The Ultimate Step by Step Guide to Preparing for the HiSET Writing

Student's #1 Choice

HiSET Writing 2026

for

Beginners

2 FULL-LENGTH PRACTICE TESTS IN THE BOOK

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Reza Nazari

Recommended by Test Prep Experts

HiSET WRITING

Language Arts–Writing

STUDY GUIDE

HiSET

Language Arts–Writing

for Beginners

The Ultimate Step by Step Guide to Preparing for the HiSET Language Arts Test

BUILD
Write complete sentences.

REVISE
Improve real drafts.

WRITE
Argue a clear essay.

The Step-by-Step Guide to Grammar, Editing, and Essay Writing for the HiSET Language Arts–Writing Test

8 CHAPTERS	DRAFT-BASED PRACTICE	TEST-DAY PLAN
Skill-building lessons	Editing inside complete drafts	A calm 120-minute routine

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Example: Classify the Task

Read This

A question shows sentence 3 of a draft email: "The volunteers delivered meals on Saturday, they collected donations on Sunday." The question asks which version of the sentence is correct.

Question: What kind of question is this, and what should the test taker look for?

Name the job The question asks for a correct version, not a better order or a smoother word. It is a grammar-and-mechanics question.

Read around The sentence joins two complete thoughts with only a comma—a sentence-boundary problem.

Pick the best The best choice will separate or correctly join the two thoughts.

✓ **Answer:** It is a writing-conventions question about sentence boundaries, so the test taker should look for the choice that joins the two complete thoughts correctly.

Common Mistake

Some test takers assume that every underlined or numbered part must contain an error. It may not. Questions sometimes offer a choice such as "The sentence is correct as written," and sometimes that choice is right. Judge the draft, not your expectations.

Your Turn

Practice Text

Teresa is getting ready for the HiSET Writing test. Her study sheet lists three kinds of multiple-choice questions. The first kind asks whether ideas are in the best order and whether a draft opens, connects, and closes well. The second kind asks for the clearest and smoothest way to word an idea. The third kind asks her to correct grammar, punctuation, capitalization, or spelling. At the bottom of the sheet she has written, "Every question has one best answer, and the essay uses two reading passages."

1. A practice question asks which sentence would best conclude a draft email. Which kind of question is it?
   - **A.** the first kind, about ordering and connecting ideas
   - **B.** the second kind, about smooth wording
   - **C.** the third kind, about grammar and mechanics
   - **D.** an essay task rather than a multiple-choice task
2. A practice question underlines "the schedule was wrote by hand" and asks for the correct version. Which kind of question is it?
   - **A.** the first kind, about ordering and connecting ideas
   - **B.** the second kind, about smooth wording
   - **C.** the third kind, about grammar and mechanics
   - **D.** an essay task rather than a multiple-choice task
3. While practicing, Teresa finds two choices that both seem acceptable. What should she do?
   - **A.** Choose the longer one, since longer answers show more effort.
   - **B.** Compare both against the draft and choose the one that works best there.
   - **C.** Skip the question, because two acceptable choices mean it will not be scored.
   - **D.** Choose the one with the most advanced vocabulary.
4. Which statement matches Teresa's study sheet and the real test?
   - **A.** The essay asks her to respond to a single passage.
   - **B.** Each multiple-choice question may have several equally correct answers.
   - **C.** The essay asks her to take a position after reading a pair of texts.
   - **D.** Grammar and punctuation matter on the essay only.

1.2 Parts of Speech in Context

PRIORITY: NEXT

A word's part of speech is the job it does in one particular sentence—and many words change jobs from sentence to sentence.

The Big Idea

English sorts words into eight jobs, called **parts of speech**: nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections. The Writing test never asks you to recite these labels, but editing questions constantly depend on them—you cannot choose between *quick* and *quickly* until you know what job the word is doing. The key habit is to judge the job in context. *Schedule* is a verb in "I schedule the shifts" and a noun in "the schedule changed." Look at what the word is doing here, in this sentence, not at what it usually does.

