

Contents

Skill area	Topic	Featured subjects	Page
Introduction			4
About the Michigan ECPE: Overview – Results – ECPE writing criteria			6

PERSONALITY

1 Artistic attributes

Cloze	Remembering the Beatles	Vocabulary round-up	8
Grammar	Think grammar!	Tackling ECPE grammar questions	10
Reading	Picasso the poet	Vocabulary round-up	12
Vocabulary	Extension and review	Expressing passionate (and not so passionate) intensity Body language (compound adjectives)	14
Writing	ECPE writing criteria (1)	Mechanics (punctuation – spelling – capitalization) Rhetoric (organization of ideas – topic development – linking)	16

2 Females at their finest

Cloze	Jackie: A remarkable First Lady	Vocabulary round-up	18
Grammar	Relative clauses	Tackling relative clause questions on the ECPE	20
Reading	Jessica: A joyful girl pilot	Vocabulary round-up	22
Vocabulary	Extension and review	Shades of shyness – Beauty is in the eye of the beholder – A “look back” at the <i>-spec</i> in <i>retrospect</i>	24
Writing	ECPE writing criteria (2)	Grammar and syntax Vocabulary	26
Vocabulary consolidation 1			28

PLANTS AND ANIMALS

3 Echoing eco themes

Cloze	Extinction: Palms under threat	Vocabulary round-up	32
Grammar	Verb-tense questions	Adjusting your expectations of ECPE verb-tense questions	34
Reading	Evolution: The giraffe's neck	Vocabulary round-up	36
Vocabulary	Extension and review	Long, longer, longest – Short, shorter, shortest – Idioms with <i>long</i> and <i>short</i>	38
Writing	For and against (1)	Rhetoric: Structuring your essay (the “tell them” prototype) The “for and against” essay: Zoos / Protecting endangered species	40

4 Amazing adaptations

Cloze	Whirly bird: The red-necked phalarope	Vocabulary round-up	42
Grammar	Frequently tested verb structures	Learning to recognize and cope with verb-structure questions	44
Reading	Heating things up: The sacred lotus	Vocabulary round-up	46
Vocabulary	Extension and review	Spreading out – The more things change, the more they stay the same – Subtle differences	48
Writing	For and against (2)	Featured topic: Ecotourism	50
Vocabulary consolidation 2			52

HEALTH AND MEDICINE

5 Weighty health problems

Cloze	Obesity on the rise	Vocabulary round-up	56
Grammar	Easily confused word forms	Tackling questions with easily confused word forms	58
Reading	Public health enemy number 1	Vocabulary round-up	60
Vocabulary	Extension and review	Overweight and underweight - Good and bad	62
Writing	The opinion essay (1)	Featured topic: Weighing in on the “fat tax”	64

Skill area	Topic	Featured subjects	Page
6 Is there a doctor in the house?			
Cloze	Asthma alert	Vocabulary round-up	66
Grammar	Participle clauses	Coping with items that involve participle clauses	68
Reading	A new kind of med school	Vocabulary round-up	70
Vocabulary	Extension and review	Emergency room – Doctor, doctor! – Other medical descriptors	72
Writing	The opinion essay (2)	Featured topic: Banning smoking in public places	74
Vocabulary consolidation 3			76

THE ENVIRONMENT

7 Devastating disasters

Cloze	Eruption: “Vancouver, this is it!”	Vocabulary round-up	80
Grammar	Easily confused phrases	Becoming sensitive to similar phrases with different meanings	82
Reading	Oily messes: Slicks and spills	Vocabulary round-up	84
Vocabulary	Extension and review	Speaking of spills – Sound like ... – Figuratively speaking	86
Writing	The problem/solution essay (1)	Featured topic: Are we ready for the next “big one”?	88

