



CBEST Prep  
Practice Test 4:  
Answers and  
Explanations

## ANSWER KEY

### Reading

- |       |       |
|-------|-------|
| 1. D  | 26. E |
| 2. A  | 27. B |
| 3. C  | 28. E |
| 4. B  | 29. A |
| 5. A  | 30. E |
| 6. E  | 31. A |
| 7. D  | 32. C |
| 8. B  | 33. E |
| 9. C  | 34. B |
| 10. E | 35. B |
| 11. C | 36. B |
| 12. A | 37. E |
| 13. B | 38. E |
| 14. D | 39. B |
| 15. A | 40. A |
| 16. B | 41. C |
| 17. D | 42. D |
| 18. E | 43. D |
| 19. D | 44. E |
| 20. E | 45. D |
| 21. A | 46. A |
| 22. D | 47. E |
| 23. B | 48. E |
| 24. A | 49. B |
| 25. D | 50. C |

### Mathematics

- |       |       |
|-------|-------|
| 1. E  | 26. C |
| 2. E  | 27. D |
| 3. A  | 28. D |
| 4. B  | 29. E |
| 5. D  | 30. B |
| 6. D  | 31. E |
| 7. B  | 32. A |
| 8. B  | 33. E |
| 9. C  | 34. D |
| 10. C | 35. A |
| 11. A | 36. D |
| 12. C | 37. A |
| 13. B | 38. B |
| 14. B | 39. B |
| 15. C | 40. B |
| 16. C | 41. A |
| 17. E | 42. B |
| 18. C | 43. B |
| 19. E | 44. C |
| 20. C | 45. C |
| 21. D | 46. D |
| 22. C | 47. C |
| 23. B | 48. C |
| 24. D | 49. C |
| 25. D | 50. D |

## SECTION I: TEST OF READING

1. **D** The pilaf is listed under Garbanzo/Chickpeas.
2. **A** The listings under Garbanzo/Chickpeas are alphabetical.
3. **C** Although Abraham Lincoln signed the Homestead Act into law, no information is given about whether he was a homesteader.
4. **B** The passage starts with an explanation of homesteading in the 1860s and then describes how the term changes in the 1960s.
5. **A** In the passage, the term defines homesteading in the 1860s and then discusses how the term has changed in the 1960s.
6. **E** The third sentence of the passage describes land trusts working with community organizations toward a common goal of sustainability.
7. **D** The last sentence gives advice to land trust leaders.
8. **B** The first sentence states that land trusts in the 80s focused on preservation and protecting the land from development. Choice (B) elaborates on that idea by describing public concern about losing natural beauty to industrialization.
9. **C** The dotted line representing homeschooling reaches its peak at the third grade.
10. **E** The bar representing public non-charter schools is highest for each grade, so (E) is correct. The chart only deals with schooling percentages, so there is no way to know the total number of students in each grade; (B) is wrong.
11. **C** Choices (A) and (C) represent two common meanings of the word “stage,” but (C), “phase,” is the one that makes sense in the context of the cooking process. Choice (B) is a trick answer; the passage may be discussing the texture of fudge, but the word “stage” does not mean “texture.”
12. **A** The tenth sentence states that stirring encourages the formation of crystals.
13. **B** Stirring at this temperature ensures that the crystals are the right size for a smooth, thick texture.
14. **D** The dancing marionettes had more strings and therefore required more manipulation.
15. **A** The first paragraph discusses the difference between puppets and marionettes, and the next two paragraphs discuss how the king and subjects communicated through the marionette troupe.
16. **B** The final paragraph discusses how the citizens used the troupe to communicate with the king—reversing the communication flow discussed in the second paragraph. Choice (E) is wrong because the citizens did have a way of communicating with the king—they used the marionettes.
17. **D** The following sentence discusses reprimanding, which is most consistent with scolding.

18. **E** The misconception is that all bears hibernate. The passage then follows with specific information about an instance wherein a bear doesn't hibernate.
19. **D** The information is not too complex, therefore (A) and (E) should be eliminated. Eliminate (B) since little opinion is stated. The ideas presented aren't necessarily recent, so eliminate (C).
20. **E** The size of the enclosure is least relevant to the idea that not all bears hibernate, and to female polar bears' denning practices.
21. **A** The statement that people who think all bears hibernate should educate themselves about the subject is simply the author's opinion. Many might disagree, arguing, for example, that the issue is irrelevant to their lives and not worth the time.
22. **D** The passage as a whole is discussing the pecking order in chickens.
23. **B** There is no evidence about the child's home and if the center's surroundings are better.
24. **A** The isolation rooms imply that the center can serve children with contagious illnesses. Choice (B) is wrong because you only know how long the children stay at the center, not the length of their illnesses. Choice (D) is wrong because there is no information about the children's preferences.
25. **D** The phrase refers to the fact that parents who discover that their child is sick must quickly make arrangements for child care.
26. **E** This detail best reveals the center's capabilities to serve children of different ages.
27. **B** One meaning of the word "curious" is "strange," which makes sense in context. It is strange that the *Literary Digest* poll, which surveyed millions of Americans, was extremely inaccurate, while the Gallup poll (which surveyed only 50,000 Americans) correctly predicted the election results. "Inquisitive," (A), the most common definition of the word, would not make sense in this context. The remaining choices are not definitions of the word, nor would they make any sense in this context either.
28. **E** Choice (E) is the only answer choice that is supported by the information in the passage: it is reasonable to conclude that economic factors played a significant role in the 1936 election. The *Literary Digest* surveyed a disproportionate number of wealthier individuals and seriously miscalculated; the passage strongly implies that the middle and upper classes voted republican, while working class people favored the reform-oriented democratic incumbent. Choice (A) is wrong because the passage does not indicate what *percentage of voters* were wealthy; it simply implies that wealthy people tended to vote republican. Choice (B) is wrong because the passage never addresses the motives or preferences of the *Literary Digest* publishers. Choice (C) is wrong because the pre-1936 *Literary Digest* presidential polls are merely described as "competent"; one cannot conclude that they were perfect. Choice (D) is wrong because there is no indication that the poll results caused Landon to lose the election (which would actually be a counterintuitive result).

