

Question ID e76b7c9b

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT/NMSQT & PSAT 10	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	

ID: e76b7c9b

Generations of mystery and horror _____ have been influenced by the dark, gothic stories of celebrated American author Edgar Allan Poe (1809–1849).

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A. writers
- B. writers,
- C. writers—
- D. writers;

ID: e76b7c9b Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation between a subject and a verb. When, as in this case, a subject (“Generations of mystery and horror writers”) is immediately followed by a verb (“have been influenced”), no punctuation is needed.

Choice B is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the subject and the verb. Choice C is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the subject and the verb. Choice D is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the subject and the verb.

Question Difficulty: Easy

Question ID 6f885d1c

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT/NMSQT & PSAT 10	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	

ID: 6f885d1c

In 1727, dramatist Lewis Theobald presented a new play, *Double Falsehood*, at a London theater. Theobald claimed that his drama was based on a little-known play by William Shakespeare, *Cardenio*. Many, including poet Alexander Pope, were _____ historians have determined that Shakespeare’s company did perform a play called *Cardenio* in 1613.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A. skeptical but
- B. skeptical, but
- C. skeptical,
- D. skeptical

ID: 6f885d1c Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. There are two independent clauses in the sentence, each with a subject and a verb: "many...were skeptical" and "historians have determined...." These clauses can be grammatically joined by a comma and the coordinating conjunction "but."

Choice A is incorrect. This choice results in a run-on sentence, which occurs when two independent clauses are joined without punctuation. Two independent clauses can’t be joined by just the coordinating conjunction "but." A comma would also be required. Choice C is incorrect. This choice creates a punctuation error called a comma splice. This sentence contains two independent clauses ("Many...were skeptical" and "historians have determined..."). A comma alone can’t join two independent clauses. That requires a comma and a coordinating conjunction. Choice D is incorrect. This choice results in a run-on sentence, which occurs when two independent clauses are joined without punctuation. This sentence contains two independent clauses ("Many...were skeptical" and "historians have determined..."), which need to be either joined by a semicolon, joined by a comma and a coordinating conjunction, or separated by a period.

Question Difficulty: Easy

Question ID 0dca4c3c

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT/NMSQT & PSAT 10	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	

ID: 0dca4c3c

Located in the northern United States, the Great Lakes Basin contains roughly 35,000 islands. Lake Superior has Grand Island, for example. Lake Michigan has Belle Isle. Lake Huron, though, is home _____ the largest island of them all: Manitoulin Island.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A. to;
- B. to—
- C. to
- D. to,

ID: 0dca4c3c Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation use between a preposition and its complement. No punctuation is needed between the preposition "to" and its complement "the largest island of them all." The complement completes the meaning of the preposition in the phrase "home to the largest island of them all," and any punctuation within it results in an ungrammatical sentence.

Choice A is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the preposition and its complement. Choice B is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the preposition and its complement. Choice D is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the preposition and its complement.

Question Difficulty: Easy

Question ID 6d4dd37e

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT/NMSQT & PSAT 10	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	

ID: 6d4dd37e

Azulejos, mosaics made of glazed ceramic tiles, can be found throughout Portugal. These mosaics beautify places such as _____ stations, and public squares.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A. libraries train
- B. libraries: train
- C. libraries—train
- D. libraries, train

ID: 6d4dd37e Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is the punctuation of items in a simple series. The comma after "libraries" is used conventionally to separate the first and second items ("libraries" and "train stations") in the series.

Choice A is incorrect because it fails to separate the first two items ("libraries" and "train stations") in the series. Choice B is incorrect because a colon can't be used in this way to separate items in a simple series. Choice C is incorrect because a dash can't be used in this way to separate items in a simple series.

