

# Question ID 11522a42

| 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: 11522a42

Consider the mechanics of the pinhole camera: light passes through a small hole, resulting in a focused projected image. A ray diagram reveals how this \_\_\_\_\_ the hole’s small size restricts light to a single ray, all light passing through the hole can only arrive at a single destination, eliminating diffraction and ensuring a clear image.

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

- A. works because
- B. works. Because
- C. works, it’s because
- D. works: it’s because

ID: 11522a42 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B 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 ("A ray...works") and another ("Because...image").

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The two sentences ("A ray...works" and "Because...image") 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 because it results in a comma splice. Since the contraction "it’s" creates a main clause, the comma after "single ray" can’t be used in this way to mark the boundary between two main clauses ("it’s...ray" and "all light...image").

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 6ade94ee

| 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: 6ade94ee

Long attributed to Jacques-Louis David, the preeminent Neoclassical painter of his day, the 1801 painting *Marie Joséphine Charlotte du Val d’Ognes* gained fresh attention in the 1990s when art historians discovered that the painting—which depicts a solitary young woman sketching—was actually the work of little-known French portrait \_\_\_\_\_ Marie-Denise Villers (1774–1821).

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

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

ID: 6ade94ee Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of punctuation between titles and proper nouns. No punctuation is needed to set off the proper noun "Marie-Denise Villers" from the title that describes Villers, "little-known French portrait artist."

Choice A is incorrect because no punctuation is needed. Choice C is incorrect because no punctuation is needed. Choice D is incorrect because no punctuation is needed.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID c57fdaec

| 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: c57fdaec

With some 16,000 in attendance, the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and \_\_\_\_\_ or FESTAC '77, as the event was more commonly known—became the largest pan-African event on record. FESTAC drew people from around the world to Lagos, Nigeria, for a monthlong celebration of Black and African art, scholarship, and activism.

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

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

ID: c57fdaec Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The text uses a dash to introduce a nonessential element that explains the acronym FESTAC. The dash matches the dash that comes after “known,” ending the descriptive aside.

Choice A is incorrect. A colon can only come after an independent clause, which isn’t the case here. Choice C is incorrect. While punctuation is required to set off “or FESTAC...known” from the rest of the sentence, nonessential elements must be separated from the sentence with matching punctuation. Since a dash appears on the other side of the element, we can’t use a comma here. Choice D is incorrect. The descriptive aside “or FESTAC...known” is a nonessential element that must be separated with punctuation from the rest of the sentence. This choice fails to add the necessary punctuation before the nonessential element.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 3cd53efd

| 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: 3cd53efd

In 2018, the innovative works of Congolese sculptor and architect Bodys Isek \_\_\_\_\_ were featured in *City Dreams*, a solo exhibition at New York’s Museum of Modern Art.

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

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

ID: 3cd53efd Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation between a subject and a verb. No punctuation is needed when the subject of a sentence is immediately followed by a main verb. In this case, the sentence’s subject (“the innovative works of Congolese sculptor and architect Bodys Isek Kingelez”) is followed by the main verb “were featured,” and no punctuation should come between them.

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: Hard

# Question ID fdff2716

| 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: fdff2716

Using satellite remote sensing, Dr. Catherine Nakalembe, director of NASA’s Harvest Africa initiative, gathers important data on crop health. Nakalembe doesn’t just compile the \_\_\_\_\_ she also shares her findings with African farmers, enabling them to make data-driven decisions about managing critical food crops.

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

- A. information, though;
- B. information, though,
- C. information; though
- D. information though,

ID: fdff2716 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. This choice uses a semicolon to join two independent clauses ("Nakalembe doesn’t just...though" and "she also shares..."). This choice also appropriately includes "though" in the first clause, where it logically belongs.

Choice B is incorrect. This choice results in a grammar error called a comma splice. It incorrectly joins two independent clauses with only a comma instead of a comma and a coordinating conjunction like "and" or "but." "Though" is a transition word, but it’s not a coordinating conjunction. Choice C is incorrect. This choice results in a punctuation error. A semicolon can only be used to link two independent clauses. However, if "though" is included in the second clause, it turns the second clause into a dependent clause, so a semicolon can’t be used after "information." Choice D is incorrect. This choice results in a grammar error called a comma splice. It incorrectly joins two independent clauses with only a comma instead of a comma and a coordinating conjunction like "and" or "but."

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 26b3f4a6

| 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: 26b3f4a6

Swedish scientists Eva Engvall and Peter Perlmann developed a method for measuring the concentration of different proteins in a biological sample. Their \_\_\_\_\_ ELISA (enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay), is used to detect and measure proteins that indicate the presence of certain diseases.

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

- A. method (called
- B. method—called
- C. method, called
- D. method called

ID: 26b3f4a6 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 “method” pairs with the comma after the closing parenthesis to separate the supplementary element “called ELISA (enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay)” from the rest of the sentence. This supplementary element functions to identify the name of Engvall and Perlmann’s method, 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 an opening parenthesis can’t be paired with a comma to separate the supplementary element from the rest of the sentence. Choice B is incorrect because a dash can’t be paired with a comma 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 supplementary element from the rest of the sentence.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID a31a4647

| 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: a31a4647

That the geographic center of North America lay in the state of North Dakota was conceded by all \_\_\_\_\_ establishing its precise coordinates proved more divisive.