29. **A** Choice (A) rhetorically asks how the results of the Literary Digest poll could have been so wrong, and the rest of the paragraph proceeds to answer that question. Paragraph 2 does *not* discuss modern use of surveys in presidential elections, (B), which candidate was the better choice for the job, (C), the merits of the Gallup poll, (D), or other famous cases of flawed survey results, (E).
30. **E** “While Jimmy Carter was not the first U.S. president to receive the Nobel Peace Prize, he is the only one who was granted this honor after his presidential term ended.”
31. **A** Look for a fact that doesn’t fit in with the points that the author makes in the passage (at least not as well as the other answer choices do). The author reasons that one-term presidents are often considered ineffective, cites several serious problems with the Carter presidency, then states that it was no surprise when Reagan beat Carter in the 1980 election. The fact that Carter had some supporters who approved of his decisions doesn’t completely contradict what the author states, but it doesn’t fit into the line of reasoning either. All the other answer choices fit in nicely with the points the author makes in the passage.
32. **C** There is no discussion about how the salt affects the difficulty/ease of turning the crank.
33. **E** The passage addresses how to use an ice cream freezer, so the owner of the freezer is the intended audience. Choices (A), (B), and (C) are wrong because there is no indication that the information is intended for professionals (who would most likely be using modern technology).
34. **B** The passage discusses people’s preconceived notions about minimum-wage workers and provides statistical evidence to the contrary.
35. **B** The author discusses the public perception that only teenagers work for minimum wage, then reveals the sad reality that many minimum-wage earners are actually impoverished adults. The word “unfortunately,” (B), is a perfect transition here.
36. **B** An assumption is an unstated assertion that the author believes to be true, whether it is or not, that is critical to the logical reasoning of the argument. If you negate an assumption, the argument will not be logically sound. Here the author is assuming that, if more dentists recommend a particular toothbrush than any other, then it must be a good toothbrush. If that’s not the case, the reasoning does not hold up and the argument essentially falls apart. None of the other answer choices are critical to the argument; if you negate them, the reasoning is unaffected.
37. **E** Whether or not the toothbrush in question is worth \$200 is a matter of opinion (some might believe that no toothbrush is worth that much money). All the other answer choices are statements of fact. Note that for sentence 2, (B), *that the dentist recommended investing in a good toothbrush* is matter of fact, even though her recommendation may reflect her opinion. The same holds true for sentences 5 and 7, (C) and (D). What is factual is that someone reported, suggested, or recommended something—even if the substance of the report, suggestion, or recommendation is an opinion.

38. **E** The author uses the story of cellophane, which involves the unintended discovery of something useful, to exemplify how some of the best discoveries are accidental. Choice (B) is wrong because the word “always” is too extreme.
39. **B** The passage describes placing a substance on the cloth.
40. **A** The materials chapter would have information about knitting needles.
41. **C** The book starts with the materials and the basics and builds up to more complicated concepts.
42. **D** The quickest way to find the meaning of a knitting term would be to consult the glossary. The section on knitting scarves and shawls is 11 pages long and might not even mention the term in question.
43. **D** The passage changes direction here and provides evidence contrary to one’s expectations.
44. **E** The passage discusses how erosion and sedimentation interfere with a river getting straighter over time.
45. **D** The passage discusses how both are major factors and does not state that one is more influential than the other.
46. **A** The following sentence discusses genetics and inheritance.
47. **E** The two influences discussed are nature and nurture.
48. **E** The genetic makeup of fraternal twins is least relevant.
49. **B** The passage discusses different factors that have affected the wall’s length.
50. **C** Information about the Great Wall of China is presented, then historical information is given and then the current forces are described.

## SECTION II: TEST OF MATHEMATICS

1. **E** Look at the digit in the thousandths place, in this case a 9. Since the number is 5 or greater, round up. The correctly rounded number is 2.59.
2. **E** Approximate the values. Choice (A) is greater than  $\frac{1}{2}$ , and (B) and (C) are just under  $\frac{1}{2}$ . You can compare (D) to (E) by making each have the same denominator. Choice (D) can be rewritten as  $\frac{3}{9}$ , which is greater than  $\frac{2}{9}$ .
3. **A** If you factor six out of each expression, you are left with (10 + 12) in the expression. If you don’t recognize how to rearrange the terms, solve the expression to find its value. The total number is 60 + 72, or 132. Estimate to see that only (A) is close.

