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Reading & Writing

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Form, Structure and Sense (key)



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Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 3580533b

In recent years, economists around the world have created new tools that quantify the overall well-being of a country's citizens. Economists in India, for example, use an Ease of Living Index. This tool _____ economic potential, sustainability, and citizens' quality of life.

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

- A. measures
- B. had measured
- C. would have measured
- D. will have been measuring

ID: 3580533b Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The previous sentence tells us how economists in India "use" a certain tool, while this sentence describes general facts about that tool. To express general facts (and also to match the simple present tense of "use"), we should use the simple present tense form "measures."

Choice B is incorrect. This choice uses the past perfect tense, but the previous sentence tells us that the tool is currently used to measure things, so the past tense doesn't make sense for this verb. Choice C is incorrect. This choice uses the future perfect conditional tense, but the previous sentence tells us that the tool is currently used to measure things, so the future tense doesn't make sense for this verb. Choice D is incorrect. This choice uses the future perfect continuous tense, but the previous sentence tells us that the tool is currently used to measure things, so the future tense doesn't make sense for this verb.

Question Difficulty: Easy



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ID: b7363ba2

Mathematician and meteorologist Edward Lorenz used the metaphor of the “butterfly effect” to explain how seemingly minor events can have major impacts on future weather. According to Lorenz’s metaphor, the wind from a butterfly flapping _____ in Brazil might eventually grow into a storm elsewhere across the globe.

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

- A. its wings
- B. its wings’
- C. it’s wing’s
- D. it’s wings’

ID: b7363ba2 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The conventions being tested are the use of possessive determiners and plural nouns. The singular possessive determiner “its” and the plural noun “wings” correctly indicate that the butterfly has multiple wings.

Choice B is incorrect because the context requires the plural noun “wings,” not the plural possessive noun “wings’.” Choice C is incorrect because the context requires the singular possessive determiner “its” and the plural noun “wings,” not the contraction “it’s” and the singular possessive noun “wing’s.” Choice D is incorrect because the context requires the singular possessive determiner “its” and the plural noun “wings,” not the contraction “it’s” and the plural possessive noun “wings’.”

Question Difficulty: Easy



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ID: dbd78791

Led by Syrian American astronomer Shadia Habbal, the Solar Wind Sherpas are an intrepid team of scientists who travel the globe to study solar winds, the streams of particles emanating from the Sun that are only visible from certain locations during a total solar eclipse. When such an eclipse is imminent, the Sherpas pack up their telescopes and _____ ready.

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

- A. get
- B. had gotten
- C. got
- D. were getting

ID: dbd78791 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of verbs to express tense in a sentence. In this choice, the present tense verb “get” is consistent with the other present tense verbs (“are,” “travel,” and “pack”) used to describe the Sherpas and their activities.

Choice B is incorrect. The past perfect verb “had gotten” isn’t consistent with the other present tense verbs used to describe the Sherpas and their activities. Choice C is incorrect. The past tense verb “got” isn’t consistent with the other present tense verbs used to describe the Sherpas and their activities. Choice D is incorrect. The past progressive verb “were getting” isn’t consistent with the other present tense verbs used to describe the Sherpas and their activities.

Question Difficulty: Easy



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ID: 77bf77cd

Farouk El-Baz, a geologist and space scientist, _____ part of the team that selected the lunar landing sites for the Apollo program during the 1960s and 1970s.

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

- A. are
- B. was
- C. have been
- D. were

ID: 77bf77cd Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-verb agreement. The singular verb "was" agrees in number with the singular subject "Farouk El-Baz."

Choice A is incorrect because the plural verb "are" doesn't agree in number with the singular subject "Farouk El-Baz." Choice C is incorrect because the plural verb "have been" doesn't agree in number with the singular subject "Farouk El-Baz." Choice D is incorrect because the plural verb "were" doesn't agree in number with the singular subject "Farouk El-Baz."

Question Difficulty: Easy



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ID: 57998dd3

Obsidian is a kind of volcanic glass formed when lava cools so quickly that the atoms inside it cannot arrange themselves in a crystalline structure. You _____ more about obsidian’s structure, which is classified as amorphous, in a later chapter.

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

- A. had learned
- B. had been learning
- C. will learn
- D. have learned

ID: 57998dd3 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of verbs to express tense in a sentence. In this choice, the future tense verb “will learn,” used in conjunction with the phrase “in a later chapter,” correctly indicates that “you” (the reader) are going to learn about obsidian’s structure at some point in the future.

Choice A is incorrect because the past perfect verb “had learned” doesn’t indicate that the subject is going to learn about obsidian’s structure in the future. Choice B is incorrect because the past perfect progressive verb “had been learning” doesn’t indicate that the subject is going to learn about obsidian’s structure in the future. Choice D is incorrect because the present perfect verb “have learned” doesn’t indicate that the subject is going to learn about obsidian’s structure in the future.

Question Difficulty: Easy



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ID: db4e3819

Midway through her 1968 jazz album *A Monastic Trio*, Alice Coltrane switches instruments, swapping the piano for the harp. With the same fluid style that Coltrane was famous for on piano, she _____ her fingers across the harp strings and creates a radiant sound.

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

- A. sweep
- B. are sweeping
- C. were sweeping
- D. sweeps

ID: db4e3819 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-verb agreement. The singular verb "sweeps" agrees in number with the singular subject "she," which refers to Alice Coltrane.

Choice A is incorrect because the plural verb "sweep" doesn't agree in number with the singular subject "she." Choice B is incorrect because the plural verb "are sweeping" doesn't agree in number with the singular subject "she." Choice C is incorrect because the plural verb "were sweeping" doesn't agree in number with the singular subject "she."

Question Difficulty: Easy



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ID: d47bb0a4

Objects ranging from the Kikkoman soy sauce bottle to the Yamaha VMAX motorcycle to the Komachi bullet train _____ designed by twentieth-century industrial designer Kenji Ekuan.

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

- A. was
- B. is
- C. has been
- D. were

ID: d47bb0a4 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-verb agreement. The plural verb "were" agrees in number with the plural subject "objects."

Choice A is incorrect because the singular verb "was" doesn't agree in number with the plural subject "objects."

Choice B is incorrect because the singular verb "is" doesn't agree in number with the plural subject "objects."

Choice C is incorrect because the singular verb "has been" doesn't agree in number with the plural subject "objects."

Question Difficulty: Easy



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ID: 69f031ab

While exploring Nevada's Gypsum Cave in 1930, Seneca and Abenaki archaeologist Bertha Parker made her most famous discovery: the skull of a now-extinct ground sloth (*Nothrotheriops shastensis*) alongside human-made tools. Parker's crucial finding was the first _____ humans in North America as far back as 10,000 years ago.

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

- A. places
- B. placed
- C. place
- D. to place

ID: 69f031ab Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The object for the verb "was" is "first," and "to place" is acting as a modifier for "first." What was the finding? It was "the first." The first to do what? The first "to place humans in North America" 10,000 years ago. When a verb serves as a modifier within a noun phrase, it must be nonfinite (i.e., not conjugated to a specific subject). The infinitive form "to place" is the only nonfinite option among the choices that makes sense in context.

