


Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	

ID: 7f48b098

Photosynthesis, the mechanism by which plants use sunlight to turn carbon dioxide and water into _____ is fueled in part by an enzyme called Photosystem II that harvests energy-giving electrons from water molecules.

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

- A. nutrients
- B. nutrients and
- C. nutrients,
- D. nutrients—

ID: 7f48b098 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is the punctuation of a supplementary element within a sentence. The comma after “nutrients” pairs with the comma after “photosynthesis” to separate the supplementary element “the mechanism by which plants use sunlight to turn carbon dioxide and water into nutrients” from the rest of the sentence. This supplementary element functions to define the term “photosynthesis,” and the pair of commas indicates that this element could be removed without affecting the grammatical coherence of the sentence.

Choice A is incorrect because it fails to use appropriate punctuation to separate the supplementary element from the rest of the sentence. Choice B is incorrect because a conjunction can’t be paired with a comma in this way to separate the supplementary element from the rest of the sentence. Choice D is incorrect because a dash can’t be paired with a comma in this way to separate the supplementary element from the rest of the sentence.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 083a35dc

Po'Pay was a Tewa leader from Ohkay Owingeh, a pueblo located about twenty-five miles north of present-day Santa Fe, New Mexico. He was instrumental in organizing the Pueblo Revolt of _____ as a result of his leadership, the Spanish colonizers were expelled from the region for a time.

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

- A. 1680
- B. 1680 and
- C. 1680,
- D. 1680, and

ID: 083a35dc Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is the coordination of main clauses within a sentence. This choice correctly uses a comma and the coordinating conjunction “and” to join the first main clause (“He...1680”) and the second main clause (“as...time”).

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The two main clauses are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction. Choice B is incorrect because when coordinating two longer main clauses such as these, it’s conventional to use a comma before the coordinating conjunction. Choice C is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. Without a conjunction following it, a comma can’t be used in this way to join two main clauses.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: be34a3df

In 2008, two years after the death of science fiction writer Octavia Butler, the Huntington Library in _____ received a collection of more than 8,000 items, including Butler’s private notes, research materials, manuscripts, photos, and drawings. Today, the Octavia E. Butler Collection is one of the most researched archives at the library.

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

- A. California,
- B. California:
- C. California—
- D. California

ID: be34a3df Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. No punctuation should separate the subject of the sentence (“the Huntington Library in California”) from its verb (“received”).

Choice A is incorrect. No punctuation should separate the subject of the sentence (“the Huntington Library in California”) from its verb (“received”). Choice B is incorrect. No punctuation should separate the subject of the sentence (“the Huntington Library in California”) from its verb (“received”). Choice C is incorrect. No punctuation should separate the subject of the sentence (“the Huntington Library in California”) from its verb (“received”).

Question Difficulty: Medium

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 8f6d6ae6

Archaeologists have estimated that the pre-Columbian Native American city of Cahokia, located across the Mississippi River from modern-day St. Louis, Missouri, had as many as 20,000 inhabitants in the year 1150 _____ it one of the largest cities in North America at the time.

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

- A. CE making
- B. CE. Making
- C. CE, making
- D. CE; making

ID: 8f6d6ae6 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The phrase “making...at the time” provides additional information about Cahokia that’s not required for the sentence to make sense or function grammatically. As a nonessential supplement, this phrase should be separated from the rest of the sentence with a comma.

Choice A is incorrect. This choice results in a run-on sentence. The nonessential descriptive aside “making...at the time” needs to be separated from the rest of the sentence with a comma. Choice B is incorrect. This choice results in a sentence fragment. “Making...at the time” doesn’t have a subject and can’t stand on its own as a sentence. Thus, it can’t be separated from the rest of the sentence with a period. Choice D is incorrect. This choice results in a punctuation error. “Making...at the time” doesn’t have a subject and can’t stand on its own as an independent clause. Since a semicolon can only link two independent clauses, using one here creates an error.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 870ae7ec

Detroit natives Timothy Paule and Nicole Lindsey have combined their two passions, Detroit and beekeeping, to improve the health of their city's flowers and other vegetation. In 2017, the couple converted a vacant lot in the city into an _____ in the years that followed they acquired nine additional lots and established more than 35 hives.