8 Rubbish!

Cloze	Amazing mountains of trash	Vocabulary round-up	90
Grammar	Impersonal vs. personal constructions	Tackling items that test impersonal and personal constructions	92
Reading	The secret life of tires	Vocabulary round-up	94
Vocabulary	Extension and review	What’s left over – Catastrophic collocations	96
Writing	The problem/solution essay (2)	Featured topic: Think outside the recycling bin!	98
Vocabulary consolidation 4			100

TECHNOLOGY

9 Innovative inventors

Cloze	Henry Ford: A tinkerer for all times	Vocabulary round-up	104
Grammar	The subjunctive, inversion, and <i>so/such</i>	Points to remember about the subjunctive, inversion, and <i>so/such</i>	106
Reading	Thomas Edison: A classic innovator	Vocabulary round-up	108
Vocabulary	Extension and review	Ahead of the times, behind the times – Greek time, Roman time – Time out for <i>time</i> expressions	110
Writing	Tasks that don’t quite fit the mold	Featured topic: What makes an invention successful?	112

10 Inventive innovations

Cloze	Online: The “new normal”	Vocabulary round-up	114
Grammar	Subordinators and other linking words	Recognizing and tackling items with missing linking words	116
Reading	Road gizmos: Botts’ dots	Vocabulary round-up	118
Vocabulary	Extension and review	The <i>brain</i> vs. <i>mind</i> debate - Computer verbs	120
Writing	Time management	Developing a time-management approach to ECPE writing	122
Vocabulary consolidation 5			124

Exam practice (GCVR and Writing).....	128
Extra activities (crossword puzzles, word jumbles, Internet survey).....	140
Grammar reference.....	146

Cloze Eruption: "Vancouver, this is it!"

Warm-up: How many of the natural phenomena pictured below can you name? Can you think of others? Which regularly threaten your country? Which have you experienced at first hand? Which do you fear the most?



STEP 1: Skim for gist. Cover the answer choices to the right of the passage. Read the text quickly, and then answer the questions below. Don't worry about unknown words yet.

- Which paragraph raises doubts about scientists' ability to predict volcanic eruptions? ____
- Which provides a graphic description of the eruption? ____
- Which mentions when the event occurred and who reported it? ____

STEP 2: Think about what is missing and what is tested. Following are the topics tested in items 1-10. Decide which topic relates to each item, and write its letter (a-j) below.

- | | |
|--|--|
| a. Structure: which subject or helping verb? | f. Structure/meaning: which verb in Simple Past? |
| b. Structure: article, preposition, past/present participle? | g. Train of thought: which noun? |
| c. Structure/meaning: which modal or linking word? | h. Train of thought: which present participle? |
| d. Structure/meaning: which <i>-ed</i> or <i>-ing</i> verb form? | i. Train of thought: which adjective? |
| e. Structure/meaning: which preposition/linking word? | j. Train of thought: which linking word? |

1. ____ 2. ____ 3. ____ 4. ____ 5. ____ 6. ____ 7. ____ 8. ____ 9. ____ 10. ____

STEP 3: Work through the passage. Remember to consider the sentences before and after each blank.

STEP 4: Read the passage again. Are your answers logical? Have you answered all the items?

VOCABULARY ROUND-UP

A Nouns: Find and underline nouns with the following meanings. Write the nouns below. Here, and in B and C, the meanings reflect the order in which the words appear in the text.

- _____ – sudden forceful explosion
- _____ – rounded curve or swelling
- _____ – event in which a large amount of rocks and earth fall down the side of a mountain
- _____ – thick, red-hot fluid within a volcano
- _____ – powdery, grayish-white substance that is left when something has been burned
- _____ – (of natural phenomena) violent force

B Verbs: Find and draw a box around verbs whose base forms have the following meanings. Write the base forms below.

