Preparation Manual

Transportation Security Administration Writing Skills Assessment

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Transportation Security Administration

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Introduction

Purpose of the Manual

The purpose of this manual is to help you prepare to take the TSA Writing Skills Assessment. This manual will familiarize you with the Assessment, and will give you a chance to study some sample questions and explanations for the correct answers to each question. If you have not had much practice taking written, multiple-choice assessments, you will have an opportunity to see what the Assessment looks like and to practice answering questions similar to those on the Assessment.

Organization of the Manual

This manual is organized into the following two sections:

Section I: Tips for taking the Assessment

Section II: Preparation material for the Writing Skills Assessment, including a practice test and explanations of correct responses

Section I
Test Taking Tips

1. You will do your best on the test if you stay calm and relaxed. Take a few deep, slow breaths to help you maintain your calm.
2. Pay careful attention to all directions before beginning.
3. For each question, read the entire question and all response options carefully before deciding upon an answer.
4. If you do not know the answer to a question, eliminate the response options that you know to be incorrect or probably incorrect and then guess from the remaining response options.
5. Your score is based only upon the number of questions you answer correctly. You are not penalized for answering questions incorrectly. Therefore, you should answer every question.
6. If you finish before time is up, go back and check your answers.
7. Ignore any patterns of As, Bs, Cs, Ds, or Es. The correct answer positions are chosen randomly and there is no way to improve your chances by guessing based on an answer pattern.

Section II
Writing Skills Assessment

Introduction

Purpose of this Section

This section of the manual has been developed to help you prepare for the Writing Skills Assessment.

This guide provides information that will refresh your knowledge of some basic rules of English grammar, syntax, usage, and sentence and paragraph organization. Only a short summary of each topic is provided. For more in-depth study, you may want to refer to English textbooks or writing handbooks. A reference list with some suggested readings is provided. Also, this guide presents a sample of the types of questions you can expect to find on the Writing Skills Assessment along with the correct answers and the rationale for them.

Preparing for the Writing Skills Assessment

Sentence Construction

A sentence is a grammatically independent group of words that serves as a unit of expression.

A sentence normally contains a stated *subject* (the noun(s) and/or pronoun(s) to which the sentence refers), and it must contain a *predicate* (the part that says something about or directs the subject) that consists of at least one word, a verb. Even the single-word command *Go!* is a sentence because it has an unstated, but implied, subject – whoever or whatever is being directed to go – and a verb.

Use of Phrases in Sentences

A phrase is a group of related words lacking a subject and/or a predicate. A phrase can be used as a noun, adjective, adverb, or verb. On the basis of their form, phrases are classified as *prepositional*, *participial*, *gerund*, *infinitive*, and *verb* phrases.

Use of Clauses in Sentences

Clauses are grammatical units containing a subject and a verb. They can be either dependent or independent. An independent clause expresses the main thought of the sentence and can stand alone as a sentence (**Example:** She laughed.). A dependent clause expresses an idea that is less important than the idea expressed in the main clause and cannot stand alone as a sentence (**Example:** As she was laughing…).

Restrictive and Nonrestrictive Phrases and Clauses

- A *restrictive* phrase or clause provides information that is necessary to identify specifically what is being described. A *nonrestrictive* phrase or clause provides information that is incidental to the meaning of the sentence.
- Generally speaking, restrictive phrases and clauses are not separated from the rest of the sentence by commas. Nonrestrictive phrases and clauses are separated from the rest of the sentence by commas.

Examples: The blue house that he built on a hill is quite large.

The blue house, which he built on a hill, is quite large.

The first sentence is written about a man who built several blue houses but only one on a hill. Therefore, the phrase *that he built on a hill* is essential for knowing which blue house is being referred to. The phrase is therefore restrictive and is not separated from the rest of the sentence by commas.

The second example is written about a man who built only one blue house, and it happens to be on a hill. Therefore, *which he built on a hill* is not essential for knowing which house is being referred to. The phrase is therefore nonrestrictive and is separated from the rest of the sentence by commas.

Examples: We should congratulate the student who won the prize.

Pat, who won the prize, deserves our congratulations.

In the first sentence the clause *who won the prize* is essential for indicating the person who should be congratulated. The clause is therefore restrictive and is not separated from the rest of the sentence by commas.

In the second sentence, the person to be congratulated is identified as Pat, and the clause *who won the prize* is not essential for identifying the person. The clause is therefore nonrestrictive and is separated from the rest of the sentence by commas.