Choice A is incorrect. The object for the verb "was" is "first," and "places" is acting as a modifier for "first." What was the thing that Parker's finding did? What was it the first to do? Place humans in North America 10,000 years ago. When a verb acts as a modifier, it must be nonfinite (i.e., not conjugated to a specific subject), but "places" is a finite form of the verb. Choice B is incorrect. The object for the verb "was" is "first," and "placed" is acting to modify "first." What was it that Parker's finding was the first to do? Place humans in North America 10,000 years ago. When a verb acts as a modifier, it must be nonfinite (i.e., not conjugated to a specific subject), but "placed" is a finite form. "Placed" can also be a past participle, but that wouldn't make sense here because the meaning of "the first placed humans" would be unclear. Choice C is incorrect. The object for the verb "was" is "first," and "place" is modifying "first." What was the thing that Parker's finding did? What was it the first to do? Place humans in North America. When a verb acts as a modifier, it must be nonfinite (i.e., not conjugated to a specific subject), but "place" is a finite form of the verb. Additionally, "place" can't serve as a noun here, because it results in an illogical sentence (the "finding" wasn't "the first place").

Question Difficulty: Easy



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ID: f4fd123c

The African Games Co-production Market, one of over 180 annual international conferences supporting video game development, _____ the growth of the African gaming industry by helping start-up studios in Africa find partners.

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

- A. promote
- B. are promoting
- C. promotes
- D. have promoted

ID: f4fd123c Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The subject of the sentence is “The African Games Co-production Market.” That’s one market, so it’s a singular noun, which means it needs a singular verb. “Promotes” is the only singular verb among the choices.

Choice A is incorrect. This choice creates a subject-verb agreement error. The subject “The African Games Co-production Market” is singular, but the verb “promote” is plural. Choice B is incorrect. This choice creates a subject-verb agreement error. The subject “The African Games Co-production Market” is singular, but the verb “are promoting” is plural. Choice D is incorrect. This choice creates a subject-verb agreement error. The subject “The African Games Co-production Market” is singular, but the verb “have promoted” is plural.

Question Difficulty: Easy



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ID: b260c65a

Earth is not a perfect sphere. Due to the _____ gravitational pull, Earth bulges out on the sides closest to and farthest from the Moon. This distorting pull is known as a tidal force, and it is responsible for the changes in water levels that are called high and low tides.

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

- A. Moon's
- B. Moons
- C. Moons'
- D. Moon

ID: b260c65a Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of possessive nouns. The singular possessive noun "Moon's" correctly indicates that there is only one Moon, and it has a gravitational pull.

Choice B is incorrect because the context requires the singular possessive noun "Moon's," not the plural noun "Moons." Choice C is incorrect because the context requires the singular possessive noun "Moon's," not the plural possessive noun "Moons'." Choice D is incorrect because the context requires the singular possessive noun "Moon's," not the singular noun "Moon."

Question Difficulty: Easy



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ID: 7c48a6dd

In the late 1960s, inspired in part by the sight of laundry hanging on a clothesline, African American abstract painter Sam Gilliam began to create his iconic "Drape" paintings. He applied bold, saturated hues to large canvases and _____ them from ceilings or walls, causing the drooping fabric to cascade in dramatic loops and curves.

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

- A. to have suspended
- B. suspending
- C. to suspend
- D. suspended

ID: 7c48a6dd Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The past tense of "suspended" matches the past tense of "applied," which has the same subject ("he") and takes place in the same context: "He applied...and [he] suspended."

Choice A is incorrect. The perfect infinitive "to have suspended" doesn't match the past tense of "applied," and it can't serve as a verb on its own. These are both verbs with the same subject and in the same context, so there's no need to shift tenses. Choice B is incorrect. The present participle "suspending" doesn't match the past tense of "applied," and it can't serve as a verb on its own. These are both verbs with the same subject and in the same context, so there's no need to shift tenses. Choice C is incorrect. The infinitive "to suspend" doesn't match the past tense of "applied," and it can't serve as a verb on its own. These are both verbs with the same subject and in the same context, so there's no need to shift tenses.

Question Difficulty: Easy



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ID: fff4c7f4

American poet Emily Dickinson wrote many of her poems on scraps of paper, but she also took steps to collect these works. From 1858 to around 1864, for example, she copied more than 800 of _____ into forty homemade booklets (known as fascicles).

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

- A. them
- B. this
- C. that
- D. it

ID: fff4c7f4 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The pronoun "them" agrees with the plural antecedents "poems" and "works."

Choice B is incorrect. "This" is a singular pronoun, but its antecedents, "poems" and "works," are plural. Choice C is incorrect. "That" is a singular pronoun, but its antecedents, "poems" and "works," are plural. Choice D is incorrect. "It" is a singular pronoun, but its antecedents, "poems" and "works," are plural.

Question Difficulty: Easy



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ID: e2759b92

Occupying a significant part of modern-day Nigeria, the Kingdom of Benin was one of the major powers in West Africa between the thirteenth and nineteenth centuries. It _____ ruled by Oba Ewuare I from 1440 to 1473.

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

- A. is
- B. will be
- C. has been
- D. was

ID: e2759b92 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of verbs to express tense in a sentence. In this choice, the past tense verb “was ruled” correctly indicates that Oba Ewuare I ruled the Kingdom of Benin in the distant past (from 1440 to 1473). This past tense verb choice is consistent with the other past tense verb (“was”) used to describe the Kingdom of Benin.

Choice A is incorrect because the present tense verb “is ruled” doesn’t indicate that Oba Ewuare I ruled the Kingdom of Benin in the distant past. Choice B is incorrect because the future tense verb “will be ruled” doesn’t indicate that Oba Ewuare I ruled the Kingdom of Benin in the distant past. Choice C is incorrect because the present perfect tense verb “has been ruled” doesn’t indicate that Oba Ewuare I ruled the Kingdom of Benin in the distant past.

Question Difficulty: Easy



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ID: 175df826

In the 2011 documentary *The Barber of Birmingham*, civil rights activist James Armstrong recounts how his barbershop in Birmingham, Alabama, _____ as a political hub for members of the Black community during the 1950s.

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

- A. serving
- B. having served
- C. served
- D. to serve

ID: 175df826 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of verb forms within a sentence. Relative clauses, such as the one beginning with "how," require a finite (tensed) verb, a verb that can function as the main verb of a clause. This choice correctly supplies the clause with the finite past tense verb "served."

Choice A is incorrect because it results in an ungrammatical sentence. The nonfinite participle "serving" doesn't supply the clause with a finite verb. Choice B is incorrect because it results in an ungrammatical sentence. The nonfinite participle "having served" doesn't supply the clause with a finite verb. Choice D is incorrect because it results in an ungrammatical sentence. The nonfinite to-infinitive "to serve" doesn't supply the clause with a finite verb.