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1. _____ – become larger than normal | 3. _____ – hold in, keep in place |
| 2. _____ – move with a loud, deep noise | 4. _____ – expect, predict |

C Adjectives, adverbs, and adverbials: Find and circle words or phrases with the following meanings. Write them below.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. _____ – (phr) working, at work | 4. _____ – too many to be counted |
| 2. _____ – making a loud, deep noise | 5. _____ – making breathing difficult |
| 3. _____ – anxious, hysterical | 6. _____ – from what is known |

At 8:32 a.m. on May 18, 1980, Mount Saint Helens woke up in a violent mood. "Vancouver, Vancouver, this is it!" radioed David Johnston, a 30-year-old geologist on duty at the U.S. Geological Survey* office, just 5.7 miles from the rumbling mountain in Washington state.

That frantic __ (1) __ was the first report of the eruption and Johnston's last known words. He __ (2) __ along with 56 other people and countless wildlife as a bulge that __ (3) __ swelled for weeks from Saint Helens' north side started thundering down the mountainside at 200 miles per hour. The landslide ripped a cap off the mountaintop, __ (4) __ it like a champagne bottle and __ (5) __ pressure that had contained pools of magma below. The 1,300-degree magma __ (6) __ from the mountain at between 50 and 80 miles per hour, flattening 220 square miles of forest and paralyzing much of the area with suffocating ash. Johnston had apparently told others earlier that he was __ (7) __ about an eruption, __ (8) __ no one had anticipated it would explode with such fury.

The question remains: If another big explosion were coming from one of the planet's 600 or so active volcanoes, __ (9) __ we be able to see it coming this time? Thanks to advances in seismology and physics, scientists are more confident __ (10) __ their abilities to predict big eruptions, but, says one of the experts, "There's an awful lot we still don't know."

* U.S. Geological Survey – department of the U.S. government that gathers scientific information to help the USA manage its natural resources and minimize loss of life and property from natural disasters

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| 1. a. geologist | c. volcano |
| b. message | d. e-mail |
| 2. a. perished | c. killed |
| b. extinguished | d. escaped |
| 3. a. it | c. was |
| b. he | d. had |
| 4. a. drinking | c. breaking |
| b. popping | d. tearing |
| 5. a. increased | c. releasing |
| b. the | d. with |
| 6. a. streamed | c. dripped |
| b. floating | d. pouring |
| 7. a. curious | c. right |
| b. sorry | d. worried |
| 8. a. which | c. so |
| b. but | d. since |
| 9. a. would | c. that |
| b. should | d. and |
| 10. a. than | c. about |
| b. as | d. and |



Discuss

In pairs or small groups, talk about the following, and then report back to the class.

- Does your government have a good track record when it comes to handling disasters?
- How ready do you think they are to handle the next big disaster?
- What steps do you think they should take to improve their readiness?



Grammar Easily confused phrases

In Unit 5 we looked at items that test easily confused word forms. In this section, we'll look at items that ask you to choose between easily confused phrases. This is another way in which lexical grammar is tested on the ECPE.

EXAM TIP

Becoming sensitive to similar phrases with different meanings

English is full of phrases that employ a word in slightly different ways that result in distinct meanings, as in these examples:

It's good for you to exercise every day.

It's good of you to offer to help me.

There's always **a demand for** hard workers.

Hard workers are always **in demand**.

The book can be ordered **on demand**.

it's good for you = it will benefit you

it's good of you = it's kind of you

a demand for = a need for

in demand = much wanted, sought after

on demand = when someone asks for it



It's a good idea to get into the habit of "collecting" such phrase groups. Some students find it helpful to have a section in their notebooks where they can record examples and definitions of these and other lexical grammar phenomena: e.g. phrasal verbs and word forms.

In each set, complete each item with one of the choices on the right. Remember to consider the meanings of the choices, and think carefully about both the meaning and structure of the sentence into which the phrase must fit.