Question Difficulty: Easy

Question ID cf01d05c

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT/NMSQT & PSAT 10	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	

ID: cf01d05c

In forecasting weather events, meteorologists sometimes discuss the role of atmospheric rivers. What are atmospheric rivers, and how _____. Part of the water cycle, atmospheric rivers are narrow channels of moisture moving through the atmosphere. In certain conditions, these “rivers” can release some of their moisture as precipitation.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A. do they affect our weather.
- B. they do affect our weather.
- C. do they affect our weather?
- D. they do affect our weather?

ID: cf01d05c Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is end-of-sentence punctuation. This choice correctly uses a question mark to punctuate the coordinated interrogative clauses "What are atmospheric rivers" and "how do they affect our weather," both of which ask direct questions.

Choice A is incorrect because a period can't be used in this way to punctuate an interrogative clause, such as "how do they affect our weather," at the end of a sentence. Choice B is incorrect because the structure requires an interrogative clause and a question mark at the end of the sentence. Choice D is incorrect because the structure requires an interrogative clause at the end of the sentence.

Question Difficulty: Easy

Question ID 1ca50ee6

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT/NMSQT & PSAT 10	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	

ID: 1ca50ee6

The Kaiparowits Formation is a fossil-rich layer of sedimentary rock in the Grand Staircase, a colossal sequence of rock layers stretching from Utah’s Bryce Canyon to Arizona’s Grand Canyon. The sandstones and mudstones of the Kaiparowits Formation were deposited _____ the Late Cretaceous, preserving many species from that time.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A. during:
- B. during;
- C. during,
- D. during

ID: 1ca50ee6 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation use between a preposition and its complement. No punctuation is needed between the preposition “during” and its complement “the Late Cretaceous.” The complement completes the meaning of the preposition in the phrase “deposited during the Late Cretaceous,” and any punctuation between the two results in an ungrammatical sentence.

Choice A is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the preposition and its complement. Choice B is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the preposition and its complement. Choice C is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the preposition and its complement.

Question Difficulty: Easy

Question ID 7c779fe7

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT/NMSQT & PSAT 10	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	

ID: 7c779fe7

Where ____ Interestingly, it was invented by an author. It first appears in the novel *Through the Looking Glass* by English author Lewis Carroll.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A. did the word “chortle” come from.
- B. the word “chortle” did come from?
- C. did the word “chortle” come from?
- D. the word “chortle” come from.

ID: 7c779fe7 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is end-of-sentence punctuation. This choice correctly uses a question mark to punctuate the interrogative sentence "where did the word ‘chortle’ come from," which asks a direct question.

Choice A is incorrect because a period can’t be used in this way to punctuate an interrogative sentence, such as "where did the word ‘chortle’ come from." Choice B is incorrect because "where the word ‘chortle’ did come from" does not follow the conventional structure of a direct question in Standard English. It’s conventional in Standard English to follow the interrogative word "where" with an auxiliary verb (such as "did") when asking a direct question. Choice D is incorrect because "where the word ‘chortle’ come from" does not follow the conventional structure of a direct question in Standard English. It’s conventional in Standard English to follow the interrogative word "where" with an auxiliary verb (such as "did") when asking a direct question. Furthermore, a period can’t be used in this way to punctuate an interrogative sentence.

Question Difficulty: Easy

Question ID 70871a31

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT/NMSQT & PSAT 10	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	

ID: 70871a31

According to the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, aloha 'āina is “a recognition, commitment, and practice sustaining the ea—or life breath” between the Hawaiian people and their natural environments. The concept has been proudly embodied _____ Native Hawaiians for generations, contributing to the lush flora and renowned beauty of the islands.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A. by;
- B. by:
- C. by,
- D. by

ID: 70871a31 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation use between a preposition and its complement. No punctuation is needed between the preposition "by" and its complement "Native Hawaiians." The complement completes the meaning of the preposition in the phrase "proudly embodied by Native Hawaiians," and any punctuation within it results in an ungrammatical sentence.

Choice A is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the preposition and its complement. Choice B is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the preposition and its complement. Choice C is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the preposition and its complement.

