

## Dashes Exercises Answer Key SAT

Choose the correct answer from the following options

1. When we think of World War II female empowerment and recruitment, the image a short haired lady wearing a polka-dotted red bandana holding up her arm— believed to be based off of Navy machine shop worker Geraldine Hoff Doyle of Michigan, may be the most prominent image that comes to mind. (Test 3, 35)
  - a. NO CHANGE
  - b. Michigan;
  - c. **Michigan—**
  - d. Michigan

**Choice B** is the best answer because it contains punctuation consistent with the punctuation that opened the aside about Geraldine Hoff Doyle. The aside opens with an em dash, and thus should also be closed with an em dash. No other choice appropriately sets off this non-essential phrase.

2. Homework that is simple to understand and quick to grasp, is finished first, while more complex homework tends to get pushed off for later. (Test 5, 26)
  - a. NO CHANGE
  - b. **Homework that is simple to understand and quick to grasp is finished first,**
  - c. Homework that is simple to understand, and quick to grasp is finished first
  - d. Homework— that is simple to understand and quick to grasp—is finished first,

**Choice B** is the best answer. No commas are needed in this clause. Choices A sets off the phrase with two commas, which indicates that it is nonrestrictive (not important to the sentence), when in fact it is vital (it includes the sentence's verb "is"). Choice D incorrectly makes a "that" clause non-restrictive (i.e. nonessential); remember that "that" clauses are typically NOT surrounded by commas as they indicate necessary information. Choice C adds an unnecessary comma between two elements. Commas should only separate three or more items joined by "and," not two items joined by "and," unless those items are complete, independent clauses.

3. It was difficult to understand why the customers didn't want to adopt the shelter's pug's: they were sweet, well-behaved, and absolutely adorable. (Test 5, 35)
  - a. NO CHANGE
  - b. **pugs:**
  - c. pugs,
  - d. pug's;

**Choice B** is the correct answer. The colon is used properly in joining two independent clauses, indicating that the second clause logically follows from the first. Choices A and D are incorrect because "pugs" should not be possessive. Choice C is incorrect because the comma creates a comma splice.

4. The famous, beloved cartoon characters of the 90's: Tom and Jerry, Powerpuff Girls, and Johnny Bravo to name a few— are no longer as well known to children in the modern generation. (Test 6, 39)
- a. NO CHANGE
  - b. 90's;
  - c. 90's,
  - d. **90's—**

**Choice D** is the correct answer because it keeps consistent with the punctuation later in the sentence. Because there is a dash between “few” and the helping verb “are,” another dash should be used before “Tom and Jerry” to set off the unrestricted (not important) clause “Tom and Jerry, Powerpuff Girls, and Johnny Bravo to name a few.” Unrestricted clauses should be set off from the sentence by the same punctuation, such as two dashes, parentheses, or commas.

5. In order to successfully take the GRE, students from many majors— from psychology to engineering, must study months beforehand and take multiple practice exams. (Test 7, 13)
- a. NO CHANGE
  - b. majors
  - c. **majors,**
  - d. majors;

**Choice D** is the correct answer because it keeps consistent with the punctuation (a comma) later in the sentence. A pair of commas should be used to set off the explanatory but non-crucial information found in the phrase “from psychology to engineering.” Unrestricted clauses should be set off from the sentence by the same punctuation, such as two dashes, two parentheses, or two commas.

6. George Washington, America's first president— set many precedents for the American presidency such as appointing a cabinet and serving only for four years. (May 2017, 21)
- a. NO CHANGE
  - b. president
  - c. **president,**
  - d. president;

**Choice C** is the correct answer because it keeps consistent with the previous punctuation in the sentence. Unrestricted clauses and appositive phrases should be set off from the sentence by the same punctuation, such as two dashes, two parentheses, or two commas. The unrestricted clauses “America's first president” should be set off from the sentence by the same punctuation. In this case it should be two commas as a comma already appeared in between “George Washington” and “America.”

7. Because Olivia had severe allergies to peanuts: her throat swells, causing her to suffocate— she carries an EpiPen around with her everywhere she goes.
- a. NO CHANGE

- b. peanuts. Her
- c. peanuts, her
- d. **peanuts— her**

**Choice D** is the correct answer because it keeps consistent with the punctuation later in the sentence. It correctly uses the dash to indicate that the following phrase will elaborate on Olivia's severe allergies. Unrestricted clauses and appositive phrases should be set off from the sentence by the same punctuation, such as two dashes, two parentheses, or two commas.

8. The New York Times however had a completely different explanation for the missing sheep; their opinion was that the whole mystery could be explained by the neighboring coyotes. (Test 8, 29)
- a. NO CHANGE
  - b. sheep, they claimed
  - c. **sheep—**
  - d. sheep, which was

**Choice C** is the best answer. The dash combines the two sentences most efficiently, creating a dramatic pause and proper cadence to serve the meaning of the sentence. It indicates that the following clause is explanatory. Furthermore, C is more direct and clear than choice A, which although colloquially acceptable, is somewhat wordy and includes a potential pronoun error ("The New York Times" is a newspaper (singular) while "their" is plural). Choice B contains a comma splice error. Choice D creates some confusion (is the which "sheep" or the "explanation") and is wordier than choice C.