1. a. He'd be a great manager _____ his hot temper. b. He'd be a great manager _____ he didn't have such a hot temper. c. He's a great manager, _____ he loses his temper sometimes. d. Uh-oh! The manager looks _____ he's going to lose his temper.	as if even if if only if it weren't for
2. a. _____ he's been coming home by 7:00. b. He promised he'd be home by 7:00 _____. c. He called to say he'd be home _____ 7:00, so let's go out at 7:30. d. Don't expect him home until 7:00, _____. He has a deadline to meet.	at the latest if not later no later than of late/lately
3. a. Good jobs are _____ nowadays. b. Before I started, I had my doubts about the job, but _____. c. Tom is _____ the best tennis player on the team. d. Is global warming slowing down? The experts say _____.	far and away far from it few and far between so far so good
4. a. Her father _____ about letting her go to the gym every day. b. Her schoolwork _____ for her to go to the gym every day. c. Because of her schoolwork, it _____ for her to go to the gym every day. d. Because of her schoolwork, she _____ to go to the gym every day.	is being difficult is difficult is finding it difficult is making it difficult
5. a. He's determined to study hard and _____ of his college education. b. I said I'm OK. It's just a scratch. Don't _____ it than it actually is. c. He's determined to _____ a bad situation. d. I didn't have time to go shopping, so we'll just have to _____ leftovers.	make the best of make do with make more of make the most of

THINK GRAMMAR!

Use the steps below to help you answer questions 1-10 at the bottom of the page.

STEP 1: Analyze the stem and choices. Refer back to Step 1 on page 10 for the questions you should ask yourself. Be ready to share your answers with the class

STEP 2: Try to figure out what grammar topic is being tested. Following are the grammar topics tested in questions 1-10. Decide which topic relates to each question, and write its letter (a-h) below. (Two are used twice.)

a. Easily confused phrases	e. Modals: past possibility
b. Easily confused word forms	f. Coordinating conjunctions
c. Verb tense/agreement	g. Relative clauses
d. Verb + which structure?	h. Reduced adverbial clauses

1. ____ 2. ____ 3. ____ 4. ____ 5. ____ 6. ____ 7. ____ 8. ____ 9. ____ 10. ____

Which choice fits the context?



STEP 3: Work through each item, choice by choice. Use what you discovered in Steps 1 and 2 to help you answer questions 1-10. Be ready to explain why you selected or ruled out each choice.

- “John called to say he can’t find his keys.”
“____ them here?”
a. Would he leave
b. Were they left
c. Should he leave
d. Could he have left
- My friend Maria has very strong opinions, so I try ____ with her.
a. that I don’t argue
b. not to arguing
c. not to argue
d. not having argued
- “You didn’t mention the divorce, did you?”
“No. Luckily, I knew ____ .”
a. not to say
b. that I didn’t say it
c. what wasn’t said
d. what not to say
- As a business major, my brother John has taken several ____ courses.
a. management
b. managing
c. manager
d. manage
- It’s always ____ before you buy a high-priced item.
a. worthy of shopping around
b. worth shopping around
c. worth it to shopping around
d. worthy to shop around
- ____ control of the car, he drove off the road and crashed into a tree.
a. Lost
b. Losing
c. He lost
d. Having been lost
- You bet she’s angry. ____ that she’s decided to break up with him.
a. So that
b. So far as
c. So long as
d. So much so
- The sale of MP3 players ____ dramatically for the last five years.
a. has been increasing
b. are increasing
c. is increased
d. have been increased
- “Where shall we go on vacation this year?”
“Well, how about camping ____ a cruise?”
a. not only
b. but also
c. or else
d. or either
- The manager is looking for a personal assistant ____ .
a. that is to trust
b. who she can be trusted
c. whom she can trust
d. in that she can trust

Reading Oily messes: Spills and slicks

Warm-up: Study the pictures. What man-made problems do you think they represent? Which problems do you think we have been most successful in dealing with? Which do you think is the worst disaster facing humanity?



STEP 1: Skim for gist. Read the passage quickly. Then answer these questions.