Verb

Definition: A word or phrase used to assert an action or state of being.

Verb Voice

The *voice* of a verb shows whether the subject performs an action (active voice) or receives it (passive voice).

Example (active voice): The consultant wrote a proposal.

Example (passive voice): The proposal was written by the consultant.

Verb Tense

The tense of a verb shows the time of the action of the verb. There are an active and a passive form of all tenses in English. The six English verb tenses are:

Tense	*Examples of Active Voice*	*Examples of Passive Voice*
Present	she takes; she is taking	she is taken; she is being taken
Past	she took; she was taking	she was taken; she was being taken
Future	she will take; she will be taking	she will be taken
Present perfect	she has taken; she has been taking	she has been taken
Past perfect	she had taken; she had been taking	she had been taken
Future perfect	she will have taken; she will have been taking	she will have been taken

The *present* tense represents action that is taking place now.

Example: She *is attending* training today.

The *past* tense represents action that took place in past time.

Example: He *wrote* five letters yesterday.

The *future* tense places action in future time.

Example: She *will attend* the meeting later today.

The *present perfect* tense represents action completed before the present time.

Example: He *has taken* training.

The *past perfect* tense represents action that occurs before another past action.

Example: She counted the letters he *had written.*

The *future perfect* tense represents action that will be completed before a specific time in the future.

Example: By next week, he *will have completed* the analysis.

Verb Mood

The *mood* of a verb shows whether an action is fact (indicative mood), something other than fact, such as a possibility, wish, or supposition (subjunctive mood), or a command (imperative mood).

Example of indicative mood: They *are going* to the ball game.

Example of subjunctive mood: I insist that he *go* to the ball game.

Example of imperative mood: *Go* now!

The subjunctive mood is also used to express a condition contrary to fact.

Example: I wish I *were* president.

Other Rules Related to Verbs

Transitive verbs require direct objects to complete their meaning.

Example: The baseball player *signed the autographs*.

Intransitive verbs do not require direct objects to complete their meaning.

Example: The boat *has docked.*

Linking verbs are not action verbs; rather, they express a state of being or existence. The various forms of the verb *to be* are primary linking verbs.

Linking verbs never take objects but, instead, connect the subject to a word or idea in the predicate.

Examples: It *was* he who bought the tickets. His proposal *is* unacceptable. Some dogs *are* excitable.

The verb *to be* can also be used with another verb as a helping (auxiliary) verb to create a verb phrase.

Examples: Flights *have been delayed.* The contract will *have to be reviewed.*

Infinitive

Definition: An infinitive is the form of a verb that expresses action or existence without reference to person, number, or tense.

Example: *To run* is relaxing. The form consists of the work "to" and the verb.

- A split infinitive has a word or several words between the *to* and the *verb* following it. Splitting an infinitive is generally considered incorrect, especially if more than one word intervenes between *to* and the verb.

  Incorrect example: You should try *to*, if you can, *attend* the briefing.

  Correct usage: You should try *to attend* the briefing, if you can.

- An infinitive may be used as the subject of a sentence or as the object of a verb or preposition.

  Example: *To become* champion has been her lifelong dream.

- An infinitive may be used as an adjectival modifier.

  Example: He had several papers *to review* during the trip.

Gerund

Definition: A gerund is the form of a verb ending in *ing* that is used as a noun. In fact, another name for a gerund is a verbal noun.

- A gerund may be used as the subject of a sentence.

  Example: *Drawing* was his favorite personal activity.

- A gerund may be used as the object of a verb or a preposition.

  Example: She preferred *walking* over *bicycling*. *Walking* is the object of the verb *preferred* and *bicycling* is the object of the preposition *over*.

Participle

Definition: A participle is a form of the verb used as an adjective. Simple participle forms end in *ed* or *ing.*

Examples: The candidate felt *betrayed.* The New Year's Eve party was *exciting.*

- When a participial phrase seems to modify a word that it cannot sensibly modify, then it is a dangling phrase.

  Incorrect example: Sailing on the open sea, many dolphins were spotted. (*Sailing* does not modify dolphins.)

  Correct usage: Sailing on the open sea, we spotted many dolphins.

Noun

Definition: A noun is a word that names a person, place, thing, quality, idea, or action.

- A common noun identifies one or more of a class of persons, places, things, qualities, ideas, or actions that are alike.