4. **B** To find the difference, convert all fractions to give them all the same denominator.  
 $12\frac{3}{4} - 9\frac{2}{4} = 3\frac{1}{5}$ . If you used the Bowtie, you first needed to convert the mixed numbers into improper fractions.  $9\frac{1}{2} = \frac{19}{2}$ , and  $12\frac{3}{4} = \frac{51}{4}$ . Then  $\frac{51}{4} - \frac{19}{2} = \frac{102 - 76}{8} = \frac{26}{8} = \frac{13}{4} = 3\frac{1}{4}$ .
5. **D** Draw the figure: a large square, cut into smaller squares in a  $6 \times 6$  formation. The number of 1-inch squares is 36.
6. **D** From the second column, you can rank three students based upon the information given: Karen, Julie, and Justin. Only (C) and (D) contain those three in that order. Since Mark scored in the 40th percentile, he scored lower than Karen. Thus, his name will appear first, making (D) the correct response.
7. **B** To find the perimeter of the triangle, simply add up all the lengths of the sides of the triangle. The expression becomes  $(s + 2) + (2s + 3) + (2s - 4)$ . Simplify to get to  $5s + 1$ .
8. **B** At the current rate, Judy should use 110 candles from her inventory a day (she sells 140, but makes 30). If you multiply this by the number of days, you can find out how many days it will take to use all 2,300 candles. You probably don't need to solve for  $x$  in this case. Simply rearrange the equation that is given, and try to make it look like one of the answer choices.
9. **C** Remember that the perimeter is simply the sum of the lengths of the sides of the figure. You know that  $AB$  is 8; you don't know the measurements of the other vertical lines, but added together, these will sum to 8 (if you can't see this, draw the three lines together—they cover the same distance as segment  $AB$ ). The same is true with the horizontal lines.  
 $AF$  is 9, and the three other segments sum to 9. Thus, the perimeter of the figure is  $8 + 9 + 8 + 9$ , and 34 is the correct answer.
10. **C** Choices (A) and (B) are both too small. Choices (D) and (E) are both too large.
11. **A** Since Alice is choosing one of each kind of ingredient, multiply the numbers together.  
 $4 \times 5 \times 3 \times 2 = 120$   
 Note: Imagine branching these options out in a type of flowchart. If Alice starts with 4 choices for sauce, each of these sauces will have 5 choices for vegetables, and each of those 20 combinations will have 3 choices for cheese, and so on.
12. **C** Rewrite the problem using approximate numbers, since the problem says to estimate:  

$$\frac{280 \times 12 \times 9}{3 \times 70 \times 9}$$
 You can simplify this fraction, cancelling 9 from the numerator and the denominator, then 70 from 280 and 70, and 3 from 12 and 3. The fraction simplifies to 16, which is the best estimate.

13. **B** Translate the problem into an equation:

$$\frac{5}{n} = 20$$

You can solve by dividing by 5 on both sides of the equation:

$$\frac{1}{n} = 4$$

Then, take the reciprocal of both sides:

$$n = \frac{1}{4}$$

Now, re-read the question, and remember to add 3 to  $n$ .

14. **B** It's easiest to work with like units. 1 pound = 16 ounces, so 8 ounces =  $\frac{1}{2}$  pound.

Each cake needs  $6\frac{1}{2}$  pounds of flour, and  $24 \times 6.5 = 156$ .

15. **C** This is an example of a contrapositive. The “If” statement is Jed scoring a goal; the “Then” statement is that the team will win. The only thing you know from an If-Then is its contrapositive—If Not B, then Not A.

16. **C** The probability that the first throw will result in heads is  $\frac{1}{2}$ . The probability that the second throw will result in heads is  $\frac{1}{2}$ . Multiply these two events together to find that the probability of getting heads on both throws is  $\frac{1}{4}$ .

17. **E** Since the average number of installations per month is provided, the total number of days that Lisa performed cable installations can be found by multiplying  $18 \times 12$  (the average number of days per month that Lisa completed installations, times 12 months).

Multiply this by 9 (the maximum number of cable installations per day) and this answers the question posed in (E). There is not enough information to determine the number of cable installations Lisa completed in any given hour, (A), month, (B), or week, (D). You also do not know the average number of installations that Lisa actually did—you only know the maximum that she CAN do.

18. **C** You can approximate since the question asks for an approximate amount. She has around 400 stickers to start with. Three times that amount is about 1,200, so added together is 1,600. 1,550 is the closest answer.

19. **E** Divide  $\frac{2400}{200}$ . This reduces to  $\frac{24}{2}$ , which is 12.

