

ACT English Practice Paper 9  
SET 1

**DIRECTIONS:** In the passages that follow, certain words and phrases are underlined and numbered. In most cases, you are to choose the one that best expresses the idea, makes the statement appropriate for standard written English, or is worded most consistently with the style and tone of the passage as a whole. If you think the original version is best, choose "NO CHANGE."

---

**I Am Iron Man**

[1] The term "Iron Man" has many connotations, including references to a song, a comic book icon, even a movie. [2] Yet only one definition of the term truly lives up to its name: the Ironman Triathlon held annually in Hawaii<sup>1</sup> a picturesque setting for a challenging race. [3] This grueling race demands amazing physical prowess and the ability to swim, bike, and run a marathon, all in less than 12 hours with no break. [4] Very few individuals are up to the task.

Otherwise<sup>3</sup> Gordon Haller is a notable exception. Growing up in the 1950s, Haller developed an interest in many sports categorized as endurance athletics, and welcomed their<sup>4</sup> grueling physical demands. As he pursued a degree in physics he drove a taxi to pay the bills, but competitive training proved<sup>5</sup> his passion. So when he heard about the race in 1978, the first year it was held, he immediately signed up.

The race somewhat<sup>6</sup> originated in an amusing way. The members of two popular sports clubs, the Mid-Pacific Road Runners of Honolulu, and the Waikiki Swim Club<sup>7</sup> of Oahu, had a long-standing and good-natured debate going over who made better athletes: runners or swimmers. However, some local bikers thought both clubs were wrong, while claiming<sup>8</sup> that they, in fact, deserved the title. Wanting to settle the dispute once and for all, when<sup>9</sup> they decided to combine three separate races already held annually on the island<sup>10</sup> into one massive test of endurance. Thus, the Waikiki Roughwater Swim of 2.4 miles, the Around-Oahu Bike race of 112 miles, and the Honolulu Marathon of 26.2 miles were all combined to form the Ironman Triathlon.

Haller was one of only fifteen competitors to show up that February morning to start the race. He quickly scanned the few pages of rules and instructions, and while reading those pages<sup>11</sup> on the last page he discovered a sentence that would become the race's famous slogan: "Swim 2.4 miles! Bike 112 miles! Run 26.2 miles! Brag for the rest of your life!" Haller took that to heart, and at the end of the day, he had become<sup>12</sup> the first Ironman champion in history.

In the approximately thirty years since that very first race, the Ironman has become a tradition in Hawaii and now boasts approximately 1,500 entrants every year. The competitors<sup>14</sup> who complete the race don't have to be the first across the finish line to claim success: just finishing is a victory unto itself.

1.

A. NO CHANGE

B. Hawaii,

C. Hawaii, being

D. Hawaii, it is

2. If the writer were to delete Sentence 4, the essay would primarily lose details that:

F. emphasize how difficult the race truly is.

G. mourn how few athletes are able to visit Hawaii in order to compete in the race.

H. highlight that most athletes prefer the run to the swimming or biking components of the race.

J. suggest that women are not truly competitive in the race.

3.

A. NO CHANGE

B. As a result,

C. In addition,

D. However,

4.

F. NO CHANGE

G. athletics and welcomed their

H. athletics, and welcomed there,

J. athletics and, welcomed there

5.

A. NO CHANGE

B. verified

C. justified

D. certified

6. The best placement for the underlined word would be:

F. where it is now.

G. before the word *in*.

H. before the word *amusing* (changing *an* to *a*).

J. before the word *way*.

**7.**

A. NO CHANGE

B. Runners, of Honolulu, and the Waikiki Swim Club

C. Runners of Honolulu and the Waikiki Swim Club

D. Runners, of Honolulu, and the Waikiki Swim Club,

**8.**

F. NO CHANGE

G. and while claiming

H. they claimed

J. claiming

**9.**

A. NO CHANGE

B. and

C. where

D. DELETE the underlined portion.

**10.** The best placement for the underlined phrase would be:

F. where it is now.

G. before the word *Wanting* (revising the capitalization accordingly).

H. before the word *once*.

J. after the word *endurance* (ending the sentence with a period).

**11.**

A. NO CHANGE

B. and

C. and while perusing those pages

D. and in those sheets of paper

**12.**

F. NO CHANGE

- G. become
- H. became
- J. becamed

13. Which of the following true statements, if added here, would most effectively and specifically emphasize Haller's achievement as described in this essay?

- A. Twelve other people also finished the race that day.
- B. There were points in the race when Haller thought he couldn't possibly finish.
- C. No women raced this year, but that was soon to change.
- D. Haller's amazing physical strength had enabled him to do what no one else in the past had accomplished.

14. Which of the following alternatives to the underlined portion would be LEAST acceptable?

- F. The individuals
- G. That
- H. The athletes
- J. The people

15. This question asks about the preceding passage as a whole.

If the writer were to delete the final paragraph of this essay, the essay would primarily lose information that:

- A. discusses the level of interest the race attracts in the present day.
- B. describes the way the current race is different from the race that Haller ran in 1978.
- C. describes how the victors respond when they cross the finish line.
- D. explains why 1,500 people would be willing to compete in such a difficult race.

