

Question ID a9c4df1c

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

ID: a9c4df1c

The short story “Rogue Enchantments” by Isabel Ibañez appears in *Reclaim the _____* anthology of fantasy and science fiction written by authors of Latin American descent.

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

- A. *Stars*. An
- B. *Stars*, while an
- C. *Stars* an
- D. *Stars*, an

ID: a9c4df1c Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of punctuation within a sentence. This choice correctly uses a comma to mark the boundary between the main clause ("The short...*Stars*") and the supplementary element ("an anthology...descent") that provides additional information about what *Reclaim the Stars* is.

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a rhetorically unacceptable sentence fragment beginning with "an anthology." Choice B is incorrect. Joining the main clause and the following supplementary element with the conjunction "while" results in a confusing and ungrammatical sentence. Choice C is incorrect because it fails to mark the boundary between the main clause and the supplementary element with appropriate punctuation.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 5cb5f123

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

ID: 5cb5f123

Nine months before Rosa Parks made history by refusing to comply with the segregated seating policy on a Montgomery, Alabama, bus, a fifteen-year-old Montgomery girl named Claudette Colvin was arrested for the same _____ to some historians, Colvin’s arrest led to Parks’s action and eventually to the desegregation of Montgomery’s bus system.

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

- A. offense. According
- B. offense, according
- C. offense according
- D. offense and according

ID: 5cb5f123 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. “Nine months...offense” and “according to...system” are both independent clauses. Separating them with a period and turning them into their own sentences is the only grammatically correct choice among the provided options.

Choice B is incorrect. This choice results in a comma splice error, which is a punctuation error that occurs when two independent clauses are joined by only a comma. “Nine months...offense” and “according to...system” are both independent clauses, so they need to be either joined by a semicolon, joined by a comma and a coordinating conjunction, or separated by a period. Choice C is incorrect. This choice results in a run-on sentence, which occurs when two independent clauses are joined without punctuation. “Nine months...offense” and “according to...system” are both independent clauses, so they need to be either joined by a semicolon, joined by a comma and a coordinating conjunction, or separated by a period. Choice D is incorrect. This choice results in a run-on sentence, which occurs when two independent clauses are joined without punctuation. “Nine months...offense” and “according to...system” are independent clauses, so we would need to put a comma before the coordinating conjunction “and” to join them properly.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 7b6fb64a

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

ID: 7b6fb64a

According to the original text of the US Constitution, written in 1787, the presidential candidate receiving the second-most Electoral College votes becomes vice president. The 12th amendment, ratified in _____ separated the elections for the two offices.

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

- A. 1804—
- B. 1804,
- C. 1804:
- D. 1804

ID: 7b6fb64a Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of punctuation within a sentence. The comma after “1804” pairs with the comma after “amendment” to separate the supplementary element “ratified in 1804” from the rest of the sentence. This supplementary element functions to provide additional information on the term “12th amendment,” and the pair of commas indicates that this element could be removed without affecting the grammatical coherence of the sentence.

Choice A is incorrect because a dash can’t be paired with a comma in this way to separate the supplementary element from the rest of the sentence. Choice C is incorrect because a colon can’t be paired with a comma in this way to separate the supplementary element from the rest of the sentence. Choice D is incorrect because it fails to use appropriate punctuation to separate the supplemental element from the rest of the sentence.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 5e38838f

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

ID: 5e38838f

Nigerian American artist Toyin Ojih Odutola uses black-ink pens to create highly detailed drawings of human figures. Her portrait of novelist Zadie _____ is displayed in the National Portrait Gallery in London.

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

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

ID: 5e38838f Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation use between a subject and a verb. No punctuation is needed when, as in this case, a subject ("Her portrait of novelist Zadie Smith") is immediately followed by a main verb ("is displayed").

Choice A is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the subject and the verb. Choice B 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: Medium

Question ID 37a443fc

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

ID: 37a443fc

In 2010, archaeologist Noel Hidalgo Tan was visiting the twelfth-century temple of Angkor Wat in Cambodia when he noticed markings of red paint on the temple _____. the help of digital imaging techniques, he discovered the markings to be part of an elaborate mural containing over 200 paintings.

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

- A. walls, with
- B. walls with
- C. walls so with
- D. walls. With

ID: 37a443fc Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation use between sentences. In this choice, the period after “walls” is used correctly to mark the boundary between the first sentence (“In...walls”) and the second sentence (“With... techniques”), which starts with a supplementary phrase.

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. A comma can’t be used in this way to mark the boundary between sentences. Choice B is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The sentences (“In...walls” and “with...paintings”) are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction. Choice C is incorrect. Without a comma preceding it, the conjunction “so” can’t be used in this way to join sentences.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID d7d03f09

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

ID: d7d03f09

In early 1700s England, it was legal for shops to sell prints of artists’ engravings without the artists’ permission. This changed in 1735 with the passage of the Engravers’ Copyright ____ gave engravers control over the distribution and sale of all prints made from their designs.

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

- A. Act, which
- B. Act; which
- C. Act. Which
- D. Act

ID: d7d03f09 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of punctuation between a main clause and a supplementary element. In this choice, the comma is used correctly to mark the boundary between the main clause ("This...Act") and the supplementary relative clause ("which...designs") that provides additional information about the Engravers’ Copyright Act.

Choice B is incorrect because a semicolon can’t be used in this way to mark the boundary between a main clause and a supplementary relative clause. A semicolon is conventionally used to join two main clauses, and "which...designs" isn’t a main clause. Choice C is incorrect because it results in a rhetorically unacceptable sentence fragment. Choice D is incorrect. Joining the main clause and the additional information about the Engravers’ Copyright Act ("gave...designs") without the comma and relative pronoun "which" results in a confusing and ungrammatical sentence.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 644f9bc2

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

ID: 644f9bc2

About 70,000 meteorites have been found on Earth. Although most meteorites are fragments of _____ hundred have been identified as being from the Moon or Mars.

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

- A. asteroids. Several
- B. asteroids, several
- C. asteroids; several
- D. asteroids: several

ID: 644f9bc2 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. This choice uses a comma to correctly separate the dependent clause "although...asteroids" from the independent clause "several hundred have been...Mars."

Choice A is incorrect. This choice results in a sentence fragment. "Although...asteroids" is a dependent clause. It can't stand on its own as a sentence, which means it can't end in a period. Choice C is incorrect. This choice results in a punctuation error. "Although...asteroids" is a dependent clause and can't be joined to the independent clause "several hundred have been...Mars" with a semicolon. A semicolon can only join two independent clauses. Choice D is incorrect. This choice creates a punctuation error. A colon can only come after an independent clause, but "although...asteroids" is a dependent clause.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID a832ed56

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

ID: a832ed56

In the 1980s, Latino filmmakers Luis Valdez, Gregory Nava, and Ramón Menéndez helped expand on-screen representation of Latino Americans with the films *Zoot Suit* _____ and *Stand and Deliver* (1988), respectively.

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

- A. (1981) *El Norte* (1983),
- B. (1981)—*El Norte* (1983)—
- C. (1981), *El Norte* (1983),
- D. (1981) *El Norte* (1983)

ID: a832ed56 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is the punctuation of items in a series. The comma after “(1981)” is used conventionally to separate the first and second items in the series, and the comma after “(1983)” is used conventionally to separate the second and third items in the series.

Choice A is incorrect because it fails to use appropriate punctuation to separate the first and second items in the series. Choice B is incorrect because dashes can’t be used in this way to separate items in a simple series. Choice D is incorrect because it fails to use appropriate punctuation to separate the items in the series.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID f304e426

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

ID: f304e426

The Mesoamerican city of Teotihuacan featured a uniquely egalitarian urban housing infrastructure. Built between the first and seventh centuries CE, Teotihuacan housed its residents (as many as 200,000, by some _____ in a complex of comfortable apartments of comparable size.

