

THE CRITICAL READER

Sixth Edition

# THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO SAT<sup>®</sup> GRAMMAR

A complete chapter devoted to each concept

Strategies to improve speed and accuracy

Test-style exercises to apply what you've learned

In-depth explanations to help you identify rules tested in different ways

FOR THE  
**DIGITAL**  
**SAT<sup>®</sup>**

# Erica L. Meltzer

author of *The Critical Reader*

# The Ultimate Guide to SAT® Grammar

Sixth Edition

Erica L. Meltzer

■ THE CRITICAL READER

New York

Copyright © 2011-2023 The Critical Reader

Cover © 2023 Tugboat Design

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without written permission from the publisher.

For information regarding bulk purchases, reprints, and foreign rights, please send correspondence to [thecriticalreader1@gmail.com](mailto:thecriticalreader1@gmail.com).

SAT® is a trademark registered by the College Board, which is not affiliated with, and does not endorse, this publication.

ISBN- 13: 978-1-7335895-9-8

## **DEDICATION**

To Emma and Joey, for whom these exercises were first written. I know you never asked to have a *grammar* book dedicated to you, but I hope you'll accept the gesture. And to Jane, Joe, Lily, and Frisco, for food, company, inspiration, and hilarity.

## **ALSO BY ERICA MELTZER**

---

*The Ultimate Guide to SAT® Grammar Workbook*

*SAT® Vocabulary: A New Approach (with Larry Krieger)*

*The Critical Reader: The Complete Guide to SAT® Reading*

*The Critical Reader: AP® English Language and Composition Edition*

*The Complete Guide to ACT® English*

*The Complete Guide to ACT® Reading*

*The Complete GMAT® Sentence Correction Guide*

*GRE® Vocabulary in Practice*

*How to Write for Class: A Student’s Guide to Grammar, Punctuation, and Style*

*IELTS® Writing: Grammar and Vocabulary*

## Table of Contents

	<b>Introduction: How to Use This Book</b>	<b>7</b>
	<b>Cheat Sheet</b>	<b>8</b>
	<b>Part I: Non-Grammar Questions</b>	<b>9</b>
1.	<b>Transitions</b>	<b>11</b>
2.	<b>Specific Focus (“Student Notes”)</b>	<b>27</b>
	<b>Part II: Punctuation</b>	<b>37</b>
	<b>Parts of Speech</b>	<b>39</b>
3.	<b>Sentences and Fragments</b>	<b>45</b>
4.	<b>Joining and Separating Sentences</b>	<b>59</b>
5.	<b>Joining Sentences and Fragments</b>	<b>72</b>
6.	<b>Non-Essential &amp; Essential Clauses</b>	<b>81</b>
7.	<b>Additional Comma Uses and Misuses</b>	<b>106</b>
	<b>Cumulative Review: All Transitions and Punctuation</b>	<b>113</b>
	<b>Part III: Grammar</b>	<b>119</b>
8.	<b>Verbs: Agreement and Tense</b>	<b>121</b>
9.	<b>Pronouns</b>	<b>143</b>
10.	<b>Apostrophes</b>	<b>155</b>
11.	<b>Modification</b>	<b>162</b>
12.	<b>Parallel Structure</b>	<b>169</b>
	<b>Cumulative Review: Verbs, Pronouns, and Modification</b>	<b>174</b>
	<b>Practice Sets: All Chapters</b>	<b>178</b>
	<b>Appendix: Additional Concepts</b>	<b>193</b>
A.	<b>Word Pairs and Comparisons</b>	<b>195</b>
B.	<b>Question Marks</b>	<b>199</b>
	<b>Answer Key</b>	<b>201</b>





## Introduction: How to Use This Book

The purpose of this book is to prepare you for the full range of concepts tested on the digital SAT®. More specifically, it is to teach you to apply those concepts to the specific ways in which they are tested on the exam. Instead of providing explanations and examples for a single version of a rule and leaving you to deduce its subtler or more complex applications, this book walks you through multiple versions of each concept, showing you how it can be tested from various angles and in combination with other concepts.

The chapters are ordered in roughly the order of the frequency with which they appear on the test. If you have limited time to study, you should focus on Parts I and II, as the principles covered there make up the vast majority of Writing questions. **If you are attempting to cram for the SAT—something that, for the record, I strongly do not recommend—or have an extremely limited amount of study time, you should focus on Part I as the question types covered there are virtually guaranteed to appear on every exam.**

If you do not plan to take the SAT for a while, however, I encourage you to work through all of the chapters in order. Although that approach will obviously require more time, it will also allow you to acquire a very solid foundation. Knowing why you are answering questions correctly, rather than simply relying on your ear, will improve both your speed and your confidence. Otherwise, you risk second-guessing yourself if a concept is tested in an unfamiliar way.

While the shorter Writing portion on the digital SAT may make the testing process less tedious, the downside to this change is that each question counts more. If you are aiming for a very high score, you must also be prepared to encounter questions testing a fairly wide range of concepts, even if only a small number of them will appear on your exam. Although the majority of questions focus on a few key areas, the remaining items are likely to be drawn from a fairly broad pool. The test, after all, cannot be made too predictable. Moreover, because of the adaptive nature of the exam, it is crucial that you answer as many questions as possible correctly in the first section, and there is no reason to lose what can be easy points.

It is also important not to confuse *having* a lot of time to answer each question (more than a minute on the digital test versus just under 50 seconds on the paper-based version) with *needing* that time. Regardless of how many seconds you technically have, you should aim to work efficiently. Remember that you do not need to answer the questions in order, and it is possible to use that fact to your advantage. If you read at a good speed and know precisely what you are looking for, some Writing questions can be answered in a matter of seconds. That leaves you plenty of time to return to more complex and time-consuming Reading questions, for example. If you are very comfortable working out of order, you may even want to answer all the Writing questions first so that you can focus more fully on the Reading questions.

Although this book sometimes goes into a fair amount of grammatical depth, its ultimate goal is to teach you to simplify—that is, to quickly identify just what each question type is testing so that you do not become distracted by irrelevant details, and to reduce seemingly complicated questions down to their essential terms. In addition, concepts that could plausibly be tested but that have not (yet) appeared on a released exam are noted as such in the text.

Even in the new digital format, the Writing and Language Test remains one of the more predictable components of the SAT. While the particular exam you take may contain a “wild card” question or two, in general, the vast majority of the material tested can be safely anticipated. The goal of this book is to teach you how to anticipate it.

~Erica Meltzer

## SAT Writing Cheat Sheet

1.	Read the full passage, not just the portion surrounding the blank, and always plug your answer back into the passage to double-check it.
2.	Transition questions: determine the relationship between the two sentences (continue, cause-and-effect, contradict) <u>before</u> you look at the answer choices. (Ch. 1)
3.	A conjunctive adverb (e.g., <i>however</i> , <i>therefore</i> , <i>moreover</i> ) at the start of a sentence follows a period, semicolon, colon, or dash. A conjunctive adverb in the middle of a sentence is surrounded by commas (Ch. 1)
4.	"Student Notes": identify the key word/phrase in the question (what the "student" wants to emphasize, present, or introduce), and find the answer that rewards it. Avoid looking at the bullet points. (Ch. 2)
5.	A transition in the middle or at the end of a sentence = relationship to the <u>previous</u> sentence. (Ch 4)
6.	Period = Semicolon = Comma + <i>and/but</i> . (Ch. 4)
7.	Comma + <i>it, this, s/he, they</i> usually (but not always) = comma splice = WRONG. (Ch. 4)
8.	Joining/separating sentences: check answers with a period or colon <u>first</u> . (Ch. 4)
9.	Colon = Single Dash = Explanation or List. A full sentence is required before but not after. (Ch. 5)
10.	2 Commas = 2 Dashes = 2 Parentheses = Non-Essential Clause. If the information between these punctuation marks is crossed out, the sentence will still make sense. BUT commas, dashes, and parentheses cannot be mixed and matched. (Ch. 6)
11.	Singular verbs end in <i>-s</i> ; plural verbs do not end in <i>-s</i> , e.g., <i>it suggests, they suggest</i> . Remember that the noun right before a verb may not be the subject. (Ch. 8)
12.	Subject-verb agreement questions may "pose" as tense questions. If the answers include singular vs. plural verbs, focus on agreement. (Ch. 8)
13.	Keep verb tense/form consistent. An underlined verb should stay parallel to the surrounding verbs unless there is a clear reason for the tense to change. Check other verbs for context. (Ch. 8)
14.	Pronoun agreement: singular nouns = <i>it</i> (things); plural nouns = <i>they</i> . (Ch. 9)
15.	Dangling modifier: a descriptive phrase set off by a comma must be followed by the noun described (Ch. 11)

# **Part I:**

# **Non-Grammar**

# **Questions**



# 1

## Transitions

Transition questions are the most common type of Writing question, with each test containing around eight to 10 such items—around 15–20% of the test. As a result, you should make sure that you are comfortable working with both common and less common transitional words and phrases. (An extended list is provided on p. 19.)

On the SAT, you must also be able to recognize when transitions do and do not create logical connections between two sentences or parts of a sentence. Usually, these questions contain four grammatically acceptable answers; the focus is on testing your ability to identify the most logical option in context.

Let's start by looking at a typical example. We're going to look at it without the answers for now.

Although T.S. Eliot devoted several years to writing "The Waste Land," it sold only about 330 copies in the six months following its publication in 1922.

\_\_\_\_\_ Eliot was forced to seek other sources of income. In the mid-1920s, he took a job as the director of a new publishing firm called Faber & Faber.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?

(A) -----

(B) -----

(C) -----

(D) -----

The fact that the blank begins with a transition tells us that the correct word must indicate the relationship between the sentence with the blank and the previous sentence or portion of the passage.

Before we even look at the answer choices, we must back up and determine how the sentence begun by the blank relates to the information before it.

The first sentence states that Eliot's "The Waste Land" *sold only about 330 copies* in the months after it was published.

The second sentence—the sentence begun by the transition—states that Eliot was forced to search for other sources of income.

Logically, the second statement indicates the **result** of the first statement, so the correct option must convey that relationship.

Now we can look at the full set of answer choices.

Although T.S. Eliot devoted several years to writing "The Waste Land," it sold only about 330 copies in the six months following its publication in 1922. \_\_\_\_\_ Eliot was forced to seek other sources of income. In the mid-1920s, he took a job as the director of a new publishing firm called Faber & Faber.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?

(A) Alternatively,

(B) Consequently,

(C) In fact,

(D) Moreover,

The fastest way to answer this question is to look for the option that conveys a result: *consequently* clearly indicates that the second statement describes a result, i.e., a consequence, of the first, so (B) is a perfect fit.

If we wanted to play process of elimination:

*Alternatively* is used to indicate a contrasting relationship, so (A) does not fit.

*In fact* is used to emphasize a preceding statement, so (C) does not fit either.

*Moreover* means "in addition" or "furthermore" and is used to introduce a new supporting idea. That's not quite what we're looking for here, so (D) can be eliminated as well.

Again, that leaves us with (B).

Notice that we were able to eliminate answers by using the purpose, or function, of each transition. Because we knew beforehand what purpose the correct word had to have, we did not need to take the time to plug each option back into the passage, get distracted by how each one sounded in context, or be tempted by vaguely plausible sounding but not-quite-right options such as (C) and (D).

## Types of Transitions

There are three main types of transitions.

1) **Continuers** indicate that two sentences are expressing similar ideas.

Correct: *Erenna sirena*, a relative of the jellyfish, is one of the rare marine organisms to emit red light. **Indeed**, only a few other deep-sea creatures produce a glow that color.

2) **Cause-and-Effect** words indicate that one action is the **result** of another.

Correct: The light from most quasars was emitted when the universe was only a fraction of its present age. **Therefore**, quasars offer an important clue to the appearance of the early universe.

3) **Contradictors** indicate that two sentences are expressing different ideas.

Correct: An increased reliance on computerized systems can leave users vulnerable to cyberattacks. **However**, current defenses are stronger than many people realize.

Continue		Cause-and Effect	Contradict
<b>Add Information</b>	<b>Emphasize</b>	Accordingly As a result As such Because	Alternately Alternatively (Al)though But
Also And Furthermore In addition Moreover	In fact Indeed <b>Compare</b> Likewise Similarly	Consequently For Hence Since	Conversely Despite/ In spite of Even so Even though However In any case In contrast Instead Meanwhile Nevertheless Nonetheless On the contrary On the other hand Otherwise Rather Regardless Still Whereas While Yet
<b>Give Example</b>	<b>Sequence of Events</b>	So Thus Therefore To this end	
For example For instance Specifically	Previously Subsequently		
<b>Define, Clarify</b>	Finally While		
Effectively Essentially In other words That is			

## How to Work Through Transition Questions

As a general rule, it is crucial to do as much work as you can toward determining the precise relationship between the statements in question before you look at the choices. If you plug in choices without really knowing what you're looking for, you may be tempted to "twist" options that don't really fit.

- 1) Reread both sentences or parts of the sentence.
- 2) Determine the relationship between them, and try to predict the answer.
  - Contrast: *however, nevertheless, still, in contrast*
  - Add similar idea: *furthermore, moreover, in addition, similarly, likewise*
  - Result: *therefore, consequently, accordingly*
  - Example: *for example, for instance, specifically*
  - Emphasis: *indeed, in fact*
- 3) Check the answers, and pick the option that matches.

Note: if you are unable to define the precise relationship, you should at least determine the general type of transition you are looking for and see if you can eliminate an answer or two.

- If the sentences express similar ideas, you can eliminate contraditors, e.g., *but* or *however*.
- If they express different ideas, you can eliminate both continuers and cause-and-effect words, e.g., *for example* or *therefore*.

**Shortcut:** If two or more answers contain grammatically identical synonyms, those answers can be automatically eliminated because no question can have more than one right answer. So, for example, if choice (A) is *consequently* and choice (C) is *therefore*, you can immediately eliminate both. Although this technique seems unlikely to apply to many digital exam questions, it may be occasionally useful.

Let's look at an example. Try not to look at the answer choices until you've determined the relationship.

Conditions in the interior of Antarctica are inhospitable to many forms of life: sub-zero temperatures, high winds, and extreme dryness make it impossible for most animals to survive.

\_\_\_\_\_ the Antarctic Peninsula and the surrounding islands have relatively mild temperatures and liquid water, allowing many species to thrive there.

1 Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?

(A) Therefore,

(B) For instance,

(C) Indeed,

(D) In contrast,

If you know what type of transition you're looking for upfront, this is a very straightforward question.

- Sentence 1 indicates that life cannot thrive in Antarctica's interior.
- Sentence 2 indicates that life can thrive in the Antarctic Peninsula and islands.

Those are clearly opposing ideas, so a contradictor is required. On that basis alone, (A), (B), and (C) are all continuers, leaving (D), *in contrast*, as the only possible answer.

**Note:** In very rare cases, the College Board has asked students to make a very fine distinction between two transitions of the same type. This question type has appeared only once, on a non-administered exam (Test 2, #25 in the 2020 edition of the *Official Guide*), but I am addressing it here to be safe.

Conditions in the interior of Antarctica are inhospitable to many forms of life: sub-zero temperatures, high winds, and extreme dryness make it impossible for most animals to survive. \_\_\_\_\_ the Antarctic Peninsula and the surrounding islands have relatively mild temperatures and liquid water, allowing many species to thrive there.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?

(A) Still,

(B) For example,

(C) However,

(D) In other words,

Although *still* and *however* are usually interchangeable, in this case *however* is a stronger fit. Technically, *still* means "despite this," but the Antarctic Peninsula's milder weather does not exist *despite* the harsher weather in the interior. It is simply a different location with a different climate. (C) is thus correct.

Let's look at another, more challenging example

Despite the sub-zero temperatures, high winds, and extreme dryness that characterize the Antarctic interior, a small number of hardy species dwell there. \_\_\_\_\_ certain mosses, lichens, and microscopic protozoa have adapted to the harsh conditions and are able to thrive.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?

(A) In addition,

(B) Specifically,

(C) Accordingly,

(D) Nevertheless,

Don't get distracted by the scientific language and references to mosses and protozoa – remember that you do not need to know anything about the topic to answer the question. Focus on the essential information, and determine the relationship between those ideas.

- Sentence 1: a few species are able to dwell in Antarctica despite its harsh climate.
- Sentence 2: lists specific species able to live there.

Logically, the correct transition must be a **continuer** signaling that Sentence 2 will present **examples** of the idea introduced in Sentence 1. The only option that matches is (B), *specifically*, so it is correct.

## Transitions in the Middle or at the End of a Sentence

In the examples we've looked at so far, transitions have appeared at the beginnings of sentences or clauses. In some cases, however, the transition may appear **between two commas** in the middle of a sentence.

**Although questions containing this construction may appear to ask about only one sentence, they are actually about the relationship between two sentences: the sentence that contains the underlined transition and the previous sentence(s).** Compare:

Version #1: **Therefore**, tropical marine mammals have very few fat reserves in their bodies.

Version #2: Tropical marine mammals, **therefore**, have very few fat reserves in their bodies.

The difference here is purely stylistic – the sentences have **the exact same meaning**, and in both cases the transition serves to connect the sentence to a previous statement. Let's look at how that works in context.

Healthy arctic marine mammals have a thick layer of fat beneath the skin. Tropical marine mammals, \_\_\_\_\_ have very few fat reserves in their bodies. As a result, many of them dwell primarily in the warm waters that surround coral reefs.

1

 Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?

(A) therefore,

(B) likewise,

(C) however,

(D) for instance,

To see why the transition can't connect the two halves of the sentence, we can cross it out and consider the information before and after it separately.

- 1) Tropical marine mammals
- 2) have very few fat reserves in their bodies

There is no logical relationship between these two statements – they make no sense when read separately.

The transition does, however, serve to clarify the relationship between the sentence in which it appears and the previous sentence. So now we're going to back up and consider those **two** sentences, again crossing out the transition.

- 1) Healthy arctic marine mammals have a thick layer of fat beneath the skin.
- 2) Tropical marine mammals, therefore, have very few fat reserves in their bodies.

The two sentences express contrasting ideas: a *thick layer* of fat vs. *very few* fat reserves. A contradictor is thus required. *Therefore*, *likewise*, and *for example* are all continuers, leaving (C), *however*, as the only option.

When you are working with **contradictors**, things become slightly more complex in terms of placement.

Unlike continuers, which are generally placed at the beginning or in the middle of a sentence, contradictors can appear at the **beginning** (followed by a comma); **middle** (surrounded by commas); or **end** (following a comma).

To illustrate, let's consider three versions of the sentence below.

- 1) Healthy arctic marine mammals have a thick layer of fat beneath the skin. **However**, tropical marine mammals have very few fat reserves in their bodies.
- 2) Healthy arctic marine mammals have a thick layer of fat beneath the skin. Tropical marine mammals, **however**, have very few fat reserves in their bodies.
- 3) Healthy arctic marine mammals have a thick layer of fat beneath the skin. Tropical marine mammals have very few fat reserves in their bodies, **however**.

All of the sentences have **the exact same meaning**, with *however* serving the exact same function: to indicate that the second sentence opposes the first.

Let's look at how that could play out in a question.

Healthy arctic marine mammals have a thick layer of fat beneath their skin, allowing them to dwell in the frigid waters surrounding the Earth's poles. Tropical marine mammals have few fat reserves in their bodies, \_\_\_\_\_. As a result, they are largely confined to the warm waters that surround coral reefs.

1  Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?

(A) therefore,

(B) however,

(C) moreover,

(D) in fact,

The most important thing to understand is that even though the transition in question is physically located next to the sentence that follows, it is still asking about the relationship between the sentence in which it appears and the previous sentence. Because those sentences present contrasting ideas, (B) is correct.

Note that you may also be asked to work with a transition in the middle of a sentence that is genuinely intended to connect two parts of the same sentence; however, these transitions will follow only **one comma**.

For example, consider this version of the question on the previous page:

Tropical marine mammals have few fat reserves in their bodies and dwell primarily in the warm waters that surround coral reefs. In contrast, healthy arctic marine mammals have a thick layer of fat beneath their skin, \_\_\_\_\_ they are able to tolerate much colder waters.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?

(A) so

(B) for

(C) yet

(D) whereas

This time, we do need to consider the two halves of the sentence in which the transition appears. As always, we start by crossing out the transition.

- 1) Healthy arctic marine mammals have a **thick layer of fat** beneath the skin.
- 2) They are able to tolerate cold water.

The second half of the sentence indicates a result of the first, so a cause-and-effect word is required. (C) and (D) are both contraditors and can be eliminated immediately.

Note that *for*, when used this way, means “because”—it is a cause-and-effect word, but it reverses the ideas: logically, arctic marine mammals do not have a layer of fat beneath their skin because they are able to tolerate cold waters, but rather the opposite.

Only *so* creates the correct cause-and-effect relationship, making (A) correct.

## Glossary of Transitions

**Accordingly**      }  
**Consequently**      }      **Therefore, as a result**

Correct: Dolphins are highly social creatures. **Consequently**, they live in pods of up to a dozen animals.

Correct: Dolphins are highly social creatures. **Accordingly**, they live in pods of up to a dozen animals.

**Furthermore**      }  
**Moreover**      }      **In addition**

Correct: Dolphins are social animals. **Furthermore**, they are highly intelligent.

Correct: Dolphins are social animals. **Moreover**, they are highly intelligent.

**In fact**      }  
**Indeed**      }      **Used to emphasize a preceding statement**

Correct: Dolphins are highly intelligent. **In fact**, they are one of the smartest mammals.

Correct: Dolphins are highly intelligent. **Indeed**, they are one of the smartest mammals.

**Even so**      }  
**Nevertheless**      }  
**Still**      }      **Despite this, however**

Correct: Dolphins are descended from land-dwelling animals. **Even so**, they can only survive in water.

Correct: Dolphins are descended from land-dwelling animals. **Nevertheless**, they can only survive in water.

Correct: Dolphins are descended from land-dwelling animals. **Still**, they can only survive in water.

### Whereas – Although

Correct: A salmon is a type of fish, **whereas** a dolphin is a type of mammal.

## **As such – As a + noun**

*As such* is one of the trickier transitions, and it's best explained with an example.

Let's start with this sentence:

Correct: Dolphins are social animals. **Because they are social animals**, they live in pods of up to a dozen animals.

We can also write it this way:

Correct: Dolphins are social animals. **As social animals**, they live in pods of up to a dozen animals.

These sentences are fine grammatically, but the repetition of the phrase *social animals* in the second sentence is awkward. To eliminate the repetition, we can replace the phrase *as social animals* with *as such*.

Correct: Dolphins are social animals. **As such**, they live in pods of up to a dozen animals.

## **Likewise – Similarly, In the same way**

Correct: As mammals, dolphins are warm-blooded. **Likewise**, they nourish their young with milk.

## **Meanwhile – Literally, at the same time; often used to mean however and signal a contrast.**

Correct: Many people think of dolphins as fish. **Meanwhile**, they ignore scientific research, which long ago established that dolphins are actually mammals.

## **Subsequently – Afterward**

Correct: In the 1980s, dolphin populations began to decline because too many animals were caught in fishing nets. **Subsequently**, fishing companies began taking steps to reassure customers that products were "dolphin safe."

## **That is – In other words; introduces a definition or explanation, and often follows a dash.**

Correct: Dolphins are mammals – **that is**, they are warm-blooded and nourish their young with milk.

## Exercise: Transitions 1 (answers p. 201)

From the three options, circle the one that correctly indicates the logical relationship between each set of statements. Then, choose the transition that best connects the statements. Remember that the transition always creates the same relationship between them, no matter where it is placed.

1. In the past, coffees were blended to suit a homogenous popular taste. \_\_\_\_\_ many different coffee flavors are now being produced.

**Step 1:** Continue Cause-and-Effect Contrast

**Step 2:**

- Ⓐ Accordingly,
- Ⓑ Thus,
- Ⓒ However,
- Ⓓ Alternatively,

2. Researchers are unable to drill into the Earth's core. \_\_\_\_\_ its chemical composition remains a mystery.

**Step 1:** Continue Cause-and-Effect / Contrast

**Step 2:**

- Ⓐ Indeed,
- Ⓑ Consequently,
- Ⓒ In contrast,
- Ⓓ For example,

3. The Taj Mahal is regarded as one of the eight wonders of the world. \_\_\_\_\_ some people believe that its architectural beauty has never been surpassed.

**Step 1:** Continue Cause-and-Effect Contrast

**Step 2:**

- Ⓐ Indeed,
- Ⓑ Specifically,
- Ⓒ To illustrate,
- Ⓓ Still,

4. In order to save an endangered species, preservationists must study it in detail. Scientific information about some endangered animals is scarce, \_\_\_\_\_.

**Step 1:** Continue Cause-and-Effect Contrast

**Step 2:**

- Ⓐ therefore
- Ⓑ moreover
- Ⓒ in contrast
- Ⓓ however

5. Pyramids are most commonly associated with ancient Egypt. \_\_\_\_\_ many people are surprised to learn that the Nubians, who lived in modern-day Sudan, constructed a far greater number of pyramids than the Egyptians did.

**Step 1:** Continue Cause-and-Effect Contrast

**Step 2:**

- Ⓐ Moreover,
- Ⓑ Consequently,
- Ⓒ Nevertheless,
- Ⓓ Likewise,

6. Modern chemistry keeps insects from ravaging crops, removes stains, and saves lives. \_\_\_\_\_ constant exposure to chemicals is taking a toll on many people's health.

**Step 1:** Continue Cause-and-Effect Contrast

**Step 2:**

- Ⓐ Hence,
- Ⓑ In contrast,
- Ⓒ Still,
- Ⓓ Subsequently,

7. Music serves no obvious purpose. It has, \_\_\_\_\_ played a role in every known civilization on earth.

**Step 1:** Continue Cause-and-Effect Contrast

**Step 2:**

- Ⓐ therefore,
- Ⓑ moreover,
- Ⓒ however,
- Ⓓ for instance,

8. In the Middle Ages, fairs often attracted large crowds and led to rioting. \_\_\_\_\_ authorities were reluctant to grant permission for them to be held.

**Step 1:** Continue Cause-and-Effect Contrast

**Step 2:**

- Ⓐ Alternatively,
- Ⓑ For instance,
- Ⓒ Furthermore,
- Ⓓ Therefore,

9. Although the abstract painter Joan Mitchell disliked being compared to Monet, the parallels between them were undeniable. Her terrace overlooked a house that Monet occupied from 1878 to 1881, as well as a landscape that he painted.

\_\_\_\_\_ some of her own late works unmistakably hark back to the paintings that Monet produced in his twilight years at Giverny.

**Step 1:** Continue Cause-and-Effect Contrast

**Step 2:**

- Ⓐ Moreover,
- Ⓑ Thus,
- Ⓒ Meanwhile,
- Ⓓ Nevertheless,

10. A recent study suggests that consuming food late in the evening has profound effects on the hunger-regulating hormones leptin and ghrelin, which influence our drive to eat. \_\_\_\_\_

researchers found that levels of the hormone leptin, which signals satiety, remained low for 24 hours for a group of subjects instructed to eat dinner late, whereas leptin levels were much higher in a group that ate dinner early.

**Step 1:** Continue Cause-and-Effect / Contrast

**Step 2:**

- Ⓐ Despite this,
- Ⓑ However,
- Ⓒ Specifically,
- Ⓓ Therefore,

## Exercise: Transitions 2 (answers p. 201)

From the three options, circle the one that correctly indicates the logical relationship between each set of statements. Then, choose the transition that best connects the statements. Remember that the transition always connects a sentence to the previous information, no matter where it is placed.

1. Rather than embrace the type of abstract work that many artists of her generation preferred, Gwendolyn Knight preferred to depict figures in a spontaneous and personal manner. \_\_\_\_\_ she painted oil portraits of friends as well as studies of dancers in motion.

(A) Moreover,

(B) Specifically,

(C) Nevertheless,

(D) Besides,

2. Discarded electronic devices such as cell phones and tablets are a rapidly growing source of waste. One way to mitigate the problem, \_\_\_\_\_ could be to include components made with renewable resources.

(A) therefore,

(B) moreover,

(C) nevertheless,

(D) however,

3. While doing fieldwork on Gorgonilla Island in Colombia in 2014, Hermann Bermúdez found spherule deposits—layers of sediment filled with tiny glass beads. These beads formed when the heat and pressure from an asteroid impact melted and scattered the crust of the Earth, ejecting tiny liquid blobs into the atmosphere. \_\_\_\_\_ they fell back to earth in solid form under the influence of gravity.

(A) Therefore,

(B) Meanwhile,

(C) Subsequently,

(D) Additionally,

4. Blue whales recognize when the wind is changing their habitat and identify places where ocean currents produce large aggregations of krill. The tiny shrimp are the primary food sources for the massive animals, which can weigh 165 tons or more. \_\_\_\_\_ their ability to locate these dense concentrations of nutrients is a matter of survival.

(A) Consequently,

(B) For instance,

(C) Furthermore,

(D) Alternatively,

5. In 1959, Project Mercury became the first human spaceflight program led by NASA. Aimed at putting an American into orbit before the Soviet Union could accomplish that goal, it was shut down after less than half a decade. \_\_\_\_\_ in the four years of its existence, seven astronauts were able to travel into space.

(A) For instance,

(B) Still,

(C) Accordingly,

(D) Indeed,

6. Bacteria have one or many appendages known as a flagellum, which is made of thousands of identical subunits. \_\_\_\_\_ a tail that was straight or only slightly flexible would leave an organism unable to move, bacteria have evolved rotating, corkscrew-shaped propellers that push them forward. Scientists call the formation of this shape "supercoiling," and now, after more than half a century, they understand how the process works.

(A) Although

(B) Despite

(C) Because

(D) Unless

7. Although Shakespeare portrayed King Richard III as a villain, historians argue that he was in fact a far more sympathetic figure. The Tudors, on whose patronage Shakespeare was dependent, had conquered the English throne from Richard. \_\_\_\_\_ the playwright was obliged to portray the king in an unflattering light.

(A) Hence,

(B) Still,

(C) In contrast,

(D) Moreover,

8. Trade on the Silk Road was a significant factor in the development of China, India, and Europe, opening long-distance political and economic interactions. \_\_\_\_\_ silk was certainly the major trade item from China, numerous other types of goods, including textiles, cloth, and pottery, also traveled along the Silk Road.

(A) Because

(B) Although

(C) Until

(D) When

9. From the moment *2001: A Space Odyssey* premiered in 1968, it was clear that the film would become best known for its special effects. It featured spacecraft that flew realistically—not zooming around in a cartoonish manner, as was the case in other films of the time.

\_\_\_\_\_ Kubrick imagined a fully realized vision of regular human spaceflights in Earth orbit and beyond.

(A) Moreover,

(B) Nevertheless,

(C) To illustrate,

(D) Meanwhile,

10. Straw has been used as a building material for centuries, and contrary to popular belief, it is not easily destroyed. \_\_\_\_\_ it can be remarkably durable. In the nineteenth century, settlers in the Nebraska Sand Hills used straw to build houses when wood and clay were scarce; some of the structures are still standing today.

(A) Therefore,

(B) Even so,

(C) However,

(D) In fact,

# 2

## Specific Focus (“Student Notes”)

---

“Note taking” questions have been created specifically for the digital SAT. They always consist of a short set of bullet points (usually 3-5) about a topic that “a student” has researched and are accompanied by a question asking you to identify the statement that best uses information from them to introduce or emphasize a particular idea.

Although these questions contain a good deal of information and may superficially appear quite complicated, you should not be intimidated by them. In fact, they can sometimes be among the most straightforward questions on the test.

The key to managing them efficiently is to recognize that only a small fraction of the information provided is actually relevant. **The answer will virtually always be contained in the question itself. The correct choice will simply rephrase it—you do not need to look at the bullet points at all.**

Every note-taking question will provide you with a specific focus—what the “student” wants to **present, introduce, specify, or emphasize**. **The information that follows is the key word or phrase.** (If you find it helpful, you may want to highlight it using the annotation tool). When you check answers, you are looking for an option that matches the focus indicated. Only one option will fit—and when you find it, you’re done.

In addition, keep in mind that all the answer choices will refer to information that is actually in the “notes”—you do not need to worry about answers that have the right focus but that are not mentioned in the left-hand column. That kind of trickiness is not the point of the test.

“Notes” questions can ask you to identify a variety of focuses; however, it can be helpful to keep in mind that correct answers to certain kinds of questions will include particular key words or types of information.

### 1) Comparisons and Contrasts

These questions ask you to identify a statement indicating that two people/things are either similar or different. Depending on the emphasis, correct answers include words such as *like*, *unlike*, or *whereas*.

### 2) Familiar and Unfamiliar

These questions ask you to identify a statement that would be used to present a person, work of art, event, etc. to an audience that either has or does not have previous knowledge of it.

Correct answers to “familiar” questions do not contain background information about the person or thing in question, whereas correct answers to “unfamiliar” questions contain basic background or historical information and may be longer than the other answers.

To illustrate, let's consider the question and set of answer choices below. We're going to start by working without the notes so that we can focus on the matching process without any distractions.

1

Mark for Review

The student wants to present a similarity between dinosaurs and modern birds. Which choice most effectively uses relevant information from the notes to achieve this goal?

The question tells us that the correct answer must contain words indicating that modern birds and dinosaurs are **alike** in some way. We can therefore assume that any choice containing words that indicate difference, e.g., *although* or *whereas*, will be incorrect.

We're going to start by scanning through the answers for those types of key words in order to see what we can keep and eliminate.

(A) Dinosaurs' mouths contained teeth; **however**, birds evolved toothless beaks over millions of years.

(B) *Mei long*, a duck-sized bipedal dinosaur from the Cretaceous era, was found preserved in volcanic ash.

(C) Birds' bones are hollow, a trait that was **shared** by many dinosaur species.

(D) Birds are descended from the theropod group of dinosaurs, which contained *Tyrannosaurus rex*.

The word *however* in (A) is a clear signal that this answer is incorrect, whereas the word *shared* suggests right away that (C) is the answer. (Spoiler: it is).

The other two choices contain no words indicating either similarity or difference, which means that they do not match the focus indicated in the question.

That said, be careful with (D). Although this answer mentions that birds are descended from dinosaurs, it does not actually include any mention of a similarity between them. As a result, it cannot be correct.

Let's look at another example. This time, we're going to work with a full question. Although it may appear complicated and time-consuming, looks can be deceiving.

While researching a topic, a student has taken the following notes.

- Carrie Mae Weems (born 1953) is a photographer and installation artist whose works employ text, fabric, audio, digital images and video.
- She has received major awards from the MacArthur Foundation and the American Academy in Rome.
- Her 2021 installation in Chicago featured photos, video, text, and furniture.
- Visitors were encouraged to browse and sit at desks in a recreation of a historic classroom.
- The same year, her "Cyclorama" exhibit at the New York City Armory included video projections, shadow puppets, and a voice-over narration.

1

Mark for Review

The student wants to **emphasize the variety of materials** employed by Weems to an audience **unfamiliar** with her work. Which choice most effectively uses relevant information from the notes to achieve this goal?

(A)

Carrie Mae Weems's artwork has been recognized by both the MacArthur Foundation and the American Academy in Rome.

(B)

In 2021, Weems staged an installation in Chicago in which visitors were encouraged to participate directly in a recreation of a historic classroom.

(C)

Carrie Mae Weems, who is considered among the most influential contemporary American artists, employs a diverse set of media: her shows include elements ranging from photos to furniture to shadow puppets.

(D)

Carrie Mae Weems's 2021 show in New York City, unlike her show in Chicago the same year, included shadow puppets as well as a voice-over narration.

Before we look at the answer choices, let's take a moment and reiterate what type of information the correct answer must contain. There are two key parts:

- 1) It must emphasize the **variety of materials** used by Weems.
- 2) Because it is for an audience **unfamiliar** with Weems's work, it must provide some basic **background** explaining who she is. That means the answer will probably be on the longer side.

Keeping those two points in mind, we're going to look at the various options.

- (A) Carrie Mae Weems's artwork has been recognized by both the MacArthur Foundation and the American Academy in Rome.

This provides some basic context about who Weems is and what she does, but it has absolutely nothing to do with the materials she uses.

- (B) In 2021, Weems staged an installation in Chicago in which visitors were encouraged to participate directly in a recreation of a historic classroom.

This option refers to Weems's work but only talks about one installation, whereas the correct answer must emphasize variety. It also lacks background information about Weems.

Notice also that this answer refers to Weems by her last name only. In most cases, when a person is being introduced to an audience unfamiliar with their work, that person is referred to by their full name!

- (C) Carrie Mae Weems, who is considered among the most influential contemporary American artists, employs a diverse set of media: her shows include elements ranging from photos to furniture to shadow puppets.

Yes, this answer includes background information that would introduce Weems to a new audience. In addition, the phrase *a diverse set of media* and the specific examples (photos, furniture, shadow puppets) correspond directly to the idea of a range of media (range = diverse).

We'll assume it's the answer but glance at (D) just to be safe.

- (D) Carrie Mae Weems's 2021 show in New York City, unlike her show in Chicago the same year, included shadow puppets as well as a voice-over narration.

This talks about different materials but does not present the sort of background necessary to introduce Weems to an unfamiliar audience.

So the answer is (C).

On the next page, we're going to look at one more.

While researching a topic, a student has taken the following notes:

- Wolves produce a range of vocalizations, including growls, whines, and barks.
- To show submission, a wolf pulls its tail between its legs.
- A raised tail indicates dominance.
- Wolves have powerful scent receptors and can perceive odors a mile or more away.
- Observers may mistake some of wolves' play behaviors for aggression.

1

Mark for Review

The student wants to present the importance of body language in wolves' communication.

