

# THE BEST ACT PREP COURSE EVER

## QUESTION STEMS

*ACT English: Problem Set*

1. The museum tour guide explained the building's history and told us about the wealthy family who used to own it.

Which of the following alternatives to the underlined portion would NOT be acceptable?

- A. summarized
- B. narrated
- C. described
- D. berated

2. A hallmark breakthrough in regenerative medicine is induced pluripotent stem cells. These stem cells can be generated directly from adult cells, which means that mature cells can now be reprogrammed by scientists. Most significantly, these cells can be used as a resource to replace those lost to certain diseases in specific parts of the body.

Given that all of the choices are true, which one provides information that is relevant and that makes the rest of this paragraph understandable?

- A. fixed again by scientists
- B. reprogrammed to give rise to other kinds of bodily cells
- C. changed into other things unlike ever before
- D. used for regenerative medicine

3. Without complete training, one should not operate the workshop's sewing machines because they are industrial and can result in serious injuries if used improperly.

Which choice most specifically illustrates that the sewing machines may cause serious harm if one does not know how to use them?

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. very unhealthy
- C. extremely dangerous
- D. unfortunate

4. New York City draws more than 60 million tourists a year and has introduced newer attractions such as the Oculus, the One World Trade Center, and Chelsea Market. Nonetheless, the most visited spots continue to be the Empire State Building, Times Square, and the Statue of Liberty.

Which of the following alternatives to the underlined portion would NOT be acceptable?

- A. summarized
- B. narrated
- C. described
- D. berated

5. The town's water supply is now classified as contaminated upon the discovery, on behalf of an independent environmental agency, of a cocktail of toxins flowing in the system, yet the mayor denies that the water remains potable.

Which choice best indicates a cruel sense of irony in the mayor's point of view?

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. insists
- C. observes
- D. conceals

6. Calling for more backup staff, the manager noticed the theatre's box office was full and a line of people waiting for tickets was starting to snake around the hallway.

Which of the following alternatives to the underlined portion would be LEAST acceptable?

- A. swamped
- B. vacant
- C. understaffed
- D. near capacity

7. The bath sponge was uneven on her sensitive, peeling skin after she spent all of yesterday sunbathing without putting sunscreen on.

Which choice best conveys how the sponge felt on her sunburn in a way that adds logical, sensory detail to the description?

- A. like gritty sandpaper
- B. smooth as soap
- C. tough as could be
- D. uncomfortable

8. Although he has never enjoyed drinking coffee, Landon took a sip of the new latte and immediately spit it back out, vowing never to try it ever again.

Which of the choices best emphasizes how much Landon hates coffee?

- A. relishes
- B. can tolerate
- C. despises
- D. somewhat dislikes

9. Yellow fever is symptomized by high fever, bleeding, and jaundice. Liver damage and other internal organ breakdown may also occur. Symptoms vary in type and severity within affected individuals, but hospitalization is sometimes needed.

Which of the following alternatives to the underlined portion would NOT be acceptable?

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. some treatments are very specific
- C. patients should remain hydrated and avoid ingesting Aspirin or other medications that may lead to internal bleeding
- D. great care should be taken to avoid progression of the disease

**10.** An experiment conducted in 1971 at Stanford University tested the psychological dynamics of prison life. Researcher Philip Zimbardo led the group and recruited male college students who volunteered to participate, randomly assigning the roles of prisoner and guard. The psychological torture that ensued between the “prisoners” and the “guards” resulted in the early termination of the experiment, which was meant to last two weeks but ended after six days.

Given that all the choices are true, which one best maintains the paragraph’s focus on the psychological relationships between prisoners and guards, and can be added at the end of the paragraph?

- A.** The Milgram obedience study conducted before the Stanford prison experiment demonstrated similar results in which people behaved oppressively when given too much perceived power.
- B.** A total of 24 students were assembled to complete the prison stimulation and underwent regular protocol for prison life, including “arrests” from their homes, fingerprinting, and taking mug shots.
- C.** The experiment was conducted in the basement of the psychology department’s building.
- D.** Both prisoners and guards were given clothing similar to their assigned roles. Guards wore khaki outfits that resembled those of an actual prison guard’s, while prisoners wore dresses and caps, as well as a chain around one ankle.

