entire pie!"), or a run-on for a sense of routine or repetition ("She went to work, she came home, she ate dinner, she went to bed, she woke up, she went to work."). Although you may want to require beginning writers to form their sentences correctly, such an awareness of the literary uses of fragments and run-ons can be encouraged.

Sentence Combination

SAMPLE ITEM:

> Milton went on the ski trip to be with his friends. Milton hates to ski.

Which of the following sentences most effectively combines the information given in the two sentences above?

A. Milton went on the trip only because he likes to be with his friends.

B. Milton went on the ski trip to be with his friends because he doesn't like to ski.

C. Although Milton hates to ski, he went on the ski trip to be with his friends.

D. Milton went on the ski trip to be with his friends, and Milton hates to ski.

DESCRIPTION OF TEST QUESTIONS:

1. The student will be presented with a pair of sentences. The sentences will be related in such a way that it will be possible to determine:

   a. whether (1) the sentences are coordinate in their importance or (2) one of the two sentences is subordinate to the other; and

   b. which conjunction can be used to combine the two sentences.

2. The communication will be followed by the question "Which of the following sentences most effectively combines the information given in the two sentences above?"

DESCRIPTION OF ANSWER CHOICES:

1. Each answer choice will be a two-clause sentence combining most or all of the information provided in the two sentences.

2. The correct answer choice will be the sentence that conveys:

   a. an appropriate relationship (coordinate or subordinate);

   b. a proper conjunction (consistent with the content-implied relationship between the two sentences); and

   c. all of the essential information contained in the two sentences.

3. An incorrect answer choice will demonstrate one of the following:

   a. inappropriate relationship: a subordination when a coordination is required or a coordination when a subordination is required;

   b. improper conjunction: the use of a conjunction that is not consistent with the content-implied nature of the relationship between the two sentences; or

   c. omitted information: the omission of essential information presented in the two sentences.

SAMPLE ITEM ANSWER CHOICE DESCRIPTIONS:

A. omitted information

B. improper conjunction

C. correct

D. inappropriate relationship

INSTRUCTIONAL ANALYSIS:

Combining two sentences involves an awareness of two aspects of the sentences' relationship:

- Are these two sentences equal in importance to each other (coordinate) or is one semantically dependent upon (subordinate to) the other?

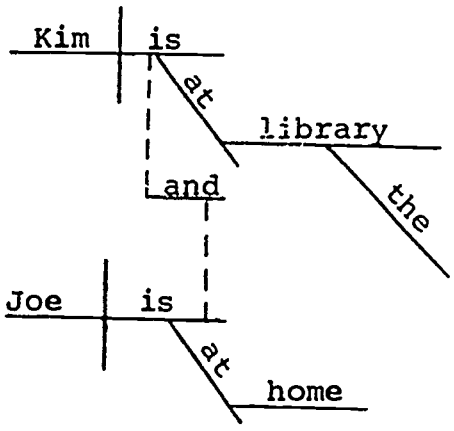
- What is the specific nature of the relationship between the two sentences? Do they have a temporal or cause/effect relationship requiring a subordinate conjunction such as "after" or "because," or are they simply stated together as events or circumstances requiring a coordinating conjunction such as "and"?

These two skills are tested by the LEAP items in this objective. In addition to determining whether an answer choice properly represents the relative importance and nature of the relationship between two sentences, students must ascertain whether a sentence contains all of the essential information conveyed by the original two sentences.

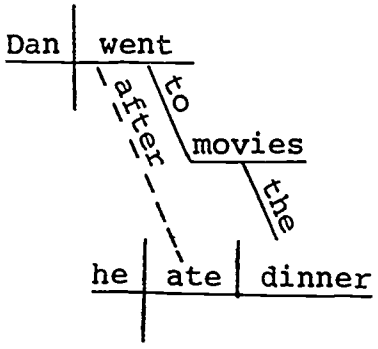
You may wish to review the difference between a compound sentence and a complex sentence. In both of these sentence formation types, two or more sentences are joined by the use of conjunctions. When two sentences have been joined, they become clauses; the resulting new sentence is either a compound or complex sentence. In a compound sentence, sentences of equal grammatical importance are combined with one of six coordinating conjunctions: and, or, nor, but, for, or yet. In a complex sentence, a main clause is explained or modified in some way by a subordinate clause. Examples of common subordinating conjunctions and their functions are: because, so that (which establish cause or purpose); until, whenever, before (time); where (place); if, unless (condition); and although, even though (concession).