20. **C** In order to find out how many tomatoes were transported over the 14-day period, you need to multiply:  $8,000 \times 14 = 112,000$ . You can also ballpark this question. If you need to multiply by 14 days, the total will be more than  $10 \times 8,000$  (80,000). Eliminate (A) and (B). The approximate calculation is  $(8,000 \times 10) + (8,000 \times 5) = 120,000$ . Only (C) is close to the correct answer.



21. **D** If you ballpark, you should be able to eliminate (A), (B), and (C). They are all under half of the total. If you multiply 0.72 by 425, the total is 306 square feet.
22. **C** To translate this question correctly, remember that when it comes to percents and fractions, “of” means multiply. Multiply the percents together:  $0.2 \times 0.4 \times 0.6 = 0.048$ , which is 4.8%. Since the question says “approximately,” look for the closest answer, which is (C).
23. **B** To find the number of classrooms needed, divide 132 by 18. The answer comes out to 7 with a remainder of 6. Thus, you need 8 classrooms to fit all the students (you can’t round down—where would the remaining 6 students go?).
24. **D** In algebraic form, the equation is  $5 + 6x = 77$ . To solve the equation, subtract 5 from both sides of the equation, to get  $6x = 72$ . Divide both sides by 6 to get  $x = 12$ . With any algebra question, if there are numbers in the answer choices, you may backsolve. Try putting the answer choices into the equation to see which one will work.
25. **D** With these types of multi-part questions/answers, work the problem one step at a time, and use Process of Elimination aggressively. The playlist must have “no less than 60 percent pop music,” so it must have no less than 90 pop songs. ( $150 \times 0.6 = 90$ ). Eliminate (A), (C), and (E). The playlist must have “no more than 20 percent hip-hop music,” so it must have no more than 30 hip-hop songs ( $150 \times 0.2 = 30$ ). Eliminate (B). Choices (C) and (E) also have too many hip-hop songs. This leaves (D). Note that the “rock” songs are not mentioned in the question stem, so they are not specifically restricted. The number of rock songs is the remainder for the total to reach 150.
26. **C** The total cost of the small loads is  $\$3.50 \times 7$ , or  $\$24.50$ . The total cost for the large loads is  $\$4.25 \times 4$ , or  $\$17.00$ . The sum of the small loads and the large loads is  $\$24.50 + \$17.00 = \$41.50$ .
27. **D** From the chart above, you can see that a student who scores in the 90th percentile is also in the stanine range of 8. Choices (A) and (E) make assumptions about how many questions were answered correctly, and you do not have any data to prove those statements are true.
28. **D** To solve this problem, you must take the percentage four different times. Note that adding 9% of something is the same as multiplying by 109%, or 1.09. This is the most efficient way to solve this problem.

$$200 \times 1.09 = 218$$

$$218 \times 1.09 = 237.62$$

$$237.62 \times 1.09 \approx 259.01$$

$$259.01 \times 1.09 \approx 282.32$$

The correct answer is approximately 282.32.

29. **E** Plug the value of 35 into the given formula:

$$F = \frac{9}{5}^{\circ}\text{C} (35) + 32$$

$$F = 63 + 32$$

$$F = 95$$

30. **B** Using the definition of percentile, you know that Maria scored as high as or higher than 84% of test takers. This is what (B) says, making it the correct answer.

You would also know that 16% of test takers scored higher than Maria ( $100\% - 84\% = 16\%$ ). Eliminate (D), since it says “lower” instead of “higher.” Also eliminate (A), because the percentage is incorrect. This is a trap answer, since  $100 - 78 = 22$ . However, it is not correct to use the Raw score to determine a percentage of test takers. 78 is the raw score, which does not necessarily indicate a percentage, since you do not know how many questions were on the test. Eliminate (C), since it is not possible to know the percentage of questions Maria answered correctly with the information given. Eliminate (E), since percentile is not the same as the percent of correct answers.

31. **E** First, calculate the total number of ounces in bagels that Frank consumes per week. Each day, he eats 55 ounces of bagels ( $5 \times 11$ ). Multiply 55 by 7 to get his weekly total of 385 ounces. Now, convert ounces to pounds. There are 16 ounces to 1 pound, and 385 divided by 16 is 24, with a remainder of 1.

32. **A** The answer is expanded to simplify the calculations. The total of (A) is  $\$8.00 + \$3.20$ , which is the same total as calculated in the problem.

33. **E** Throws of a die are independent events—one outcome will not have an effect on the next outcome.

You can ignore the first sentence. If you want the probability that her next throw will not result in a 4, there are 5 desired outcomes—1, 2, 3, 5, and 6. There are total of 6 possible outcomes, so the probability is  $\frac{5}{6}$ .

34. **D** Expenses are shown in dark gray. Look for the franchise for which expenses were the lowest. Salt Lake City had expenses around \$250,000, which is the lowest of the franchises shown. Select (D).

35. **A** “50% more than” something is the same as “150% of” something. In this case, find the franchise that has 150% more income than expenses. 150% is the same as  $1\frac{1}{2}$  times, so (A) is correct. (Salt Lake City is the franchise that has 50% more income than expenses; however, it is not necessary to determine this in order to answer the question. Don’t do unnecessary work!)

