



## PRUEBA DE INGLÉS DE ACCESO A LA UNIVERSIDAD UNIBERTSITATERA SARTZEKO INGELES HAUTAPROBA

### \*Additional Information on the University Entrance English Test

#### THE TEST (1 hour 30 minutes)

In accordance with the regulations of the R.D.1640/1999 of 22 October 1999 (BOE 27/10/1999) as stated in article 7.1 “[la primera parte de la prueba de acceso a los estudios universitarios] tendrá como objetivo apreciar la **madurez** y la **formación general** del estudiante y estará concebida para evaluar destrezas académicas básicas, como la **comprensión de conceptos**, el **uso del lenguaje**, las capacidades para analizar, relacionar, sintetizar, expresar ideas y el **conocimiento de una lengua extranjera**” and in 7.3 “**Análisis de un texto** de un idioma extranjero, del lenguaje común, no especializado. A partir del texto propuesto el estudiante realizará un **comentario personal** y **responderá a cuestiones** relacionadas con el texto, que serán planteadas y respondidas por escrito en el mismo idioma, sin ayuda de diccionario ni de ningún otro material didáctico” the English Language Test must necessarily be of the Reading Comprehension type in design.

Accordingly, the outline of the University Entrance English Test Paper all these years has invariably been made up of the following sections:

#### I.- Reading comprehension (skimming) and language in use (wh-questions)

Reading is probably the most important skill a university-college student needs to succeed in his or her studies. Hence, this test attempts to measure how well a candidate can read and understand written material. The questions on this test will assess his/her ability to infer the general meaning of a passage and to recall details and other information, namely to analyze it for content and relationships, to identify central thoughts such as themes, ideas or viewpoints, to use and understand various forms of writing and to critically assess written information.

The candidate will have to read carefully (skimming and scanning the text, questions included) a passage of no more than 300 words, taken from various sources (mostly authentic material from media, aural or written). The topics tend to be trendy and appealing for undergraduates-to-be, narrative, descriptive or argumentative in form (either by describing, relating, presenting facts or arguing on general issues) and not exceedingly difficult for understanding. If any of the words or expressions in the passage is unusual or technical, students will be provided with an explanation of the meanings.

As a reminder, it is very important to regard the instructions as part of the test and, remarkably in this section, it is advisable to look at the questions before reading the passage. The application of the skimming and scanning reading techniques will come next.

In doing so, the students are instructed to answer the questions by rewriting the original sentences of their own accord.

## **II.- Reading comprehension (scanning) and language in use (true/false)**

This section, in its turn, demands a thorough reading of the text. The subsequent answer can be provided, either by reporting the original sentence that justifies it, or by quoting properly this very original sentence (i.e., with the proper introductory arrangements that precede any quotation marks). Consequently, the grammatical appropriateness of the answer will carry half of the single mark per sentence assigned.

## **III.- Lexical knowledge (synonyms)**

A good vocabulary is critical to understanding written material and writing effective assignments and essays. The questions on this test attempt to assess students' knowledge of synonyms, antonyms and affixes, word meanings and definitions, multi-meaning words as well as their ability to use words in context.

It is our duty, then, to train student in guessing meanings by the techniques of: analogy (same rooted words in other languages); word-splitting (void of affixes and suffixes); encyclopaedic or cultural knowledge (acquired in other disciplines); and contextual analysis (explicit or implicit definition either in the text or the questions section, grammatical function, recurrences, etc.)

## **IV.- Writing production (composition)**

The ability to use grammar appropriately and to structure written material properly is important in any academic area. This test, therefore, assesses students' ability to use grammatical elements effectively, to correctly identify proper sentence construction, and to demonstrate an understanding of sentence sequences and paragraph structure. Remember that candidates will get marks for using a wide range of appropriate sentence structures and vocabulary, but not if they torture their sentences to show how many language structures they can fit into one paragraph!

If chosen a discursive piece of writing, candidates are marked on how clearly and convincingly they present their argument, not on whether the examiner agrees with them. Obviously, candidates can illustrate their points with personal experiences and anecdotes.

With this task, it is important for the candidate to make sure that he/she understands what to do before starting the proper writing. It is advisable to make notes on the question paper to help in the planning of what one is going to write on the answer sheet.

It is generally a good idea to start by drawing an introductory hypothesis in favour or against the argument raised by the examiner's statement. Then present briefly the main points either asserting or refuting the given opinion, always supported by arguments based on beliefs, acquired knowledge, information handed down or even one's own experiences. Conclude the writing by turning the introductory hypothesis into a thesis or simply reasserting general beliefs or even launching a new quest on the topic.

One further question recurrently raised by examiners is: how to proceed in cases of too long or too short writings? To unify grading criteria one can suggest deducing 0.25 if the number of words exceeds a total 180 and 0.5 if the number of words is below 80.

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Note: The problem of gradation is made all the more complex as there are no universally accepted criteria. If proper or not, we invite examiners to follow the instructions forwarded in the Evaluation Criteria sheet. For additional information about the English Test, please contact us.