You will learn to:

- match each of the eight jobs to what a word is actually doing in a sentence
- identify a word's part of speech from its role in a specific sentence
- recognize when the same word takes different jobs in different sentences

Here are the eight jobs, each with a plain description. Read them the way you would read a toolbox label—not to memorize, but so the terms never rattle you when an answer choice uses one:

- **Noun** — names a person, place, thing, or idea: *driver*, *lobby*, *permit*, *patience*.
- **Pronoun** — stands in for a noun: *she*, *they*, *it*, *everyone*.
- **Verb** — shows an action or a state of being: *repairs*, *is*, *will arrive*.
- **Adjective** — describes a noun or pronoun: *narrow* entrance, *final* notice.
- **Adverb** — describes a verb, an adjective, or another adverb, often telling how, when, or where: arrives *quickly*, *very* narrow.
- **Preposition** — ties a noun to the rest of the sentence, often showing place or time: *on* the counter, *during* the shift, *before* noon.
- **Conjunction** — connects words or word groups: *and*, *but*, *or*, *because*, *although*.
- **Interjection** — a short burst of feeling: *Oh*, *well*, *wow*. It is rare in the formal drafts the test uses.

Beginner Routine

Ask what it does	Does the word name, replace, act, describe, connect, or locate?
Check its neighbors	A word right before a noun is often an adjective; a word explaining a verb is often an adverb; a word followed by a noun that answers "where" or "when" is often a preposition.
Test this sentence only	The same word may hold a different job in the next sentence. Judge each use on its own.

Example: One Word, Two Jobs

Read This

Sentence 1: The landlord will light the walkway with solar lamps.

Sentence 2: The new light above the mailboxes flickers.

Question: What job does *light* do in each sentence?

Sentence 1	Ask what the landlord will do: *will light*. Here *light* is the main verb, showing an action.
Sentence 2	Ask what flickers: the *light*. Here *light* names a thing—a noun—and *new* is an adjective describing it.
Conclusion	Same word, two different jobs, decided entirely by context.

✓ **Answer:** *Light* is a verb in sentence 1 and a noun in sentence 2.

Common Mistake

Do not label a word by its ending alone. Most *-ly* words are adverbs, but *friendly* is an adjective ("a friendly greeting"), and some adverbs, such as *soon* and *well*, have no *-ly* at all. The job in the sentence—not the spelling—decides the part of speech.

Beginner Note

Verbs are not always action words. Forms of *be*—*is*, *are*, *was*, *were*—show a state of being, and each one is a full verb on its own. In "The lobby is quiet," the verb is *is*. Beginners who hunt only for action often decide such sentences have no verb at all.

Your Turn

Practice Text: Break-Room Note

Marisol schedules the weekend shifts, and she posts the schedule early so that everyone can plan ahead. During busy weeks, extra help arrives quickly.

1. In the first sentence, what job does the word *schedules* do?
   - **A.** noun naming a document
   - **B.** verb telling what Marisol does
   - **C.** adjective describing the shifts
   - **D.** adverb telling when
2. Later in the same sentence, what job does the word *schedule* do in "she posts the schedule early"?
   - **A.** verb
   - **B.** adverb
   - **C.** noun
   - **D.** conjunction
3. In "During busy weeks," what job does the word *During* do?
   - **A.** conjunction connecting two complete thoughts
   - **B.** preposition tying the noun *weeks* to the rest of the sentence
   - **C.** adverb describing the verb *arrives*
   - **D.** adjective describing *weeks*
4. In "extra help arrives quickly," which word is an adverb, and what does it describe?
   - **A.** *quickly* — it describes the verb *arrives*
   - **B.** *extra* — it describes the verb *arrives*
   - **C.** *quickly* — it describes the noun *help*
   - **D.** *arrives* — it describes *quickly*

1.3 Complete Sentences: Subject, Predicate, Complete Thought

PRIORITY: CORE

Every complete sentence names something and says something about it—and it leaves the reader with a finished thought.

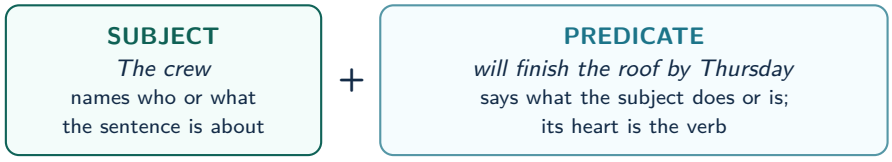
The Big Idea

A complete sentence has two working parts. The **subject** names who or what the sentence is about. The **predicate** says what the subject does or is, and its heart is the verb. But parts alone are not enough: a sentence must also express a complete thought, so that when you finish reading it, no essential piece is left hanging. That gives you a two-part test you will use for the rest of this book—is there a verb with a subject, and does the thought feel finished? Many conventions decisions depend on this first step, because you cannot repair a sentence until you can see its skeleton.

