

Please write below for Student ID the **last 4-digits** of your social security # and the abbreviation for your college. Example: 7042dvc or 3998ccsf

Student ID \_\_\_\_\_

## Information Competency Proficiency Exam

**Directions:** This exam tests your abilities to determine your information needs, plan for research, and find, evaluate and cite information. There are two parts to this exam:

1. Part A is a **paper-copy** exam composed of multiple choice items, some short answers and some matching items; and
2. Part B is **online** at <URL>. It involves your preparing for and conducting library and Web research.

Please give this exam your serious attention and do your best. You can take a break between Part A and Part B. It doesn't matter which part you do first, as long as you complete both parts.

Read the items **carefully** and if you think that more than one answer might be correct, **always select the BEST answer. Do not guess.**

The following four questions will help us know more about your experience doing research. Circle your answers:

1. How long have you been at this community college?  
a. 1 - 2 semesters/terms   b. 3 - 4 semesters/terms   c. 5 - 6 semesters/terms   d. 7+ semesters/terms
2. What is your educational goal?  
a. get an AA/AS degree   b. get a job-related certificate   c. transfer to a 4-year institution  
d. continuing education for a job or possible job   e. personal interest/enrichment
3. Have you had any training or instruction in doing library or Web research?   YES   NO  
If you answered "Yes," what have you had? (Circle as many as apply to you)  
a. library orientation/workshop(s)   b. credit course   c. non-credit course  
d. librarian/instructor presentation to my class   e. librarian/teacher presentation in high school  
f. something else   Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_
4. On a scale of **0 to 10**, with **zero being bad and ten being excellent**, how would you rate your library research skills in terms of being able to locate and evaluate information? Circle your response:  
0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

## Information Competency Proficiency Exam: Part A

**Directions:** Read the following multiple choice items carefully and even if you think that more than one answer might be correct, always select the **BEST** answer.

1. We need information when we want to:
  - a. discuss current issues
  - b. plan a vacation
  - c. write a report
  - d. revise our diet
  - e. answers a., b., c., and d.
  
2. You need to research an aspect of the topic “**education in public schools.**” Which one of the following would be an appropriate research question?
  - a. Does bilingual education help children attending public schools?
  - b. Should all school children receive free lunches?
  - c. Should states require standardized testing for religious schools?
  - d. Do labor unions help teachers keep their jobs?
  
3. You are writing a paper for your ecology class. You first need information defining the term “watershed.” What is your best choice for getting some **brief background information**?
  - a. Search for “watershed” in the library’s online catalog.
  - b. Find journal articles about “watershed.”
  - c. Look up “watershed” in a general reference source like an encyclopedia.
  - d. Type “watershed” in a Web search engine for a complete list of references on the topic.
  
4. Which group of keywords best describes the information need for the following assignment: “Prepare a presentation about the gains achieved by women in the 1980s.”
  - a. presentation, women, gains
  - b. women, gains, achieved
  - c. women, gains, 1980s
  - d. gains, achieved, 1980s
  
5. You are training to become a dental hygienist. Which source might offer you the best **first-hand** introduction into a new method of cleaning teeth?
  - a. A written manual that comes with some equipment
  - b. A video showing the use of the new equipment
  - c. An in-person demonstration by a dental hygienist
  - d. An encyclopedia article about dental hygiene

6. Which of the following is **not** a **secondary** source?
  - a. Encyclopedia article
  - b. Letters
  - c. Newspaper article reporting about a research study
  - d. Biography
  
7. College policies on access to information state that
  - a. you will not download any information found on the college Web site
  - b. you will not use the college computers and networks for harassment, gain, commercial purposes or for promoting personal views
  - c. you will not use another person's user ID and password
  - d. answers a. and b.
  - e. answers b. and c.
  
8. Typically a library's online catalog contains:
  - a. information about books, videos and other non-print items in the library.
  - b. the complete text of all the journal articles in the library.
  - c. information about the college's courses.
  - d. answers a. and b.
  
9. For your health class, you're writing a 5 page paper on the **benefits of aerobic exercise**. What would be the best approach to researching this topic?
  - a. Get an overview about the topic from a commercial Web site, then get recent/more specific information from magazine articles.
  - b. Get scholarly journal articles for recent/very specific information about the topic.
  - c. Get an overview of the topic from a current encyclopedia on exercise and health, then get more recent/more specific information from scholarly journal articles.
  - d. Get an overview of the topic from a health encyclopedia.
  