Question Difficulty: Easy



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ID: 31362d2d

If simple sugars such as ribose and glycolaldehyde _____ Earth from elsewhere and survived impact—a possibility astrophysicist Nicolle Zellner outlined in a 2020 study—the sugars could have reacted with other molecules that were already present on the planet to form the nucleotides that are the structural components of RNA and DNA.

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

- A. reach
- B. had reached
- C. will reach
- D. are reaching

ID: 31362d2d Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of verbs to express tense. In this choice, the past perfect verb “had reached” is used correctly to describe a past action that was completed before another action in the past. Specifically, in this hypothetical scenario about the origins of RNA and DNA on Earth, the simple sugars had to have reached Earth before they could react with other molecules on the planet.

Choice A is incorrect because the present tense verb “reach” doesn’t indicate that the simple sugars reached Earth before reacting with other molecules on the planet. Choice C is incorrect because the future tense verb “will reach” doesn’t indicate that the simple sugars reached Earth before reacting with other molecules on the planet. Choice D is incorrect because the present progressive verb “are reaching” doesn’t indicate that the simple sugars reached Earth before reacting with other molecules on the planet.

Question Difficulty: Easy



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ID: 1d971f75

Photographer Ansel Adams's landscape portraits are iconic pieces of American art. However, many of the _____ of landscapes were intended not as art but as marketing; a concessions company at Yosemite National Park had hired Adams to take pictures of the park for restaurant menus and brochures.

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

- A. photographer's early photo's
- B. photographers early photo's
- C. photographer's early photos
- D. photographers early photos

ID: 1d971f75 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. There's only one photographer (Adams), and the photos are his, so the singular possessive "photographer's" is correct. There's more than one photo, and nothing belongs to the photos, so the simple plural "photos" is correct.

Choice A is incorrect. This choice uses the singular possessive "photo's," which isn't correct. There's more than one photo, and they don't possess anything, so the noun should be the simple plural "photos." Choice B is incorrect. This choice uses the simple plural "photographers" and the singular possessive "photo's," which aren't correct. There's only one photographer (Adams) and there's more than one photo. Choice D is incorrect. This choice uses the simple plural "photographers," which isn't correct. There's only one photographer (Adams).

Question Difficulty: Easy



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ID: f40ca576

Each year in the fall, when the weather starts to cool in the northern hemisphere, millions of North American monarch butterflies journey south. Searching for food and warmer habitats, they _____ thousands of miles—from as far north as Canada all the way down to Mexico—on this annual migration.

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

- A. flew
- B. were flying
- C. had flown
- D. fly

ID: f40ca576 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of verbs to express tense. In this choice, the present tense verb “fly” is consistent with the other present tense verb (“journey”) used to describe the butterflies’ yearly migration. Together, these simple present tense verbs correctly indicate that the migration is a current, yearly occurrence.

Choice A is incorrect. The simple past tense verb “flew” isn’t consistent with the other present tense verb used to describe the butterflies’ yearly migration. Choice B is incorrect. The past progressive tense verb “were flying” isn’t consistent with the other present tense verb used to describe the butterflies’ yearly migration. Choice C is incorrect. The past perfect tense verb “had flown” isn’t consistent with the other present tense verb used to describe the butterflies’ yearly migration.

Question Difficulty: Easy



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ID: 4c9a2aee

Wanda Diaz-Merced is an astrophysicist who lost her sight when she was young. Diaz-Merced's condition inspired her to develop software that can translate scientific data into sound. Sound-based tools _____ scientists to detect subtle patterns in data. Such patterns may not be evident in traditional graphs.

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

- A. has enabled
- B. enable
- C. is enabling
- D. enables

ID: 4c9a2aee Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-verb agreement. The plural verb "enable" agrees in number with the plural subject "sound-based tools."

Choice A is incorrect because the singular verb "has enabled" doesn't agree in number with the plural subject "sound-based tools." Choice C is incorrect because the singular verb "is enabling" doesn't agree in number with the plural subject "sound-based tools." Choice D is incorrect because the singular verb "enables" doesn't agree in number with the plural subject "sound-based tools."

Question Difficulty: Easy



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ID: 42cc9236

If you try on one of artist Nick Cave's signature Soundsuits, you can expect to swish, rustle, or clang every time you move. Cave makes his suits out of found objects, everything from ceramic birds to broken record players. He carefully considers the sound an object makes before using _____ in a suit.

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

- A. this
- B. that
- C. these
- D. it

ID: 42cc9236 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested here is pronoun-antecedent agreement. The singular pronoun "it" agrees in number with the singular antecedent "object."

Choice A is incorrect. The singular pronoun "this" is used to refer to a specific thing, but here there is no specific object being referred to. Instead, the sentence is referring back to a hypothetical object that Cave might use in a Soundsuit. Choice B is incorrect. The singular pronoun "that" is used to refer to a specific thing, but here there is no specific object being referred to. Instead, the sentence is referring back to a hypothetical object that Cave might use in a Soundsuit. Choice C is incorrect because the plural pronoun "these" doesn't agree in number with the singular antecedent "object."

Question Difficulty: Easy



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ID: 81ac953e

In 1899, Swedish chemist Svante Arrhenius developed an equation to answer a long-standing question: why do chemical reactions speed up at higher temperatures? The Arrhenius equation, named for its creator, _____ an important concept in modern chemistry.

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

- A. have remained
- B. remain
- C. remains
- D. are remaining

ID: 81ac953e Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. This choice uses the singular verb "remains" to match the singular subject "equation."

Choice A is incorrect. The singular noun "equation" doesn't match with the plural verb conjugation "have remained." Choice B is incorrect. The singular noun "equation" doesn't match with the plural verb conjugation "remain." Choice D is incorrect. The singular noun "equation" doesn't match with the plural verb conjugation "are remaining."

Question Difficulty: Easy



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ID: ec08463d

Botanists recognize over fifty different species of sunflower. One species, the silverleaf sunflower, _____ both an early-flowering ecotype that tends to grow in coastal areas and a late-flowering ecotype that grows inland.

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

- A. having included
- B. including
- C. to include
- D. includes

ID: ec08463d Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. This verb needs to function as the main verb in the sentence, with the subject “one species,” so it needs to be conjugated. This choice gives us the singular present tense “includes,” which is the only conjugated form of the verb among the choices.

Choice A is incorrect. This doesn’t complete the text in a way that conforms to the conventions of Standard English. This verb needs to function as the main verb in the sentence, with the subject “one species,” so it needs to be conjugated. “Having included” is a participle form of the verb: it’s not conjugated and doesn’t function like a normal verb. Choice B is incorrect. This doesn’t complete the text in a way that conforms to the conventions of Standard English. This verb needs to function as the main verb in the sentence, with the subject “one species,” so it needs to be conjugated. “Including” is the gerund form of the verb: it’s not conjugated and doesn’t function like a normal verb. Choice C is incorrect. This doesn’t complete the text in a way that conforms to the conventions of Standard English. This verb needs to function as the main verb in the sentence, with the subject “one species,” so it needs to be conjugated. “To include” is the infinitive form of the verb: it’s not conjugated.