Question Difficulty: Easy

Question ID 244328b7

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT/NMSQT & PSAT 10	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	

ID: 244328b7

Many companies have simplified their products’ packaging designs in recent years, but _____ Researcher Lan Anh Nu Ton and her colleagues designed a research study to find out.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A. consumers actually do prefer this simpler style.
- B. do consumers actually prefer this simpler style?
- C. do consumers actually prefer this simpler style.
- D. consumers actually do prefer this simpler style?

ID: 244328b7 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is end-of-sentence punctuation. This choice correctly uses a question mark to punctuate the interrogative clause “do consumers actually prefer this simpler style,” which asks a direct question at the end of the sentence. This is the question that the researchers in the next sentence were trying to investigate.

Choice A is incorrect because the context requires an interrogative clause. The declarative clause “consumers actually do prefer this simpler style” incorrectly indicates the consumers’ preference was already known, whereas the researchers had yet to find this out. Choice C is incorrect because a period can’t be used in this way to punctuate an interrogative clause at the end of a sentence. Choice D is incorrect because a question mark can’t be used in this way to punctuate a declarative clause, such as “consumers actually do prefer this simpler style,” at the end of a sentence.

Question Difficulty: Easy

Question ID d4a030d0

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT/NMSQT & PSAT 10	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	

ID: d4a030d0

When using a search engine, many people click just the first one or two results. Click restraint is the practice of scanning a search results page and evaluating what you see before deciding which link _____

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A. should you choose.
- B. you should choose?
- C. should you choose?
- D. you should choose.

ID: d4a030d0 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is end-of-sentence punctuation. This choice correctly uses a period to punctuate a declarative sentence that ends with an indirect question (“which link you should choose.”)

Choice A is incorrect. The structure requires a declarative clause that presents an indirect question about what is evaluated in click restraint, not an interrogative clause that presents a direct question, such as “which link should you choose.” Choice B is incorrect. It’s unconventional to use a question mark in this way to punctuate a declarative clause that presents an indirect question, such as “which link you should choose.” Choice C is incorrect. The structure requires a declarative clause that presents an indirect question about what is evaluated in click restraint, not an interrogative clause that presents a direct question, such as “which link should you choose.”

Question Difficulty: Easy

Question ID a97fe87f

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT/NMSQT & PSAT 10	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	

ID: a97fe87f

A harpsichord may look just like a piano, but the difference between the two instruments is easy to hear. When a harpsichord’s keys are pressed, the strings inside the _____ are plucked, not struck.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A. instrument:
- B. instrument
- C. instrument—
- D. instrument,

ID: a97fe87f Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation use between a subject and a verb. When, as in this case, a subject ("the strings inside the instrument") is immediately followed by a main verb ("are plucked"), no punctuation is needed.

Choice A is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the subject and the verb. Choice C is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the subject and the verb. Choice D is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the subject and the verb.

Question Difficulty: Easy

Question ID 0b48e6dc

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT/NMSQT & PSAT 10	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	

ID: 0b48e6dc

In 1976, the Inuit rock group Sikumiut recorded the album *People of the Ice*. Though only their first record, it shows a band already skilled at the difficult task of making music that sounds easy and fun. On songs like “Utirumavunga,” Lucassie Koperqualuk’s guitar riffs effortlessly _____ Charlie Adams’s delightfully catchy vocal melodies.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A. blend, with
- B. blend. With
- C. blend; with
- D. blend with

ID: 0b48e6dc Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation between a verb and a prepositional phrase. No punctuation is needed between the verb “blend” and the prepositional phrase “with Charlie Adams’s delightfully catchy vocal melodies.” The prepositional phrase completes the idea of the sentence, explaining with what Koperqualuk’s guitar riffs blend.

Choice A is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the verb and the prepositional phrase. Choice B is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the verb and the prepositional phrase. Choice C is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the verb and the prepositional phrase.

