

Semicolons Exercises Answer Key SAT

Choose the correct answer from the following options

1. Because nuts contain a healthy balance of fat, protein, and fiber; they are excellent foods to snack on throughout the day. (Test 8, 4)
 - a. NO CHANGE
 - b. **fiber, they**
 - c. fiber. They
 - d. fiber, thus they

Choice B is the best answer. A semicolon (Choice A) cannot be used to separate a dependent clause (i.e. that starts with a word such as “Because”) from an independent clause. Instead, a comma should be used to properly separate the introductory dependent clause from the following main independent clause. Choice C creates a fragment for the first sentence. Choice D unnecessarily adds the word thus (redundancy).

2. To counter the the large number of pests during a bug infestation, exterminators use professional-grade insecticide and seal up to house to ensure all the insects die. (Test 7, 24)
 - a. **NO CHANGE**
 - b. infestation; exterminators
 - c. infestation: exterminators
 - d. infestation. Exterminators

Choice A is the correct answer because it appropriately separates the introductory infinitive phrase from the following main independent clause. Choice B is not appropriate because a semicolon should be used between two independent clauses, not between a phrase and independent clause. Choice C is incorrect because a colon is used only after an independent clause or complete idea. Choice D is incorrect: it creates a fragment; the first phrase is not a complete sentence.

3. Some of the vegetables that belong in the Cucurbitaceae family, characterized by rampant, climbing tendrils, include: pumpkins, squash, cucumbers, and melons.
 - a. NO CHANGE
 - b. **include pumpkins, squash, cucumbers and melons.**
 - c. include, those being pumpkins, squash, cucumbers and melons.
 - d. include: pumpkins and squash, and cucumbers and melons.

Choice B is the best answer because no punctuation is needed after the word include. If you cannot take the semicolon out of the sentence and have two complete sentences, it is likely that the semicolon is being used incorrectly (A). For example, “mushrooms, eggplants, and bitter melon” does not make sense by itself. Choice D unnecessarily uses a colon and over uses the word “and.” Remember, you don’t need a colon before a list if you have a lead out word such as “include” or “such as.”

4. The spinach tasted absolutely repulsive to Mikey; but he knew the importance of eating his vegetables in order to receive the proper nutrients.
- a. NO CHANGE
 - b. Mike; and he
 - c. Mikey, he
 - d. **Mikey, but he**

Choice D is the best answer. Two independent clauses should be joined either by a semicolon or by a conjunction and a comma, but never by both. Thus, the semicolon in this sentence should be replaced by a comma. Choice C is a run on sentence.

5. The developer is the one who builds the app, fixes any bugs, and essentially ensures that the product is running smoothly; and is thus the driving force behind an online web-app.
- a. NO CHANGE
 - b. **builds the app, fixes any bugs, and essentially ensures that the product is running smoothly, and**
 - c. builds the app, fixes any bugs, and essentially ensures that the product is running smoothly: and
 - d. builds the app, fixes any bugs, and essentially ensures that the product is running smoothly– and

Choice B is the best answer because a comma correctly separates the list from the return to the rest of the sentence. This sentence might also have no comma after smoothly and be correct. Generally, we don't like to use commas between compound verbs. Here the subject "developer" at the start of the sentence connects to the two instances of the verb "is." So you would usually avoid putting a comma between these two verbs (i.e. that comma after smoothly will bother some grammar people). However, the long list creates some confusion as to the use of "and," so a comma builds an appropriate pause before continuing the sentence. All the other choices make even more of a break, which is inappropriate. When you have a compound verb, you don't want to place invasive punctuation, such as a dash or semicolon, between the subject and second compound verb if you can help it. This is also a case of picking what simply is clearest and not overthinking. Sometimes the "rules" on the SAT are slightly bent to accommodate what makes sense and works. Comma rules tend to be a bit more flexible than some other rules. Besides, everything else available is worse.

6. There are many meat substitutes that can deliver the same nutrients as meat, such as tofu, quinoa, soy; and lentils. (Test 7, 28)
- a. NO CHANGE
 - b. soy; and
 - c. soy, and,

d. soy, and

Choice D is the best answer. The comma is correctly used to separate the list items of foods that can be a meat substitute. Choice A is incorrect because a colon should never be used to separate items in a list. Choice B is incorrect because although semicolons can sometimes be used to separate items in a list, this is typically only when necessary to prevent confusion because of comma use within at least one element and when this is true, punctuation must stay consistent (tofu; quinoa; soy, in a natural state such as soybeans; and lentils). Choice C is incorrect because a comma should not follow the conjunction “and” in a list of items.