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

- A. estimates)
- B. estimates),
- C. estimates—
- D. estimates

ID: f304e426 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of punctuation within a sentence. This choice correctly completes the parenthetical element "as many as 200,000, by some estimates" with a closing parenthesis, pairing with the opening parenthesis that appears earlier in the sentence. This parenthetical element functions to specify the number of residents, and the use of parentheses indicates that this element could be removed without affecting the grammatical coherence of the sentence.

Choice B is incorrect. While this choice completes the parenthetical element with a closing parenthesis, no comma is needed before the prepositional phrases ("in...size") that provide essential information about where the residents were housed. Choice C is incorrect because a dash can't be paired with an opening parenthesis in this way to separate the parenthetical element from the rest of the sentence. Choice D is incorrect because it doesn't close the parenthetical element that was opened earlier in the sentence.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 0304eafe

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

ID: 0304eafe

Typically, underlines, scribbles, and notes left in the margins by a former owner lower a book’s _____ when the former owner is a famous poet like Walt Whitman, such markings, known as marginalia, can be a gold mine to literary scholars.

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

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

ID: 0304eafe Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is the coordination of independent clauses within a sentence. An independent clause is a phrase containing a subject and a verb that can stand on its own as a sentence. This choice uses a comma and the coordinating conjunction “but” to join the first independent clause (“underlines...lower a book’s value”) and the second independent clause (“such markings...can be a gold mine to scholars”) to create a compound sentence.

Choice B is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The two independent clauses are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction. Choice C is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. A comma can’t be used in this way to mark the boundary between two independent clauses. Choice D is incorrect because a comma is needed to mark the boundary between two coordinated independent clauses.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 87edfd83

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

ID: 87edfd83

In 2017, artists Isabel and Ruben Toledo redesigned the costumes and sets for The Miami City Ballet’s production of *The _____* to reviewers, the Toledos’ designs helped infuse the production with elements of Miami’s Latin American culture.

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

- A. *Nutcracker* according,
- B. *Nutcracker*, according
- C. *Nutcracker* according
- D. *Nutcracker*. According

ID: 87edfd83 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation use between sentences. In this choice, the period is used correctly to mark the boundary between one sentence (“In 2017...*Nutcracker*”) and another (“According...culture”). The supplementary element “according to reviewers” modifies the main clause of the second sentence (“the Toledos’...culture”).

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The sentences are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction. Furthermore, no punctuation is needed within the supplementary element “according to reviewers.” Choice B is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. A comma can’t be used in this way to mark the boundary between sentences. Choice C is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The sentences are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 9078c2c4

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

ID: 9078c2c4

The fine, powdery substance that covers the Moon’s surface is called regolith. Because regolith is both readily available and high in oxygen _____ scientists have wondered whether it could be used as a potential source of oxygen for future lunar settlements.

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

- A. content and
- B. content,
- C. content
- D. content, and

ID: 9078c2c4 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation between a subordinate clause and a main clause. This choice correctly uses a comma to mark the boundary between the subordinate clause (“Because...content”) and the main clause (“scientists...settlements”).

Choice A is incorrect. Joining the subordinate clause (“Because...content”) and the clause that follows (“scientists...settlements”) with the conjunction “and” results in an ungrammatical sentence that lacks a main clause. Choice C is incorrect because it fails to mark the boundary between the subordinate clause and the main clause with appropriate punctuation. Choice D is incorrect. Joining the subordinate clause (“Because...content”) and the clause that follows (“scientists...settlements”) with a comma and the conjunction “and” results in an ungrammatical sentence that lacks a main clause.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID b5c0a451

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

ID: b5c0a451

While many video game creators strive to make their graphics ever more _____ others look to the past, developing titles with visuals inspired by the “8-bit” games of the 1980s and 1990s. (The term “8-bit” refers to a console whose processor could only handle eight bits of data at once.)

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

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

ID: b5c0a451 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation between a subordinate clause and a main clause. This choice correctly uses a comma to mark the boundary between the subordinate clause (“While...lifelike”) and the main clause (“others look to the past”).

Choice A is incorrect because it results in an incomplete sentence with no main clause. Choice B is incorrect because it fails to mark the boundary between the subordinate clause (“While...lifelike”) and the main clause (“others...past”). Choice D is incorrect because it results in an incomplete sentence with no main clause.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 0c33d831

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

ID: 0c33d831

Customers who are satisfied with how a company resolves a service issue may regard that company more positively than they would if no such issue had occurred. This idea is known as the service recovery _____ research suggests that it has important implications for customer loyalty and retention.

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

- A. paradox,
- B. paradox
- C. paradox, and
- D. paradox and,

ID: 0c33d831 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C 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 "and" to join the first main clause ("This idea...paradox") and the second main clause ("research...retention").

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 it results in a run-on sentence. The two main clauses are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction. Choice D is incorrect because when coordinating two longer main clauses such as these, it's conventional to use a comma before the coordinating conjunction, not after it.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID cadbdfbb

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

ID: cadbdfbb

While constructing the Limyra Bridge, ancient Roman builders relied on temporary wooden beams to support the stone and brick structure. These temporary supports, a construction system known as _____ were removed when the bridge was completed.

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

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

ID: cadbdfbb Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of punctuation within a sentence. The comma after "falsework" pairs with the comma after "supports" to separate the supplementary element "a construction system known as falsework" from the rest of the sentence. This supplementary element functions to clarify the term "these temporary supports," and the pair of commas indicates that this element could be removed without affecting the grammatical coherence of the sentence.

Choice A is incorrect because a semicolon can't be paired with a comma in this way to separate the supplementary element from the rest of the sentence. Choice B is incorrect because it fails to use appropriate punctuation to separate the supplemental element from the rest of the sentence. Choice D is incorrect because a colon can't be paired with a comma in this way to separate the supplementary element from the rest of the sentence.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 9a4576fb

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

ID: 9a4576fb

In 2000, Nora de Hoyos Comstock, herself an owner of a successful consulting firm, sought to increase Latina representation in corporate _____. founded Las Comadres para las Americas, an international community that for over two decades has served as a resource and information network for Latina business professionals.

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

- A. settings she
- B. settings, she
- C. settings and she
- D. settings. She

ID: 9a4576fb Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. It appropriately uses a period to mark the end of one independent clause ("In 2000...settings") and the start of another ("She founded...professionals").

Choice A is incorrect. This choice results in a run-on sentence error. Both the clause before the blank ("In 2000...settings") and the clause after the blank ("she...professionals") are independent clauses, so they need to be separated by punctuation. Choice B is incorrect. This choice results in a comma splice error. It incorrectly joins two independent clauses with just a comma. Linking two independent clauses with a comma also requires the use of a coordinating conjunction (like *for*, *and*, *nor*, *but*, *or*, *yet*, or *so*). Choice C is incorrect. This choice results in a run-on sentence, an error caused when two independent clauses are joined without punctuation or appropriate conjunctions. Since both the clause before the blank ("In 2000...settings") and the clause after the blank ("she...professionals") are independent, a comma would be required in addition to the coordinating conjunction "and."

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 27945061

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

ID: 27945061

After the United Kingdom began rolling out taxes equivalent to a few cents on single-use plastic grocery bags in 2011, plastic-bag consumption decreased by up to ninety _____ taxes are subject to what economists call the “rebound effect”: as the change became normalized, plastic-bag use started to creep back up.