The distinction between coordination and subordination can be reinforced with sentence diagramming.

Compound sentence: Kim is at the library, and Joe is at home.



Complex sentence: Dan went to the movies after he ate dinner.



From such diagrams, students can see that sentences can be combined in a variety of meaningful ways. An awareness of these sentence-joining methods will help students to master this LEAP objective.

SKILL AREA: WORD USAGE
(Domain VII, Standard D)

SAMPLE ITEM:

[1] Dear George,

[2] The circus arrives in town on January 14. [3] Some people expect all performances to be sold out by opening night. [4] I can purchase a ticket for you when I go to the ticket agency. [5] Then, you will be able to see the show with Jenny and I.

[6] Your friend,

[7] Mario

In which part of this letter, if any, is there an error in word usage?

A. Part [2]

B. Part [4]

C. Part [5]

D. None of the above

DESCRIPTION OF TEST QUESTIONS:

1. The student will be presented with a written communication representing the type of writing apt to be required of high school students and young adults: friendly and business letters, as well as narrative, descriptive, and expository essays. Each part (sentence; letter salutation, closing, or signature) of the communication will be identified by a bracketed number.

2. The communication will either be free of errors or will contain a violation in one of the following English usage convention areas:

   a. irregular noun forms

   b. singular and plural possessive nouns

   c. appositives

d. adverbs

e. helping and main verb combinations

f. verb tense (present and past)

g. inflectional endings expressing verb tense and number

h. comparative and superlative forms of adjectives

i. singular and plural possessive pronouns

j. subject pronouns

k. demonstrative pronouns

l. object pronouns

m. pronoun (definite and indefinite) and antecedent agreement

DESCRIPTION OF ANSWER CHOICES:

1. For items containing no error, the correct answer choice will be D, "None of the above." For all other items, the correct answer choice will be the communication part in which the usage error appears.

2. An incorrect answer choice will represent either:

   a. proper usage: selecting A, B, or C as containing an error when it does not; or

   b. an unidentified error: selecting D when the passage does contain an error.

SAMPLE ITEM ANSWER CHOICE DESCRIPTIONS:

A. proper usage

B. proper usage

C. correct (nominative pronoun used as object of preposition)

D. unidentified error

INSTRUCTIONAL ANALYSIS:

People speak differently in various parts of the United States and according to cultural and familial heritage. The way a person speaks is part of that person's character. As a teacher, you might feel hesitant to tell your students that their manner of speech is "wrong." Rather, you may wish to discuss with your students the purpose of having a standardized form of English that, ideally, everyone can write and understand.

Because grammatical conventions for standardized English are different from some speakers' manner of speech, written expression often requires substantial effort. Rules of grammar will have to be internalized through an awareness of errors that occur, memorization of proper forms, and frequent oral and written practice. It may prove beneficial to call attention to violations of grammatical conventions that frequently arise in students' writing. By identifying these errors, you can sensitize students to their own problem areas. For example, you might extract the following set of sentences from a collection of student essays or stories and write them on the board:

1. Many students disagrees with this policy.

2. Jake and me rode our bikes all the way to the lake.

3. I sleeped until very late that morning.

4. Rollerskating is more funner than jogging.

5. My father cooks very good.

One at a time, sentences can be read aloud, discussed, analyzed, and corrected. Pose specific questions that lead students to an understanding of why the sentences are written improperly. For example, in regard to the first sentence you may ask questions such as: What is the verb in this sentence? What is its subject? Is this subject singular or plural? Do the subject and verb match in number? Tailor your questions to your students' special needs.

You may also want students to keep lists of usage errors in a special notebook section. This section can also contain lists of proper usage constructs such as comparative and superlative forms and various types of pronouns. These lists can be accompanied by explanations and examples of illustrative sentences. The content in these lists may seem to simply reiterate usage sections provided in composition textbooks; however, it will be more reinforcing and meaningful when created by the students themselves and tailored to each student's individual usage challenges.

English usage encompasses a wide range of possible errors. Some of the more common usage violations in each of LEAP's 13 eligible usage convention areas are briefly discussed below. You may wish to review these errors according to your students' needs.