Which choice most effectively uses relevant information from the notes to achieve this goal?

(A)

Wolves display a variety of physical and vocal signals when interacting with one another.

(B)

The position of a wolf's tail and ears can reveal its status relative to other animals in the pack.

(C)

Some wolf behaviors may appear aggressive to observers but are actually types of play.

(D)

Wolves are extremely effective hunters because they can smell prey from far away.

Again, we're going to start by identifying key phrase that tells us the specific focus. The phrase following the word *emphasize* indicates that the correct answer will focus on wolves' body language, so we're going to approach each choice by looking for that information.

(A)

Wolves display a variety of physical and vocal signals when interacting with one another.

Be very careful here. The answer does refer to *physical and vocal signals*, but it doesn't provide any actual examples of how wolves use their bodies. Furthermore, *vocal signals* don't count as body language—we're looking for something about how wolves move, not about what sounds they make. So (A) is probably wrong, but we'll leave it for now, just in case.

(B)

The position of a wolf's tail and ears can reveal its status relative to other animals in the pack.

Yes, this fits. The phrase *the position of a wolf's tail and ears* provides a specific example of how wolves use their bodies to communicate among each other. This is a much stronger answer than (A), and it matches the required focus directly. We can thus choose it confidently, without needing to check (C) and (D)—which are, in any case, entirely off-topic.

## Exercise: “Student Notes” (answers p. 201)

**Step 1: Circle or underline the key words in the question below.**

1

 Mark for Review

The student wants to emphasize the mass participation in victory gardens to an audience unfamiliar with the movement. Which choice most effectively uses relevant information from the notes to achieve this goal?

---

**Step 2: Find the answer that matches.**

(A)

Victory gardens, which became popular in the United States during World War II, were planted not only in backyards and empty lots but also in window boxes.

(B)

During World War II, millions of people throughout the United grew fruits and vegetables in small plots of land known as victory gardens.

(C)

Labor shortages impeded the transportation of fruits and vegetables during World War II, so citizens were encouraged to grow their own produce.

(D)

Neighbors across the United States pooled their resources during World War II, planting different kinds of foods and forming cooperatives.

**Step 1: Circle or underline the key words in the question below.**

2

Mark for Review

The student wants to emphasize a difference between thundersnow and regular thunderstorms. Which choice most effectively uses relevant information from the notes to achieve this goal?

---

**Step 2: Find the answer that matches.**

(A)

Because current prediction models for thundersnow are unreliable, the University of Missouri has developed a program to improve meteorologists' ability to forecast this type of weather.

(B)

Regular thunderstorms and thundersnow both form when a cold mass develops on top of warm air and combines with moisture near the ground.

(C)

Thunder and lightning, which require warm air, are common during spring and summer rainstorms but occur only rarely during winter snowstorms, which primarily involve cold air.

(D)

When thundersnow occurs at night, lightning appears brighter because it is reflected against the snowflakes.

**Step 1: Circle or underline the key words in the question below.**

3

Mark for Review

The student wants to present the effects of musical training on the brain. Which choice most effectively uses relevant information from the notes to achieve this goal?

---

**Step 2: Find the answer that matches.**

(A)

When a person listens to music, sound vibrations in the ear are converted to neural messages and transmitted to the thalamus.

(B)

Neurologists now believe that music processing is much more complex than originally believed.

(C)

Kiminobu Sugaya's research shows that professional musicians use different regions to process music than casual listeners do.

(D)

When sound reaches the auditory cortex, it is immediately broken down into many different elements including rhythm, pitch, and tone.

On the next page, try some questions in full test format.

While researching a topic, a student has taken the following notes:

- In the early 1940s Admiral Grace Hopper became the third person to program the Mark I computer.
- This was the first large-scale computer in the United States.
- In 1952, she invented the compiler, which translated English commands into computer code.
- It paved the way for the creation of programming languages Fortran and COBOL and allowed generations of non-experts to learn programming.

4

 Mark for Review

The student wants to emphasize the lasting impact of Hopper's work to an audience familiar with her achievements. Which choice most effectively uses relevant information from the notes to achieve this goal?

(A) Prior to Mark I, a large-scale computer had never been built in the United States, so Hopper's work was groundbreaking.

(B) Hopper's compiler led to the creation of programming languages that remain in use and have inspired generations of new programmers.

(C) Only two people had programmed the Mark I before Hopper was given the opportunity to work on it in the early 1940s.

(D) Before she invented the compiler in 1952, Grace Hopper had worked as a programmer for the first large-scale computer in the United States.

While researching a topic, a student has taken the following notes:

- The neural circuits responsible for spatial navigation in mammals, reptiles, and birds have been studied extensively, but it was not known whether they existed in fish.
- To test whether fish can navigate spatially, a team led by Adelaide Sibeaux created an experiment requiring a group of goldfish to estimate a distance to be traveled.
- Nine goldfish were trained to swim 28 inches in a narrow tank and given a cue to turn around at the end.
- When researchers removed the cue and moved the starting position, the fish continued to swim approximately the same length.
- This suggests that spatial navigation circuits are present in fish.

5

Mark for Review

The student wants to introduce the goals of the study. Which choice most effectively uses relevant information from the notes to achieve this goal?

- (A) When researchers tested goldfish's ability to estimate a distance, they discovered that the fish were able to complete the task with a high level of accuracy.
- (B) The findings of Adelaide Sibeaux's team suggest that fish have the same type of spatial navigation circuitry as other kinds of animals.
- (C) It is now clear that goldfish can learn specific patterns of behavior in response to external cues.
- (D) Researchers wanted to determine whether fish possess the same types of neural circuits for spatial navigation that mammals, reptiles, and birds have.

# **Part II:**

# **Punctuation**



## Parts of Speech

There are eight parts of speech in the English language, five (#1-5 below) of which are directly relevant to the SAT and two of which (#6-7) may be relevant on certain questions. (The eighth part, interjections, i.e., exclamations, is not relevant at all.) If you are not comfortable identifying parts of speech, you should begin by reviewing this section. Although portions of these definitions are repeated throughout the guide, familiarizing yourself with them before you begin will help you move through the explanations and exercises more easily.

### 1. Verb

Verbs indicate actions or states of being.

#### Examples:

To be  
To have  
To seem  
To go  
To study  
To believe

The “to” form of a verb is known as the **infinitive**. All of the verbs listed above are infinitives. If you are uncertain whether a word can be used as a verb, try placing *to* in front of it to form an infinitive.

Verbs are not always used as infinitives. In order to indicate who is performing an action, we must **conjugate** the verb and provide its **subject**.

*To be* and *to have* are the most common English verbs. As a result, they are tested frequently. Because they are irregular, their conjugated forms differ from their infinitives. *To be* is also unique in that it is conjugated in both the present and past. To answer many verb questions correctly, you must be able to distinguish between these verbs’ singular and plural forms, almost always in the third person (*it/they*).

Conjugation of *to be*, present:

Singular	Plural
I am	We are
You are	You (pl.) are
<b>It, Sing. Noun is</b>	<b>They, Pl. Noun are</b>

Conjugation of *to be*, past:

Singular	Plural
I was	We were
You were	You (pl.) were
<b>It, Sing. Noun was</b>	<b>They, Pl. Noun were</b>

Conjugation of *to have*, present\*:

Singular	Plural
I have	We have
You have	You (pl.) have
<b>It, Sing. Noun has</b>	<b>They, Pl. Noun have</b>

\*The past form of *have* is always *had*.

The **number** of a verb indicates whether it is **singular or plural**. *I, she, he, it* and *one* are always singular, and *we* and *they* are always plural\*. You can be either singular or plural.

Note that third-person **singular** verbs end in *-s*, whereas third-person **plural** verbs do not end in *-s*, e.g., *it works, they work*. SAT verb questions also focus on this distinction.

The **tense** of a verb indicates when an action occurred.

It is = Present	It would be = Conditional
It has been = Present perfect	It would have been = Past conditional
It was = Simple past	It will be = Future
It had been = Past perfect	It will have been = Future perfect

## 2. Noun

Nouns indicate people, places, objects, and ideas, and can always be preceded by *a(n)* or *the*.

Note that in addition to physical objects, nouns can refer to ideas/concepts and things that cannot be touched. These nouns, known as **abstract nouns**, frequently end in *-ment, -tion, and -tude*.

**Examples:** bicycle, supervisor, Amelia Earhart, Chicago, notion, development, latitude

- The **bicycle** is an affordable and convenient **form of transportation**.
- Until the early nineteenth **century**, most **scientists** held the **belief** that **meteorites** could not exist.

## 3. Pronoun

Pronouns replace nouns.

**Examples:** she, you, one, we, him, it(s), their, this, that, these, those, which, both, some, few, many

- Astronomers study the universe. **They** observe **it** through telescopes.
- Michelangelo was one of the greatest artists of the Renaissance. **He** was born in 1475.

**Personal pronouns** are often referred to in the following manner:

Singular	Plural
1 <sup>st</sup> person = I	1 <sup>st</sup> person = We
2 <sup>nd</sup> person = You	2 <sup>nd</sup> person = You
3 <sup>rd</sup> person = S/he, It, One*	3 <sup>rd</sup> person = They

\*See p. 145 for a discussion of the singular *they*.

## **4. Preposition**

Prepositions are **time** and **location** words. They indicate where things and people are, where they're going, and when events happened. They are always followed by nouns.

**Example:** The dog ran **under** the fence and **into** the neighboring yard **in** a matter **of** seconds.

About	Among	Beside	In	Opposite
Above	Around	Between	Inside	Outside
Across	Before	By	Near	Toward
After	Behind	During	Next to	Under
Against	Below	For	Off	With
Along	Beneath	From	On	Without

## **5. Conjunction**

Conjunctions indicate relationships between words, phrases, and clauses.

**Examples:** and, but, however, therefore, so, although, yet, when, because, since

- Holland was once home to 10,000 windmills, **but** only 1,000 remain today.
- The surface of Mars appears red **because** it is covered with iron-rich minerals.

## **6. Adverb**

Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, other adverbs, and phrases/clauses. Many common adverbs end in *-ly* (e.g., *slowly*, *loudly*, *strongly*), but the SAT is primarily concerned with **conjunctive adverbs**: adverbs that serve as transitional words.

Although many of these words have the same meaning as conjunctions, they can only be used at the beginning of a sentence or clause.

**Examples:** however, therefore, thus, hence, moreover, indeed, furthermore, subsequently

- Holland was once home to 10,000 windmills; **however**, only 1,000 remain today.
- The surface of Mars is covered with iron-rich minerals; **therefore**, it appears red.

## **7. Adjective**

Adjectives modify (pro)nouns and other adjectives.

**Examples:** large, pretty, interesting, solid, wide, exceptional, smart, short, simple

- Some airports have begun using **short**, **friendly** robots to guide passengers to their gates.



## Exercise: Identifying Parts of Speech (answers p. 201)

In the following sentences, write the part of speech that corresponds to each underlined word.

1. Some (A) planets that are very different from our own may have the (B) potential to turn current theories (C) about solar system (D) formation upside down.

(A)	
(B)	
(C)	
(D)	

2. Flamingoes (A) are generally viewed as elegant and graceful, (B) but they also exhibit surprisingly (C) rowdy behavior. As a result, (D) they have recently become the subject of serious scientific examination.

(A)	
(B)	
(C)	
(D)	

3. In response to their critics, (A) advocates of genetically modified foods (B) insist that such crops are beneficial (C) because they grow faster, require fewer pesticides, and reduce (D) stress on natural resources.

(A)	
(B)	
(C)	
(D)	

4. The fig tree (A) plays an important role in rain forest (B) ecosystems because (C) it provides food for many different types of animals as well as cloth for local (D) inhabitants.

(A)	
(B)	
(C)	
(D)	

5. (A) Although she never (B) obtained any formal academic credentials, the Austrian-born psychoanalyst Melanie Klein (C) became renowned as an (D) innovator for her work with young children.

(A)	
(B)	
(C)	
(D)	

6. Edith Kanaka‘ole was an (A) internationally acclaimed hula teacher, composer, chanter and performer. (B) Today, she (C) is credited (D) with playing a vital role in passing down the teachings of hula during the Hawaiian Renaissance of the 1970s.

(A)	
(B)	
(C)	
(D)	

7. The importance of neurons in (A) cognition is well documented; (B) however, neurons are interspersed with glial cells, whose role in the cognition (C) process is not well understood (D) by researchers.

(A)	
(B)	
(C)	
(D)	

8. Developing tools for precise (A) control of biological activities is one of the main goals of synthetic biology. To create such instruments, researchers (B) borrow principles from numerous fields, enabling (C) them to discover potentially (D) transformative applications.

(A)	
(B)	
(C)	
(D)	

# 3

## Sentences and Fragments

---

Before you read any further, try the exercise below. When you look at its title, you might roll your eyes and think, "Well duh, of course I know what a sentence is," but sometimes it isn't nearly as obvious as you might assume. **The ability to distinguish between sentences and fragments is the basis for correctly using the punctuation discussed in the following chapters.** If you have trouble determining when a statement is and is not a sentence, you will find it extremely difficult to know when to use periods, commas, semicolons, and colons.

### Is It a Sentence?

For each statement below, circle "Sentence" if it can stand alone as an independent sentence and "Fragment" if it cannot. Once you have read the statement carefully, spend no more than a couple of seconds selecting your answer. Try to complete the full exercise in under two minutes. (Answers p. 201)

1. Louis Armstrong was one of the greatest jazz musicians of the twentieth century.

Sentence                      Fragment

2. He was one of the greatest jazz musicians of the twentieth century.

Sentence                      Fragment

3. Louis Armstrong, who was one of the greatest jazz musicians of the twentieth century.

Sentence                      Fragment

4. Who was one of the greatest jazz musicians of the twentieth century.

Sentence                      Fragment

5. Louis Armstrong, who was one of the greatest jazz musicians of the twentieth century, was a vocalist as well as a trumpet player.

Sentence                      Fragment

6. Today, he is considered one of the greatest jazz musicians of the twentieth century.

Sentence                      Fragment

7. He is, however, considered one of the greatest jazz musicians of the twentieth century.

Sentence                      Fragment

8. He is now considered one of the greatest jazz musicians of the twentieth century.

Sentence                      Fragment

9. Because of his virtuosic trumpet skills, Louis Armstrong is considered one of the greatest jazz musicians of the twentieth century.

Sentence                      Fragment

10. Although he was one of the most virtuosic trumpet players of his generation.

Sentence                      Fragment

11. Many people considering Louis Armstrong the greatest jazz musician of all time.

Sentence                      Fragment

12. Many of them consider him the greatest jazz musician of all time.

Sentence                      Fragment

13. Many consider him the greatest jazz musician of all time.

Sentence                      Fragment

14. Many of whom consider him the greatest jazz musician of all time.

Sentence                      Fragment

15. Having shown an unusual gift for music early in his childhood, Louis Armstrong, who was born in New Orleans on August 4, 1901.

Sentence                      Fragment

16. Having shown an unusual gift for music early in his childhood, Louis Armstrong, who was born in New Orleans on August 4, 1901, went on to become one of the greatest jazz musicians of the twentieth century.

Sentence                      Fragment

17. Moreover, Armstrong, who spent much of his early life in poverty, went on to become one of the greatest jazz musicians of the twentieth century.

Sentence                      Fragment

18. Nicknamed "Satchmo," Louis Armstrong, who was born in New Orleans on August 4, 1901, grew up to become one of the greatest jazz musicians of the twentieth century and, perhaps, one of the greatest musicians of all time.

Sentence                      Fragment

To reiterate: Although SAT questions—in contrast to the sentences above—always appear in short passages, the ability to quickly identify a statement as either a sentence or a non-sentence is crucial. Without that knowledge you won’t know what sort of punctuation to use when separating it from other statements. In fact, dealing with sentences like the ones on the previous page in context can often make things *harder*, not easier, because there is all sorts of other information present to distract you.

For example, let’s say you weren’t sure about #13 (*Many consider him the greatest jazz musician of all time*). If you saw the following question, you might get stuck.

In the decades after the legendary trumpeter Louis Armstrong retired from performing, his fame continued to grow. Jazz fans and scholars now unanimously celebrate him as one of the greatest jazz musicians of the twentieth \_\_\_\_\_ him to be among the greatest jazz musicians of all time.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) century, many consider

(B) century many consider

(C) century. Many consider

(D) century; many considering

Unfortunately, there’s no way to answer this question for sure without knowing whether you’re dealing with one sentence or two. You might eliminate B) and D) because they sound awkward, but then you’re stuck between (A) and (C). If you think the second clause is a sentence, you’ll want to put in a period and choose (C). But if it isn’t a sentence, then the comma must be all right, and the answer must be (A).

You stare at the question for a while, thinking it over. *Many consider him to be among the greatest jazz musicians of all time*... That sounds kind of weird. Besides, what sort of sentence would just say *many*, without saying *many of what?* You can say *many people*, that’s fine, but not just *many*. It just sounds wrong. You don’t even know who the sentence is talking about. You can’t start a sentence like that. Unless it’s some kind of trick... But (C) is just too weird. No way can that be the answer.

So you pick (A).

But actually, the answer is (C).

You’ve just fallen into a classic trap: you thought that because *Many consider him the greatest jazz musician of all time* didn’t make sense out of context, it couldn’t be a sentence. But guess what: **whether a statement is or is not a sentence has absolutely nothing to do with its meaning.**

Beginning on the next page, we’re going to take a very simple sentence and look at the various elements that can get added onto it without changing the fact that it’s a sentence. We’re also going to look at some common types of fragments and how they get formed.

## **Building a Sentence**

Every sentence must contain two things:

- 1) A **subject**
- 2) A **conjugated verb** that corresponds to the subject.

A sentence can contain only one word (*Go!* is a sentence because the subject, *you*, is implied) or consist of many complex clauses, but provided it contains a subject and a verb, it can be considered grammatically complete *regardless of whether it makes sense outside of any context*.

### **A. Simple Sentence**

Sentence: The tomato grows.

This is known as a simple sentence because it contains only a subject (*the tomato*) and a verb (*grows*), which tells us what the subject does. Because it can stand on its own as a sentence, it can also be called an **independent clause**.

### **B. Prepositional Phrase(s)**

If we want to make our sentence a little longer, we can add a **prepositional phrase**. A prepositional phrase is a phrase that begins with a preposition, a **time** or **location** word that comes **before a noun**. Common prepositions include *in*, *to*, *with*, *from*, *for*, *at*, *by*, and *on*. (For an extended list, see p. 41.)

Sentence: The tomato grows around the world.

Sentences can contain many prepositional phrases, sometimes one after the other.

Sentence: The tomato grows in many shapes and varieties in greenhouses around the world.

A prepositional phrase can also be placed between the subject and the verb. When that is the case, the prepositional phrase starts at the preposition and ends right before the verb.

Sentence: The tomatoes in the greenhouse grow in many varieties and colors.

A prepositional phrase can also be placed at the **beginning** of a sentence.

Sentence: In the greenhouse, the tomatoes grow in many varieties and colors.

A prepositional phrase **cannot**, however, stand alone as a complete sentence.

Fragment: In the greenhouse

Fragment: In many shapes and varieties in greenhouses around the world

## C. Pronoun as Subject

Nouns can also be replaced by **pronouns**: words such as *it*, *she*, and *they*. For example, in the sentence *The tomato grows*, we can replace the subject, *tomato*, with the singular pronoun *it*:

Sentence: It grows.

This is actually still a sentence because it has a subject (*it*) and a verb that corresponds to the subject (*grows*). The only difference between this version and the version with the noun is that here we don't know what the subject, *it*, refers to.

**This is where a lot of students run into trouble. They assume that if a statement doesn't make sense out of context, then it can't be a sentence. But again, those two things are not necessarily related.**

As is true for the original version, we can rewrite the longer versions of our sentence using pronouns.

Sentence: It grows around the world.

Sentence: It grows in many shapes and varieties in greenhouses around the world.

If we wanted to make the subject plural, we could replace it with the plural pronoun *they*.

Sentence: Tomatoes grow.

Sentence: They grow.

Sentence: They grow in many shapes and varieties in greenhouses around the world.

*It* and *they* are the most common **subject pronouns** (pronouns that can replace nouns as the subject of a sentence), but many other pronouns can also be used as subjects. Some of them can refer only to people; some can refer only to things; and some can refer to both people and things.

People	Things	People or Things
I	It	None
You	This	One
S/he	That	Each
We		Every
No one	Nothing	Any
	Anything	Few
Anyone	Everything	Both
Anybody	Something	Some
		Several
Someone		Many
Somebody		More
		Most
Everyone		Other(s)
Everybody		All
		They

## “Group” Pronouns

One very common point of confusion often involves “group” pronouns such as *some, several, few, many, and others*. These pronouns can be used to begin clauses in two different ways, one of which creates an independent clause and the other of which creates a dependent clause.

Let's start with these two sentences:

Sentence: Many tomatoes are grown in greenhouses around the world.

Sentence: Most people believe that the tomato is a vegetable.

People generally don't have too much trouble recognizing that these are sentences. They have pretty clear subjects (*many tomatoes, most people*) and verbs (*are, believe*), and they make sense by themselves. The problem arises when we take away the nouns, *tomatoes* and *people*, and start to deal with the pronouns on their own.

### Pronoun (of them) = sentence

In this usage, the pronoun simply acts as a subject and is used to replace a noun. It is often followed by the phrase *of them*, but it can be used by itself as well.

Sentence: Many (of them) are grown in greenhouses around the world.

Sentence: Most (of them) believe that the tomato is a vegetable.

Taken out of any context, the above examples don't make much sense, nor do they provide any real information. Regardless of how odd you find these examples, however, **they are still sentences** because each one contains a subject (*many, most*) and a verb (*are, believe*) that corresponds to it.

### Pronoun + of which / whom = fragment

When an indefinite pronoun is followed by *of which* or *of whom*, it creates a **dependent clause**, which by definition cannot stand alone as a full sentence.

Fragment: Many of which are grown in greenhouses around the world

Fragment: Most of whom believe that the tomato is a vegetable

Which means:

Incorrect: The tomato is used by cooks around the world, most of them believe that it is a vegetable rather than a fruit.

Correct: The tomato is used by cooks around the world. Most of them believe that it is a vegetable rather than a fruit.

Correct: The tomato is used by cooks around the world, most of whom believe that it is a vegetable rather than a fruit.

## D. Adverbs

Adverbs **modify verbs** and **clauses**. Most adverbs are created by adding *-ly* onto adjectives.

Slow	→	Slowly
Current	→	Currently
Important	→	Importantly

A second type of adverb, however, does not end in *-ly*.

Some of these adverbs are **adverbs of time**, which tell you **when** or **how often** something occurs. Others are **transitions** that indicate relationships between ideas.

Again	Meanwhile	Next	Often	Then
Consequently	Moreover	Never	Still	Today
Furthermore	Nevertheless	Now	Sometimes	Yesterday

**Important:** Adverbs have **no grammatical effect whatsoever** on a sentence. A sentence to which an adverb is added will continue to be a sentence, regardless of where the adverb is placed.

Sentence: Now, the tomato grows in many shapes and varieties in greenhouses around the world.

Sentence: The tomato currently grows in many shapes and varieties in greenhouses around the world.

Sentence: The tomato grows in many shapes and varieties in greenhouses around the world today.

## E. Non-Essential Information

Information can be inserted between the subject and the verb in the form of a **non-essential** word or phrase/clause.

Sentence: The tomato, which is one of the most popular salad ingredients, grows in many shapes and varieties in greenhouses around the world.

Non-essential clauses describe nouns (usually the subject). They are **surrounded by commas** (one before, one after); often begin with “**w-words**” such as *who* and *which*; and are usually **followed by a verb**.

Sentence: The tomato, however, grows in many varieties in greenhouses around the world.

These clauses or words are called “non-essential” because when they are removed, the sentence still makes grammatical sense.

Fragment: The tomato, which is one of the most popular salad ingredients, and it grows in many shapes and varieties in greenhouses around the world.

Sentence: The tomato, which is one of the most popular salad ingredients, grows in many shapes and varieties in greenhouses around the world.

## Appositives

Although non-essential clauses frequently begin with “w-words” (also known as **relative pronouns**), they are not required to do so. You could also see a non-essential clause that looks like this:

The tomato, **one of the most popular salad ingredients**, grows in many shapes and varieties in greenhouses around the world.

A non-essential clause that begins with a noun is known as an **appositive**. Appositives can also appear as descriptions at the beginnings or ends of sentences, as in the examples below.

Beginning: **A popular salad ingredient**, the tomato grows in many shapes and varieties in greenhouses around the world.

End: In greenhouses around the world grow many shapes and varieties of the tomato, **a popular salad ingredient**.

A non-essential clause cannot stand alone as a complete sentence. As a **shortcut**, know that a statement (not a question) beginning with a “w-word” such as *which*, *who(se)*, or *where* is not a complete sentence.\*

Fragment: Which is one of the most popular salad ingredients

Fragment: Who think that the tomato is a vegetable

Sentence: One of the most popular salad ingredients, the tomato grows in many shapes and varieties in greenhouses around the world.

In addition, a sentence **cannot stop** right after a non-essential clause. If it does, it is no longer a complete sentence but rather a fragment, and it should not have a period or semicolon placed after it.

Fragment: The tomato, which is one of the most popular salad ingredients

Fragment: The tomato, one of the most popular salad ingredients

Although the first version does contain the verb *is*, that verb does not correspond to the subject, *the tomato*. Instead, it corresponds to the pronoun *which* at the beginning of the new clause. In order to create a sentence, we can remove *which*, restoring the verb to its proper subject, *the tomato*.

Sentence: **The tomato** is one of the most popular salad ingredients.

Alternately, we can place a main verb after the non-essential clause and complete the sentence with additional information.

Sentence: **The tomato**, (which is) one of the most popular salad ingredients, **grows** in many shapes and varieties in greenhouses around the world.

\*The only exception to this rule involves cases in which a “w-word” functions as a subject, e.g., *Where the meeting would be located was a subject of intense debate*. Although this usage is rare, you should be aware that it is acceptable.

## F. Participles and Gerunds

Every verb has two **participles**:

### 1) Present participle

The present participle is formed by adding *-ing* to the verb

Talk	→	talking
Paint	→	painting
Throw	→	throwing

### 2) Past participle

The past participle is usually formed by adding *-ed* or *-n* to the verb

Talk	→	talked
Paint	→	painted
Throw	→	thrown

A **participial phrase** begins with a **participle** and can be in either the **present** or the **past**.

Let's get back to our sentence. Now we're going to add a participial phrase at the beginning, using the present participle *originating*.

Sentence: **Originating in South America**, the tomato, one of the most popular salad ingredients, grows in many shapes and varieties in greenhouses around the world.

To form the past tense, we can use the present participle *having* + past participle of the main verb (*originated*).

Sentence: **Having originated in South America**, the tomato, one of the most popular salad ingredients, grows in many shapes and varieties in greenhouses around the world.

We can also use the past participle of the verb *grow*.

Sentence: **Grown originally in South America**, the tomato, one of the most popular salad ingredients, is now produced in many shapes and varieties in greenhouses around the world.

Participial phrases can appear in the beginning (as in the above examples), middle, or end of a sentence.

Middle: The tomato, **cultivated initially in South America during the first millennium B.C.**, is now grown in many shapes and varieties in greenhouses around the world.

End: The tomato is now grown in greenhouses around the world, **having first been cultivated in South America in the first millennium B.C.**

Participial phrases **cannot** stand alone as sentences, however.

Fragment: Originating in South America.

Fragment: Having first been cultivated in South America in the first millennium B.C.

Fragment: Grown originally in South America.

Fragment: Grown originally in South America, the tomato, one of the most popular salad ingredients.

**Gerunds** are identical in appearance to present participles: they are created by adding *-ing* to verbs. Whereas participles act as modifiers, gerunds act as nouns. They typically follow pronouns, e.g., *I was irritated by his whistling*, or prepositions, e.g., *The gannet is a bird that catches fish by diving from heights of up to 100 feet*.

At this point, however, the **most important** thing to understand is a word that ends in *-ing* is **not a verb**. A clause that contains a subject and an *-ing* word rather than a conjugated verb is a **fragment**.

Fragment: Tomatoes **growing** in many shapes and varieties in greenhouses around the world

In order to turn the fragment into a sentence, we must eliminate the gerund by **conjugating** the verb.

Sentence: Tomatoes **grow** in many shapes and varieties in greenhouses around the world.

**Important:** Answer choices that contain BEING (gerund of *to be*), are usually wrong. In addition to creating fragments, the use of *being* often leads to wordy and awkward constructions.

*Being* is also **irregular**—the conjugated forms of the verb look completely different from the gerund form. In order to easily correct errors with *being*, you should make sure to know all of the conjugated (third person) forms of the verb *to be*.

	Present	Past
Singular	is	was
Plural	are	were

## Present

Fragment: Today, the tomato **being** grown in greenhouses around the world

Sentence: Today, the tomato **is** grown in greenhouses around the world.

## Past

Fragment: Originally, tomatoes **being** cultivated only in South America

Sentence: Originally, tomatoes **were** cultivated only in South America.

## G. Conjunctions

There are two main types of conjunctions:

- 1) **Coordinating conjunctions** join two independent clauses.
- 2) **Subordinating conjunctions** join an independent clause and a dependent clause.

### Coordinating Conjunctions

There are seven coordinating conjunctions, collectively known by the acronym **FANBOYS**.

**For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So**

The most common FANBOYS conjunctions are *and*, *but*, and *so*, which should be your primary focus. We'll talk a lot more about FANBOYS in the next chapter, but for now you should know that a single clause beginning with one of these conjunctions is not a complete sentence.

Fragment: **And** today, tomatoes are cultivated in greenhouses around the world

Sentence: **Today**, tomatoes are cultivated in greenhouses around the world.

### Subordinating Conjunctions

Somewhere around third grade, you may have learned that you should never start a sentence with *because*. While this rule is taught with the best of intentions, it's unfortunately only half right. In reality, it's perfectly acceptable to begin a sentence with *because*—sometimes.

Here's the rule: *Because* is a type of conjunction known as a **subordinating conjunction**. A clause that begins with a subordinating conjunction **cannot stand on its own as a sentence** and is therefore **dependent**.

Fragment: **Because** tomatoes are colorful and full of flavor

If, however, an independent clause is placed after the dependent clause, the whole sentence can correctly begin with a subordinating conjunction.

Sentence: **Because** tomatoes are colorful and full of flavor, they are one of the most popular salad ingredients.

Other common subordinating conjunctions include the following:

After	Before	Since	When
Although	Despite	Though	Whenever
As	Even though	Unless	Whereas
Because	If	Until	While

In the examples below, the incorrect version of each sentence contains only a dependent clause, while the correct version that follows contains a dependent clause followed by an independent clause.

Fragment: **Although** tomatoes have been cultivated since the first millennium B.C.

Sentence: **Although** tomatoes have been cultivated since the first millennium B.C., they did not become popular in the United States until the mid-nineteenth century.

Fragment: **When** tomatoes were first brought to Europe from South America

Sentence: **When** tomatoes were first brought to Europe from South America, many people believed that the small yellow fruits were poisonous.

Note that when a clause begun by a subordinating conjunction contains a subject (underlined below), that clause must contain a conjugated verb rather than an *-ing* word.

Fragment: Most tomatoes grown today have smooth surfaces, although some older plants and most modern beefsteaks showing pronounced ribbing

Sentence: Most tomatoes grown today have smooth surfaces, although some older plants and most modern beefsteaks show pronounced ribbing.

When no subject is present, however, an *-ing* word can acceptably appear in the same phrase as some subordinating conjunctions, primarily ones indicating time (e.g., *while*, *when*, *before*, *after*, *since*).

Sentence: Since becoming a central ingredient in Italian cooking during the nineteenth century, the tomato has grown in popularity worldwide.

## Exercise: Sentences and Fragments (answers p. 202)

Label each of the following phrases as either a sentence or a fragment. Rewrite all fragments as sentences by changing, adding, or eliminating one word only.

1.	Since 2009, physicists having been intrigued by possible evidence of dark matter in the center of the Milky Way galaxy.
2.	Only around 25 percent of the variation in the human life span is influenced by genes, with the rest depending on other factors, including accidents, injuries, and exposure to substances that accelerate aging.
3.	When they catch sight of their prey, and peregrine falcons drop into a steep, swift dive at more than 200 miles an hour.
4.	The observational branch of astronomy relies on the collection of data from celestial bodies, whereas the theoretical branch using computers to analyze their movements.
5.	Each spring, students who gather from around the world for the FIRST Robotics Competition, an experience that can change lives.
6.	Many forms of meditation, a practice that has been examined by researchers over the last several decades, and have been deemed ineffective.
7.	They enjoy national popularity, with the average person in the United States consuming over 25 pounds of them each year.
8.	Although findings from one recent study about meteorites suggest that water has been present on Earth since the planet was formed.
9.	Usually structured differently from autobiographies, but memoirs follow the development of an author's personality rather than the writing of his or her works.

10.	Chicago's metropolitan area, sometimes called Chicagoland, which is home to 9.5 million people and is the third largest in the United States.
11.	She began adding elements of gospel music into her songs in early 1961, releasing her first gospel-influenced album later that year.
12.	According to author Nadine Gordimer, the process of writing fiction is largely unconscious, emerging from what people learn and how they live.
13.	In the nineteenth century, the Great Lakes being a major highway for transportation, migration, and trade, as well as home to a large number of aquatic species.
14.	Amelia Griffiths—one of the most prominent amateur scientists of the early nineteenth century—was a beachcomber who compiled many important collections of algae specimens.
15.	Most of which have now been replaced by more modern forms of transportation, including cars, subways, and trams.

# 4

## Joining and Separating Sentences

---

In Chapter 1, we looked at transitions in terms of meaning. In this chapter, we're going to look at them in terms of grammar. We're also going to consider the various ways in which two sentences can be punctuated.

There are three main ways to separate two complete sentences (independent clauses) from one another:

- 1) Period or Semicolon
- 2) Comma + Coordinating (FANBOYS) Conjunction
- 3) Colon or Dash

Note that two sentences **cannot** be separated by a comma alone.

We're going to look at these options in detail in this chapter, but first we're going to look at how "separating sentences" questions (i.e., sentence-boundary questions) work on the SAT.

**Very important: No matter where in a passage the blank occurs, make sure to back up to the beginning of the sentence and read from the beginning all the way through to the period.** Otherwise, you might not notice that there are two sentences rather than one.

As a general rule, it is a good idea to check answer choices that contain one of the above types of punctuation first. This is particularly true if a **period** or **colon** appears. When you are given the option of creating two sentences, there is a good chance the question is testing your ability to do just that.

**When answering these questions, you must be particularly careful with phrases that make sense at the end of one sentence but that must belong to the following sentence for grammatical reasons.**

There are several common types of phrases/clauses that are especially likely to be involved in this construction.

- Prepositional phrase
- *-ing* (participial) phrase
- Subordinating conjunction (e.g., *because*, *when*)

Starting on the next page, we're going to look at some examples.

### Example #1: Prepositional Phrase

To reiterate, a prepositional phrase is a phrase that begins with a preposition, e.g., *from, of, to, in, for, with, to, between, about*.

This type of phrase can easily make sense at either the end of one sentence or the beginning of the next, making it crucial for you to get the full context before choosing an answer.

A self-proclaimed “collector of souls,” the American painter Alice Neel (1900–1984) is acclaimed for her powerful, psychologically revealing \_\_\_\_\_ she depicted a wide range of subjects, from her family and friends to prominent critics, artists, and strangers she met on the street. As a result, she became known for challenging the conventions of her genre.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- (A) portraiture over the course of her career
- (B) portraiture. Over the course of her career,
- (C) portraiture, over the course of her career,
- (D) portraiture over the course of her career,

Because the underlined phrase initially seems to make sense where it is, many test-takers will immediately pick (A) and move on to the next question without a second thought. What they will not do is read all the way to the period after the word *street*. Take a moment, and just read the entire sentence in isolation:

**A self-proclaimed “collector of souls,” the American painter Alice Neel (1900–1984) is acclaimed for her powerful, psychologically revealing portraiture over the course of her career she depicted a wide range of subjects, from her family and friends to prominent critics, artists, and strangers she met on the street.**

Can you spot the problem now? If the phrase *over the course of her career* is left without any punctuation, the sentence is far too long. In fact, there are two sentences, not one:

As discussed, two complete sentences must be divided by a period or a semicolon, not a comma. The only answer that creates two sentences is (B).

When the underlined phrase is attached to the beginning of the second sentence rather than the end of the first, the sentences make perfect sense.

Sentence #1: A self-proclaimed “collector of souls,” the American painter Alice Neel (1900–1984) is acclaimed for her powerful, psychologically revealing portraiture.

Sentence #2: Over the course of her career, she depicted a wide range of subjects, from her family and friends to prominent critics, artists, and strangers she met on the street.

## Example #2: -ING Word

You should also be on the lookout for “separating sentences” questions that require you to identify the correct punctuation around an *-ing* phrase.

For example, consider the following question. We’re going to keep working with the same passage so that you can see how certain structures lend themselves to the same error tested in slightly different ways.

A self-proclaimed “collector of souls,” the American painter Alice Neel (1900–1984) is acclaimed for her powerful, psychologically revealing \_\_\_\_ a wide range of subjects, from her family and friends to prominent critics, artists, and strangers she met on the street, she became known for challenging the conventions of her genre.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) portraiture depicting

(B) portraiture, depicting

(C) portraiture. Depicting

(D) portraiture depicting,

If you read only the section of the passage immediately surrounding the blank, the *-ing* word *depicting* makes sense at the end of the first sentence: That would seem to make (A) correct.

