

## SAT Colons Exercises Answer Key SAT

Choose the correct answer from the following options

1. By Monday, the crystals forming on the rock candy string had reached an astonishing ten grams; on the following Wednesday, the candy was fully formed and could be packaged and sold to customers.
  - a. **NO CHANGE**
  - b. Wednesday, the candy, was fully formed
  - c. Wednesday the candy, was fully formed
  - d. Wednesday: the candy was fully formed

**Choice A** is the best answer because the comma is placed correctly after the prepositional phrase “on the following Wednesday”. Choice B incorrectly separates a subject and verb with a comma. Choice D is incorrect because a colon cannot be used after an introductory prepositional phrase, but rather, only follows a complete clause or thought.

2. To combat the rise of unhealthy, processed foods served in the dining halls, a group of health-conscious students rallied together to start the Whole Foods movement, demanding healthier meals made of raw ingredients to be served in the cafeterias. (Test 7, 24)
  - a. **NO CHANGE**
  - b. halls; a
  - c. halls: a
  - d. halls. A

**Choice A** is the best answer. A comma is needed to separate the introductory phrase from the independent main clause of the sentence. In this case, a semicolon would be inappropriate because it would not be separating two independent clauses. Likewise, a colon must come after a complete thought or independent clause, not after an introductory phrase. Choice D creates a sentence fragment.

3. After oil was added to a hot the frying pan, the frying pan began to pop. It was sizzling with a mixture of oil and water, creating jumping droplets of hot oil. (Test 6, 4)
  - a. **NO CHANGE**
  - b. **pop: it was sizzling with**
  - c. pop. It was sizzling with--
  - d. pop, it was sizzling with

**Choice B** is the best answer. The colon is used properly to introduce an independent clause that elaborates on the information from the previous sentence. In Choice A, the colon is misplaced, separating a preposition from the objects of the preposition (a colon must come after a complete thought; not all lists need colons in front of them). In Choice C, the dash is also misplaced. It would have been correct if the dash were placed after the word “pop.” Choice D is incorrect because it creates a comma splice error (run on sentence).

4. The shift from a female president to a male president of the knitting club is probably the most successful example: of an increasing acceptance men into the knitting community. (Test 6, 36)

a. NO CHANGE  
b. example, of an increasing acceptance  
c. example of an increasing acceptance,  
d. **example of an increasing acceptance**

**Choice D** is the best answer because there is no punctuation need to set off the prepositional phrase “of an increasing acceptance.” Neither a colon nor a comma is needed to separate the noun “example” from the description.

5. It is not difficult to see why many people own dogs as pet's— they are always happy and make great companions. (Test 5, 35)

a. NO CHANGE  
b. **pets:**  
c. pets,  
d. pet's;

**Choice B** is the best answer. The plural noun “pets” is object of the preposition “as” and the colon appropriately joins two independent clauses. The second clause (“they are always happy and make great companions”) follows logically from the first clause (“It is not difficult...dogs”). Choices A and D improperly use the singular possessive “pet’s” when a simple plural is correct. Choice C is a run on sentence with a comma splice error.

6. Big Silicon Valley tech companies such as Google have been adding stress-relieving programs and spaces to foster a healthier work environment and to increase worker productivity. (Test 5, 42)

a. **NO CHANGE**  
b. companies, such as  
c. companies such as:  
d. companies: such as

**Choice A** is the best answer because there is no need for punctuation to separate the subject “companies” from the adjective “such as.” If Google were followed by a comma, then a comma in front of such as would be appropriate (choice B), but a comma in front of such as only works if it is in a pair of commas. A single comma between a subject and verb is almost always wrong. C and D are incorrect as “such as” already introduces the multiple ideas that follow and thus a colon is redundant and unnecessary. Generally, “such as” should not be used with colons.

7. The author envisioned the novel’s plot characteristics: the introduction, climax, and resolve that made his story interesting. and thus was able to quickly write bestseller. (Test 4, 35)

a. NO CHANGE  
b. characteristics: the introduction, climax, and resolve that made his story interesting—

c. **characteristics– the introduction, climax, and resolve that made his story interesting–**

d. characteristics; the introduction, climax, and resolve that made his story interesting;

**Choice C** is the best answer. The em dashes correctly surround the examples of the book characteristics. When offsetting a removable (non-essential) phrase, you must use identical punctuation marks (eliminating choices A and B). Likewise, semicolons (choice D) cannot be used to offset phrases, only to offset clauses.