10. As you collect sources for your project it is critical to
  - a. evaluate each source for accuracy and currency
  - b. print the full text out
  - c. record all bibliographic information for your Works Cited list
  - d. answers a. and b.
  - e. answers a. and c.

11. You need information about **career opportunities in nursing**. What would you type in the Web search engine box to find the **most** information?
- nurses or nursing opportunities
  - nurs\* career\*
  - career opportunities in nursing
  - “nursing jobs or careers”
12. Which of the following includes the most complete list of elements that are typically required for a MLA or APA formatted citation for a **magazine article** from an **online database**?
- author, title of article, magazine's title, date of publication, pages, name of the database.
  - author, title of article, magazine's title, magazine publisher, date of publication, pages, name of the database, URL
  - author, title of article, magazine's title, date of publication, pages, name of database, URL
  - author, title of article, magazine's title, date of publication, pages, name of database, date of access, URL
13. Paraphrasing is the process of:
- summarizing the author's ideas in your own words
  - selecting paragraphs to use in your paper
  - changing a phrase to mean something else
  - none of the above
14. You are writing a report on automobile safety and tires. You have found several sources. Which would be the **most trustworthy** because of the likelihood of having objective information?
- report from an automobile association
  - survey from a tire manufacturer
  - article in an automobile magazine
  - article in a consumer rights magazine
  - article in a women's magazine
15. When evaluating sources of information, the date of the source:
- is important depending on the topic
  - should never be more than ten years old
  - is only critical in medical research
  - usually not important if it is a reliable source

16. To determine if an author is qualified to write on a specific topic, which of the following would most likely provide trustworthy information about the author's qualifications:
- a general encyclopedia
  - biography index or database
  - author's Web page hosted by the university where he or she is employed
  - answers a., b., and c.
  - answers b. and c.
17. Which of the following strategies would be useful for trying to confirm the accuracy of information on a Web page?
- checking the Web page author's qualifications
  - researching other sources for the same information
  - finding out which institution is hosting the Web page
  - answers a. and c.
  - answers a. and b. and c.
18. You now own a 1996 Ford Windstar that has given you electrical problems. You need to buy a new car so you look at the magazine *Consumer Reports* which says Windstars have fewer than average electrical repair problems. Which of the following is the **most likely conclusion** to make?
- You should buy another Windstar.
  - Consumer Reports* is wrong.
  - You have a different model year from the one described in the report.
  - A mechanic damaged your electrical system.
19. Which of the following usually requires a password because it does not allow free access for all Web users?
- library online catalog
  - periodical databases, like InfoTrac or EBSCOhost
  - Yahoo! Web directories
  - bookstores' Web sites
20. Copyright protection covers works:
- as long as the author or creator is still alive.
  - only if an explicit copyright notice ( ©, or Copyright by ...) is displayed.
  - that represent an original idea, in any format (text, music, drawing, video, ...).
  - only if they have been published.

21. You want to use some of the information found in a magazine article for your research paper. Which situation(s) require that you write a footnote citing the source of your information?

- a. When you copy a whole paragraph.
- b. When you paraphrase a main point in your own words.
- c. When you quote a sentence from the article.
- d. answers a., b., c., and d.
- e. answers a. and c.

22. Which of the following are valid reasons to cite the sources you used for a research paper?

- a. Readers of your paper may want to find and read the sources you cite.
- b. U.S. Copyright law states that research papers must contain such a list.
- c. You could be accused of plagiarism if you don't cite your sources properly.
- d. answers a., b., and c.
- e. answers a. and c.

23. You must create a radio advertisement for your job. You want to use a small part of a popular song from a CD for background music. What is required of you, if anything, before broadcasting this advertisement?

- a. Notify the songwriter that you will use part of his song.
- b. Find out who distributed the song and negotiate with them for the right to play part of this song.
- c. Nothing, you can use the song since you are only playing a small part of it.
- d. You can use the song since you paid for the CD it is published on.

24. Which of the following statements is true?

- a. When citing articles you retrieved from an online periodical database, you need to include the name of the database.
- b. Different disciplines, such as psychology or biology, have developed specific citation styles.
- c. The MLA style of citations is used by Web search engines.
- d. answers a. and b.
- e. answers b. and c.

