



# A NEW DIRECTION: COMPASS





### TIPS FOR TAKING THE COMPASS

1. RELAX! The COMPASS evaluations are designed to help you succeed in college. Once you identify your academic strengths and weaknesses you can select the right courses and get any help you may need to improve underdeveloped skills.
2. Arrive a few minutes early so you can locate the assessment area, restrooms, and “gather your thoughts” before testing.
3. Ask questions if you do not understand the directions for COMPASS. Staff are available to assist you!
4. PACE YOURSELF! Remember that COMPASS questions adjust to your skill level and may increase in difficulty.
5. Read each question carefully until you understand what the question is asking.
6. Try to respond to all the items presented to you even if you are not certain of the answer.

### WHAT WILL I BE EVALUATED ON?

The COMPASS evaluation will focus on writing, reading, and math skills. We have provided some sample questions in this brochure. What makes COMPASS unique is that it adapts to your abilities...questions increase in difficulty depending on your skill level. The COMPASS writing passage allows the student to edit text that has a variety of “problems.” Writing skills include grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, as well as strategy, organization and style in effective writing. COMPASS reading allows the student to identify the main idea of a passage thereby measuring reading for comprehension and prior knowledge. In COMPASS mathematics, which cover a variety of items from pre-algebra to elementary algebra, you will be asked to select a correct answer from a list of choices. Because you are using computer technology, the difficulty of the items on the test adjust to your strengths. The results are untimed so you can relax and do your best! You will also be asked some basic questions about your educational background and career plans to help our college faculty and staff get to know you better.

**SAMPLE COMPASS WRITING SKILLS ITEMS:**

**DIRECTIONS:** When the evaluation begins, you will be shown an essay on the computer screen. The essay will contain mistakes in punctuation, grammar, writing style, and organization. You will be asked to find these mistakes and fix them. You can also get extra help by clicking on the help button.

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My children love to climb trees. Neither do I begrudge them the risks and I gladly offer them the first boost. I can understand their enjoyment of scaling the heights of those green, growing giants. We must be some remnant of a memory left off of our simian past.

Nevertheless, near my boyhood home in Ohio one sweet gum tree that was my favorite grew here. Its trunk rose straight up into the sky; its highest branches exceeding the peak of our two-story house. The glossy five-pointed leaves would dance and sparkle in the sunlight like green stars.

I was small for my age but limber, and athletic. A crotch of branches near the top served as my crow's nest. Once I was able to reach the lowest limbs, the climbing went easily. Have the branches grown out from the trunk at comfortable right angles and were handy enough together to create pull-up bars and step rungs. I would stay there for an hour at a time, swayed by each breeze that came along, enjoying a clearly view over the neighborhood and Beyond, yet hidden from sight by the foliage.



I recall those times when I hear my childrens' voices floating down from one of the trees near our house.

### QUESTIONS:

1.
  - A. My children love to climb trees.
  - B. My children love at climbing trees.
  - C. My children love for climb trees.
  - D. My children love of climbing trees.
  - E. My children love to climbing trees.
  
2.
  - A. Neither do I begrudge them the risks and I
  - B. I do not begrudge them the risks nor I
  - C. If I do not begrudge them the risks, I
  - D. I do not begrudge the risks and I
  
3.
  - A. I can understand their enjoyment
  - B. I can understand, their enjoyment
  - C. I can understand their enjoyment,
  - D. I can understand; their enjoyment
  - E. I can understand: their enjoyment
  
4.
  - A. We must be some remnant of a memory
  - B. Those must be some remnant of a memory
  - C. It must be some remnant of a memory
  - D. Its must be some remnant of a memory
  - E. Theirs must be some remnant of a memory
  
5.
  - A. Nevertheless, near my boyhood home in Ohio
  - B. In the meantime, near my boyhood home in Ohio
  - C. Near my boyhood home in Ohio
  - D. Furthermore, near my boyhood home in Ohio
  - E. Then, near my boyhood home in Ohio



6. Suppose the writer wants to add a sentence at the end of the passage that would tie the narrator's role as a parent to the reminiscences of the joy of tree climbing. Which of the following would accomplish this the best?

- A. I sure did have some great times up in my treetop hideouts.
  - B. Even though I may have a chore for them to do, I know that it can wait until they come back down to earth.
  - C. Sometimes two of them will climb a tree together, then they would sit up there chattering away like monkeys.
  - D. One is never too old to enjoy the excitement and challenge of climbing a mighty oak
  - E. We've had some problems, though, with raccoons making their nests in the hollow limbs of trees near our house.
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### **SAMPLE COMPASS READING SKILLS ITEMS:**

**DIRECTIONS:** You will be asked to read one or more essays which are presented on the computer screen. When you are finished reading each essay, you will be asked several questions about what you have read. You will be able to go back and look at the essay at any time while answering these questions. You can also get extra help by clicking on the help button.

