

Ritsumeikan Uji Junior High School  
Entrance Exam - IPC 3 English Writing

SAMPLE

Question Booklet

Instructions

- i) You will be given a text to read. The text will be at an 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading level and may be fiction or non-fiction.
- ii) Applicants will be asked to respond to one of the essay prompts that follows the reading. Your response should be AT LEAST 300 words and it should reference the reading text.
- iii) There are 100 total points for the examination.
- iv) Applicants will have 60 minutes to complete the examination.

# Reading Comprehension and Making Inferences

Read the excerpt below from The Times Tribune. When you have finished reading, answer ONE of the prompts that follow.

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In January 2024, St. Paul **City Council** President Mitra Jalali looked out at her fellow council members. All the members' seats were occupied by women — a first for Minnesota's capital city.

A **city council** is responsible for deciding on laws, services and projects that will benefit the city, as well as how to come up with the money to fund them.

St. Paul has a population of about 300,000 people. Experts who track women in politics say it is the first large U.S. city they know of with an all-female city council. But even as the council members celebrate the milestone, they are expressing more excitement about what the all-female council can accomplish in the coming year.

“We’re a multi-faith, multicultural group of women. Our professional experiences are what people trusted as much as our personal ones. ... And we have a clear policy vision that we got elected on,” Jalali said in an interview.

All seven women are under 40 years old, and 6 out of the 7 are women of color. All seven women are Democrats, but the office is **nonpartisan**, which means that it is not biased toward any political group. From civil engineering to nonprofit directing, the members of the council have a wide range of professional experiences, which Jalali said helps capture the city’s diversity.

“I think that our community is finally reflected by the city council,” Jalali said, adding, “The median age of our community is 32.5. We are a majority person-of-color city. We have many major racial and ethnic groups, many of which are now represented on this council.”

The Rutgers data show that women continue to be underrepresented as **municipal officials** across the country. A **municipal official** is a person who works for a city or town. Jean Sinzdak, associate director of the center, said 7 out of 10 municipal officeholders across the country are male, and most of them are white.

“The fact that you have an all-female council and a majority of women of color, it has a long-term effect on young women and girls seeing them and saying, ‘I can do this, too,’” Sinzdak said.

Hwa Jeong Kim is the council's vice president. She and Jalali said that their top priorities include a comprehensive housing policy, protections for people who rent their homes, economic development and climate action. They will also focus on public safety interventions that use police officers less and mental health responders more.

The council “lifts up the progressive values of our community more than ever and is committed to doing that difficult work together,” Jalali said. She added that their work is not just performative but also “sustainable and will really make lasting change.”

Karen Kedrowski is the director of the Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics at Iowa State University. She said the number of women elected to office at the city, state and federal levels doesn’t rise above 25 to 30 percent across the U.S.

“So to have a 100 percent female city council in a major city in the United States is really significant. If it’s not the first one, it’s one of the first where this has happened — so it’s a big deal,” Kedrowski said.

“What’s remarkable about this lineup is not just that it’s all women, but it’s the age of these women and it’s the diversity of these women,” Heidi Heitkamp said. She is the director of the Institute of Politics at the University of Chicago and a former U.S. senator from North Dakota.

“It’s going to be a wonderful opportunity to see what ... things will change because you have different people sitting at the table who traditionally haven’t had those roles,” Heitkamp said.

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## **Writing Prompt and Instructions**

Directions: Respond to ONE of the essay prompts below. You should write your answer on the separate answer sheet provided. In response to the question, you should write a well-structured paragraph of at least 300 words. Please make sure you reference the reading above in your response.

1. How does having an all-female city council possibly affect young women and girls' perspective of their own future in politics?
2. Why is it important that a city council is made up of individuals that reflect the diversity of the community they represent?