ACCUPLACER ESL Sentence Meaning Test

The ESL Sentence Meaning test measures how well you understand the meaning of sentences in English. It assesses the understanding of word meanings in one- or two-sentence contexts. The sentences are drawn from the subject areas of natural science, history/social studies, arts/humanities, psychology/human relations, and practical situations. There are four content areas measured: (a) Particle, Phrasal Verbs, Prepositions of Direction; (b) Adverbs, Adjectives, Connectives Sequence; (c) Basic Nouns and Verbs; and (d) Basic and Important Idioms.

Sample Questions

*The sentence below has a blank space. Choose the word or phrase that makes the sentence meaningful and correct.*

1. Shikibu Murasaki, who wrote almost a thousand years ago, was one of the world’s ______ novelists.
   A. most early
   B. too early
   C. more early
   D. earliest

2. The Chang children ______ their parents by making sandwiches for the whole family.
   A. helped out
   B. helped with
   C. helps for
   D. helps to

3. As demonstrated by his last album, which was released after his death, Ibrahim Ferrer ______ one of the most beautiful voices in Latin music.
   A. had
   B. have
   C. have had
   D. having

4. After we saw the play, we had different opinions ______ Jane’s performance.
   A. about
   B. at
   C. for
   D. towards
5. Having recorded many of the most beloved songs of the 1940s, jazz singer Ella Fitzgerald ______ one of the most prominent musical performers of her time.
   A. had been
   B. has been
   C. was
   D. will be

6. As we drove through the darkness, we saw another car coming ______ the bend in the road.
   A. through
   B. under
   C. over
   D. around

7. Sonia is so determined and stubborn, she never ______ until she gets exactly what she wants.
   A. gives up
   B. gives out
   C. gave in
   D. gave away

8. At only 43, John F. Kennedy was the ______ American president ever to be elected.
   A. most young
   B. more young
   C. youngest
   D. younger

Each problem contains one or two sentences followed by a question. Choose the correct answer to the question.

9. Elena found a tomato that was much bigger than all the others in the garden.
   How did the tomato compare to the others in the garden?
   A. It was the smallest.
   B. It was not very large.
   C. It was larger than some.
   D. It was the largest.

10. When the popular entertainer canceled her appearance, the Latin American festival was postponed indefinitely.
    When will the festival likely take place?
    A. Tonight
    B. Tomorrow
    C. Next week
    D. Many weeks later

11. Janet is never late to meet her friends, and sometimes arrives early.
    Which best describes Janet?
    A. Lonely
    B. Punctual
    C. Talkative
    D. Tardy

12. Bram Stoker is best known for his classic horror novel Dracula, which was published in 1897.
    What did Bram Stoker do?
    A. He was a doctor.
    B. He was a merchant.
    C. He was a writer.
    D. He was an engineer.

13. Exhausted from her transatlantic flight, Judy could not stay up past 9 p.m.
    What did Judy do at 9 p.m.?
    A. Leave work
    B. Come home from the airport
    C. Lose her enthusiasm
    D. Go to bed

14. This semester many students are enrolled in a new course, African Dance, which is being taught by a first-time instructor, Sheila Duncan.
    How long has the university offered the African dance class?
    A. For a short time
    B. For many years
    C. For an entire school year
    D. On and off for a while

15. Samantha sleeps late whenever she can, leaves work early, and never does anything unless she absolutely has to.
    Which best describes Samantha?
    A. boring
    B. lazy
    C. selfish
    D. tired

16. Gustave Eiffel was immortalized by his Eiffel Tower in Paris, a structure that was originally meant to be temporary.
    Gustave Eiffel was
    A. a painter
    B. a politician
    C. an architect
    D. a construction worker

17. We heard on the radio that because of damage to the school caused by the storm, classes are cancelled until further notice.
    When will classes resume?
    A. later today
    B. tomorrow
    C. several weeks from now
    D. when the storm is over
18. Early for her dentist appointment, Beth killed time by looking in all the store windows on the block.

What was Beth doing?
A. exercising  
B. shopping  
C. hunting  
D. waiting

19. Even though Maria’s puppy Sparky was the runt of the litter when she picked him out, he grew up to be the biggest dog in the neighborhood.

When Maria first got Sparky,
A. he was larger than the other puppies  
B. he was the smallest of all the puppies  
C. he was larger than some of the other puppies  
D. he was not very small

20. When Miguel ran for class president, he won by a mile.

How many votes did Miguel get compared to the other candidate?
A. He got just enough votes to win.  
B. He got about the same number of votes.  
C. He got significantly more votes.  
D. He got a few more votes.

21. Juanita rushed to her dance class and burst through the door in the nick of time.

When Juanita got to her dance class, she was
A. very early  
B. very late  
C. nearly late  
D. a little late