- Which paragraph describes methods that are used to get rid of oil spills? ____
- Which presents the positive side of dealing with oil spills? ____
- Which focuses on what happens to wildlife when an oil spill occurs? ____
- Which mentions the amount of oil that enters the sea from various sources? ____



STEP 2: Scan for detail. As you answer the questions below the text, follow the method in Step 2 on page 22. Remember to treat each question as four "True/False" statements.

VOCABULARY ROUND-UP

A Nouns: Find and underline nouns whose singular forms have the following meanings. Write the nouns below. Here, and in B and C, the meanings reflect the order in which the words appear in the text.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 1. _____ – series of actions | 5. _____ – cleaning agent, dirt remover |
| 2. _____ – useless material | 6. _____ – tiny drop of liquid |
| 3. _____ – staff, group of workers | 7. _____ – small piece of something |
| 4. _____ – unpaid helper | 8. _____ – working together, partnership |

B Verbs: Find and draw a box around verbs whose base forms have the following meanings. Write the base forms below. (For 14, see choices for question 4.)

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1. _____ – flow/leak out slowly | 8. _____ – clean by rubbing hard |
| 2. _____ – leave and let build up | 9. _____ – remove from the surface |
| 3. _____ – send out, emit | 10. _____ – spread over a wide area |
| 4. _____ – die, be destroyed | 11. _____ – synonym of 10 |
| 5. _____ – cover with oil/grease | 12. _____ – (phr v/fig) cause to begin |
| 6. _____ – protect (e.g., from cold) | 13. _____ – hold in, keep in place |
| 7. _____ – take into the body | 14. _____ – throw away carelessly |

C Adjectives, adverbs, and adverbials: Find and circle words or phrases with the following meanings. Write them below. (For 6-8, see choices for questions 2 and 5.)

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1. _____ – at the present time | 5. _____ – of or related to the sea |
| 2. _____ – unprotected against attack | 6. _____ – gradually developing |
| 3. _____ – with great care | 7. _____ – unavoidably, predictably |
| 4. _____ – (phr) concerning, regarding | 8. _____ – requiring much time |

More than 60 million gallons of oil enter the oceans every year, which is not reported on the news. That's because this oil seeps from oil-bearing rock layers into the ocean as part of a natural process. When tankers running aground spill oil, that's news, and currently these accidents deposit about 37 million gallons of oil into the ocean every year. The largest amount of oil entering the ocean through human activity is the 363 million gallons that come from industrial waste and automobiles. When people pour their used motor oil on the ground or into their septic systems¹, it eventually seeps into the groundwater. Together with industrial waste discharged into rivers, oil is part of the runoff² from waterways that empty into the ocean. All of this affects ocean ecosystems. 5

When an oil spill occurs, the oil may spread across miles of open ocean and up onto beaches. Coastal areas that are the habitat for fish, birds, and other wildlife are often the most vulnerable. Animals may perish when the oil slicks their fur or feathers, decreasing the surface area so they are no longer insulated from the cold water. Or they may ingest the oil and become sick or unable to reproduce properly. 10

Coastal oil spills also affect humans. Emergency equipment and personnel must be rushed to the scene. The cleanup is usually a group effort by oil companies, government agencies, local groups, and volunteers. People rescue and clean birds and animals and painstakingly scrub oil from rocky shores with brushes and detergent. Coming in by sea and by air, crews skim the spreading oil from the water's surface. Oil that cannot be skimmed is emulsified – that is, droplets of oil are scattered into tiny particles that will then float away and disperse out to sea. Sometimes microscopic helpers are put to work. Genetic engineers have developed oil-eating bacteria that are used to ingest the oil and continue the cleanup long after crews and volunteers have left. 15

The experience gained from several well-publicized oil spills has ushered in an era of greater understanding and international cooperation with regard to containing spills and avoiding environmental disasters that affect the ocean. Another bright spot is that ecologists revisiting oil spill sites have found marine population recovery better than they had predicted. 20

1 septic system – underground system of tanks and pipes that allows human waste to decompose and drain away