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

- A. percent, such
- B. percent and such
- C. percent. Such
- D. percent such

ID: 27945061 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation use between sentences. In this choice, the period after “percent” is used correctly to mark the boundary between one sentence (“After...percent”) and another (“Such...up”).

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. A comma can’t be used in this way to mark the boundary between sentences. Choice B is incorrect. Without a comma preceding it, the conjunction “and” can’t be used in this way to join sentences. Choice D is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The sentences (“After...percent” and “Such...up”) are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 0ff2eca9

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

ID: 0ff2eca9

By analyzing the level of radioactive decay within a fossil specimen, scientists can establish the age of that fossil with a high degree of precision. When radioactive elements aren't present, scientists turn to _____ analysis of Earth's sediment layers (strata) —to estimate how old a fossil is based on the age of the strata in which the fossil is found.

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

- A. stratigraphy—the
- B. stratigraphy (the
- C. stratigraphy: the
- D. stratigraphy, the

ID: 0ff2eca9 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of punctuation within a sentence. The dash after "stratigraphy" pairs with the dash after "(strata)" to separate the supplementary element "the analysis of Earth's sediment layers (strata)" from the rest of the sentence. This supplementary element functions to define the term "stratigraphy," and the pair of dashes indicates that this element could be removed without affecting the grammatical coherence of the sentence.

Choice B is incorrect because a parenthesis can't be paired with a dash in this way to separate the supplementary element from the rest of the sentence. Choice C is incorrect because a colon can't be paired with a dash in this way to separate the supplementary element from the rest of the sentence. Choice D is incorrect because a comma can't be paired with a dash in this way to separate the supplementary element from the rest of the sentence.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID acc431b6

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

ID: acc431b6

In her analysis of Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth* (1905), scholar Candace Waid observes that the novel depicts the upper classes of New York society as “consumed by the appetite of a soulless _____ an apt assessment given that *The House of Mirth* is set during the Gilded Age, a period marked by rapid industrialization, economic greed, and widening wealth disparities.

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

- A. materialism”; and
- B. materialism” and
- C. materialism,”
- D. materialism”

ID: acc431b6 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation between a main clause and a supplementary noun phrase. This choice correctly uses a comma to mark the boundary between the main clause (“scholar...materialism”) and the supplementary noun phrase (“an apt assessment”) that describes Waid’s observation about how *The House of Mirth* depicts the upper classes of New York society.

Choice A is incorrect because a semicolon and the conjunction “and” can’t be used in this way to mark the boundary between a main clause and a supplementary noun phrase. Choice B is incorrect. Joining the main clause (“scholar...materialism”) and the following noun phrase with the conjunction “and” results in a confusing and illogical sentence that suggests that the novel depicts the upper classes of New York society as “an apt assessment,” which doesn’t make sense in this context. Choice D is incorrect because it fails to mark the boundary between the main clause and the supplementary noun phrase with appropriate punctuation.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 01d50ee8

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

ID: 01d50ee8

The city of Pompeii, which was buried in ash following the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 CE, continues to be studied by archaeologists. Unfortunately, as _____ attest, archaeological excavations have disrupted ash deposits at the site, causing valuable information about the eruption to be lost.

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

- A. researchers, Roberto Scandone and Christopher Kilburn,
- B. researchers, Roberto Scandone and Christopher Kilburn
- C. researchers Roberto Scandone and Christopher Kilburn
- D. researchers Roberto Scandone, and Christopher Kilburn

ID: 01d50ee8 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is the punctuation of a restrictive coordinated noun phrase. No punctuation is needed within or around the coordinated noun phrase “researchers Roberto Scandone and Christopher Kilburn” because it would create an illogical separation between the noun “researchers” and the coordinated noun phrase “Roberto Scandone and Christopher Kilburn.”

Choice A is incorrect because no punctuation is needed. Placing a pair of commas around the coordinated noun phrase “Roberto Scandone and Christopher Kilburn” creates an illogical separation between the noun “researchers” and the aforementioned coordinated noun phrase. In this case, it illogically suggests that researchers in general bear the specific names Roberto Scandone and Christopher Kilburn. Choice B is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the noun “researchers” and the coordinated noun phrase “Roberto Scandone and Christopher Kilburn.” Choice D is incorrect because no punctuation is needed within the coordinated noun phrase “Roberto Scandone and Christopher Kilburn.”

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 436142eb

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
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ID: 436142eb

As British scientist Peter Whibberley has observed, “the Earth is not a very good timekeeper.” Earth’s slightly irregular rotation rate means that measurements of time must be periodically adjusted. Specifically, an extra “leap second” (the 86,401st second of the day) is _____ time based on the planet’s rotation lags a full nine-tenths of a second behind time kept by precise atomic clocks.

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

- A. added, whenever
- B. added; whenever
- C. added. Whenever
- D. added whenever

ID: 436142eb Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation between a verb and a preposition. When, as in this case, a verb (“is added”) is immediately followed by a preposition (“whenever”), no punctuation is needed.

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

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 2c1eaa50

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

ID: 2c1eaa50

Horsepower is a unit of measurement used to determine how much power a vehicle produces. The measurement is based on how much and how quickly weight can be _____. One unit of mechanical horsepower is equivalent to the amount of power it takes to lift 550 pounds one foot off the ground in one second.

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

- A. moved, for example,
- B. moved,
- C. moved; for example,
- D. moved

ID: 2c1eaa50 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of punctuation within a sentence. This choice uses a semicolon in a conventional way to join the first main clause ("The measurement...moved") and the second main clause ("for example...second").

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. Without a coordinating conjunction, a comma can't be used in this way to join the two main clauses ("The measurement...moved" and "for example...second"). Choice B 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 the two main clauses ("The measurement...moved" and "one unit...second"). Choice D is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The two main clauses ("The measurement...moved" and "one unit...second") are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 92b2bf72

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

ID: 92b2bf72

Archaeologists have estimated that the pre-Columbian Native American city of Cahokia, located across the Mississippi River from modern-day St. Louis, Missouri, had as many as 20,000 inhabitants in the year 1150 _____ it one of the largest cities in North America at the time.

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

- A. CE making
- B. CE. Making
- C. CE, making
- D. CE; making

ID: 92b2bf72 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The phrase “making...at the time” provides additional information about Cahokia that’s not required for the sentence to make sense or function grammatically. As a nonessential supplement, this phrase should be separated from the rest of the sentence with a comma.

Choice A is incorrect. This choice results in a run-on sentence. The nonessential descriptive aside “making...at the time” needs to be separated from the rest of the sentence with a comma. Choice B is incorrect. This choice results in a sentence fragment. “Making...at the time” doesn’t have a subject and can’t stand on its own as a sentence. Thus, it can’t be separated from the rest of the sentence with a period. Choice D is incorrect. This choice results in a punctuation error. “Making...at the time” doesn’t have a subject and can’t stand on its own as an independent clause. Since a semicolon can only link two independent clauses, using one here creates an error.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 2e746f47

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

ID: 2e746f47

It is generally true that technological change is a linear process, in which once-useful technologies are replaced by new and better _____ the reawakening of interest in the steam engine (from advocates of carbon-neutral rail travel) reminds us that ostensibly obsolete technologies may be brought back into service to address society’s changing needs.

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

- A. ones, even so;
- B. ones even so,
- C. ones; even so,
- D. ones, even so,

ID: 2e746f47 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is the coordination of main clauses within a sentence. This choice uses a semicolon in a conventional way to join the first main clause (“It is...ones”) and the second main clause (“even so...needs”). Furthermore, the placement of the semicolon after “ones” indicates that the supplementary phrase “even so” modifies the following clause (“the reawakening...needs”), resulting in the most logical and grammatically complete sentence. With this punctuation, the sentence logically indicates that the recent interest in an old technology like steam engines is despite the fact that technological change typically seeks out new technologies.