**Directions: The following questions refer to the text in the boxes. Read the text and the question after it carefully and select the one best answer.**

**NewsBank NewsFile**

**COVERAGE:** A comprehensive, full-text news resource consisting of regional, national and international sources. Its regional articles offer a valuable benefit to researchers and students by providing coverage of current issues and events. Updated daily.

**Health Reference Center - Academic**

**COVERAGE:** Articles from a variety of consumer-oriented and professional health periodicals, plus excerpts from health-related reference books. Material includes a medical dictionary; medical directories and reference books; and pamphlets issued by leading health organizations. Updated weekly.

**BioMedical Reference Collection: Basic**

**COVERAGE:** Provides health professionals access to 100 full-text journals covering such disciplines as clinical medicine, nursing, dentistry, veterinary medicine, the health care system and the pre-clinical sciences. Updated weekly.

25. You want to help your father understand a medical diagnosis. You need to find good information written for the non-expert. Look at the database descriptions **in the box above** and then select the best source to search for this information need.
- a. NewsBank NewsFile
  - b. Health Reference Center - Academic
  - c. BioMedical Reference Collections: Basic
  - d. answers a., b., and c.

26. In the initial stages of your research, you find this paragraph:



The above paragraph provides relevant information for which of the following topics?

- a. increase in adult violence
  - b. physical punishment of children
  - c. relationship between physical punishment of children and adult violence
  - d. violence and class differences
27. Read the following extract and select the quotation that would best explain what the NCFL does:



- a. "NCFL is the leader in parent-child learning."
- b. "It's a powerful way to develop learning skills in young children by helping disadvantaged parents complete their own education and learn important life skills at the same time."
- c. "Sometimes it takes a creative idea to give power to good intentions."
- d. "Toyota has provided support to more than 150 family literacy programs across America."

28. You are at your home computer and have just connected to an online periodical database to find articles for an English assignment. The image of the screen above is what you see when you connect. This database is new to you. You've done a search and gotten **no results**. What should you do?
- a. quit and try another database
  - b. email the NewsBank company for assistance
  - c. click "Help"
  - d. click "Keyword"

<i>Author</i>	Grisham, John.
<i>Title</i>	<b>The pelican brief / John Grisham.</b>
<i>Publ/date</i>	New York : Doubleday, c1992.
<b>LOCATION</b>	
<b>Main Collection</b>	PS3557 R5355 P4 1992
<b>STATUS</b>	
BEING SEARCHED	
<i>Edition</i>	1st ed.
<i>Descript</i>	371 p. ; 24 cm.
<i>Subject</i>	United States. Supreme Court -- Fiction.
<i>ISBN</i>	0385421982 :
	0385423543 (lg. print) :

You want to obtain a particular book to take home. Study the online catalog screen **above** to answer these next two questions.



29. Write in the blank exactly what you need to locate the book on the shelf. \_\_\_\_\_
30. Should this book be on the shelf? Yes or No? \_\_\_\_\_

"Spank in anger? That's right. If you're going to spank a child's rear end, it is rightful to make perfectly clear you disapprove of the child's behavior. You are displeased, as in angry. Not in a rage, however. You are not in a rage because you've spanked as a first resort. You are just angry, and you are able to communicate that emotion clearly." (Rosemond, John K. "Should the Use of Corporal Punishment by Parents be Considered Child Abuse?" Debating Children's Lives. Ed. Mary Ann Mason and Eileen Gambril. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1994. 210-214.)

"Ironically, if spanking is to be done at all, the "last resort" may be the worst time. The problem is that parents are usually very angry by that time and act impulsively. Because of the high level of anger, if the child rebels and calls the parent a name or kicks the parent, the episode can escalate into physical abuse. Indeed, most episodes of physical abuse started out as physical punishment and got out of hand..." (Strauss, Murray S. Ten Myths about Spanking Children. Durham, NC: University of New Hampshire Family Research Laboratory, 1992.)

31. You are researching the topic "child abuse" for a paper and find the two quotations in the **box above**: What do these two quotations do?
- They contradict each other.
  - They offer different explanations of the causes of child abuse.
  - They have conclusions based on different research.
  - They talk about two different topics.