8. Despite being a six-foot-tall sixth grader, Sean White, an American-born teenager. He decided to play soccer instead of basketball. (Test 3, 14)

a. NO CHANGE

b. teenager:

c. teenager; he

d. **teenager,**

**Choice D** is the best answer because it correctly uses a comma to close the modifying clause “an American-born teenager,” which opens with a comma. Repeating a pronoun such as “he” after two nouns already establishing that person “Sean White” and “teenager” is extremely awkward. Don’t “double up” on your pronouns in this manner (Choices A and C). A colon here is incorrect because it comes between the subject and verb in the sentence. Don’t separate subjects and verbs with colons or semicolons.

9. Training everyday and displaying an amazing passion as a child; Michael Phelps quickly became the fastest swimmer on his swim team. (Test 3, 21)

a. NO CHANGE

b. passion as a child:

c. passion as a child, and

d. **passion as a child,**

**Choice D** is the correct answer because the comma provides the correct punctuation for the opening dependent clause to modify the subject “Michael.” Choice A is incorrect as a semicolon cannot be used to offset an introductory phrase. Choice B is incorrect as a colon cannot be used to offset an introductory phrase. Choice C fails to connect two parallel forms with the word and, as it connects a phrase with a clause. “And” can only connect ideas that are alike in form.

10. Students, parents; and school administrators were all working together to organize an event to show their gratitude for teachers on teacher appreciation day. (Test 1, 4)

a. NO CHANGE

b. parents, and,

c. parents: and

d. **parents, and**

**Choice D** is the best answer. It has the correct punctuation for items (“Students, parents, and school administrators) listed in a series. Choice B incorrectly places a comma after “and.” Choice C incorrectly uses a colon to separate items in a series. Choice A incorrectly uses a

semicolon to separate items in a series. Use a comma to separate items in a series unless doing so would create confusion.

11. Miranda Cole, an investigator for the NYPD, believes that there was another motive behind the burglary; the burglar was the father-in-law of the victim. (Test 1, 16)
- a. NO CHANGE
  - b. burglary; and it was that
  - c. **burglary:**
  - d. burglary: being

**Choice C** is the correct answer. The colon indicates that the other motive that contributed to the burglary is about to be stated. Choice A is grammatically correct but stylistically inferior to using a colon, because the colon builds a clearer and stronger relationship between the two clauses. Choice B incorrectly uses a semicolon with a coordinating conjunction (“and”) and is also awkwardly wordy. Choice D awkwardly uses the word “being.” “Being” is usually wrong on the SAT unless it is necessary to create a proper or parallel form.

12. Some dogs require much more attention and physical activity than others. Take boxer dogs, for instance, unless they are given proper exercise on the daily, they will dig holes and tear up furniture. (Test 3, 29)
- a. NO CHANGE
  - b. **dogs, for instance:**
  - c. dogs for instance,
  - d. dogs. For instance

**Choice B** is the correct answer. The colon introduces the clause that elaborates on the preceding information that “Some dogs require much more attention and physical activity than others.” Choices A and C are a run on sentences, as the imperative (command) clause “Take ...for instance” is in fact a complete, independent clause (the subject is an implied “you”). Choice D awkwardly shifts the words “for instance” to the second sentence, when this phrase actually connects more clearly with the words in the first sentence.

13. An optometrists job includes tasks such as: conducting a basic eye exam, diagnosing vision problems, and testing depth perception and color differentiation.
- a. NO CHANGE
  - b. **such as conducting a basic eye exam,**
  - c. such as conducting a basic eye exam;
  - d. such as: conducting a basic eye exam and

**Choice B** is the best answer because the phrase “such as” followed by a colon is redundant. When a colon is used before a list, phrases such as “such as” and “including” are not necessary, and when these phrases are used, a colon should not be used. Choice C incorrectly uses a semicolon to separate items in a list when all other items are separated by commas.

14. For some, it take weeks of working in a nursery to be able to finally distinguish several flowers: the hydrangea, the rose, and the sunflower. (Test 1, 32)

a. **NO CHANGE**

b. flowers;

c. flowers,

d. flowers

**Choice A** is the best answer because the colon provides a grammatically standard and correct usage of a colon before a list of items and after a complete clause. Choice B is incorrect because a semicolon cannot be used to separate a list of nouns from a clause. Choice C is incorrect as it creates confusion: are the flowers in the list along with the hydrangea, the rose and the sunflower, or are those three actually types of flowers? Choice D offers no appropriate separation of the list that describes the flowers and the word flowers. It is awkward and incorrect.