SET 2

### New Beginnings

[1]

As a junior in high school, I am very concerned about college. I'm trying to do everything right: when I <sup>16</sup> keep my grades up, participate in a few extracurricular activities, prepare for standardized tests, even perform community service. I spend most days thinking about the future hoping <sup>17</sup> that I'm on the right path, I do my best at everything I can.

[2]

[1] I'm interested in a career in nursing.<sup>18</sup> I decided to try to secure a spot as a volunteer at the local hospital. [2] I accepted his offer immediately, thinking to myself that here lies<sup>19</sup> all the opportunities I could ever want! [3] It would be the best of both worlds: helping people while gaining valuable on-the-job experience! [4] So I put on a nice pair of slacks, a blouse.<sup>20</sup> and some comfortable shoes-don't all nurses wear comfortable shoes?-and went to visit the business office. [5] Fortunately, the hospital director was quite willing to let me help out, and he said I could start that summer as soon as I finished my finals. 21

[3]

The director gave me a brief tour of various departments as he told me about the primary focus of each, an expert himself in every facet of hospital administration.<sup>22</sup> until we stopped right in front of the maternity ward. "This is where you're going to work," he said, ushering me through the brown double doors. Walking into the ward, my ears were immediately overwhelmed. Women<sup>23</sup> yelled and newborns wailed. Nurses rushed around to adjust medical instruments that screamed for attention. I felt suspicious<sup>24</sup> in the center of so much action and wondered if I had been too hasty in seeking out such a difficult service project.

[4]

Apparently my fear must have shown clearly on my face as<sup>25</sup> I looked around because the director said, "Don't worry. You'll get used to the pace up here. You are going to help in the nursery." With that, we walked down the busy hallway past the numerous delivery rooms<sup>26</sup> and into the most peaceful room I've ever seen. The pastel colors provided a quiet backdrop to the humming of machines and soft coos of sleeping infants. A whispering nurse, the one in charge of the nursery.<sup>27</sup> welcomed me, thanked me for volunteering, and asked me to start folding some baby blankets and placing it<sup>28</sup> in the appropriate drawer. The director gave me a questioning look, which I returned with a quiet nod. 29 I got right to work.

16.

F. NO CHANGE

G. I keep

H. I am keeping

J. I have kept

17.

A. NO CHANGE

B. future, hoping

C. future. Hoping

D. future praying

**18.**

F. NO CHANGE

G. nursing, therefore,

H. nursing, so

J. nursing, but

**19.**

A. NO CHANGE

B. lays

C. lay

D. lie

**20.**

F. NO CHANGE

G. pair, of slacks, a blouse,

H. pair, of slacks, a blouse

J. pair of slacks a blouse

**21.** For the sake of the logic and coherence of this paragraph, Sentence 2 should be placed:

A. where it is now.

B. after Sentence 3.

C. after Sentence 4.

D. after Sentence 5.

**22.**

F. NO CHANGE

G. expert, himself in every facet of hospital administration,

H. expert, himself, in every facet of hospital administration

J. expert himself in every facet of hospital administration

**23.**

A. NO CHANGE

B. my ears immediately felt overwhelmed, women

C. I was overwhelmed by the sounds. Women

D. hearing and overwhelmed. Women

**24.** Which choice would be most consistent with the figurative description provided elsewhere in this paragraph?

F. NO CHANGE

G. besieged

H. weak

J. defenseless

**25.** Which of the following alternatives to the underlined portion would be LEAST acceptable?

A. face while

B. face when

C. face at the same time that

D. face since

**26.** Given that all the choices are true, which one provides the most vivid description of the hospital hallway?

F. NO CHANGE

G. down a hallway filled with bright blue and pink balloons, beautiful flowers, and jubilant fathers

H. past a nurses' station and a handful of expectant fathers

J. under the yellowing ceiling of the dated hospital

**27.**

A. NO CHANGE

B. nurse the one in charge of the nursery,

C. nurse the one in charge of the nursery

D. nurse, the one in charge of the nursery

**28.**

F. NO CHANGE

G. place them

H. placed them

J. placing these

**29.** If the writer were to delete the phrase "which I returned with a quiet nod" from the preceding sentence and end the sentence with a period, the sentence would primarily lose:

A. a detail that expresses the narrator's ease while in the nursery.

B. a specific description of the narrator's anger toward the director.

C. information that indicates the narrator will quit the hospital as soon as the director leaves.

D. nothing at all, because this information had already been provided earlier in the passage.

**30.** This question asks about the preceding passage as a whole.

Upon reviewing the essay and realizing that some key information has been left out, the writer composes the following sentence incorporating that information:

Soon enough, I showed up for my first day at the hospital.

This sentence would most logically be placed before the first sentence in Paragraph:

F. 1

G. 2

H. 3

J. 4