Question Difficulty: Easy

Question ID fa19b586

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT/NMSQT & PSAT 10	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	

ID: fa19b586

Emperor penguins don’t waddle out of the ocean. They launch themselves at such a high speed that they travel up to two meters before landing. How _____ A layer of microbubbles on their plumage reduces friction as the penguins speed to the surface.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A. they are able to move so fast!
- B. are they able to move so fast.
- C. they are able to move so fast.
- D. are they able to move so fast?

ID: fa19b586 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is end-of-sentence punctuation. This choice correctly uses a question mark to punctuate the interrogative sentence “how are they able to move so fast?” The interrogative sentence asks a direct question, and the next sentence answers it.

Choice A is incorrect because the context requires an interrogative sentence. The exclamative sentence “how they are able to move so fast!” emphasizes the penguin’s high rate of speed, but it doesn’t set up the next sentence’s explanation of how the penguins achieve such speeds. Choice B is incorrect because a period can’t be used in this way to punctuate an interrogative sentence. Choice C is incorrect because the context requires an interrogative sentence. The exclamative sentence “how they are able to move so fast” emphasizes the penguin’s high rate of speed, but it doesn’t set up the next sentence’s explanation of how the penguins achieve such speeds.

Question Difficulty: Easy

Question ID 28867bce

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT/NMSQT & PSAT 10	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	

ID: 28867bce

In 2009, researchers determined that pottery fragments from a cave in China were close to 18,000 years old. These are some of the oldest _____ of pottery ever found.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A. pieces:
- B. pieces,
- C. pieces
- D. pieces—

ID: 28867bce Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation use between a noun and a prepositional phrase. No punctuation is needed between the noun "pieces" and the prepositional phrase "of pottery." The prepositional phrase provides essential information about what kind of pieces were found, so it shouldn't be separated from the rest of the noun phrase ("some of the oldest pieces") with punctuation.

Choice A is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the noun phrase "some of the oldest pieces" and the prepositional phrase "of pottery." Choice B is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the noun phrase "some of the oldest pieces" and the prepositional phrase "of pottery." Choice D is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the noun phrase "some of the oldest pieces" and the prepositional phrase "of pottery."

Question Difficulty: Easy

Question ID 2ad8651d

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT/NMSQT & PSAT 10	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	

ID: 2ad8651d

Fans of science fiction will _____ multiple references to classic sci-fi stories in Janelle Mon  e’s song lyrics, including her recurring nods to the plot of the 1927 sci-fi film *Metropolis*.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A. appreciate the
- B. appreciate. The
- C. appreciate, the
- D. appreciate: the

ID: 2ad8651d Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested here is punctuation between a verb and object. No punctuation is needed between the verb ("appreciate") and its object ("the multiple references..."). The object helps complete the idea of the verb—in this case, it explains what fans of science fiction will appreciate—and any punctuation between the two results in an ungrammatical sentence.

Choice B is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the verb and its object. Choice C is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the verb and its object. Choice D is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the verb and its object.

Question Difficulty: Easy

Question ID 53e5b412

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT/NMSQT & PSAT 10	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	

ID: 53e5b412

Ganga is a folk singing tradition that originated in the Dinaric Alps in southern Europe. Ganga singers sing different melodies at the same time. The clashing notes can echo a long way across the mountains, which is why _____

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A. ganga has been used as a communication method?
- B. ganga has been used as a communication method.
- C. has ganga been used as a communication method.
- D. has ganga been used as a communication method?

ID: 53e5b412 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is end-of-sentence punctuation. This choice correctly uses a period to punctuate a declarative sentence ending with a relative clause that presents an indirect question (“why ganga has been used as a communication method.”)

Choice A is incorrect. It’s unconventional to use a question mark to punctuate a declarative sentence that presents an indirect question. Choice C is incorrect. The structure requires a declarative clause at the end of the sentence, not an interrogative clause that asks a direct question, such as “has ganga been used as a communication method.” Choice D is incorrect. The structure requires a declarative clause at the end of the sentence, not an interrogative clause that asks a direct question, such as “has ganga been used as a communication method.”