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a confusing and illogical sentence. Placing the semicolon after “so” indicates that the supplementary element “even so” modifies the first clause of the sentence, which doesn’t make sense in this context. Choice B is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. It fails to mark the boundary between the two main clauses with appropriate punctuation. 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 the two main clauses of the sentence.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID f7ad3231

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

ID: f7ad3231

The intense pressure found in the deep ocean can affect the structure of proteins in fish’s cells, distorting the proteins’ shape. The chemical trimethylamine N-oxide (TMAO) counters this effect, ensuring that proteins retain their original _____ is found in high concentrations in the cells of the deepest-dwelling fish.

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

- A. configurations. TMAO
- B. configurations TMAO
- C. configurations, TMAO
- D. configurations and TMAO

ID: f7ad3231 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation use between sentences. In this choice, the period after “configurations” is used correctly to mark the boundary between one sentence (“The intense...configurations”) and another (“TMAO...fish”). The supplementary phrase (“ensuring...configurations”) modifies the main clause of the first sentence (“The chemical...effect”), and “TMAO” is the subject of the second sentence.

Choice B is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The sentences (“The intense...configurations” and “TMAO...fish”) are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction. Choice C is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. A comma can’t be used in this way to mark the boundary between sentences. Choice D is incorrect. Without a comma preceding it, the conjunction “and” can’t be used in this way to join sentences.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 9808e50c

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

ID: 9808e50c

The Lion Light system, developed by Kenyan inventor Richard Turere, consists of LED lights installed around the perimeter of livestock pastures. Powered with _____ the blinking LEDs keep lions away at night, thus protecting the livestock without risking harm to the endangered lions.

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

- A. energy collected, by solar panels, during the day
- B. energy collected by solar panels during the day
- C. energy collected by solar panels during the day,
- D. energy, collected by solar panels during the day,

ID: 9808e50c 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 supplementary phrase (“powered...day”), which describes how the LEDs are powered, and the main clause (“the blinking...night”).

Choice A is incorrect because it fails to mark the boundary between the supplementary phrase and the main clause with appropriate punctuation. Furthermore, placing commas around the phrase “by solar panels” suggests that it could be removed without affecting the coherence of the sentence, which isn’t the case. Choice B is incorrect because it fails to mark the boundary between the supplementary phrase and the main clause with appropriate punctuation. Choice D is incorrect. Placing commas around the phrase “collected by solar panels during the day” suggests that it could be removed without affecting the coherence of the sentence, which isn’t the case.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID bb1b7e79

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

ID: bb1b7e79

Choreographers George Balanchine and Martha Graham both contributed sections to the dance piece *Episodes*, which premiered at New York’s City Center of Music and Drama in 1959. This cross-genre collaboration brought together the distinct features of Balanchine’s neoclassical ballet and Graham’s modern _____ the stylistic diversity and creative innovation within the dance world.

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

- A. dance, it showcased
- B. dance. Which showcased
- C. dance, showcasing
- D. dance. Showcasing

ID: bb1b7e79 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The conventions being tested are the use of punctuation and verb forms within a sentence. This choice correctly uses a comma to mark the boundary between the main clause (“This...dance”) and the supplementary element (“showcasing...world”) that provides additional information about what the collaboration accomplished. Moreover, the nonfinite present participle “showcasing” is used correctly to form a supplementary element that modifies the main clause (“this...dance”), describing what the collaboration demonstrated about stylistic diversity and creative innovation in the dance world.

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. Adding the subject “it” and the finite verb “showcased” results in a second main clause (“it...world”), and a comma can’t be used in this way to join two main clauses. Choice B is incorrect because it results in a rhetorically unacceptable sentence fragment beginning with “which.” Choice D is incorrect because it results in a rhetorically unacceptable sentence fragment beginning with “showcasing.”

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID a6516f88

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

ID: a6516f88

In a 2023 study, researchers documented a fascinating behavior in the aquatic plant *Elodea densa*. When exposed to low levels of light, the plant’s _____ the cellular organs that generate energy from light—reshuffled to form a tightly packed, glass-like surface ideal for collecting more light.

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

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

ID: a6516f88 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is the punctuation of a supplementary element within a sentence. The dash after "chloroplasts" pairs with the dash after "from light" to separate the supplementary element "the cellular organs that generate energy from light" from the rest of the sentence. This supplementary element functions to define the term "chloroplasts," and the pair of dashes indicates that this element could be removed without affecting the grammatical coherence of the sentence.

Choice A is incorrect because it fails to use appropriate punctuation to separate the supplementary element from the rest of the sentence. Choice B is incorrect because a semicolon can’t be paired with a dash in this way to separate the supplementary element from the rest of the sentence. Choice C is incorrect because a comma can’t be paired with a dash in this way to separate the supplementary element from the rest of the sentence.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 42f19284

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

ID: 42f19284

Santa Clara Pueblo artist Roxanne Swentzell's sculpture *Mud Woman Rolls On* consists of five human figures made of clay and plant fiber and arranged in descending size; each figure holds the smaller one in front of it. The arrangement of the figures, according to _____ represents her idea that “we all come from the Earth, generation after generation.”

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

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

ID: 42f19284 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The phrase “according to Swentzell” is an aside that interrupts the flow of the sentence, so it needs to be separated from the sentence with a pair of matching punctuation marks: two commas, two dashes, or a pair of parentheses. We already have a comma before “according,” so we must add a comma after “Swentzell.” .

Choice A is incorrect. This choice creates a punctuation error. The phrase “according to Swentzell” is an aside that interrupts the flow of the sentence, so it needs to be separated from the sentence with a pair of matching punctuation marks: one before and one after the phrase. Choice C is incorrect. This choice creates a punctuation error. “The arrangement of the figures, according to Swentzell” is not an independent clause, so it can’t come before a colon. Choice D is incorrect. This choice creates a punctuation error. The phrase “according to Swentzell” is an aside that interrupts the flow of the sentence, so it needs to be separated from the sentence with a pair of matching punctuation marks. We already have a comma at the beginning, so we have to use another comma here to match. We can’t just switch to a dash! .

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID e03330c9

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

ID: e03330c9

Psychophysicist Howard Moskowitz was hired by a soda company to determine how much artificial sweetener _____. After conducting consumer taste tests, he found that no such ideal existed: participants expressed a wide range of preferences for different blends of sweetener, carbonization, and flavoring.

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

- A. do most people prefer in a diet drink?
- B. do most people prefer in a diet drink.
- C. most people prefer in a diet drink?
- D. most people prefer in a diet drink.

ID: e03330c9 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. This sentence is a statement: “Moskowitz was hired by a soda company to determine how much artificial sweetener most people prefer in a diet drink.” So a period is the most appropriate punctuation mark.

Choice A is incorrect. This doesn’t complete the text in a way that conforms to the conventions of Standard English. This sentence is not a question—it’s a statement. So a question mark is not the appropriate punctuation. Choice B is incorrect. This doesn’t complete the text in a way that conforms to the conventions of Standard English. We already have the verbs “was hired... to determine” in this sentence. The verb “do” is not needed and results in a confusing, ungrammatical sentence. Choice C is incorrect. This doesn’t complete the text in a way that conforms to the conventions of Standard English. This sentence is not a question—it’s a statement. So a question mark is not the appropriate punctuation.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID e74902fd

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

ID: e74902fd

Emperor Ashoka ruled the Maurya Empire in South Asia from roughly 270 to 232 BCE. He is known for enforcing a moral code called the Law of Piety, which established the sanctity of animal _____ the just treatment of the elderly, and the abolition of the slave trade.