Question Difficulty: Easy



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ID: 4a90a978

In 1990, California native and researcher Ellen Ochoa left her position as chief of the Intelligent Systems Technology Branch at a NASA research center _____ the space agency's astronaut training program.

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

- A. to join
- B. is joining
- C. joined
- D. joins

ID: 4a90a978 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of nonfinite verb forms in a sentence. The nonfinite to-infinitive verb "to join" is correctly used to form a subordinate clause that expresses why Ochoa left her position (to join the training program).

Choice B is incorrect because the finite verb "is joining" can't be used in this way to indicate Ochoa's action of joining the training program. A conjunction such as "and" would be needed to coordinate "is joining" with the previous finite verb, "left." Choice C is incorrect because the finite verb "joined" can't be used in this way to indicate Ochoa's action of joining the training program. A conjunction such as "and" would be needed to coordinate "joined" with the previous finite verb, "left." Choice D is incorrect because the finite verb "joins" can't be used in this way to indicate Ochoa's action of joining the training program. A conjunction such as "and" would be needed to coordinate "joins" with the previous finite verb, "left."

Question Difficulty: Easy



Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 59e41600

Why are Rome's famous concrete structures, such as the Colosseum, still standing after 2,000-plus years, when modern concrete may not even last for fifty? Scientists _____ that the secret to Roman concrete's durability was its unique blend of ingredients, which included volcanic ash and seawater.

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

- A. explain
- B. having explained
- C. explaining
- D. to explain

ID: 59e41600 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of verb forms within a sentence. The main clause of a sentence requires a finite (tensed) verb, and this choice supplies the finite present tense verb "explain" to indicate what the scientists do.

Choice B is incorrect because it results in an ungrammatical sentence. The nonfinite participle "having explained" doesn't supply the main clause with a finite verb. Choice C is incorrect because it results in an ungrammatical sentence. The nonfinite participle "explaining" doesn't supply the main clause with a finite verb. Choice D is incorrect because it results in an ungrammatical sentence. The nonfinite to-infinitive "to explain" doesn't supply the main clause with a finite verb.

Question Difficulty: Easy



Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 588887b9

In 1881, French chemist Camille Faure redesigned the rechargeable lead-acid battery. Faure's design greatly increased the amount of electricity that the original battery, which the French physicist Gaston Planté _____ fifteen years earlier, could hold.

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

- A. is inventing
- B. will invent
- C. invents
- D. had invented

ID: 588887b9 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. Faure redesigned the battery in 1881, and the original battery was invented "fifteen years earlier." Notice that this is the only choice in the past tense. To indicate that a past occurrence took place before another past occurrence, we need to use "had" + the past tense form of the verb. This is called the "past perfect" tense.

Choice A is incorrect. This choice creates a tense error. Planté invented the original battery in the past, so we shouldn't use the present tense "is inventing." Choice B is incorrect. This choice creates a tense error. Planté invented the original battery in the past, so we shouldn't use the future tense "will invent." Choice C is incorrect. This choice creates a tense error. Planté invented the original battery in the past, so we shouldn't use the present tense "invents."

Question Difficulty: Easy



Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 96e5da01

The alga species *Chlorella vulgaris* is very efficient at making oxygen. For this reason, scientists are currently exploring ways to use this species in space. *C. vulgaris* might be used, for example, to build future biological air exchange systems that _____ oxygen for astronauts.

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

- A. are producing
- B. produced
- C. produce
- D. have produced

ID: 96e5da01 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of verbs to express tense. Simple present tense verbs can be used to describe actions that tend to occur, including in a hypothetical or future scenario. In this case, the simple present tense verb “produce” indicates what the air exchange systems might be able to do in the future (produce oxygen for astronauts).

Choice A is incorrect. The present progressive tense verb “are producing” suggests that the oxygen is currently being produced, not that it might be produced in the future. Choice B is incorrect because the past tense verb “produced” suggests that the oxygen was produced in the past, not that it might be produced in the future. Choice D is incorrect because the present perfect tense verb “have produced” suggests that the oxygen has been produced from a point in the past up to the present, not that it might be produced in the future.

Question Difficulty: Easy



Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 12bd5b75

With its towering, six-spired exterior of granitelike quartz monzonite, the Salt Lake Temple is one of the most instantly recognizable structures in the state of Utah. However, many people do not know that _____ built over the course of forty years, with construction beginning in 1853 and ending in 1893.

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

- A. it was
- B. one was
- C. they were
- D. both were

ID: 12bd5b75 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is pronoun-antecedent agreement. The singular pronoun "it" agrees in number with the singular antecedent "the Salt Lake Temple."

Choice B is incorrect because the singular pronoun "one" is ambiguous in this context; the resulting sentence leaves unclear whether there is only one Salt Lake temple or multiple. Choice C is incorrect because the plural pronoun "they" doesn't agree in number with the singular antecedent "the Salt Lake Temple." Choice D is incorrect because the plural pronoun "both" doesn't agree in number with the singular antecedent "the Salt Lake Temple."

Question Difficulty: Easy



Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: bd11fe93

Dr. Rocío Paola Caballero-Gill is a paleoceanographer. This means that Dr. Caballero-Gill doesn't just study oceans as they are today. She uses chemistry and fossil evidence _____ oceans as they were in the past.

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

- A. has studied
- B. to study
- C. studied
- D. studies

ID: bd11fe93 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of verb forms within a sentence. The nonfinite to-infinitive verb “to study” is correctly used to form a subordinate clause that indicates what Dr. Caballero-Gill uses chemistry and fossil evidence for (to study oceans as they were in the past).

Choice A is incorrect because it results in an ungrammatical sentence. The finite verb “has studied” can’t be used in this way to form a subordinate clause that indicates what Dr. Caballero-Gill uses the evidence for. Choice C is incorrect because it results in an ungrammatical sentence. The finite verb “studied” can’t be used in this way to form a subordinate clause that indicates what Dr. Caballero-Gill uses the evidence for. Choice D is incorrect because it results in an ungrammatical sentence. The finite verb “studies” can’t be used in this way to form a subordinate clause that indicates what Dr. Caballero-Gill uses the evidence for.

Question Difficulty: Easy



Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: b74f676f

Classical composer Florence Price's 1927 move to Chicago marked a turning point in her career. It was there that Price premiered her First Symphony—a piece that was praised for blending traditional Romantic motifs with aspects of Black folk music—and _____ supportive relationships with other Black artists.

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

- A. developing
- B. developed
- C. to develop
- D. having developed

ID: b74f676f Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The missing verb is part of the same clause as the verb "premiered," and "Price" is the subject of both. So we need the past-tense form "developed" in order to match "premiered."