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

- A. apiary,
- B. apiary, and
- C. apiary and
- D. apiary

ID: 870ae7ec Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. Both clauses in this sentence could stand alone as complete sentences, which means they are both independent clauses. This choice uses a comma plus a coordinating conjunction to link them together, which is one of the correct ways to link two independent clauses.

Choice A is incorrect. This choice results in a run-on sentence error. Both clauses in this sentence could stand alone as complete sentences, which means they are both independent clauses. A comma by itself is not enough punctuation to link two independent clauses. Choice C is incorrect. This choice results in a run-on sentence error. Both clauses in this sentence could stand alone as complete sentences, which means they are both independent clauses. Independent clauses can only be linked in a few ways, including with a comma plus a coordinating conjunction. This choice uses the coordinating conjunction "and," but it is missing the comma beforehand. Choice D is incorrect. This choice results in a run-on sentence error. Both clauses in this sentence could stand alone as complete sentences, which means they are both independent clauses. Independent clauses need to have certain kinds of punctuation marks between them. This choice doesn't use any punctuation between the two clauses.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: b0a525be

Santa Clara Pueblo artist Roxanne Swentzell's sculpture *Mud Woman Rolls On* consists of five human figures made of clay and plant fiber and arranged in descending size; each figure holds the smaller one in front of it. The arrangement of the figures, according to _____ represents her idea that "we all come from the Earth, generation after generation."

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

- A. Swentzell
- B. Swentzell,
- C. Swentzell:
- D. Swentzell—

ID: b0a525be Answer


Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The phrase "according to Swentzell" is an aside that interrupts the flow of the sentence, so it needs to be separated from the sentence with a pair of matching punctuation marks: two commas, two dashes, or a pair of parentheses. We already have a comma before "according," so we must add a comma after "Swentzell."

Choice A is incorrect. This choice creates a punctuation error. The phrase "according to Swentzell" is an aside that interrupts the flow of the sentence, so it needs to be separated from the sentence with a pair of matching punctuation marks: one before and one after the phrase. Choice C is incorrect. This choice creates a punctuation error. "The arrangement of the figures, according to Swentzell" is not an independent clause, so it can't come before a colon. Choice D is incorrect. This choice creates a punctuation error. The phrase "according to Swentzell" is an aside that interrupts the flow of the sentence, so it needs to be separated from the sentence with a pair of matching punctuation marks. We already have a comma at the beginning, so we have to use another comma here to match. We can't just switch to a dash! .

Question Difficulty: Medium

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	

ID: eef91a50

Nine months before Rosa Parks made history by refusing to comply with the segregated seating policy on a Montgomery, Alabama, bus, a fifteen-year-old Montgomery girl named Claudette Colvin was arrested for the same _____ to some historians, Colvin's arrest led to Parks's action and eventually to the desegregation of Montgomery's bus system.

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

- A. offense. According
- B. offense, according
- C. offense according
- D. offense and according

ID: eef91a50 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. "Nine months...offense" and "according to...system" are both independent clauses. Separating them with a period and turning them into their own sentences is the only grammatically correct choice among the provided options.