  Examples: The girl chained her *bicycle* to the *fence*.

- A proper noun identifies a particular person, place, thing, quality, idea, or action. (*Note*: Proper nouns must be capitalized.)

  Examples: *Joe Brown* drove his *Lincoln Towncar* to the *Kennedy Center.*

- A collective noun identifies a group of people or things that are related or acting as one.

  Examples: The *jury* arrives at the courthouse each day at nine in the morning. The *platoon* travels by night in order to avoid detection. Collective nouns are *single* in number; thus, they take a singular verb.

- If the individual members of the group are referred to, then the plural verb can be used.

  Example: A group of employees *are* sharing supplies with each other.

- The possessive of a singular noun is formed by adding an apostrophe and *s* to the noun.

  Examples: the boy's sweater; Alice's car

- The possessive of a plural noun ending in *s* is formed by adding an apostrophe only.

  Examples: officers' salaries; workers' union

Pronoun

Definition: A pronoun is a word that is used in place of a noun, most frequently to eliminate monotonous repetition of the noun. There are nine types of pronouns:

- Demonstrative pronouns point out a specific person or thing.

  Examples: this, that, these, those

- Indefinite pronouns refer to people or things generally rather than specifically.

  Examples: all, any, anybody, anyone, anything, both, each, either, everybody, everyone, everything, few, many, most, much, neither, no one, nobody, none, nothing, one, other, several, some, somebody, someone, something, such

- Verbs used with indefinite pronouns must agree with the pronoun in number.

Examples: none *is*; much *is*; everyone *is*; many *are*

None is generally used in a singular sense. If you think of *none* as *no one person or thing*, then it is easy to see that it is singular in meaning and takes a singular verb. However, when *none* is used in the sense of *not two* or *no amount*, then a plural verb is used.

Example: None of the team members are in agreement.

- Interrogative pronouns are used to ask questions.

  Examples: who, what, which

- Relative pronouns relate a subordinate part of a sentence to the main clause.

  Examples: who, whoever, whom, whomever, whose, which, whichever, what, that

  Who and *whoever* are used as subjects in a sentence or phrase, while *whom* and *whomever* are used as objects in a sentence or phrase.

  Examples: *Who* will get the tickets? *Whoever* is going will buy the tickets. I need to give tickets to *whom*? The tickets will be given to *whomever* I see first.

- Personal pronouns refer to persons or things and change form in three different persons: first person (the person speaking), second person (the person spoken to), and third person (person or thing spoken about).

  - First person pronouns: I, we (used as subject of sentences and clauses) me, us (used as objects of verbs and prepositions)

  - Second person pronoun: you (used for singular and plural, for subjects and objects)

- Third person pronouns: he, she, it, they (used as subject of sentences and clauses)
  him, her, it, them (used as objects of verbs and prepositions)

  Examples: Bill and *I* are going. She told Sally and *me*.

- Possessive pronouns determine ownership or possession without using an apostrophe followed by an *s*.

  Examples: my, mine, our, ours, yours, his, hers, its, their, theirs (*Note*: *it's* is not a possessive pronoun; it is the contraction of *it is*.)

- Reflexive pronouns refer back to the noun or pronoun used as the subject of the sentence.

  Examples: I burned *myself*. You are deceiving *yourself*. John excused *himself*.

- Intensive pronouns are used to emphasize the previous noun or pronoun.

  Examples: You *yourself* must register. Anne *herself* must finish it.

Adjective and Adverb

Definitions: An adjective is a word that modifies a noun. An adverb is a word that modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb.

- An adjective or an adverb should be placed so that there is no doubt as to which word it modifies.

  Example: The *angry* boy *quickly* threw the ball. *Angry* is an adjective modifying the noun *boy*. *Quickly* is an adverb modifying the verb *threw*.

- Adjectives and adverbs show degrees of quality or quantity by means of their positive, comparative, and superlative forms. The positive form expresses no comparison at all. The comparative form adds an *-er* to the positive form of the adjective or adverb or prefixes the positive form with the word *more* to express a greater degree or a comparison between two persons or things. The superlative form adds an *-est* to the

positive form of the adjective or adverb or prefixes the positive form with the word *most* to express the greatest degree of quantity or quality among three or more persons or things.

Examples:

Positive	**Comparative**	**Superlative**
short	shorter	shortest
beautiful	more beautiful	most beautiful
big	bigger	biggest
quickly	more quickly	most quickly

- Many adverbs have the characteristic *ly* ending.