Choice A is incorrect. This choice creates a verb form error. The missing verb is part of the same clause as the verb "premiered," and "Price" is the subject of both. So we need the past-tense form "developed" in order to match "premiered." Choice C is incorrect. This choice creates a verb form error. The missing verb is part of the same clause as the verb "premiered," and "Price" is the subject of both. So we need the past-tense form "developed" in order to match "premiered." Choice D is incorrect. This choice creates a verb form error. The missing verb is part of the same clause as the verb "premiered," and "Price" is the subject of both. So we need the past-tense form "developed" in order to match "premiered."

Question Difficulty: Medium



Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 684b8bd2

Far from being modern inventions, _____ more than 5,000 years ago.

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

- A. Sumerians in ancient Mesopotamia used drinking straws
- B. drinking straws were used by Sumerians in ancient Mesopotamia
- C. the use of drinking straws by Sumerians in ancient Mesopotamia happened
- D. ancient Mesopotamia was home to Sumerians who used drinking straws

ID: 684b8bd2 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. Modifiers and their subjects must go next to each other. The modifier “far from being modern inventions” must be describing “drinking straws,” because those are the only possible inventions in this sentence.

Choice A is incorrect. Modifiers and their subjects must go next to each other. The modifier “far from being modern inventions” can’t be describing “Sumerians,” because they are a group of people, not an invention. Choice C is incorrect. Modifiers and their subjects must go next to each other. The modifier “far from being modern inventions” can’t be describing “the use of drinking straws,” because it is not “the use” of drinking straws that is an invention—it is the drinking straws themselves. Choice D is incorrect. Modifiers and their subjects must go next to each other. The modifier “far from being modern inventions” can’t be describing “Ancient Mesopotamia,” because that is a place, not an invention.

Question Difficulty: Medium



Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: c52652c9

The human brain is primed to recognize faces—so much so that, due to a perceptual tendency called pareidolia, _____ will even find faces in clouds, wooden doors, pieces of fruit, and other faceless inanimate objects. Researcher Susan Magsamen has focused her work on better understanding this everyday phenomenon.

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

- A. she
- B. they
- C. it
- D. those

ID: c52652c9 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. "It" is a singular pronoun used to stand in for objects. Since the antecedent in this case is the singular noun phrase "the human brain," "it" is a perfect pronoun to use here.

Choice A is incorrect. Although "she" is a singular pronoun, it is reserved for people and animals, not objects like "the human brain." Choice B is incorrect. "They" is a plural pronoun, but we need a singular pronoun to represent the antecedent "the human brain." Choice D is incorrect. "Those" is a plural pronoun, but we need a singular pronoun to represent the antecedent "the human brain."

Question Difficulty: Medium



Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 36944347

Official measurements of the Mississippi River's length vary: according to the US Geologic Survey, the river is 2,300 miles long, whereas the Environmental Protection Agency records its length as 2,320 miles. This disparity can be explained in part by the fact that rivers such as the Mississippi expand and contract as _____ sediment.

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

- A. they accumulate
- B. one accumulates
- C. it accumulates
- D. we accumulate

ID: 36944347 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The noun that goes with "expand and contract" is "rivers," a plural noun. "They" is a third-person plural pronoun, so it can correctly stand in for "rivers."

Choice B is incorrect. This choice creates a pronoun-antecedent agreement error. "One" is a singular pronoun, but the noun that goes with "expand and contract" is "rivers," a plural noun. Choice C is incorrect. This choice creates a pronoun-antecedent agreement error. "It" is a singular pronoun, but the noun that goes with "expand and contract" is "rivers," a plural noun. Choice D is incorrect. This choice creates a pronoun-antecedent agreement error. The noun that goes with "expand and contract" is the plural noun "rivers." Rivers are not people, so "we" can't be used to stand in for it.

Question Difficulty: Medium



Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 8d53e7a0

Slam poet Elizabeth Acevedo's debut novel *The Poet X*, winner of the 2018 National Book Award for Young People's Literature, is composed of _____ protagonist, fifteen-year-old Xiomara Batista.

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

- A. poems putatively written by the novel's
- B. poem's putatively written by the novel's
- C. poem's putatively written by the novels'
- D. poems putatively written by the novels'

ID: 8d53e7a0 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. Nothing belongs to the "poems" in the sentence, so it should not be possessive—just a simple plural noun. The protagonist does belong to the novel—it's the protagonist of the novel—so "novel" needs to be a singular possessive noun.

Choice B is incorrect. This doesn't complete the text in a way that conforms to the conventions of Standard English. This choice uses the singular possessive "poem's," but the text indicates that it should be the simple plural "poems": there is more than one poem, and nothing belongs to the poems. Choice C is incorrect. This doesn't complete the text in a way that conforms to the conventions of Standard English. This choice uses the singular possessive "poem's," but the text indicates that it should be the simple plural "poems": there is more than one poem, and nothing belongs to the poems. This choice also uses the plural possessive "novels'," which is incorrect because there is only one novel. Choice D is incorrect. This doesn't complete the text in a way that conforms to the conventions of Standard English. This choice uses the plural possessive "novels'," which is incorrect because there is only one novel, so it should be the singular possessive "novel's."

Question Difficulty: Medium



Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 0bcb4417

Oglala Lakota poet Layli Long Soldier's star quilt poems offer an unusually open-ended reading experience. With _____ eight panels of text stitched together in the shape of a traditional eight-pointed Lakota star quilt, the poems present viewers with a seemingly infinite number of ways to read them.

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

- A. their
- B. it's
- C. they're
- D. its

ID: 0bcb4417 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of possessive determiners. The plural possessive determiner "their" agrees in number with the plural noun "the poems," thus indicating that the poems had eight panels of text stitched together in the shape of a traditional eight-pointed Lakota star quilt.

Choice B is incorrect because "it's" is the contraction for "it is" or "it has," not a possessive determiner. Choice C is incorrect because "they're" is the contraction for "they are," not a possessive determiner. Choice D is incorrect because the singular possessive determiner "its" doesn't agree in number with the plural noun "the poems."

Question Difficulty: Medium



Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: c8607bdf

"Praise Song for the Day," Elizabeth Alexander's 2009 inaugural poem, asserts that "We cross dirt roads and highways...to see what's on the other side." Alexander's use of "we" _____ Americans' collective efforts and shared desire to seek new opportunity.

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

- A. evokes
- B. are evoking
- C. have evoked
- D. evoke

ID: c8607bdf Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-verb agreement. The singular verb "evokes" agrees in number with the singular subject "Alexander's use."

Choice B is incorrect because the plural verb "are evoking" doesn't agree in number with the singular subject "Alexander's use." Choice C is incorrect because the plural verb "have evoked" doesn't agree in number with the singular subject "Alexander's use." Choice D is incorrect because the plural verb "evoke" doesn't agree in number with the singular subject "Alexander's use."

Question Difficulty: Medium



Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: db2e480a

By the time Hawaiian king Kamehameha III _____ the throne, the number of longhorn cattle, first introduced to the islands in 1793, had drastically increased, and so too had the need for *paniolo* (Hawaiian cowboys) to manage the wild herds that then roamed throughout the volcanic terrain.