Question Difficulty: Easy

Question ID 85834a0a

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT/NMSQT & PSAT 10	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	

ID: 85834a0a

At 1,280 meters, the Golden Gate Bridge in the United States is one of the longest suspension bridges in the _____ the Tsing Ma Bridge in China, at 1,377 meters, is even longer.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A. world but
- B. world, but,
- C. world,
- D. world, but

ID: 85834a0a Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is the coordination of main clauses within a sentence. This choice correctly uses a comma and the coordinating conjunction “but” to join the first main clause (“At...world”) and the second main clause (“the...longer”).

Choice A is incorrect because when coordinating two main clauses such as these, it’s conventional to use a comma before the coordinating conjunction. Choice B is incorrect because a comma isn’t needed after the conjunction “but.” Choice C is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. Without a conjunction following it, a comma can’t be used in this way to join two main clauses.

Question Difficulty: Easy

Question ID adc59ce9

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT/NMSQT & PSAT 10	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	

ID: adc59ce9

The Alvarez theory, developed in 1980 by physicist Luis Walter Alvarez and his geologist son Walter Alvarez, maintained that the secondary effects of an asteroid impact caused many dinosaurs and other animals to die _____ it left unexplored the question of whether unrelated volcanic activity might have also contributed to the mass extinctions.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A. out but
- B. out, but
- C. out
- D. out,

ID: adc59ce9 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is the coordination of main clauses within a sentence. This choice correctly uses a comma and the coordinating conjunction “but” to join the first main clause (“the Alvarez...out”) and the second main clause (“it left...extinctions”).

Choice A is incorrect because when coordinating two longer main clauses such as these, it’s conventional to use a comma before the coordinating conjunction. Choice C is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The two main clauses are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction. Choice D is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. Without a conjunction following it, a comma can’t be used in this way to join two main clauses.

Question Difficulty: Easy

Question ID d496cd4f

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT/NMSQT & PSAT 10	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	

ID: d496cd4f

Human-made (synthetic) fibers used in clothes and many other consumer products are more durable than most natural plant ____ the manufacture of synthetic fibers requires toxic chemical solvents that can pollute air and water.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A. fibers,
- B. fibers but
- C. fibers
- D. fibers, but

ID: d496cd4f Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is the coordination of main clauses within a sentence. This choice correctly uses a comma and the coordinating conjunction “but” to join the first main clause (“Human-made...fibers”) and the second main clause (“the manufacture...water”).

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. Without a conjunction following it, a comma can’t be used in this way to join two main clauses. Choice B is incorrect because when coordinating two longer main clauses such as these, it’s conventional to use a comma before the coordinating conjunction. Choice C is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The two main clauses are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction.

Question Difficulty: Easy

Question ID e0ed3f38

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT/NMSQT & PSAT 10	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	

ID: e0ed3f38

After the printing press was introduced in 1440, handwritten manuscripts from Europe’s medieval period were often destroyed and the paper used for other purposes. In one instance, pages _____ a collection of Norse tales dating to 1270 were discovered lining a bishop’s miter (hat).

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A. from:
- B. from,
- C. from
- D. from—

ID: e0ed3f38 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation use within a sentence. No punctuation is needed between the preposition “from” and the noun phrase beginning with “a collection.” The word “from” introduces a prepositional phrase that modifies the noun “pages” and provides essential information about the pages’ origin.

Choice A is incorrect. No punctuation is needed within the prepositional phrase beginning with “from.” Choice B is incorrect. No punctuation is needed within the prepositional phrase beginning with “from.” Choice D is incorrect. No punctuation is needed within the prepositional phrase beginning with “from.”

Question Difficulty: Easy

Question ID e11fd558

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT/NMSQT & PSAT 10	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	

ID: e11fd558

The algaita is a double reed wind instrument from West Africa. The reed of a wind instrument is the mouthpiece _____. A double reed contains two pieces of cane that vibrate and produce sound as air passes between them.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A. where sound is made?
- B. where is sound made.
- C. where sound is made.
- D. where is sound made?