Eliminate (B) and (D), since they refer to specific dollar amounts, and not percents or relative values. Since each franchise has different amounts for expenses, determine the percentage for each franchise, rather than looking for a specific dollar amount. (In this case, Salt Lake City has

\$125,000 more income than expenses, which fits neither (B) nor (D); however, it is not necessary to determine this in order to eliminate these answers.)

Choices (C) and (E) refer to relative heights of the bars, and should be eliminated. Note that the vertical axis on the bar graph has a minimum value of \$200,000. Therefore, since a portion of the axis is not shown, you cannot compare the relative heights of the bars in order to determine percentages. Instead, the dollar amounts on the axis must be used.

36. **D** Divide the total number of miles (260) by the number of hours driven (4):  $260 \div 4$  is 6.5 hours.
37. **A** 71% is  $\frac{71}{100}$ , which is close to  $\frac{70}{100}$ , which reduces to 0.7, or  $\frac{7}{10}$ . Choice (A) is a number between 0.6 and 0.75. Choice (B) is too small (0.5 to 0.6). Choice (C) is too low (0.6 to 0.7). Choice (D) is too high (above 0.75). Choice (E) is also too small. Work as quickly as you can by approximating, and comparing the value to the fractions you know, like  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{3}{4}$ , etc.
38. **B** First, find Brett's current weekly gross pay. If you multiply  $35 \times \$12.50$ , you get \$437.50 in weekly gross pay. The increase in gross pay is the new total of \$480 minus the previous total of \$437.50. The difference is \$42.50.
39. **B** One tank of gas can last for 360 miles (12 gallons  $\times$  30 miles/gallon). Divide 1,800 miles by the 360 miles per tank to get 5 tanks.
40. **B** Approximate the two values as 24,000 CDs for Brant's store, and 17,000 CDs for Marty's store. The difference is around 7,000. Again, because the question asks for an estimate, you don't need to waste time doing detailed calculations.
41. **A** To divide a number by  $\frac{3}{9}$ , you can instead multiply the number by  $\frac{9}{3}$  (which is the reciprocal of  $\frac{3}{9}$ ). This is the same as multiplying the number by 3. Choices (B), (C), and (D) all have the equivalent of multiplying by  $\frac{1}{3}$ , which is the opposite of the correct operation. Choice (E) is false—it's definitely possible to divide by fractions.
42. **B** This is a ratio question—use the Ratio Box! A completed Ratio Box looks like this:

	Correct	Missed	Whole
Ratio (in parts)	2	3	5
Multiply by	16	16	16
Actual Number	32	48	80

First, you are given the initial ratio of 2:3, and the actual number of 80. The multiplier is 16. Finally, Ballparking is helpful on this problem. You should be able to eliminate (D) and (E) immediately.

43. **B** First, add the percentages for all of the other candidates:  $12\% + 17\% + 21\% + 26\% = 76\%$ .  
Next, subtract  $100\% - 76\% = 24\%$ .
44. **C** Since the total price and the number of houses is provided, it is possible to determine the average price (total price/number of houses). Eliminate (A), since the average can be determined. The information also states that “the lowest price is \$35,000 less than the average price.” Since the average can be determined, the lowest price can also be determined. Eliminate (B).  
  
The information also states that “the lowest price is \$75,000 less than the highest price.” Since the lowest price can be determined, the highest price can also be determined. Eliminate (D). Since the lowest price and the highest price can be determined, it’s also possible to determine the average of the two. Eliminate (E). It is not possible, however, to determine the median price of the six houses, unless each of the six prices are given. Select (C), since the median cannot be determined.
45. **C** This is a standard average question. Using the Average Pie, you can fill in the information given. The number of things is 6, and the total is 408 (the sum of all six test scores).  $408 \div 6$  gives us the average of 68.
46. **D** First, turn (C) into a decimal.  $\frac{1}{8}$  is equal to 0.125. Now compare across all answer choices. In the tenths column, only (B) and (D) have a zero—eliminate all others. In the thousandths column, (D) has a 6, while (B) has an 8. Choice (D) is smaller.
47. **C** Together, Ben and Alex can nail 9 nails a minute. After 11 minutes, the two of them will have nailed 99 nails. 11 is the best estimate.
48. **C** This is a proportion question. First, identify the relationship you are given: 3 game stamps: 1 large drink. Set this equal to the one you want to know: 60 game stamps: ? large drinks. The equation looks like this:  

$$\frac{3 \text{ game stamps}}{1 \text{ large drink}} = \frac{60 \text{ game stamps}}{x \text{ large drinks}}$$
 If you cross-multiply, you get  $3x = 60$ ;  $x = 20$ .
49. **C** In order to get the percentage of votes Peter received, you need to find the total number of votes. The four numbers sum is 300. Peter received 150 of 300, or 50%.
50. **D** From question 45, you know that the total number of votes is 300. There are a total of 4 things. Divide to get the average of 75.

## SECTION III: TEST OF WRITING

### Topic 1

Sophocles once observed that “there is no success without hardship.” In an essay to be read by an audience of educated adults, state whether you agree or disagree with this statement. Support your position with logical arguments and specific examples.