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

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

ID: e74902fd Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. Notice that "the sanctity of animal life" is the first item in a list of three things. We must use a comma to separate the first two items in the list, just as a comma is used to separate "the just treatment of the elderly" and "the abolition of the slave trade."

Choice A is incorrect. This choice creates a punctuation error. Notice that "the sanctity of animal life" is the first item in a list of three things. To appropriately format the list, we need punctuation to separate each item. Choice B is incorrect. This choice creates a punctuation error. Notice that "the sanctity of animal life" is the first item in a list of three things. While semicolons are sometimes used to separate list items, this list uses commas to separate the other list items, and lists must use the same punctuation throughout. Choice C is incorrect. This choice creates a punctuation error. Notice that "the sanctity of animal life" is the first item in a list of three things. While colons can be used to introduce lists, they can't be used to separate items within a list.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 4f0be608

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

ID: 4f0be608

While one requires oxygen and one does _____ and anaerobic respiration are both forms of cellular respiration—that is, they are processes by which cells break down glucose to use as energy.

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

- A. not aerobic
- B. not. Aerobic
- C. not, aerobic
- D. not; aerobic

ID: 4f0be608 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. A comma is the appropriate way to link the dependent clause “While...not” and the independent clause that follows.

Choice A is incorrect. This choice creates a run-on sentence error. “While...not” is a dependent clause, which must be separated from the independent clause that follows with some sort of punctuation. Choice B is incorrect. This choice creates a sentence fragment. “While one requires oxygen and one does not” isn’t an independent clause, so it can’t stand alone as a complete sentence. Choice D is incorrect. This choice creates a punctuation error. “While one requires oxygen and one does not” isn’t an independent clause, so it can’t be linked to the clause that follows with a semicolon.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 68a95699

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

ID: 68a95699

When particles are suspended in liquid (like pollen in a water glass), they will zigzag randomly through the liquid and collide with one another in perpetuity. This type of random, continuous _____ is known as Brownian motion, can be observed throughout the natural world.

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

- A. movement: which
- B. movement, which
- C. movement which
- D. movement. Which

ID: 68a95699 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. This choice correctly uses commas to set off the nonessential relative clause "which is known as Brownian motion" that provides extra information about the "random, continuous movement" that isn't necessary for the function of the sentence.

Choice A is incorrect. This choice results in a punctuation error. The relative clause "which is known as Brownian motion" is a nonessential supplement. Nonessential supplements need to be set apart from the rest of the sentence with a pair of commas, dashes, or parentheses, so we can't use a colon here. Also, notice that colons can only come after an independent clause, which isn't the case here. Choice C is incorrect. This choice results in a punctuation error. The relative clause "which is known as Brownian motion" is a nonessential supplement, so it should be separated from the rest of the sentence by a pair of matching punctuation marks. We already have a comma after "motion," so we need to add a comma before "which." This choice is missing that comma. Choice D is incorrect. This choice results in a sentence fragment. "This type of random, continuous movement" is not an independent clause and can't stand alone as a full sentence, so we can't put a period here.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID b5c65155

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

ID: b5c65155

According to Naomi Nakayama of the University of Edinburgh, the reason seeds from a dying dandelion appear to float in the air while _____ is that their porous plumes enhance drag, allowing the seeds to stay airborne long enough for the wind to disperse them throughout the surrounding area.

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

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

ID: b5c65155 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The word “falling” occurs in the middle of a clause and isn’t part of a supplement, so we don’t need any punctuation after it. We can see this more clearly if we simplify the rest of the sentence: “The reason seeds appear to float while falling is that their plumes enhance drag.” .

Choice A is incorrect. This doesn’t complete the text in a way that conforms to the conventions of Standard English. The word “falling” occurs in the middle of a clause and isn’t part of a supplement, so we don’t need any punctuation after it. We can see this more clearly if we simplify the sentence: “The reason seeds appear to float while falling is that their plumes enhance drag.” .

Choice B is incorrect. This doesn’t complete the text in a way that conforms to the conventions of Standard English. The word “falling” occurs in the middle of a clause and isn’t part of a supplement, so we don’t need any punctuation after it. We can see this more clearly if we simplify the sentence: “The reason seeds appear to float while falling is that their plumes enhance drag.” .

Choice C is incorrect. This doesn’t complete the text in a way that conforms to the conventions of Standard English. The word “falling” occurs in the middle of a clause and isn’t part of a supplement, so we don’t need any punctuation after it. We can see this more clearly if we simplify the sentence: “The reason seeds appear to float while falling is that their plumes enhance drag.” .

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 0002224a

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

ID: 0002224a

Polyphenols are organic compounds _____ among their many roles, provide pigment that helps protect plants against ultraviolet radiation from sunlight.

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

- A. that—
- B. that;
- C. that,
- D. that:

ID: 0002224a Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is the punctuation of a supplementary element within a sentence. The comma after “that” pairs with the comma after “roles” to separate the supplementary element “among their many roles” from the rest of the sentence. This supplementary element functions to clarify that polyphenols have many roles, and the pair of commas indicates that this element could be removed without affecting the grammatical coherence of the sentence.

Choice A is incorrect because a dash can’t be paired with a comma to separate the supplementary element from the rest of the sentence. Choice B is incorrect because a semicolon can’t be paired with a comma to separate the supplementary element from the rest of the sentence. Choice D is incorrect because a colon can’t be paired with a comma to separate the supplementary element from the rest of the sentence.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 9e5df6f9

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

ID: 9e5df6f9

Many Samoans enjoy a sport called kilikiti. This bat-and-ball game was derived from ____ kilikiti differs from cricket in a few key ways.

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

- A. cricket but:
- B. cricket but,
- C. cricket, but
- D. cricket, but,

ID: 9e5df6f9 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is the coordination of main clauses within a sentence. This choice correctly uses a comma before the coordinating conjunction "but" to join the first main clause ("This bat-and-ball game was derived from cricket") and the second main clause ("kilikiti differs from cricket in a few key ways").

Choice A is incorrect. When coordinating two main clauses such as these, it's not conventional to use a colon in this way after the coordinating conjunction. Choice B is incorrect. When coordinating two main clauses such as these, it's not conventional to use a comma in this way after the coordinating conjunction. Choice D is incorrect. When coordinating two main clauses such as these, it's not conventional to use a comma in this way after the coordinating conjunction.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 325a1583

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

ID: 325a1583

Lucía Michel of the University of Chile observed that alkaline soils contain an insoluble form of iron that blueberry plants cannot absorb, thus inhibiting blueberry growth. If these plants were grown in alkaline soil alongside grasses that aid in iron solubilization, _____ Michel was determined to find out.

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

- A. could the blueberries thrive.
- B. the blueberries could thrive.
- C. the blueberries could thrive?
- D. could the blueberries thrive?

ID: 325a1583 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 clause “could the blueberries thrive,” which asks a direct question at the end of the sentence.

Choice A is incorrect because a period can’t be used in this way to punctuate an interrogative clause, such as “could the blueberries thrive,” at the end of a sentence. Choice B is incorrect because the context requires an interrogative clause. The declarative clause “the blueberries could thrive” incorrectly indicates that it was known that the blueberries could thrive in alkaline soil, whereas Michel had yet to find this out. Choice C is incorrect because a question mark can’t be used in this way to punctuate a declarative clause, such as “the blueberries could thrive,” at the end of a sentence.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 16820e55

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

ID: 16820e55

Mia Heavener’s 2019 novel *Under Nushagak Bluff*, which takes place in a mid-twentieth-century rural Alaskan fishing _____ the story of three Yup’ik women who grapple with the rise of commercial fisheries and other changes affecting their community.