**PASSAGE 1**

When I'm in New York but feeling lonely for Wyoming I look for the Marlboro ads in the subway. But the men I see in those posters with their stern, humorless looks remind me of no one I know here. In our hell-bent earnestness to romanticize the cowboy we've ironically disesteemed his true character. If he's "strong and silent" it's because there's probably no one to talk to. If he "rides away in the sunset" it's because he's been on horseback since four in the morning moving cattle and he's trying, fifteen hours later, to get home to his family. If he's a "rugged individualist" he's also part of a team: ranch work is teamwork and even the glorified open-range cowboys of the 1880s rode up and down the Chisholm Trail in the company of twenty or thirty other riders. It's not toughness but "toughing it out" that counts. In other words, this macho, cultural artifact the cowboy has become is simply a man who possesses resilience, patience, and an instinct for survival. "Cowboys are just like a pile of rocks—everything happens to them. They get climbed on, kicked, rained and snowed on, scuffed up by the wind. Their job is "just to take it", one old timer told me.

Adapted from Gretel Ehrlich, *The Solace of Open Spaces*.  
Copyright 1985 by Gretel Ehrlich.

1. According to the passage, cowboys are probably "strong and silent" because:
  - A. their work leaves them no time for conversation.
  - B. they have been cautioned not to complain.
  - C. they are stern and humorless.
  - D. there is no one nearby to listen to them.
  - E. their work makes them too tired to talk.

**PASSAGE 2**

Despite the preaching of some fitness gurus, pain does not equal gain. In fact, as The American Medical Women's Association physicians remind us, the more you enjoy exercise, the more likely - and the more often—you will do it. Here are some ideas that underscore the "pleasure principle":

Play to your preferences. Think about an activity that you really love. Any activity—it doesn't have to be fitness-oriented. Then get creative, combining fun with a physical challenge. Got the travel bug? Sign up for a fitness-oriented vacation.

Get active any way you choose. If you have an aversion to exercise, a fresh perspective may help. Variety is the key. Try all kinds of activities—bird watching, gardening, Ping-Pong, bicycle riding, social dancing. The best workouts aren't necessarily the ones that deliver the greatest calorie burn; they're the activities you enjoy most because you're most likely to do them.

Socialize...actively! Invite a few friends to join you on a nature hike and share a picnic lunch. Don't miss a step at holidays, either; create active celebrations with family or friends.

Adapted from "Women's Health Confidential". Copyright 1993 by Rodale Press, Inc.

2. This passage contradicts a traditional view of exercise which holds that:

- A. The more painful the exercise the better.
- B. Exercise must be enjoyable to be successful.
- C. Exercise is vital to good health.
- D. Group exercise activities aren't successful.
- E. Health equals pleasure.

**SAMPLE COMPASS MATH SKILLS ITEMS:**

This evaluation will not be timed. You may take as much time as you need to complete it. You will receive scratch paper and a pen or pencil. Please ask for these materials if you do not have any. No textbooks or any other materials (except scratch paper, pencil and a calculator are permitted). You will NOT be allowed to return to previous questions in order to change your answers.

You must answer each question presented to you. If you do not know the answer, choose the answer that seems to make the most sense. You should try your best to answer each item correctly, but you will NOT be penalized for guessing.

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1. What is the average (arithmetic mean) of 8, 7, 7, 5, 3, 2, and 2?  
A.  $3\frac{4}{7}$  B.  $4\frac{5}{7}$  C.  $4\frac{6}{7}$  D. 5 E. 108
  2. Linda is making toys for the next arts and crafts sale. Each toy costs Linda \$1.80 to make. If she sells the toys for \$3.00 each, how many will she have to sell to make a profit of exactly \$36.00?  
A. 12 B. 20 C. 30 D. 60 E. 108
  3.  $0.005 \times 0.0003 = ?$   
A.  $1.5 \times 10^{-6}$  B.  $1.5 \times 10^{-7}$  C.  $1.5 \times 10^{-12}$   
D.  $1.5 \times 10^{-1}$  E.  $1.5 \times 10^1$
  4. Which of the following expressions describes all real values for x that are solutions for the inequality of  $7 - 5x > 2$ ?  
A.  $X < 1$  B.  $X > 1$  C.  $X > 9/5$  D.  $X > -9/5$  E.  $x < 9/5$



5. What is the slope of the line defined by the equation  $3x + 5y - 10 = 0$ ?
- A. 4      B.  $-3/5$       C. -4      D.  $3/5$       E.  $5/3$
6. For all  $x$ ,  $9x^2 - 16x - 4 = ?$
- A.  $(9x + 2)(x - 0.2)$       B.  $(3x - 4)(x - 1)$   
C.  $(3x - 2)(3x + 2)$       D.  $(9x - 2)(x - 2)$   
E. None of these
7. An urn contains 3 white marbles, 3 black marbles, and 4 red marbles. The probability of obtaining a white or red marble in a single random draw is ?
- A.  $2/5$       B.  $7/10$       C.  $3/5$       D.  $1/2$       E. 1
8. Twelve shares of a company's stock sells for \$75.00. How much would you pay for 20 shares of stock at the same rate?
- A. \$120.00      B. \$100.20      C. \$125.00  
D. \$150.00      E. \$123.00
9.  $3/20 + 4 + 13/40 = ?$
- A.  $20/60$       B.  $256/60$       C. 1      D.  $1/2$       E.  $179/40$

**SAMPLE COMPASS SKILLS ANSWERS****Writing Skills**

1. A    2. B    3. A    4. C    5. C    6. B

**Reading Skills**

1. D    2. A

**Math Skills**

1. C    2. C    3. A    4. A    5. B  
6. A    7. B    8. C    9. E