Choice B is incorrect. This choice results in a comma splice error, which is a punctuation error that occurs when two independent clauses are joined by only a comma. "Nine months...offense" and "according to...system" are both independent clauses, so they need to be either joined by a semicolon, joined by a comma and a coordinating conjunction, or separated by a period. Choice C is incorrect. This choice results in a run-on sentence, which occurs when two independent clauses are joined without punctuation. "Nine months...offense" and "according to...system" are both independent clauses, so they need to be either joined by a semicolon, joined by a comma and a coordinating conjunction, or separated by a period. Choice D is incorrect. This choice results in a run-on sentence, which occurs when two independent clauses are joined without punctuation. "Nine months...offense" and "according to...system" are independent clauses, so we would need to put a comma before the coordinating conjunction "and" to join them properly.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 548f4956

It is generally true that technological change is a linear process, in which once-useful technologies are replaced by new and better _____. The reawakening of interest in the steam engine (from advocates of carbon-neutral rail travel) reminds us that ostensibly obsolete technologies may be brought back into service to address society's changing needs.

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

- A. ones, even so;
- B. ones even so,
- C. ones; even so,
- D. ones, even so,

ID: 548f4956 Answer


Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is the coordination of main clauses within a sentence. This choice uses a semicolon in a conventional way to join the first main clause ("It is...ones") and the second main clause ("even so...needs"). Furthermore, the placement of the semicolon after "ones" indicates that the supplementary phrase "even so" modifies the following clause ("the reawakening...needs"), resulting in the most logical and grammatically complete sentence. With this punctuation, the sentence logically indicates that the recent interest in an old technology like steam engines is despite the fact that technological change typically seeks out new technologies.

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a confusing and illogical sentence. Placing the semicolon after "so" indicates that the supplementary element "even so" modifies the first clause of the sentence, which doesn't make sense in this context. Choice B is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. It fails to mark the boundary between the two main clauses with appropriate punctuation. Choice D is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. Without a conjunction following it, a comma can't be used in this way to join the two main clauses of the sentence.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	

ID: 2c84f96a

In 2017, artists Isabel and Ruben Toledo redesigned the costumes and sets for The Miami City Ballet’s production of *The _____* to reviewers, the Toledos’ designs helped infuse the production with elements of Miami’s Latin American culture.

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

- A. *Nutcracker* according,
- B. *Nutcracker*, according
- C. *Nutcracker* according
- D. *Nutcracker*. According

ID: 2c84f96a Answer


Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation use between sentences. In this choice, the period is used correctly to mark the boundary between one sentence (“In 2017...*Nutcracker*”) and another (“According...culture”). The supplementary element “according to reviewers” modifies the main clause of the second sentence (“the Toledos’...culture”).

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The sentences are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction. Furthermore, no punctuation is needed within the supplementary element “according to reviewers.” Choice B is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. A comma can’t be used in this way to mark the boundary between sentences. Choice C is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The sentences are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	

ID: 67667d72

Humans were long thought to have begun occupying the Peruvian settlement of Machu Picchu between 1440 and 1450 CE. However, a team led by anthropologist Dr. Richard Burger used accelerator mass spectrometry to uncover evidence that it was occupied _____ 1420 CE, according to Burger, humans were likely inhabiting the area.

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

- A. earlier. In
- B. earlier, in
- C. earlier, which in
- D. earlier in

ID: 67667d72 Answer


Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation use between sentences. In this choice, the period is used correctly to mark the boundary between one sentence ("However...earlier") and another ("In...area"). The supplementary phrase "in 1420 CE" modifies "humans," the subject of the third sentence.

Choice B is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. A comma can't be used in this way to mark the boundary between sentences. Choice C is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. A comma can't be used in this way to mark the boundary between sentences. Moreover, the subordinating conjunction "which" creates a confusing and illogical sentence that suggests that the supplementary phrase beginning with "in" modifies the previous information ("However...earlier") rather than the information that follows. Choice D is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The sentences ("However...earlier" and "in...area") are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	

ID: 403d7bb5

According to Naomi Nakayama of the University of Edinburgh, the reason seeds from a dying dandelion appear to float in the air while _____ is that their porous plumes enhance drag, allowing the seeds to stay airborne long enough for the wind to disperse them throughout the surrounding area.