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

- A. village. Tells
- B. village tells
- C. village: tells
- D. village, tells

ID: 16820e55 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of punctuation within a sentence. The comma after “village” pairs with the comma after “*Under Nushagak Bluff*” to separate the supplementary relative clause (“which...village”) from the rest of the sentence. This supplementary relative clause functions to provide additional information about the setting of Heavener’s novel, and the pair of commas indicates that this element could be removed without affecting the grammatical coherence of the sentence.

Choice A is incorrect because it results in two rhetorically unacceptable sentence fragments, one beginning with “Mia” and the other beginning with “tells.” Choice B is incorrect because it fails to use appropriate punctuation to separate the supplementary relative clause (“which...village”) from the rest of the sentence. Choice C is incorrect because a colon can’t be paired with a comma in this way to separate the supplementary relative clause (“which...village”) from the rest of the sentence. A colon can be used between two main clauses or a main clause and supplement, but here there is no main clause on either side of the colon.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 01388993

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

ID: 01388993

Cy Twombly, a US painter and sculptor, created many large-scale abstract works, such as his 10-painting series *Fifty Days at Iliam*. In these works, Twombly’s artistic style is exemplified by his use of graffiti-like _____ often incorporate words or phrases from poetry and mythology.

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

- A. scribbles: that
- B. scribbles that
- C. scribbles; that
- D. scribbles. That

ID: 01388993 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use and punctuation of a relative clause. This choice correctly uses the relative pronoun “that” and no punctuation to create an integrated relative clause that provides essential information about the noun phrase (“graffiti-like scribbles”) that it modifies.

Choice A is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the integrated relative clause beginning with “that often” and the noun phrase that it modifies (“graffiti-like scribbles”). Choice C is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the integrated relative clause beginning with “that often” and the noun phrase that it modifies (“graffiti-like scribbles”). Choice D is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the integrated relative clause beginning with “that often” and the noun phrase that it modifies (“graffiti-like scribbles”).

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 389d824d

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

ID: 389d824d

Materials scientist Marie-Agathe Charpagne and her colleagues believed they could improve on the multicomponent alloy NiCoCr, an equal-proportions mixture of nickel (Ni), cobalt (Co), and chromium (Cr), by replacing chromium with ruthenium _____ the alloy that resulted, NiCoRu, turned out to be an unsuitable replacement for NiCoCr.

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

- A. (Ru)
- B. (Ru) but
- C. (Ru),
- D. (Ru), but

ID: 389d824d Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is the coordination of main clauses. This choice correctly uses a comma and the coordinating conjunction “but” to join the first main clause (“Materials...Ru”) and the second main clause (“the alloy...NiCoCr”).

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The two main clauses are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction. 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 comma splice. Without a conjunction following it, a comma can’t be used in this way to join two main clauses.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 42398886

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

ID: 42398886

Dolores Huerta’s advocacy on behalf of farmworkers was rooted in her experience as a schoolteacher in Stockton, California, in the early 1950s. Hoping to help her students and their families outside the _____ Huerta left teaching to start the Stockton chapter of the Community Service Organization, a group focused on the needs of local farmworkers.

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

- A. classroom.
- B. classroom;
- C. classroom,
- D. classroom

ID: 42398886 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of punctuation within a sentence. This choice correctly uses a comma to mark the boundary between the introductory participial phrase ("Hoping...classroom") and the main clause ("Huerta...farmworkers").

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a rhetorically unacceptable sentence fragment beginning with "hoping." Choice B is incorrect because a semicolon can’t be used in this way to mark the boundary between the participial phrase ("Hoping...classroom") and the main clause ("Huerta...farmworkers"). Choice D is incorrect because it fails to mark the boundary between the participial phrase ("Hoping...classroom") and the main clause ("Huerta...farmworkers").

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 95d469a1

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

ID: 95d469a1

In ancient Greece, an Epicurean was a follower of Epicurus, a philosopher whose beliefs revolved around the pursuit of pleasure. Epicurus defined pleasure as “the absence of pain in the body and of trouble in the _____ that all life’s virtues derived from this absence.

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

- A. soul,” positing
- B. soul”: positing
- C. soul”; positing
- D. soul.” Positing

ID: 95d469a1 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation use between a main clause and a participial phrase. This choice correctly uses a comma to mark the boundary between the main clause (“Epicurus...’soul”) and the participial phrase (“positing...absence”) that provides additional information about how Epicurus defined pleasure.

Choice B is incorrect because a colon can’t be used in this way to join a main clause and a participial phrase. Choice C is incorrect because a semicolon can’t be used in this way to join a main clause and a participial phrase. Choice D is incorrect because it results in a rhetorically unacceptable sentence fragment beginning with “positing.”

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 032da5fe

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

ID: 032da5fe

In Puerto Rico, it’s not unusual for a city or town to be known by a nickname that corresponds to one of its notable features, like landscape, climate, famous residents, or chief export. For example, the Puerto Rican municipality of Aibonito is well known for its lush _____ this distinction has earned it the fitting nickname of “the Garden of Puerto Rico.”

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

- A. greenery
- B. greenery,
- C. greenery and
- D. greenery;

ID: 032da5fe Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation between two main clauses. “Aibonito is well known for its lush greenery” and “this distinction has earned it the fitting nickname...” are both complete main clauses; a semicolon correctly joins them while signaling a close logical connection.

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The two main clauses are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction. Choice B 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 C is incorrect. When coordinating two longer main clauses such as these, it’s conventional to use a comma before the coordinating conjunction.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 9c340c1c

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

ID: 9c340c1c

Award-winning cinematographer James Wong Howe was known for his innovative filming techniques. While filming a boxing match for the movie *Body and Soul* _____ Howe had a handheld camera operator wear roller skates. This allowed the operator to move smoothly around actors in a boxing ring, creating an immersive experience for viewers.

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

- A. (1947), and
- B. (1947),
- C. (1947) and
- D. (1947)

ID: 9c340c1c Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation between a supplementary element and a main clause. This choice correctly uses a comma to mark the boundary between the supplementary phrase (“While...1947”), which indicates when the action occurred, and the main clause (“Howe had a handheld camera operator wear roller skates”).

Choice A is incorrect because a comma paired with the conjunction “and” can’t be used in this way to mark the boundary between the supplementary element (“While...1947”) and the main clause (“Howe...skates”). Choice C is incorrect because the conjunction “and” can’t be used in this way to join the supplementary element (“While...1947”) and the main clause (“Howe...skates”). Choice D is incorrect because it fails to mark the boundary between the supplementary element and the main clause with appropriate punctuation.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 7f873c60

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

ID: 7f873c60

In her book *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts*, author Maxine Hong Kingston examines themes _____ childhood, womanhood, and Chinese American identity by intertwining autobiography and mythology.

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

- A. of:
- B. of
- C. of—
- D. of,

ID: 7f873c60 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. “Themes of childhood” is one noun phrase, with “themes of” implicitly carrying over to the other items on the list (“themes of childhood, [themes of] womanhood, and [themes of] Chinese American identity”).