You will learn to:

- find the subject and the predicate of a sentence
- tell a simple subject from a complete subject
- recognize compound subjects and compound predicates
- find the main verb, including verbs with helpers such as *will*, *have*, and *is*

Sentence Anatomy: The Two-Part Completeness Test



The two-part test: (1) Is there a verb, and a subject that performs it?
(2) Does the thought feel finished, with nothing left hanging?

Scan Me

You will learn to:

- recognize how HiSET drafts present numbered sentences and underlined portions
- read the full sentence and its neighbors before judging any choice
- avoid the shortest-answer reflex and the fanciest-answer reflex

Why do neighbors matter so much? Because drafts are webs, not lists. The word *they* in sentence 4 points back to people named in sentence 3. A date in sentence 2 may control which verb tense fits sentence 5. If you read only the underlined words, more than one choice may look acceptable. The best answer is the one that is grammatical *and* faithful to the draft around it. The example below shows the trap in action: watch the answer flip.

Example: Judged Alone, It Passes—Judged in Context, It Fails

Read This

(1) Last spring, the animal shelter's kitten intake doubled. **(2)** Foster families respond by taking in more than forty litters.

Question: A question asks whether the underlined verb is correct. What does reading only sentence 2 miss?

Place the target The underlined word is the verb *respond* in sentence 2.

Read the whole sentence "Foster families respond by taking in more than forty litters" is complete and grammatical. Judged alone, it passes—and "correct as written" looks safe.

Read the neighbors Sentence 1 opens with *Last spring* and uses *doubled*. The draft is telling a past story.

Judge by fit In a past story, the verb must be *responded*. The neighbor overturns the verdict.

✓ **Answer:** Alone, sentence 2 looks correct; beside sentence 1, it is wrong. *Respond* must become *responded*—proof that the neighboring sentences, not the underlined words, decide the answer.

The two reflexes deserve equal suspicion. A short choice wins only when the dropped words were dead weight; if it drops information the draft needs, it loses. A fancy choice—*utilize* for *use*, *reside* for *live*—wins almost never, because good drafts favor plain, precise wording that suits their readers. Judge every choice by fit, not by size or shine.

☞ Beginner Routine

Place the target Find the numbered or underlined part the question asks about.

Read the whole sentence Never judge an underlined phrase without the rest of its sentence.

Read the neighbors Check the sentence before and after for pronouns, time words, and connections.

Judge by fit Choose the option that is correct and matches the draft's meaning and plain style.

☞ Common Mistake

Some test takers skim the question, glance at the underlined words, and pick the choice that "sounds smart." Drafts on this test are everyday documents—emails, newsletters, reports—written for everyday readers. A revision that dresses a plain idea in formal costume usually makes the draft worse, and the test rewards the editor who notices.

✏ Your Turn

Practice Text: Library Column Draft

(1) The library's tool-lending program began with twelve donated tools. **(2)** Today the collection includes more than two hundred items. **(3)** Borrowers can keep a tool for one week. **(4)** They can renew it once if no one is waiting. **(5)** The program succeeds because neighbors return what they borrow.

1. A question asks about the word *They* in sentence 4. What should you do before choosing an answer?
   A. Judge sentence 4 by itself, since that is where the word appears.
   B. Read sentence 3 to see who *They* refers to.
   C. Choose the shortest option to save time.
   D. Replace *They* with a more formal word.
2. One choice shortens sentence 2 to "The collection grew." Why should an editor be cautious about it?
   A. Shorter choices are never correct.
   B. Longer choices are always better.
   C. The short version contains a spelling error.
   D. The short version loses the specific detail that shows how much the program grew.
3. One choice revises part of sentence 5 to "effectuate the restitution of borrowed implements." Why is this a poor revision?
   A. It is grammatically incorrect.
   B. It is too short to be a sentence.
   C. It trades clear, plain wording for wording that is harder to read and does not fit a library column.
   D. It turns the sentence into a question.
4. On the test, what does a number or an underline in a draft signal?
   A. the part a question will ask about, which may or may not need a change
   B. a sentence that contains an error that must be fixed
   C. the sentence that states the main idea of the draft
   D. a sentence that can safely be skipped while reading

ESSAY TRANSFER ▪ Complete Sentences
Draft one body-paragraph claim, then run the chapter check: identify its subject and verb, confirm the thought is finished, and repair any collision with the next sentence. A scorer cannot follow evidence through a fragment or run-on.