2 runoff – rainwater that is not absorbed by the soil

1. How are animals affected by oil spills?
 - a. They may become ill from swallowing the oil.
 - b. Their ability to reproduce may be negatively affected.
 - c. They may die due to lack of protection against the cold.
 - d. They may suffer in all of the above ways.
2. What has surprised ecologists about their experience with oil spills?
 - a. the difficulty of the cleanup process
 - b. the publicity their efforts have attracted
 - c. the ability of marine life to recover from spills
 - d. the emerging spirit of international cooperation
3. Which plays a more long-term role in some cleanup operations?
 - a. volunteers who scrub oil off of rocky coastlines
 - b. crews involved in skimming oil from the surface
 - c. crews involved in dispersing the remaining oil out to sea
 - d. bacteria that have been genetically engineered to ingest oil
4. Which is the source of the largest quantity of oil that winds up in the ocean?
 - a. oil-bearing layers of rock that lie under the ocean
 - b. accidents caused by oil tankers that run aground
 - c. industrial waste and motor oil dumped directly into the ocean
 - d. industrial waste and motor oil that enters the ocean via rivers
5. What is **not** true of a typical cleanup operation after a coastal oil spill?
 - a. It is essential that 100% of the oil be skimmed from the surface.
 - b. It requires careful planning, special equipment, and lots of manpower.
 - c. Cleanup is inevitably a difficult and quite time-consuming procedure.
 - d. Volunteers are frequently allowed to take part in the cleanup effort.



Vocabulary Extension and review

EXTENSION

- A Speaking of spills:** In the reading passage, we came across oil **seeping** from oil-bearing rock layers and **spilling** from damaged tankers. We also read about people **pouring** used oil on the ground. These are just a few of the verbs we use to describe how liquids move from one place to another. Study the examples in each group, and match the infinitive form of the bold verbs with their meanings below. Then discuss which words might go with the photos.

Group 1

- The sound of the tap **dripping** kept us awake all night long.
- She tried to contain her emotions, but tears were **trickling** down her face.
- He knocked over the glass and **spilled** orange juice all over the table.
- Where were you last night when it was **pouring/teeming** with rain?
- Mary, can you **pour** me another cup of coffee, please?
- She loved to sit on the river bank and watch the water **flowing** past.
- If blood **seeps** through the bandage, remove it and apply a new dressing.
- We **splashed** each other happily, until I swallowed water and began to choke.

- _____ – cause liquid to fall out of a container, making a mess
- _____ – hit or disturb a liquid, causing it to disperse noisily
- _____ – fall in drops, one at a time
- _____ – (of rain) come down heavily, as if in a continuous stream
- _____ – move in a very thin stream
- _____ – move steadily/smoothly, like blood through veins or water in a river
- _____ – make liquid come out of a container in a controlled stream
- _____ – leak slowly through something

Group 2

- He picked up the garden hose and **sprayed** water all over us.
- The wound was so deep that blood was **gushing** everywhere!
- The doctor pressed the edges of the infected cut, and thick yellow pus **oozed** out.
- The river broke its banks, **inundating** the area with several feet of water.
- The rain **pelted** down so hard that I thought it would make holes in the roof!
- The fisherman listened to the waves **lapping** gently against the boat.
- The child was fascinated by the tiny kittens **lapping up** their milk.
- Babies make cute **gurgling** noises, like water running down a half-clogged drain!

- _____ – force liquid out of an opening so that it spreads in tiny drops
- _____ – make a bubbling sound, like water going through a narrow space
- _____ – beat or strike heavily, like hard rain
- _____ – move or hit gently against something with a soft sound
- _____ – drink by repeatedly moving the tongue over a liquid (like cats, etc.)
- _____ – come out profusely (i.e., in large quantities) and with great force
- _____ – flood (i.e., cover an area with a huge amount of water)
- _____ – (of thick liquids) come out, flow out slowly