Choice A is incorrect. This choice inappropriately breaks up the introduction of a list. Also, “In her book...themes of” is not an independent clause, thanks to the dangling “of” at the end, so it can’t precede a colon. Choice C is incorrect. This choice inappropriately breaks up the introduction of a list. Also, “In her book...themes of” is not an independent clause, thanks to the dangling “of” at the end, so it can’t precede a single dash. Choice D is incorrect. This choice inappropriately breaks up the introduction of a list. “Themes of” implicitly carries over to each item on the list (“themes of childhood, [themes of] womanhood, and [themes of] Chinese American identity”), so we don’t want to use a comma to separate it.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 5d5bae46

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

ID: 5d5bae46

A study showed that a solar park caused nearby land to cool, though the ecological impact of this temperature decrease isn't yet known. Before the park's construction, the surface temperature 30 meters outside of the park boundary was 0.1°C cooler than that of a control ____ construction, the temperature 30 meters outside of the boundary was 1.7°C cooler than that of the control area.

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

- A. area after
- B. area after,
- C. area. After
- D. area, after

ID: 5d5bae46 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation use between sentences. In this choice, the period is used to correctly mark the boundary between one sentence ("Before...area") and another ("After...area"). The phrase "After construction" modifies the next sentence to indicate that the temperature was cooler after construction.

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence that fuses the two sentences ("Before...area" and "after...area") without punctuation and/or a conjunction. Choice B is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence that connects the two sentences ("Before...area" and "after...area") without punctuation and/or a conjunction. Additionally, no punctuation is needed between "after" and "construction." Choice D is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. A comma can't be used in this way to mark the boundary between the two sentences ("Before...area" and "after...area").

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 21c5e71c

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

ID: 21c5e71c

Winding through the ice atop Norway’s Jotunheim Mountains is the Lendbreen pass, an ancient route that was used by hunters, farmers, traders, and travelers in the Middle Ages before eventually falling into disuse. Recently, archeologists have _____ knives, horseshoes, wool tunics, and thousands of other artifacts from the icy pass.

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

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

ID: 21c5e71c Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. No punctuation should separate the verb "unearthed" and its objects (i.e, what was "unearthed"): "knives, horseshoes, wool tunics, and thousands of other artifacts."

Choice A is incorrect. This choice creates a punctuation error, separating the verb "unearthed" from its objects (i.e, what was "unearthed") with a colon. Choice B is incorrect. This choice creates a punctuation error, separating the verb "unearthed" from its objects (i.e, what was "unearthed") with a comma. Choice C is incorrect. This choice creates a punctuation error, separating the verb "unearthed" from its objects (i.e, what was "unearthed") with a dash.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 1e88e91b

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

ID: 1e88e91b

A standard Argo float, a type of autonomous robot, measures temperature and salinity in the upper regions of ice-free oceans. More advanced floats can measure a wider range of _____ and monitor seasonal ice zones.

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

- A. variables: travel to greater depths
- B. variables, travel to greater depths,
- C. variables travel to greater depths,
- D. variables, travel to greater depths;

ID: 1e88e91b Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is the punctuation of items in a series. The comma after “variables” is used conventionally to separate the first and second items in the series, and the comma after “depths” is used conventionally to separate the second and third items.

Choice A 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 comma is needed after “variables” to separate the first and second items in the series. Choice D is incorrect because a semicolon can’t be used in this way to separate items in a simple series.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 77e9fd42

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

ID: 77e9fd42

Both Sona Charaipotra, an Indian American, and Dhonielle Clayton, an African American, grew up frustrated by the lack of diverse characters in books for young people. In 2011, these two writers joined forces to found CAKE Literary, a book packaging _____ specializes in the creation and promotion of stories told from diverse perspectives for children and young adults.

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

- A. company,
- B. company that
- C. company
- D. company, that

ID: 77e9fd42 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use and punctuation of an integrated relative clause. This choice correctly uses the relative pronoun “that” and no punctuation to create an integrated relative clause that provides essential information about the noun phrase (“a book packaging company”) that it modifies.

Choice A is incorrect because it doesn’t use a relative pronoun to link the verb phrase beginning with “specializes” to the noun phrase that it modifies (“a book packaging company”). Choice C is incorrect because it doesn’t use a relative pronoun to link the verb phrase beginning with “specializes” to the noun phrase that it modifies (“a book packaging company”). Choice D is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the integrated relative clause beginning with “that specializes” and the noun phrase that it modifies (“a book packaging company”).

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 85c68fbc

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

ID: 85c68fbc

After a spate of illnesses as a child, Wilma Rudolph was told she might never walk again. Defying all odds, Rudolph didn't just walk, she _____ the 1960 Summer Olympics in Rome, she won both the 100- and 200-meter dashes and clinched first place for her team in the 4x100-meter relay, becoming the first US woman to win three gold medals in a single Olympics.

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

- A. ran—fast—during
- B. ran—fast during
- C. ran—fast, during
- D. ran—fast. During

ID: 85c68fbc Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation use between sentences. In this choice, the period is used correctly to mark the boundary between one sentence ("Defying...fast") and another sentence that begins with a supplementary phrase ("During...Olympics").

Choice A is incorrect. When a dash is present in a sentence ("ran—fast"), it's not conventional to use another dash ("fast—during") to mark the boundary between sentences because it creates a potentially confusing sentence. In this context, a period, semicolon, or colon would be clear and more conventional. Choice B is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The sentences ("Defying...fast") and ("during...Olympics") are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction. Choice C is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. A comma can't be used in this way to mark the boundary between sentences.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID b630d200

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

ID: b630d200

Technologies such as microphones and inkjet printers are made using piezoelectric materials, which generate an internal electric field when pressure is applied to them. The toxic nature of some of these materials recently led a team from the University of Sheffield to investigate how _____

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

- A. could their use be better regulated?
- B. their use could be better regulated.
- C. their use could be better regulated?
- D. could their use be better regulated.

ID: b630d200 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 that asks an indirect question ("The toxic nature of some of these materials recently led a team from the University of Sheffield to investigate how their use could be better regulated").

Choice A is incorrect because the structure requires a period and a declarative clause at the end of the sentence that states what the team investigated, not an interrogative clause that asks a direct question, such as "how could their use be better regulated?" Choice C is incorrect because it's unconventional to use a question mark in this way to punctuate a declarative sentence. Choice D is incorrect because the structure requires a declarative clause at the end of the sentence that states what the team investigated, not an interrogative clause that asks a direct question, such as "how could their use be better regulated?"

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 0d668f18

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

ID: 0d668f18

In her large-scale sculpture *Casa-lsla*, artist Edra Soto included references to her childhood in Puerto Rico. For example, the sculpture’s steel panels have a crisscrossing pattern inspired by the iron gates _____

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

- A. Soto would see in her neighborhood?
- B. Soto would see in her neighborhood.
- C. would Soto see in her neighborhood.
- D. would Soto see in her neighborhood?

ID: 0d668f18 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 ("For example...neighborhood").

Choice A is incorrect. It’s unconventional to use a question mark in this way to punctuate a declarative sentence. Choice C is incorrect. The structure requires a declarative clause at the end of the sentence that states where Soto saw the steel panels, not an incomplete interrogative clause that asks a direct question, such as "would Soto see in her neighborhood." Choice D is incorrect. The structure requires a period and a declarative clause at the end of the sentence that states where Soto saw the steel panels, not an incomplete interrogative clause asking a direct question, such as "would Soto see in her neighborhood?"

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 4fa8e44a

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

ID: 4fa8e44a

At eight paragraphs long, the preamble to the constitution of _____ country in Western Asia—is much longer than the one-paragraph preamble to the United States Constitution.

