Syllabus

TASC Preparation – Language Arts Writing Part 1

Course Overview

The TASC Preparation Courses were developed by aligning Plato Courseware with the strands and topics that are assessed on the 2014 TASC Test. Each unit aligns to one or more strands within the 2014 TASC Test and the modules within each unit target the essential concepts of the Common Core State Standards as assessed on the TASC Test for Language-Arts Writing. This course focuses on the study of different writing strategies. In this course, you will find a variety of lessons and activities to improve your knowledge of these strategies.

Course Goals

By the end of this course, you will:

- Explore different types of sentences and how to identify the subject in a sentence.
- Understand how nouns and pronouns are used as subjects, direct objects, indirect objects and predicate nominatives.
- Explore verb tenses, ways to choose the correct tense and how to match verbs with their subjects.
- Understand how to identify a misplaced modifier.
- Explore ways to identify phrases and clauses in a sentence.
- Explore verbal and prepositional phrases including how to identify and use prepositions.
- Analyze parallel structure within sentences and how to identify, correct and fix sentence fragments.
- Understand the basics of punctuation and capitalization.
- Understand spelling rules and examine spellings of commonly misspelled words.
- Explore ways to improve vocabulary including the use of dictionaries and context clues to find word meanings.
- Understand how to identify figurative language in a poem.
- Understand the causes of awkward sentence structure and ways to correct these sentences.
- Understand how to avoid word choice errors and combine sentences to enhance writing.

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: Language: Sentences and Parts of Speech

Summary
Unit 1 explores ways to identify different sentence types such as exclamatory, declarative, imperative or interrogative sentences. Students learn how to identify the subject of a sentence including compound subjects. Students also learn how to use nouns and pronouns as subjects, direct objects, indirect objects and predicate nominatives. The unit explains verb tenses and how to choose the correct tense. The unit also provides an understanding of how to match verbs with their subjects. The concluding part of the unit explores misplaced modifiers including how to locate them in a sentence.

Unit 2: Language: Phrases and Clauses

Summary
Unit 2 focuses on how to identify phrases and clauses in sentences. The unit explains how to recognize verbal phrases such as participle, gerund and infinitive phrases. The unit also includes how to identify and use prepositions and prepositional phrases. Students learn to demonstrate proficiency in using language terminology and applying language concepts such as parallelism. The concluding part of the unit includes how to identify and correct sentence fragments.

Unit 3: Language: Punctuation

Summary

Unit 3 introduces the basics of punctuation, including periods, explanation points, and question marks. The unit provides knowledge on how to correctly identify and use hyphens, parentheses and semicolons accordingly. The unit also explores how to punctuate sentences correctly using commas, semicolons, colons, dashes, hyphens and quotation marks. The unit concludes with a review of punctuation based on practice questions.

Unit 4: Language: Capitalization

Summary

Unit 4 focuses on capitalization. The unit begins by explaining how to correctly use capital letters, and how to capitalize proper nouns and modifiers. Students learn how to capitalize names of places and events. Students also study the use of capital letters in titles.

Unit 5: Language: Spelling

Summary

Unit 5 explains how to apply important spelling rules including doubling final consonants, adding prefixes and using "cede", "ceed" or "sede". The unit then moves on to show students the correct spellings of commonly misspelled words. The unit also covers ways to improve vocabulary and the use of a dictionary to find word meanings. The unit concludes by showing how to use context clues to find word meanings.

Unit 6: Language: Language in Context

Summary

Unit 6 explores different ways to identify figurative language in a poem. The unit explains the causes of awkward sentence structure and how to correct these sentences. Students also learn how to combine sentences to make the relationship between ideas clear. The concluding part of the unit explores how to avoid common word choice errors.