

THE BEST ACT PREP COURSE EVER

PARENTHESES AND DASHES

ACT English: Problem Set

1. The book's illustrations were all done by hand—sketched, and traced, inked and shaded, finalized and colored,—and required incredible patience. (73E 18)
 - A. NO CHANGE
 - B. hand, sketched and traced
 - C. hand, sketched, and traced
 - D. hand—sketched and traced,
2. Stella's floral arranging business has grown so much that she plans to hire more people. Usually she designs each arrangement herself but the orders have increased. (74H 6)
 - A. NO CHANGE
 - B. people and usually
 - C. people—usually
 - D. people; usually
3. The swimmer finished the 50-meter freestyle event in 24 seconds; her best time so far. (74F 51)
 - A. NO CHANGE
 - B. in 23 seconds—
 - C. in 23 seconds;
 - D. in, 23 seconds,
4. Although the pop duo's music career has taken off—as shown by its chart-topping singles from the past year, fame hasn't changed its members' hardworking ethics. (73E 34)
 - A. NO CHANGE
 - B. off—as shown by its chart-topping singles from the past year—
 - C. off, as shown by its chart-topping singles from the past year—
 - D. off as shown by its chart-topping singles from the past year
5. The dollhouses in her collection—18 of them—depict different time periods and are outfitted with little figurines. (72F 20)
 - A. NO CHANGE
 - B. them depict—
 - C. them depict,
 - D. them depict
6. Jackie Chan (Chan Kong-sang), is known for his acrobatic fighting style and is trained in both Kung Fu and Hapkido. (73E 45)
 - A. NO CHANGE
 - B. Chan—Chan Kong-sang
 - C. Chan (Chan Kong-sang)
 - D. Chan, Chan Kong-sang
7. The toddler's most detested foods—peaches and spinach—were mixed in a smoothie to mask the taste. (73G 62)
 - A. NO CHANGE
 - B. foods—peaches and spinach, were
 - C. foods—peaches—and spinach were
 - D. foods, peaches and spinach were
8. Though not quite as tall as other mountains, (Mount Everest, for instance, is 9,000 feet taller), Mount McKinley is the highest mountain peak in North America. (74F 48)
 - A. NO CHANGE
 - B. mountains (Mount Everest,
 - C. mountains, (Mount Everest
 - D. mountains (Mount Everest
9. To process search queries every second, 40,000 in all, Google, requires a quick and efficient system. (74F 17)
 - A. NO CHANGE
 - B. second (40,000) in all, Google requires
 - C. second—40,000 in all—Google requires
 - D. second, 40,000, in all, Google requires
10. Last night Grandma made the entire wedding cake by herself—mixing, and baking, icing and stacking, decorating and chilling—so it's surprising that she's even the first one up this morning. (73E 18)
 - A. NO CHANGE
 - B. herself—mixing and baking,
 - C. herself, mixing, and baking
 - D. herself, mixing and baking
11. Banning of international ivory trade—which involves creatures such as African and Asian elephants is a widely debated issue. (73C 3)
 - A. NO CHANGE
 - B. elephants—
 - C. elephants:
 - D. elephants,

12. To reach the magazine's deadline, the photographer's images (1,000) in all, need to be edited in the next two hours. (74F 17)
- A. NO CHANGE
B. images—1,000 in all, need
C. images—1,000 in all—need
D. images, 1,000, in all, need
13. The professor recently completed a marathon in 5 hours: a personal best. (74F 51)
- A. NO CHANGE
B. in 5 hours—
C. in 5 hours;
D. in, 5 hours,
14. The kindergartener's favorite activity is collecting stickers—200 in total, each with a special place in her sticker book. (72F 20)
- A. total—each
B. total each—
C. total each,
D. total each
15. Tom is so exhausted that he doesn't even want to go to his singing lessons. Usually three times a week but today he just couldn't. (74H 6)
- A. NO CHANGE
B. lessons and usually
C. lessons—usually
D. lessons; usually
16. The old sign's weathering form still advertises Vacancies ... Gas Station ... Rest Stop—reminders of a lost town. (73C 18)
- A. NO CHANGE
B. advertises—
C. advertises,
D. advertises:
17. The molecule deoxyribonucleic acid, or DNA, dictates one's genetic predispositions to certain diseases. Which of the following alternatives to the underlined portion would NOT be acceptable? (70C 62)
- A. acid—DNA for short—
B. acid, or DNA
C. acid—DNA—
D. acid (DNA)
18. Light shines through the church's stained glass windows—mostly yellows and reds bathing churchgoers in a warm haze. (73G 62)
- A. NO CHANGE
B. windows—mostly yellows and reds—bathing
C. windows—mostly yellows—and reds bathing
D. windows, mostly yellows and reds bathing
19. To film her audition tape she recorded it three times—once for practice, once to fix mistakes, and once for the final take. (73E 56)
- A. NO CHANGE
B. once each in a row for practice, to fix mistakes, and
C. in a sequence of three—practice, to fix mistakes, and also
D. once in each of the following—practice, to fix mistakes, and
20. Ella suffers a type of depression called seasonal affective disorder, or SAD, and uses light therapy boxes for phototherapy. Which of the following alternatives to the underlined portion would NOT be acceptable? (70C 62)
- A. disorder—SAD—
B. disorder (SAD)
C. disorder, or SAD
D. disorder—SAD for short—

ANSWER KEY

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

ANSWER EXPLANATIONS

1. **D.** The dash appropriately sets off and emphasizes the intricate process of creating the book's illustrations; it also corresponds to the dash at the end of the phrase.
2. **C.** Adding a dash instead of the period emphasizes Stella's decision to hire more people.
3. **B.** Replacing the colon with a dash emphasizes the additional detail that this was her best time thus far. Dashes are more flexible than colons—if choosing between the two, pick the dash.
4. **B.** A corresponding dash replaces the comma at the end of the phrase that began with a dash.
5. **A.** The dash appropriately sets off the added detail of how many dollhouses she has in her collection.
6. **C.** The comma after the parentheses is not needed because the parentheses are used to set off Jackie Chan's birth name.
7. **A.** The dashes appropriately set off the details of what the toddler hates eating.
8. **B.** A comma is not needed before the parentheses, which are used to set off an example of taller mountains.
9. **C.** The dashes emphasize just how many search queries Google processes per second.
10. **B.** The comma after "mixing" is misplaced and should be removed because the phrase is supposed to read "mixing and baking" to maintain the parallelism of the rest of the phrase.
11. **B.** The dash is needed at the end of the phrase to correspond to the dash at the beginning of the phrase.
12. **C.** Dashes replace the misplaced parentheses around 1,000; the phrase "1,000 in all" is a specific detail that needs to be emphasized further.
13. **B.** The dash replaces the colon because it emphasizes the detail that this time was the professor's personal best. Dashes are more flexible than colons—if choosing between them, a dash is often the better option.
14. **A.** The dash replaces the comma at the end of the phrase to correspond to the dash at the beginning of the phrase.
15. **C.** Adding a dash instead of the period prevents a sentence fragment.
16. **B.** The dash is needed at the beginning of the phrase to set it off and correspond to the dash at the end of the phrase.
17. **B.** Commas must be used on either side of the phrase "or DNA" to set it off, otherwise, using only one comma creates a comma splice.
18. **B.** A dash is needed at the end of the phrase to correspond to the dash used at the beginning of the phrase to set it off.
19. **A.** The dash is appropriately used to set off additional details about how she filmed her audition tape. The other answer choices are redundant and/or misuse the dash.
20. **C.** Commas must be used on either side of the phrase "or SAD" to set it off, otherwise, using only one comma creates a comma splice.