1



2



3



4



5



6



7

B Sounds like ... : Some of the verbs in task A are **onomatopoeic**: that is, they sound like the actions they represent. Match each “sound” with one of the featured verbs. Then label the photos.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. _____ – dp! – dp! – dp! – dp! | 4. _____ – luh-uhp! luh-uhp! |
| 2. _____ – jijj-JWHOOSH! | 5. _____ – splaattz! |
| 3. _____ – grghg! - grghg! | |



C Figuratively speaking: Several of the words in task A can also be used figuratively in “non-liquid” contexts. See if you can complete the sentences below with the correct form of the verbs in the box.

flow gush inundate lap up ooze trickle

- She hates her new job. She’s been _____ with work ever since she started.
- Your essay will _____ better if you use a few more linking words.
- Business was slow over the summer, but orders are slowly starting to _____ in again.
- She loves getting compliments on her new novel. She just _____ the praise.
- The artist _____ with enthusiasm whenever he talks about his work.
- Her new boyfriend _____ confidence and charm. I hope he’s as nice as he seems.

REVIEW

Study the words in the vocabulary exercises on pages 80-81, 84, and 86-87, and then answer the questions below.

- In the early morning the grass is covered with _____ of moisture known as dew.

a. particles	b. droplets	c. bulges	d. slicks
--------------	-------------	-----------	-----------
- If sea levels rise around the world, flooding will occur in _____, low-lying coastal areas.

a. vulnerable	b. emerging	c. rumbling	d. suffocating
---------------	-------------	-------------	----------------
- The children covered their ears as the train _____ through the tunnel.

a. oozed	b. flowed	c. thundered	d. gushed
----------	-----------	--------------	-----------
- According to the article, a sumo wrestler _____ more calories in a day than most people do in a week!

a. ingests	b. deposits	c. disperses	d. oozes
------------	-------------	--------------	----------
- After the _____, the surrounding landscape was covered in a thick layer of ash.

a. earthquake	b. volcano	c. flood	d. eruption
---------------	------------	----------	-------------
- Which guard was _____ duty at the time of the accident?

a. in	b. with	c. on	d. at
-------	---------	-------	-------
- The fire department responded immediately to the woman’s _____ call for help.

a. painstaking	b. frantic	c. inevitable	d. time-consuming
----------------	------------	---------------	-------------------
- Rescue crews spent a week trying to _____ as much oil as they could off the surface of the blackened sea.

a. skim	b. lap up	c. scrub	d. contain
---------	-----------	----------	------------
- Improper disposal of industrial _____ is a major cause of water pollution.

a. detergent	b. processes	c. spills	d. waste
--------------	--------------	-----------	----------
- Inevitably, the Industrial Revolution _____ an age of countless environmental problems.

a. dispersed	b. ushered in	c. inundated	d. contained
--------------	---------------	--------------	--------------

Writing The problem/solution essay

FEATURED TOPIC: Are we ready for the next “big one”?

Another task type that you might encounter on the ECPE Writing paper is the problem/solution essay. You are typically asked to (a) describe a problem/situation and then (b) offer solutions. Here is a typical task.

When disaster strikes, our greatest enemy is rarely the storm, the quake, or the tsunami itself. More often it’s us, and how prepared we are to face the crisis. Discuss the risks that a natural phenomenon poses to your area. What do think your community should do to prepare itself for the disaster?

A Analyze the task. Read the task above carefully, and then answer the questions that follow.

- Underline what the task asks you to do. How many parts are there? ____ How many natural phenomena does the question ask you to discuss? ____
- (a) How many paragraphs do you think you would need in the main body of the composition? ____
(b) What should you cover in each? _____

EXAM TIP

The problem/solution essay

Here is a suggested plan for the problem/solution essay based on the “tell them” prototype.

