FEEDBACK TUTORIAL LETTER

2nd SEMESTER 2019

Test 1

Principles of English Language Usage
(PLU411S)
Principles of Language Usage Test 1 Memo
Total marks: 100
Section A: Reading comprehension
Read the following text and answer the questions that follow

Meteorite Impact and Dinosaur Extinction

1. There is increasing evidence that the impacts of meteorites have had important effects on Earth, particularly in the field of biological evolution. Such impacts continue to pose a natural hazard to life on Earth. Twice in the twentieth century, large meteorite objects are known to have collided with Earth. If an impact is large enough, it can disturb the environment of the entire Earth and cause an ecological catastrophe. The best-documented such impact took place 65 million years ago at the end of the Cretaceous period of geological history. This break in Earth’s history is marked by a mass extinction, when as many as half the species on the planet became extinct.

2. While there are a dozen or more mass extinctions in the geological record, the Cretaceous mass extinction has always intrigued paleontologists because it marks the end of the age of the dinosaurs. For tens of millions of years, those great creatures had flourished. Then, suddenly, they disappeared. The body that impacted Earth at the end of the Cretaceous period was a meteorite with a mass of more than a trillion tons and a diameter of at least 10 kilometers. Scientists first identified this impact in 1980 from the worldwide layer of sediment deposited from the dust cloud that enveloped the planet after the impact. This sediment layer is enriched in the rare metal iridium and other elements that are relatively abundant in a meteorite but very rare in the crust of Earth. Even diluted by the terrestrial material excavated from the crater, this component of meteorites is easily identified. By 1990 geologists had located the impact site itself in the Yucatán region of Mexico. The crater, now deeply buried in sediment, was originally about 200 kilometers in diameter.

3. This impact released an enormous amount of energy, excavating a crater about twice as large as the lunar crater Tycho. The explosion lifted about 100 trillion tons of dust into the atmosphere, as can be determined by measuring the thickness of the sediment layer formed when this dust settled to the surface. Such a quantity of material would have blocked the sunlight completely from reaching the surface, plunging Earth into a period of cold and darkness that lasted at least several months. The explosion is also calculated to have produced vast quantities of nitric acid and melted rock that sprayed out over much of Earth, starting widespread fires that must have consumed most terrestrial forests and grassland. Presumably, those environmental disasters could have been responsible for the mass extinction, including the death of the dinosaurs.

4. Several other mass extinctions in the geological record have been tentatively identified with large impacts, but none is so dramatic as the Cretaceous event. However, even without such specific documentation, it is clear that impacts of this size do occur and that their results can be catastrophic. What is a catastrophe for one group of living things, however, may create opportunities for another group. Following each mass extinction, there is a sudden evolutionary burst as new species develop to fill the ecological niches opened by the event.
Impacts by meteorites represent one mechanism that could cause global catastrophes and seriously influence the evolution of life all over the planet. According to some estimates, the majority of all extinctions of species may be due to such impacts. Such a perspective fundamentally changes our view of biological evolution. The standard criterion for the survival of a species is its success in competing with other species and adapting to slowly changing environments. Yet an equally important criterion is the ability of a species to survive random global ecological catastrophes due to impacts.

Earth is a target in a cosmic shooting gallery, subject to random violent events that were unsuspected a few decades ago. In 1991, the United States Congress asked NASA to investigate the hazard posed today by large impacts on Earth. The group conducting the study concluded from a detailed analysis that impacts from meteorites can indeed be hazardous. Although there is always some risk that a large impact could occur, careful study shows that this risk is quite small.

Reading comprehension questions

For multiple choice questions, just write down the number of the question and the correct letter.

1. The word “pose” in paragraph 1 is closest in meaning to (2)
   a. claim
   b. model
   c. assume
   d. present

2. In paragraph 2, why does the author include the information that dinosaurs had flourished for tens of millions of years and then suddenly disappeared? (3)
   a. To support the claim that the mass extinction at the end of the Cretaceous is the best-documented of the dozen or so mass extinctions in the geological record
   b. To explain why as many as half of the species on Earth at the time are believed to have become extinct at the end of the Cretaceous
   c. To explain why paleontologists have always been intrigued by the mass extinction at the end of the Cretaceous
   d. To provide evidence that an impact can be large enough to disturb the environment of the entire planet and cause an ecological disaster