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

- A. ascended
- B. will ascend
- C. ascends
- D. is ascending

ID: db2e480a Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. "Ascended" is in the simple past tense. Since Kamehameha became king in the past, this makes the most sense.

Choice B is incorrect. "Will ascend" is in the future tense, but we wouldn't know about Kamehameha III's ascent if it hadn't happened yet. The information in the sentence, as well as the tense of other verbs, tells us that the events described happened in the past. Choice C is incorrect. "Ascends" is in the simple present tense. However, the information in the sentence, as well as the tense of other verbs, tells us that the events described happened in the past. Choice D is incorrect. "Is ascending" is in the continuous present tense, which we use to show that something is ongoing, but this doesn't make sense here—the information in the sentence, as well as the tense of other verbs, tells us that the events described happened in the past.

Question Difficulty: Medium



Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: a30567fd

Nuhād al-Ḥaddād, known as Fairuz, was one of the most beloved Lebanese singers of the twentieth century. Her broad singing repertoire—which included traditional forms, such as the Arabic *qasida* and *maqam*, alongside modern pop and jazz styles—lent Fairuz a timeless, cross-generational appeal, _____ her the moniker “the soul of Lebanon.”

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

- A. earned
- B. had earned
- C. earning
- D. earn

ID: a30567fd Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The word "earning" is being used to introduce an additional modifying phrase, which describes how Fairuz’s repertoire lent her cross-generational appeal. When a verb ends in -ing and doesn’t have a helper verb like "is" before it, it can be used to modify a noun or verb. This is appropriate here.

Choice A is incorrect. The underlined verb is being used to introduce additional descriptive information, which is set off from the rest of the sentence by a comma. Because there is no subject here, a finite form of the verb (like "earned") creates an error. We need another form of the verb that doesn’t require a subject and can introduce descriptive information. Choice B is incorrect. The underlined verb is being used to introduce additional descriptive information, which is set off from the rest of the sentence by a comma. Because there is no subject here, a finite form of the verb (like "had earned") creates an error. We need another form of the verb that doesn’t require a subject and can introduce descriptive information. Choice D is incorrect. The underlined verb is being used to introduce additional descriptive information, which is set off from the rest of the sentence by a comma. Because there is no subject here, a finite form of the verb (like "earn") creates an error. We need another form of the verb that doesn’t require a subject and can introduce descriptive information.

Question Difficulty: Medium



Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: cd2443c0

A pioneer in the field of taphonomy (the study of how organic remains become fossils), _____ may be just as prevalent in the fossil record as those of thick-shelled organisms.

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

- A. fossils of thin-shelled organisms, Anna Behrensmeyer demonstrated in a 2005 analysis,
- B. Anna Behrensmeyer demonstrated in a 2005 analysis that fossils of thin-shelled organisms
- C. it was demonstrated in a 2005 analysis by Anna Behrensmeyer that fossils of thin-shelled organisms
- D. a 2005 analysis—by Anna Behrensmeyer—demonstrated that fossils of thin-shelled organisms

ID: cd2443c0 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-modifier placement. This choice makes the noun phrase “Anna Behrensmeyer” the subject of the sentence and places it immediately after the modifying phrase “a pioneer...fossils.” In doing so, this choice clearly establishes that Anna Behrensmeyer—and not another noun in the sentence—is a pioneer in the field of taphonomy.

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the noun phrase “fossils of thin-shelled organisms” immediately after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that the “fossils” are a pioneer in the field of taphonomy. Choice C is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the pronoun “it” immediately after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that “it” is a pioneer in the field of taphonomy. Choice D is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the noun phrase “a 2005 analysis” immediately after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that “a 2005 analysis” is a pioneer in the field of taphonomy.

Question Difficulty: Medium



Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: e44db0a0

Because a cycle of lunar phases _____ 29.5 days to complete, it's possible to observe two full moons in a single month, one at the beginning and one at the end.

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

- A. are taking
- B. have taken
- C. take
- D. takes

ID: e44db0a0 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-verb agreement. The singular verb "takes" agrees in number with the singular subject "a cycle of lunar phases."

Choice A is incorrect because the plural verb "are taking" doesn't agree in number with the singular subject "a cycle of lunar phases." Choice B is incorrect because the plural verb "have taken" doesn't agree in number with the singular subject "a cycle of lunar phases." Choice C is incorrect because the plural verb "take" doesn't agree in number with the singular subject "a cycle of lunar phases."

Question Difficulty: Medium



Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 67614549

After winning the 1860 presidential election, Abraham Lincoln appointed Edward Bates, Salmon P. Chase, and William H. Seward to his cabinet. Lincoln's decision was surprising, since each of these men had run against him, but historians have praised it, noting that Lincoln _____ his rivals' diverse talents to strengthen his administration.

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

- A. has leveraged
- B. is leveraging
- C. will leverage
- D. leveraged

ID: 67614549 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The subject of the verb is "Lincoln," and the first sentence tells us that we're talking about something that Abraham Lincoln did in 1860. So the simple past tense "leveraged" fits the logic of the text.

Choice A is incorrect. This choice creates a tense issue. "Has leveraged" is the present perfect tense, which is used for an action that began in the past and continues into the present. Lincoln started leveraging his rivals' talents in 1860—it's definitely not still happening today. So the present perfect tense isn't appropriate. Choice B is incorrect. This choice creates a tense issue. "Is leveraging" is the present tense, but Lincoln leveraged his rivals' talents in 1860, so the present tense isn't appropriate. Choice C is incorrect. This choice creates a tense issue. "Will leverage" is the future tense, but Lincoln leveraged his rivals' talents in 1860, so the future tense isn't appropriate.

Question Difficulty: Medium



Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	■ ■ ■

ID: f0864217

Rabinal Achí is a precolonial Maya dance drama performed annually in Rabinal, a town in the Guatemalan highlands. Based on events that occurred when Rabinal was a city-state ruled by a king, _____ had once been an ally of the king but was later captured while leading an invading force against him.

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

- A. *Rabinal Achí* tells the story of K'iche' Achí, a military leader who
- B. K'iche' Achí, the military leader in the story of *Rabinal Achí*,
- C. the military leader whose story is told in *Rabinal Achí*, K'iche' Achí,
- D. there was a military leader, K'iche' Achí, who in *Rabinal Achí*

ID: f0864217 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The modifier “Based on events...by a king,” is describing the drama “*Rabinal Achí*.” Modifiers need to be next to the subjects they describe, so “*Rabinal Achí*” needs to be the first word after the comma.

Choice B is incorrect. This doesn't complete the text in a way that conforms to the conventions of Standard English. The modifier “Based on events...by a king,” is describing the drama “*Rabinal Achí*.” Modifiers need to be next to the subjects they describe, so “*Rabinal Achí*” needs to be the first word after the comma. Choice C is incorrect. This doesn't complete the text in a way that conforms to the conventions of Standard English. The modifier “Based on events...by a king,” is describing the drama “*Rabinal Achí*.” Modifiers need to be next to the subjects they describe, so “*Rabinal Achí*” needs to be the first word after the comma. Choice D is incorrect. This doesn't complete the text in a way that conforms to the conventions of Standard English. The modifier “Based on events...by a king,” is describing the drama “*Rabinal Achí*.” Modifiers need to be next to the subjects they describe, so “*Rabinal Achí*” needs to be the first word after the comma.

