

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

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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

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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

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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

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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

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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."

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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

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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

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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

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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

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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

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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