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

- A. falling,
- B. falling:
- C. falling;
- D. falling

ID: 403d7bb5 Answer


Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The word “falling” occurs in the middle of a clause and isn’t part of a supplement, so we don’t need any punctuation after it. We can see this more clearly if we simplify the rest of the sentence: “The reason seeds appear to float while falling is that their plumes enhance drag.” .

Choice A is incorrect. This doesn’t complete the text in a way that conforms to the conventions of Standard English. The word “falling” occurs in the middle of a clause and isn’t part of a supplement, so we don’t need any punctuation after it. We can see this more clearly if we simplify the sentence: “The reason seeds appear to float while falling is that their plumes enhance drag.” . Choice B is incorrect. This doesn’t complete the text in a way that conforms to the conventions of Standard English. The word “falling” occurs in the middle of a clause and isn’t part of a supplement, so we don’t need any punctuation after it. We can see this more clearly if we simplify the sentence: “The reason seeds appear to float while falling is that their plumes enhance drag.” . Choice C is incorrect. This doesn’t complete the text in a way that conforms to the conventions of Standard English. The word “falling” occurs in the middle of a clause and isn’t part of a supplement, so we don’t need any punctuation after it. We can see this more clearly if we simplify the sentence: “The reason seeds appear to float while falling is that their plumes enhance drag.” .

Question Difficulty: Medium

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	

ID: 6b49f5f1

In 1727, dramatist Lewis Theobald presented a new play, *Double Falsehood*, at a London theater. Theobald claimed that his drama was based on a little-known play by William Shakespeare, *Cardenio*. Many, including poet Alexander Pope, were _____ historians have determined that Shakespeare's company did perform a play called *Cardenio* in 1613.

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

- A. skeptical but
- B. skeptical, but
- C. skeptical,
- D. skeptical

ID: 6b49f5f1 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. There are two independent clauses in the sentence, each with a subject and a verb: "many...were skeptical" and "historians have determined...." These clauses can be grammatically joined by a comma and the coordinating conjunction "but."

Choice A is incorrect. This choice results in a run-on sentence, which occurs when two independent clauses are joined without punctuation. Two independent clauses can't be joined by just the coordinating conjunction "but." A comma would also be required. Choice C is incorrect. This choice creates a punctuation error called a comma splice. This sentence contains two independent clauses ("Many...were skeptical" and "historians have determined..."). A comma alone can't join two independent clauses. That requires a comma and a coordinating conjunction. Choice D is incorrect. This choice results in a run-on sentence, which occurs when two independent clauses are joined without punctuation. This sentence contains two independent clauses ("Many...were skeptical" and "historians have determined..."), which need to be either joined by a semicolon, joined by a comma and a coordinating conjunction, or separated by a period.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: 40c3589d

Luci Tapahonso is the inaugural poet laureate of the Navajo Nation. Her book *Sáanii Dahataal/The Women Are Singing*—a combination of fiction and memoir, poetry and _____ serves as a testament to her versatility as a writer.

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

- A. prose;
- B. prose
- C. prose,
- D. prose—

ID: 40c3589d Answer


Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. “A combination of fiction and memoir, poetry and prose” is a nonessential supplement, so it needs to be set off from the rest of the sentence with a pair of matching punctuation marks. We already have a dash at the beginning of the supplement, so we need to add a dash at the end of the supplement to match.

Choice A is incorrect. This doesn’t complete the text in a way that conforms to the conventions of Standard English. “A combination of fiction and memoir, poetry and prose” is a nonessential supplement, so it needs to be set off from the rest of the sentence with a pair of matching punctuation marks. We already have a dash at the beginning of the supplement, so we need to add a dash at the end of the supplement to match. Choice B is incorrect. This doesn’t complete the text in a way that conforms to the conventions of Standard English. “A combination of fiction and memoir, poetry and prose” is a nonessential supplement, so it needs to be set off from the rest of the sentence with a pair of matching punctuation marks. We already have a dash at the beginning of the supplement, so we need to add a dash at the end of the supplement to match. Choice C is incorrect. This doesn’t complete the text in a way that conforms to the conventions of Standard English. “A combination of fiction and memoir, poetry and prose” is a nonessential supplement, so it needs to be set off from the rest of the sentence with a pair of matching punctuation marks. We already have a dash at the beginning of the supplement, so we need to add a dash at the end of the supplement to match.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	