  Example: quickly, slowly, angrily

Article

Definition: An article is a word that refers to a noun and gives definiteness or indefiniteness to the noun.

- The English articles are *a*, *an*, and *the*.

  A and *an* are the indefinite articles. They are used for general nouns or when the audience does not know which thing you are referring to. *A* is used before words that begin with a consonant, and *an* is used before words that begin with a vowel.

  Examples: *An* attorney will meet you today. *A* file is missing from my desk.

  The is the definite article. It is used when the audience knows which thing is being referred to.

  Example: *The* attorney that you met with last week has returned your call.

Preposition

Definition: A preposition is a word that connects a noun to some other word in the sentence. Prepositions usually establish a relationship of time or location. The use of a preposition automatically creates a prepositional phrase.

Examples: *in* a month; *after* a year; *on* the table; *behind* the door.

- There are over 40 prepositions in English, some of which are: *about, around, before, at, below, by, for, from, in, of, on, to, through, up, upon,* and *with*.

Conjunction

Definition: A conjunction (also known as a connective) is a word that joins together sentences, clauses, phrases, or words.

- Conjunctions that connect two or more parts of a sentence that are of equal rank (Example: two nouns or verbs or phrases, etc.) are called coordinating conjunctions.

  Examples: *and, but, or, nor, for,* and sometimes *yet*

- Subordinating conjunctions connect dependent (subordinate) clauses to independent (main) clauses. Subordinating conjunctions include *though, if, as, when, while,* and *since*.

  Example: *Since he took the course for his own advancement,* his employer wouldn't pay for it.

- Correlative conjunctions are pairs of words that connect sentence elements that are of equal rank. Correlative conjunctions must always appear together in the same sentence.

  Examples: *either-or, neither-nor, whether-or, both-and,* and *not only-but also*

  Examples used in sentences:
  Neither the manager *nor* the employee had a reasonable solution to the problem. *Whether* he stayed home *or* went to work depended on a change in his symptoms.
  Both the program office *and* the budget office agreed on the increase in funding for the new equipment.
  She was outstanding *not only* in her academic coursework *but also* in her fitness training.

Avoiding Verb, Noun, and Pronoun Shifts

Unnecessary shifts in person, number, tense, or voice confuse readers and seriously weaken communication. The examples below indicate these types of errors.

A shift in person occurs when a writer shifts back and forth among the first, second, and third persons**.**

> **Incorrect example:** If *you* want to pass the physical, *a person* has to exercise daily.

A shift in number occurs when a plural pronoun is used to refer back to a singular antecedent or vice versa.

> **Incorrect example:** *Anyone* who shops in that department store must seriously consider *their* budget.

Unnecessary shifts in tense more commonly occur within a paragraph rather than within an individual sentence.

> **Incorrect example:** After the historian *spent* several hours describing the armies' strategies, he *gave* a horrifying account of the attack. He *points* out in great detail what *is* going on in the minds of each of the soldiers.

A shift in voice occurs when a writer makes unnecessary shifts between the active and the passive voice.

> **Incorrect example:** *I wrote* the journal article; the *book chapter was* also *written* by me. (In this example, the first clause is active voice and the second shifts to passive voice.)

When two sentence elements are joined by a conjunction, they should have parallel structure.

> **Correct example:** She was outstanding not only *in her academic coursework* but also *in her fitness training.*

> **Incorrect example:** She was outstanding not only *in her academic coursework* but also *she excelled in fitness training.*

Sentence Organization within Paragraphs

A paragraph presents a larger unit of thought than a sentence can contain.

A paragraph must meet certain requirements:

- A paragraph should have *unity*, that is, internal consistency. It should not digress from the dominant idea expressed in the topic sentence.

- A paragraph should have *completeness*. It should present enough detailed information about the topic sentence to answer any general questions the reader may have. More specific questions would require additional paragraphs with new topic sentences.

- A paragraph should have *coherence*. Sentences should flow into each other so that the reader experiences the paragraph as an integrated unit, not as a collection of separate sentences.

- A paragraph should have *order*. Like structure in a larger work, order in a paragraph grows partly out of the material and is partly imposed by the writer. Most paragraphs and essays follow one of the two patterns that follow.