If you read the no-punctuation option in context of the full passage, however, you again get a massive run-on sentence that needs to be divided in two.

**A self-proclaimed “collector of souls,” the American painter Alice Neel (1900–1984) is acclaimed for her powerful, psychologically revealing portraiture depicting a wide range of subjects, from her family and friends to prominent critics, artists, and strangers she met on the street, she became known for challenging the conventions of her genre.**

A comma cannot replace a period, so both (B) and (D) are out. (C), however, correctly uses a period to divide the sentences.

Sentence #1: A self-proclaimed “collector of souls,” the American painter Alice Neel (1900–1984) is acclaimed for her powerful, psychologically revealing portraiture.

Sentence #2: **Depicting a wide range of subjects, from her family and friends to prominent critics, artists, and strangers she met on the street, she became known for challenging the conventions of her genre.**

### Example #3: Subordinating Conjunction

Clauses beginning with subordinating conjunctions, e.g., *because* or *although*, are also a potential target for questions asking you to divide a lengthy run-on.

For example, consider this version of the passage.

A self-proclaimed “collector of souls,” the American painter Alice Neel (1900–1984) is acclaimed for the scope of her \_\_\_\_ a wide range of subjects, from her family and friends to prominent critics, artists, and strangers she met on the street, she also became known for challenging the conventions of her genre.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) portraiture because she depicted

(B) portraiture, depicting

(C) portraiture. Because she depicted

(D) portraiture, her depiction of

If you read only the section of the passage immediately surrounding the blank, the subordinating conjunction *because* makes sense at the end of the first sentence: *A self-proclaimed “collector of souls,” the American painter Alice Neel (1900–1984) is acclaimed for her powerful, psychologically revealing portraiture because she depicted a wide range of subjects*). That would seem to make (A) correct.

If you read the no-punctuation option in context of the full passage, however, you get a massive run-on sentence that yet again needs to be divided in two.

**A self-proclaimed “collector of souls,” the American painter Alice Neel (1900–1984) is acclaimed for the scope of her work because she depicted a wide range of subjects, from her family and friends to prominent critics, artists, and strangers she met on the street, she also became known for challenging the conventions of her genre.**

A comma cannot replace a period, so both (B) and (D) are out. (C) correctly uses a period to divide the sentences.

Sentence #1: A self-proclaimed “collector of souls,” the American painter Alice Neel (1900–1984) is acclaimed for the scope of her portraiture.

Sentence #2: **Because she depicted a wide range of subjects, from her family and friends to prominent critics, artists, and strangers she met on the street, she also became known for challenging the conventions of her genre.**

So far, we’ve just looked at sentence-division questions that use periods—but there are other types of punctuation that can also be used to divide sentences. In the next section, we’re going to look at the various options in detail.

## A. Period = Semicolon

For the purposes of the SAT, **periods and semicolons are grammatically identical**: both are used to separate two complete sentences. (The first letter after a period is capitalized, while the first letter after a semicolon is lower case, but these constructions will always be given correctly in the answer choices.)

- Correct: Tomatoes are used in many different types of **cooking**. **Farmers** around the world grow them in both fields and greenhouses.
- Correct: Tomatoes are used in many different types of **cooking; farmers** around the world grow them in both fields and greenhouses.

## "Strong" Transitions

Certain transitions—formally known as conjunctive adverbs—are considered “strong” enough to begin a sentence. Common examples include *however*, *therefore*, *thus*, *consequently*, *moreover*, and *nevertheless*. **When used to begin a clause, these transitions must follow a period or semicolon, never a comma.**

- Incorrect: The tomato is often treated as a vegetable, **however**, it is actually a fruit.
- Correct: The tomato is often treated as a vegetable. **However**, it is actually a fruit.
- Correct: The tomato is often treated as a vegetable; **however**, it is actually a fruit.

## B. Comma + Coordinating (FANBOYS) Conjunction

As discussed in the previous chapter, complete sentences can also be joined by *comma + coordinating conjunction*. These conjunctions are also known by the acronym **FANBOYS**:

**For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So.**

The three most common FANBOYS conjunctions are *and*, *but*, and *so*. They should be your primary concern, but you should be aware of the others as well.

When a FANBOYS conjunction is used without a comma to join two sentences, the result is a **run-on sentence**. Note that a sentence does not have to be long to be a run-on.

- Run-on: Tomatoes are used in many different types of **cooking and they** are grown around the world in both fields and greenhouses.
- Correct: Tomatoes are used in many different types of **cooking, and they** are grown around the world in both fields and greenhouses.

Likewise, a FANBOYS conjunction should not be used after a period or a semicolon.\* Any answer choice that contains one of these constructions can be automatically eliminated.

- Incorrect: Tomatoes are used in many different types of **cooking. And they** are grown around the world in both fields and greenhouses.
- Incorrect: Tomatoes are used in many different types of **cooking; and they** are grown around the world in both fields and greenhouses

\*Although this construction is technically wrong, in everyday writing it is generally accepted when used for occasional stylistic effect.

When the subject is the same in both clauses and is **not** repeated in the second clause, do **not** use a comma.

Incorrect: Tomatoes are used in many different types of **cooking, and are** grown around the world in both fields and greenhouses.

Correct: Tomatoes are used in many different types of **cooking and are** grown around the world in both fields and greenhouses.

You can also think of the above rule this way: because *comma + and* = period, simply replace *comma + and* with a period, and see if you have two complete sentences:

Incorrect: Tomatoes are used in many different types of **cooking. Are** grown around the world in both fields and greenhouses.

Because the statement after the period is not a sentence, no comma should be used before *and*.

### Very Important: Semicolon = Period = Comma + FANBOYS

Because a period, a semicolon, and *comma + FANBOYS conjunction* are grammatically identical, you will not be asked to choose among them. If more than one of these constructions appear as choices, you can eliminate all of them because no question can have more than one right answer. For example:

Astronomers have long suspected that the tilt of Saturn's rings comes from gravitational interactions between Saturn and Neptune. Recent modeling suggests that although the orbits of Saturn and Neptune were once \_\_\_\_\_ has escaped Neptune's pull.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) in sync, Saturn

(B) in sync. Saturn

(C) in sync; Saturn

(D) in sync, but

In this case, (A) is the only possible option because the period in (B), semicolon in (C), and comma + *but* in (D) are all grammatically equivalent. In this case, (A) is correct because it places a comma between a dependent clause (*Recent modeling suggests that although the orbits of Saturn and Neptune were once in sync*) and an independent clause (*Saturn has escaped Neptune's pull*). As a rule, you should always double-check the remaining option to ensure it fits, but in general you can assume it will be correct.

## C. Colon = Dash

It is also possible to separate two independent clauses with a colon or dash, **but only when the second clause explains or describes a result of the first**. Based on the preliminary material released by the College Board, the colon is particularly likely to appear in correct answers. For example:

Astronomers have long suspected that the tilt of Saturn's rings comes from gravitational interactions between Saturn and \_\_\_\_ gyrates, like a spinning top, at nearly the same rate as the orbit of Neptune.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) Neptune, Saturn's tilt

(B) Neptune: Saturn's tilt

(C) Neptune, whereas Saturn's tilt

(D) Neptune that Saturn's tilt

The second sentence provides an explanation for the first: it describes why scientists have long suspected that the tilt of Saturn's rings is affected by Neptune (it gyrates at the same rate as Neptune's orbit). As a result, a colon can acceptably be placed between the two sentences, making (B) the answer.

**Note:** Although it is unlikely, it is not impossible that you will be asked to choose between a colon and a semicolon or period. To reiterate, a colon can only separate two sentences when the second defines or explains the first. If that is not the case, a semicolon or period must be used instead.

The production of ceramics in China, which began during the Neolithic period, has continued until the present \_\_\_\_ range from bricks and tiles, to hand-built pots and jars fired in kilns, to the refined porcelain wares made originally for the imperial court and later for export.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) day, although construction materials

(B) day, construction materials

(C) day: construction materials

(D) day; construction materials

In this case, the second sentence builds on the first sentence by giving additional information about the topic; however, it does not actually provide an explanation. As a result, a colon cannot be used to separate the two statements. (D) rather than (C) must be the answer.

## Comma Splices and How to Avoid Them

When a comma alone is used to separate two independent clauses, the result is known as a **comma splice**. **Comma splices are always incorrect.**

In most cases, comma splices are caused by two specific constructions:

- 1) Pronoun as subject
- 2) Adverb at the start of a clause

### Pronoun as Subject

As discussed in the previous chapter, a sentence whose subject is a noun (e.g., *the tomato grows*) and a sentence whose subject is a pronoun (e.g., *It grows*) are grammatically identical, even if the second version does not make sense out of context.

Because there is so much confusion around this concept, it has traditionally been one of the most commonly tested errors on the SAT. While it is unclear how heavily the digital SAT will focus on it, you should make sure that you are comfortable identifying errors involving this construction.

**Shortcut:** commas splices are often signaled by the construction *comma + pronoun* (e.g., *it, he, she, they, one*). Whenever you see this construction underlined, you should immediately be on your guard.

For example, consider the question below:

Euripides is identified with many theatrical innovations that have profoundly influenced modern \_\_\_\_ for the representation of heroes as ordinary people who find themselves in extraordinary circumstances.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- |     |                                     |
|-----|-------------------------------------|
| (A) | drama; and he is particularly known |
| (B) | drama, he is particularly known     |
| (C) | drama particularly being known      |
| (D) | drama. He is particularly known     |

The construction *comma + he* in (B) is a signal that a comma splice is most likely involved and that that answer can be eliminated right away. The simplest fix is to replace the comma with a period or semicolon, so you should start by looking for an answer that includes one of those constructions. (D), the correct answer, uses a period, so it is correct.

## Adverb at the Start of a Clause

As mentioned earlier, certain “strong” transitions (conjunctive adverbs) must be placed after a period or semicolon when used to begin a clause. This is also true of many “time” words, e.g., *today, currently, later*.

Logical Relationship	Time or Sequence
Besides	After
Consequently	Currently
Furthermore	Finally
However	First
In addition	Later
Meanwhile	Next
Moreover	Now
Nevertheless	Today
Otherwise	Subsequently
Still	
Therefore	Then
Thus	

A sentence that begins with an adverb is **grammatically identical** to one that does not.

Sentence: Almost twenty of Euripides' plays survive.

Sentence: **However**, almost twenty of Euripides' plays survive.

Sentence: **Today**, almost twenty of Euripides' plays survive.

Let's look at a test-style example.

Euripides, one of the three ancient Greek dramatists whose plays have survived, is identified with many theatrical innovations that have profoundly influenced modern \_\_\_\_ he is particularly known for the representation of heroes as ordinary people who find themselves in extraordinary circumstances.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) drama today

(B) drama, today

(C) drama; today,

(D) drama today,

The key to answering this question correctly is to recognize that *Today he is particularly known for the representation of heroes as ordinary people who find themselves in extraordinary circumstances* is a complete sentence. That means it must follow either a semicolon or a period, making (C) the only possible choice.

## To summarize:

In many cases, you will be given the option of using only a period, semicolon, colon, or dash to correctly join two complete sentences.

Period: George Westinghouse, who was one of Thomas Edison's main rivals, was something of a scientific **prodigy**. He created his first major invention, the rotary steam engine, before the age of twenty.

Semicolon: George Westinghouse, who was one of Thomas Edison's main rivals, was something of a scientific **prodigy**; he created his first major invention, the rotary steam engine, before the age of twenty.

Colon: George Westinghouse, who was one of Thomas Edison's main rivals, was something of a scientific **prodigy**: he created his first major invention, the rotary steam engine, before the age of twenty.

Dash: George Westinghouse, who was one of Thomas Edison's main rivals, was something of a scientific **prodigy**—he created his first major invention, the rotary steam engine, before the age of twenty.

In some cases, you may also have the option of **adding a transition**:

- Comma + FANBOYS
- Semicolon + Conjunctive Adverb

Correct: Frank Sinatra, one of the most famous singers of the twentieth century, never studied music **formally**, so he learned his songs by ear.

Correct: Frank Sinatra, one of the most famous singers of the twentieth century, never studied music **formally**; therefore, he learned his songs by ear.

## Exercise: Joining and Separating Sentences (answers p. 202)

In the following sentences, correct any error involving run-on sentences, comma splices, or FANBOYS conjunctions by adding or changing only one punctuation mark (adjusting the capitalization as necessary). Some of the sentences do not contain an error.

1.	Lake Superior is the largest freshwater lake in the world by surface area and the third largest by volume, it holds around 10% of the world's fresh surface water.
2.	Very early printed books left spaces for commentary, miniature illustrations and illuminated initials; all of which would have been added later by hand.
3.	CRISPR tools can be programmed to target and cut virtually any DNA sequence, however, they have been limited by the requirement that they first recognize a short sequence surrounding the targeted section.
4.	Ethnomusicologist Alan Lomax believed that remote places contained extraordinary pieces of culture; he traveled the globe in search of songs and stories.
5.	Introduced in 1678, the term “conscious” acquired at least five definitions in fifty years; and its ambiguity has not faded in more recent times.
6.	Historically, the silk produced by silkworms has been used in fashion as a material for luxury robes, today, silk-based materials are more likely to be found in a doctor’s office or operating room.
7.	The Qing Dynasty attained the height of its power under the Qianlong Emperor beginning in 1755, he led Ten Great Campaigns that extended Qing control into Inner Asia and personally supervised a number of Confucian cultural projects.
8.	Interacting with animals is known to help people cope with stress because the prefrontal cortex helps individuals regulate social and emotional interactions, neuroscientists believe that it might be particularly relevant to their research.

9.	Bats can perceive and stalk their prey in complete darkness: they use a system of ultrasonic sounds to produce echoes that identify its location.
10.	As an undergraduate, Theodore Roosevelt began a systematic study of the United States Navy's role in the War of 1812, assisted by two uncles, he studied original source materials and official records, ultimately publishing <i>The Naval War of 1812</i> in 1882.

Now try some test-style questions. (Additional questions are located at the end of the following chapter.)

11. A computer scientist who specializes in natural language processing, Yejin Choi has dedicated much of her recent research to commonsense knowledge and \_\_\_\_\_ on developing artificial intelligence systems that can reason with common sense.

(A) reasoning. She also works

(B) reasoning, also she works

(C) reasoning, she also works

(D) reasoning she also works

12. Interacting with animals, particularly dogs, is known to help people cope with \_\_\_\_\_. the prefrontal cortex helps individuals regulate and process social and emotional interactions, neuroscientists believe that it might be particularly relevant to their research.

(A) stress, because

(B) stress: because

(C) stress because

(D) stress because—

13. Contemporary theatrical performers in the United States draw influences from across the globe. For example, the choreographer and dancer Savion Glover aims to restore the African roots of tap dance by eliminating hand \_\_\_\_\_ he focuses on the feet as the primary source of movement instead.

(A) gestures throughout his works,

(B) gestures, throughout his works,

(C) gestures. Throughout his works,

(D) gestures throughout, his works

14. Food waste has been identified as the most prominent type of hospitality waste. Roughly 1.3 billion tons of food is lost or is thrown away annually—the equivalent of one third or even up to one half of all food intended for human \_\_\_\_ food waste is a major environmental, social and economic issue.

A consumption, therefore,

B consumption, therefore

C consumption therefore,

D consumption; therefore,

15. In surveys, a significant majority of people usually agree that cycling is a desirable means of transit, especially in densely populated areas. Practically speaking, however, there is often a large gap between desired and actual \_\_\_\_ for example, only 20% of short-distance trips in residential environments are made by bicycle.

A numbers in Germany

B numbers: in Germany

C numbers, in Germany,

D numbers in Germany,

# 5

## Joining Sentences and Fragments

In addition to knowing how to use various types of punctuation to join and separate sentences, you must be able to do the same for sentences (independent clauses) and fragments (dependent phrases or clauses). There are several options, all of which are fair game on the SAT.

- 1) Comma
- 2) Colon
- 3) Dash

Note that periods and semicolons cannot be used to separate a sentence from a fragment.

### Subordinating Conjunctions

To reiterate from Chapter 3, clauses that begin with subordinating conjunctions are always dependent.

After	Before	Since	When
Although	Despite	Though	Whenever
As	Even though	Unless	Whereas
Because	If	Until	While

When a dependent clause begun by one of the above conjunctions comes before an independent clause, a comma must be placed between the clauses.

Incorrect: Although Frank Sinatra never studied music formally and learned his songs by ear **he** became one of the most famous singers of the twentieth century.

Correct: Although Frank Sinatra never studied music formally and learned his songs by ear, **he** became one of the most famous singers of the twentieth century.

Incorrect: Because Frank Sinatra, one of the most famous singers of the twentieth century, never learned to read **music** **he** learned his songs by ear.

Correct: Because Frank Sinatra, one of the most famous singers of the twentieth century, never learned to read **music**, **he** learned his songs by ear.

When the independent clause comes first, the comma is **usually unnecessary**, except in the case of "strong" subordinating conjunctions such as *(al)though* and *even though*.

Incorrect: Frank Sinatra became one of the most famous singers of the twentieth **century** **although** he never learned to read music.

Correct: Frank Sinatra became one of the most famous singers of the twentieth **century**, **although** he never learned to read music.

Another option is to use an *-ing* word (participle) to join the clauses.

Incorrect: Frank Sinatra, one of the most famous singers of the twentieth century, never studied music **formally learning** his songs by ear.

Correct: Frank Sinatra, one of the most famous singers of the twentieth century, never studied music **formally, learning** his songs by ear.

Note that the construction *with ... -ing* can be used as an alternative to *and + verb*. A comma is always placed before the word *with*.

For example, the sentence below can be written two ways:

Correct: The Mid-Autumn Festival, a popular harvest festival, dates back 3,000 years to China's Shang Dynasty, **and** celebrations usually **take place** on the fifteenth day of the eighth month.

Correct: The Mid-Autumn Festival, a popular harvest festival, dates back 3,000 years to China's Shang Dynasty, **with** celebrations usually **taking place** on the fifteenth day of the eighth month.

Because these two constructions are equivalent, you will not be asked to choose between them. You should, however, be able to recognize that the second version is grammatically acceptable and have a general understanding of how it is used.

In addition, *which* can be used to join an independent and a dependent clause. The clause begun by *which* is always dependent and must follow a comma.

Correct: The Mid-Autumn Festival, a popular harvest festival, dates back to China's Shang Dynasty, **which** lasted from 1600 B.C. until 1064 B.C.

Incorrect: The Mid-Autumn Festival, a popular harvest festival, dates back to China's Shang Dynasty **which** lasted from 1600 B.C. until 1064 B.C.

## Double Conjunctions

As a rule, in any two consecutive clauses, only **one** subordinating or coordinating (FANBOYS) conjunction can be used—it is grammatically incorrect to use two. Otherwise, the sentence will lack a main clause.

Incorrect: **Although** the Antarctica interior is home to some of the most pristine landscapes on earth, **but** its climate is too harsh to sustain animal life.

Correct: **Although** the Antarctica interior is home to some of the most pristine landscapes on earth, **its** climate is too harsh to sustain animal life.

Correct: The Antarctica interior is home to some of the most pristine landscapes on earth, **but** its climate is too harsh to sustain animal life.

If you encounter a question testing this concept on the digital SAT, note that **both transitions are unlikely to appear in the answer choices**. Rather, you will most probably be responsible for **backing up to the beginning of the sentence** and noticing that it begins with a transition, making a second one incorrect.

For example, consider the following question.

Most of the marine life that inhabits the tropics is characterized by a lack of fat reserves; however, this is not true for all species. For example, although the pompano has a substantial layer of fat beneath its \_\_\_\_\_ it is typically found in the warm waters around Florida and the Gulf of Mexico.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) skin, but

(B) skin and

(C) skin that

(D) skin,

If you focus only on the blank and the area immediately surrounding it, you are likely to get tricked by the contrasting information before and after the blank and opt for (B).

If you back up to the beginning of the sentence, however, you can see that it begins with *Although*. As a result, the following clause cannot begin with a FANBOYS conjunction (*but* or *and*). The only way to create a grammatically acceptable statement is to place a comma alone after *skin*. That makes (D) correct.

On the next page, we're going to look at a more challenging version of the question.

Most of the marine life that inhabits the tropics is characterized by a lack of fat reserves; however, this is not true for all species. For example, although the pompano, a toothless, small-scaled fish prized for its taste, has a substantial layer of fat beneath its \_\_\_\_\_ it is typically found in the warm waters around Florida and the Gulf of Mexico.

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) skin, but

(B) skin, and

(C) skin that

(D) skin,

In this case, additional information in the form of a non-essential phrase (*a toothless, small scaled-fish prized for its taste*) has been inserted between the subject and the verb to distract from the error.

As we saw earlier, phrases and clauses set off by commas—one before, one after—can be crossed out without affecting the basic structure of the sentence. (We'll look at this in more detail in the following chapter). If we read the sentence without the non-essential information, we get... the previous question.

*Although the pompano...has a substantial layer of fat beneath its \_\_\_\_\_ it is typically found in the warm waters around Florida and the Gulf of Mexico.*

Because the first clause begins with *although*, the following clause cannot begin with *but* or *and*. Again, only a comma is needed, making the answer (D).

It is also possible that some questions will require you to jump ahead and notice that a transition is already present in the middle of a sentence. For example:

Most of the marine life that inhabits the tropics is characterized by a lack of fat reserves; however, this is not true for all species. For example, \_\_\_\_\_ has a substantial layer of fat beneath its, but it is typically found in the warm waters around Florida and the Gulf of Mexico.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) that the pompano

(B) because the pompano,

(C) although the pompano,

(D) the pompano

The second clause begins with the FANBOYS conjunction *but*. As a result, the first clause should not also begin with a transition. That eliminates (B) and (C). (A) creates a nonsense construction, leaving (D).

## Colon

As discussed in the previous chapter, a colon can be used like a period to separate two complete sentences. However, colons are not exactly like periods. **While the statement before a colon must be a complete, standalone sentence, the information after it can be either a sentence (explanation) or a fragment (list).**

**Shortcut:** any answer that places a colon before *such as* or *including* is almost certainly incorrect.

Incorrect: Photographer and filmmaker George Picker chronicled artists **such as**: folk singers, jazz musicians, and visual artists.

Incorrect: Photographer and filmmaker George Picker chronicled artists **including**: folk singers, jazz musicians, and visual artists.

Correct: Photographer and filmmaker George Picker chronicled a wide variety of **artists**: folk singers, jazz musicians, and visual artists were all among his subjects.

Because *Photographer and filmmaker George Picker chronicled artists such as*, and *Photographer and filmmaker George Picker chronicled artists including* do not make sense on their own as complete thoughts, a colon cannot be placed after them.

## Dash

A **single dash** can also be used in place of a colon, to set off a definition or explanation.

In such cases, a complete, standalone sentence must come before the dash. Either a sentence or a fragment can follow it, however.

Correct: Impressionist paintings have several major **characteristics – a focus** on outdoor scenes, an emphasis on the interplay of light and dark, and a sense of movement.

Correct: The bowhead whale is thought to be the longest-living mammal in the **world – that is**, it can survive for up to 200 years.

The dash vs. colon distinction is purely stylistic. As a result, you will not be asked to choose between an answer with a colon and one with a dash unless one of the options is clearly preferable for other reasons.

In addition, a single dash can be used for stylistic purposes: to deliberately interrupt a statement or to create a dramatic pause or sense of suspense. In this usage, either a sentence or a fragment (as in the examples below) can follow the dash.

Correct: Universities have historically offered a wide variety of continuing education **classes – but** the ways in which those classes are offered is rapidly changing.

Correct: Only a few minerals are found in most places, but large concentrations of the rocks collect in a few **locations – Russia’s Kola Peninsula**, for example.

This is not a construction you should worry about too much—you just need to know that it is acceptable so that you do not eliminate answers containing it simply because you find it odd.

## Exercise: Joining and Separating Sentences/Clauses (answers p. 203)

1. When light travels for billions of years, it stretches out into its full \_\_\_\_ light ranges from ultraviolet and visible into infrared radiation.

Ⓐ spectrum, as the universe expands,

Ⓑ spectrum. As the universe expands,

Ⓒ spectrum as the universe expands,

Ⓓ spectrum as the universe expands

2. The artist Lee Lozano was known for her experimental works, some of which were shocking to critics when they first appeared. In 1967, Lozano began her \_\_\_\_ of eleven massive paintings of undulating lines made with shimmery iron-oxide paint. Each piece measured 96 by 42 inches and was created in one sitting: *2 Wave* took eight hours, whereas *96 Wave* took three days.

Ⓐ *Wave Series*, consisting

Ⓑ *Wave Series*. Consisting

Ⓒ *Wave Series*; which consisted

Ⓓ *Wave Series*, it consisted

3. Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, the largest national park in the United States, represents everything compelling about Alaska. It is \_\_\_\_ than Belgium. It showcases towering mountains such as Mount St. Elias, which stands more 18,000 feet tall, as well as glaciers.

Ⓐ immense; larger, in fact,

Ⓑ immense, larger—in fact

Ⓒ immense—larger, in fact,

Ⓓ immense—larger, in fact—

4. The “molecular trees” that biologists use to map out similarities between species often contradict the classifications that group organisms by their appearance. Researchers compared both kinds of trees and mapped them based on animals’ \_\_\_\_ molecularly similar species were more likely to live near one another than those that looked similar.

Ⓐ locations, and found that

Ⓑ locations; finding that

Ⓒ locations, they found that

Ⓓ locations, finding that

5. African American life during the 1920s was documented in great detail by the writers and artists of the Harlem Renaissance. Far less is known about it during the \_\_\_\_\_ the market for their work disappeared almost overnight when the stock market crashed.

(A) Great Depression in the 1930s,

(B) Great Depression, in the 1930s,

(C) Great Depression: in the 1930s,

(D) Great Depression in, the 1930s

6. The exact origins of human language remain a major question for evolutionary biologists. Unique to human language \_\_\_\_\_ to flexibly recombine a limited sound set into words and sequences, generating an endless series of new sentences. In contrast, the production of these types of sequences in other animals appears limited, stunting their ability to create meaning.

(A) is: the capacity

(B) is the capacity:

(C) is the capacity—

(D) is the capacity

7. Most of Earth's volcanic activity is concentrated in a few highly active regions. For example, the geologic instability known as the Pacific Ring of Fire has produced numerous \_\_\_\_\_ approximately 10,000 earthquakes annually, the ring is dotted with three-quarters of all active volcanoes on Earth.

(A) faults causing

(B) faults, causing

(C) faults. Causing

(D) faults, and causes

8. A novel method of air conditioning—which has been adopted by some of the world's most powerful corporations, uses the simple power of ice. The system works \_\_\_\_\_ when lower power usage means that energy is cheaper and lower temperatures require less power to freeze water.

(A) by making ice at night,

(B) by: making ice at night

(C) by, making ice at night:

(D) by—making ice at night

9. Before the invention of modern refrigeration, hunger was a part of daily life at sea. The absence of cool, dry storage spaces put normal pantry staples such as flour and dried beans at a high risk of mold. The climate also presented preservation \_\_\_\_\_ fresh fruits and meats was next to impossible in warmer waters.

(A) problems keeping

(B) problems keeping,

(C) problems: keeping

(D) problems, keeping

10. Determined to create an original American architecture, Frank Lloyd Wright set the standard for what became known as the Prairie Style. Because the homes he designed had flat roofs, no attics or basements, and long rows of windows that further emphasized the horizontal \_\_\_\_\_ reflected the long, low fields on which they sat.

(A) theme; they

(B) theme, so they

(C) theme, they

(D) theme they

11. The northern snakehead is aptly \_\_\_\_\_ perhaps a mad scientist—had grafted a snake's head and several inches of scaly body onto a fish. Its fins hang unevenly from its body, as though they were tacked on as an afterthought. Given the fish's wild appearance, it is hardly a surprise that researchers refer to it as Frankenfish.

(A) named: its head tapers to a point, making it look as if someone—

(B) named, its head tapers to a point, making it look as if someone—

(C) named— its head tapers to a point, making it look as if someone,

(D) named—its head tapers to a point, making it look as if someone,

12. Every spring, swarms of colorful, painted lady butterflies appear in California as they make their way from western Mexico to the Pacific Northwest. Some years, there are millions of migrating \_\_\_\_\_ need access to nutrients. Moreover, California is home to resident painted lady populations that require food sources year-round.

(A) butterflies, which all of them

(B) butterflies, all of them

(C) butterflies, all of them

(D) butterflies, all of which

13. The relationship between humans and the natural world is central to Ada Limón’s \_\_\_\_ her collection *The Hurting Kind*, her narrators learn from nature how to understand and convey their feelings, reactions and memories.

(A) poetry in

(B) poetry, in

(C) poetry. In

(D) poetry in,

14. The appearance of mosaic—pictures made of many small pieces—has remained unchanged for thousands of years. However, the last few decades have seen the emergence of a new \_\_\_\_ three-dimensional stone wall murals. One such mural was produced by Janna Morrison in 2005. She combined the piecework of mosaic murals with traditional soapstone slab carving.

(A) style, colorful,

(B) style: colorful,

(C) style, colorful—

(D) style; colorful

15. Researchers have long believed that camels originated in North America, a theory that was first proposed after a camel fossil was discovered in Canada’s Yukon Territory in 1913. As paleontologists eventually discovered, these camels were much larger than their modern \_\_\_\_ long, massive limbs and long spines on their backs, creating an enormous hump.

(A) counterparts, they had

(B) counterparts—they had

(C) counterparts; having

(D) counterparts they had

# 6

## Non-Essential & Essential Clauses

---

To review, non-essential elements (words, phrases, and clauses) can be removed from a sentence without affecting its essential meaning or grammatical structure.

Non-essential clauses often begin with “w-words” such as *which* and *who*, but they can also begin with nouns (appositives) or participles (-*ing*, -*ed*).

Correct:    The Tower of London, **which was begun by William the Conqueror in 1078**, is one of the largest and most imposing fortifications in England.

The sentence contains a clause that is surrounded by commas and that begins with the word *which*. If we cross out that clause, the remaining sentence makes complete sense on its own:

Correct:    The Tower of London...is one of the largest and most imposing fortifications in England.

If one or both of the commas are removed, however, the sentence is incorrect.

Incorrect:    The Tower of London, **which was begun by William the Conqueror in 1078** is one of the largest and most imposing fortifications in England.

Incorrect:    The Tower of London **which was begun by William the Conqueror in 1078**, is one of the largest and most imposing fortifications in England.

Incorrect:    The Tower of London **which was begun by William the Conqueror in 1078** is one of the largest and most imposing fortifications in England.

In order to fix the sentence, you must recognize that it will still make sense if the clause *which was begun by William the Conqueror in 1078* is removed. Commas must therefore be added around that clause.

Correct:    The Tower of London, **which was begun by William the Conqueror in 1078**, is one of the largest and most imposing fortifications in England.

Sometimes non-essential clauses can be very long. In such cases, you must make sure to look all the way back to the beginning of the sentence in order to identify the beginning of the non-essential clause. You should also be prepared to cross out a lot of information in order to determine whether a non-essential clause is present.

To reiterate: if a sentence still makes sense when a word or phrase is crossed out, two commas must be placed around that information.

On the SAT, any part of a non-essential clause can be tested. In some cases, only the beginning of the clause will be underlined, in which case you must read ahead to identify the end. In other cases, only the end of the clause will be underlined, in which case you must backtrack to the beginning. Either way, you must consider the sentence as a whole in order to determine how the clause should be punctuated.

Let's look at an example.

The city of London, which was originally built by the Romans along the banks of the Thames more than two thousand years \_\_\_\_ a number of extremely modern neighborhoods.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) ago contains

(B) ago; contains

(C) ago, containing

(D) ago, contains

If you focus only on the portion of the sentence that is directly asked about, you might sense that a break is required between *ago* and *contains*, but you'll be working more on intuition than on understanding. The key is to go back to the beginning of the sentence and recognize that the word *which* signals the start of a non-essential clause. The only logical place for that clause to end is right before the verb *contains*.

Crossed out:

~~The city of London, which was originally built by the Romans along the banks of the Thames more than two thousand years~~ \_\_\_\_ a number of extremely modern neighborhoods.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) ago contains

(B) ago; contains

(C) ago, containing

(D) ago, contains

When the non-essential clause is eliminated, the remaining sentence makes sense (*The city of London...contains a number of extremely modern neighborhoods*). A comma after *ago* is therefore required, making (D) correct.

Thinking about where non-essential clauses begin and end can also help you identify fragments. When you are confronted with an exceptionally long statement, you can easily get lost and end up unable to determine whether it is a sentence. For example:

The city of London, which was originally built by the Romans along the banks of the Thames more than two thousand years \_\_\_\_\_ a number of extremely modern neighborhoods.



MS ANH DAY SAT 1600  
HOTLINE: 0967 104 204

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) ago and contains

(B) ago, it contains

(C) ago, containing

(D) ago, contains

With the non-essential clause removed, it becomes much clearer that (A), (B), and (C) will all produce fragments when plugged into the sentence. Only D) correctly places a verb immediately after the comma, supplying a main verb that corresponds to the subject and creating a coherent sentence.

**Important: two commas do not always equal a non-essential clause!**

One common mistake is to assume that the presence of two commas in a sentence automatically signals a non-essential clause. That, however, is not necessarily the case. Compare the following two sentences:

Sentence 1: London, which was one of the largest and most important cities in Europe during the Middle Ages, remains an important financial and cultural center today.

This sentence contains a non-essential clause that can be removed without altering its basic meaning:

Correct: London, ~~which was one of the largest and most important cities in Europe during the Middle Ages~~, remains an important financial and cultural center today.

Now take a look at this sentence:

Sentence 2: During the Middle Ages, London was one of the largest and most important cities in Europe, and today it remains an important financial and cultural center.

Although there are two commas, we get nonsense when we cross out the information between them.

Incorrect: During the Middle Ages, ~~London was one of the largest and most important cities in Europe~~, and today it remains an important financial and cultural center.

In addition, some sentences that contain commas setting off non-essential clauses also contain commas that serve unrelated purposes. In such cases, you may need to read carefully in order to tell where non-essential clauses in the middle of a sentence are actually located.

Correct: Sumo wrestling, a full-contact sport in which competitors attempt to force one another out of a circular ring, originated in Japan, which remains the only country in the world where the sport is practiced.

There is just one non-essential clause in the middle of the sentence that can be removed without a problem:

Correct: Sumo wrestling, ~~a full-contact sport in which competitors attempt to force one another out of a circular ring,~~ originated in Japan, which remains the only country in the world where the sport is practiced.

If the information between a different set of commas is removed, however, we are left with nonsense:

Incorrect: Sumo wrestling, a full-contact sport in which competitors attempt to force one another out of a circular ring, ~~originated in Japan,~~ which remains the only country in the world where the sport is practiced.

If you cannot hear where the non-essential clause belongs, take your pencil (not a pen!), draw a line through the section you want to test, and read the sentence without it. If that doesn't work, erase the line, cross out a different section, and try again. It is very important that you go through this process because it is the only means you have of figuring out the answer logically.

**Note:** On the digital SAT—unlike the paper-based test or prep materials—you will obviously not have the option of taking your pencil and physically crossing out text to test out where non-essential clauses begin and end. (There is an annotation tool, but you may find it awkward to work with for this purpose.) As a result, **it is very important that you learn to identify non-essential clauses mentally and visually.**

That said, if you have any difficulty spotting them, **I strongly encourage you to physically cross out information as much as you need to in the earlier stages of your preparation process**—this will help you develop your recognition of these clauses to the point where you can identify them by sight only.

## **Exercise: Identifying Non-Essential Words and Phrases** **(answers p. 203)**

In the following sentences, place commas around non-essential phrases as necessary. If you are uncertain whether a section of the sentence is non-essential, cross it out and read the sentence without it. Note that some sentences contain additional, unrelated commas.

1.	The cesium fountain atomic clock the most precise form of timekeeper available is expected to become inaccurate by less than a single second over the next 50 million years.
2.	Frank Gehry's buildings critics agree are among the most important examples of contemporary architecture found in the United States.
3.	The most common types of coral which are usually found in clear, shallow waters require sunlight in order to grow.
4.	Used in some martial arts, the Red Belt one of several colored belts intended to denote a practitioner's skill level and rank originated in Japan and Korea.
5.	Testing animal cognition is tricky, and comparing and contrasting across species lines especially when distinct species-specific tests are used is particularly challenging.
6.	New Zealand one of the last lands to be settled by humans developed distinctive animal and plant life during its long isolation.
7.	Forensic biology the application of biology to law enforcement has been used to identify illegal products such as ivory and investigate bird collisions with wind turbines.
8.	Human computers who once performed basic numerical analysis for laboratories were behind the calculations for everything from the first accurate prediction of the return of Halley's Comet to the success of the Manhattan Project.
9.	The wingspan of the monarch butterfly a species commonly mistaken for the similar-looking viceroy butterfly ranges from 8.9 to 10.2 centimeters.

10.	Some traditional assumptions about how to treat jellyfish stings have recently been called into question: rinsing the affected areas with seawater for example only spreads the stings to a larger area.
11.	The world's first copyright law which was established in Great Britain in 1709 was intended to protect books from illegal copying and distribution.
12.	The unusually large size of the Komodo dragon the largest species of lizard has been attributed to one of its ancient ancestors, the immense varanid lizard.
13.	Judy Chicago's <i>The Dinner Party</i> was through an unprecedented worldwide grassroots movement exhibited to more than a million people in six countries on three continents.
14.	According to the <i>Motif-Index of Folk Literature</i> a magisterial six-volume compilation of myths, legends and folktales collected by folklorists in the early twentieth century many cultures have told similar stories to explain the occurrence of solar eclipses.
15.	A new software called DXplain some hospitals report is helping doctors make diagnoses and avoid the types of errors that can sometimes cause harm to patients.