ID: e11fd558 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is end-of-sentence punctuation. This choice correctly uses a period to punctuate a declarative sentence ("the reed of a wind instrument is the mouthpiece") that ends with a prepositional phrase ("where sound is made").

Choice A is incorrect. It's unconventional to use a question mark to punctuate a declarative sentence. Choice B is incorrect. The structure requires that the sentence continue as a declarative clause, not end with an interrogative clause. Choice D is incorrect. The structure requires that the sentence continue as a declarative clause and end with a period, not end with an interrogative clause and a question mark.

Question Difficulty: Easy

Question ID cfda196c

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT/NMSQT & PSAT 10	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	

ID: cfda196c

In the novel *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe, Okonkwo is a leader of Umuofia (a fictional Nigerian clan) and takes pride in his culture’s traditions. However, when the arrival of European missionaries brings changes to Umuofia, the novel asks a central question: How _____

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A. Umuofia’s traditions will be affected.
- B. will Umuofia’s traditions be affected.
- C. Umuofia’s traditions will be affected?
- D. will Umuofia’s traditions be affected?

ID: cfda196c Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The clause before the colon tells us that the novel “asks a question,” so the clause after the colon should be in the conventional form of a question: with the verb before the subject, and a question mark at the end.

Choice A is incorrect. This choice ends the sentence with a period, which isn’t right. The clause before the colon tells us that the novel “asks a question,” so the clause after the colon should be that question. Choice B is incorrect. This choice ends the sentence with a period, which isn’t right. The clause before the colon tells us that the novel “asks a question,” so the clause after the colon should be that question. In Standard English, questions place the verb before the subject and end with a question mark. Choice C is incorrect. This choice doesn’t conform to the conventions of Standard English. In Standard English, questions place the verb before the subject.

Question Difficulty: Easy

Question ID 34fbf298

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT/NMSQT & PSAT 10	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	

ID: 34fbf298

The capital city of the Aztec empire, Tenochtitlan, was built on an island in a lake. Because of the marshy conditions, the Aztec people _____ floating farms called “chinampas.”

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A. created
- B. created:
- C. created,
- D. created;

ID: 34fbf298 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation use between a verb and its object. No punctuation is needed between the verb “created” and its object “floating farms called ‘chinampas.’” The object helps complete the idea of the verb—in this case, it explains what the Aztec people created—and any punctuation between the two results in an ungrammatical sentence.

Choice B is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the verb and its object. Choice C is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the verb and its object. Choice D is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the verb and its object.

Question Difficulty: Easy

Question ID 798b4cd6

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT/NMSQT & PSAT 10	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	

ID: 798b4cd6

By analyzing ice cores from Greenland and Antarctica, a research team at Sweden’s Lund University discovered evidence of a solar storm that occurred 9,200 years ago. Scientists had previously thought the Sun to be in a relatively “quiet” phase at that _____ the Lund team’s finding suggests otherwise.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A. time but
- B. time, but
- C. time,
- D. time

ID: 798b4cd6 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is the coordination of main clauses within a sentence. This choice correctly uses a comma and the coordinating conjunction "but" to join the first main clause ("Scientists...time") and the second main clause ("the Lund...otherwise").

Choice A is incorrect because when coordinating two longer main clauses such as these, it’s conventional to use a comma before the coordinating conjunction. Choice C is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. Without a conjunction following it, a comma can’t be used in this way to join two main clauses. Choice D is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The two main clauses are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction.

Question Difficulty: Easy

Question ID 52f75c9b

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT/NMSQT & PSAT 10	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	

ID: 52f75c9b

The element carbon has the highest melting point _____ all the elements on the periodic table—3,500 degrees Celsius.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A. of
- B. of—
- C. of,
- D. of:

ID: 52f75c9b Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation use between a preposition and its complement. No punctuation is needed between the preposition "of" and its complement "all the elements on the periodic table." The complement completes the meaning of the preposition in the phrase "the highest melting point of all the elements on the periodic table," and using punctuation to separate the complement from the preposition results in an ungrammatical sentence.

