

Illinois Certification Testing System



BASIC SKILLS: LANGUAGE ARTS

Workshop Activities



- **Discuss Language Arts self-assessment**
- **Language Arts standards**
- **Review and apply each standard**
- **Practice all standards**
- **Refer to exercises to practice at home**

Language Arts Self-Assessment



- **Do you feel like you are competent with grammar?**
 - Do you remember what a verb is?
 - Do you remember the proper use of pronouns?
 - Do you know the proper uses of adverbs, adjectives and/or prepositional phrases?
- **Do you feel competent in recognizing the correct punctuation uses?**
- **Do you feel like you are a competent speller?**
- **Do you remember the capitalization rules?**

Language Arts Standards



- **Standard 7: Demonstrate command of standard usage in edited English in the United States**
- **Standard 8: Understand and apply knowledge of mechanical conventions in edited English in the United States**

Review Standard 7



- **Subject verb agreement**
- **Verbs**
- **Pronouns**
- **Adverbs**
- **Adjectives**
- **Prepositional Phrases**

Subject and Verb Agreement



- **First Person**
 - Singular: **I see** a field of fireflies.
 - Plural: **We see** a field of fireflies.
- **Second Person**
 - **You see** a shower of sparks.
- **Third Person**
 - The **scientist sees** a cloud of cosmic dust.
 - The **scientists see** a cloud of dust.

Verbs with Amounts



- **Amounts as subjects = singular verbs**
 - **Two hours** *is* not enough time to finish.
 - **Three hundred dollars** *is* what we must pay.
 - **Two miles** *is* a short sprint for some serious joggers.
 - **Three-quarters of an inch** *is* needed for a perfect fit.

Verbs with Fields of Study



- **Field of study as subjects = singular verbs**
 - **Statistics *is*** required of science majors.
 - **Statistics *show*** that a teacher shortage is coming.

Verbs with Special Nouns



- **Special nouns as subjects = mostly singular verbs**
 - The *news* **gets** better each day.
 - *Sports* **is** a good way to build physical stamina.
 - Three *sports* **are offered at the recreation center.**
 - **Those** *slacks* need pressing.
 - That *pair* of slacks **needs** pressing.
 - Two new TV *series* **are** big hit.
 - A *series* of disasters **is** plaguing our production.

Verbs with Titles & Company Names



- Titles as subject = singular verbs
 - *Breathing Lessons* by Anne Tyler **is** a prize-winning novel.
- Company names as subject = singular verbs
 - *Cohn Brothers* **boxes** and **delivers** fine art.

Verbs with Words Themselves



- **Words themselves as subjects = singular verbs**
 - ***We implies*** that everyone is included.
 - During the Vietnam War, ***protective reaction strikes was*** a euphemism for *bombing*.

Pronouns



- **Pronouns must match their antecedent in number.**
 - The *firefly* glows with *it* emerges from *its* nest at night.
 - *Fireflies* glow when *they* emerge from *their* nests at night.
- **Antecedents require a plural pronoun when “and” connects two or more antecedents.**
 - The Cascade Diner *and* the Wayside Diner closed for New Year’s Eve to give *their* employees the night off.
- **When the antecedents are joined by “or” (or by “either...or,” “not only...but,” or “neither...nor”), ignore everything before the final antecedent.**
 - After the restaurant closes, *either* the resident mice *or* the owner’s *cat* gets *itself* a meal.

Adjectives and Adverbs



- **Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs**
 - The wind blew *briskly*.
 - The lawyer spoke *quickly* and *well*.
 - The lawyer spoke *very quickly*.
 - The lawyer was *extremely* busy.
- **Adjectives modify nouns and pronouns**
 - The *brisk* wind blew.
 - The *concerned* lawyer took a *quick* look at the jury members.
 - She felt *triumphant*, for they were *attentive*.

Prepositional Phrases



- A prepositional phrase consists of a preposition and the words it modifies.
 - *In the fall*, we will hear a concert *by our favorite tenor*.
 - *After the concert*, he will fly *to San Francisco*.
 - Don't you love planting flowers *in the spring time*?