## Two Commas vs. Period or Semicolon

Many introductory and transitional phrases that are often used to **begin** clauses can also be used non-essentially **within** clauses—often in the middle (surrounded by commas), but sometimes also at the end (after a single comma).

For example, the sentence below can be written multiple ways.

Correct: **Many scholars believe** that the Tower of London retained its original form until the reign of Richard the Lionheart at the end of the twelfth century.

Correct: The Tower of London retained its original form, **many scholars believe**, until the reign of Richard the Lionheart at the end of the twelfth century.

Correct: The Tower of London retained its original form until the reign of Richard the Lionheart at the end of the twelfth century, **many scholars believe**.

Although the second and third versions may sound odd to you, they are acceptable as long as the sentence makes sense when the non-essential information is removed.

The same is true of single-word transitions. Some common examples include *however*, *therefore*, *in fact*, *indeed*, *for example*, and *moreover*. (We actually saw some of these transitions used non-essentially in the previous chapter.)

As discussed earlier, these transitions should follow a period or semicolon when they are used to begin a sentence or clause. In the sentence below, for instance, the transition *however* is used to begin the second sentence/clause:

Correct: The Tower of London was built during the Norman Conquest. **However**, (or: **Conquest; however**) nearly a thousand years later, it still remains standing.

That transition can also be used non-essentially in the **middle of the sentence**. This construction is typically used for **contradictors** such as *however* and *though*.

Correct: The Tower of London was built during the Norman Conquest. Nearly a thousand years later, **however**, it still remains standing.

The commas around *however* tell us that if we cross out that word, the sentence will still make sense. And sure enough, when we eliminate it, we are left with a grammatically acceptable sentence:

Correct: Nearly a thousand years later...it still remains standing.

We can also place the transition at the end of the sentence.

Correct: The Tower of London was built during the Norman Conquest. Nearly a thousand years later it still remains standing, **however**.

In terms of meaning, placing the transition at the end of the clause rather than at the beginning or in the middle has no effect—the transition still serves to indicate the relationship between the second sentence and the first.

What we **cannot** do is this:

Incorrect: The Tower of London was built during the Norman Conquest, **however**, nearly a thousand years later, it still remains standing.

In the above version of the sentence, the two commas imply that the word *however* can be removed without affecting the sentence's essential meaning. But if we remove those commas, we end up with two independent clauses placed back-to-back, without any punctuation between them.

Incorrect: The Tower of London was built during the Norman Conquest nearly a thousand years later, it still remains standing.

## Colon or Dash

Note that in some cases, a **colon** or **dash** may also be used after a non-essential word or phrase at the end of a sentence. This construction is acceptable when an explanation or definition follows.

Correct: Since the eighteenth century, artisans have attempted to reproduce the sound of a Stradivarius violin. None of them have succeeded, **however: the tonal quality** remains unique and unmatched by any other instrument maker.

Correct: Since the eighteenth century, artisans have attempted to reproduce the sound of a Stradivarius violin. None of them have succeeded, **however—the tonal quality** remains unique and unmatched by any other instrument maker.

In the sentence above, the colon or dash is acceptable because the statement following it serves to explain what is meant by *None of them have succeeded*.

**Note:** It is unlikely (although not impossible) that you would be asked to decide between a period or semicolon and a colon/dash in this question type, at least not without an additional error present. The emphasis is on testing your ability to identify which sentence non-essential information belongs to, not on asking you to make fine distinctions between punctuation marks.

## To Summarize:

The need for two commas vs. a period, semicolon, or colon is determined solely by context. **If you are unsure which type of punctuation should be used, use the answer choices to plug in the necessary word(s), and read the passage without the transition.**

- If a single, logical sentence remains, the word or phrase is non-essential and must be set off by commas.
- If there are two sentences, the transition is being used to start a new sentence or clause and must come after a period, semicolon, or colon.
- If a transition is used non-essentially at the end of a sentence, it connects that sentence to the previous section of the passage. It must come after a comma and can be followed by a period, semicolon, or colon.

## Punctuating Transitions

On the SAT, some questions will ask you to determine whether transitions are used non-essentially (set off by commas) or used to begin a clause (after a period, semicolon, or colon).

For example, consider the question below.

Led by a team from the University of California, San Diego, researchers have developed a new series of algorithms enabling four-legged robots to navigate challenging terrain while avoiding obstacles. Until now, most approaches have involved either vision or speed and sense of \_\_\_\_\_ the new system combines both options, allowing robots to anticipate changes in their environment and change course when an object is in their way.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A movement, however,
- B movement, however;
- C movement; however,
- D movement however,

The presence of *however* with various combinations of commas and semicolons indicates that the question is testing whether this transition is being used non-essentially or to start a clause.

To determine that, we're going to plug the noun *movement* back into the sentence and read the two statements without the transition.

- 1) Until now, most approaches have involved either vision or speed and sense of movement.
- 2) The new system combines both, allowing robots to anticipate changes in their environment and change course if required.

Both of these are complete sentences, and they express contrasting ideas. Logically, then, *however* belongs at the beginning of the second sentence.

A transition that is used to begin a sentence must follow a period, semicolon, or colon, so (C) is the only acceptable option.

On the next page, we're going to look at something a bit more challenging.

**To reiterate:** A transition placed at the end of a sentence connects that sentence to the previous sentence. So even though a question may appear to ask only about the end of one sentence and the beginning of the next, you may also need think about a third sentence: the one before the question.

If this sounds a bit head-spinning, we're going to look at an example.

Traditionally, most approaches to robotic navigation have involved either vision or speed and sense of direction. A new system developed by a team from the University of California, San Diego, along with other researchers combines both \_\_\_\_ created by the group are able to anticipate changes in their environment and change course when an object is in their path.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) systems, though the four-legged robots

(B) systems, though. The four-legged robots

(C) systems, though, the four-legged robots

(D) systems; though, the four-legged robots

The various placements of *though* before and after a period vs. comma tell us that the question is testing which sentence the transition belongs to.

(D) can be eliminated immediately because the subordinating conjunction *though* cannot be set off by a comma at the beginning of a clause, but after that, we need to look at the passage as a whole.

If we just look at the statements involved in the question, minus the transition, we get the following:

- 1) A new system developed by a team from the University of California, San Diego, along with other researchers combines both systems.
- 2) The four-legged robots created by the group are able to anticipate changes in their environment and change course when an object is in their path.

Both of these statements are full sentences, but they express similar ideas. *Though* is a contradictor, so it does not make sense to place it between them.

Working from the answer choices, you can notice that (B) gives us the option of putting the transition at the end of the first statement. Placed there, it serves to connect that sentence to the previous sentence—the first sentence of the passage. So now we get this:

- 1) Traditionally, most approaches to robotic navigation have involved either vision or speed and sense of direction.
- 2) A new system developed by a team from the University of California, San Diego, along with other researchers combines both systems.

The second sentence presents a contrast to the first, so it makes sense to end the second sentence with *though*. (B) is thus correct.

One more.

**Because he is commonly viewed as a champion of free scientific inquiry**, Galileo is generally thought of as a strict proponent of rationalism. He was also deeply influenced by humanistic \_\_\_\_\_ he derived much of his inspiration from art, particularly Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) inquiry, however:

(B) inquiry, however,

(C) inquiry however

(D) systems, however

This question follows the same pattern as the previous one, although we can actually eliminate more answers upfront.

*However* must always come after some form of punctuation and be followed by a comma, so (C) and (D) can be eliminated right away. The real question is whether the transition is being used to end a sentence or begin one.

Again, we can consider statements before and after the blank without the transition:

- 1) He was also deeply influenced by humanistic inquiry.
- 2) He derived much of his inspiration from art, particularly Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

The statements express similar ideas (humanistic inquiry = art), so *however* should not be placed between them. In addition, they are complete sentences, so *however* would need to follow a period or semicolon, not a comma.

That eliminates (B) and leaves (A) as the only option.

When *however* is placed at the end of the second sentence and plugged back into the passage, it makes perfect sense: the first sentence indicates that Galileo is *generally thought of as a strict proponent of rationalism*, an idea that stands in contrast to the statement that he was deeply influenced by the humanities.

The colon is acceptable because the information following it explains the assertion that Galileo valued humanistic inquiry by providing a specific example (*Dante's Divine Comedy*) of a work that influenced him.

## Quick Check: Punctuating Transitions (answers p. 204)

1. The difference between hot things and cold things is the level of agitation in their molecules. For example, the water molecules in a hot kettle are in a state of excitement, careening around and colliding into each other rapidly. When they condense on a pane of \_\_\_\_\_ the very same water molecules are in a much calmer state.

(A) glass, though

(B) glass, though,

(C) glass. Though,

(D) glass though

2. Weighing in at 165 tons or more, blue whales (*Balaenoptera musculus*) are the largest animals on Earth. They have been the subject of decades of \_\_\_\_\_ still have many unanswered questions about their biology and ecology.

(A) research, though, scientists

(B) research; though, scientists

(C) research, though. Scientists

(D) research, though scientists

3. According to one study, dolphins appear to refer to one another by using specific series of clicks and squeaks. Whether these vocalizations should truly be considered names and are used in a way that is comparable to human ones remains controversial among animal \_\_\_\_\_ preliminary findings suggest that that may in fact be the case.

(A) researchers, however,

(B) researchers; however,

(C) researchers, however;

(D) researchers however,

4. The quest to decipher the Rosetta Stone was complicated by the unique nature of ancient Egyptian writing. The scholars who sought to decode it had primarily worked with alphabetic languages like English and French, in which letters represent different sounds. Hieroglyphic \_\_\_\_\_ was a hybrid system. Its hundreds of characters alternately represented sounds, objects, and ideas.

(A) script, in contrast,

(B) script in contrast

(C) script, in contrast:

(D) script; in contrast

## Non-Essential Clauses with Dashes and Parentheses

Many of the non-essential clauses you are asked to work with on the SAT will be constructed using commas; however, these clauses can also be set off by dashes and parentheses.

Correct: The Tower of London—which was begun by William the Conqueror in 1078—is one of the largest and most imposing fortifications in England.

Correct: The Tower of London (which was begun by William the Conqueror in 1078) is one of the largest and most imposing fortifications in England.

Why use dashes or parentheses? For stylistic reasons. In comparison to commas, dashes create a stronger break. Parentheses imply that information is less important than either commas or dashes do.

Despite these differences, two commas, two dashes, and two parentheses are all grammatically interchangeable.

The only exception involves transitions (e.g., *however*, *therefore*, *in fact*), which must be surrounded by commas when they are used non-essentially.

Otherwise, you will not be asked to choose among these types of punctuation when they are used correctly. You will, however, be asked to recognize when they are used incorrectly.

**The most important thing to know is that either two commas, two dashes, or two parentheses should be used—you cannot mix and match.**

For instance, a non-essential clause begun by a comma should not end with a dash or close-parenthesis, and a non-essential clause begun by an open-parenthesis should not end with a comma or dash.

For example, consider the sentence below.

The Norman \_\_\_\_ that occurred in 1066—marked an important step in the development of the English language.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) Conquest, an event

(B) Conquest—an event

(C) Conquest an event

(D) Conquest: an event

If you know that a dash must only be paired with another dash to create a non-essential clause, you can immediately choose (B).

Likewise:

Today, the city of London (which was originally built by the Romans along the banks of the Thames more than two thousand years \_\_\_\_ home to a number of extremely modern neighborhoods.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) ago, is

(B) ago; is

(C) ago is

(D) ago) is

In order to answer this question, it is necessary to back up to the beginning of the sentence and notice the parenthesis after *London*. A parenthesis must be paired with another parenthesis, so (A) and (C) can be automatically eliminated. B) can also be eliminated because a semicolon can only separate two sentences, and *contains a number of extremely modern neighborhoods* is not a sentence. That leaves (D), which is correct.

Another potential error involves placing both commas and parentheses around a non-essential clause. **As a general rule, either commas or parentheses should be used. Because these two types of punctuation signal non-essential information, it is redundant to use both.** (The one exception is discussed below.)

For example, consider the following question.

In the decades following the Norman invasion of England in 1066, many important defensive structures were built. For example, the Tower of \_\_\_\_ remains one of the largest and most imposing fortifications in England.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) London, (which was begun by William the Conqueror in 1078),

(B) London, (which was begun by William the Conqueror in 1078)

(C) London (which was begun by William the Conqueror in 1078),

(D) London (which was begun by William the Conqueror in 1078)

All of the incorrect answer choices above violate the “one punctuation type” rule. The only grammatically acceptable answer is (D), which places commas neither before nor after the parentheses.

Now we're going to make things a little harder. As discussed above, it is incorrect to use both a close-parenthesis and a comma for the sole purpose of marking the end of a non-essential clause.

**When a comma is grammatically necessary for other reasons, however, it is acceptable to place one after a close-parenthesis.**

For example, take a look at the following question:

The tower of London was constructed as a prison in the eleventh century (the year \_\_\_\_ but over the centuries it has been used as everything from a treasury to an armory.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) (1078 to be exact);

(B) 1078, to be exact,

(C) 1078 to be exact),

(D) 1078 to be exact—

The non-essential clause begins with a parenthesis, so it must end with one as well. That eliminates (B) and (D). (A) does not fit either because a semicolon should not be placed before a FANBOYS conjunction (*but*).

A FANBOYS conjunction should, however, follow a comma that is used to separate two independent clauses. And if we cross out the parenthetical information, that is exactly what we get.

Correct: The Tower of London was constructed as a prison in the eleventh century ~~(the year  
1078 to be exact)~~, but over the centuries it has been used as everything from an armory to a treasury.

(C) is thus correct.

### Exercise: Non-Essential Clauses with Commas, Dashes, and Parentheses (answers p. 204)

1. Despite the fact that parrots are well known for their long lives and advanced \_\_\_\_ their lifespans and relative brain size are comparable to those of primates—it is unclear whether the two traits have influenced each other.

(A) cognition—

(B) cognition,

(C) cognition

(D) cognition:

2. Carnivorous species of flora such as the pitcher plant use a variety of techniques (including nectar, smells, and bright \_\_\_\_ and their traps deploy sheer drops, smooth surfaces that cannot be scaled, or blockades of bristles that prevent prey from escaping.

(A) colors that lure insects,

(B) colors that lure insects),

(C) colors that lure insects—

(D) colors that lure insects;

3. Timothy O'Hara, deputy head of marine sciences at Australia's Museum Victoria, is leading an effort to develop a database of marine biodiversity worldwide. Because tackling every ocean species in existence is such a monumental task, O'Hara and his team are focusing on the brittle \_\_\_\_ and collecting historical records from 1,614 oceanic expeditions spanning the last century.

(A) star, (a spindlier, more delicate cousin of the famous sea star),

(B) star (a spindlier, more delicate cousin of the more famous sea star)

(C) star (a spindlier, more delicate cousin of the more famous sea star,

(D) star, (a spindlier, more delicate cousin of the more famous sea star)

4. The poet W.H. Auden's contradictions made him a difficult person to fathom. Although he appeared to lead a chaotic existence, he was also obsessively punctual and adhered to a strict work schedule. His poems, which on the surface often appear to be simple, straightforward \_\_\_\_\_ defy easy understanding as well.

A compositions—often

B compositions often

C compositions often,

D compositions, often

5. On the streets of London, pink hollyhocks creep over high brick walls, and ivy climbs over courtyards. Offices and museums set aside valuable real estate for patches of green with fruit trees and flowers. With more than 300 gardens—some public, others private, many \_\_\_\_\_ is one of Europe's greenest capitals.

A secret, the city

B secret the city

C secret—the city

D secret: the city

## Essential Clauses with and without “That”

Clauses beginning with *that* are always essential to the meaning of a sentence and should not be set off by commas (or any other form of punctuation, for that matter). **In other words, the use of a comma before or after *that* is virtually always incorrect.** If you see either of these constructions in an answer choice, you should start by assuming that the option is incorrect.

Incorrect: Parrots are one of the most difficult pets, **that** a person can have because they are intelligent, demanding, and live for up to 50 years.

Incorrect: Parrots are one of the most difficult pets **that, a** person can have because they are intelligent, demanding, and live for up to 50 years.

Correct: Parrots are one of the most difficult pets **that a** person can have because they are intelligent, demanding, and live for up to 50 years.

In the above sentence, *that* is optional. The sentence can be correctly written either with or without it.

If the word *that* is deleted, however, no comma should ever be used in its place.

Incorrect: Parrots are one of the most difficult pets, **a** person can have because they are intelligent, demanding, and live for up to 50 years.

Note that on very rare occasions, non-essential information may be placed after the word *that*. In such cases, it is acceptable for a comma to be placed after *that*.

Correct: Hundreds of seismic sensors have been placed around the Pacific Northwest in order to detect “p” waves, the harmless, fast-moving signals that, **as a general rule,** precede the “s” waves responsible for violent shaking during earthquakes.

## Commas with Names and Titles

Names and titles can be either essential or non-essential. While you may have learned that a comma should always be placed before a name or title, that is not the whole story. Commas should *sometimes* be placed before—and after—names and titles. Other times, no commas should be used. It all depends on the context.

**Important:** When a name or title appears in the middle of a sentence—that is, not as the first or last words—there are generally only two correct options: (1) two commas, one before and one after the name or title; or (2), no commas at all.

Occasionally, a single comma may be required after the name or title, for reasons discussed later in this chapter; however, a single comma before a name or title is always incorrect.

The simplest way to determine whether commas are necessary is to treat the name or title like any other non-essential element: read the sentence without it, and see if it still makes sense **in context**. If it does, the commas are necessary; if it does not, the commas are not necessary. (Think: no sense = no commas.)

Let's look at how this rule would play out in some test-style questions.

Ada Lovelace and her \_\_\_\_\_ were two of the most influential figures in the history of computer science. After Babbage sketched out his ideas for an “analytical engine,” Lovelace demonstrated that the machine might be able to carry out a variety of complex tasks.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A acquaintance, Charles Babbage,
- B acquaintance Charles Babbage
- C acquaintance Charles Babbage,
- D acquaintance, Charles Babbage

Because the name Charles Babbage appears in the middle of a sentence, our options are two commas or no commas, eliminating (C) and (D). To choose between (A) and (B), we must cross out the name: *Ada Lovelace and her acquaintance were two of the most influential figures in the history of computer science.*

Now we must consider the context. This sentence is grammatically acceptable, but we do not know who Lovelace's acquaintance was. As a result, the reference to Babbage in the following sentence does not make sense. That means the name is essential, and no commas are required. The answer is therefore (B).

**Another way to think of this rule is as follows:**

- **Commas around a name or title imply that it is the only person or thing.**
- **No commas around a name or title imply that it is one of many people or things.**

Commas around *Charles Babbage* would imply that Babbage was Ada Lovelace's **only** acquaintance. That's theoretically possible, but it's not very logical. Without the commas, the sentence implies that Ada Lovelace had multiple acquaintances, one of whom was Babbage. That interpretation just makes more sense.

Let's look at another example.

Born Elaine Potter Richardson in Antigua, Caribbean-American \_\_\_\_\_ began her career as a journalist, only later turning to fiction. In 1985, she published the novel *Annie John*, a semi-autobiographical story of a young girl growing up in Antigua.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) author, Jamaica Kincaid

(B) author Jamaica Kincaid

(C) author, Jamaica Kincaid,

(D) author Jamaica Kincaid,

Once again, we're going to start by crossing the name out of the sentence. *Born Elaine Potter Richardson in Antigua, Caribbean-American author began her career as a journalist.*

No, that construction is completely ungrammatical. The name is clearly essential, so no commas are needed. The answer is (B).

Now, however, consider this:

*Annie John*, a semi-autobiographical story of a young girl growing up in Antigua, was published to great critical acclaim in 1985. The novel's \_\_\_\_\_ had only recently turned to fiction, having spent the early years of her career as a journalist.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) author, Jamaica Kincaid,

(B) author Jamaica Kincaid

(C) author, Jamaica Kincaid

(D) author Jamaica Kincaid,

The name is located within the sentence, again indicating that our options are two commas or no commas.

When we cross out *Jamaica Kincaid*, the resulting sentence still makes grammatical sense. (*The novel's author had only recently turned to fiction, having spent the early years of her career as a journalist.*)

The name *Jamaica Kincaid* adds specific information about the author, but it is not essential to the basic structure of the sentence. In addition, Kincaid was logically the **only** author of the novel, and two commas serve to indicate that there is only one of someone or something. (A) is thus correct.

Now let's look at an example of a question involving a title. We're going to revisit this passage, but from a slightly different angle:

Jamaica Kincaid (born May 25, 1949) is a novelist, essayist, and gardener. Born Elaine Potter Richardson in Antigua, she came to the United States at the age of 17 to work as an au pair in Westchester County, New York. She eventually won a scholarship to Franconia College in New Hampshire but returned to New York City to write. In 1985, she published \_\_\_\_\_ a semiautobiographical story of a young girl growing up in Antigua that won acclaim for the honesty of its depiction of familial relationships.

1

 Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) the novel, *Annie John*,

(B) the novel *Annie John*,

(C) the novel *Annie John*

(D) the novel: *Annie John*,

As always, we're going to start by crossing out the title and reading the sentence without it: *In 1985, she published the novel... a semiautobiographical story of a young girl growing up in Antigua*.

No, this statement does not make sense in context because we do not know which novel the sentence is referring to. In addition, commas around the title would imply that *Annie John* was the only novel published in 1985. The information is therefore essential. In most cases, that would indicate that commas should not be placed around the title.

But wait, there's a twist! This is the rare **exception** to the "two commas or no commas" rule. A comma is required to separate the independent first clause from the dependent second clause (*a semiautobiographical story of a young girl growing up in Antigua*). Without the comma, we just get a big jumble. So in this case, the answer is (B).

**Exception: The commas around a name or title that refers to one person/thing are sometimes omitted for stylistic reasons.** This is not uncommon in everyday writing.

Technically: An avid gardener, Jamaica Kincaid is known for her 1985 novel, *Annie John*, as well  
Correct           as her essays.

Acceptable: An avid gardener, Jamaica Kincaid is known for her 1985 novel *Annie John* as well  
as her essays.

Because Jamaica Kincaid only published one novel in 1985, commas are technically required. From a stylistic perspective, however, the sentence reads more cleanly without them.

Although this exception has not historically been tested on the SAT, it did appear in a College Board-released practice question (Digital Test 1). If you encounter a question targeting it, you should simply know that **you will not be asked to choose between two commas and no commas** if both are legitimate options. If you are given both options, you should follow the grammatical rules strictly.

## Non-Essential vs. Essential Clauses: The Case of “Who”

Clauses beginning with *who* can also be either non-essential (two commas) or essential (no commas). Both versions are grammatically acceptable, but they have somewhat different meanings.

Version 1: People, **who attend large open-air events such as sporting matches and music festivals**, often turn to camping as a cheap form of accommodation.

The commas in the above sentence imply that the clause between them is not central to the meaning of the sentence. The focus of the sentence is on **people in general**. The fact that they attend large open-air events such as sporting matches and music festivals is secondary.

Version 2: People **who attend large open-air events such as sporting matches and music festivals** often turn to camping as a cheap form of accommodation.

The lack of commas in the second version indicates that the sentence is not discussing people in general but rather **a specific group of people**: those who attend large open-air events such as sporting matches and music festivals. While the first version of the sentence is grammatically correct, the second version makes more sense. Clearly, not all people *turn to camping as a cheap form of accommodation*.

Grammatically, a sentence with a “who clause” can be written either way; the focus of the sentence merely shifts. In terms of meaning, however, you will have to think about whether the information is essential. For example, consider the following question.

The advantages of growing up in a bilingual home can start as early as six months of age. A study conducted by York University’s Institute of Health found that \_\_\_\_\_ show better attentional control than infants being raised in monolingual environments. The findings suggest that early exposure to multiple languages could set the stage for lifelong cognitive benefits.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A infants, who are regularly exposed to more than one language,
- B infants who are regularly exposed to more than one language,
- C infants, who are regularly exposed to more than one language
- D infants who are regularly exposed to more than one language

(B) and (C) can be eliminated pretty quickly because our options are two commas or no commas.

To figure out whether the commas are necessary, we’re going to start by treating the clause as non-essential and reading the sentence without it: *A study conducted by York University’s Institute of Health found that infants...show better attentional control than infants being raised in monolingual environments.*

Although the sentence still works grammatically, it no longer makes sense. The passage is focusing on a specific group: infants who are regularly exposed to more than one language. Because that information is used to define them, it is essential, and no commas should be used. (D) is thus correct.

## Exercise: All Non-Essential and Essential Clauses (answers p. 204)

The following questions test all the concepts regarding commas and essential/non-essential clauses discussed in this chapter. If you are uncertain whether a clause is essential or non-essential, follow these steps:

- 1) Cross out the word or phrase.
- 2) Determine whether the sentence makes sense in context without it.
- 3) Determine whether commas are necessary.

1. According to one scholar, the Singer sewing machine emerged from a collaboration between a so-called mechanical \_\_\_\_\_ and a lawyer, Edward Clark. Singer may or may not have been a genius with machines, but he was remarkably adept at displaying his name: it appeared multiple times on the machines he and Clark produced.

A genius Isaac Merritt Singer,

B genius Isaac Merritt Singer

C genius, Isaac Merritt Singer,

D genius Isaac Merritt Singer,

2. In the popular imagination, ants are often depicted as brave soldiers or dutiful factory workers. According to \_\_\_\_\_ however, this portrayal is a human fiction.

A entomologist Deborah Gordon,

B entomologist, Deborah Gordon

C entomologist Deborah Gordon

D entomologist, Deborah Gordon,

3. Lisa See has always been intrigued by stories that have been lost, forgotten, or deliberately covered up. See, author of the \_\_\_\_\_ traveled to a remote area of China to research the book. While there, she was able to investigate a secret type of writing that women had kept hidden for over a thousand years.

A best-selling novel, *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan*,

B best-selling novel *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan*

C best-selling novel, *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan*

D best-selling novel *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan*,

4. Alfred Mosher Butts, the American architect responsible for the creation of *Scrabble*, intended it to be a variation on the existing word game *Lexiko*—the two games had the same set of letter tiles and point values. Butts created a few sets himself, but the first \_\_\_\_\_ did not think that the game was likely to become very popular.

- (A) first manufacturers who inspected them,  
(B) manufacturers—who inspected them,  
(C) manufacturers, who inspected them,  
(D) manufacturers who inspected them

5. Grant Wood never achieved the kind of critical acclaim earned by other twentieth-century artists in the United States. However, his best-known \_\_\_\_\_ is one of the few images to reach the status of universally recognized cultural icon.

- (A) painting, (the endlessly satirized *American Gothic*),  
(B) painting, (the endlessly satirized *American Gothic*)  
(C) painting (the endlessly satirized *American Gothic*),  
(D) painting (the endlessly satirized *American Gothic*)

6. The discovery of x-rays occurred entirely by chance. In November 1895, the German \_\_\_\_\_ accidentally discovered an image created by rays emanating from a vacuum tube. Further investigation showed that the rays were capable of passing through many kinds of matter.

- (A) physicist, Wilhelm Roentgen,  
(B) physicist Wilhelm Roentgen  
(C) physicist, Wilhelm Roentgen  
(D) physicist Wilhelm Roentgen,

7. Pterosaurs, the first flying \_\_\_\_\_ ended in over-elongated fingers. These reptiles filled the skies between 66 and 220 million years ago, their bodies ranging in size from less than a foot to the length of a small airplane.

- (A) vertebrates, had wings made of a membrane, that  
(B) vertebrates, had wings made of a membrane that  
(C) vertebrates had wings made of a membrane that,  
(D) vertebrates—had wings made of a membrane that

8. First recorded in 1835, polio became the most serious public health problem of the mid-twentieth century, and scientists searched frantically a cure. During the 1940s, President Franklin D. Roosevelt was the world's most recognized polio victim, having founded the \_\_\_\_\_ to spur the development of new treatments.

(A) organization, March of Dimes

(B) organization March of Dimes

(C) Organization, March of Dimes,

(D) Organization March of Dimes,

9. Wallace Fowlie, one of Stendhal's most sympathetic critics, claimed that the writer's genius was due in part to the way he blurred the line between his own interior life and those of his characters. Stendhal was, \_\_\_\_\_ "literally inhabited by his creations," discovering himself as he discovered them.

(A) Fowlie argues,

(B) Fowlie argues

(C) Fowlie argues—

(D) Fowlie, argues

10. The first recorded mention of the Agojie—the all-female military regiment in the kingdom of Dahomey—dates to 1729. However, it is possible that the unit was formed even earlier, toward the beginning of Dahomey's \_\_\_\_\_ was created.

(A) existence, when a troupe consisting of women, who were already experienced elephant-hunters,

(B) existence when a troupe consisting of women, who were already experienced elephant-hunters,

(C) existence, when a troupe consisting of women who were already experienced elephant-hunters

(D) existence when a troupe consisting of women who were already experienced elephant-hunters,

# 7

## Additional Comma Uses & Misuses

### Commas should be used:

#### A. To Separate Items in a List

In any list of three or more items, each item must be followed by a comma. The comma before *and* is optional. You will not be asked to choose between a version with the comma and a version without.

Correct: The open-storage display brings over 900 vintage World's Fair souvenirs out of attics, desk drawers, **shoeboxes, and museum** archives for visitors to view.

Correct: The open-storage display brings over 900 vintage World's Fair souvenirs out of attics, desk drawers, **shoeboxes and museum** archives for visitors to view.

No comma should be used **after** the word *and*.

Incorrect: The museum's open-storage display brings over 900 vintage World's Fair souvenirs out of attics, desk drawers, **shoeboxes, and, museum** archives for visitors to view.

Incorrect: The museum's open-storage display brings over 900 vintage World's Fair souvenirs out of attics, desk drawers, **shoeboxes and, museum** archives for visitors to view.

The only exception is when the word *and* is followed by non-essential information. In that case, a comma is required to set off the phrase or clause.

Correct: Deserts are found on every continent, including Antarctica. They are often the site of unusual rock formations **and, in some cases,** amazing archaeological finds.

When the items in a list consist of long phrases, or are punctuated internally by commas, they can also be separated with semicolons. However, commas and semicolons should not be mixed and matched.

Incorrect: Among Marie Curie's achievements were the development of the theory of **radioactivity;** the invention of techniques for isolating radioactive **isotopes,** and the discovery of the elements polonium and radium.

Correct: Among Marie Curie's achievements were the development of the theory of **radioactivity;** the invention of techniques for isolating radioactive **isotopes;** and the discovery of the elements polonium and radium.

## B. Between Two Adjectives Whose Order Could be Reversed, OR That Could Be Separated by the Word “And”

When the order of the adjectives does not matter, a comma should be used to separate them.

Correct: One of the Queens Museum’s recent exhibits featured works by contemporary artists from Japan, Taiwan, and Ireland, offering patrons the chance to see a kind of **innovative, passionate** art that larger museums often ignore.

Correct: One of the Queens Museum’s recent exhibits featured works by contemporary artists from Japan, Taiwan, and Ireland, offering patrons the chance to see a kind of **passionate, innovative** art that larger museums often ignore.

Alternately, you can try placing the word *and* between the adjectives. If they make sense when separated by that word, a comma should be used.

Correct: One of the Queens Museum’s recent exhibits featured works by contemporary artists from Japan, Taiwan, and Ireland, offering patrons the chance to see a kind of **innovative and passionate** art that larger museums often ignore.

Correct: One of the Queens Museum’s recent exhibits featured works by contemporary artists from Japan, Taiwan, and Ireland, offering patrons the chance to see a kind of **innovative, passionate** art that larger museums often ignore.

## C. After Introductory Words and Phrases

Introductory words and phrases (e.g., *in fact, moreover, as a result*) should be set off by commas.

Correct: **At first**, it looked as if the storm was going to miss us by a few hundred miles.

Correct: **Nevertheless**, Armstrong persisted and became an extraordinary musician.

Correct: Desserts were traditionally characterized by their sweetness. **However**, bakers are now creating ones that feature intriguing blends of sweet and savory.

To reiterate: **subordinating conjunctions such as *although* and *because* cannot be used this way.**

Incorrect: Desserts were traditionally characterized by their sweetness. **Although**, bakers are now creating ones that feature intriguing blends of sweet and savory.

## **Commas should NOT be used:**

### **A. Before or After Prepositions**

To review, prepositions are **location** and **time** words such as *of, for, from, to, in, with, by, about* and *between*. Do not use a comma before or after a preposition.

Incorrect: Ada Lovelace and Charles Babbage were two of the most influential figures, in the history of computer science and mathematics.

Incorrect: Ada Lovelace and Charles Babbage were two of the most influential figures in, the history of computer science and mathematics.

Correct: Ada Lovelace and Charles Babbage were two of the most influential figures in the history of computer science and mathematics.

The only **exception** to this rule occurs when a preposition is used to begin a non-essential clause.

Correct: Although Ada Lovelace lived nearly a century before the first computer was built, she, in a way that was unique among nineteenth-century mathematicians, foresaw many of the modern computer's capabilities.

### **B. Between Adjectives and Nouns**

This rule is particularly important when you are working with multiple adjectives or lists. Though commas are required between items in a list, no comma should be placed between the final adjective and the noun.

Incorrect: Headquartered in New York City, the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (NATAS) is a well-known **national, organization** with local chapters in cities around the United States.

Correct: Headquartered in New York City, the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (NATAS) is a well-known **national organization** with local chapters in cities around the United States.

### **C. Between Adjectives, When the First Modifies the Second**

If the first adjective modifies the second adjective, OR if two adjectives could not normally be separated by the word *and*, no comma should be used.

Incorrect: Created in Jamaica during the late 1960s, reggae music emerged from a number of sources ranging from **traditional, African** songs and chants to contemporary jazz.

Correct: Created in Jamaica during the late 1960s, reggae music emerged from a number of sources ranging from **traditional African** songs and chants to contemporary jazz.

In the above sentence, *traditional* modifies *African songs*. In addition, you would not say *traditional and African songs*. As a result, no comma should be used between the adjectives.

## D. Between Subjects and Verbs

Unless a subject and verb are separated from one another by a non-essential clause, no comma should be placed between them.

Incorrect: Ada Lovelace and Charles Babbage, were two of the most influential figures in the history of computer science and mathematics.

Correct: Ada Lovelace and Charles Babbage were two of the most influential figures in the history of computer science and mathematics.

This rule holds true even when subjects are extremely long and complex, as in the example below. Even though you may feel that a pause is necessary, in strict grammatical terms, no comma should be used.

Incorrect: What is particularly remarkable about Ada Lovelace's work on Charles Babbage's "analytical engine," is that Lovelace foresaw many of the ways in which computers are used today.

Correct: What is particularly remarkable about Ada Lovelace's work on Charles Babbage's "analytical engine" is that Lovelace foresaw many of the ways in which computers are used today.

## E. Between Compound Items

When two nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc. are joined by the word *and*, no comma should be used.

**The easiest way to approach this rule is as follows:** because *comma + and* = period, plug in a period in place of *comma + and*. If two complete sentences are **not** present, no comma should be used.

### Compound Noun

Incorrect: **Ada Lovelace, and Charles Babbage** were two of the most influential figures in the history of computer science and mathematics.

Plug in: **Ada Lovelace. Charles Babbage** were two of the most influential figures in the history of computer science and mathematics.

Correct: **Ada Lovelace and Charles Babbage** were two of the most influential figures in the history of computer science and mathematics.

### Compound Adjective

Incorrect: Ada Lovelace and Charles Babbage were two of the most **important, and influential** figures in the history of computer science and mathematics.

Plug in: Ada Lovelace and Charles Babbage were two of the most **important. Influential** figures in the history of computer science and mathematics.

Correct: Ada Lovelace and Charles Babbage were two of the most **important and influential** figures in the history of computer science and mathematics.

## F. Before or Around “Self” Words

“Self” words (formally known as **emphatic pronouns**) are used to emphasize that particular people or things are being referred to. Each object pronoun has an emphatic counterpart, e.g., *me, myself; it, itself; them, themselves*.

Although constructions containing these words may sound strange to you, there is nothing inherently wrong with them. In fact, the only thing you need to know is that it is **incorrect** to place a comma before a “self” word, or before and after one.

Incorrect: The Tower of London, which lies within the Borough of Tower Hamlets, is separated from the **city, itself** by a stretch of open space.

Incorrect: The Tower of London, which lies within the Borough of Tower Hamlets, is separated from the **city, itself**, by a stretch of open space.

Correct: The Tower of London, which lies within the Borough of Tower Hamlets, is separated from the **city itself** by a stretch of open space.

In most cases, it is also incorrect to place a comma after an emphatic pronoun.

Incorrect: The Tower of London, which lies within the Borough of Tower Hamlets, is separated from the **city itself**, by a stretch of open space.

However, when a comma would normally be necessary (e.g., before a FANBOYS conjunction or to set off a non-essential clause), it is acceptable to place a comma after an emphatic pronoun.

Correct: The Tower of London is separated from the city **itself, but** it is nevertheless one of London’s most popular tourist attractions.

In the sentence above, *comma + but* is used to separate two complete sentences. The first sentence just happens to end with the word *itself*.

## Exercise: Additional Comma Uses and Misuses (answers p. 204)

1. In areas where human activity occurs in close proximity to wildlife, it was long assumed that animals would change their habits to avoid people. However, a study led by Professor Laura Prugh of the University of \_\_\_\_\_ that even in remote, rarely visited national parks, nearly any level of human activity in a protected area can alter animals' behavior.