#### Sample Essay #1: Overall Score = 4 (Pass)

I agree wholeheartedly with Sophocles' observation that “there is no success without hardship.” Enduring adversity forces individuals to seek an inner strength that often propels them to loftier heights than those who have not overcome such hardships. While some people believe that traits such as talent and intelligence are more important to achieving success than hardship is, they are mistaken. Hardship can come in different forms, many of them private and obscure, so the trials that successful people have experienced may not be apparent to the casual observer. Moreover, what constitutes “success” similarly varies and is not limited to the trappings of wealth and status. Some of the most successful people among us, all of whom probably endured hardship, may not appear successful by mainstream standards.

I believe that hardship is conducive to success in the traditional sense of wealth, fame, professional achievement, and status. My favorite author, J.K. Rowling of the Harry Potter series, exemplifies this phenomenon. She once said, “Rock bottom became the solid foundation on which I rebuilt my life.” Rowling had been left in a desperate situation as an impoverished single mother. Now she is one of the richest and most famous authors of our time. Rowling, like others who have risen to the top from nothing, fought every day with everything she had to change her unenviable circumstances for the better. Would she have worked that hard to make something of herself if she had been enjoying a comfortable life of privilege? I highly doubt it. Those who never need to use their inner strength may never even know it's there.

Moreover, the very real link between hardship and success is sometimes obscured because hardship is not always obvious. Many people suffer through and overcome tremendously difficult circumstances—but they do it quietly. Anna, the CEO of a company I worked for, came from a wealthy family and had a “privileged” background. She was brilliant, attractive, charming, and appeared to have everything going for her. Nobody knew about her troubled childhood and the debilitating anxiety from which she suffered. Everybody thought that Anna was extraordinarily fortunate and that life has been easy for her. In actuality, she was bravely fighting and winning her own battles every day. Anna is just like so many others who overcome similarly covert hardships. She used her fortitude to meet the difficult challenges of her life and then used that same fortitude to achieve her extraordinary professional, financial, and social goals.

In addition, those who believe that success occurs without hardship may be defining success too narrowly. While people like J.K. Rowling and Anna are clearly “successful” by society's standards, there are many different kinds of success. Being a competent parent, a loyal friend, a good student or a diligent employee are all laudable goals that good character can achieve when strengthened through hardship. Jane, an elderly woman who suffered through wartime trauma, made it her life's goal to be kind and decent to everyone, even though others had been unkind to her. The ability that Jane had to rise above the unpleasant circumstances she found herself in carried over from her wartime experiences to her postwar everyday life. She is one of the kindest individuals I've ever known and, by any enlightened estimation, a true success story.

In conclusion, Sophocles was quite correct when he observed that “there is no success without hardship.” Whether hardship involves issues like poverty and war, or personal struggles that may be less obvious to others, adversity gives one the strength and determination to achieve one’s goals. Those goals might involve attaining great wealth, professional accomplishment or societal status. Alternatively, they might simply entail self-improvement and being the best person one can be. I believe in the old saying that “whatever doesn’t kill you makes you stronger.” Accordingly, successful people are those who have suffered through great difficulties and then used that strength of character to get what they want out of life.

### **Sample Essay #2: Overall Score = 3 (Marginal Pass)**

I agree with the quote by Sophocles that “there is no success without hardship.” Strength of character comes from overcoming hardship and the most successful people are the people who have managed to do this. Sometimes it’s not always obvious because everybody’s hardship is different, but you have to overcome adversity in order to succeed in life. Also, people become “successful” in many different ways—so things like money, power, and fame aren’t always how we measure the success that people who overcome hardship manage to achieve.

First, I believe that people who have hard lives are much more likely to achieve success in the usual ways we think of it—wealth, academic achievement, professional accomplishments, etc. For example, J.K. Rowling, the author of Harry Potter, talks about how her life hit “rock bottom” when she was a poor single mother. She talks about how her hardship motivated her to build something of her life, which she clearly did, as she’s one of the richest and best-known authors now. I don’t think that she would have worked so hard to succeed if she had a comfortable life that wasn’t all that bad—it was the hardship that drove her to strive for such excellence. I believe this is true for most people who reach the top. They were forced to look deep down to find an inner strength that people who have it easy don’t need to find. If your life is basically fine then you don’t feel the same urgency to escape from painful circumstances that people who experience serious hardships do.

Second, I think that success is never achieved without hardship, even though someone’s “hardship” isn’t always obvious (the word can mean different things for different people). We tend to think of hardship in terms of poverty or some other obvious life circumstance that everybody would know about. The truth is that some people suffer and overcome incredible hardship without anyone even knowing about it. When we look at rich people or people that seem to have everything going for them, we may not know that they overcame emotional problems, loneliness, family trouble behind closed doors, or lots of other problems that might have caused them suffering. I know a lady once who was the CEO of a company and nobody knew she had overcome serious problems with anxiety and depression. Everybody thought she was just a privileged person who never had to overcome anything.

Third, what counts as “success” is different for everybody and somebody without wealth or status could have achieved their goals in life. They could be a good parent, a good friend, or even just a good person. Especially when people have had hard lives, just maintaining morals and self-respect can be enough for success.

