



# Grammar, Spelling & Punctuation (GSP) Examination

## CO 2413 & CO 3223 Prerequisite: 70% or better on the GSP Exam

This exam is a rudimentary measurement tool to ensure you are familiar with basic GSP rules learned via primary, intermediate and secondary schooling before beginning any CO writing courses. All students are required to take the GSP Exam and **pass with a score of 70% or better before** registering for **CO 2413 Intro to News Writing or CO 3223 Comm & Media Research**. Please review the information on the remaining pages to learn more about the exam.

### How to Register for the GSP Exam

Log in to your [myState account](#). On the home page of your MyState, scroll down to the section labeled “Canvas Self Enrollment Courses.” In that section, select “Find a Course” and scroll through the options to find and click “GSP Exam.” Finally, click “Yes” to self-enroll. The GSP Exam page will now appear as a course on your Canvas dashboard.

Canvas Self Enrollment Courses

Find a Course

Canvas Self Enrollment Courses

GSP Exam  
The Department of Communication's Grammar, Spelling and Punctuation Exam. Passage (70 or better) of the exam is required for enrollment into CO 2413 - Intro to News Writing & Reporting. Students have three attempts to pass the exam. Failure to pass after the third attempt prevents a student from ever registering for CO 2413.

Self Enroll? Yes No

Students are highly encouraged to read through the GSP Exam resources below before starting the exam.

**Spelling and Word Usage (See Last Page):** The list of words included on this form can be used to prepare for the GSP exam. Students should note that this list does not reflect the exact or only questions on the exam.

**Helpful Internet Sites:** The website links provided below can be used to prepare for the GSP exam. Students should note that these sites in no way reflect the exact or only questions on the exam.

- <http://www.quickanddirtytips.com/grammar-girl>
- <https://www.poynter.org/tag/grammar-and-style/>
- <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/5/>

**Questions?** Please email [GSP@comm.msstate.edu](mailto:GSP@comm.msstate.edu).



## FAQs About the GSP Exam

### Why is the GSP exam required?

The reputation of the Department of Communication at Mississippi State University has long been predicated on excellence in written communication. As this skill is the cornerstone to precise methods of sharing information, faculty members voted in 2015 to institute this exam to validate the most common English language skills.

**We require a score of 70 percent or better** to register for any writing classes in the department, as do many other state and national universities. The exam we administer coincides with a pool of questions developed by professors from around the U.S., which were later adopted by several sister institutions.

### How does the exam affect my progress as a Communication major? If I can't pass the exam, do I have to change my major?


No student may register for or take CO 2413 Introduction to News Writing and Reporting or CO 3223 Comm & Media Research Methods before passing the exam. Note. CO 2413 is a prerequisite for nearly all other BD&J, PD&J and PR writing classes. If you do not pass the exam within three attempts, your only options are either to change your major to a program that doesn't require CO 2413, CO 3223, or try to take the course at a different school and transfer it back to MSU.

To take the course at a different school and transfer it back to MSU, you will have to find a course at another school that seems to be equivalent to CO 2413 or CO 3223 and have it approved by our department ahead of time.

Students who choose to change their major can consider the Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies (BSIS). In this program, students choose two or three areas of study to combine into one degree. Students may choose Communication as one of those emphasis areas and take CO courses that don't have CO 2413 or CO 3223 as a prerequisite. Also, because the BSIS degree is housed in the College of Arts & Sciences, a large majority of the requirements students complete early in the Communication major also count toward the BSIS degree. Students interested in changing to the BSIS major can contact the College of Arts & Sciences Dean's Office.

### How many times can I attempt the exam?

**Effective April 16, 2018, students are allowed a maximum of three attempts.** However, the department counsels students who fail on their first attempt to either apply greater preparation or begin considering a discipline of study outside the department. A third failure means a student can never register for CO 2413 or CO 3223 and, therefore, cannot complete the required coursework in the Broadcasting & Digital Journalism, Communication & Media Studies, Print & Digital Journalism or Public Relations concentrations. Our goal is to assist you in proceeding with a degree program in the most expedient manner.





### **How often do you administer the exam?**

The exam is available free of charge online through MyCourses. Students can find it listed as an External Course and register for it using their Net ID. We urge students to take the exam as early as possible in their MSU career to fulfill this primary requirement without delay. Students may mistakenly delay taking or passing the exam and later regret they did not complete it sooner.

### **How do you assist prospective Communication majors to prepare? Do you offer any suggestions to prepare for the exam?**

No specific class exists at MSU to prepare for this exam. However, the grammar and punctuation rules it requires reflect the teaching at middle- and high-school levels. We base the spelling words on a list we and other university communication programs consider essential for an appropriately broad communication vocabulary.

Naturally, your ability to display mastery of the three fundamental areas (grammar, spelling and punctuation) is the primary goal. Some students return to middle-school-level grammar textbooks for guidance. A stern self-assessment of your skill with the possible spelling words, perhaps with the help of a “spelling buddy,” can help identify weak areas.

In addition, we provide a spelling and word usage list and a list of numerous helpful internet sites to help you practice and hone your skills. These sites are varied in their style and content; you may find some more helpful than others.