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

- A. Bahrain—a
- B. Bahrain, a
- C. Bahrain a
- D. Bahrain: a

ID: 4fa8e44a Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is the punctuation of a supplementary element within a sentence. The dash after “Bahrain” pairs with the dash after “Asia” to separate the supplementary element “a country in Western Asia” from the rest of the sentence.

Choice B is incorrect because a comma can’t be paired with a dash in this way to separate the supplementary element from the rest of the sentence. Choice C is incorrect because it fails to use appropriate punctuation to separate the supplementary element from the rest of the sentence. Choice D is incorrect because a colon can’t be paired with a dash in this way to separate the supplementary element from the rest of the sentence.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 6f3cb620

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

ID: 6f3cb620

Known for her massive photorealistic paintings of African American figures floating or swimming in pools, Calida Garcia _____ was the logical choice to design the book cover for Ta-Nehisi Coates’s *The Water Dancer*, a novel about an African American man who can travel great distances through water.

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

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

ID: 6f3cb620 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation between a subject and a verb. When, as in this case, a subject (“Calida Garcia Rawles”) is immediately followed by a verb (“was”), no punctuation is needed.

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

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 62658b83

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

ID: 62658b83

Robin Wall Kimmerer of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation is a bryologist, a plant scientist who specializes in mosses. To Kimmerer, mosses are Earth’s most adaptable plants: they can clone _____ enter a dormant state in times of drought, and grow in areas that don’t have soil.

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

- A. themselves;
- B. themselves,
- C. themselves. And
- D. themselves

ID: 62658b83 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is the punctuation of items in a series. The comma after “themselves” is used conventionally to separate the first item (“they can clone themselves”) and the second item (“enter a dormant state in times of drought”) in the series of things mosses can do.

Choice A is incorrect because a semicolon can’t be used in this way to separate items in a simple series such as this. Choice C is incorrect because it results in a rhetorically unacceptable sentence fragment beginning with “And enter.” Choice D is incorrect because it fails to use appropriate punctuation to separate the first and second items in the series.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 4e4ac47f

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

ID: 4e4ac47f

A study led by scientist Rebecca Kirby at the University of Wisconsin–Madison found that black bears that eat human food before hibernation have increased levels of a rare carbon isotope, _____ due to the higher ¹³C levels in corn and cane sugar. Bears with these elevated levels were also found to have much shorter hibernation periods on average.

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

- A. carbon-13, (¹³C)
- B. carbon-13 (¹³C)
- C. carbon-13, (¹³C),
- D. carbon-13 (¹³C),

ID: 4e4ac47f Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is the punctuation of a supplementary element within a sentence. The comma after “(13C)” pairs with the comma after “isotope” to separate the supplementary element “carbon-13 (13C)” from the rest of the sentence. This supplementary element defines the “rare carbon isotope,” and the pair of commas indicates that this element could be removed without affecting the grammatical coherence of the sentence.

Choice A is incorrect because it fails to use appropriate punctuation to separate the supplementary element “carbon-13 (13C)” from the rest of the sentence. Choice B is incorrect because it fails to use appropriate punctuation to separate the supplementary element “carbon-13 (13C)” from the rest of the sentence. Choice C is incorrect because it fails to use appropriate punctuation to separate the supplementary element “carbon-13 (13C)” from the rest of the sentence. The comma after “carbon-13” isn’t necessary because the parentheses around “13C” already separate this element from the rest of the sentence.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 918785b9

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

ID: 918785b9

Many mechanical calculators were powered by a notched cylinder mechanism called the Leibniz wheel. Leibniz wheel calculators were popular in the first half of the twentieth _____ these ingenious devices were eventually replaced by electronic calculators.

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

- A. century
- B. century,
- C. century, but
- D. century that

ID: 918785b9 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is the coordination of main clauses within a sentence. This choice correctly uses a comma and a coordinating conjunction ("but") to join the first main clause ("Leibniz...century") and the second main clause ("these ingenious...calculators").

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The two main clauses are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction. Choice B 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 joining the two main clauses in this way with the subordinating conjunction "that" results in an ungrammatical and illogical sentence.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 32bf9139

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

ID: 32bf9139

Researchers Amit Kumar and Nicholas Epley investigated how _____. In a series of experiments conducted in 2022, they found that people performing small acts of kindness underestimated the positive effect their actions had on others.

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

- A. do people perceive acts of kindness.
- B. do people perceive acts of kindness?
- C. people perceive acts of kindness?
- D. people perceive acts of kindness.

ID: 32bf9139 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 asks an indirect question ("Researchers Amit Kumar and Nicholas Epley investigated how people perceive acts of kindness").

Choice A is incorrect. The structure of the sentence requires a declarative clause at the end of the sentence that states what Kumar and Epley did, not an interrogative clause that asks a direct question, such as "how do people perceive acts of kindness."
Choice B is incorrect. The structure of the sentence requires a declarative clause at the end of the sentence that states what Kumar and Epley did, not an interrogative clause that asks a direct question, such as "how do people perceive acts of kindness?"
Choice C is incorrect. It's unconventional to use a question mark in this way to punctuate a declarative sentence that asks an indirect question, such as "Researchers...kindness."

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID a456c404

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

ID: a456c404

In 1959, the film industry debuted Smell-O-Vision. Theaters were fitted with specialized vents that emitted odors at specific points in a _____ as the scent of roses when roses appeared in a scene. Smell-O-Vision failed to impress, however, with one reviewer declaring it “briefly weird and not very interesting.”

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

- A. movie such
- B. movie; such
- C. movie. Such
- D. movie, such

ID: a456c404 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The comma appropriately separates the nonessential descriptive aside "such as...scene" from the independent clause "Theaters were...movie." Since the descriptive example of roses isn't necessary for the sentence to function, it needs to be set off with punctuation.

Choice A is incorrect. This choice results in a run-on sentence. Since the example of roses isn't necessary for the sentence to function, the descriptive aside "such as...scene" needs to be separated from the preceding independent clause with some sort of punctuation. Choice B is incorrect. This choice creates a punctuation error. A semicolon can only be used to separate two independent clauses, but "such...scene" is not an independent clause and couldn't stand on its own as a sentence. Choice C is incorrect. This choice results in a sentence fragment. The descriptive aside "Such...scene" is not an independent clause and can't stand on its own as a sentence.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 8210bc02

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

ID: 8210bc02

The life spans of rockfish vary greatly by species. For instance, the colorful calico rockfish (*Sebastes dallii*) can survive for a little over a _____ the rougheye rockfish (*Sebastes aleutianus*) boasts a maximum life span of about two centuries.

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

- A. decade: while
- B. decade. While
- C. decade; while
- D. decade, while

ID: 8210bc02 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation between a main clause and a subordinate clause. This choice correctly uses a comma to mark the boundary between the main clause ("the colorful...decade") and the subordinate clause ("while...centuries") that provides contrasting information about the life span of rougheye rockfish.

Choice A is incorrect because a colon can't be used in this way to join a main clause and a subordinate clause. Choice B is incorrect because it results in a rhetorically unacceptable sentence fragment beginning with "while." Choice C is incorrect because a semicolon can't be used in this way to join a main clause and a subordinate clause.

Question Difficulty: Medium

Question ID 4dff7ee8

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

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The part of a compound that determines the compound’s color is _____ the chromophore. One example of a chromophore is hemoglobin, which gives human blood its red color.

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

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

ID: 4dff7ee8 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation use between a verb and its complement. No punctuation is needed between the verb “is called” and its complement “the chromophore.” The complement helps complete the idea of the verb—in this case, it explains what the part of a compound that determines the compound’s color is called—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 complement. Choice C is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the verb and its complement. Choice D is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the verb and its complement.

Question Difficulty: Medium