  - *From the general to the particular*: This type of paragraph begins with a topic sentence that serves as an introductory summary of the topic. The remaining sentences explain or illustrate this statement, so that the idea becomes increasingly clear as the paragraph progresses. The topic sentence is usually at or near the beginning of the paragraph.

  - *From the particular to the general*: This type of paragraph is the reverse of the previous pattern. It begins with a series of explanatory or illustrative statements that lead to a general statement or summary. The topic sentence is usually at or near the end of the paragraph.

A paragraph can be looked upon as a microcosm, an exact parallel in miniature of the entire work:

- It has a dominant idea, usually expressed in a topic sentence.

- The dominant idea is developed by examples, comparisons, explanations, or arguments to make the meaning of the topic sentence clear.
- There may be a concluding restatement of the topic idea.

Capitalization

Definition: Capitalization is the use of capital letters to place special emphasis on particular letters to set them off from lower-case letters.

- Sentences always begin with a capital letter.
- The first letter of a quotation is always capitalized.
- Proper nouns, that is, nouns that name particular persons, places, or things, must be capitalized.

  Examples: Appalachian Mountains, Mississippi River, Brooklyn Bridge
- Titles that precede a proper name are capitalized; those that follow a proper name are not.

  Examples: Chairperson John Smith and John Smith, the chairperson

Punctuation

Definition: Punctuation is the use of periods, commas, semicolons, colons, question marks, exclamation points, dashes, apostrophes, brackets, parentheses, slashes, and quotation marks to convey the pauses and gestures that we use in speech to clarify and emphasize meaning.

- Use a period to end a sentence.

  Example: She went to the beach.
- Use a period after abbreviations.

  Examples: Mr. Ms. U.S. Corp.
- Use a comma to separate independent clauses in a compound sentence.

Example: Suzanne made a presentation at the conference, and then she spent the remainder of the day touring the city.

- Use a comma to separate an introductory phrase or clause from the main clause of a sentence.

  Example: After completing the work, the contractor left the site.

- Place a comma after every item in a series.

  Example: The new office is furnished with a desk, a computer, two chairs, and a supply cabinet.

- Two or more adjectives that modify the noun that they precede are separated by commas.

  Example: The cold, windy morning was not a good beginning for their vacation.

- Commas are used to set off the items in a date.

  Example: On Monday, August 17, 1998, he became the head of the office. Commas are not used when only the month and year are given.

  Example: August 2002

- A semicolon is used to separate elements in a series when some of the elements already contain commas.

  Example: Sally wishes us to attend the first, third, and fifth sessions on Wednesday; the second, fourth, and sixth sessions on Thursday; and the first only on Friday.

- A semicolon is used to join two closely related independent clauses that are not joined by a conjunction.

  Example: The project began slowly; thereafter, additional staff were assigned to it.

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WRITING PRACTICE TEST

It is suggested that you take no more than 15 minutes to answer questions 1 through 8 below.

For questions 1, 2, and 3 choose the one answer that represents a correction that should be made to the sentence. If no correction is necessary, choose (D).

1. Once a request to carry firearms into a foreign country are approved, a Transportation Security Inspector must notify the Office of Foreign Operations for coordination of the request.

   A) change to carry to for carrying
   B) change are to is
   C) change coordination to coordinating
   D) no correction is necessary

2. Supervisor Smith knows that it is important for his Transportation Security Inspectors to understand each of the fundamental principals that apply to all methods of dog training.

   A) change knows that to knows which
   B) change each to each and every one
   C) change principals to principles
   D) no correction is necessary

3. The geographical area composing much of the border between the United States and Mexico is considered to have a desert climate.

   A) change between to from
   B) insert a comma after area
   C) change is to are
   D) no correction is necessary

Instructions: For question 4, choose the one answer that is the best revision to the underlined word(s) or phrase(s) in the paragraph. If no revision to the underlined word(s) or phrase(s) is necessary, choose option (E). If there are two underlined sections in the same paragraph, each possible answer will consist of two revisions, one for each underlined section. The two revisions will be separated by a slash (/). The first revision will be for the first underlined section in the paragraph, and the second revision will be for the second underlined section in the paragraph.

4. The passenger's use of a fraudulent document was a hindrence to the identification of the passenger.

   (A) fraudelant / hindrence
   (B) fraudulant / hindrence
   (C) fraudulent / hindrance
   (D) fraudulant / hindrance
   (E) no correction is necessary

For questions 5 and 6, select the correct paragraph order to create a passage that is well-organized, clear, and coherent. If no correction is necessary, choose (D).