3. Which of the following can be inferred / concluded from paragraph 3 about the location of the meteorite impact in Mexico? (3)
a. The location of the impact site in Mexico was kept secret by geologists from 1980 to 1990.
b. It was a well-known fact that the impact had occurred in the Yucatán region.
c. Geologists knew that there had been an impact before they knew where it had occurred.
d. **The Yucatán region was chosen by geologists as the most probable impact site because of its climate.**

4. According to paragraph 3, how did scientists determine that a large meteorite had impacted Earth?
   a. They discovered a large crater in the Yucatán region of Mexico.  
   b. **They found a unique layer of sediment worldwide.**
   c. They were alerted by archaeologists who had been excavating in the Yucatán region.
   d. They located a meteorite with a mass of over a trillion tons.

5. The word “excavating” in paragraph 3 is closest in meaning to  
   a. digging out  
   b. extending  
   c. destroying  
   d. covering up

6. The word “consumed” in paragraph 3 is closest in meaning to  
   a. changed  
   b. exposed  
   c. **destroyed**  
   d. covered

7. Mention any five impacts of the Cretaceous dust.  
   ✓ The explosion lifted about 100 trillion tons of dust into the atmosphere  
   ✓ The dust blocked the sunlight completely from reaching the surface  
   ✓ The dust plunged Earth into a period of cold and darkness that lasted at least several months.  
   ✓ The explosion also produced vast quantities of nitric acid
The nitric acid melted rock that sprayed out over much of Earth, starting widespread fires.
The wild fire consumed most terrestrial forests and grassland.
Presumably, those environmental disasters could have been responsible for the mass extinction, including the death of the dinosaurs (Any five)

8. The phrase “tentatively identified” on line 36 is closest in meaning to
a. identified after careful study
b. identified without certainty
c. occasionally identified
d. easily identified

9. Paragraph 5 supports which of the following statements about the factors that are essential for the survival of a species.

a. The most important factor for the survival of a species is its ability to compete and adapt to gradual changes in its environment.
b. The ability of a species to compete and adapt to a gradually changing environment is not the only ability that is essential for survival.
c. Since most extinctions of species are due to major meteorite impacts, the ability to survive such impacts is the most important factor for the survival of a species.
d. The factors that are most important for the survival of a species vary significantly from one species to another.

10. State whether the following statements are TRUE or FALSE
i. Impacts of the meteorites do not pose a natural danger to life on Earth. False
ii. The Cretaceous is the most dramatic extinction. True
iii. The original diameter of the crater was bigger than 100km. True
iv. After every mass extinction, new species evolve. True

According to the passage, who conducted investigations about the current dangers posed by large meteorite impacts on Earth?

a. Paleontologists
b. Geologists
c. The United States Congress
d. NASA

Section B: Grammar
August is a burning season in the Amazon. During this month, ranchers use the dry weather to prepare land for crops and pasture. Earlier in the month, the smoke drifted and darkened the afternoon sky in Latin America’s largest city, São Paulo, 1,800 miles to the southeast. There were at least 5,442 fires in Rondônia this August, according to statistics from INPE, Brazil’s space agency. That is up from 1,975 last year, echoing an Amazon-wide trend. The Amazon produces at least 20% of the world oxygen, and it is also known as the lungs of the earth.

1. Change the following sentences into question forms (6)
   i. Is August a burning season in the Amazon?
   ii. Did the smoke drift?
   iii. Does the Amazon produce at least 20% of the world oxygen?

2. Identify the parts of speech of the following words as used in the extract. (10)
   a) August = noun
   b) Amazon = noun
   c) earlier = adverb
   d) produces = verb
   e) world = adjective
   f) and = conjunction
   g) the = article
   h) up = preposition
   i) drifted = verb
   j) afternoon = adjective

3. Identify the tenses of the following sentences (8)
   a) Present simple
   b) Past simple
   c) Present simple
   d) Present simple

4. Change the following sentence into negation. (6)
   i. August is not a burning season in the Amazon.
   ii. The smoke did not drift.
   iii. The Amazon does not produce at least 20% of the world oxygen.

Section C: Essay analysis

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Read the following essay, and answer the questions that follow.

My bedroom

1. One of the places dear to each person in their houses is their bedroom. The bedroom is the one place where people rest, and they regard it as their sanctuaries. This essay describes my bedroom, as I know it.

2. The door is white, with some scratches at the bottom from my cat. My cat scratches the door when she wants to come into my room. The door handle is brown and metal. At the complete bottom of the door is a rubber flap, which I do not know the reason why it is there.

