

CMWA Study Guide

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Preparing for the CMWA may seem like a mystery, but with this guide and some effort, you should feel more confident about the assessment. Preparing for the CMWA will also help you to do better in BC 230 and/or BC 290!

What is the CMWA?

- The College of Management Writing Assessment tests your writing and grammar skills.
- It is a two hour timed test.
- There is an objective/multiple choice grammar section and a short essay section.
- The CMWA is required to place into BC 230 or BC 290, which is a prerequisite for many upper level management courses.

The Grammar Section

- Must get 32/50 to get into BC 230, 40/50 to get into BC 290
You can see sample questions here: <http://blogs.umb.edu/upo/cm-staff-pages/college-of-management-writing-assessment/cmwa-grading-standards-and-sample-questions/>
- Some key items to review:
 - Verb conjugation/subject-verb agreement
 - Punctuation (apostrophes, commas, periods, etc.)
 - Subject vs object pronouns
- Study resources:
 - Quizzes on every topic: <https://www.usingenglish.com/quizzes/>
 - Verb Tense Overviews and Exercises: <https://www.englishpage.com/>
 - FCE Prep Use of English practice tests: <https://www.flo-joe.co.uk/fce/students/tests/>
 - The Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL): https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html (search the topics for overviews and exercises)

The Writing Section

- You must get 7/10 to get into BC 230 and 8/10 to get into BC 290.
- You are writing a response to a case study. It's NOT A **THESIS**. Follow the instructions for format specified on the test. The format is:
 - Introduction/Summary of the scenario
 - Analysis of one option/action,
 - Analysis of a second option/action
 - Optional analysis of another action
 - Conclusion with your recommendation
- You must analyze both sides of the issue reference in the question. You cannot focus only on why one side is good/better because there are ALWAYS benefits and negatives to both options.
- Pay attention to your verbs – subject-verb agreement, time meaning, etc.
- Every sentence counts – it is better to write few sentences well than many sentences poorly.
- See a sample prompt here: <http://blogs.umb.edu/upo/cm-staff-pages/college-of-management-writing-assessment/cmwa-grading-standards-and-sample-questions/>

Resources/Strategies to improve your overall skills:

- Write! Practice is the best way to improve.
 - Practice summarizing.
 - Practice writing about both sides of an issue (not just one side).
- Read as much English as you can. Here are some good sources of business English for reading:
 - *The Harvard Business Review*: <https://hbr.org/>. Sign up for a free account and access up to 15 articles per month (without an account, you can only access five articles per month). There are hundreds of articles written at a high level of Business English on all sorts of Business related topics.
 - *The Wall Street Journal*: <https://www.wsj.com/>. There is lots of good content here, though you may need a subscription or at least an account.
 - *The Economist*: <http://www.economist.com/>. Again, there is good content, but you can only access a certain number of articles each month without an account.
 - *Forbes*: <https://www.forbes.com/>. You'll find lots of shorter articles that are easy to read, as well as longer, more in-depth stories.
 - Paul Krugman's blog in the New York Times: <https://krugman.blogs.nytimes.com/>. This is a blog, so you will notice some differences between this and a standard newspaper article (Use of "I," a more casual and conversational tone, etc.) You can read up to ten free articles per month at nytimes.com. After that, you need a subscription. Paul Krugman is an excellent author, and as an economist, he addresses finance and other technical topics.
- Listen to as much English as you can. Here are some good sources of business English for listening:
 - <https://www.englishpage.com/listening/index.htm>
 - "5 Business Podcasts to Start Listening to in 2016" from *Entrepreneur* <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/270070>
 - "The 8 Best Podcasts for Business Savvy Listeners" from *Fast Company* <https://www.fastcompany.com/3038746/the-8-best-podcasts-for-business-savvy-listeners>
 - "9 Great Business Podcasts You Should Know" from *Fortune* <http://fortune.com/2014/12/04/great-business-podcasts/>

Where to go for more info/help:

- CMWA Blog: <http://blogs.umb.edu/upo/cm-staff-pages/college-of-management-writing-assessment/>
- For questions regarding reservations, email: The CMWA Program at CMWA@umb.edu
- For questions regarding the CMWA and placement process, contact: Kathryn Archard, CM Writing Program Director: kathryn.archard@umb.edu
- For guidance on studying and preparing for the CMWA: Katie Almeida Spencer, CM Writing Tutor Mentor: katherine.almeida@umb.edu