(A) Washington, found

(B) Washington found:

(C) Washington found,

(D) Washington found

2. Bright stars acted as compasses that helped ancient Polynesian mariners navigate between the many islands of the Pacific Ocean. Using double hulled canoes, they were able to make \_\_\_\_\_ within the immense Polynesian triangle.

(A) contact, with nearly every island

(B) contact with nearly every, island

(C) contact with nearly every island

(D) contact with nearly every island,

3. Originally established by the British crown, the Postal Service became essential to the American Revolution. The development of a mail network among the colonies facilitated \_\_\_\_\_ between pockets of resistance that otherwise might have remained isolated.

(A) communication, and coordination

(B) communication and coordination,

(C) communication and coordination

(D) communication, and, coordination

4. Throughout his writing, Montaigne manages to give the impression of being ready to commit to paper his every thought. As a result, the reader feels as if he were attempting to capture \_\_\_\_\_

(A) the process of thinking, itself.

(B) the process of thinking itself.

(C) the process, of thinking itself.

(D) the process, of thinking, itself.

5. Having appeared sometime around 1500 B.C., Sanskrit is one of India's 22 official languages. Despite its association with classical Indian culture, it is still used in many \_\_\_\_\_.

A hymns, mantras, and chants.

B hymns mantras, and chants.

C hymns; mantras, and, chants.

D hymns, mantras, and chants.

6. Although there was no contact between Japan and Britain during the prehistoric era, there are surprising parallels between them. In both places, inhabitants built stone circles, crafted elaborate pots, and used flaked stone tools. Furthermore, the \_\_\_\_ bear striking similarities to the circle at Stonehenge.

A astonishing Japanese stone circles at Oyu,

B astonishing, Japanese stone circles at Oyu

C astonishing Japanese, stone circles at Oyu

D astonishing Japanese stone circles at Oyu

## Cumulative Review: All Punctuation and Transitions (answers p. 205)

1. Many animals recognize the voices of members of their own species, and some can even recognize those of other species, such as humans. \_\_\_\_\_ it turns out a few animals, including gorillas, can not only identify familiar voices but also connect those voices to pleasant or unpleasant memories.

(A) Therefore,

(B) Indeed,

(C) However,

(D) For example,

2. Judith Jamison decided on a career in dance only after three semesters of studying psychology at Fisk \_\_\_\_\_ her education at the Philadelphia Dance Academy. In 1964, she was spotted by choreographer Agnes de Mille, who invited her to appear in a performance with the American Ballet Theater.

(A) University, she completed

(B) University; and she completed

(C) University, completing

(D) University; completing

3. When a person breaks a bone, it eventually knits itself back together. \_\_\_\_\_ a researcher at Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands, wondered why buildings couldn't do the same. Inspired by the human body, Jonkers created self-healing concrete.

(A) Microbiologist, Henk Jonkers,

(B) Microbiologist Henk Jonkers,

(C) Microbiologist, Henk Jonkers

(D) Microbiologist Henk Jonkers—

4. Perhaps the ocean organism most vulnerable to temperature change is coral. There is evidence that reefs will bleach—that is, eject algae that play a key role in maintaining their \_\_\_\_\_ even a slight persistent increase in temperature.

(A) ecosystems—at

(B) ecosystems, at

(C) ecosystems at,

(D) ecosystems: at

5. Once in power, King Henry VII of England legitimized his rule by suppressing rebellions and proclaiming his links to the European continent. According to Elizabeth Cleland, a curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the \_\_\_\_\_ recognized the importance of art in emphasizing such ties.

- (A) king who had spent his youth, in exile abroad
- (B) king—who had spent his youth in exile abroad,
- (C) king, who had spent his youth in exile abroad,
- (D) king who had spent his youth in exile abroad,

6. The simplest type of bridge can be created by dragging a log over a creek. However, the construction of modern bridges typically requires years of \_\_\_\_\_. Architects, engineers, and artists may spend a decade or more working together to design a single structure.

- (A) education, today,
- (B) education today,
- (C) education today
- (D) education: today,

7. Illusions, cognitive scientists have found, can reveal everything from how we process time and space to how we experience consciousness. \_\_\_\_\_ if a person watching a waterfall shifts his or her gaze to a group of rocks on the side, the rocks appear to move in the opposite direction from the flow of water.

- (A) Nevertheless,
- (B) Therefore,
- (C) Still,
- (D) To illustrate,

8. Eli Whitney's most famous invention, the cotton gin, was patented in 1794. The \_\_\_\_\_ is short for "engine," and the cotton gin revolutionized cotton production by automating its processing.

- (A) word, gin,
- (B) word gin—
- (C) word gin
- (D) word gin,

9. Patients who participate in clinical trials hope to gain access to experimental treatments that would not otherwise be available to them. Every clinical drug trial conducted today randomly assigns patients to one of two \_\_\_\_\_ receives the actual medication.

- (A) groups, however. Only one of which
- (B) groups; however, only one of which
- (C) groups, however, only one of them
- (D) groups; however, only one of them

10. Adam Smith argued that self-interested motives can lead to productive behavior that benefits society and not just the actor. Smith first noted the power of this form of \_\_\_\_\_ *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759). Then, he made the argument famous in his classic 1776 treatise, *The Wealth of Nations*.

- (A) motivation, in his first major work,
- (B) motivation. In his first major work,
- (C) motivation in his first major work,
- (D) motivation in his first major work;

11. The scientific contributions of Svante Pääbo have shaped the entire field of paleogenetics, not just the study of Neanderthals. \_\_\_\_\_ his work has spanned all three known species of humans, one of which the world would likely be unaware if not for Pääbo and his research team.

- (A) Indeed,
- (B) Still,
- (C) Consequently,
- (D) In contrast,

12. Until recently, the polar ice caps on Mars were thought to be frozen solid all the way to their beds due to the cold Martian climate. In 2018, evidence from the European Space Agency's Mars Express satellite challenged this \_\_\_\_\_ ice-penetrating radar called MARSIS, which can see through the planet's southern ice cap, researchers revealed an area at the base of the ice that was likely to contain liquid water.

- (A) assumption using
- (B) assumption. Using
- (C) assumption, using
- (D) assumption and used

13. The trouble with quantum mechanics was never that it made the wrong prediction. In fact, from the beginning of the twentieth century, when physicists first outlined the \_\_\_\_ it was capable of describing the sub-atomic world with extraordinary accuracy.

(A) theory,

(B) theory;

(C) theory

(D) theory:

14. Best known for the series of 10 plays collectively referred to as “The Pittsburgh Cycle,” the \_\_\_\_ explores universal themes while exploring the experiences and heritage of the African American community throughout the twentieth century.

(A) playwright, August Wilson,

(B) playwright, August Wilson

(C) playwright August Wilson,

(D) playwright August Wilson

15. In the mid-nineteenth century, governments around the world began to recognize that controlling infectious diseases would require international cooperation. \_\_\_\_ representatives from twelve countries came together in 1851 at the first International Sanitary Conference in an attempt to halt the spread of cholera plague and yellow fever.

(A) Nonetheless,

(B) Accordingly,

(C) Moreover,

(D) On the other hand,

16. Since the early nineteenth century, doomsayers have gloomily predicted that increasing populations would exhaust their food \_\_\_\_ shortages would result in catastrophic famines. Yet the world currently produces enough food to feed 10 billion people, and there are only seven billion of us.

(A) supplies in only a few decades they claimed

(B) supplies, in only a few decades, they claimed

(C) supplies. In only a few decades, they claimed,

(D) supplies in only a few decades they claimed,

17. High-elevation pine trees are among the oldest forms of flora on the North American continent. Among them, *Pinus longaeva* is notable for its extreme longevity and stability during periods of change. Contributing to the species' \_\_\_\_\_ physiological traits that enhance survival in harsh, dry habitats and defensive traits that make it less vulnerable than other high-elevation pines to tree-killing bark beetles.

(A) remarkable durability, are

(B) remarkable durability are:

(C) remarkable, durability are

(D) remarkable durability are

18. Unlike electronic devices, which are powered by the manipulation of electrons, the human brain relies on the movement of ions in liquid. Inspired by this process, researchers have long sought to develop water-based "ionics". Although ions in water move more slowly than the electrons that are used in smartphones or \_\_\_\_\_ researchers believe that the ionic species with different physical and chemical properties could be harnessed in a variety of ways.

(A) computers,

(B) computers

(C) computers;

(D) computers, but

19. Facing extreme conditions such as starvation and stress, some bacteria enter a dormant state in which life processes stop. Biologists have discovered how these microbes assess environmental conditions before reviving \_\_\_\_\_. Carries implications for evaluating life on Earth as well as other planets.

(A) themselves, this process

(B) themselves this process:

(C) themselves this process

(D) themselves—a process that

20. Most theories claim the Moon formed out of the debris of a collision between the Earth and a Mars-sized object known as Theia, which came together in orbit over a period of months or years. A new simulation advances a different \_\_\_\_\_. May have formed in a matter of hours, when material from the Earth and Theia was launched into orbit immediately after the impact.

(A) theory, though the Moon

(B) theory, though: the Moon

(C) theory; though, the Moon

(D) theory though the Moon



# **Part III:**

# **Grammar**



# 8

## Verbs: Agreement and Tense

The SAT contains two main types of verb questions:

- 1) Subject-verb agreement
- 2) Verb tense

Although some questions may test both concepts, it is important to understand that they are distinct.

- **Agreement** answers the question “singular or plural?”  
Verbs must agree with their subjects: singular subjects must take singular verbs, and plural subjects must take plural verbs.
- **Tense** answers the question “when?” It indicates past, present, or future.

Let's consider the following sentence:

**The feathers** of the black-backed woodpecker **has** evolved to blend in with charred trees so that they are invisible to predators lurking in the forest.

This sentence contains a **disagreement between the subject and the verb** because the subject (*feathers*) is plural and the verb (*has*) is singular.

The singular noun *woodpecker*, which appears immediately before the verb, is part of the prepositional phrase *of the black-backed woodpecker* and has no effect on the number of the verb.

In order to correct the sentence, we must use the plural verb *have* rather than the singular verb *has*.

When many students encounter this type of sentence, however, their first instinct is to change the **tense** of the verb and use the past tense, *had*. While this change does make the sentence grammatically acceptable, there is no compelling reason for the sentence to be rewritten in another tense. **More importantly, the correction does not address the actual problem: the subject and the verb disagree.**

But, you might wonder, why does that matter if *had* fixes the sentence anyway? Why bother learning all that grammar if you can get the question right without worrying about any of it?

Well, because you could see a question that looks like the one on the next page.

Some contemporary artists seek inspiration in historical as well as current events. For example, the works of California-based painter and sculptor Alan Chin \_\_\_\_\_ elements commonly associated with the nineteenth century gold rush and the transcontinental railroad.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) has included

(B) includes

(C) have included

(D) having included

Unfortunately, this question forces you to deal with the actual error. If you can't hear there's a problem and don't have the grammatical tools to figure it out, you're out of luck. You can probably recognize that (D) is awkward and breaks the "-ing is bad" rule, but otherwise... you really have to guess.

If you cannot identify the error immediately, the key to dealing with subject-verb agreement questions is to work backwards, using the answer choices to determine what the question is testing.

**1) Look at the answer choices.**

(A) and (B) contain singular verbs, *has* and *includes*, whereas (C) contains a plural verb, *have*.

When some answer choices contain singular verbs while other answer choices contain plural verbs, the question is testing subject-verb agreement.

**2) Identify the subject, and determine whether it is singular or plural.**

Remember that the noun right before a verb usually won't be the subject. If it were, the question would be too easy, and it wouldn't be on the test in the first place!

When an underlined verb is located close to the beginning of a sentence, the subject is typically right at the beginning of the sentence. So back up and look at the first words of the sentence: *The works*. That's your subject. *Works* ends in -s, so it's plural.

Alternately, you can think about it logically. What has included elements inspired by both the California gold rush and the transcontinental railroad? Alan Chin's *works*. A person can't contain these things.

**3) Find the verb that agrees with the subject.**

*Works* is plural, so a plural verb is required. Only (C) contains a plural verb (*have*), so it is correct.

Notice that although (B) contains a verb in one tense (*includes*), while (A) and (C) contain verbs in other tenses (*has/have included*), you do not need to worry about tense at all in order to answer the question correctly. The only thing that matters is subject-verb agreement. **The fact that different answers contain different tenses is simply a distraction technique designed to make verb questions look more complicated than they actually are.**

## Subject-Verb Agreement

You are very likely to encounter at least one question testing subject-verb agreement on your test, so you should be familiar with the various ways in which disagreements can be constructed.

These questions ask about verbs in the third-person singular (*she/he/it/one*) and third person plural (*they*) because these forms have the highest potential for confusion.

The most important thing to remember about the singular vs. plural forms of a verb is as follows:

- Singular verbs end in *-s* (e.g., it makes)
- Plural verbs do **not** end in *-s* (e.g., they make)

Note that this is the **opposite of nouns**, which take an *-s* in the plural and no *-s* in the singular.

For example, *the book* (noun) is singular, and *the books* is plural

However, *he speaks* (verb) is singular, and *they speak* is plural.

### Regular Verbs

Subject	Correct	Incorrect
Singular	The researcher believes	The researcher believe
Plural Simple	The researchers believe	The researchers believes
Plural Compound	The researcher <u>and</u> her team believe	The researcher <u>and</u> her team believes

### Irregular Verbs

		To be	To have
Present	singular	is	has
	plural	are	have
Past	singular	was	had
	plural	were	had

Unfortunately, questions testing subject-verb agreement are unlikely to make disagreements too obvious. Subjects and verbs are unlikely to appear next to one another, first because this arrangement would make errors easy to spot, and second because errors in students' own writing generally occur when some form of separation is involved.

That said, there are a number of fairly predictable ways in which disagreements can be disguised.

## A. Subject – Non-Essential Clause – Verb

In this structure, a non-essential clause is simply inserted between the subject and the verb to distract from the fact that the subject is singular and the verb is plural or vice versa. When the information between the commas is crossed out, the disagreement between them is revealed.

Again, if you have difficulty identifying these errors, you should practice by taking your pencil and physically crossing out the information between the commas so that you are more easily able to work with the structure visually on a screen.

For example:

Incorrect: Green tea with mint, which is a popular drink in many Middle Eastern countries, **are** said to have many health benefits.

Cross out: Green tea with mint, ~~which is a popular drink in many Middle Eastern countries,~~ **are** said to have many health benefits.

Correct: Green tea with mint, which is a popular drink in many Middle Eastern countries, **is** said to have many health benefits.

It is also possible for a disagreement to occur **within** a non-essential clause:

Incorrect: Green tea with mint, **which are** a popular drink in many Middle Eastern countries, is said to have many health benefits.

Correct: Green tea with mint, **which is** a popular drink in many Middle Eastern countries, is said to have many health benefits.

## Essential Clause with “That”

Disagreements can also involve essential clauses beginning with *that*. As is true for disagreements involving non-essential clauses, errors can be placed around the essential clause or within it.

Incorrect: A drink that is popular in many Middle Eastern countries **are** green tea with mint, said to have many health benefits.

Correct: A drink that is popular in many Middle Eastern countries **is** green tea with mint, said to have many health benefits.

Incorrect: The black widow spider has striking red hourglass markings that makes it one of the most recognizable spiders in the United States.

Correct: The black widow spider has striking red hourglass markings that make it one of the most recognizable spiders in the United States.

## B. Subject – Prepositional Phrase – Verb

As discussed earlier, a prepositional phrase is a phrase that begins with a preposition (e.g., *in the box*, *under the table*, *over the hill*). Prepositional phrases are frequently inserted between subjects and verbs to distract from disagreements.

If a set of answer choices contains both singular and plural verbs, make sure to check for a prepositional phrase between the subject and verb. The last word of the phrase will always appear right before the verb.

In the examples below, the subject is underlined, the prepositional phrase is italicized, and the verb is bold.

Incorrect: The patent *for the first mechanical pencils* **were** granted to Sampson Morgan and John Hawkins in England during the early nineteenth century.

Cross out: ~~The patent *for the first mechanical pencils* **were**~~ granted to Sampson Morgan and John Hawkins in England during the early nineteenth century.

Correct: The patent *for the first mechanical pencils* **was** granted to Sampson Morgan and John Hawkins in England during the early nineteenth century.

In the example above, the subject (*patent*) is singular and requires a singular verb (*was*). However, the prepositional phrase ends with a plural noun (*pencils*), which is placed immediately before the verb.

## C. Verb Before Subject

In this structure, the normal word order (or **syntax**) of a sentence is reversed so that the verb is placed before the subject. Sentences may **begin with a prepositional phrase**, followed by the verb and then subject.

In the examples below, the subject is underlined, the prepositional phrase is italicized, and the verb is bold.

Incorrect: Among the finds from a recent archaeological dig **was** earthenware knobs originally used for “pay walls,” boxes into which Elizabethan theater-goers deposited their fees.

Correct: Among the finds from a recent archaeological dig **were** earthenware knobs originally used for “pay walls,” boxes into which Elizabethan theater-goers deposited their fees.

Most often, the preposition will be the first word of the sentence, as in the example sentences above, but sometimes it will be the second.

Incorrect: Identified among the finds from a recent archaeological dig **was** earthenware knobs originally used for “pay walls,” boxes into which Elizabethan theater-goers deposited their fees.

Correct: Identified among the finds from a recent archaeological dig **were** earthenware knobs originally used for “pay walls,” boxes into which Elizabethan theater-goers deposited their fees.

This structure can be confusing because the reversed syntax makes the sentence sound odd. It is important to understand, however, that the unusual syntax itself is not what makes the sentence incorrect. It is simply a distraction to keep you from hearing the disagreement between the subject and the verb.

Sometimes a sentence in this form will not contain an agreement error. In such cases, you will still need to be able to identify the subject and double-check the agreement in order to confirm that no change is necessary.

It is also important that you be able to determine the subject because you may also encounter errors in which the verb comes before the subject but is not preceded by a prepositional phrase:

Incorrect: Radioactivity is generally not considered harmful when people are exposed to it at low levels for brief periods, but less clear is its long-term effects.

Correct: Radioactivity is generally not considered harmful when people are exposed to it at low levels for brief periods, but less clear are its long-term effects.

When there is no preposition at the start of the sentence, there are unfortunately no real tip-offs for this error besides the presence of both singular and plural verb forms in the answer choices. The easiest way to identify the subject is simply to ask yourself *what* is “less clear” – the plural noun *long-term effects* is the only option that makes sense, so the sentence requires the plural verb *are*.

## D. Compound Subject

A compound subject consists of two nouns—singular or plural—joined by the word *and*. Compound subjects are **always plural** and thus take plural verbs.

While compound subjects are generally quite straightforward in short, simple sentences, they can be easy to overlook in longer ones if you do not read carefully or only pay attention to the noun next to the verb. Errors involving compound subjects can also be very difficult to hear, so you cannot rely on your ear.

For example:

Incorrect: Pigeons make highly effective messengers because their speed and homing ability allows them to quickly and reliably reach familiar destinations.

Correct: Pigeons make highly effective messengers because their speed and homing ability allow them to quickly and reliably reach familiar destinations.

You should be especially careful to determine the complete subject when the verb appears before the subject, as in the second example below. Agreement errors involving this type of syntax are exceptionally hard to identify by ear, even if they would be fairly obvious without the inverted word order.

Incorrect: The two lowest spots that researchers have ever identified on earth, The Mariana Trench and the HMRG Deep sits along the deepest part of the ocean floor

Incorrect: Along the deepest part of the ocean floor sits the Mariana Trench and the HMRG Deep, the two lowest spots that researchers have ever identified on earth.

Both versions of the sentence contain the same error, but the second one hides it much more effectively.

## E. There is, There are, etc.

There is  
There was  
There has been } go with **singular nouns**

There are  
There were  
There have been } go with **plural nouns**

Incorrect: In recent years, there **has been** many questions raised about the safety of genetically modified foods.

Correct: In recent years, there **have been** many questions raised about the safety of genetically modified foods.

## F. Gerunds = Singular

Gerunds (-ing words) take **singular verbs** when they act as subjects. Don't get distracted by a plural noun before the verb!

Incorrect: Playing parlor games such as charades **were** a popular pastime in the early twentieth century, before the invention of radio and television.

Correct: Playing parlor games such as charades **was** a popular pastime in the early twentieth century, before the invention of radio and television.

## G. Collective Nouns = Singular

Collective nouns are **singular nouns** that refer to groups of people. Common examples include *agency, institution, school, committee, jury, city, country, company, university*, and *team*. Although such nouns are treated as plural in British English and are sometimes used with plural verbs in everyday American English as well, the SAT only considers **singular verbs** correct.

Incorrect: For the past several years, the theater company **have** traveled to various schools throughout the city in order to expose students to classic works.

Correct: For the past several years, the theater company **has** traveled to various schools throughout the city in order to expose students to classic works.

## H. That, What, or Whether as a Subject = Singular

All of these words can be used as subjects, although that construction might strike you as very odd.  
*That* = the fact that; *whether/what* = the question of whether/what.

Correct: That Jane Goodall became the world's foremost expert on chimpanzees **was** hardly a surprise to those who had observed her childhood fascination with animals.

## I. Indefinite Pronouns

Indefinite pronouns refer to unspecified nouns. They are used to indicate amounts and can take either singular or plural verbs.

Singular	Plural	Singular or Plural
None*	Few	Neither
No one	Both	Some
Any	Several	More
One	Many	Most
Each	Others	All
Every	A number	
Another		
Much		
The number		

If you encounter these pronouns on the SAT, they are likely to be followed by prepositional phrases (italicized below). Don't get distracted by a noun in the prepositional phrase and mistake it for the subject.

Incorrect: When any (one) of the committee members propose a new regulation, the committee discusses it thoroughly and then takes a vote.

Correct: When any (one) of the committee members proposes a new regulation, the committee discusses it thoroughly and then takes a vote.

When (*n*)either and (*n*)or are paired with two nouns, the verb must agree with the noun before the verb.

Correct: Neither Amy Tan nor Maxine Hong Kingston was raised in a literary family, but both became avid readers while growing up near San Francisco.

When (*n*)either is not paired with (*n*)or and is used with two singular nouns, a singular verb should also be used. In this usage, **neither** is short for **neither one**, and **one** is singular by definition.

Correct: Both Amy Tan and Maxine Hong Kingston became avid readers while growing up near San Francisco, but neither was raised in a literary family.

When *some*, *more*, *most*, and *all* are paired with *of + singular (pro)noun*, they take singular verbs.

Correct: The state of Florida was the site of some of the first European settlements in North America, yet most of it was unpopulated until the nineteenth century.

However, when these pronouns appear alone or are paired with *of + plural (pro)noun*, they take plural verbs.

Correct: Although members of the Algonquin tribe obtained food primarily through hunting and fishing, some (of them) were also farmers who raised corn, squash, and beans.

\*In everyday writing, *none* and, less frequently, *any* are often paired with plural verbs, although that use is technically incorrect. You can assume that if the SAT ever tests these pronouns, only singular verbs will be considered right.

### Exercise: Subject-Verb Agreement (answers p. 205)

For the following sentences, determine whether the underlined verbs agree with their subjects. If not, write in the correct form of the verb. Remember that singular verbs end in -s whereas plural verbs do not.

1. Galaxies, far from being randomly scattered throughout the universe, appears to be distributed in a series of bubble-shaped patterns.

2. The expansion of roads and the construction of a chemical plant has led to a rapid increase in the number of endangered bird species throughout the county.

3. The works of Chippewa author Louise Erdrich explores complex familial relationships among Native Americans as they reflect on issues of identity and belonging.

4. Any of the participants in the study is permitted to withdraw if the medication's side effects become too severe.

5. Each of the compositions by jazz musician Thelonius Monk seem to evoke a self-enclosed world, one with its own telltale harmonies and rhythms.

6. The presence of mysterious cave paintings in the Mississippi Valley have puzzled archaeologists studying images created by ancient inhabitants of the region.

7. One of the most serious problems in treating the injuries of competitive athletes are that one injury often contributes to the next, making it difficult for doctors to identify the primary risk factor.

8. When the Punic Wars, a series of conflicts between Rome and Carthage, was fought during the second and third centuries B.C., they probably formed the largest military clash that had ever taken place.

9. The founding of *The Chicago Tribune* by friends James Kelly, John Wheeler, and Joseph Forrest was prompted by the desire to create a world-class newspaper in a region lacking in serious journalism.

10. Although Andrew Carnegie and Cornelius Vanderbilt established themselves as two of the most powerful figures in business during the late nineteenth century, neither were born into a wealthy family.

11. Though its use has been widely banned, lead paint, which was once used in both homes and businesses, has left potentially hazardous materials in many buildings.

12. The study of foreign languages requires considerable effort and time, as well as access to the right tools. What constitutes the “right” tools, however, changes based on previous language exposure and students’ preferences.

13. Also known as coverts, the feathers of a peacock’s tail spreads out in a distinctive train and boast colorful “eye” markings.

14. The writings of Edmund Wilson, who was interested in many aspects of modern culture, reflect a fascination with the ideas of thinkers ranging from Marx to Freud.

## Verb Tense

Correct answers to tense questions are primarily **based on context**. Several options may be acceptable on their own, but only one answer will fit in the passage. Unless there is a clear reason for the tense to change, a verb should be parallel to the other verbs in the sentence or passage. You must therefore make sure to read the surrounding sentences in order to obtain enough information to answer tense questions.

For example, consider the question below.

The tomato **is** consumed in many different ways, including raw, as an ingredient in many dishes and sauces, and in drinks. Botanically a fruit, it \_\_\_\_\_ considered a vegetable for culinary purposes. It **belongs** to the nightshade family, and its plants typically **grow** from three to ten feet high.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) was

(B) had been

(C) would be

(D) is

Out of context, the sentence is fine. If you looked at it on its own, you would have no way of knowing whether there was a problem.

(B), (C), and (D) are all grammatically acceptable as well (although more complex tenses such as *would be* and *had been* are less likely to appear as correct answers). As a result, it is necessary to consider the verbs in the surrounding sentences: *is*, *belongs*, and *grow*. All of those verbs are in the **present tense**, so the underlined verb must be in the present tense as well. Only *is* fits, so (D) is correct.

In addition, when a sentence includes two verbs in different tenses, each item must include a separate conjugated verb corresponding to the appropriate tense.

Incorrect: The forestry industry **has met and continue** to meet the growing changes required to stay competitive within a rapidly transforming economy.

Correct: The forestry industry **has met and will continue** to meet the growing changes required to stay competitive within a rapidly transforming economy.

Although many tense questions will require you to keep the tense of a particular verb consistent with the tense of the surrounding verbs, correct answers may sometimes depend on other factors.

## A. Present Progressive

Present progressive = *is/are + -ing*, e.g., *she is painting, they are doing, it is growing*

This tense is used to emphasize that an action is happening right at the moment. It can be considered parallel to a verb in the simple (no *-ing*) present. For example:

Correct: Engines powered by ions can travel great distances and **are** currently **carrying** satellites beyond our solar system.

## B. Present Perfect

Present perfect = *has/have + past participle*, e.g., *has painted, has done, have grown*

- Usually formed by adding *-ed* to the verb. (For common irregular past participles, see p. 134.)
- Used for actions that **began in the past** and that are **continuing into the present**.
- **Most important** irregular verb = *to be*, which becomes *has been* (sing.) and *have been* (pl.).

The words *for, since, over, and during* usually act as tip-offs that the present perfect is required.

Incorrect: Since around 500 B.C., people cultivate/cultivated tomatoes in Mesoamerica.

Correct: Since around 500 B.C., people **have cultivated** tomatoes in Mesoamerica.

The present perfect is also commonly used to describe **an action that occurred very recently**.

Correct: Scientists **have reported** that the breakthrough may result in new technologies.

Note that **questions involving the present perfect are likely to depend only on the sentence in which they appear**. For example:

The complexity of human speech is a problem that continues to puzzle computer scientists. **Since** the 1950s, they \_\_\_\_ to create a machine capable of responding to human language with a comparable degree of flexibility and depth.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) have struggled

(B) had struggled

(C) would struggle

(D) struggle

The word *since* serves as a signal that the present perfect is required. (A) is thus correct.

## C. Simple Past

Simple past = *verb + -ed*, e.g., *talked, played, painted*

- Describes a **finished action in the past**.
- Usually identical to the past participle, e.g., *she has walked* and *she walked*. For a list of common irregular past participles, see p. 134.
- Most important **irregular verb** = *to be*, which becomes *was* (sing.) and *were* (pl.).

Dates and **time periods** are usually tip-offs that the simple past is required.

Correct: Around 500 B.C., the inhabitants of Central America **began** to cultivate the first tomatoes.

Correct: During the Middle Ages, many members of the nobility **lived** in castles.

## D. Past Perfect

Past perfect = *had + past participle*, e.g., *had painted, had done, had grown*

- When a sentence refers to two finished actions, the past perfect is used to describe only the action that happened **first**.

**Important:** the phrase *by the time* is a tip-off that the past perfect is required. For example:

Martha Graham, an American dancer and choreographer, is known as one of the foremost pioneers of modern dance. Building upon the foundation of turn-of-the-century dancer Isadora Duncan, Graham brought this art form to a new level with her introduction of dance techniques that at first horrified and then later won over the American public. **By the time** she retired from the stage in 1970, she \_\_\_\_ gave hundreds of performances and permanently altered the course of dance in the United States.

1

 Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) gave

(B) will give

(C) had given

(D) would have given

The presence of the phrase *by the time* indicates that the past perfect is required. You can also think of it this way: logically, Martha Graham must have given hundreds of performances (action #1) before she retired (action #2). (D) is thus correct.

## Past Forms: Irregular Verbs

- Irregular past participles often end in *-en*, *-own*, *-ung*, or *-unk*.
- Irregular simple past forms often end in *-ew*, *-ang*, or *-ank*.

<b>Infinitive</b>	<b>Simple Past</b>	<b>Past Participle</b>
To (a)rise	(A)rose	(A)risen
To (a)waken	(A)woke	(A)woken
To be	Was	Been
To become	Became	Become
To begin	Began	Begun
To blow	Blew	Blown
To break	Broke	Broken
To choose	Chose	Chosen
To do	Did	Done
To draw	Drew	Drawn
To drink	Drank	Drunk
To drive	Drove	Driven
To fly	Flew	Flown
To freeze	Froze	Frozen
To get	Got	Gotten*
To go	Went	Gone
To hide	Hid	Hidden
To give	Gave	Given
To grow	Grew	Grown
To know	Knew	Known
To ride	Rode	Ridden
To ring	Rang	Rung
To run	Ran	Run
To see	Saw	Seen
To sew	Sewed	Sewn
To shrink	Shrank	Shrunk(en)
To sing	Sang	Sung
To sink	Sank	Sunk(en)
To speak	Spoke	Spoken
To spring	Sprang	Sprung
To steal	Stole	Stolen
To stink	Stank	Stunk
To swim	Swam	Swum
To take	Took	Taken
To tear	Tore	Torn
To throw	Threw	Thrown
To wear	Wore	Worn
To write	Wrote	Written

\*Note to students who have attended school in the British system. Although *got* is used as the past participle of *get* in British English, *gotten* is standard in American English.

## E. Would vs. Will

Future = *will* + verb

The future is used to describe actions that have not yet occurred but that will definitely occur, and to indicate **predictions, suggestions, and hopes**.

Correct: Over the next several decades, demographers believe, millions of people **will migrate** to cities from rural areas.

Correct: Scientists now use machine learning algorithms to predict how long lithium-ion battery **will last**.

Conditional = *would* + verb

*Would* is used to describe **hypothetical** situations: ones that **could** or **might** occur but have not actually occurred.

Correct: Many people who think of the tomato as a vegetable **would be** surprised to learn that it is actually a fruit.

*Would* + verb can also refer to a **recurring action** in the past.

Correct: The Fireside Poets, so called because families **would read** them aloud in front of their fireplaces, were as popular in the nineteenth century as rock stars are today.

Finally, *would* can be used to refer to an action that, from the perspective of the past, has not yet occurred—even if, from today's perspective, that action occurred long ago.

**Shortcut:** *would*, not *will*, should generally be used in sentences that include a date in the past.

For example:

At the age of 14, Martha Graham saw the acclaimed dancer Ruth St. Denis perform and proclaimed that her future profession was “chosen.” However, when Graham began dancing shortly afterward, in the **early years of the twentieth century**, no one could have imagined that she \_\_\_\_\_ one of the greatest choreographers of all time.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) will become

(B) would become

(C) would have become

(D) becomes

Because the sentence clearly describes events in the past, *would*, not *will*, should be used. (B) is thus correct.

## F. Would Have vs. Will Have

In the paper version of the SAT, answers with *would have* and *will have* have traditionally been **incorrect**, but it is nevertheless useful to have a basic understanding of how these tenses are used.

Past conditional = *would have + verb*

*Would have* is used to describe an action that could have happened, but that did not actually occur.

The most important thing to know about this tense is that *would have + past participle* should not appear in a **clause** begun by *if*, although this construction can appear in the same **sentence**.

Incorrect: If the Washington Monument **would have been** constructed as originally designed, the National Mall **would have been** anchored by a pantheon of 30 columns.

Correct: If the Washington Monument **had been** constructed as originally designed, the National Mall **would have been** anchored by a pantheon of 30 columns.

Future perfect = *will have + verb*

*Will have* is used to describe a future action that will be finished *before* a second action occurs.

As is true for the past perfect, this tense is often associated with the phrase *by the time*.

Correct: By the time construction on the GIFT Diamond Tower is complete, workers **will have spent** more than three years assembling the 87-story building.

## Passive Voice

In a **passive** construction, the subject and the object are flipped. *X does y* (active) becomes *y is done by x* (passive). Note that the construction *by* combined with a form of *to be* often signals the passive voice.

### Active

William Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet*.

### Passive

*Hamlet was written by William Shakespeare.*

Although the passive voice should not be a major concern, you should be aware that it has a tendency to create **wordy and awkward constructions likely to signal incorrect answers**.

Assuming that there is no additional error involved, if you are trying to decide between an answer with an active construction and an answer with a passive one, you can assume that the active option will be right.

In response to the demand for long-lasting staple foods during the 1970s, \_\_\_\_ As result, the nutritional value of many packaged foods declined.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- (A) preservatives were added by manufacturers to dishes that previously were simple.
- (B) the addition of preservatives to manufacturers to previously simple dishes.
- (C) manufacturers added preservatives to previously simple dishes.
- (D) previously simple dishes had preservatives added to them by manufacturers.

(B) creates a fragment because it does not contain a main verb, so it can be eliminated immediately. (A) and (D) both contain wordy, passive construction (*preservatives were added by manufacturers*). As a result, they read less cleanly than (C), which contains a much cleaner, more standard subject-verb construction (*manufacturers added preservatives*). (C) is thus correct.

## To vs. -ING

Finally, it is possible that you will encounter questions asking you to identify whether the “to” (infinitive) or “-ing” (gerund) form of a verb is correct.

- Incorrect: Even brief exposure to words associated with money seems to cause people to become more independent and less inclined **helping** others.
- Correct: Even brief exposure to words associated with money seems to cause people to become more independent and less inclined **to help** others.

Unfortunately, there is no rule or “trick” for these questions—you must simply be able to hear which version is correct. These questions are likely to appear very infrequently and should not be a major cause for concern; however, based on the practice material released by the College Board, they do appear to be fair game for the digital test.

When a “to” form is replaced with an “-ing” form, a preposition must often be placed before the “-ing” form. For example:

Deactivated viruses form the basis of many vaccines known for their effectiveness \_\_\_\_\_ disease. As a result, people can be safely injected with genetic material from a virus without becoming ill themselves.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) to prevent

(B) in preventing

(C) with preventing

(D) preventing

Because the standard phrase is *effectiveness in preventing*, (B) is correct.

**Note:** when both the “to” and “-ing” forms are acceptable, you will not be asked to choose between them.

- Correct: During the Seneca Falls convention in 1848, the problem of women’s suffrage began **taking** precedence over other concerns.
- Correct: During the Seneca Falls convention in 1848, the problem of women’s suffrage began **to take** precedence over other concerns.

For the sake of thoroughness, an extended list of expressions requiring “to” and “-ing” forms is included on the following page. To be clear, however, even if English is not your first language, I do not advocate spending long periods of time trying to memorize it. The chance that you will encounter one of these questions is sufficiently small that you should not worry about them until you are consistently answering every other type of question correctly.

<b>Infinitive ("to")</b>	<b>Gerund ("‐ing")</b>
Agree to be	Accused of being
Allow to be	Accustomed to being
Appear/seem to be	Admired for being
Arrange to be	Admit to being
Aspire to be	Advocate being
Attempt to be	After being
Cease to be	Avoid being
Choose to be	Banned from being
Claim to be	Before being
Consider to be	Consider being
Decide to be	Deny being
Decline to be	Describe being
Deserve to be	Discuss being
Encourage to be	Effective in/at being
Expect to be	Enjoy being
Fail to be	Famous for being
Have the ability to be	Imagine being
Inclined to be	In charge of being
Inspire (someone) to be	In the hope(s) of being
Intend to be	(In)capable of being
Known to be (+ noun)	Insist on being
Manage to be	Known as/for being
Neglect to be	Mind being
Offer to be	Postpone being
Prepare to be	Praised for being
Promise to be	Prevent from being
Refuse to be	Regarded as being
Reluctant to be	Report being
Require to be	Resent being
Seek/strive to be	Risk being
Shown to be	Seen as being
Struggle to be	Stop being
Tend to be	Succeed in/at being
Threaten to be	Used to being
Want to be	Viewed as being
Wish to be	Without being

## Exercise: Subject-Verb Agreement and Tense (answers p. 205)

1. For several weeks each year, more than 200 artists from 60 countries gather in Santa Fe to offer handmade masterworks. Every July, one of the world's largest folk-art festivals \_\_\_\_ together artists from every corner of the globe for a vast and colorful international bazaar.