The Five-Step Sentence Check

Use this sequence on any draft sentence a question marks: (1) find the verb, including its helpers; (2) find the subject that performs or receives it; (3) ask whether the thought is finished—if not, you have a fragment; (4) check where one complete thought ends and the next begins—if they collide, you have a run-on; and (5) confirm that every word's form matches its job in the sentence. Then, before answering, reread the sentence with its neighbors.

Chapter 1 Practice

How to Practice

This chapter practice works the way the real test does: the questions live inside two complete drafts. Read Source A in full before answering Questions 1–6, and read Source B before Questions 7–12. Each draft contains planted problems—fragments, run-ons, and wrong word forms—along with sentences that are perfectly fine. For every question, reread the numbered sentence and its neighbors before you choose.

Source A: Email from the Office Manager

To: All staff
From: Dana Whitfield, Office Manager
Subject: Parking during the lot repaving

(1) The parking lot will be repaved during the first week of August. **(2)** Crews will work in two stages, the west half will close on Monday. **(3)** Employees who normally park on the west side. **(4)** They should use the garage on Center Street instead. **(5)** The garage entrance is narrow, so drivers should enter it careful. **(6)** The east half will close on Thursday and will reopen the following Monday. **(7)** Anyone with a mobility concern can request a reserved space near the door. **(8)** Contact the front desk with questions.

1. Which revision of sentence 2 corrects its error?
   - **A.** Crews will work in two stages the west half will close on Monday.
   - **B.** Crews will work in two stages, the west half, will close on Monday.
   - **C.** Crews, will work in two stages, the west half will close on Monday.
   - **D.** Crews will work in two stages; the west half will close on Monday.
2. Sentence 3 is not a complete sentence. Which repair works best in the email?
   - **A.** Rewrite it as "Employees who normally park. On the west side."
   - **B.** Rewrite it as "Employees who normally park on the west side, they should use the garage on Center Street instead."
   - **C.** Combine sentences 3 and 4: "Employees who normally park on the west side should use the garage on Center Street instead."
   - **D.** Add a comma after *Employees*.
3. Which change corrects sentence 5?
   - **A.** Change *careful* to *carefully*.
   - **B.** Change *narrow* to *narrowly*.
   - **C.** Change *enter* to *entrance*.
   - **D.** The sentence is correct as written.
4. What is the complete subject of sentence 7?
   - **A.** Anyone
   - **B.** Anyone with a mobility concern
   - **C.** a mobility concern
   - **D.** a reserved space
5. In sentence 6, the words *will close* and *will reopen* form what?
   - **A.** a compound predicate that shares the subject *the east half*
   - **B.** a compound subject
   - **C.** two fragments
   - **D.** a comma splice
6. In sentence 5, what job does the word *narrow* do?
   - **A.** verb showing an action
   - **B.** adverb describing *enter*
   - **C.** noun naming a thing
   - **D.** adjective describing the entrance

Source B: Community Newsletter Draft

(1) The Riverside Food Pantry will move to the old fire station on Grant Avenue in October. **(2)** The new space has a loading dock, volunteers can unload donations in half the time. **(3)** Because the station kept its walk-in cooler. **(4)** The pantry can now accept fresh produce and dairy. **(5)** Neighbors responded generous when the move was announced. **(6)** The pantry will publish its new hours in the November newsletter.

7. Which revision best corrects sentence 2?
   - **A.** The new space has a loading dock volunteers can unload donations in half the time.
   - **B.** The new space has a loading dock, volunteers, can unload donations in half the time.
   - **C.** The new space has a loading dock, so volunteers can unload donations in half the time.
   - **D.** The sentence is correct as written.
8. What is the best way to fix sentence 3?
   - **A.** Add a comma: "Because, the station kept its walk-in cooler."
   - **B.** Capitalize *walk-in*.
   - **C.** Move sentence 3 to the end of the draft.
   - **D.** Combine it with sentence 4: "Because the station kept its walk-in cooler, the pantry can now accept fresh produce and dairy."
9. Which change corrects sentence 5?
   - **A.** Change *responded* to *response*.
   - **B.** Change *generous* to *generously*.
   - **C.** Change *Neighbors* to *Neighbor's*.
   - **D.** The sentence is correct as written.

Scan Me