Question Difficulty: Hard



Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	■ ■ ■

ID: ea0aa676

In the 1970s, Janaki Ammal, a prominent botanist, emerged as a powerful voice in India's environmental conservation movement. Her exhaustive chromosomal survey of plants in Silent Valley, a pristine tropical forest in Kerala, India, that is home to nearly 1,000 species of native flora (many of which are endangered), _____ instrumental in the government's decision to preserve the forest.

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

- A. are
- B. were
- C. have been
- D. was

ID: ea0aa676 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The subject "survey" is singular, and so is the verb "was."

Choice A is incorrect. The subject "survey" is singular, but the verb "are" is plural. Choice B is incorrect. The subject "survey" is singular, but the verb "were" is plural. Choice C is incorrect. The subject "survey" is singular, but the verb "have been" is plural.

Question Difficulty: Hard



Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	■ ■ ■

ID: dc645172

The artistic talents of Barbara Chase-Riboud, most known for her 1979 historical novel *Sally Hemings* and the conversation it inspired, _____ limited to the realm of prose: she first excelled in sculpture, where her affinity for bronze—a material she described as “timeless” due to its use across eras and cultures—became part of her artistic identity.

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

- A. hasn't been
- B. wasn't
- C. isn't
- D. aren't

ID: dc645172 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The subject "talents" is plural, and so is the verb "aren't": "the artistic talents... aren't limited."

Choice A is incorrect. The subject "talents" is plural, but the verb "hasn't been" is singular. Choice B is incorrect. The subject "talents" is plural, but the verb "wasn't" is singular. Choice C is incorrect. The subject "talents" is plural, but the verb "isn't" is singular.

Question Difficulty: Hard



Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	■ ■ ■

ID: 3bceeb93

When they were first discovered in Australia in 1798, duck-billed, beaver-tailed platypuses so defied categorization that one scientist assigned them the name *Ornithorhynchus paradoxus*: "paradoxical bird-snout." The animal, which lays eggs but also nurses _____ young with milk, has since been classified as belonging to the monotremes group.

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

- A. they're
- B. their
- C. its
- D. it's

ID: 3bceeb93 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The singular possessive pronoun "its" agrees with the singular antecedent "the animal" and indicates that the "young" belong to it.

Choice A is incorrect. This choice creates a pronoun-antecedent agreement error. "They're" is a contraction of "they are," a plural pronoun and verb, but the antecedent "the animal" is singular. Also, we don't need the extra verb "are" – we already have a main verb in this clause, so adding "are" would be confusing and ungrammatical. Choice B is incorrect. This choice creates a pronoun-antecedent agreement error. "Their" is a plural pronoun, but the subject of the sentence is "the animal," a singular noun. Choice D is incorrect. This choice creates a confusing and ungrammatical sentence. "It's" is a contraction for "it is." We already have the verb "nurses" in this clause, so we shouldn't add the verb "is."

Question Difficulty: Hard



Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	■ ■ ■

ID: dab8b8ee

Known as Earth's "living skin," biocrusts are thin layers of soil held together by surface-dwelling microorganisms such as fungi, lichens, and cyanobacteria. Fortifying soil in arid ecosystems against erosion, _____

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

- A. a recent study's estimate is that these crusts reduce global dust emissions by 60 percent each year.
- B. an estimated 60 percent reduction in global dust emissions each year is due to these crusts, according to a recent study.
- C. these crusts reduce global dust emissions by an estimated 60 percent each year, according to a recent study.
- D. a recent study has estimated that these crusts reduce global dust emissions by 60 percent each year.

ID: dab8b8ee Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The subject of the modifier "fortifying soil in arid ecosystems against erosion" is "biocrusts." Subject-modifier placement requires a modifier and its subject to be next to each other, so "biocrusts" or some variant meaning "biocrusts" (in this case, "these crusts") must begin the missing clause.

Choice A is incorrect. Modifiers and their subjects must go next to each other. The subject of the modifier "fortifying soil in arid ecosystems against erosion" is "biocrusts," not "a recent study's estimate." Choice B is incorrect. Modifiers and their subjects must go next to each other. The subject of the modifier "fortifying soil in arid ecosystems against erosion" is "biocrusts," not "an estimated 60 percent reduction." Choice D is incorrect. Modifiers and their subjects must go next to each other. The subject of the modifier "fortifying soil in arid ecosystems against erosion" is "biocrusts," not "a recent study."

Question Difficulty: Hard



Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	■ ■ ■

ID: 0fe5ce68

Ten of William Shakespeare's plays are classified as histories. Although each one of these plays, which include *Henry V* and *Richard III*, _____ on a single historical figure (specifically, an English king), some, such as *Henry VI Part One* and *Henry VI Part Two*, feature different episodes from the same monarch's life.

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

- A. focuses
- B. focus
- C. are focused
- D. were focused

ID: 0fe5ce68 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-verb agreement. The singular verb "focuses" agrees in number with the singular subject "each one of these plays," which refers to each play individually.

Choice B is incorrect because the plural verb "focus" doesn't agree in number with the singular subject "each one of these plays." Choice C is incorrect because the plural verb "are focused" doesn't agree in number with the singular subject "each one of these plays." Choice D is incorrect because the plural verb "were focused" doesn't agree in number with the singular subject "each one of these plays."

Question Difficulty: Hard



Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	■ ■ ■

ID: 5b8f9cf2

In the canon of North African literature, Moroccan author Driss Chraïbi's 1954 novel *The Simple Past* (*Le Passé simple*) looms large. A coming-of-age story, a social meditation, and a sober gaze into the dark maw of French colonialism, _____ interrogates systemic power with memorable intensity.

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

- A. Morocco gained its independence two years before the publication of Chraïbi's debut novel, which
- B. Chraïbi's debut novel, published two years before Morocco gained its independence,
- C. Chraïbi wrote a debut novel that, published two years before Morocco gained its independence,
- D. published two years before Morocco gained its independence, Chraïbi wrote a debut novel that

ID: 5b8f9cf2 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. Subject-modifier placement requires a modifier and its subject to be next to each other. The subject of the modifier "a coming-of-age story...colonialism" is Chraïbi's novel *The Simple Past*, so the subject "Chraïbi's debut novel" fits perfectly after this introductory modifying phrase.

