

Accuplacer Sentence Skills

Course Overview

Each unit in the Accuplacer Sentence Skills course aligns to one or more topics in the 2016 Accuplacer Test. This course consists of three units that are designed to enhance your language skills. Each lesson is carefully drafted into sections that explain concepts in an easy-to-understand manner. Activities and tests help you practice what you have learned.

Course Goals

By the end of this course, you will be able to do the following:

- Examine the main idea in informational texts, and identify characters and settings in novels.
- Explore subject-specific vocabulary and find word meaning based on context.
- Examine point of view and word choice and understand how they affect conflict in a novel.
- Find the denotation and connotation of a word, and identify word relationships and synonyms and antonyms in context.
- Identify cause and effect in literary nonfiction and conflict in fiction and poetry.
- Analyze literal and figurative language in poetry.
- Examine the theme of identity in literature, and explore how the topic of place can influence the discussion of identity in poetry.
- Understand how a writer crafts characters to be relatable to readers, and investigate the effect of point of view on a story.
- Explore point of view and theme in memoirs, and practice writing a short memoir.
- Analyze how a topic is communicated through different types of media, and investigate change in society.
- Explore descriptive language, types of pronouns, and how to match words to tone.
- Develop the skills necessary for planning, organizing, drafting, and editing academic writing.
- Write informative essays and essays about short fiction.
- Understand coordinate and non-coordinate adjectives, transitional words and phrases, dangling modifiers, auxiliary verbs, and coordinating conjunctions.
- Understand the effect of word choice and structure in stories.
- Explore methods for writing and revising poetry, and investigate the theme of change in literature.
- Analyze common features of plot development in fiction.
- Use clauses, phrases, verb mood, and voice properly in your writing.
- Identify and correct common mistakes in sentence structure.

General Skills

To participate in this course, you should be able to do the following:

- Complete basic operations with word processing software, such as Microsoft Word or Google Docs.
- Complete basic operations with presentation software, such as Microsoft PowerPoint or Google Docs presentation.
- Perform online research using various search engines and library databases.
- Communicate through email.

For a complete list of general skills that are required for participation in online courses, refer to the Prerequisites section of the Plato Student Orientation document, found at the beginning of this course.

Course Materials

- notebook
- pencils or ink pens
- computer with Internet connection and speakers or headphones
- Microsoft Word or equivalent
- Microsoft PowerPoint or equivalent

Course Structure

Unit 1: Word Meanings in Fiction and Poetry

Summary

In this unit, you will examine word meanings while reading poetry and fiction. You will explore subject-specific vocabulary and find word meaning based on context. As you study literary elements such as point of view, word choice, cause and effect, and conflict, you will also work on understanding denotations and connotations of words, synonyms and antonyms, and other word relationships. You will build your spelling skills and study word roots, prefixes, and suffixes.

Activity/Objective
Defining Identity <i>Examine the main idea through the use of informational texts about identity.</i>
Characters and Setting in Novels <i>Identify characters and setting in a novel.</i>
Point of View and Conflict in Novels <i>Examine point of view and word choice and how they affect conflict in a novel.</i>

Activity/Objective
Exploring Cause and Effect <i>Investigate examples of cause and effect in literary nonfiction.</i>
Conflict in Fiction <i>Identify and examine conflict in fiction.</i>
Conflict in Poetry <i>Identify and examine conflict in poetry.</i>
The Power of Words <i>Analyze literal and figurative language in poetry.</i>
Discussing Change In Our Lives <i>Prepare for and conduct a group discussion on the topic of change.</i>

Unit 2: Word Choice in Well-Crafted Writing

Summary

In unit 2, you will examine literary elements such as theme, point of view, and setting in fiction, poetry, and informational texts. At the same time, you will explore the technical skills that go into well-crafted writing. You will examine the importance of matching words to tone, pronoun use, coordinate and non-coordinate adjectives, and transitions. You will identify and correct dangling modifiers and see how to correctly use auxiliary verbs, coordinating conjunctions, gerunds, participles, and infinitives. Finally, you will study shifts in verb voice and mood and the impact of word choice.

Activity/Objective
Undertaking the Journey of Identity <i>Examine the theme of identity in literature.</i>
Defining Identity with Place <i>Explore how the topic of place can influence the discussion of identity in poetry.</i>
Relating to Characters <i>Explore how writers craft characters to be relatable to readers.</i>
The Importance of Point of View <i>Investigate the impact point of view has on a story.</i>
How Society Shapes Your Point of View <i>Explore point of view in memoirs and practice writing a short memoir.</i>
Examining How Societies Communicate <i>Analyze how a topic is communicated through different types of media.</i>
Investigating Change in Society <i>Explore topics of social change in informational texts.</i>
Writing Informative Essays <i>Examine the characteristics of informative essays.</i>

Activity/Objective
<p>Identifying the Writing Process <i>Develop skills for planning, organizing, drafting, and editing academic writing.</i></p>
<p>Writing About Short Fiction <i>Investigate approaches for writing argumentative essays about works of fiction.</i></p>
<p>Who You Are: Assessing Your Present <i>Explore Charles Dickens's narrative approach to assessing one's present in A Christmas Carol and reflect on your current identity as a student.</i></p>
<p>Who You Will Be: Predicting Your Future <i>Analyze Charles Dickens's narrative approach to predicting one's future behavior in A Christmas Carol and consider how your past and present behavior can help you determine the type of student you will be.</i></p>
<p>Word Choice and Stories with Plot Twists <i>Investigate the impact of word choice and structure in two stories with plot twists, O. Henry's "The Gift of the Magi" and Giovanni Boccaccio's "Federigo's Falcon."</i></p>

Unit 3: Sentence Structure in Writing

Summary

In this unit, you will write and revise poetry, study plot development in fiction, and explore point of view in memoirs as you learn more about sentence structure. You will build your knowledge of clauses, phrases, voice, and verb mood. You will learn to recognize and correct common errors in sentence structure, such as fused sentences, comma splices, run-on sentences, and "ambiguous this."

Activity/Objective
<p>Using Words Creatively <i>Explore methods for writing and revising poetry.</i></p>
<p>Experiencing Change in Life and Literature <i>Investigate the theme of change in literature.</i></p>
<p>Building Plot in Fiction <i>Analyze common features of plot development in fiction.</i></p>
<p>Memoirs <i>Explore point of view and theme in Frederick Douglass's Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave.</i></p>
<p>Common Mistakes in Writing <i>Identify and explain common sentence structure mistakes in college-level writing.</i></p>