3. The floor in my room is wooden, it creaks when stepped on. However, I do have one white, plush carpet approximately in the middle of the floor. It is rather clean looking, considering it is white, and that it is not washed regularly.

4. To the left of the door is a leather chair, of which is of no particular use, besides hanging half-used clothes on it. Past the chair is my electronic station, where I charge my phone at night, and charge my shaver during the day. In addition, center-left is a rectangular window overlooking our backyard garden and swimming pool. It is a pleasant view for a cold room. My queen-size bed is at the center-left. It has white and grey covers. The blanket in particular has a floral design. My cat scratches things all the time. My pillow has a white case and nothing else to it. The frame of the bed is wooden and beige in color.

5. The walls are all white, except the back room, which is covered with a blue, mosaic-patterned cloth. The curtains over the large window are also white and see-through, which almost defeat the purpose of having them. The ceiling is white, but with black blotches above the meditation altar because of candle and incense smoke. It is one of the coldest rooms in our house. As the windows are quite old and thin, and lack insulation. During autumn and winter, sometimes a heater is brought in to feel comfortable. However, with enough heavy blankets, sleep is manageable.

6. It is a simple room without much purpose other than sleeping, meditating, and playing percussion. Nevertheless, I am a down-to-earth person, and it matches.

Essay analysis questions

1. This essay describes my bedroom, as I know it. (2)
2. The door is white, with some scratches at the bottom from my cat. (2)
3. The door is white, with some scratches at the bottom from my cat. (2)
4. The floor in my room is wooden, it creaks when stepped on. (2)
5. The floor in my room is wooden. It creaks when stepped on. (2)
6. The floor in my room is wooden. It creaks when stepped on. (2)
7. My cat scratches things all the time. (2)
8. It is a pleasant view for a cold room my queen-size bed is at the center-left. (2)
9. It is a pleasant view for a cold room. My queen-size bed is at the center-left. (2)
It is a pleasant view for a cold room, and my queen-size bed is at the center-left.

10. As the windows are quite old and thin, and lack insulation.
11. As the windows are quite old and thin, and lack insulation, during autumn and winter, sometimes a heater is brought in to feel comfortable.

12. However, In addition, Nevertheless

Section D: Writing

Write one body paragraph on the following topic:

The advantages of a good education system

GRID FOR MARKING A PARAGRAPH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Below standard 0-3</th>
<th>At standard 4</th>
<th>Above standard 5</th>
<th>High standard 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic sentence</strong></td>
<td>Shows no grasp of nature and function of a topic sentence/Topic sentence is clear but controlling idea is vague.</td>
<td>Topic and controlling idea are present though not clearly stated.</td>
<td>Topic and controlling idea are clear but simplistic.</td>
<td>Topic and controlling idea are clear. Topic sentence shows insight and original thought.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus</strong></td>
<td>No clear focus. Focus may be split / too broad / confusing. Writer’s focus doesn’t match the rest of the paragraph.</td>
<td>Paragraph is focused around the controlling idea. Parts of the paragraph might stray, but the overall message is there.</td>
<td>Paragraph is clearly focused around the controlling idea. Clear and interesting, but may need more development</td>
<td>Paragraph is clearly focused around a complex controlling idea. Clear reasons/points contribute to the focus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Support / Evidence</strong></td>
<td>Support for the topic sentence is vague or irrelevant. Main points too general and/or too few. Separate sentences or paragraphs are used. No attempt at a</td>
<td>Support given for the topic sentence, but parts of paragraph may be too general / vague. Some information irrelevant (distracting or unnecessary) Enough supporting sentences (±5),</td>
<td>Points in the paragraph are generally supported with details, quotes or examples that illustrate and explain the points the writer makes. Concluding sentence links ideas in</td>
<td>Gives a variety of vivid and concrete support which supports the controlling idea. Concluding sentence complements rest of the paragraph.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity and Language maturity</td>
<td>Several grammar patterns seriously influence understanding (E.g. tense errors, confused wording or sentence structure.)</td>
<td>Generally clear. Sentence structure may be simplistic and/or repetitive. Some grammar error patterns or confusing word choice do not seriously interfere with understanding.</td>
<td>Demonstrates mastery of conventional grammar Clear, with complex sentence structures. Some minor grammar errors</td>
<td>Sentences are complex and effective. Sentence structure and word choice used creatively</td>
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