**11.** Using both hands, the server meticulously stacked the bowls and plates to avoid spilling any leftover food onto his customers.

Which of the following alternatives to the underlined portion would NOT be acceptable?

- A.** carefully
- B.** gently
- C.** cautiously
- D.** recklessly

**12.** The kite strings wound around the branches of the tree, resulting in a problem that had to be cut off to be removed.

Which choice most specifically illustrates the state of the kite strings?

- A.** free-flowing spool
- B.** tangled mess
- C.** clean heap
- D.** disorganized puzzle

**13.** Thomas thought that he would not receive a good grade on his project, but to his surprise, the project was deemed the best in the class and received the highest marks.

Which of the following alternatives to the underlined portion would NOT be acceptable?

- A.** astonishment
- B.** disbelief
- C.** embarrassment
- D.** amazement

14. Circadian rhythms operate and cycle approximately every 24 hours. In fact, they take their name from the Latin word “circa” which means “around” and “diēm.” They regulate physiological processes in living things.

Which choice most effectively describes one of the physiological processes mentioned in the paragraph and can be placed after the last sentence?

- A. These rhythms may be affected by external cues such as the amount of sunlight or the temperature.
- B. In humans, for instance, sleep/wake homeostasis regulated the periods in which one is more sleepy or more awake throughout the day.
- C. Circadian rhythms operate on living things, even down to organisms like fungi and cyanobacteria.
- D. Circadian rhythms are defined as having free-running periods.

15. The Scottish Highlands are riddled with many mountain ranges, though few populate the area. Ben Nevis, the tallest mountain in the British Isles, can be found in this area. In addition, this area contains the only taiga biome in the British Isles.

Given that all of the choices are true, which one provides information that is relevant and that makes the rest of this paragraph understandable?

- A. the only taiga biome in the British Isles, which is manifest in the numerous Scots pine forests littering the region.
- B. the only taiga biome in the British Isles, which are comprised of over 6,000 islands in total.
- C. the only taiga biome in the British Isles, where Scottish English is spoken predominantly.
- D. the only taiga biome in the British Isles, where the Highland Council presides over the regions in the administrative body.

16. Despite watching the movie together three times, Donna still couldn't figure out how her best friend, who enjoyed similar interests, did not enjoy her favorite movie at all.

Which choice best conveys Donna's bafflement that her best friend didn't enjoy the movie?

- A. was clueless at
- B. was very confusing
- C. was discouraged to
- D. was dumbfounded at

17. Proven by the lack of any vacation days or sick days off, Maggie's commitment to her job is astounding considering she also works part-time at another nonprofit organization.

Which of the choices best emphasizes how much Maggie devotes to her job?

- A. obligation
- B. dedication
- C. task
- D. contract

18. Left out on the porch overnight in the rain, the radio blared the morning news crystal clear and uninterrupted, as if it wasn't soaked just mere hours ago.

Which of the following alternatives to the underlined portion would NOT be acceptable?

- A. broadcasted
- B. trumpeted
- C. whispered
- D. transmitted

19. Haussmann's renovation of Paris necessitated destroying medieval areas of the city, widening the streets, and installing public water systems such as sewers and aqueducts. Although his work did not transpire without opposition, Hausmann revolutionized Parisian architecture.

What choice provides the most specific information about how Haussmann revolutionized architecture and can be added after the last sentence?

- A. Haussmann was commissioned by Emperor Napoleon III in 1853.
- B. Traffic circulation in the city center, and the rest of Paris for that matter, new buildings were organized and functional, and the quality of life in the city improved as a whole.
- C. Emperor Napoleon III assigned Haussmann as prefect of the Seine.
- D. In 1970, Haussmann was dismissed, but his renovation works continued.

20. Whenever he visits his old campground, Leo makes sure to greet any park officers working that day, even the occasional camp counselor who happens to visit too.

Which of the following alternatives to the underlined portion would be LEAST acceptable?

