

## SAT Commas Exercises Answer Key

Choose the correct answer from the following options

1. Jill Cole, an emerging front-page reporter for the New York Times believes that the best way to report news is to wait until the whole story is understood. (Test 1, 15)
  - a. NO CHANGE
  - b. Cole an emerging front-page reporter for the New York Times,
  - c. **Cole, an emerging front-page reporter for the New York Times,**
  - d. Cole, an emerging front-page reporter, for the New York Times

**Choice C** is the best answer. The commas correctly offset the modifying clause “an emerging front-page reporter for the New York Times.”

2. In fact, teachers’ training now includes courses on psychology and health. Many of whom add lectures on physical health, mental health, and stress relief into their curriculum. (Test 2, 7)
  - a. Training now includes courses on psychology and health; many teachers, in fact, are adding lectures on physical health, mental health, and stress relief into their curriculum.
  - b. In fact, teachers’ training now includes courses on psychology and health; many teachers add lectures on physical health, mental health, and stress relief taught by them in their curriculum.
  - c. **In fact, many teachers, whose training now includes courses on psychology and health, add lectures on physical health, mental health, and stress relief into their curriculum.**
  - d. Including courses on psychology and health is, in fact, why many teachers add lectures in physical health, mental health, and stress relief into their curriculum.

**Choice C** is the correct answer because it correctly places the relative pronoun “whose” immediately after the subject “teachers.” This gives the sentence a logical flow of information. Choices A, B, and D all fail to place “teachers” as the main subject without redundancy. Furthermore, Choice B is awkwardly passive (“taught by them”). Choice D includes the phrasing “is why” which is almost always incorrect. Choice A is somewhat unclear in terms of the link between the training and the lectures mentioned later.

3. Many people stay on the waitlist for months before being able to sample renowned chef, Gordon Ramsay’s, juicy, quarter-pound beef wellington. (Test 2, 13)
  - a. NO CHANGE
  - b. chef, Gordon Ramsay’s
  - c. chef Gordon Ramsay’s,
  - d. **chef Gordon Ramsay’s**

**Choice D** is the best answer. No punctuation is needed in this underlined phrase. Would you ever say President, George Washington? Probably not. Title-like descriptors and professions

(note: without a “the” in front!) are NOT appositive phrases and do not need commas. Choices A, B, and C all have one or more unnecessary commas.

4. Drip irrigation, the practice of using small amounts of water evenly across a specific area, has been shown to save water by delivering water and nutrients directly to the root zone while minimizing evaporation. (Test 2, 35)
- a. **NO CHANGE**
  - b. area–
  - c. area;
  - d. area

**Choice A** is the correct answer. The comma appropriately closes the clause “the practice of using small amounts of water evenly across a specific area,” which also begins with a comma. Choices B, C, and D use punctuation that is not consistent with the punctuation at the beginning of the clause. Don’t mix punctuation when you’re trying to offset a phrase!

5. Through the help of crash dummies, researchers have been able to show that the use of seatbelts can be imperative, or crucial; to one’s survival in a car accident. (Test 2, 33)
- a. NO CHANGE
  - b. or crucial to,
  - c. or, crucial to,
  - d. **or crucial, to**

**Choice D** is the best answer. The comma is used correctly as the punctuation that identifies “crucial” as the definition of “imperative.” Choice A misuses a semicolon (these can only really separate independent clauses). Choices B & C incorrectly separate phrases that include the word “to”– remember that your pair of commas must surround the words that are removable. “To” is necessary to complete the idea “imperative to” so it is NOT removable. Thus put the comma BEFORE the word “to.”

6. The student chosen to get pied in the face, vice president, Jacob Roshe accepted the nomination without hesitation. (Test 3, 41)
- a. NO CHANGE
  - b. face, vice president, Jacob Roshe,
  - c. face vice president Jacob Roshe,
  - d. **face, vice president Jacob Roshe,**

**Choice D** is the best answer because it places the noun phrase “vice president Jacob Rosche” as an appositive phrase corresponding to the person in the previous phrase, “The student chosen to get pied in the face.” Remember, titles/jobs WITHOUT a “the” in front of a name are treated as adjectives. Thus you don’t need a comma after vice president (Choices A & B). C only has one comma and thus separates the subject and verb with a single comma (not ok).

7. Despite being accused of plagiarism, Vincent Van Gogh still copied other artists, such as Jean-Francois Millet until he was able to develop his own style. (Test 4, 3)
- a. NO CHANGE

- b. **Jean-Francois Millet,**
- c. Jean-Francois Millet;
- d. Jean-Francois Millet--

**Choice B** is the correct answer because it creates an appropriate phrase describing the subject “artists,” and is correctly offset by commas. Because the “such as” is preceded by a comma, we need to complete that “such as...” phrase with a second comma to correctly offset it.

8. The result was a outbreak of children getting fevers nationwide in 1918. It was the swine flu epidemic. (Test 4, 8)
  - a. The result an outbreak, the swine flu epidemic, of children getting fevers nationwide in 1918.
  - b. **The result was the swine flu epidemic, an outbreak of children getting fever nationwide in 1918.**
  - c. The outbreak of children getting fevers nationwide in 1918 was the resulting swine flu epidemic.
  - d. An outbreak of children getting sick resulted and it was nationwide in 1918; it was the swine flu epidemic.

**Choice B** is the correct answer because it appropriately punctuates the appositive phrase that describes the “swine flu epidemic.” All of the other choices are actually misplaced modifiers. If you missed this one, you may want to look at modifiers, too!

9. Alex’s flower shop, which was originally opened by her grandmother in the 80’s— was the little town’s favorite place to purchase flowers for special occasions. (Test 5, 15)
  - a. NO CHANGE
  - b. **grandmother in the 80’s,**
  - c. grandmother, in the 80’s,
  - d. grandmother in the 80’s

**Choice B** is the correct answer because the comma after “80’s” is correctly used to with the comma after “shop” to offset the clause “which was originally opened by her grandmother in the 80’s.” Don’t mix punctuation! You can’t pair a dash with a comma to offset a clause or phrase (answer A). C creates an awkward pause before “in the 80’s” (generally you don’t want a comma in front of a preposition unless it is indicating parallelism in a series of prepositional phrases or gives an appropriate “breathe” in the sentence.) D fails to add a comma necessary to complete the “which” clause that is offset by the first comma before the “which.” “Which” clauses should typically be offset by a pair of commas if mid sentence.

10. There are a multitude of reasons why one should recycle, such as, a desire to create less waste or a chance for young kids to earn a little bit of pocket money. (Test 4,22)
  - a. NO CHANGE
  - b. recycle such as:
  - c. recycle such as,
  - d. **recycle, such as**

**Choice D** is the best answer because the nonrestrictive clause “such as...pocket money” should be preceded by a comma. The phrase “such as” is never followed by a comma (A/C). The

phrase “such as” is also never followed by a colon (B) (see “colons” exercise for more on this). The list of reasons supporting the claim for recycling is nonrestrictive because the list merely tells the reader about recycling but not having this list does not change the meaning of the first portion of the sentence before the comma or restrict what is meant by recycle. Thus it is appropriate to add a comma before “such as.”