Irregular Noun Forms

Some nouns have completely irregular plural forms that cannot be created simply by following spelling rules; these are the words that may appear as usage errors on the LEAP items in this skill area. Irregular plural forms include men, women, children, mice, geese, teeth, and feet. In addition to these, plural forms such as thieves and lives, whose irregular spellings affect their pronunciation and are not predictable based on a spelling rule (not all words ending in f form plurals with -ves), may also be tested.

Plurals of foreign terms (words in English that were taken from other languages such as Latin, Greek, or French) are not specified as ineligible for testing on the LEAP examination; however, these will not be tested unless they are considered familiar to high-school students.

Singular and Plural Possessive Nouns

This usage convention area will test errors in which 's has been entirely omitted, for example, "I borrowed Gregory book." Plural possessives will be tested only with plural nouns that do not end in -s (for example, "The children coats are hanging in their closets.").

Appositives

Difficulties with appositives usually involve whether they should be enclosed by commas. This is a matter of punctuation and, therefore, will not be tested in the word usage objective. A possible usage error regarding an appositive may involve gender agreement, as in "My sister, a boy of many talents, plays soccer," or number agreement, as in "Our friends Betty Smith are coming over today."

Adverbs (and Adjectives)

Items in this objective require students to discern whether an adverb or an adjective is grammatically correct. For example, an adverb cannot be used to modify a noun, as in "He is a sadly person," "There is very rain today," or "Diana picked up her heavily books." Similarly, an adjective cannot be used to modify a verb (as in #5 of our hypothetical set of student sentences on page 56) an adjective, or an adverb.

It may also be helpful to remind your students that one adverb, badly, has irregular comparative (worse) and superlative (worst) forms.

Helping and Main Verb Combinations

This area tests the use of helping, or auxiliary, verbs to form verb phrases. Students need to avoid mistakes such as:

1. using two helping verbs together ("Charlotte might can come over tonight.");

2. using the wrong form of a helping verb ("Brian be working over at the mill." "We done finished our report." "She have never been there before."); and

3. omitting a necessary helping verb ("Kenny been here all day.").

Verb Tense

Students need to be aware that a sentence must be written consistently with respect to tense. For example, it would not be logical to say, "I go to the zoo yesterday." The LEAP examination tests only the past and present tenses because many sentences can be either present or future tense: "Today we are swimming."/"Today we will swim."

Inflectional Endings Expressing Verb Tense and Number

The student must be able to recognize which inflectional ending is appropriate for a given verb in the context of a sentence. An important aspect of this convention area that will be covered on the test is subject-verb agreement. Emphasize to students that a verb must match its subject in person and number, even if there is an intervening phrase. (This rule is violated in student sentence #1, p.56.)

Singular: Helen builds tables.
Plural: Helen and Steve build tables.

Singular: The leader of the people speaks well.
Plural: The leaders of the country speak well.

Singular: Each of the teams has its own flag.
Plural: All of the teams have their own flag.

You may also wish to have students review verbs with irregular endings. For example, student sentence #3 (p.56) contains the improperly written verb "sleeped" instead of

"slept", which is an irregular past-tense form. You may want to review other such verbs with your students.

Comparative and Superlative Forms of Adjectives

Some of your students may benefit from a review of the construction of comparative and superlative forms. In general, one-syllable adjectives form their comparatives with the suffix -er and their superlatives with -est. Two exceptions to this generalization are good and bad, which have irregular forms: better (comparative) and best (superlative), and worse (comparative) and worst (superlative), respectively. Adjectives of three or more syllables form their comparatives with more ("more beautiful") and their superlatives with most ("the most expensive"), while two-syllable adjectives sometimes use the suffixes and other times use the adverbs. In addition to violations of these generalizations (with resulting errors such as "more big" and "curiouser"), possible LEAP errors include double comparative (as in student sentence #4, p.56) and double superlative (as in "my most best friend") forms.

Singular and Plural Possessive Pronouns

This area tests the distinction between possessive pronouns that can function as adjectives modifying nouns (such as my and their) and those that cannot (such as mine and theirs).