(A) brings

(B) bring

(C) have brought

(D) bringing

2. Kite-flying has a long history in Japan: according to legend, the first kites flew nearly 1,400 years ago. Since that time, kite-flying \_\_\_\_ a delightful tradition.

(A) had remained

(B) has remained

(C) remained

(D) remains

3. Although the Concorde was retired in 2003, a plane capable of flying halfway around the world in a mere four hours could soon exist. For engineers, the elimination of sonic booms \_\_\_\_ one of the biggest challenges involved in building the new craft. Some of them claim, however, that they have found a way of reducing the amount of noise the planes make.

(A) is

(B) are

(C) have been

(D) were

4. The construction of prefabricated houses is based on the assembly-line model of car manufacturing. In the 1920s, Ford's production method for the Model T transformed the automobile from a luxury item into a purchase that was affordable for the average consumer. Today, assembly-line production and bulk buying \_\_\_\_ both the cost and construction time for prefabricated homes.

(A) has driven down

(B) have driven down

(C) is driving down

(D) drives down

5. Ronald Joffrey and Gerald Arpino founded the Joffrey School of Ballet in 1953. In the years since, it \_\_\_\_\_ into one of the world's most prestigious training centers for classical dance.

(A) evolves

(B) would evolve

(C) has evolved

(D) is evolving

6. Basket weaving is one of the most widespread crafts in history: originating in the Middle East around 7,000 years ago, it spread to every continent except Antarctica. The preservation of ancient baskets is difficult, however, because most items are made of natural materials like wood, grass, and vines, which \_\_\_\_\_ rapidly. As a result, much of the history of basket making has been lost.

(A) decay

(B) decays

(C) has decayed

(D) decayed

7. The supercontinent called Pangaea broke apart about 200 million years ago, when it was fractured by the movement of tectonic plates. Geologists predict, however, that the pieces \_\_\_\_\_ themselves hundreds of millions of years in the future, possibly in the area around the north pole.

(A) will reassemble

(B) reassemble

(C) have reassembled

(D) to reassemble

8. In the mid-1600s, the French playwrights Jean Racine and Pierre Corneille competed for the title of greatest tragedian. By the end of the century, however, Racine \_\_\_\_\_ considerably more successful than his rival.

(A) become

(B) will become

(C) has become

(D) had become

9. Yurts have been a distinctive feature of life in Central Asia for at least three thousand years. The first written description of a yurt used as a \_\_\_\_\_ recorded by Herodotus, who described yurt-like tents as the homes of the Scythians: horse-riding nomads who lived in the northern Black Sea and Central Asia during the first millennium A.D.

(Ⓐ) dwelling was

(Ⓑ) dwellings, was

(Ⓒ) dwelling has been

(Ⓓ) dwelling, had been

10. In 1860, the Lincoln-Douglas debates \_\_\_\_\_ as an important campaign document in the presidential race, which pitted Lincoln against Douglas for the second time. In this case, however, Douglas was running as the candidate of a divided party and finished a distant second in the popular vote.

(Ⓐ) have been printed as a book and used

(Ⓑ) were printed as a book and used

(Ⓒ) were printed as a book and had been used

(Ⓓ) printed as a book and used

## 9

## Pronouns

A pronoun must agree with the noun to which it refers, i.e., its **antecedent** or **referent**.

Singular pronouns (e.g., *she*, *it*) must agree with singular nouns, and plural pronouns (e.g., *they*) must agree with plural nouns.

Some pronouns refer only to people (e.g., *he*, *she*); some only to things (e.g., *it*); and some to both (e.g., *they*).

On the SAT, some questions will ask you to determine whether a pronoun should be singular or plural, which in turn requires you to back up and determine whether the noun it refers to is singular or plural. In some cases, you may also need to identify whether a pronoun refers to a person or to a thing.

Let's start by looking at the following question.

The cacao bean is the dried and fully fermented fatty bean of the cacao tree (*Theobroma cacao*). \_\_\_\_\_ the source of cocoa butter and solids, including chocolate, as well as an ingredient in many Mesoamerican dishes such as molé and tejate.

1

 Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) They are

(B) It is

(C) These are

(D) One is

When we look at the answers, we can see that they contain both singular (*it*, *one*) and plural (*they*, *these*) options. As a result, we must determine which noun the underlined pronoun is intended to refer to, and whether that noun is singular or plural.

The underlined pronoun appears at the start of the sentence, and antecedents typically come before pronouns (*ante-* = before). It is therefore necessary to look at the previous sentence: *The cacao bean is the dried and fully fermented fatty bean of the cacao tree (*Theobroma cacao*)*.

Now we're going to think through the problem step by step:

- Logically, what is the source of cocoa butter and solids? The cacao bean.
- Is *cacao bean* singular or plural? Singular. We know because there is no *-s* on the end of *bean*.
- Is *they* singular or plural? Plural.

So we have a mismatch. The pronoun *it* must be used to refer to a singular noun. The answer is therefore (B). Note that it does not matter that *they* could logically refer to the plural noun *cacao beans*. Only the singular noun *cacao bean* is present, and a **pronoun must refer to a word that actually appears**.

Don't get distracted by (D): *one* normally implies *one of many*, but as we've established, the referent is singular. Although you could maybe-kind-of-sort-of make an argument for this answer, (B) is simply more correct according to the most logical interpretation of the passage.

## A. Things

Traditionally, the majority of SAT pronoun agreement questions have tested things, and given that this type of agreement is responsible for most pronoun errors in academic writing, that pattern is likely to hold.

The pronouns *it/its* and *they/their* are used to refer to singular and plural things, e.g., cities, books, paintings. (Note that the plural of *it* is either *they* or *them*, not *its*.)

Singular	Plural
It	They, Them
Its	Their

A singular noun must be replaced with a singular pronoun.

Incorrect: While the tomato is botanically a fruit, **they** are considered a vegetable for culinary purposes.

Correct: While the tomato is botanically a fruit, **it** is considered a vegetable for culinary purposes.

Likewise, a plural noun must be replaced with a plural pronoun.

Incorrect: While tomatoes are botanically fruits, **it** is considered a vegetable for culinary purposes.

Correct: While tomatoes are botanically fruits, **they** are considered vegetables for culinary purposes.

A referent may appear in the same sentence in which an underlined pronoun appears, but it may also appear in the previous sentence (as in the examples above) or, on rare occasions, in the following sentence.

**To reiterate: When you encounter a set of answer choices that includes both singular and plural pronouns, you should always take a moment to figure out which noun the pronoun refers to.** Otherwise, you are very likely to be confused by choices that are grammatically correct but that create disagreements when plugged back into the passage.

## B. People

Errors involving people are typically easier to catch than ones involving things for the simple reason that it is generally quite clear whether a passage is discussing one person or multiple people. For example:

Mae Jemison became the first African American woman to travel into space when she went into orbit aboard the Space Shuttle Endeavour on September 12, 1992. After \_\_\_\_\_ medical education and a brief general practice, Jemison served in the Peace Corps for two years.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) one's

(B) her

(C) their

(D) there

Because the underlined pronoun must logically refer to Mae Jemison, who is clearly female (*the first African American woman*), *her* is the sole possibility. The answer is therefore (B).

When the gender of a singular noun is unspecified, e.g., *a researcher*, *an architect*, the phrase *he or she* (or a grammatically alternate form, e.g., *him or her*, *his or her*) should be used. Although *they* is common in everyday English, only *he or she* has traditionally been considered correct on the SAT. Unless material indicating otherwise is released by the College Board, it is probably safest to assume that this pattern will hold true on the digital test. For example:

Working memory, the ability to consciously hold and manipulate new information in the mind, is an effortful process. In particular, neurons in a person's prefrontal cortex must work together in synchrony to focus \_\_\_\_\_ thoughts.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) our

(B) one's

(C) his or her

(D) your

Because the pronoun in question refers to *a person*, singular, (C) is correct.

**Note:** both *each* and *every* are **singular** (short for *each one* or *every one*) and take the singular pronouns *it* and *he or she*.

Incorrect: Each of the researchers will present **their** work at the conference.

Correct: Each of the researchers will present **his or her** work at the conference.

Incorrect: Every one of the researchers will present **their** work at the conference.

Correct: Every one of the researchers will present **his or her** work at the conference.

### C. One, You, We

One	One, One's
We	Us, Our
You	You, Your

While *one*, *you*, and *we* can all be used to talk about people in general, these pronouns must remain consistent throughout; they cannot be mixed and matched with one another (or any other pronoun) within a sentence or paragraph.

Remember that context is important. While all four of the answers to a given question may be grammatically correct and make sense out of context, only one will make the sentence **parallel** to the surrounding sentences or parts of a sentence.

If you have been reading the passage carefully and not just skipping from question to question, you will likely remember which pronoun was used in the previous couple of sentences. If you are unsure, however, you must go back to the passage and read the surrounding sentences to see which pronoun is used.

To consciously hold and manipulate new information mentally, **we** must make a concerted effort. In particular, neurons in the prefrontal cortex must work together in synchrony to focus \_\_\_\_\_ thoughts.

1  Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) one's

(B) our

(C) your

(D) their

If you just read the sentence with the underlined pronoun on its own, you would have no way of knowing which option to choose. A look at the previous sentence, however, reveals that it contains the pronoun *we*. That means that the pronoun in this sentence must match. *Our* is the possessive form, so (B) is correct.

## D. Missing or Ambiguous Antecedent (Noun > Pronoun)

When a pronoun refers to a noun that is missing or unclear, it is necessary to name the specific person, place, or thing in order to remove the ambiguity. For example:

Daniel Liebeskind and Frank Gehry are among the most celebrated architects in the world. \_\_\_\_\_ known for using unconventional building materials such as corrugated metal to create tilted geometrical structure



MS ANH DAY SAT 1600  
HOTLINE: 0967 104 204

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) He is known

(B) It is known

(C) Gehry is known

(D) He would be known

Because *Daniel* and *Frank* are both male names, it is unclear which one *he* refers to. (A) and (D) can be eliminated. The tense shift in (D) is exceedingly awkward, eliminating that option as well.

Although it keeps the construction singular, (C) is correct because it supplies a specific name and removes the ambiguity.

**Important:** given the choice between a pronoun and a noun naming a specific person or thing, the noun will virtually always be correct. For example:

Produced by the Boston-based startup Superpedestrian, a new device called the Copenhagen Wheel can be slipped onto any bicycle to provide an electronic boost. With a 350-watt motor and a 48-volt lithium battery, it can produce more than four times the energy created by regular pedaling. \_\_\_\_\_ can use a smartphone to unlock and lock it, change gears, and select how much assistance the motor should provide.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) They

(B) Bicycle riders

(C) He or she

(D) Some

The passage describes a device that *can be slipped onto any bicycle*, so it makes sense that *they* would refer to bicycle riders. The problem is that the noun *bicycle riders* doesn't actually appear in the passage, and again, a pronoun must refer to a noun that actually appears. Only (B) supplies the noun indicating exactly who can use a smartphone to control the device.

A version of the “noun over pronoun” rule can also be tested with *this* and *that*. Generally speaking, *this* and *that* (along with their plural forms *these* and *those*) should be followed by a noun because the pronoun alone tends to result in a vague construction. For example:

Over the last several decades, the Internet has fundamentally changed how we live, work, and play. From virtual classrooms to electronic banking to online gaming, many of our daily actions and interactions are now governed by the web. While \_\_\_\_\_ has numerous benefits, it has some drawbacks as well.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) this

(B) that

(C) these

(D) this technology

Although the reader can reasonably assume that the word *this* refers to the Internet or to conducting daily activities online, the sentence does not actually spell that fact out. (D) is correct because it includes a specific noun, and **more specific is always better**.

## E. Emphatic Pronouns

“Self” words, e.g., *himself*, *itself*, and *themselves*, can correctly be used to emphasize either people or things. Just make sure that they agree with the noun they are intended to emphasize.

Incorrect: What is criticized is the author’s refusal to discuss her work publicly, not the quality of the writing herself.

Correct: What is criticized is the author’s refusal to discuss her work publicly, not the quality of the writing itself.

Because *the writing* (thing, singular) rather than *the author* (person) is the noun emphasized here, *itself* must be used.

## F. Noun Agreement

Nouns themselves must also agree in number: singular subjects must be paired with singular nouns, and plural subjects must be paired with plural nouns.

Incorrect: Capitalizing on the national cycling craze of the early 1890s, Orville and Wilbur Wright decided to open a shop and become a **bicycle seller**.

Correct: Capitalizing on the national cycling craze of the early 1890s, Orville and Wilbur Wright decided to open a shop and become **bicycle sellers**.

Because Orville and Wilbur Wright were two people, they must have become *bicycle sellers*, plural.

On the other hand, you must watch out for constructions that appear to be plural but are in fact singular.

Incorrect: Orville Wright, along with his brother Wilbur, are considered **inventors** of the airplane.

Correct: Orville Wright, along with his brother Wilbur, is considered **an inventor** of the airplane.

Notice that this example contains a non-essential clause after *Orville Wright*. If that clause is removed, the error reveals itself: *Orville Wright...are considered inventors of the airplane*. Clearly that does not make sense.

*Orville Wright*, the true subject of the sentence, was one person and therefore *an inventor*, singular.

## Relative Pronouns

As is true for other pronouns such as *it* and *he*, some relative pronouns can refer to people only; others can refer to things only; and still others can refer to both people and things.

People	Things	People & Things
Who Whom	Which	Whose That

### Who(m) vs. Which

Use *who* or *whom*, not *which*, when referring to people. *Which* is reserved for things.

Incorrect: Employees which participate in professional development can acquire new skills and associate with other workers in their industries.

Correct: Employees who participate in professional development can acquire new skills and associate with other workers in their industries.

**Note:** Although *that* is often used to refer to people in everyday writing, this usage is controversial and has thus never been directly tested on the SAT. It is not impossible that you will encounter this construction in Writing passages or answers; however, you can assume that other concepts are being tested.

### Whose

*Whose* is the possessive of both *who* and *which*. Although it looks like *who*, it can refer to **people or things**.

Correct: People **whose** last names begin with letters that occur late in the alphabet are often susceptible to limited-time offers because they tend to be eager for acknowledgment.

Correct: Mount Hosmer is an “upside-down mountain” **whose** oldest rocks are found near the top of the mountain and **whose** youngest rocks are found near the bottom.

### Who vs. Whom

There are two primary things to know about *who* and *whom* for the SAT:

- 1) Who is used before a verb.
- 2) Whom is used after a preposition.

A verb should never come right after *whom*. If it does, *who* should be used instead.

Incorrect: One of the first screen writers to include details such as stage directions in her work was June Mathis, whom helped make film into an art form.

Correct: One of the first screen writers to include details such as stage directions in her work was June Mathis, who helped make film into an art form.

*Whom* should, however, be used after a preposition (e.g., *of, from, for, to, by, with, in, on, about*).

Incorrect: Among Emily Dickinson's favorite writing partners was her sister-in-law, Susan Huntington, with who she exchanged hundreds of letters.

Correct: Among Emily Dickinson's favorite writing partners was her sister-in-law, Susan Huntington, with whom she exchanged hundreds of letters.

**Important:** A verb can be placed after *pronoun + of whom* (e.g., *some of whom believe, many of whom go*). The use of *whom* is determined by the preposition *of*, not by the verb.

### Where, When, and “Preposition + Which”

- *Where* refers to places (physical locations) only. It should not be used to indicate times or books/films/television programs.
- *When* refers to times and events only.

*Preposition + which* (e.g., *in which, during which, to which*) can be used in place of *where* or *when*. Although this construction may sound odd to you, it is perfectly acceptable.

Incorrect: The Middle Ages was a period **where** many farmers were bound to the land they worked.

Correct: The Middle Ages was a period **when/in which** many farmers were bound to the land they worked.

Watch out for answers that do not place a preposition before *which*.

Incorrect: New York is a city **which** many people travel by subway rather than by car.

Correct: New York is a city **in which** many people travel by subway rather than by car.

As a general rule, if *where/when* and *preposition + which* are both acceptable and appear in different answers, there will be a separate factor that makes one choice correct and the other(s) incorrect.

Note that when *preposition + which* is used, it is unnecessary to also place a preposition at the end of the clause or sentence.

Incorrect: Performance artist Anna Deveare Smith is known for her one-woman “documentary plays” in which she plays a wide array of characters **in**.

Correct: Performance artist Anna Deveare Smith is known for her one-woman “documentary plays” in which she plays a wide array of characters.

### Whereby

*Whereby* means “by which” or “according to which.” It is typically used to introduce a description of **systems, methods, or processes**. Although constructions involving this word do tend to sound somewhat awkward, they may appear in correct answers.

Correct: Desalination is a process **whereby** salt and other minerals are removed from water in order to produce a liquid that is suitable for human consumption.

## Exercise: Pronoun Agreement (answers p. 205)

1. In recent years, new forms of digital technology have allowed acoustic engineers to create sophisticated noise-filtering devices. As a result, \_\_\_\_\_ can now eliminate unwanted noise with a precision never before possible.

(A) it

(B) they

(C) he or she

(D) this

2. Elizabeth Barrett Browning's "Cry of the Children," published in 1842, denounced the use of child labor. The poem also brought about some of the first labor laws designed to prevent \_\_\_\_\_.

(A) them

(B) those

(C) some

(D) that practice

3. When people dream, their eyes move in accordance with the action. If someone is dreaming about watching a game of tennis, for example, \_\_\_\_\_ eyes will move from left to right with each volley.

(A) his or her

(B) one's

(C) our

(D) your

4. Jazz musician Miles Dewey Davis III was known for creating a unique sound through the use of non-traditional instruments such as the French horn. He joined Ella Fitzgerald and Duke Ellington as \_\_\_\_\_ of the most renowned jazz performers in the United States during the mid-twentieth century.

(A) many

(B) some

(C) one

(D) more

5. Although people who sleep in the middle of the day are often perceived as lazy, they are actually a remarkably accomplished group. Winston Churchill, John F. Kennedy, Napoleon, Albert Einstein, and Thomas Edison were all \_\_\_\_ known for valuing their afternoon rest.

(A) a famous napper

(B) a famous, napper

(C) famous nappers;

(D) famous nappers,

6. Many runners, even those \_\_\_\_ train regularly, have a tendency to stick to an established distance. As a result, they never develop a clear sense of their athletic potential.

(A) whom

(B) who

(C) which

(D) they

7. There are around 300 octopus species, all of which are part of an elite group of marine creatures with remarkably large brains. Scientists have found that octopuses can not only navigate their way through mazes, but also solve problems quickly and remember \_\_\_\_\_

(A) it.

(B) this.

(C) that.

(D) information.

8. The ENIAC, a precursor to the modern computer developed in the 1940s, was capable of adding more than 5,000 numbers per second. Occupying the space of a room, the machine contained dozens of panels, \_\_\_\_\_ own unique function.

(A) each with its

(B) each with their

(C) each of them had its

(D) each of which had their

9. In 1858, Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux won a commission to redesign Manhattan's Central Park, which at that time lacked ways for pedestrians and carriages to navigate the park without disturbing one another. \_\_\_\_\_ began work later that year.

(A) It

(B) He

(C) They

(D) Some

10. Many of the largest deserts, including the Gobi Desert and the Patagonian Desert, are located in the shadows of immense mountain ranges that block moisture from nearby bodies of water. For example, the Himalayan peaks surrounding \_\_\_\_\_ are so high that clouds cannot rise high enough to cross them.

(A) it

(B) this

(C) that one

(D) the Gobi

# 10

## Apostrophes

Singular	Plural (-s, -es)	Singular Possessive (-'s)	Plural Possessive (-s')
Scientist	Scientists	Scientist's	Scientists'
Business	Businesses	Business's	Businesses'

To form the **plural** of a noun, add *-s*. When a singular noun ends in *-s*, add *-es*. Do **not** add an apostrophe.

Correct: The **birds** are flying. = More than one bird is flying.

Correct: The **businesses** are open. = More than one business is open.

To form the possessive of a singular regular noun, an or irregular plural noun, add *apostrophe + -s*.

Correct: The **bird's** wings are red. = The wings of the bird are red.

Correct: The **business's** policy is new. = The policy of the business is new.

Correct: The **children's** growth = The growth of the children

Singular	Plural
Child	Children
Fish	Fish
Foot	Feet
Mouse	Mice
Person	People
(Wo)man	(Wo)men

To form the possessive of a regular plural noun, add an apostrophe after the *-s* or *-es*.

Correct: The **birds'** wings are red. = The wings of the birds are red.

Correct: The **businesses'** policies are new. = The policies of the businesses are new.

**\*Note:** For well-known names ending in *-s*, the possessive can be formed by adding only an apostrophe (e.g., Dickens' works = the works of Dickens), but you do not need to worry about this exception for the SAT.

The construction *apostrophe + -s* is also used to form a **contraction** between a noun and the verb *is* or *has*. This usage has not traditionally been a major focus of the SAT; however, you should be comfortable distinguishing it from the usage indicating possession.

Correct: The **newspaper's** distributed nationally. = The newspaper **is** distributed nationally.

Correct: The **study's** been released. = The study **has** been released.

If apostrophe questions involve nouns, either one or two of these words may be underlined, with the answers providing various combinations of possessives and plurals.

Studies have suggested that memories are stored as unique firing patterns of the \_\_\_\_\_. When a memory is retrieved, those patterns are replayed.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) brains neuron's.

(B) brain's neurons.

(C) brains' neurons.

(D) brain's neuron's.

**Shortcut:** A noun followed by another noun should contain an apostrophe, whereas a noun followed by any other part of speech should not contain an apostrophe. When you think about it, this is only logical: the only thing a noun can possess is another noun.

For example, in the above question, an apostrophe is required in the phrase *brain's neurons* because *brain* is followed by another noun, *neurons*. That eliminates (A).

(D) can be eliminated automatically as well because *neuron's* is not followed by another word, and a noun must possess something in order to take an apostrophe.

Be careful with (C): *brains'* is possessive, but the apostrophe after the *-s* indicates a plural noun. The singular must be used to refer to the brain in general, so this answer can be eliminated as well.

(B) correctly makes the first noun singular and possessive, and the second noun plural only.

Note that the apostrophe-no apostrophe pattern can be applied even when a single noun is involved. You just need to look at the non-underlined word right after the blank. If, for example, only the word *brain* were omitted in the question above, you would look at the following word — *neurons* — and see that it was a noun as well. That would tell you an apostrophe was necessary.

## Plural and Possessive Pronouns

To review: a pronoun is a word such as *it* or *their* that can replace a noun in a sentence. For example, the sentence *I.M. Pei is a well-known architect* can be rewritten as *He is a well-known architect*.

Apostrophes are used differently for pronouns than they are for nouns.

- To form the possessive of a pronoun, add *-s*. **Do not add an apostrophe**.
- To form a contraction with the verb *is* or *are*, add *apostrophe + -s* or *-re*.

**Important:** The main pronouns tested with apostrophes on the SAT are *it* and *they*, and they should be your main focus. However, I am including *you* and *who* as well for the sake of thoroughness.

### A. It's vs. Its

**It's** = *it is*, *it has*

**Its** = possessive of *it*. Used before a noun.

**Its' & Its's** = do not exist. Answers with these constructions can be eliminated immediately.

The easiest way to choose between *its* and *it's* is simply to plug in *it is*. If *it is* makes sense in context, you need the apostrophe. If *it is* does not make sense, the apostrophe is incorrect.

- Incorrect: Some critics of the Internet have argued that it is a danger because **it's (it is)** vastness threatens people's intellectual health.
- Incorrect: Some critics of the Internet have argued that it is a danger because **its' vastness** threatens people's intellectual health.
- Correct: Some critics of the Internet have argued that it is a danger because **its** vastness threatens people's intellectual health.

### B. They're, Their, and There

Although the same apostrophe rules apply to *they're* vs. *their* as apply to other pronouns, an extra degree of confusion is often present because of a third identical-sounding pronoun: *there*.

**They're** = *they are*

**Their** = possessive of *they*. Used before a noun.

**There** = a place

In general, it is easiest to think of *there* as separate from *they're* and *their*, which both involve *they*.

To check *their* vs. *they're*, plug in *they are*. If you can plug in this phrase, the apostrophe is necessary. If you can't plug it in, no apostrophe should be used.

To check *there*, simply ask yourself whether the pronoun is referring to a place. The passage will make it clear whether this is the case.

### They're

- Incorrect: Although **their** usually powered by rowers, canoes may also have sails or motors.
- Incorrect: Although **there** usually powered by rowers, canoes may also have sails or motors.
- Correct: Although **they're** usually powered by rowers, canoes may also contain sails or motors.

Because you would say, *Although they are usually powered by rowers*, the apostrophe is required.

### Their

- Incorrect: Deactivated viruses form the basis of many vaccines known for **they're effectiveness** in preventing disease.
- Incorrect: Deactivated viruses form the basis of many vaccines known for **there effectiveness** in preventing disease.
- Correct: Deactivated viruses form the basis of many vaccines known for **their** effectiveness in preventing disease.

Because you would not say, *Deactivated viruses form the basis of many vaccines known for they are effectiveness*, no apostrophe is needed. The sentence does not refer to a place, so *there* is not correct either.

### There

- Incorrect: Because Denver is located close to the Rocky Mountains, snow often falls **they're**.
- Incorrect: Because Denver is located close to the Rocky Mountains, snow often falls **their**.
- Correct: Because Denver is located close to the Rocky Mountains, snow often falls **there**.

Because the sentence is clearly talking about a place, *there* is required.

## C. You're vs. Your

**You're** = you are

**Your** = possessive form of *you*. Used before a noun.

To determine which version is correct, plug in *you are*.

- Incorrect: The first few hours of the workday can have a significant effect on **you're** level of productivity over the following eight hours.
- Correct: The first few hours of the workday can have a significant effect on **your** level of productivity over the following eight hours.

Because you would not say, *The first few hours of the workday can have a significant effect on you are level of productivity*, no apostrophe should be used.

## D. Who's vs. Whose

**Who's** = who is, who has

**Whose** = possessive form of *who*. Unlike *who*, *whose* can be used to refer to both people and things.

To determine which version is correct, plug in *who is*.

Incorrect: Frank Gehry is an American architect **whose** known for his original and sometimes outlandish designs.

Correct: Frank Gehry is an American architect **who's (who is)** known for his original and sometimes outlandish designs.

BUT:



MS ANH DAY SAT 1600  
HOTLINE: 0967 104 204

Incorrect: Frank Gehry is an American architect **who's (who is)** designs are famous for their boldness and originality.

Correct: Frank Gehry is an American architect **whose** designs are famous for their boldness and originality.

It is possible that you will encounter SAT questions testing pronouns in terms of both agreement and apostrophes simultaneously. In such cases, you must first determine whether the referent is singular or plural; and second, whether an apostrophe is needed to indicate a contraction with *is* or *are*. For example:

Until recently, it was believed that silent synapses—connections between neurons that remain inactive until memories are formed—were present only during early development. However, new research suggests that \_\_\_\_\_ role in the adult brain may be much larger than previously thought.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) its

(B) it's

(C) their

(D) they're

Logically, the pronoun in the blank must refer to *silent synapses*, plural.

*Its* and *it's* are singular, so (A) and (B) can be eliminated.

To choose between (C) and (D), plug in *they are*: *However, new research suggests that they are role in the adult brain may be much larger than previously thought.* No, that clearly does not make grammatical sense.

(C) can thus be eliminated, leaving (D) as the correct answer.

## Exercise: Apostrophes (answers p. 206)

1. Because the lemur, a small animal native to Madagascar, shares some traits with other primates, \_\_\_\_\_ frequently mistaken for an ancestor of modern monkeys and apes.

(A) its

(B) it's

(C) its'

(D) their

2. Throughout his 1986 novel-in-verse, *The Golden Gate*, Vikram Seth maintains a stubborn resistance to traditional structure. The narrator does not hesitate to interrupt the \_\_\_\_\_ in order to explain a shift in the plot or to comment on the structure of the book.

(A) stories events

(B) story's events

(C) stories' event's

(D) story's events'

3. The woolly mammoth's appearance and behavior have been studied more than those of most other prehistoric animals because \_\_\_\_\_ have been discovered in many different locations around the world.

(A) it's bones

(B) its bone's

(C) its bones

(D) its bones'

4. The modern rodeo has its roots in Mexico, where in the early nineteenth century ranch hands called *vaqueros* developed and perfected the roping and riding skills that are performed in \_\_\_\_\_. They also gave the rodeo its name: the word *rodeo* derives from the Spanish verb *rodear*, which means to round up.

(A) today's competitions.

(B) todays competitions.

(C) todays' competitions.

(D) today's competition's.

5. Flavonoids—naturally occurring substances found in many common foods and beverages such as tea, oranges, and nuts—have long been known to have many health benefits. However, new research shows \_\_\_\_\_ may be even more wide-ranging than scientists realized.

(A) they're positive effects

(B) they're positive effect's

(C) their positive effects'

(D) their positive effects

6. Although the physical differences between humans and non-human primates are quite distinct, their brains may be remarkably similar. However, even the most minute distinctions may make a big difference in various \_\_\_\_\_ development.

(A) species'

(B) specie's

(C) species

(D) species's

# 11

## Modification

As a rule, modifiers should be placed as close as possible to the nouns, pronouns, or phrases they modify. When modifiers are separated from the words or phrases they modify, the result is often unclear and sometimes completely absurd. **Although modification errors are of course presented in the context of passages, they involve only the sentences in which they appear; you do not need to consider the surrounding information.**

There are two potential types of modification errors:

- 1) Dangling Modifiers
- 2) Misplaced Modifiers

### Dangling Modifiers

Sentences that include dangling modifiers are characterized by an introductory phrase that describes (modifies) the subject but does not name it. This phrase is always followed by a comma.

In addition, introductory phrases often—but not always—begin with *-ing* words (participles).

Whenever a sentence contains an introductory phrase, the subject must appear immediately after the comma. If the subject does not appear in that place, the modifier is dangling, and the sentence is incorrect.

Incorrect:    **Stretching** from one end of the city to the other, the efficiency of Lisbon's traditional tram system often surprises both tourists and city residents.

The above sentence contains an introductory phrase that begins with an *-ing* word (*Stretching*) and does not name the subject—that is, it does not tell us *what* stretches from one end of the city to the other.

We must therefore ask ourselves what stretches from one end of the city to the other. When we look at the rest of the sentence, it is clear that this description can only refer to Lisbon's traditional tram system.

The words *Lisbon's traditional tram system* do not appear immediately after the comma, so the modifier is dangling. In order to fix the sentence, we must place *Lisbon's traditional tram system* (the subject) immediately after the comma.

Correct:    **Stretching** from one end of the city to the other, Lisbon's traditional tram system often surprises both tourists and city residents with its efficiency.

Some modifiers do not begin with *-ing* words.

Incorrect: An elementary school teacher from Arkansas, increased funding and support for public libraries were what Bessie Boehm Moore advocated for.

Who was the elementary school teacher from Arkansas? *Bessie Boehm Moore*, not *increased funding and support*. So *Bessie Boehm Moore*, the subject, must be placed immediately after the comma.

Correct: An elementary school teacher from Arkansas, **Bessie Boehm Moore** advocated for increased funding and support for public libraries.

Watch out for the possessive version of the subject placed immediately after the introductory phrase. In general, any possessive noun placed immediately after an introductory phrase will be incorrect.

Incorrect: An elementary school teacher from Arkansas, **Bessie Boehm Moore's goal** was to achieve increased funding and support for public libraries.

Who is the elementary school teacher from Arkansas? *Bessie Boehm Moore*, not her *goal*.

Correct: An elementary school teacher from Arkansas, **Bessie Boehm Moore** had the goal of achieving increased funding and support for public libraries.

It is, however, acceptable to begin the main clause with a modifier describing the subject because that description is considered part of the **complete subject**.

Correct: A native of Arkansas, **elementary school teacher Bessie Boehm Moore** had the goal of achieving increased funding and support for public libraries.

**Important:** When fixing dangling modifiers, focus on identifying who or what the introductory phrase refers to (i.e., the subject). The correct answer must place the subject right afterwards. For example:

Josephine Baker, born Freda Josephine McDonald in a small Missouri town, spent the majority of her career in Europe. In the 1920s, Baker took Paris by storm. Famed for her jaw-dropping performances, \_\_\_\_ By 1927, she was one of the most photographed women in the world.

1

 **Mark for Review**

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- |     |   |
|-----|---|
| (A) | one of her costumes consisted of 16 bananas strung onto a skirt.      |
| (B) | her costume once consisting of 16 bananas strung onto a skirt.        |
| (C) | she once wore a costume consisting of 16 bananas strung onto a skirt. |
| (D) | 16 bananas strung onto a skirt once formed one of her costumes.       |

Who was *famed for her jaw-dropping performances*? Josephine Baker (not her skirt). So *Josephine Baker*, the subject, must appear at the beginning of the correct answer. (C) is the only possible answer.

## Misplaced Modifiers

Misplaced modifiers can occur anywhere in a sentence. They also involve modifiers separated from the words/phrases they are intended to modify, and they often result in unintentionally ridiculous statements.

Incorrect: An allergic reaction is usually characterized by symptoms that appear at most two hours after a person has consumed a particular food such as itching or swelling.

Understood literally, this sentence indicates that itching and swelling are particular types of food. Clearly, however, they are symptoms of an allergic reaction. To correct the sentence, we must make that fact clear.

Correct: An allergic reaction usually begins at most two hours after a person has consumed a particular food and is characterized by itching and swelling.

**Important:** *Which* should refer to the noun before it. The placement of *which* in the incorrect version below implies the environmental movement rather than pesticides caused bird populations to drop,

Incorrect: Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring* revealed the dangers of pesticides and initiated the environmental movement, **which** had caused a sharp decline in bird populations.

Correct: The environmental movement was initiated when Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring* revealed the dangers of pesticides, **which** had caused a sharp decline in bird populations.

Let's look at a test-style example.

Pigeons have long played an important role as messengers, as a result of their homing ability, speed, and altitude. \_\_\_\_\_ a time when the city was surrounded by Prussian troops.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) During the Franco-Prussian War in 1871, the French military used pigeons to transport messages to Paris,

(B) During the Franco-Prussian War in 1871, pigeons were used by the French military to transport messages to Paris,

(C) Pigeons were used to transport messages to Paris during the Franco-Prussian War in 1871,

(D) In 1871, during the Franco-Prussian War, the French military using pigeons to transport messages to Paris,

Because the words *a time* appear after the comma, the information right before the comma must refer to a time. Only (C) does so, making it correct. Note that it is only necessary to look at the **end** of each answer.

It is also possible that misplaced modifiers involving parentheses will be tested. In such cases, the rule is that the information at the beginning of the parentheses must refer to the noun that immediately precedes it. For example, the question on the previous page could also be written this way:

Pigeons have long played an important role as messengers, as a result of their homing ability, speed, and altitude. \_\_\_\_\_ (a time when the city was surrounded by Prussian troops).

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) During the Franco-Prussian War in 1871, the French military used pigeons to transport messages to Paris

(B) During the Franco-Prussian War in 1871, pigeons were used by the French military to transport messages to Paris

(C) Pigeons were used to transport messages to Paris during the Franco-Prussian War in 1871

(D) In 1871, during the Franco-Prussian War, the French military using pigeons to transport messages to Paris

The rule for parentheses is exactly the same as it is for a comma: the parenthetical information begins with *a time*, so previous section must end with 1871. Again, (C) is correct.

This concept could also be tested the other way around:

Pigeons have long played an important role as messengers, as a result of their homing ability, speed, and altitude. During the Franco-Prussian War in 1871, the French military used pigeons to transport messages to Paris \_\_\_\_\_

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) (a time when the city was surrounded by Prussian troops).

(B) (at the time, the city was surrounded by Prussian troops).

(C) (that time being one when the city was surrounded by Prussian troops).

(D) (the city was surrounded by Prussian troops at the time).

The biggest trap you could fall into here is to focus on the answer choices alone, without considering the information that comes before the parentheses. You could eliminate (C) based on the gerund *being*, but after that you might run into trouble because all of the answers are grammatically acceptable.

In reality, the key to answering this question is to look at the noun that comes right before the open-parenthesis: in this case, *Paris*. *Paris* is a city, so the parenthetical information must begin by referring to that fact. (D) is the only option that begins with *the city*, so it is the only possible answer.

### Exercise: Modification (answers p. 206)

1. In addition to being a politician, Theodore Roosevelt was also an ardent naturalist. Following his defeat in the 1912 presidential election, \_\_\_\_\_ where he collected many new animal and insect specimens.

- (A) he undertook along the Amazon basin an expedition,
- (B) an expedition along the Amazon was taken by him,
- (C) he undertook an expedition along the Amazon basin,
- (D) he had undertaken an expedition along the Amazon basin and

2. One of the greatest musicians of her time, \_\_\_\_\_. By the age of twelve, she was renowned throughout Europe as both a performer and a composer.

- (A) Clara Wieck's piano studies began when she was five.
- (B) Clara Wieck's piano studies began at five years old.
- (C) at five years old Clara Wieck began her study of the piano.
- (D) Clara Wieck began her piano studies when she was five years old.

3. When President James Polk officially confirmed the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill in Coloma, California, in 1848, hopeful prospectors immediately began planning for the trip. Beginning their journey in spring of 1849, \_\_\_\_\_ that was risky and mostly unknown. Some forty-niners traveled alone, but most formed companies that enabled them to share food and expenses during the long journey.