- A. admonish
- B. say hello to
- C. chat with
- D. speak to

**ANSWER KEY**

1. D   2. B   3. C   4. A   5. B   6. B   7. A   8. C   9. C   10. A   11. D   12. B   13. C   14. B  
15. A   16. C   17. B   18. C   19. B   20. A

**ANSWER EXPLANATIONS**

1. D      To berate means to scold or criticize in an angry tone, which does not match the tone of “explain,” or to make an idea clear to someone by describing it. Don’t forget to pay attention to the word “NOT”!
2. B      The correct option describes what reprogramming can do and clarifies what kinds of cells replaces “those lost to certain diseases in specific parts of the body,” which is mentioned in the last sentence of the paragraph.
3. C      “Bad” does not indicate to what extent the machines can cause harm if used improperly. “Extremely dangerous” demonstrates that the machines are able and/or likely to cause “serious harm.” It is the best choice as its tone is closest to the wording of the question stem.
4. A      “Therefore” is not an acceptable transition because it means “for that reason,” and is not a synonym of the other three choices. The sentence it introduces contains an idea opposite to the sentence it follows. “Nonetheless” means in spite of that, and is similar to “however,” so it fits with the idea that despite the newer attractions drawing people to New York, the classic tourist spots remain the most visited. Remember to pay attention to the word “NOT” in stems!
5. B      The irony comes in the fact that the mayor does not admit to the dire situation with the city’s water. (B) is the best answer because it reveals how the mayor fights for a truth that contradicts facts (ironically so). Potable means “drinkable” -- many students will miss this question based on vocabulary. The idea of denying the water’s drinkability would not be in contrast so the word “yet” would be improper were that correct. (C) is more neutral in tone and does not reinforce the stem’s wording (“cruel”). (D) seems illogical-- why would a mayor conceal good water? It also doesn’t relate to the idea in the stem about a “point of view” (“insists” carries an element of opinion)
6. B      “Vacant” means empty and devoid of any furnishings; this would be the least acceptable because the word it replaces is “full.”
7. A      The best option with sensory detail says that the sponge was “like gritty sandpaper” on her skin meaning that it felt rough against her peeling, sunburned skin-- it is both logical (sunburns aren’t comfortable or smooth) and evokes a sense of touch through simile (a style of sensory detail). (B) is illogical and (C) and (D) are too vague.
8. C      To despise means to feel contempt, even repugnance, for. This is a stronger option to describe Landon’s level of dislike. The stem calls for “hate” so (C) is correct.
9. C      The best option explains very specific actions (hydration and avoiding aspirin) -- these are specific ways to treat the disease. Other choices are more vague or general in scope and thus incorrect.
10. A      The correct option is the only one discussing any psychological themes pertaining to the prisoners and the guards. In fact, the rest of the options describe protocol that was used in the experiment.
11. D      “Recklessly” is an adverb that means without thinking or caring about the consequences of one’s actions; therefore, it is the opposite of the waiter who is stacking the dishes meticulously or with great care.
12. B      The best option “tangled mess” further illustrates how the strings were wound around the branches, so they must have been twisted together in indistinguishable ways.
13. C      Thomas was not “embarrassed” because he got a bad grade despite thinking otherwise; rather, he was surprised, or felt astonished or shocked, because of an unexpected outcome. Don’t forget the word “NOT”!
14. B      The best option describes one example of a physiological process that is regulated by circadian rhythms, sleep/wake homeostasis. The other options define different aspects of circadian rhythms, but not physiological processes. Additionally “These Rhythms” in answer (A) is ambiguous if placed here.

15. A The best option includes how the taiga biome is displayed in the Scottish Highlands. The other options describe other facts about either the British Isles or the Highlands, which are not necessarily pertinent to the paragraph.
16. C To be dumbfounded means to be greatly astonished or amazed. This choice best conveys how Donna was amazed that her best friend didn't enjoy her favorite movie considering the fact that they share similar interests. (A) is non idiomatic (you aren't clueless "at" anything but rather "about")
17. B A commitment entails being dedicated to something, or being willing to put in whatever it takes to fulfill it. Thus, her dedication to her job is demonstrated by how she never takes any days off of work.
18. C To whisper means to say quietly, and is the opposite of "blared," "broadcasted," "trumpeted," and "transmitted." Don't forget to read the "NOT"!
19. B The best option explains how the city improved after Haussmann's renovations. The other options describe the logistics of Haussmann's hiring.
20. A To admonish means to warn or reprimand someone firmly. Leo makes sure to catch up with people he meets at his old camp, not reprimand or admonish them.