

Ritsumeikan Uji Junior High School

Entrance Exam - IPC 2 English Writing

SAMPLE

Question Booklet

Instructions

- i) You will be given a text to read. The text will be at a 7th 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 275 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.

Section 1 – Reading Comprehension and Making Inferences

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

St. Paul **City Council** President Mitra Jalali looked out at her fellow council members on January 10, 2024. They had all been sworn in the previous day. 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, along with how to come up with the money to fund them.

St. Paul has a population of about 300,000 people. Experts 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 six out of the seven are people of color. All seven women are Democrats, but the office is **nonpartisan**, meaning 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.

“I think that our community is finally reflected by the city council,” Jalali said. “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.”

Data from Rutgers University shows that there are fewer female than male **municipal officials** across the country. A **municipal official** is a person who works for a city or town. Jean Sinzdak, the associate director of the center, says 7 out of 10 municipal officeholders across the country are male, and most of them are white.

Having an all-female council with so many women of color is a big deal, she says. “It has a long-term effect on young women and girls seeing them and saying, ‘I can do this, too.’”

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

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 isn’t more than 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. She is also a former U.S. senator from North Dakota.

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 250 words. Please make sure you reference the reading above in your response.

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