Choice A is incorrect. Modifiers and their subjects must go next to each other. The introductory modifier "a coming-of-age story...colonialism" is describing Chraïbi's novel, not Morocco. However, this choice places Morocco directly next to that modifier. Choice C is incorrect. Modifiers and their subjects must go next to each other. The introductory modifier "a coming-of-age story...colonialism" all describes Chraïbi's novel, not Chraïbi himself. However, this choice places Chraïbi directly next to that modifier. Choice D is incorrect. Modifiers and their subjects must go next to each other. The modifier "a coming-of-age story..." is describing Chraïbi's novel, so that needs to be the subject immediately after the modifier. This choice adds another modifier that describes Chraïbi's novel, but then puts "Chraïbi" himself—not the novel—right after that modifier, which doesn't make sense. Chraïbi wasn't "published two years before" Moroccan independence; his novel *The Simple Past* was.

Question Difficulty: Hard



Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	■ ■ ■

ID: de3dd17d

Planetary scientist Briony Horgan and her colleagues have determined that as much as 25 percent of the sand on Mars is composed of impact spherules. These spherical bits of glass form when asteroids collide with the planet, ejecting bits of molten rock into the atmosphere that, after cooling and solidifying into glass, _____ back onto Mars's surface.

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

- A. to rain
- B. raining
- C. having rained
- D. rain

ID: de3dd17d Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. "That...[rain] back onto Mars's surface" is a relative clause that describes the "bits of molten rock." Forming the clause requires a conjugated, finite verb, and this is the only choice that provides that.

Choice A is incorrect. "To rain" is an infinitive and can't serve as the main verb of a clause. A conjugated verb is needed here to form the main verb of the relative clause "that...[rain] back onto Mars's surface," which describes the "bits of molten rock." Choice B is incorrect. "Raining" is a present participle and, on its own, can't serve as the main verb of a clause. A conjugated verb is needed here to form the main verb of the relative clause "that...[rain] back onto Mars's surface," which describes the "bits of molten rock." Choice C is incorrect. "Having rained" is a perfect participle and can't serve as the main verb of a clause. A conjugated verb is needed here to form the main verb of the relative clause "that...[rain] back onto Mars's surface," which describes the "bits of molten rock."

Question Difficulty: Hard



Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	■ ■ ■

ID: 61160f0a

Author Madeline L'Engle, _____ to create a suspenseful tone that draws the reader in, begins her novel *A Wrinkle in Time* with descriptions of "wraithlike shadows" and "the frenzied lashing of the wind."

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

- A. looked
- B. looks
- C. is looking
- D. looking

ID: 61160f0a Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of verb forms within a sentence. The nonfinite present participle verb "looking" is correctly used to form a subordinate clause that describes the intent behind how L'Engle begins her novel.

Choice A is incorrect because the finite past tense verb "looked" can't be used in this way to form a subordinate clause. Choice B is incorrect because the finite present tense verb "looks" can't be used in this way to form a subordinate clause. Choice C is incorrect because the finite present progressive tense verb "is looking" can't be used in this way to form a subordinate clause.

Question Difficulty: Hard



Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	■ ■ ■

ID: d46ac7e7

A second-generation Japanese American, Wataru Misaka _____ in World War II (1941-45) and won two amateur national basketball championships at the University of Utah when he joined the New York Knicks for the 1947-48 season, becoming the first non-white basketball player in the US's top professional league.

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

- A. already served
- B. was already serving
- C. already serves
- D. had already served

ID: d46ac7e7 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. Misaka served in World War II before he joined the New York Knicks in 1947. To show that a past occurrence took place before another past occurrence, we need to use "had" + the past tense form of the verb. This is called the past perfect tense.

Choice A is incorrect. Misaka served in World War II before he joined the Knicks. Both events are in the past, but his service in World War II happened earlier, so we need a verb that makes it clear that his service (and the two national championships) had ended by the time he joined the Knicks. Choice B is incorrect. "Was already serving" forms the continuous past tense, which we use when we're showing a past action that was ongoing. Misaka served in World War II before he joined the Knicks. Both events are in the past, but they're not happening at the same time, so we shouldn't use the continuous past tense here. Choice C is incorrect. Misaka served in World War II in the past, so we shouldn't use the present tense "serves."

Question Difficulty: Hard



Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	■ ■ ■

ID: 50801257

In 1994, almost 200 years after the death of Wang Zhenyi, the International Astronomical _____ the contributions of the barrier-breaking 18th-century astronomer and author of "Dispute of the Procession of the Equinoxes," naming a crater on Venus after her.

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

- A. Union would finally acknowledge
- B. Union to finally acknowledge
- C. Union, having finally acknowledged
- D. Union, finally acknowledging

ID: 50801257 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. It's the only choice that offers a form of the verb "acknowledge" that can go with the subject "International Astronomical Union" to make a complete sentence. This might seem like an odd use of "would," but when speaking from a point of view in the past, we can actually use "would" to express something that happened later. That's the case here: 200 years after Wang Zhenyi's death, the IAU would finally acknowledge her contributions.

Choice B is incorrect. This choice creates a sentence fragment. There's no main verb elsewhere in the sentence, so we need a form of the verb "acknowledge" that can go with the subject "the International Astronomical Union" and serve as that main verb. "To acknowledge" can't do that. Choice C is incorrect. This choice creates a sentence fragment. There's no main verb elsewhere in the sentence, so we need a form of the verb "acknowledge" that can go with the subject "the International Astronomical Union" and serve as that main verb. "Having acknowledged" can't do that. Choice D is incorrect. This choice creates a sentence fragment. There's no main verb elsewhere in the sentence, so we need a form of the verb "acknowledge" that can go with the subject "the International Astronomical Union" and serve as that main verb. The "-ing" form can't do that.

Question Difficulty: Hard



Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	■ ■ ■

ID: a14eef71

In 2015, a team led by materials scientists Anirudha Sumant and Diana Berman succeeded in reducing the coefficient of friction (COF) between two surfaces to the lowest possible level—superlubricity. A nearly frictionless (and, as its name suggests, extremely slippery) state, _____

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

- A. when their COF drops below 0.01, two surfaces reach superlubricity.
- B. two surfaces, when their COF drops below 0.01, reach superlubricity.
- C. reaching superlubricity occurs when two surfaces' COF drops below 0.01.
- D. superlubricity is reached when two surfaces' COF drops below 0.01.

ID: a14eef71 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The subject of the modifier “a nearly frictionless state” is “superlubricity.” Subject-modifier placement requires a modifier and its subject to be next to one another, so “superlubricity” must be the first word in the missing clause.

Choice A is incorrect. This choice creates a subject-modifier placement error. The subject of the modifier “a nearly frictionless state” is “superlubricity.” Subject-modifier placement requires a modifier and its subject to be next to one another, so “superlubricity” must be the first word in the missing clause. Choice B is incorrect. This choice creates a subject-modifier placement error. The subject of the modifier “a nearly frictionless state” is “superlubricity.” Subject-modifier placement requires a modifier and its subject to be next to one another, so “superlubricity” must be the first word in the missing clause. Choice C is incorrect. This choice creates a subject-modifier placement error. The subject of the modifier “a nearly frictionless state” is “superlubricity.” Subject-modifier placement requires a modifier and its subject to be next to one another, so “superlubricity” must be the first word in the missing clause.

Question Difficulty: Hard