In conclusion, Sophocles was right when he said that there is no success without hardship. People with hard lives achieve more, even though we may not know this because their hardship wasn’t obvious. Also, what counts as “success” may be different for different people.

### **Sample Essay #2: Overall Score = 2 (Marginal Fail)**

I agree with Sophocles that there is no success without hardship. The people who experience the most hardship in life are the ones that win the most success. Hardship makes them strong. They say whatever doesn’t kill you makes you stronger.

JK Rowling the author of Harry Potter overcame serious hardship. She was a poor single mother and had just hit rock bottom basically. This made her stronger than she would have been without going through that. She is now one of the most famous and wealthy writers in the world because of her adversity. I don't feel that she would have been motivated enough to do what she did if she didn't have so much hardship to overcome. When everything is going good, why fight so hard to succeed? Nothing is really that bad.

Many people overcome major hardship even though you wouldn't know it. Some people who look like they have everything from a distance actually suffer tremendously with family problems or psychological problems or loneliness. And a whole lot besides that. Just because people look like their doing fine doesn't mean that there's no hardship. These people become stronger through their hardship because they lived through it and kept fighting until they were successful. Sometimes talent and brains make people successful without any suffering but that's not true for most people. Usually they have to fight really hard to get what they want. Why would someone fight every day of their life to become successful if everything was basically ok?. IMHO, people who have easy lives just become soft and lazy. Only adversity shows you what your made of.

In conclusion I agree with Sophocles that there is no success without hardship. I personally have become a much stronger person through hardship. I don't regret it at all. I think my life would have been much easier if things had gone my way but I was forced to discover my own inner strength as a result. I think some people who are born geniuses or who have mad skills maybe able to become successful without any hardship but they are definitely the exception, not the rule.

### **Sample Essay #4: Overall Score = 1 (Fail)**

I am some body who has definitely suffered hardship and gotten success. When I was in high school I had a miserable time because I was the new kid on the block and nobody liked me at first. I would get hassled every day in the lunchroom so much that I found it seriously hard to study or do anything really. People who didn't know me probably wouldn't even know that I was enduring hardship because it wasn't obvious on the surface of things. Soon though I worked hard at making friends and overcame that hardship to become a successful student and a successful person in general. I think that anybody who becomes some body in this life has to overcome hardship, look at famous people like JK Rowling who suffered hardship as a poor single mother and now she's a rich successful writer of the Harry Potter books. You can't become that rich and famous without going through some stuff! If she hadn't suffered like that she would probably just have lived a nice comfy quiet life because she didn't have the inner drive to become anything great. Look at people who overcame wars and atrocities and things like that. You could even say that becoming anything except bitter and angry and still being nice people after suffering through that is a form of success. So whether it's me overcoming my high school years or famous authors or victims of war you have to have hardship to get success.

## **Topic 2**

It has been said that the most meaningful experiences we have in life occur when we step outside of our comfort zones. In an essay to be read by educated adults, describe an experience when you stepped outside of your comfort zone in some way. Was the experience meaningful for you? If so, in what way? Provide specific details about what occurred and its effects upon you and your life.

### **Sample Essay #4: Overall Score = 4 (Pass)**

The time when I mustered up the courage to venture out of my comfort zone and teach my very first class was one of the most meaningful experiences of my life. The anxiety that I felt was enormous, but so was the benefit that I ultimately received. I had read somewhere that "you must do the thing you fear." That advice proved just what I needed at a critical juncture of my life.

I think my comfort zone was always a bit too narrow. Through my innate caution I avoided many of the pitfalls and calamities that my siblings, who are risk-takers by nature, inevitably fell into along the way. I was always the child “with the good head on his shoulders,” the one who looked before he leapt. While I believe that the life decisions I made were intelligent ones on the whole, I now realize that “playing it safe” was a way of avoiding the anxiety associated with exploring the unfamiliar. Sometimes unpleasant feelings and experiences are necessary to move on to a better phase of life, and I was becoming stagnant for fear of failure. I joined a more competitive football league, but I refused to try baseball; after all, what if I wasn’t any good at it? I would ask a girl out, but only if I knew she would accept; after all, what if she rejected me and I was humiliated? I was in a self-imposed rut and didn’t even know it.

Then one day I had an encounter with the dean of my school that changed everything. I was a first-year graduate student and the dean approached me about teaching a course in classic literature the following month. The student who had originally been scheduled to teach the course had to cancel. I thought the idea was completely outside the realm of possibility. I didn’t know how to teach a class and I didn’t even know that much about classic literature. What if the students asked me questions and I didn’t know the answers? What if I panicked and started prattling on about nonsense? What if I was too scared even to introduce myself and just stood at the front of the room and drooled? I was going to say “no”—I fully intended to tell him no. But for some reason I heard myself say “yes,” and then everything changed.