Choice B is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the preposition and its complement. Choice C is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the preposition and its complement. Choice D is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the preposition and its complement.

Question Difficulty: Easy

Question ID 8b69a05e

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT/NMSQT & PSAT 10	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	

ID: 8b69a05e

In her two major series “Memory Test” and “Autobiography,” painter Howardena Pindell explored themes _____ healing, self-discovery, and memory by cutting and sewing back together pieces of canvas and inserting personal artifacts, such as postcards, into some of the paintings.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A. of
- B. of,
- C. of—
- D. of:

ID: 8b69a05e Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation between a preposition and its complement. No punctuation is needed between the preposition “of” and its complement, the noun phrase “healing, self-discovery, and memory.”

Choice B is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between a preposition and its complement. Choice C is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between a preposition and its complement. Choice D is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between a preposition and its complement.

Question Difficulty: Easy

Question ID 39e532a3

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT/NMSQT & PSAT 10	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	

ID: 39e532a3

In 1953, a fellow performer tripped on legendary jazz musician Dizzy Gillespie’s trumpet, bending its bell upward. When Gillespie tested the damaged instrument, he realized that he _____ sound of a bent bell over that of a straight one.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A. preferred; the
- B. preferred the
- C. preferred, the
- D. preferred. The

ID: 39e532a3 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation use between a verb and its object. No punctuation is needed between the verb "preferred" and its object "the sound of a bent bell over that of a straight one." The object helps complete the idea of the verb—in this case, it explains what type of sound Gillespie preferred—and any punctuation between the two results in an ungrammatical sentence.

Choice A is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the verb and its object. Choice C is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the verb and its object. Choice D is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the verb and its object.

Question Difficulty: Easy

Question ID 9ac1672b

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT/NMSQT & PSAT 10	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	

ID: 9ac1672b

Before the Erie Canal was completed in 1825, transporting goods by wagon between New York City and the Midwest took up to forty-five days and cost one hundred dollars per ton. By linking the Hudson River to Lake _____ canal reduced transport time to nine days and cut costs to six dollars per ton.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A. Erie; the
- B. Erie (the
- C. Erie, the
- D. Erie: the

ID: 9ac1672b Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation between a supplementary phrase and a main clause. This choice correctly uses a comma to mark the boundary between the introductory supplementary phrase (“By linking the Hudson River to Lake Erie”), which identifies how the canal reduced transport time, and the main clause (“the canal reduced transport time to nine days and cut costs to six dollars per ton”).

Choice A is incorrect because a semicolon can’t be used in this way to mark the boundary between a supplementary phrase (“By... Erie”) and the main clause (“the canal...ton”). Choice B is incorrect because an open parenthesis can’t be used in this way to mark the boundary between a supplementary phrase (“By...Erie”) and the main clause (“the canal...ton”). Choice D is incorrect because a colon can’t be used in this way to mark the boundary between an introductory supplementary phrase (“By...Erie”) and the main clause (“the canal...ton”).

Question Difficulty: Easy

Question ID 57ec4990

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT/NMSQT & PSAT 10	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Boundaries	

ID: 57ec4990

Louise Bennett (1919–2006), also known as “Miss Lou,” was an influential Jamaican poet and folklorist. Her innovative poems _____ the use of Jamaican Creole (a spoken language) in literature.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A. popularized;
- B. popularized,
- C. popularized
- D. popularized:

ID: 57ec4990 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation use between a verb and an object. No punctuation is needed between the verb "popularized" and its object "the use of Jamaican Creole." The object helps complete the idea of the verb—in this case, it explains what Louise Bennett popularized—and any punctuation between the two results in an ungrammatical sentence.

Choice A is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the verb and its object. Choice B is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the verb and its object. Choice D is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the verb and its object.

Question Difficulty: Easy