Subject Pronouns

This area tests the rule that a pronoun representing the subject of a sentence must be in the subjective case. Students sometimes experience difficulty in this area when using compound subjects. For example, instead of saying "Bobby and I baked cookies," a student might erroneously say "Bobby and me baked cookies," improperly using an objective pronoun in place of a subjective pronoun. (See also student sentence #2, p.56.) Remind students to mentally remove the first part of a compound subject to see how it would sound. ("Me baked cookies.")

Demonstrative Pronouns

For the LEAP examination, students need to know that a demonstrative pronoun must agree in number with the noun that follows it. Examples of violations of this rule are "This people are working very hard" and "Those notebook belongs to Sylvia.") Another area of possible errors involves context; this and these denote proximity in time or space, while that and those indicate some degree of distance. It would, therefore, be illogical to say "These tables over there are the smallest" or "Here, take that letter from my hand."

Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement

This convention area requires that a pronoun agree in person and in number with the noun it replaces. Therefore, a sentence such as "The ballerina is putting on its satin dancing shoes" is incorrect because ballerina is feminine, and its is neuter; their would also be incorrect as a pronoun in this sentence because ballerina is singular and their is plural.

More extensive discussions of these usage conventions can be found in composition textbooks and handbooks. You may wish to encourage students to refer to such references for elaboration, review, and opportunities for practice.

SKILL AREA: STUDY SKILLS
(Domain VIII, Standards BC)

Using Reference Materials and Media to Obtain Information and Demonstrating Dictionary Skills

SAMPLE ITEM:

Adapted from an almanac:

State	Land Area in Square Miles	Population in 1980	Capital	Largest City
Alabama	51,705	3,893,888	Montgomery	Birmingham
Arizona	114,000	2,718,425	Phoenix	Phoenix
Colorado	104,091	2,889,735	Denver	Denver
Louisiana	47,752	4,206,312	Baton Rouge	New Orleans
Mississippi	47,689	2,520,638	Jackson	Jackson

What was the population of Arizona in 1980?

A. 114,000

B. 2,718,425

C. 3,893,888

D. 4,206,312

DESCRIPTION OF TEST QUESTIONS:

1. The student will be presented with an excerpt from one of the following reference sources: an index, a glossary, a map, a chart, a graph, a diagram, a table, a schedule, an encyclopedia, a footnote or bibliography, a periodical (magazine or newspaper), a telephone directory, a thesaurus, an atlas, an almanac, the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, or a dictionary. The source of the excerpt will be identified as follows: "Adapted from a(n) [type of reference source]:"

2. The excerpt will be followed by a question that requires the reader to use the reference source in a typical and appropriate manner. It will specify the information to be extracted from the excerpt and will include all the data necessary for locating the information. Mathematical operations will not be required.

DESCRIPTION OF ANSWER CHOICES:

1. The correct answer choice will be the only piece of information that can be extracted from the reference-source excerpt to accurately answer the test question.

2. An incorrect answer choice will be one of the following types:

   a. adjacent: information from the excerpt that is next to the requested information;

   b. similar: information from the excerpt that is similar in appearance or meaning to the requested information; or

   c. incorrect information: other kinds of information from the excerpt that do not accurately respond to the test question.

SAMPLE ITEM ANSWER CHOICE DESCRIPTIONS:

A. adjacent

B. correct

C. adjacent

D. incorrect information

INSTRUCTIONAL ANALYSIS:

Knowing how to use common reference sources effectively to find desired information is a necessary skill for all students. Mastery of this skill involves proficiency in recognizing alphabetical order, reading rows and columns, interpreting abbreviations and codes, and deciphering keys and legends. In addition, a reader using a reference tool needs to know precisely what information is needed and how to find it.

Students will already be familiar with many, but perhaps not all, of the 17 reference sources that are eligible for use in testing this skill area. You should explain each type of reference source and provide practice in using these tools for your students. Many reference sources will require little time whereas others, such as the thesaurus, may require more time for explanation and practice. Although it is not tested on the LEAP examination, you may want to discuss reference selection, that is, which reference source to use to find a specific kind of information. In order for a student to find a particular piece

of information or a body of data concerning a topic, the student must, first of all, know where to turn. For example, is an encyclopedia or a dictionary more useful for finding general information about the life of Eleanor Roosevelt?

Finally, a good way to reinforce reference usage capability is to have students conduct library research for a paper or report. Encourage your students to ask the librarian for help when they need it. With guidance and opportunities for practice, students can become adept at using these invaluable information tools.