5.

(1) TSA also recognizes that transportation assets, such as airplanes and tunnels, are part of larger systems, such as the national aviation system or a mass transit system. Taken together, all the individual transportation systems form the national transportation system (i.e., a "system of systems"). The behavior of transportation systems cannot be fully explained by confining observations to individual cars, vessels, and aircraft or fixed infrastructure. An attack on a specific asset must be analyzed for how it will impact the larger transportation system within which it resides. Impacts to a specific transportation system may then have ripple-effects on other transportation systems that could result in cascading failures.

(2) In December 2005, we made a risk-based choice to change our operations to better meet this threat. Before the change, our screening workforce was spending a lot of time searching for items that no longer posed a significant risk - items that would no longer be useful to terrorists intent on taking control of an aircraft. Based on analysis of threats, vulnerabilities and consequences, we removed the most innocuous of these from our list of items that are prohibited beyond the checkpoint. The time and labor we used to spend detecting them has been shifted to finding explosives instead.

(3) The nature of the current threat has changed since September 11, 2001. The deployment of measures like hardened cockpit doors, the Federal Flight Deck Officer Program, a vastly expanded Transportation Security Inspector Program, and others have greatly reduced the risk of an attack similar to those of September 11. Today, explosives pose the greatest risk to our transportation systems.

(4) Delivering the best security we can means using risk to guide our decisions - maximizing our resources by directing them where they are most needed. Working with our network of federal and industry partners, we identify the areas of greatest risk throughout transportation systems and act to prevent attacks and mitigate their potential consequences. To meet future threats, we are ensuring that we maintain surge capacity to respond when and where they emerge.

A) 4 – 3 – 2 – 1

B) 3 – 4 – 1 – 2

C) 2 – 3 – 4 – 1

D) no correction is necessary

6.

(1) Immediately following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (DCA) was closed to general aviation aircraft because of its proximity to downtown Washington, D.C.

(2) After conducting a thorough security review in partnership with other Departments of Homeland Security and Defense agencies, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) developed a security plan that balances the special security needs of the airport with the economic importance of general aviation flights.

(3) ASOs are specially trained law enforcement officers who are authorized by the TSA to fly onboard each general aviation aircraft operating into or out of DCA.

(4) The plan, called the DCA Access Standard Security Program, or DASSP, allows a total of 48 general aviation flights a day leaving from designated "gateway airports." All of these flights must have an Armed Security Officer (ASO) onboard.

A) 1 – 4 – 2 – 3

B) 1 – 4 – 3 – 2

C) 1 – 2 – 4 – 3

D) no correction is necessary

Answers to the Writing Skills Questions

1. **Correct Answer: B** A verb must agree with its subject in number. The subject, "request," is singular and, therefore, the verb should be changed from "are" to "is."

2. **Correct Answer: C** The correct use of the word "principles" refers to rules, laws, or standards that are applied to the method of dog training. By contrast, the word "principal" means first or foremost in importance.

3. **Correct Answer: D** No change to the sentence is necessary.

4. **Correct Answer: C** The words "fraudulent" and "hindrance" are spelled correctly in this sentence while various incorrect spellings of these words are used in A, B, and D.

5. **Correct Answer: A** The most logical order of the passages is 4, 3, 2, 1. It is not logical to begin the passages with paragraphs 2 or 3, as indicated in Responses B and C, because they appear to complete information that has been presented earlier and, therefore, depend on information in the other two paragraphs in order to be understood. This also eliminates Response D. This leaves Response A, which begins with paragraph 4. The paragraphs presented in this order form a well-organized, coherent passage.

6. **Correct Answer: C** The most logical order of the passages is 1, 2, 4, 3. The first paragraph introduces the issue and sets the stage for the remaining paragraphs describing the actions taken to address the issue. Accordingly, paragraph 1 should be the first paragraph. Paragraphs 2 and 4 elaborate on the resolution to the issue introduced in paragraph 1 and therefore must follow paragraph 1. Paragraph 2 logically comes before paragraph 4 because paragraph 2 explains that a plan was put in place whereas paragraph 4 elaborates on the specifics of the plan. Finally, paragraph 3 is clearly the concluding paragraph because it further defines the role of the ASO which is introduced in paragraph 4. The paragraphs presented in this order form a well-organized, coherent passage.