ID: c8540a5b

Swedish scientists Eva Engvall and Peter Perlmann developed a method for measuring the concentration of different proteins in a biological sample. Their _____ ELISA (enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay), is used to detect and measure proteins that indicate the presence of certain diseases.

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

- A. method (called
- B. method—called
- C. method, called
- D. method called

ID: c8540a5b Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is the punctuation of a supplementary element within a sentence. The comma after “method” pairs with the comma after the closing parenthesis to separate the supplementary element “called ELISA (enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay)” from the rest of the sentence. This supplementary element functions to identify the name of Engvall and Perlmann’s method, and the pair of commas indicates that this element could be removed without affecting the grammatical coherence of the sentence.

Choice A is incorrect because an opening parenthesis can’t be paired with a comma to separate the supplementary element from the rest of the sentence. Choice B is incorrect because a dash can’t be paired with a comma to separate the supplementary element from the rest of the sentence. Choice D is incorrect because it fails to use appropriate punctuation to separate the supplementary element from the rest of the sentence.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: c101fc44

How do scientists determine what foods were eaten by extinct hominins such as Neanderthals? In the past, researchers were limited to studying the marks found on the fossilized teeth of skeletons, but in 2017 a team led by Laura Weyrich of the Australian Centre for Ancient DNA tried something _____ the DNA found in Neanderthals' fossilized dental plaque.

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

- A. new: sequencing
- B. new; sequencing
- C. new, sequencing:
- D. new. Sequencing

ID: c101fc44 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. "A team...tried something new" is an independent clause leading to an explanation of what the new thing was. A colon can only be used at the end of an independent clause, and typically introduces further explanation that expands upon the first clause, which makes a colon the perfect choice here.

Choice B is incorrect. This choice results in a punctuation error. "Sequencing...dental plaque" can't stand on its own as a sentence, and so it can't be linked to the independent clause "a team...tried something new" with a semicolon. Only two independent clauses can be connected in this way. Choice C is incorrect. This choice results in a punctuation error. If "sequencing" is included in the first clause, it can no longer stand on its own as a complete idea. Since a colon can only come at the end of an independent clause, using one in this way creates an error. Choice D is incorrect. This choice results in a sentence fragment. "Sequencing...dental plaque" can't stand on its own as a sentence.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
SAT	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

ID: c04e9136

The 2022 Nobel Prize in Chemistry was awarded to three pioneers in the field of click chemistry: two-time Nobel laureate Barry Sharpless, who coined the term "click chemistry" in 1998; Carolyn Bertozzi, founder of the Bertozzi Group at _____ and Morten Meldal, a professor at the University of Copenhagen in Denmark.

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

- A. Stanford
- B. Stanford,
- C. Stanford:
- D. Stanford;

ID: c04e9136 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. This choice correctly uses a semicolon to punctuate a complex list (which is made up of items that have commas in them).

Choice A is incorrect. This is a complex list, indicated by the semicolon between "1998" and "Carolyn Bertozzi." What comes after the blank is a separate list item, so punctuation is needed after "Stanford." Choice B is incorrect. This is a complex list, indicated by the semicolon between "1998" and "Carolyn Bertozzi." The items in this list have internal punctuation in the form of commas and must therefore be separated by semicolons to avoid confusion. Choice C is incorrect. This is a complex list, indicated by the semicolon between "1998" and "Carolyn Bertozzi." Colons aren't used to separate items in a list.

Question Difficulty: Medium