### **If I fail the exam, how long must I wait to retake it?**

Students who wish to retake the exam must wait five working days between attempts, which is time the student should spend better preparing for the exam.

### **Where can I find the list of the words from which you prepared the spelling test?**


You can find all possible spelling words on the following pages.

### **Can I register for any Department of Communication writing class if I plan to take and pass the exam after the semester begins?**

No, without exception. You must pass the exam before beginning CO 2413 or CO 3233, which is a prerequisite for nearly all other writing classes in the department.

### **What exceptions do you allow to register for such classes without passing the exam?**

Advisors and instructors will analyze the curriculum of any students who already completed a news writing class at an accredited institution. We may allow students whose class work meets the rigorous standards of this fundamental course to register for any Department of Communication writing classes.





### **Can I take the exam elsewhere and have it applied at MSU?**

We deal with such issues on an individual basis, but if you have previously passed the exam at another institution, you should have little trouble with MSU's version.

### **What is the cost of the exam?**

No charge. The exam is self-administered online through MyCourses.

### **Where do I register for the exam?**

Log in to your myState account. Click the hamburger button in the top left corner and choose "Self Enroll." In the top right corner, use the drop-down menu under "Canvas Course Self Enrollment" to choose "Grammar, Spelling, and Punctuation Exam." The GSP Exam page will now appear as a course on your Canvas dashboard.

### **Is the exam the same each time?**

No single exam exists for this process. We draw questions and words randomly from a computerized list of questions to ensure that the exam varies from one occasion to the next.

### **Why can't I see my test?**

The faculty of the Department of Communication determined from the outset of adopting this exam that it is not designed for remedial purposes. Frankly, the goal of the exam is not to improve your skills, but to see evidence of your skills and preparedness to succeed in the demanding, writing-intensive classes all fields of study in our department require.

### **How do I contact the coordinator of the GSP exam?**

You may email [GSP@comm.msstate.edu](mailto:GSP@comm.msstate.edu) for answers to your specific questions. A word of advice: Always check the spelling of your e-mail message before you send it. Developing this habit will help you identify words you may not be aware of misspelling.

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## Spelling and Word Usage

The list of words included on this form can be used to prepare for the GSP exam. Students should note that this list does not reflect the exact or only questions on the exam. *Used with permission from the University of North Carolina.*

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|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. stationary/stationery | 38. mute/moot            | 73. adverse/averse       |
| 2. lose/loose            | 39. flair/flare          | 74. biannual/biennial    |
| 3. its/it's              | 40. flu/flue             | 75. eminent/imminent     |
| 4. past/passed           | 41. grisly/grizzly       | 76. flout/flaunt         |
| 5. to/too/two            | 42. piece/peace          | 77. cereal/serial        |
| 6. affect/effect         | 43. hostile/hostel       | 78. click/cliقة          |
| 7. comprise/compose      | 44. forward/foreword     | 79. accept/except        |
| 8. weather/whether       | 45. lay/lie              | 80. allusion/illusion    |
| 9. everyday/every day    | 46. led/lead             | 81. canvas/canvass       |
| 10. miner/minor          | 47. gorilla/guerilla     | 82. loathe/loath         |
| 11. pedal/peddle         | 48. hanger/hangar        | 83. ravish/ravage        |
| 12. moral/morale         | 49. hang/hung            | 84. adopt/adapt          |
| 13. naval/navel          | 50. your/you're          | 85. anxious/eager        |
| 14. ordinance/ordnance   | 51. home/hone            | 86. bloc/block           |
| 15. overdo/overdue       | 52. gibe/jibe            | 87. capitol/capital      |
| 16. pole/poll            | 53. insure/ensure        | 88. damage/damages       |
| 17. role/roll            | 54. further/farther      | 89.                      |
| 18. shoe-in/shoo-in      | 55. fair/fare            | portentous/pretentious   |
| 19. spade/spayed         | 56. infer/imply          | 90. prostrate/prostate   |
| 20. vane/vein/vain       | 57. shear/sheer          | 91. sewage/sewerage      |
| 21. wither/whither       | 58. aid/aide             | 92. quash/squash         |
| 22. yoke/yolk            | 59. alter/altar          | 93. suit/suite           |
| 23. rein/reign           | 60. bail/bale            | 94. reticent/reluctant   |
| 24. imply/infer          | 61. baited/bated         | 95. rebut/refute         |
| 25. oral/verbal          | 62. bare/bear            | 96. who/whom             |
| 26. incite/insight       | 63. censor/censure       | 97. conscience/conscious |
| 27. cite/sight/site      | 64. breach/breech/broach | 98. climactic/climatic   |
| 28. peek/peak            | 65. discreet/discrete    | 99. wet/whet             |
| 29. lightning/lightning  | 66. desert/dessert       | 100. sole/soul           |
| 30. allude/elude         | 67. principle/principal  |                          |
| 31. pored/poured         | 68.                      |                          |
| 32. historic/historical  | complement/compliment    |                          |
| 33. there/their/they're  | 69. cord/chord           |                          |
| 34. then/than            | 70. bridal/bridle        |                          |
| 35. heroin/heroine       | 71. cannon/canon         |                          |
| 36. council/counsel      | 72.                      |                          |
| 37. faze/phase           | regime/regimen/regiment  |                          |