

ESL Sentence Meaning

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) Participle, Phrasal Verbs, Prepositions of Direction; (b) Adverbs, Adjectives, Connectives Sequence; (c) Basic Nouns and Verbs; and (d) Basic and Important Idioms.

ESL Sentence Meaning Sample Questions

Directions for questions 1–8

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

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

- After we saw the play, we had different opinions _____ Vincent's performance.
A. about
B. at
C. for
D. to
- 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
- As we drove through the darkness, we saw another car coming _____ the bend in the road.
A. through
B. under
C. over
D. around
- Sonia is so determined and stubborn that she never _____ until she gets exactly what she wants.
A. gives up
B. gives out
C. gave in
D. gave away
- At only 43, John F. Kennedy was the _____ American president ever to be elected.
A. most young
B. more young
C. youngest
D. younger

Directions for questions 9–15

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

- 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.
- 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. Jasmine is never late to meet her friends, and sometimes arrives a few minutes early.

Which best describes Jasmine?

- 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. Get on an airplane
- D. Go to bed

14. Eliot sleeps late whenever he can, leaves work early, and never does anything unless he absolutely has to.

Which best describes Eliot?

- A. Boring
- B. Lazy
- C. Selfish
- D. Tired.

15. 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

Answer Key

ESL SENTENCE MEANING	
QUESTION	
NUMBER	CORRECT ANSWER
1	D
2	A
3	A
4	A
5	C
6	D
7	A
8	C
9	D
10	D
11	B
12	C
13	D
14	B
15	C