- (A) these prospectors took an overland route, known as "forty-niners,"
- (B) these prospectors, known as "forty-niners," took an overland route
- (C) an overland route was taken by these prospectors, known as "forty-niners"
- (D) these prospectors, known as "forty-niners," taking an overland route

4. Environmentalists estimate that nearly a trillion plastic bags—in use since the 1970s—are produced worldwide each year. The problems that they cause are well known: unable to break down in landfills, \_\_\_\_\_. They also contain toxic dyes that contaminate water and soil. As a result, an increasing number of cities are banning their use.

- (A) animals are harmed when they consume the bags.
- (B) the bags harm the animals that consume them.
- (C) animals are harmed by consuming the bags.
- (D) harm is caused to animals that consume them.

5. Bioluminescence is light created by a chemical reaction produced within an organism. Most bioluminescent organisms are found in the ocean, although a few, including fireflies and certain fungi, are found on land. \_\_\_\_\_. some form of bioluminescence is produced by approximately 90% of deep-sea creatures, including fish, bacteria, and jellies.

- (A) Dwelling almost exclusively in saltwater habitats,
- (B) They dwell almost exclusively within saltwater habitats,
- (C) Saltwater habitats being dwelled in almost exclusively by them,
- (D) Bioluminescent organisms dwell almost exclusively in saltwater habitats, and

6. Guerilla films are typically made by independent producers who lack the budget to obtain permits, rent locations, and build expensive sets. In the past, these films were often poorly made; however, their quality has improved significantly. While it was once difficult for filmmakers to obtain the necessary equipment,

- (A) professional quality digital cameras are now widely available to filmmakers that are inexpensive.
- (B) professional quality digital cameras are now widely available to filmmakers, and these are inexpensive.
- (C) inexpensive professional quality digital cameras are now widely available to filmmakers.
- (D) now, professional quality digital cameras are widely available to filmmakers that are inexpensive.

# 12

## Parallel Structure

Parallel structure (or **parallelism**) is the repetition of a particular grammatical construction within a sentence or paragraph. It is used to indicate that multiple ideas have equal levels of importance. In addition, the use of parallel constructions makes writing clearer and easier for readers to follow.

Parallel structure can be tested in two major ways:

- 1) In lists: 3 items
- 2) On either side of a conjunction: 2 items

### Parallel Structure with Lists

In any given list of three or more items, each item should appear in the same format: noun, noun, and noun; gerund, gerund, and gerund; verb, verb, and verb. For example, consider the question below.

Healthy marine environments result from a precise balance of factors and are therefore vulnerable to threats from a variety of sources. For example, **changes** in wind circulation, **runoff** from sewage, and \_\_\_\_\_ can all lead to the creation of ocean waters low in oxygen and inhospitable to marine life.

1  Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) to accumulate fertilizers

(B) they accumulate fertilizers

(C) accumulating fertilizers

(D) accumulation of fertilizers

The first two items in the list begin with nouns (*changes*, *runoff*), so the third item must begin with a noun as well. (D) is the only option that begins with a noun (*accumulation*), so it is the only possible answer.

If a full list is underlined, you can simplify the question by checking the beginning of each item. For example, consider this version of the question from the previous page.

Healthy marine environments result from a precise balance of factors and are therefore vulnerable to threats from a variety of sources. For example, \_\_\_\_\_ can all lead to the creation of ocean waters low in oxygen and inhospitable to marine life.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) **changes in wind circulation, runoff from sewage, and accumulating fertilizers**

(B) **changing wind circulation, runoff from sewage, and accumulating fertilizers**

(C) **changing wind circulation, having runoff from sewage, and to accumulate fertilizers**

(D) **changes in wind circulation patterns, runoff from sewage, and accumulation of fertilizers**

Once again, (D) is the only option in which each item begins with a noun, so it is correct.

Questions can also test punctuation within lists. Remember from Chapter 7 that the items in a list can be separated by either commas or semicolons, but not both within the same list.

Healthy marine environments result from a precise balance of factors and are therefore vulnerable to threats from a variety of sources. For example, \_\_\_\_\_ can all lead to the creation of ocean waters low in oxygen and inhospitable to marine life.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) **changes in wind circulation; runoff from sewage, and accumulating fertilizers**

(B) **changes in wind circulation, runoff from sewage; and accumulating fertilizers**

(C) **changes in wind circulation, from sewage there is runoff, and fertilizers accumulate**

(D) **changes in wind circulation patterns; runoff from sewage; and accumulation of fertilizers**

Both (A) and (B) incorrectly mix colons and semicolons, and (C) is incorrect because the second item does not follow the grammatical pattern. (D) correctly keeps the items consistent and uses only semicolons.

## Parallel Structure with Conjunctions

Another type of parallel structure question involves only two items joined by a conjunction (*and*, *or*, *but*).

Although these questions are fairly straightforward, you must consider the entire sentence because **the answer is likely to depend on information outside the blank**. For example, consider the question below.

Unlike some animals, most lizards have a highly developed sense of vision. As a result, they are able to use clear body language **and** \_\_\_\_\_ their colors in order to communicate.

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) alter

(B) altering

(C) they alter

(D) altered

The word *and* connects the underlined item to the non-underlined item, so the two items must match. Note that the repetition of the word *to* is optional. The correct answer could read either *to alter* or *alter*, as is the case here. (A) is thus correct.

It is also possible that two-item parallel structure questions will ask you to work with phrases rather than single words. For example:

In recent years, the amount of time and money devoted to books by publishing companies has been reduced by both financial constraints **and** \_\_\_\_\_

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) the emphasis on marketing has increased.

(B) an increased emphasis on marketing.

(C) they have increased the emphasis on marketing.

(D) increasing the emphasis on marketing.

The construction before *and* consists of a noun (*financial constraints*), so the construction after it must begin the same way. Neither (C) nor (D) begins with a noun, so both can be eliminated. (A) incorrectly contains a clause with a verb (*has*), whereas (B) correctly contains only a noun phrase without one.

### Exercise: Parallel Structure (answers p. 206)

1. In the insect world, spiders are fearsome animals—the tiny equivalent of wolves, lions or sharks. Spiders use a wide range of strategies to capture \_\_\_\_\_ in order to avoid detection.

(A) prey; including trapping it in webs; with sticky bolas they lasso it, and mimicking other insects

(B) prey, including trapping it in webs, lassoing it with sticky bolas; and they mimic other insects

(C) prey, including trapping it in webs; lassoing it with sticky bolas; and mimicking other insects

(D) prey, including trapping it in sticky webs; to lasso it with sticky bolas, and mimicking other insects

2. Scientists have long been uncertain whether dogs can read human emotions, but evidence is growing that canines can accurately “read” what people feel. In fact, a recent study found that dogs are able to distinguish between expressions that indicate happiness and \_\_\_\_\_

(A) those that indicate fear or anger.

(B) those in which fear or anger are indicated.

(C) fear in anger are indicated in others.

(D) indicating fear and anger are others.

3. Without structural engineers, everything could twist and shake apart. Their know-how is vital to mastering green construction’s novel materials and innovative practices, whether used to harness the force of the wind or \_\_\_\_\_

(A) capture the power that the waves have.

(B) capturing the power of the waves.

(C) have captured the power of the waves.

(D) capture the power of the waves.

4. Haiku poems, which contain just 17 syllables, can describe any person or object, but they are seldom complicated or difficult to understand. Each Haiku must contain a *kigo*, a season word that indicates what time of the year the Haiku is set. For example, blossoms would indicate \_\_\_\_\_

(A) spring; snow would give the idea of winter and summertime would be suggested by fireflies.

(B) spring; snow would give the idea of winter; and fireflies would suggest summertime.

(C) spring snow would give the idea of winter; and fireflies suggest summertime.

(D) spring; the idea of winter would be given by snow; and fireflies would suggest summer.

5. For centuries, there have been reports of strange bright lights in the sky just before, during, or after an earthquake. Over the years, descriptions have varied widely: the lights have been described as flaring white streaks, floating orbs, and \_\_\_\_\_. Sometimes the lights appeared for just a few seconds, but other times they hovered in the sky for minutes or even hours at a time.

(A) flames that flicker.

(B) flames that are flickering.

(C) flames to flicker.

(D) flickering flames.

## Cumulative Review: Chapters 8-12 (answers p. 206)

1. Although rap music originated in the United States, it has international influences. The kora, the balafon, and the ngoni are \_\_\_\_ that rappers have incorporated into their music.

(A) a West African instrument

(B) a West African instrument,

(C) West African instruments

(D) West African instruments,

2. Most jurors are not compensated at rates sufficient to replace lost wages. As a result, many citizens called for jury duty seek to avoid selection by demonstrating that \_\_\_\_ have urgent commitments or would experience financial hardship.

(A) he or she

(B) they

(C) one

(D) you

3. Many major historical inventions occurred simultaneously in multiple places. Writing, in contrast, had only a few independent origins, and the alphabet \_\_\_\_ only once in history.

(A) has arisen

(B) had arisen

(C) arises

(D) arose

4. Retrieval practice is an approach to studying that involves recalling previously learned information. The method, which can take forms including flash cards, practice tests and open-ended writing prompts, \_\_\_\_ learners recognize what they do and don't know.

(A) helps

(B) help

(C) have helped

(D) are helping

5. Although *Moby Dick* has long been considered a classic work of literature, it was published to middling reviews in 1851. Its author, Herman Melville, worked as a customs inspector for most of his \_\_\_\_\_

(A) life; suffered from nervous exhaustion; and only modest literary success was achieved.

(B) life; suffered from nervous exhaustion, and achieving only modest literary success.

(C) life; suffered from nervous exhaustion; and achieved only modest literary success.

(D) life; suffered from nervous exhaustion; and only modest literary success had been achieved.

6. After a disaster like a forest fire or a volcanic eruption, the first plants to come back are the fastest colonizers—particularly ferns. Unlike other types of flora, ferns sprout from minuscule spores \_\_\_\_\_

(A) blown long distances by the wind smaller than a grain of pollen.

(B) that by the wind are blown long distances smaller than a grain of pollen.

(C) smaller than a grain of pollen, which by the wind is blown long distances.

(D) that are smaller than a grain of pollen and blown long distances by the wind.

7. The illegal clearing of Mexican forests once caused the Monarch butterfly to come close to losing its habitat. In recent years, however, \_\_\_\_\_

(A) this has declined.

(B) that has declined.

(C) these have declined.

(D) this threat has declined.

8. Throughout the Edo period (1603-1867), the Samurai were the highest-ranking group in Japan. After the Meiji Restoration of 1868, however, the Japanese imperial family reassumed rule. The samurai caste faded away, with many of its members becoming \_\_\_\_\_.

Ⓐ a scholar or a bureaucrat

Ⓑ a scholar or bureaucrats

Ⓒ scholars or a bureaucrat

Ⓓ scholars or bureaucrats

9. The presence of brief, high-frequency electrical events generated in the hippocampus \_\_\_\_ believed to indicate major events in the brain's so-called episodic memory. This type of memory involves important episodes or pieces of information, such as childhood birthday parties or old telephone numbers.

Ⓐ is

Ⓑ are

Ⓒ have been

Ⓓ were

10. Bacteria push themselves forward by coiling long, threadlike appendages into corkscrew shapes that act as makeshift propellers. Because the "propellers" are made of a single protein, the process by which bacteria move has traditionally baffled scientists. Using cryo-electron microscopy, however, \_\_\_\_ the strange structure of these propellers at the level of individual atoms.

Ⓐ it was revealed by researchers what no traditional light microscope could see:

Ⓑ researchers revealed what no traditional light microscope could see:

Ⓒ the revelation of researchers that no traditional light microscope could see:

Ⓓ what no traditional light microscope could see was revealed by researchers

11. By the beginning of the fifteenth century, Venice \_\_\_\_ strivers from across the Mediterranean basin. There, they ran the guard fleets that kept the city-state's adversaries in check.

Ⓐ has drawn

Ⓑ had drawn

Ⓒ draws

Ⓓ drawing

12. In 1963, Lina Wertmüller directed her first film, *The Basilisks*. Although it received mixed reviews, it featured a distinctive combination of ethnographic satire and impressionistic drama that \_\_\_\_\_ Wertmüller's future works.

- (A) characterize
- (B) will characterize
- (C) would characterize
- (D) are characteristic of

13. Norman Rockwell's intricately conceived narrative paintings were widely reproduced in popular magazines. Across the United States, a vast audience of readers recognized themselves in the \_\_\_\_\_

- (A) images stories.
- (B) image's stories.
- (C) images story's.
- (D) images' stories.

14. For all his fame and celebration, William Shakespeare remains a mysterious figure. Scholars are often forced to turn to speculation when discussing his activities because so few reliable sources about his personal life \_\_\_\_\_

- (A) exists.
- (B) exist.
- (C) has existed.
- (D) is in existence.

15. Since ancient times, the fresco has served as an important method of mural making. Consisting of watercolor applied to freshly laid plaster, \_\_\_\_\_ When the plaster sets, the painting becomes an integral part of the wall.

- (A) water is used by frescoes as a vehicle for allowing them to merge with the plaster.
- (B) water and pigment merge with the plaster to create frescoes.
- (C) frescoes use water as a vehicle that allows pigment to merge with the plaster.
- (D) pigment merges with the plaster using water as a vehicle for frescoes.

## Practice Sets: All Chapters (answers pp. 206-207)

### Set 1

1. While ancient cities are often imagined to have been more sustainable than modern ones, the tension between urban life and the environment has deep roots. \_\_\_\_\_ the development of the ancient city of Akko six thousand years ago transformed dense coastal forests into a dry, shrubby grassland.

(A) However,

(B) Hence,

(C) Furthermore,

(D) For example,

2. In the eyes of the colonial British administration, Samuel Adams was an outlaw. \_\_\_\_\_ he often behaved like one: he erased his fingerprints, refused to copy his letters, and destroyed piles of his papers to prevent them from falling into enemy hands.

(A) Specifically,

(B) Indeed,

(C) Nevertheless,

(D) On the other hand,

3. Because the wild ancestors of modern felines never lived in social groups, cats are genetically predisposed to be independent. \_\_\_\_\_ during the domestication process, they developed the ability to form social relationships with other members of their species as well as with people.

(A) Moreover,

(B) Accordingly,

(C) For instance,

(D) Still,

4. Recent research suggests that short-term training in self-regulation—the ability to manage attention, emotion, and impulses, as well as to persevere in achieving \_\_\_\_\_ have long-term effects for children. A recent study found that children who participated in a single unit on self-regulation were still experiencing positive effects more than three years later.

(A) goals, can

(B) goals can

(C) goals—can

(D) goals can:

5. In the winter of 1885, archaeologists in Greece discovered a unique assembly of figures. Buried in 480 BC, they had been spared 2,500 years of vandalism. Researchers were astonished—not only because of the importance of the works, but also because of the excellent preservation of \_\_\_\_\_ original surface paint.

(A) their

(B) its

(C) his or her

(D) one's

6. While bees can survive in the dark, they prefer to be in the sunlight. The shaded interiors of woodlands are therefore considered a poor habitat for bees. New research shows that many types of bees are active high above the \_\_\_\_\_ suggests wild bees are just as happy in treetops as they are among the flowers at ground level.

(A) trees, however; a discovery that

(B) trees, however, a discovery that

(C) trees, however, a discovery, that

(D) trees, however, this discovery

7. Adult height is primarily determined by the information encoded in people's DNA. These correlations are not exact, however. Traditionally, the role of genetics in the process of growth from tiny infant to adults \_\_\_\_\_ a complex and poorly understood area of human biology.

(A) are

(B) have been

(C) has been

(D) having been

8. John F. Kennedy was the first U.S. president to hold televised press conferences, and he used the new medium of television to great effect. \_\_\_\_\_ his humor, charm, and wit allowed him to connect with his audiences.

(A) A natural in front of the camera,

(B) As a natural in front of the camera,

(C) Kennedy was a natural in front of the camera,

(D) Kennedy was a natural in front of the camera, and

9. While researching a topic, a student has taken the following notes:

- Game shows became an important part of American popular culture in the 1950s.
- Viewership of high-stakes games such as *The \$64,000 Question* quickly increased.
- In 1959, many of the higher stakes game shows were found to be rigged.
- Daytime game shows were played for low stakes, but in the evening, contestants could win thousands of dollars.
- By the early 1960s, viewership had declined significantly.

The student wants to emphasize the rapid rise and fall of game shows' popularity. Which choice most effectively uses relevant information from the notes to achieve this goal?

- (A) During some game shows, contestants competed against each other for enormous sums of money.
- (B) As a result of scandals involving game shows in the late 1950s, viewers began to lose interest in these programs.
- (C) Although game shows attracted a large following in the first few years after they were created, viewership decreased dramatically only a decade later.
- (D) In the mid-twentieth century, game shows reflected the American public's growing reliance on television for entertainment.

10. While researching a topic, a student has taken the following notes:

- The carbohydrates in honey can quickly be converted to energy.
- Ancient Greeks and Egyptians used honey in ointments for skin and eye problems.
- The medical device company Derma Sciences sells honey-coated bandages.
- Honey does not cause blood sugar to spike the way other types of sweeteners do.
- Today, raw honey is used to reduce seasonal allergies.

The student wants to emphasize honey's medicinal properties. Which choice most effectively uses relevant information from the notes to achieve this goal?

- (A) Unlike other types of sweeteners, honey allows a person's blood sugar to remain stable rather than rising sharply.
- (B) Honey was commonly used as a sweetener in ancient times, before the cultivation of sugarcane began.
- (C) Honey contains carbohydrates that can provide a quick boost of energy.
- (D) For thousands of years, people have used honey to treat skin problems and relieve allergy symptoms.

## Set 2

1. Magnesium, phosphorous, and zinc, which the human body requires to carry out its basic functions, cannot be produced internally. \_\_\_\_\_ people must obtain them from food and drink.

(A) Therefore,

(B) Nevertheless,

(C) Subsequently,

(D) To illustrate,

2. While much of mathematics research focuses on developing proofs for conjectures, it is often impossible to check that a hypothesis is true in all cases. Mathematician Melanie Wood uses statistics to verify these hypotheses. \_\_\_\_\_ she develops probabilistic models for natural numbers and integers to see how they behave on average.

(A) However,

(B) Consequently,

(C) Meanwhile,

(D) Specifically,

3. The consumption of glucose activates a specific circuit notifying a person's brain that sugar is present in the body. Calorie-free artificial sweeteners, \_\_\_\_\_ do not have this effect, a fact that likely explains why many people find diet soft drinks less satisfying than regular ones.

(A) moreover,

(B) therefore,

(C) in contrast,

(D) for instance,

4. Since the early nineteenth century, doomsayers have gloomily predicted that increasing populations would exhaust their food. \_\_\_\_\_ shortages would result in catastrophic famines. Yet the world currently produces enough food to feed 10 billion people, and there are only seven billion of us.

(A) supplies in only a few decades, they claimed

(B) supplies, in only a few decades they claimed

(C) supplies. In only a few decades, they claimed,

(D) supplies, in only a few decades, they claimed:

5. Many daily decisions are motivated by basic needs, such as earning a living or satisfying \_\_\_\_\_. decision-making is a complex process that can be influenced by both internal and external conditions. Factors ranging from the weather to the presence of other individuals to one's level of motivation can all play a role.

Ⓐ hunger, however,

Ⓑ hunger. However,

Ⓒ hunger, however;

Ⓓ hunger however

6. Jane and Maria Porter, who wove fascinating tales out of accounts drawn from history books, are often credited with the invention of the historical novel.

\_\_\_\_\_. certainly the first to achieve critical acclaim with best-selling novels such Jane's *Thaddeus of Warsaw* (1803), Maria's *The Hungarian Brothers* (1807) and Jane's *The Scottish Chiefs* (1810)—books whose protagonists included a mix of real figures and invented characters.

Ⓐ She was

Ⓑ They were

Ⓒ This was

Ⓓ Some were

7. Oscar Howe enrolled in the Sante Fe Studio School in his late teens, learning the flat style of painting taught there. Although the school encouraged students to create the kinds of stylized art he would later rail

\_\_\_\_\_. Howe worked successfully in this style for many years, gradually loosening its constraints to pursue his own creative interests.

Ⓐ against,

Ⓑ against

Ⓒ against—

Ⓓ against, but

8. Spiders produce the strongest silks but are too aggressive to be farmed. The second-best alternative involves incorporating spider DNA into silkworms—traditionally an expensive and time-consuming process. Scientists at Tianjin University have demonstrated, however, that when the silk naturally produced by \_\_\_\_\_. its sticky outer layer removed, it can be made almost twice as strong as spider silk.

Ⓐ silkworms, has

Ⓑ silkworms has

Ⓒ silkworms have

Ⓓ silkworms, have

9. The world's largest bristlecone pine, the Patriarch Tree, is located in Patriarch Grove, California, whose splendid remoteness and moonscape appearance \_\_\_\_\_ the landscape a surreal atmosphere. Bristlecone pines and limber pines dot the landscape with a background view of the Great Basin in Nevada.

(A) has given

(B) would give

(C) gives

(D) give

10. While researching a topic, a student has taken the following notes:

- Cai Lun, director of the Imperial Workshop in China, is generally credited with having created paper in 105 CE.
- According to a legend that developed centuries later, he was inspired by a nest of paper wasps.
- He soaked and pressed plant fibers until they lay flat.
- In 2006, archaeologists discovered plant-based specimens with Chinese characters dating to 8 CE.
- This suggests that paper was made in China before Cai Lun's time.

The student wants to point out that Cai Lun was not the true inventor of paper to an audience unfamiliar with him. Which choice most effectively uses relevant information from the notes to achieve this goal?

(A) While legend held that Cai Lun was responsible for making the first real paper in 105 C.E., that myth did not develop until hundreds of years later.

(B) Twenty-first century findings suggest that paper production actually began in China as early as 8 C.E. rather than in 105 C.E. as was previously believed.

(C) Although the invention of paper is often attributed to Cai Lun, a court official during the Han Dynasty, his main innovation was to soak and press plant fibers until they were flat enough to be written on.

(D) Cai Lun, a Han Dynasty court official, was said to have been inspired to create paper after examining a nest of paper wasps.

### Set 3

1. Most organisms that carry out photosynthesis are able to produce food directly from carbon dioxide and water using energy from light. However, not all organisms use carbon dioxide as a source of carbon atoms for this process. \_\_\_\_ photoheterotrophs use organic compounds rather than carbon dioxide as a source of carbon.

(A) For instance,

(B) Meanwhile,

(C) Furthermore,

(D) Nevertheless,

2. By the beginning of the 20th century, the sonnet had become an antiquated poetic style. Claude McKay, however, found it an ideal medium to convey his ideas. Many modernists criticized his use of the form. \_\_\_\_ he persevered and created a significant number of sonnets.

(A) Moreover,

(B) Likewise,

(C) Indeed,

(D) Nevertheless,

3. The “songs” of blue whales usually register at between 15 and 20 hertz—a nearly inaudible rumble on the edge of what the human ear can perceive. One blue whale in the Pacific has produced vocalizations registering more than 50 herz, \_\_\_\_ a finding so unusual that some researchers have suggested the animal is actually a hybrid species.

(A) therefore,

(B) moreover,

(C) however,

(D) for example,

4. Growing nutritious, protein-dense microalgae in seawater-fed aquaculture systems—particularly in the southern hemisphere—could help increase food production by more than 50%. \_\_\_\_ researchers estimate that over the next three decades, an additional 10 million people might be fed.

(A) Still,

(B) In fact,

(C) Therefore,

(D) Subsequently,

5. Indo-European languages are the first language of more than 3 billion people in Europe, across northern India, as far east as Siberia, and in North and South America. Beginning almost 500 years ago, scholars began to notice similarities between languages such as \_\_\_\_\_ it became clear that hundreds of such languages were connected by common root words.

(A) Sanskrit and Latin as the field of linguistics matured,

(B) Sanskrit and Latin, as the field of linguistics matured

(C) Sanskrit and Latin. As the field of linguistics matured,

(D) Sanskrit and Latin as the field of linguistics matured

6. Unlike the binary bits used in standard computers, qubits can exist in multiple states at a time and have much greater processing capacity. However, they require specific conditions to exhibit quantum behavior and are challenging to harness. Synthetic \_\_\_\_\_ has corrected this problem by creating qubits from the electron spin of molecules with a central metallic atom.

(A) chemist Danna Freedman,

(B) chemist, Danna Freedman,

(C) chemist, Danna Freedman

(D) chemist Danna Freedman

7. It is a well-established fact that exercise can help people lose weight and avoid gaining it. However, identifying the cellular mechanisms that underlie this process \_\_\_\_\_ difficult because so many cells and tissues are involved.

(A) have proven

(B) has proven

(C) are proving

(D) is proven

8. The algorithms developed by computer scientist Stephanie Gil address such key questions as how robots share information and how each robot enacts an algorithm so that \_\_\_\_\_ actions are coherent within a group. Her goal is to enable the machines to achieve shared goals more efficiently and accurately.

(A) its

(B) their

(C) they're

(D) our

9. While researching a topic, a student has taken the following notes:

- Gumbo is a heavily seasoned vegetable stew that sometimes includes meat and shellfish.
- Its name comes from a West African word for okra, even though that vegetable is not always used.
- Shrimp and crawfish were introduced by members of the Choctaw tribe.
- Gumbo was most likely invented in the 1700s; the first written references to it appeared in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- Spanish, Caribbean and German dishes have also influenced gumbo.

The student wants to indicate the diverse origins of gumbo. Which choice most effectively uses relevant information from the notes to achieve this goal?

(A) Named after a West African word for okra, gumbo combines elements of Spanish, Caribbean, German, and Native American cuisine.

(B) Although gumbo was probably invented during the 1700s, it was not mentioned in writing until the following century.

(C) Despite the origins of its name, gumbo does not always include okra.

(D) Some versions of gumbo contain meat and shellfish, whereas others contain only vegetables.

10. While researching a topic, a student has taken the following notes:

- The ATLAS program uses the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) to obtain precise measurements about the formation of the universe.
- The LHC is five stories tall, weighs 7,000 tons, and has more than 1,500 miles of cable.
- More than 5,000 researchers are involved.
- Monica Dunford is the coordinator for research on the Standard Model in physics.
- Silvia Franchini oversees data collection for the project.

The student wants to introduce the scope and purpose of the ATLAS program. Which choice most effectively uses relevant information from the notes to achieve this goal?

(A) The ATLAS experiment was officially funded in 1995; additional countries, universities, and laboratories joined in subsequent years.

(B) Researchers from dozens of institutions on nearly every continent participate in research at ATLAS.

(C) The ATLAS program employs thousands of researchers who use complex tools to investigate the origins of the universe.

(D) As part of the ATLAS program, Monica Dunford coordinates research on the Standard Model, while Silvia Franchini oversees data collection.

## Set 4

1. One criticism that is commonly leveled against remote work is that employees, who work from home, have difficulty controlling the boundary between their personal and professional lives. \_\_\_\_\_, in a recent survey, remote workers reported a fairly good fit—5.3 on a 7-point scale—between their work and non-work lives.

(A) Therefore,

(B) Similarly,

(C) However,

(D) Moreover,

2. As a college student at Mt. Holyoke, the playwright Suzanne-Lori Parks was steered toward writing plays rather than fiction because of her penchant for drama. \_\_\_\_\_ she had a tendency to act out all the characters' voices when she read her short stories aloud in class.

(A) As such,

(B) Specifically,

(C) In addition,

(D) Consequently,

3. Until recently, the period of rapid cooling that occurred between 7.6 and 5.4 million years ago was attributed to carbon dioxide being drawn from the Earth's atmosphere by the weathering of the Himalayas. Barbara Clementz and Mark Carrapa propose a different contributing \_\_\_\_\_ a major increase in volcanism in the Andes around 7 million years ago.

(A) factor, however

(B) factor; however,

(C) factor however,

(D) factor, however:

4. Many odors are formed by volatile compounds that disintegrate \_\_\_\_\_ so widely that they can no longer be detected by a person's nose. As a result, smells tend to linger in the air for no more than a few seconds.

(A) easily, they disperse

(B) easily dispersing

(C) easily; dispersing

(D) easily, dispersing

5. While researching a topic, a student has taken the following notes:

- Jacob Lawrence was a mural painter.
- His vibrant patterns and simplified, angular figures created powerful, direct images.
- His most famous work is the *Migration Series* (1940-41): 60 panels depicting African Americans' migration from the rural south to northern cities after World War I.
- Half the panels are in the Museum of Modern Art; the others are in the Phillips Collection.
- In 1954-56, he produced *Struggle*, a 30-panel series focusing on neglected aspects of American history from 1775-1815.

The student wants to emphasize the large scale of Jacob Lawrence's work. Which choice most effectively uses relevant information from the notes to achieve this goal?

(A) Lawrence's *Struggle* series contained only half as many panels as the *Migration* series.

(B) Lawrence's murals, which consist of series of panels, feature bold and angular designs.

(C) In the 1940s and 1950s, Lawrence created projects consisting of dozens of panels to show a wide range of historical events.

(D) Lawrence's *Migration Series*, his best-known work, is divided between the Museum of Modern Art and the Phillips Collection.

6. The use of text in the visual arts can be traced back to cubist painters such as Georges Braque and \_\_\_\_\_ both painted and collaged—into still lifes. Playing with language was also central to the Dadaists, who left an important legacy with their daring, often humorous use of language.

(A) Pablo Picasso, who added letters and words—

(B) Pablo Picasso, who added letters and words

(C) Pablo Picasso, who added letters and words,

(D) Pablo Picasso, who added: letters and words

7. The satyr plays produced in ancient Greece should not be confused with the satires performed in Rome. The Romans developed an independent tradition of satire, one of the few literary genres that \_\_\_\_\_ created.

(A) he or she

(B) it

(C) this

(D) they

8. Synesthesia, a phenomenon whose name derives from the Greek meaning “to perceive together,” comes in many varieties. People who experience this condition may \_\_\_\_\_

- (A) smell in color; see numbers as shapes, or taste specific flavors when hearing certain words.
- (B) smell in color, see numbers as shapes; or taste specific flavors when hearing certain words.
- (C) smell in color; see numbers as shapes; or taste specific flavors when hearing certain words.
- (D) smell in color; see numbers as shapes or specific flavors are tasted when certain words are heard.

9. Astronomers have recently discovered a stellar binary, or pair of stars, with an extremely short orbit of 51 minutes. The system appears to be a rare type of binary, known as a cataclysmic variable, \_\_\_\_\_ a hot, dense core of a burned-out star.

- (A) in which a star similar to the sun orbits tightly around a white dwarf—
- (B) where a star similar to the sun orbits around a white dwarf tightly,
- (C) that a star similar to the sun orbits tightly, around a white dwarf
- (D) which a star, similar to the sun orbits tightly around a white dwarf and

10. The Komodo dragon, a reptile with ancestors that date back more than 100 million years, is the largest lizard in the world. The yellow color of its long, forked tongue is indeed reminiscent of a fire-spitting dragon. \_\_\_\_\_ its heavy, scaly body recalls that of the mythical creature.

- (A) Consequently,
- (B) Specifically,
- (C) In contrast,
- (D) Likewise,

## Set 5

1. Advocates of space exploration often hope for a fully developed space economy driven by widespread demand. \_\_\_\_ a path toward this future remains unclear. Space tourism, zero-gravity manufacturing, and asteroid mining all show promise, but none of them is commercially viable yet.

(A) Indeed,

(B) Consequently,

(C) However,

(D) Furthermore,

2. The Triassic reptile *Scleromochlus* measured only about seven inches long. Its bones were light and delicate, preventing them from being physically removed from rock without damage. \_\_\_\_, paleontologist Davide Foffa and his colleagues took CT scans of *Scleromochlus* fossils still embedded in the ground in order to obtain a detailed look at the animal's skeleton.

(A) Nevertheless,

(B) To illustrate,

(C) Besides,

(D) Thus,

3. One of the indirect effects of globalization has been the creation of global cities, which have a tendency to form megacities and megaregions. This type of growth exerts immense pressure on cities; \_\_\_\_ it also increases the competition among them.

(A) however,

(B) moreover,

(C) for instance,

(D) still,

4. Predictions that electronic books would replace physical ones entirely appear to have been premature. \_\_\_\_ sales of printed books have actually overtaken sales of electronic ones in some genres. While easy access to online platforms satisfies consumers' demand for instant content, print offers reader a tactile experience they cannot obtain from screens.

(A) In fact,

(B) Nevertheless,

(C) Similarly,

(D) On the other hand,

5. Temperate rainforest is a scientifically recognized habitat, one that is scarcer globally than tropical rainforest. According to ecologists, a “rainforest” is defined as land that receives more than 55 inches of precipitation each year, with rain spread across summer and winter months. Temperate rainforest is cool but not \_\_\_\_ temperatures average 60 degrees or lower.

(A) cold in July

(B) cold, in July

(C) cold. In July,

(D) cold in July,

6. In recent years, neuroscientists have begun to gain insight into some of the underlying mechanisms of breathing. In the late 1980s, researchers identified a group of brainstem neurons responsible for regulating \_\_\_\_ has served as a launching pad for studies into how the brain integrates breathing with other behaviors.

(A) respiration, that discovery

(B) respiration that discovery

(C) respiration, a discovery, that

(D) respiration—a discovery that

7. Totem poles, which are typically created out of red cedar, were traditionally built to mark a family’s lineage and validate its rights and privileges. The poles would not necessarily tell a story so much as \_\_\_\_ would serve to document stories and histories familiar to community members or particular family or clan members.

(A) it

(B) they

(C) these

(D) some

8. Nicknamed Iron Riders, the Buffalo Soldiers volunteer bicycle corps departed from Fort Missoula, Montana, on June 14, 1897, embarking on a 1,900-mile journey to St. Louis. During their 41-day journey, which made headlines around the United States, \_\_\_\_ snow, sleet, hail, heavy rain, and oppressive heat.

(A) more than 50 miles per day were traveled by the cyclists, who alternately endured

(B) more than 50 miles per day were traveled by the cyclists, they alternately endured

(C) the cyclists traveled more than 50 miles per day, and alternately enduring

(D) the cyclists traveled more than 50 miles per day, alternately enduring

9. While researching a topic, a student has taken the following notes:

- Chain mail armor was invented before the Middle Ages.
- It covered only the chest, so early medieval knights also wore a helmet and carried a shield.
- At the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, near the end of the Middle Ages, the first plate armor was created.
- Knights quickly began using it to cover their entire bodies.
- In highly stratified medieval society, armor served as a status symbol.

The student wants to present a difference in the type of armor used by early and later knights. Which choice most effectively uses relevant information from the notes to achieve this goal?

(A) Both chain mail armor, which was used in the early Middle Ages, and plate armor, which was used later, covered the wearer's chest.

(B) The armor used by knights in the late Middle Ages consisted of solid plates, which covered the wearer's full body.

(C) Whereas early medieval knights wore armor that left them partially exposed, knights in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century used plate armor, which offered full protection.

(D) In the late thirteenth century, knights began to wear plate armor that covered the wearer from head to toe.

10. While researching a topic, a student has taken the following notes:

- The “colossal heads” are the most famous artworks produced by the Olmecs, the first Mesoamerican civilization (1200 BCE – 400 CE).
- Scholars theorize that the heads depicted Olmec rulers.
- They were carved from boulders weighing between 6 and almost 50 tons.
- Each one wears a headdress whose meaning is unclear.
- The monument at Takalik Abaj in Guatemala is the only sculpture outside the Olmec heartland.

The student wants to emphasize the mystery surrounding the sculptures. Which choice most effectively uses relevant information from the notes to achieve this goal?

(A) The faces, which scholars believe may represent Olmec rulers, sit below headdresses of unknown significance.

(B) Only one of the heads is located outside the Olmec heartland.

(C) While all of the heads are immense, they do vary in size: the smallest weigh six tons, whereas the largest ones weigh 50.

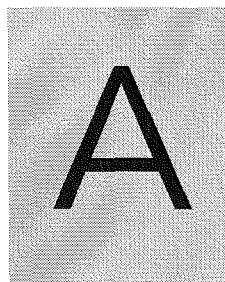
(D) The Olmecs, who created the first civilization in Mesoamerica, carved a series of enormous stone heads.

# **Appendix:**

# **Additional Concepts**

**Note:** The concepts presented in the following chapters were tested on the paper-based SAT; however, as of November 2022, they have not appeared in any of the four digital practice tests released by the College Board. Although it is safe to assume they will not be a major focus of the digital exam, you should familiarize yourself with them just in case if you are aiming for a high score.





## Word Pairs and Comparisons

---

### Word Pairs

Word pairs can be used to create comparisons indicating either similarity or difference. These words must always appear together; they cannot be mixed and matched with each other or paired with other words.

#### A. As...as

*As...as* is used to indicate that two people or things are equal.

- Incorrect: Among pioneers of modern dance, Isadora Duncan is **as** renowned a dancer and choreographer **than** Martha Graham.
- Correct: Among pioneers of modern dance, Isadora Duncan is **as** renowned a dancer and choreographer **as** Martha Graham.

#### B. Not only...but (also)

Saying that something is **not only x but (also) y** means that it is **x as well as y**.

- Incorrect: Martha Graham was **not only** a great dancer **and** (also) a great choreographer.
- Correct: Martha Graham was **not only** a great dancer **but also** a great choreographer.

#### C. More/-ER...than, Less...than

- Incorrect: At 25 feet, a python named Medusa is **longer as** any other snake in the world.
- Correct: At 25 feet, a python named Medusa is **longer than** any other snake in the world.

#### D. (N)either...(n)or

- Incorrect: In the United States, **neither** Nikola Tesla **or** James Joule is **as famous as** Thomas Edison.
- Correct: In the United States, **neither** Nikola Tesla **nor** James Joule is **as famous as** Thomas Edison.