Introduction	Tell them what you’re going to tell them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restate topic in your own words, perhaps by giving a dramatic example that establishes the context for the reader. Hint that solutions exist.
Main body	Tell them	<p>Para. 2 – Describe the problem(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open with topic sentence introducing the situation. Support with 2-4 specific examples or aspects of the problem. <p>Para. 3 – Offer solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open with topic sentence that transitions from problems to solutions. Elaborate each solution with explanations and/or possible results. If desired, close by mentioning the overall result of your solutions.
Conclusion	Assess what you told them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledge the difficulty of putting solutions into effect, and end with a dramatic or thought-provoking statement.



B Analyze the model. Study the Exam Tip above and the model on the opposite page. Cover the notes to the right of the model, and then do the tasks below.

- Introduction:** Underline the sentence in which the writer focuses in on the exact problem she is going to discuss. Does she mention specific solutions in the paragraph? ____
- Para. 2:** How many main aspects of the problem does the writer point out? ____ Underline the phrases that announce the start of each aspect. Does she provide elaboration for each aspect? ____
- Para. 3:** How many solutions does the writer present? ____ Underline the phrases that announce the start of each aspect.
- Conclusion:** Is the conclusion effective? Why or why not?
- Discuss:** In order to finish on time, the writer had to make some hard choices about what to include in each paragraph. Which paragraph(s) might have been stronger with the addition of several more sentences? What implications does this have for your own writing?

Hurricanes start south of the USA and usually lose force as they move up the eastern coast. Experts say that under certain conditions, however, a big one could strike New York City, my home town, causing even more destruction than Katrina. Would we be ready? With careful planning, I'm hoping the answer would be "yes."

A major hurricane strike on New York would be devastating. New York is a coastal city, located at the mouth of the Hudson River. Much of it is built on three low islands – Manhattan, Staten Island, and Long Island – connected by tunnels and bridges. The immediate consequence would be massive flooding in many areas. What's worse, the subway system, tunnels, and coastal highways would also be inundated, cutting people off from escape and potentially trapping hundreds of thousands of commuters. Additionally, most buildings in New York were not built to withstand category-4 hurricanes with ground winds exceeding 120 mph. Skyscrapers are even more at risk, as their upper floors would be exposed to even stronger winds.

Preparation for such a disaster requires the cooperation of government, businesses, and individuals. The government's first priority needs to be making a plan for evacuating millions of residents before escape routes to the mainland are flooded. Individuals would need to learn the routes and have their own plan for getting out. Secondly, food, clothing, and medical supplies need to be on hand. Officials should begin obtaining and storing these supplies now so they don't get caught short. They also need to find and prepare facilities that could be used as shelters. This would require the cooperation of neighboring states.

Of course, having a plan and putting it into effect in the face of a monster storm are two different things. On the bright side, New Yorkers have shown that they can pull together in a crisis. September 11th was proof of this. Hopefully, this spirit – and proper advance planning – will help us survive and rebuild if a major hurricane does hit.

Did you know?

New York comes just after New Orleans and Miami on the list of major U.S. cities most vulnerable to hurricanes.



The calm before the storm? Imagine the devastation that high winds and a 25-foot storm surge might cause here.

INTRODUCTION:

- ▶ Establish context of problem
- ▶ Pose question and hint at solutions

MAIN BODY: Para. 2 – Problem

- ▶ Topic sentence restating problem
- ▶ Aspect 1: Statement
 - Elaboration
 - Consequence 1
 - Consequence 2
- ▶ Aspect 2: Statement
 - Elaboration

MAIN BODY: Para. 3 – Solutions

- ▶ Topic sentence moving into solutions
- ▶ Solution 1: Statement
 - Elaboration
- ▶ Solution 2
 - Elaboration
- ▶ Solution 3 + elaboration

CONCLUSION:

- ▶ Acknowledge difficulty of putting solutions into effect
- ▶ End with dramatic or thought-provoking idea

C Try it! Use the plan in the Exam Tip to write a well-structured response to the topic on the previous page (250-300 words). Remember to proofread for mechanics, grammar/syntax, and vocabulary level. For ideas on other disasters to write about, look at the photos in the Warm-up on page 80.