At first everything changed for the worse. I was so worried and anxious for the next month that I almost called the dean a dozen times to cancel. Slowly I realized how reluctant I had been to try anything new—and the extent to which I had limited my possibilities as a result. On the day of the class I kept reminding myself of that quote “you must do the thing you fear,” and I forced myself to go into that classroom and teach that class. Much to my surprise, it went great! I talked about classic literature for two hours (I think I even kept the students ten minutes over that day)! One student did ask me a question to which I didn’t know the answer, so I told her I would find out and let her know during the next class. I was slightly embarrassed, but the sky didn’t fall. I learned that sometimes bad feelings are necessary for good feelings to emerge. Now not only am I a full-time teacher with a satisfying career, but I’m also less afraid to take the risks I need to take to build an emotionally full life.

In conclusion, teaching my first class when I was in graduate school was a watershed moment for me. Teaching is one of the most meaningful aspects of my life, but I needed to step outside of my comfort zone in order to make it happen. I’ll never be a daredevil and I’m still cautious by nature, but whenever I find myself limiting my own possibilities out of fear I think about that experience. I ask myself whether I’m being prudent or simply too afraid to take a chance, and if it’s the latter I take the risk (I even joined a baseball team last year)! I believe my life is now richer because, in teaching a class of college students about classic literature so many years ago, I taught myself something of value as well.

## **Sample Essay #2: Overall Score = 3 (Marginal Pass)**

One of the most meaningful experiences of my life was when I forced myself to teach a class in classic literature. In order to do that I had to step outside of my comfort zone, which was very difficult for me. I had always been extremely shy, so making myself the center of attention was terrifying. I’m so glad that I did, however, because this experience changed my life for the better.

I had thought about being a teacher but I was too afraid to try. I was a self-conscious person that just wanted to fade into the background. I worried about being embarrassed in front of a whole group of people if I forgot my train of thought or didn’t know the answer to a question. In short, I didn’t have the courage to step outside my comfort zone. I chose to play it safe and avoid risks because I couldn’t get hurt that way; the problem was that without the risks there wasn’t much reward. My life wasn’t bad, but it wasn’t really emotionally satisfying either. Then one day the dean asked me if I was interested in teaching a course in classic literature the next fall. I don’t know why I did it, but for some reason I said yes. For the next few months I prepared night and



day, worrying about how I would do with my very first lecture. So many times I wanted to tell the dean that I changed my mind because I wanted to crawl back into my comfort zone. Then finally the day arrived.

I don't remember how I got myself into that classroom, but somehow I managed to show up on the first day of class. I wanted so much to make up an excuse and run out of the room, but then I just did it! I remember thinking about a quote that I had heard—you have to do the thing that you're afraid of. I started lecturing and just kept going. I talked for hours and hours—and started to realize that I loved teaching. I even kept the class 10 minutes over that day! From that day forward I knew that I would be a teacher for the rest of my life. I also knew that meaningful things happen when I force myself outside of my comfort zone.

In conclusion, I was changed in a very meaningful way by stepping out of my comfort zone to teach my very first class. Now I am a full time teacher and I love my job. I'm also a person that is more confident and that takes more risks. I learned that without risk there is no reward.

### **Sample Essay #3: Overall Score = 2 (Marginal Fail)**

I had a meaningful experience when I stepped outside of my comfort zone to teach a classic lit class in grad school. At first I was afraid and nervous but I faced my fears and just did it. This changed me and my life for the better because I'm much more confident now. I'm also a full time teacher—all because I faced my fear!

Before I taught the classic lit class I was always shy and never wanted really to be the center of attention. I was afraid to step outside of my comfort zone because of the anxiety that I felt when I did. I didn't want to teach the class because I was afraid that I wouldn't know the answers and would just start to drool in front of everybody (lol). Then I remembered that somebody said that you need to do whatever it is you're afraid of. I bit the bullet and just got up there and started lecturing. Believe it or not, it went great! I even kept the class late that day. Now I'm a full time teacher and lecturing a class is nothing for me. Sometimes I don't know the answers and I just say so. Were all human and still learning, right?

In conclusion one of the most meaningful experiences of my life was when I stepped outside of my comfort zone to teach a class in classic lit. This changed me and my life for the better because I'm so much more confident now. Whenever I'm afraid to step outside my zone I just remember that experience and just go for it. Sometimes I don't go through with it but usually I do if I really force myself. This has effected my life for the better, I even went skydiving last year! Before my experience teaching the classic lit class that never would have been possible for me because I never would have stepped out of my comfort zone. It was a very meaningful experience.

### **Sample Essay #4: Overall Score = 1 (Fail)**

I've always been kinda shy and never really wanted to come out of my comfort zone. I guess I just wanted to do things my own way and not do other things I wasn't comfortable with because it was upsetting. I thought about being a teacher but never really thought I could because I would probably just faint in front of the whole class because I was so nervous. I had a chance to teach a classic lit class once and it totally changed me though. I'm not gonna lie at first I was a wreck. I tried to imagine everybody sitting there in there underwear but then I was just nervous AND embarrassed because I was looking at a whole group of people in there underwear. That didn't really help. Then I just got up and did it! I had a great time during that class and found out teaching is actually pretty rad. Now I'm a full time teacher and I love it all because I stepped outside my comfort zone. You can't be afraid of life if you want to do great things. If you're afraid of something go ahead and do it... it will pay off. It did for me.