Review Standard 8



- **Commas**
- **Colons**
- **Semicolons**
- **Capitalization**
- **Spelling**

Commas: Items in a List



- **Academic style**
 - I can't believe you went to Disneyland, Six Flags, and Universal Studios all in one day.
- **Journalistic style**
 - He likes mustard, onions and chili on his hotdogs.

Commas: Introductory Phrases or Clauses



- After we completed our whirlwind visit to all three amusement parks, we fell into a deep sleep for twelve hours.
- To Donald Duck, Mickey Mouse is not a stranger.
- To hotdogs, chili is a natural accompaniment.

Commas: Nonrestrictive Elements



- **An energetic person**, Anna Hom enjoys jogging.
- Anna Hom, **who is in excellent physical condition**, enjoys jogging.
- Anna Hom enjoys jogging, **which is also Adam's favorite pastime**.

Commas: Coordinating Conjunctions



- The sky turned dark gray, **and** the wind died suddenly.
- The November morning had just begun, **but** it looked like dusk.
- Shopkeepers closed their stores early, **for** they wanted to get home.
- Soon high winds would start, **or** thick snow would begin silently.
- The firehouse whistle blew four times, **so** everyone knew a blizzard was coming.

Commas: Coordinate Adjectives



- The **huge, restless** crowd waited for the concert to begin.
- Hundreds of **roaring, cheering, yelling fans** filled the stadium.
- Only corn grown for popcorn pops consistently because all other kinds of corn lack **tough, enable-like** shells.

Commas: Quoted Words



- Speaking of ideal love, the poet William Black wrote, “Love seeketh not itself to please.”
- “My love is a fever,” said William Shakespeare about love’s passion.
- “I love no love,” proclaimed the poet Mary Coleridge, “but thee.”

Colons: Listed Items



- **If you really want to lose weight, you must do three things:** eat smaller portions, exercise, and drink lots of water.
- **The students demanded:** an expanded menu in the cafeteria, improved janitorial services, and more up-to-date textbooks.

Colons: Appositives & Quotations

- **Appositive**
 - Only cats are likely to approve of one old-fashioned remedy for cuts: **a lotion of catnip, butter, and sugar.**
- **Quotation**
 - **The little boy in *E. T.* did say something neat:** “How do you explain school to a higher intelligence?”

Semicolons: Independent Clauses



- The desert known as Death Valley became a US National Park in 1994; it used to be a US National Monument.
- This is my husband's second marriage; it's the first one for me.

Semicolons: Sentence Structures & Lists



- When the peacock has presented his back, the spectator will usually begin to walk around him to get a front view; **but** the peacock will continue to turn so that no front view is possible.
- Our Constitution is in actual operation; everything appears to promise that it will last; **but** in this world, nothing is certain but death and taxes.
- For anything worth having one must pay the price; and the price is always work, patience, love, self-sacrifice.

Capitalization



- **first word of a sentence**
- **“I” and “O”**
- **First word of a quotation if the quotation is a complete sentence**
- **Proper nouns and adjectives (Abraham Lincoln, Mexico, World Wide Web, Mexican, American)**

Spelling



- **Review the spellings/definitions of these frequently confused words**
 - Accept/except
 - Advice/advise
 - Effect/affect
 - Allude/elude
 - Allusion/illusion
 - Cite/sight/site
 - Elicit/Illicit
 - Precede/proceed
 - Then/than

Practice



- Practice each standard as a group by writing your own example for the rule discussed on each slide.
- Practice each standard on your own by going to http://www.icts.nesinc.com/IL_practest_opener.asp to complete the practice test.

Citation



- **Information for this workshop came from:**
 - http://www.icts.nesinc.com/IL_practest_opener.asp
 - Simon & Schuster. *Handbook for Writers*. 5th edition.

Additional Resources



- Grammar Punctuation and Spelling - <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/grammar/>
- Grammar and Punctuation – <http://www.grammarbook.com/>
- Writing World Grammar Resources - <http://www.writing-world.com/links/grammar.shtml>