## Faulty Comparisons

**Always compare people to people and things to things.** Watch out for questions that compare people to things and vice-versa. Since 2016, these questions have made up a relatively small portion of the Writing and Language Test, but they may continue to appear on the digital exam.

### Singular Faulty Comparison

Incorrect: Throughout the 1950s, the music of composer Charles Ives was far less popular among audiences in the United States than John Philip Sousa.

In the above sentence, music (thing) is being compared to John Philip Sousa (person). In order to make the sentence correct, we must compare music to music.

There are several ways to fix this sentence:

Correct: Throughout the 1950s, Charles Ives's music was far less popular among audiences in the United States than **John Philip Sousa's music**.

Correct: Throughout the 1950s, Charles Ives's music was far less popular among audiences in the United States than **the music of John Philip Sousa**.

A singular noun can also be replaced with the phrase *that of*.

Correct: Throughout the 1950s, Charles Ives's **music** was far less popular among audiences in the United States than **that of** John Philip Sousa. (*That of = the music of*)

### Plural Faulty Comparison

Plural faulty comparisons can also be fixed either with nouns or with the phrase *those of*.

Incorrect: Although birds are not generally known for their intelligence, recent findings have established that parrots often possess **skills** similar to **human toddlers**.

Correct: Although birds are not generally known for their intelligence, recent findings have established that parrots often possess **skills** similar to **the skills of** human toddlers.

Correct: Although birds are not generally known for their intelligence, recent findings have established that parrots often possess **skills** similar to **those of** human toddlers.  
(*Those of = the skills of*)

Alternately, *that of* may be incorrectly used to refer to a plural noun.

Incorrect: Although birds are not generally known for their intelligence, recent findings have established that parrots often possess **skills** similar to **human toddlers**.

Incorrect: Although birds are not generally known for their intelligence, recent findings have established that parrots often possess **skills** similar to **that of human toddlers**.

Correct: Although birds are not generally known for their intelligence, recent findings have established that parrots often possess **skills** similar to **those of human toddlers**.

*Those of* may also be incorrectly used to refer to a singular noun.

- Incorrect: Although birds are not generally known for their intelligence, recent findings have established that parrots often possess **a level of understanding** similar to **human toddlers**.
- Incorrect: Although birds are not generally known for their intelligence, recent findings have established that parrots often possess **a level of understanding** similar to **those of human toddlers**.
- Correct: Although birds are not generally known for their intelligence, recent findings have established that parrots often possess **a level of understanding** similar to **that of human toddlers**.

Furthermore, when two things are compared, they must be the same type of thing. Otherwise, a faulty comparison is created.

- Incorrect: Unlike **a train, the length** of a tram is usually limited to one or two cars, which may run either on train tracks or directly on the street.

Even though both *train* and *length* are things, they are not equivalent. We can either compare a train to a train or a length to a length, but we cannot compare a train to a length.

- Correct: Unlike **the length of** a train, **the length** of a tram is usually limited to one or two cars, which may run either on train tracks or directly on the street.
- Correct: Unlike **that of** a train, **the length** of a tram is usually limited to one or two cars, which may run either on train tracks or directly on the street. (*That of = the length of*)

## Comparing Amounts: Fewer vs. Less, Many vs. Much

- *Fewer* and *many* refer to things that are **quantifiable**—things that can be counted. They are followed by **plural nouns**.
- *Less* and *much* refer to things that are **not quantifiable**—things that cannot be counted. They are followed by **singular nouns**.

### Fewer vs. Less

Incorrect: Because Antarctica is characterized by extreme temperatures and harsh living conditions, it supports less animal species than any other continent does.

Correct: Because Antarctica is characterized by extreme temperatures and harsh living conditions, it supports fewer animal species than any other continent does.

*Animal species* is plural and can be counted, so *fewer* should be used.

Incorrect: Because Antarctica is characterized by extreme temperatures and harsh living conditions, it supports fewer animal life than any other continent does.

Correct: Because Antarctica is characterized by extreme temperatures and harsh living conditions, it supports less animal life than any other continent does.

*Animal life* is singular and cannot be counted, so *less* should be used.

### Many vs. Much

Incorrect: Despite blazing heat and constant threats from predators, much more types of animals inhabit the African savannah than inhabit other, more moderate environments.

Correct: Despite blazing heat and constant threats from predators, many more types of animals inhabit the African savannah than inhabit other, more moderate environments.

*Types of animals* is plural and can be counted, so *many* should be used.

Incorrect: With over 1,100 animal species of mammals and over 2,600 species of bird, Africa hosts many more animal life than any other continent does.

Correct: With over 1,100 animal species of mammals and over 2,600 species of bird, Africa hosts much more animal life than any other continent does.

*Animal life* is singular and cannot be counted, so *much* should be used.

# B

## Question Marks

**Direct questions** do exactly what their name implies: they ask questions directly and **end with a question mark**. Note that in this construction, the question is a separate element that makes sense on its own.

Correct: When Orson Welles' *War of the Worlds* was broadcast as a radio play in 1938, some listeners asked themselves the following question: **is this a piece of theater or a live broadcast?**

**Indirect questions** are embedded in longer sentences, however, and **a period is used**. Very often (but not always), this construction involves clauses begun by *whether* or *if*.

Correct: When Orson Welles' *War of the Worlds* was broadcast as a radio play in 1938, some listeners could not tell **whether/if it was a piece of theater or a live broadcast**.

In this case, the section of the sentence that expresses uncertainty cannot be detached from the larger sentence. As a result, it is a statement, and a period must be placed at the end of it. A test-style example might look like the following:

Researchers frequently debate animals' ability to experience human-like emotions. Naturalists, for example, often speculate about whether \_\_\_\_\_

1

Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- (A) can bees feel agitation and annoyance?
- (B) can bees feel agitation and annoyance.
- (C) bees can feel agitation and annoyance?
- (D) bees can feel agitation and annoyance.

Because the underlined portion is embedded in a longer sentence, a period rather than a question mark is required. (A) and (C) can thus be eliminated. (B) is incorrect because a noun (*bees*) rather than a verb (*can*) must be placed after *whether*. That makes (D) the answer.



## Answer Key

Transitions 1	“Student Notes”
1. Contrast: C	1. B
2. Cause-and-Effect: B	2. C
3: Continue: A	3. D
4. Contrast: D	4. B
5. Cause-and-Effect: B	5. D
6. Contrast: C	<b>Identifying Parts of Speech</b>
7. Contrast: C	1. A: noun; B: noun; C: preposition; D: noun
8. Cause-and-Effect: D	2. A: verb; B: conjunction; C: adjective; D: pronoun
9. Continue: A	3. A: noun; B: verb; C: conjunction; D: noun
10. Continue: C	4. A: verb; B: noun; C: pronoun; D: noun
<b>Transitions 2</b>	5. A: conjunction; B: verb; C: verb; D: noun
1. B	6. A: adverb; B: adverb; C: verb; preposition
2. D	7. A: noun; B: conjunction/adverb; noun; D: preposition
3. C	8. A: noun; B: verb; C: pronoun; D: adjective
4. A	<b>Is It a Sentence?</b>
5. B	1. Sentence
6. C	2. Sentence
7. A	3. Fragment
8. B	4. Fragment
9. A	5. Sentence
10. D	6. Sentence
	7. Sentence
	8. Sentence

9. Sentence	9. Usually structured differently from autobiographies, <del>but</del> memoirs follow the development of an author's personality rather than the writing of his or her works.
10. Fragment	10. Chicago's metropolitan area, sometimes called Chicagoland, <del>which</del> is home to 9.5 million people and is the third largest in the United States.
11. Fragment	11. Sentence
12. Sentence	12. Sentence
13. Sentence	13. In the nineteenth century, the Great Lakes <del>were</del> a major highway for transportation, migration, and trade, as well as home to a large number of aquatic species.
14. Fragment	14. Sentence
15. Fragment	15. Most of <del>them</del> have now been replaced by more modern forms of transportation, including cars, subways, and trams.
16. Sentence	
17. Sentence	
18. Sentence	
<b>Sentences and Fragments</b>	
1. Fragment: Since 2009, physicists <del>have</del> been intrigued by possible evidence of dark matter in the center of the Milky Way galaxy.	
2. Sentence	
3. When they catch sight of their prey, <del>and</del> peregrine falcons drop into a steep, swift dive at more than 200 miles an hour.	
4. The observational branch of astronomy relies on the collection of data from celestial bodies, whereas the theoretical branch <del>uses</del> computers to analyze their movements.	
5. Each spring, students <del>who</del> gather from around the world for the FIRST Robotics Competition, an experience that can change lives.	
6. Many forms of meditation, a practice that has been examined by researchers over the last several decades, <del>and</del> have been deemed ineffective.	
7. Sentence	
8. <del>Although</del> Findings from one recent study about meteorites suggest that water has been present on Earth since the planet was formed.	
<b>Joining and Separating Sentences</b>	
1. Lake Superior is the largest freshwater lake in the world by surface area and the third largest by <del>volume</del> . It holds around 10% of the world's fresh surface water.	
Also acceptable: volume; it volume: it	
2. Very early printed books left spaces for commentary, miniature illustrations and illuminated initials, all of which would have been added later by hand.	
3. CRISPR tools can be programmed to target and cut virtually any <del>DNA sequence</del> . However, they have been limited by the requirement that they first recognize a short sequence surrounding the targeted section.	
Also acceptable: sequence; however,	
4. Correct	
5. Introduced in 1678, the term "conscious" acquired at least five definitions in fifty years, <del>and</del> its ambiguity has not faded in more recent times.	

6. Historically, the silk produced by silkworms has been used in fashion as a material for luxury **robes**. **Today**, silk-based materials are more likely to be found in a doctor's office or operating room.

Also acceptable: robes; today

7. The Qing Dynasty attained the height of its power under the Qianlong **Emperor**. Beginning in 1755, he led Ten Great Campaigns that extended Qing control into Inner Asia and personally supervised a number of Confucian cultural projects.

Also acceptable: Emperor; beginning  
Emperor: beginning

8. Interacting with animals is known to help people cope with **stress**. **Because** the prefrontal cortex helps individuals regulate social and emotional interactions, neuroscientists believe that it might be particularly relevant to their research.

Also acceptable: stress; because  
stress: because

9. Correct

10. As an undergraduate, Theodore Roosevelt began a systematic study of the United States Navy's role in the War of **1812**. **Assisted** by two uncles, he studied original source materials and official records, ultimately publishing *The Naval War of 1812* in 1882.

Also acceptable: 1812; assisted  
1812: assisted

11. A

12. B

13. C

14. D

15. B

#### Joining and Separating Sentences/Clauses

1. B

2. A

3. C

4. D

5. C

6. D

7. C

8. A

9. C

10. C

11. A

12. D

13. C

14. B

15. B

#### Identifying Non-Essential Words and Phrases

1. The cesium fountain atomic clock, **the most precise form of timekeeper available**, is expected to become inaccurate by less than a single second over the next 50 million years.

2. Frank Gehry's buildings, **critics agree**, are among the most important examples of contemporary architecture found in the United States.

3. The most common types of coral, **which are usually found in clear, shallow waters**, require sunlight in order to grow.

4. Used in some martial arts, the Red Belt, **one of several colored belts intended to denote a practitioner's skill level and rank**, originated in Japan and Korea.

5. Testing animal cognition is tricky, and comparing and contrasting across species lines, **especially when distinct species-specific tests are used**, is particularly challenging.

6. New Zealand, **one of the last lands to be settled by humans**, developed distinctive animal and plant life during its long isolation.

<p>7. Forensic biology, <b>the application of biology to law enforcement</b>, has been used to identify illegal products from endangered species and investigate bird collisions with wind turbines.</p> <p>8. Human computers, <b>who once performed basic numerical analysis for laboratories</b>, were behind the calculations for everything from the first accurate prediction of the return of Halley's Comet to the success of the Manhattan Project.</p> <p>9. The wingspan of the monarch butterfly, <b>a species commonly mistaken for the similar-looking viceroy butterfly</b>, ranges from 8.9 to 10.2 centimeters.</p> <p>10. Some traditional assumptions about how to treat jellyfish stings have recently been called into question: rinsing the affected areas with seawater, <b>for example</b>, only spreads the stings to a larger area.</p> <p>11. The world's first copyright law, <b>which was established in Great Britain in 1709</b>, was intended to protect books from illegal copying and distribution.</p> <p>12. The unusually large size of the Komodo dragon, <b>the largest species of lizard</b>, has been attributed to one of its ancient ancestors, the immense varanid lizard.</p> <p>13. Judy Chicago's <i>The Dinner Party</i> was, <b>through an unprecedented worldwide grassroots movement</b>, exhibited to more than a million people in six countries on three continents.</p> <p>14. According to the <i>Motif-Index of Folk Literature</i>, a <b>magisterial six-volume compilation of myths, legends and folktales collected by folklorists in the early twentieth century</b>, many cultures have told similar stories to explain the occurrence of solar eclipses.</p> <p>15. A new software called DXplain, <b>some hospitals report</b>, is helping doctors make diagnoses and avoid the types of errors that can sometimes cause harm to patients.</p> <p><b>Quick Check: Punctuating Transitions</b></p> <p>1. B 2. D 3. B 4. A</p>	<p><b>Non-Essential Clauses with Commas, Dashes, and Parentheses</b></p> <p>1. A 2. B 3. B 4. D 5. C</p> <p><b>All Non-Essential and Essential Clauses</b></p> <p>1. C 2. A 3. D 4. D 5. D 6. B 7. B 8. C 9. A 10. C</p> <p><b>Additional Comma Uses and Misuses</b></p> <p>1. D 2. C 3. C 4. B 5. A 6. D</p>
--	---

<b>Cumulative Review: All Punctuation and Transitions</b>	
1. C	6. has (subject: presence)
2. C	7. is (subject: one)
3. B	8. were (subject: Punic Wars)
4. A	9. Correct, was (subject: founding)
5. C	10. was (subject: neither)
6. D	11. Correct, has (subject: lead paint)
7. D	12. Correct, changes (subject: what)
8. C	13. spread (subject: feathers)
9. D	14. Correct, reflect (subject: writings)
10. B	<b>Subject-Verb Agreement and Tense</b>
11. A	1. A
12. B	2. B
13. A	3. A
14. D	4. B
15. B	5. C
16. C	6. A
17. D	7. A
18. A	8. D
19. D	9. A
20. B	10. B
<b>Pronoun Agreement</b>	
1. appear (subject: galaxies)	1. B
2. have (subject: expansion and construction)	2. D
3. explore (subject: works)	3. A
4. Correct: is (subject: any)	4. C
5. seems (subject: each)	5. D

6. B	<b>Cumulative Review: Chapters 8-12</b>
7. D	1. C
8. A	2. B
9. C	3. D
10. D	4. A
<b>Apostrophes</b>	5. C
1. B	6. D
2. B	7. D
3. C	8. D
4. A	9. A
5. D	10. B
6. A	11. B
<b>Modification</b>	12. C
1. C	13. D
2. D	14. B
3. B	15. C
4. B	<b>Practice Sets: All Chapters</b>
5. D	<b>Set 1</b>
6. C	1. D: Transition
<b>Parallel Structure</b>	The first sentence states that the conflict between sustainability and urban life is very old (has deep roots), and the sentence begun by the blank illustrates that idea by citing a specific ancient city that transformed its environment. “For example” is the only transition that can be used to introduce an example, making (D) correct.
1. C	
2. A	
3. D	
4. B	
5. D	

## 2. B: Transition

The first sentence states that Samuel Adams was an outlaw, and the statement begun by the blank reiterates or emphasizes that idea. "Indeed" is used to convey emphasis, so (B) is correct. "Nevertheless" and "on the other hand" both indicate contrast and have similar meanings, so (C) and (D) can be eliminated automatically, but be careful with (A): the second sentence does provide specific examples of Adams' outlaw-like behavior, but the transition is used to introduce the statement preceding the examples, not the examples themselves.

## 3. D: Transition

The first and second sentences convey opposing ideas (cats are programmed to be independent vs. their ability to form social relationships), so a contradictor is required. "Still" is the only contradictor, so it must be correct by default. "Moreover" is a continuer; "accordingly" is a cause-and-effect word; and "for instance" introduces an example.

## 4. C: Dashes

If you back up and read the sentence with the blank from the beginning, you can see that it contains a dash. That immediately suggests that a second dash will be used, so (C) is the most likely answer. When you plug that answer into the sentence, it fits: when the information between the dashes is removed, the sentence still makes sense (*Recent research suggests that short-term training in self-regulation...can actually have long-term effects for children*). The other options simply serve as distractions and do not need to be considered seriously.

## 5. A: Pronoun Agreement

The preservation of what's original surface paint? The only noun to which the pronoun in the blank could logically refer is the plural noun *works*, which corresponds to the pronoun "their". (A) is thus correct.

## 6. B: Separating Sentences and Fragments

(A) can be eliminated quickly because the statement after the semicolon is not a full sentence (*a discovery that suggests wild bees are just as happy in the treetops as they are among the flowers at ground level*). (C) can be gotten rid of immediately because a comma before or after that is virtually always incorrect. (D) does not fit either because the statement after the comma (*this discovery suggests wild bees are just as happy in the treetops as they are among the flowers at ground level*) is a full sentence, and so it must follow a period or semicolon rather than a comma. (B) is correct because the statement following the comma (*a discovery that suggests wild bees are just as happy in the treetops as they are among the flowers at ground level*) is not a sentence, and so this type of punctuation is acceptable.

## 7. C: Subject-Verb Agreement

This is a classic example of a subject-verb agreement question posing as a tense question. The fact that the answer choices contain different tenses is only a distraction—the real issue is the number of the verb. There are two plural options ("are" and "have been") but only one singular ("has been"), which suggest that the singular choice is correct. (The -ing form "having" in (D) is a distraction that creates a fragment.) What is *a complex and poorly understood area of human biology?* The role of genetics. Although the complete subject ends with the plural noun *genetics*, the main subject is *role*, which is singular. (C) is thus correct. Tense does not factor in at all.

## 8. D: Dangling Modifier, Comma Splice

Be very careful with both (A) and (B): although these answers are clear, concise, and grammatically correct, they both create dangling modifiers: each phrase describes John F. Kennedy, so that name must be placed immediately after the comma, at the start of the text after the blank. That portion of the text does not begin with John F. Kennedy, however, but rather with *his humor*. To avoid a dangling modifier, the name must appear at the end of the inserted text. (C) does not work because it creates a comma splice. (D) avoids that issue by placing the FANBOYS conjunction *and* after the comma, a construction that is equivalent to a period.

### 9. C: Student Notes

The key phrase in the question is “rapid rise and fall of game shows’ popularity,” so the correct answer must indicate that game shows became very popular and then lost that popularity within a short period. If you skim through the answers looking for a statement that matches that idea, you’ll find it in (C), in the phrase “viewership decreased dramatically only a decade later.” (A) and (D) are off-topic, but be careful with (B): this answer does state that viewers “lost interest in game shows,” but it only indicates when that occurred, not that it occurred rapidly.

### 10. D: Student Notes

The key phrase in the question is “honey’s medicinal properties” (that is, the characteristics of honey that make it like a medicine). The correct answer must therefore convey the idea that honey can cure or heal. The fact that honey was “commonly used as a sweetener in ancient times” has nothing to do with healing, nor does its ability to “rapidly provide energy,” so (B) and (C) can be easily eliminated. (A) is generally related to honey’s health properties, but keeping blood sugar stable is not the same thing as healing. (D) is a much more direct fit: a substance used to “treat skin problems and relieve allergy symptoms” would by definition act like a medicine.

## Set 2

### 1. A: Transition

The second sentence indicates a result of the first: if people cannot produce magnesium, zinc, and phosphorous internally, then they must get them by eating and drinking. A cause-and-effect word is required; only “therefore” fits.

### 2. D: Transition

The last sentence describes one way in which Melanie Wood uses statistics to develop proofs (developing probabilistic models for natural numbers and integers), so the correct transition must be used to introduce an example. “Specifically” is the only option that does so.

### 3. C: Transition

The first and second sentences present opposing ideas: glucose causes the brain to signal the presence of sugar vs. this does not occur when artificial sweeteners are consumed. A contradictor is therefore required, making “in contrast” the only possible option.

### 4. C: Separating Sentences

Shortcuts: (C) contains a period, which suggests that there may be two sentences involved. Start by checking this option. You can also apply the “no comma before a preposition rule” to eliminate (B) and (D) right away.

Although the phrase *in only a few decades* makes sense immediately after the word *food*, as part of the same sentence, it must actually be used to begin a new sentence. If you back up and read from the beginning of the sentence all the way to the period, you’ll find that there must actually be two sentences. Placing only a comma before *in only a few decades* creates a comma splice, eliminating (B) and (D). The lack of punctuation in (A) creates a fused sentence (two sentences placed back-to-back without any punctuation between them). (C) correctly uses a period to separate the two sentences.

### 5. B: Punctuating Transitions

This question asks you to distinguish between “however” used non-essentially (between two commas) and “however” used to begin a clause (after a period or semicolon). In this case, the statement following the punctuation is a complete sentence, so “however” is being used to begin a clause. That makes (B) correct. In addition, when this transition is used between commas, or after a single comma at the end of a sentence, it serves to connect a sentence to a previous statement—but since there is no previous statement, that does not make any sense here. (A) and (C) must therefore be incorrect, and (D) can be eliminated automatically because “however” must always have punctuation around it.

### 6. B: Pronoun Agreement

If you back up and read from the beginning of the passage, you’ll find that the pronoun in question must refer to Jane and Maria Porter, who are obviously two separate people and must therefore be referred to as “they”.

## 7. A: Joining Sentences and Fragments

To determine what type of punctuation (if any) should be placed after “against,” you must back up and read from the beginning of the sentence. The clause in question begins with *although*, and as a rule, clauses beginning with *although* must be set off by a comma. That makes (A) correct. Note that (D) cannot be right because two consecutive clauses cannot both begin with transitions that have the same meaning.

## 8. B: Subject-Verb Agreement, Comma Between Subject and Verb

The answer choices contain both singular (*has*) and plural (*have*) verbs, indicating that the sentence is testing subject verb agreement. What has its sticky outer layer removed? The silk naturally produced by silkworms. Even though the noun immediately before the verb is plural (*silkworms*), this word is part of the prepositional phrase *by silkworms* and does not affect the number of the verb. (C) and (D) both contain plural verbs and can thus be eliminated. (A) is incorrect as well because this option places an unnecessary comma between the complete subject (*the silk naturally produced by silkworms*) and the verb. That leaves (B), which contains the correct agreement but omits the comma.

## 9. D: Subject-Verb Agreement

As in the previous question, the inclusion of both singular verbs (*gives, has*) and a plural verb (*give*) in the answer choices indicate that this question is most likely testing subject-verb agreement. What is the subject of the verb in question? *Splendid remoteness and moonscape appearance*. That is a compound subject, so a plural verb is required, making the answer (D). Note that the different tenses in the answer choices are simply a distraction technique.

## 10. C: Student Notes

Shortcut: This is an “unfamiliar audience” question, which means that the correct answer must provide background information and will likely be on the longer side. With that information, you can zero in on (C), which is noticeably longer than the other answers. And indeed, this option presents basic information about who Cai Lun was, as well as his main role in the creation of paper. Playing process of elimination, (B) can be eliminated automatically because it does not even mention Cai Lun. Although (A) indicates that it was a myth that Cai Lun invented paper, this answer is incorrect because it does not include any background information about him. (D) does not work either because it only hints that Cai Lun may not have invented paper and, like (A), does not include any background information.

### Set 3

#### 1. A: Transition

The sentence before the blank indicates that *not all organisms use carbon dioxide for [photosynthesis]*, and the sentence begun by the blank provides a specific example of a type of organism that does not use carbon dioxide. “For instance” is the only transition that indicates this relationship, making (A) correct.

#### 2. D: Transition

The sentence before the blank and the final sentence present contrasting ideas: Claude McKay was criticized for writing sonnets vs. he continued to write in this form. A contradictor is therefore required, and “nevertheless” is the only option that fits into this category.

#### 3. C: Transition

Remember that when a transition is placed between two commas in the middle of a sentence, it serves to connect that sentence to the previous sentence. To answer this question, you must therefore back up and read from the beginning of the passage. The first sentence indicates that blue whale songs usually fall between 15 and 20 hertz, whereas the second sentence indicates that one whale has produced a song at 50 hertz. Those are contrasting ideas, so a contradictor is required. “However” is the only option that fits.

#### 4. B: Transition

The first sentence indicates that growing high-protein micro algae could substantially increase food production, and the second sentence reiterates and builds on that idea by pointing out the large number of people that might be fed. A continuer is therefore required. (A) can be eliminated because “still” is a contradictor, and (D) can be eliminated because “subsequently” (then, next) does not make any sense. Be careful with (C), however: the fact that researchers estimate 10 million people might be fed is not the direct and obvious logical consequence of increased microalgae production. (Only hundreds of thousands of people might be fed, for instance, or perhaps 20 million.) As a result, “in fact” is a better answer because this word only serves to indicate that a statement is emphasizing a previous one. (B) is thus correct.

#### 5. C: Separating Sentences

Although the phrase *as the field of linguistics matured* makes sense after the word *Latin*, don’t be fooled. If you back up and read from the beginning of the sentence, when you plug in the missing information you’ll find that there are actually two sentences, and *As the field of linguistics matured* must be placed at the beginning of the second. (A) and (D) create fused sentences—two sentences placed back-to-back, without any punctuation—and (B) creates a comma splice. (C) correctly separates the sentences with a period.

#### 6. D: Commas with Name

When commas are tested in relation to names, there are generally only two correct options: two commas (non-essential) or no commas (essential). To check the usage here, treat the name non-essentially, and read the sentence without it: *Synthetic chemist has corrected this problem by creating qubits...* No, that clearly does not make grammatical sense, so the name is essential, and no commas should be used. That makes the answer (D).

#### 7. B: Subject-Verb Agreement, Verb Form

The inclusion of both singular verbs (*has, is*) and plural verbs (*have, are*) signals that this question is testing subject-verb agreement, so the first thing to do is back up and identify the subject: the gerund *identifying*. Gerunds are always singular, so the verb must be singular as well. That eliminates (A) and (C). (D) creates an ungrammatical construction—the present perfect is created with *has*, not *is*, and can be eliminated as well, leaving (B) as the correct option.

#### 8. A: Pronoun Agreement

The actions of what are coherent with a group? The most logical referent in the sentence is *each robot*, singular. A singular pronoun (*its*) is thus required, making the answer (A). Be careful not to get distracted by the plural noun *robots*, which appears earlier in the sentence. The word *and* creates a break in the sentence, with the information after it corresponding to a new subject: *each robot*.

#### 9. A: Student Notes

The key phrase—what the student wants to indicate—is “diverse origins,” so the correct answer must convey the idea that gumbo was influenced by many different cultures or foods. If you approach the answers with that requirement in mind, you can identify (A) as the answer almost immediately: the reference to *Spanish, Caribbean, German, and Native American cuisine* is an exact match, making it unnecessary to check the other options.

#### 10. C: Student Notes

The key phrase—what the student wants to introduce—is “scope and purpose,” so the correct answer must convey information about ATLAS’s size and goals. If you skim through the answers, you can see that (B) contains the word “dozens” and (C) contains the word “thousands,” whereas (A) and (D) do not contain any words indicating size. (B) does not work, however, because this answer provides no information about the program’s goals. (C) is correct because the phrase “to investigate the origins of the universe” conveys the program’s purpose.

**Set 4****1. C: Transition**

The two sentences convey contrasting ideas: employees who work from home have trouble controlling the boundary between their personal and professional lives vs. remote workers expressed relative satisfaction with the work-life balance. A contradictor is thus required, making “however” the only option.

**2. B: Transition**

The second sentence illustrates what is meant by the statement *penchant for* (tendency towards) *drama* in the first sentence. As a result, the correct transition must be used to introduce an example or supporting statement. “Specifically” is the only option with that function, making (B) correct.

**3. D: Punctuating Transitions**

(A) and (C) can be eliminated automatically since *however* must always follow some form of punctuation and be followed by a comma. To decide between (B) and (D), you must determine which clause this transition belongs to, and whether it belongs at the beginning (after a semicolon) or end (after a single comma). (B) does not fit because “however” can only be placed at the beginning of an independent clause, and *a major increase in volcanism in the Andes around 7 million years ago* is not a full sentence. By default, (D) must be correct. Note that the colon is acceptable here because it follows a complete sentence and introduces an explanation—unlike a semicolon, a colon can be followed by a fragment.

**4. D: Separating Sentences and Fragments**

You can assume that (A) is incorrect because *comma + they* normally signals a comma splice (indeed, that is the case here). (C) can be easily eliminated as well because the statement after the semicolon is not a full sentence. (B) does not fit because punctuation must be used to indicate a break between the first (independent) clause and the second (dependent) clause. A comma is required, making (D) correct.

**5. C: Student Notes**

The key phrase—what the student wants to emphasize—is “the large scale of Jacob Lawrence’s work.” The correct answer must therefore convey information about the size of Lawrence’s work. If you skim through the answer, you’ll find that (B) and (D) contain no words related to size, and the word “half” in (A) is inconsistent with the idea of “large scale.” Only “dozens of panels” in (C) is a match for the correct idea, so that answer is correct.

**6. A: Non-Essential Clause with Dashes**

If you do not stop at the blank and instead read the entire sentence in which the question appears, you can notice that it contains a dash. That immediately suggests that a first dash will be required to set off a non-essential clause, so (A) is the most likely answer. When you plug in that option and read the sentence without the information between the dashes, it still makes sense (*The use of text in the visual arts can be traced back to cubist painters such as Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso, who added letters and words...into still lifes*). There is no need to check the other answers.

**7. D: Pronoun**

One of the few literary genres that who created? If you read the sentence with the blank, the only logical referent is *Romans*, plural. A plural pronoun (“they”) is thus required, making (D) correct.

**8. C: Punctuation with List; Parallel Structure**

As soon as you notice that the answer involves a list, scan for consistent punctuation: either commas or semicolons can be used to separate the items, but they cannot be alternated. Only (C) keeps the punctuation consistent.

Note: when commas are used to separate the first two list items, the third comma is optional (for this reason, you will never be asked to choose between a version with and without the comma). However, when a semicolon is used between the first two items, another semicolon must be used before the third item. For that reason, as well as the fact that the third item is not parallel to the other two, (D) is incorrect.

### 9. A: Dash; Separating Sentences and Fragments

Because the answers are fairly long and contain no immediately obvious clues as to what concept(s) are being tested, beyond the fact that punctuation is involved, you are best served by working through the answers in order. If you do so, you'll actually find the answer right away. (A) fits because a single dash must follow a full sentence (*The system appears to be a rare type of binary, known as a cataclysmic variable*) but can be followed by a fragment (*a hot, dense core of a burned out star*). In addition, the statement after the comma provides a definition, and definitions are often introduced with dashes. Note that this is the rare exception in which a comma can acceptably be placed before a preposition (*in*), because the punctuation serves to mark the end of a non-essential clause (*known as a cataclysmic variable*).

(B) is incorrect because *tightly* modifies *orbits* and should be placed next to it, and because the placement of *tightly* rather than a *white dwarf* immediately before *a hot dense core* creates a misplaced modifier. This answer is also extremely awkward. (C) incorrectly places a comma before a preposition (*around*) and does not place any punctuation after *dwarf*, creating a jumbled, ungrammatical construction. (D) simply creates nonsense when plugged in.

### 10. D: Transition

The sentence that must be begun by the transition and the previous sentence express similar ideas: both serve to explain why the Komodo dragon's name is appropriate. "In contrast" is a contradictor, so (C) can be automatically eliminated. "Consequently" does not fit either because the last sentence does not indicate a result of the previous statement. Now, however, be careful. "Specifically" is used to introduce an example, but the Komodo dragon's *heavy, scaly body* is not an example of its *long, forked tongue*. Rather, the scaly body is mentioned as a second example of why the name "dragon" is appropriate. "Likewise" indicates that the last sentence has the same supporting-example purpose as the previous sentence, making (D) correct.

### Set 5

#### 1. C: Transition

The first two sentences express opposing ideas: advocates of space exploration want a fully developed space economy vs. that future is unclear. A contradictor is therefore required, making "however" the only option.

#### 2. D: Transition

Logically, Foffa and his colleagues must have taken CT scans of the fossils *still embedded in the ground because the bones could not be physically removed from the rock without damage*. That is a cause-and-effect relationship. "Thus" is the only transition in the correct category, making (D) the answer.

#### 3. B: Transition

"However" and "still" are both contradictors, so you can start by assuming (A) and (D) are incorrect. The fact that the formation of megaregions increases competition between cities is not an example of the fact that it exerts pressure on them, so (C) can be eliminated as well. "Moreover" correctly indicates that the statement begun by the blank is describing a second effect of the formation of megaregions.

#### 4. A: Transition

The first sentence introduces the idea that print books will not be entirely replaced by electronic ones, and the second statement indicates that print books outsell electronic ones in some instances. Those are similar ideas, with the second sentence emphasizing the first. The function of "in fact" is to emphasize, so (A) is correct. Although "similarly" is also a continuer, this transition is used to introduce a new, related example rather than to reiterate a previously stated idea. For that reason, (C) does not fit.

### 5. C: Separating Sentences

Although the phrase *in July* makes sense after the word *not*, as part of the same sentence, it must actually be used to begin a new sentence. Omitting the punctuation creates a fused sentence (two sentences placed back-to-back without any punctuation), eliminating (A) and (D). (B) creates a comma splice. (C) correctly uses a period to separate the two sentences.

### 6. D: Separating Sentences and Fragments

A comma before *that* is virtually always wrong, so you can assume that (A) and (C) are both incorrect. (B) creates a fused sentence (two sentences placed back-to-back without any punctuation), leaving (D) as the only possibility. That answer correctly places a dash after a full sentence and before a fragment.

### 7. B: Pronoun Agreement

What would serve to document stories and histories, etc.? If you back up and read from the beginning of the sentence, you'll find that the only logical referent is *the poles*, plural. A plural pronoun is thus required, eliminating (A). "These" should not be used without a noun after it, and there is nothing in the sentence to indicate that only *some* of the poles served the purpose indicated. Only "they" is both grammatically correct and logical.

### 8. D: Dangling Modifier, Separating Clauses

The beginning of the sentence describes the cyclists but does not include the actual subject *the cyclists*, so that phrase must appear at the beginning of the blank, immediately after *United States*. Otherwise, a dangling modifier is created. Only (C) and (D) place *the cyclists* at the beginning, so (A) and (B) can be eliminated right away. (C) does not work because *comma + and = period*, and *alternately enduring snow, sleet, hail, heavy rain, and oppressive heat* is not a sentence.

### 9. C: Student Notes

The key phrase—what the student wants to present—is "a difference in the type of armor used by early and late knights," so the correct answer must convey a contrast. If you skim through the answers, you can notice that the only option to contain a contradictor, "whereas," is (C), so you can start by reading that choice first. It clearly describes a difference between early and late medieval armor, so it is unnecessary to check any of the other answers.

### 10. A: Student Notes

The key phrase—what the student wants to emphasize—is "mystery surrounding the sculptures," so the correct answer must be consistent with the idea of mystery. The phrase "unknown significance" in (A) corresponds to that idea; all the other answers are off-topic.



## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Erica Meltzer earned her B.A., *magna cum laude*, from Wellesley College and spent more than a decade tutoring privately in Boston and New York City, as well as throughout the United States and internationally online. Her experience working with pupils from a wide range of educational backgrounds and virtually every score level gave her unique insight into the types of stumbling blocks students often encounter when preparing for standardized reading and writing tests.

She was inspired to begin writing her own test-prep materials in 2007, after visiting a local bookstore in search of additional practice questions for an SAT student. Unable to find material that replicated the contents of the exam with sufficient accuracy, she decided to write her own. What started as a handful of exercises jotted down on a piece of paper became the basis for her first book, the original *Ultimate Guide to SAT Grammar*, published in 2011. Since that time, she has authored guides for SAT reading and vocabulary, as well as verbal guides for the ACT®, GRE®, and GMAT®. Her books have sold more than 200,000 copies and are used around the world. She lives in New York City, and you can visit her online at [www.thecriticalreader.com](http://www.thecriticalreader.com).

Whether you are seeking a comprehensive review or need to concentrate on just a few key areas, *The Ultimate Guide to SAT® Grammar* teaches you the rules you must know to master the Writing portion of the new digital SAT with confidence.

**Includes:**

- Step-by-step explanations that break down concepts in all of their forms, from the simplest to the most complex.
- Strategies for identifying correct and incorrect answers with greater speed and accuracy.
- More than 200 practice questions with detailed explanations that allow you to apply your skills and check your understanding.
- Tips and strategies for taking the computer-based exam.

To help you maximize your takeaway and use your study time as efficiently as possible, this book begins with the most commonly tested concepts and includes cumulative reviews designed to ensure that essential material covered early on is not forgotten.

---

In 2007, Erica Meltzer answered a Craigslist ad for an SAT tutor and unexpectedly found herself in the high-pressure world of Manhattan test prep. Today, she is the author of guides for the SAT®, ACT®, GRE®, GMAT®, and IELTS®. Her books are used around the world, and her work has been cited in *Teen Vogue*, *The College Solution*, and *CBS MarketWatch*. She lives in New York City, and you can visit her online at [www.thecriticalreader.com](http://www.thecriticalreader.com).



SAT® is a trademark registered by the College Board, which is not affiliated with, and does not endorse, this publication.

ISBN 9781733589598

A standard linear barcode representing the ISBN number 9781733589598.

90000

9 781733 589598