*The New York Times*, June 22, 1997 v146 s1 p8(N) col 5 (6 col in)

**Californians may vote on gay marriages.** (Defense of Marriage Committee sponsors ballot proposal defining marriage as union between one man and one woman)

View other articles linked to these subjects:

**California - Social Policy**

[View](#) 770 Periodical references  
[See also](#) 129 other subdivisions

**Marriage Law - California**

[View](#) 5 Periodical references  
[See also](#) 88 other subdivisions

**Same-Sex Marriage - Laws, Regulations, Etc.**

[View](#) 359 Periodical references  
[See also](#) 59 other subdivisions

**The New York Times, Jun 22, 1997**

[View](#) other articles in this issue

32. For your sociology assignment you need to find information about the legal status of same sex marriages in California. Look at the **boxed example above** from an online periodicals database to answer this question:

Which of the **Subjects** listed should you view to find related information about the legal status of same-sex marriages?

- a. Marriage Law – California
- b. California – Social Policy
- c. Gay Marriages
- d. Same-Sex Marriage – Laws, Regulations, Etc.

**Directions: The next several items ask you to select the best match.**

33. Match the activities below to the appropriate **step** of the research process.

write the number **1** for **step 1 – preparations**  
write the number **2** for **step 2 – collecting information or**  
write the number **3** for **step 3 – creating the final product.**

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. Explore background information to narrow the topic
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. Decide if you gathered enough appropriate sources for the research project
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. Cite your sources
- \_\_\_\_\_ d. Formulate a research question
- \_\_\_\_\_ e. Evaluate the sources found
- \_\_\_\_\_ f. Write the paper
- \_\_\_\_\_ g. Find information appropriate for the research question

Numbers 34. – 37. below are four citations for types of information sources. Match the lettered items in the gray box to each citation. **You may use a letter more than once.**



- 34. \_\_\_\_\_ Hume, David. "Justice and Equality." *Equality: Selected Readings*. Ed. Louis P. Pojman and Robert Westmoreland. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- 35. \_\_\_\_\_ "Post-Workout Refueling." K. Engel. *Muscle & Fitness*. Oct. 2002:258.
- 36. \_\_\_\_\_ Meeks, K. (2000). *Driving while black: Highways, shopping malls, taxicabs, sidewalks: How to fight back if you are a victim of racial profiling.* New York: Broadway.
- 37. \_\_\_\_\_ "Detained by the U.S. Government." *Synthesis/Regeneration*. Fall 2002, 9-11.

38. Imagine you are researching advances in AIDS treatments. What kind of information would the following sources provide? Write the **number 1 or 2** in the blanks.

1. information on advances in the treatment of AIDS
2. background information about AIDS

- \_\_\_ a. a book on the discovery and spread of AIDS
- \_\_\_ b. a Web site on alternative medicine
- \_\_\_ c. an article from a recent *Journal of the American Medical Association* describing research findings of a prescription drug study
- \_\_\_ d. an encyclopedia article about immune diseases
- \_\_\_ e. a magazine article on therapeutic uses of marijuana

**Directions: To answer the following questions, please write in a short answer.**

39. What is an example of a **primary** source of information?

\_\_\_\_\_

40. After which call number in the sequence below would a book with the following call number be shelved? Write the correct letter in the blank.

- a. PS3503 .A62 A79 1999
- b. PS3503 .A623 Q8 1961
- c. PS3503 .A627 P87 1958
- d. PS3503 .A815 A923 E44 1910
- e. PS3503 .A923 W59 2000

After letter \_\_\_\_\_

41. What disciplinary action might happen to community college students who violate college policies on plagiarism?

\_\_\_\_\_

42. You need to read the novel *Prodigal Summer* by Barbara Kingsolver, but the book is checked out from your college library. You don't have the money to buy it from a bookstore, so how can you get a library copy of the book?

\_\_\_\_\_

43. Popular periodicals like *Newsweek* usually contain many advertisements. What are two **other** characteristics of popular periodicals?

\_\_\_\_\_

44. Scholarly periodicals like the *American Sociological Review* usually contain very few advertisements. What are two **other** characteristics of scholarly periodicals?
- 

45. Your research question is: "Do elementary school students receive adequate science instruction in California public schools?" How could you **broaden** this question? Write an example of a broader research question:
- 

46. You need to make a presentation to the City Council meeting against the proposed regulation of banning dogs from city parks. What are **two** approaches you could take to find information supporting your point of view.

You have already used Web search tools and databases to find information. You still need more information so you want to use **other methods of inquiry**.

---

---

47. To gain access to your college library's online databases from **off-campus** you would
-