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

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

ID: a31a4647 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 uses a semicolon in a conventional way to join the first main clause ("That the...involved") and the second main clause ("establishing...divisive"). Further, the semicolon is the most appropriate choice when joining two separate, parallel statements, such as here, where the information following the semicolon contrasts with the information before.

Choice A is incorrect because placing a colon after "involved" illogically indicates that the information in the second main clause (the precise location was the subject of disagreement) explains or amplifies the information in the previous main clause (the general location was agreed upon by all). Instead, the information in the second clause contrasts with the previous information. 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 because it results in a run-on sentence. The two main clauses are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID c8c6c6b4

| 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: c8c6c6b4

To humans, it does not appear that the golden orb-weaver spider uses camouflage to capture its \_\_\_\_\_ the brightly colored arachnid seems to wait conspicuously in the center of its large circular web for insects to approach. Researcher Po Peng of the University of Melbourne has explained that the spider’s distinctive coloration may in fact be part of its appeal.

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

- A. prey, rather,
- B. prey rather,
- C. prey, rather;
- D. prey; rather,

ID: c8c6c6b4 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is the coordination of main clauses within a sentence. The semicolon is correctly used to join the first main clause (“To humans...prey”) and the second main clause (“rather...approach”). Further, the comma after the adverb “rather” is correctly used to separate the adverb from the main clause (“the brightly...approach”) it modifies, logically indicating that the information in this clause (how the spider’s behavior appears to humans) is contrary to the information in the previous clause (how the spider’s behavior does not appear to humans).

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 appropriate punctuation and/or a conjunction. Choice C is incorrect. Placing the comma between the first main clause “To humans...prey” and the adverb “rather” illogically indicates that the information in the first main clause is contrary to what came before, which doesn’t make sense in this context.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 01c615f6

| 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: 01c615f6

In rural Minnesota, ecologist Leroy Walston conducted a study to determine whether seeding solar panel fields with wildflowers could bolster pollinator populations in nearby food crops. Walston’s findings indicate that—assuming solar panel installers’ \_\_\_\_\_ practice has the potential to increase the number of native bees in crops near solar fields throughout the Midwest by up to 20 percent.

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

- A. cooperation, this
- B. cooperation—this
- C. cooperation: this
- D. cooperation this

ID: 01c615f6 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of punctuation within a sentence. This choice correctly uses a dash after “cooperation” to pair with the dash after “that” to separate the supplementary element “assuming solar panel installers’ cooperation” from the rest of the sentence.

Choice A 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 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 it fails to use appropriate punctuation to separate the supplemental element from the rest of the sentence.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID a1805541

| 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: a1805541

Journalists have dubbed Gil Scott-Heron the “godfather of rap,” a title that has appeared in hundreds of articles about him since the 1990s. Scott-Heron himself resisted the godfather \_\_\_\_\_ feeling that it didn’t encapsulate his devotion to the broader African American blues music tradition as well as “bluesologist,” the moniker he preferred.

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

- A. nickname, however
- B. nickname, however;
- C. nickname, however,
- D. nickname; however,

ID: a1805541 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation use between a main clause and two supplementary elements. In this choice, the commas after “nickname” and “however” are correctly used to separate the supplementary adverb “however” from the main clause (“Scott-Heron...nickname”) on one side and the supplementary participial phrase (“feeling... bluesologist”) on the other.

Choice A is incorrect because it fails to mark the boundary between the supplementary adverb “however” and the supplementary phrase (“feeling...bluesologist”). Choice B is incorrect because a semicolon can’t be used in this way to join the supplementary adverb “however” and the supplementary phrase (“feeling...bluesologist”). Choice D is incorrect because a semicolon can’t be used in this way to join the main clause (“Scott-Heron...nickname”) and the supplementary word and phrase (“however” and “feeling...bluesologist”). Moreover, placing the semicolon after “nickname” illogically signals that the following information (Scott-Heron’s feeling that the nickname didn’t encapsulate his devotion to the blues tradition) is contrary to the information in the previous clause (Scott-Heron’s resistance to the nickname).

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 172a8388

| 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: 172a8388

Photosynthesis, the mechanism by which plants use sunlight to turn carbon dioxide and water into \_\_\_\_\_ is fueled in part by an enzyme called Photosystem II that harvests energy-giving electrons from water molecules.

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

- A. nutrients
- B. nutrients and
- C. nutrients,
- D. nutrients—

ID: 172a8388 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 “nutrients” pairs with the comma after “photosynthesis” to separate the supplementary element “the mechanism by which plants use sunlight to turn carbon dioxide and water into nutrients” from the rest of the sentence. This supplementary element functions to define the term “photosynthesis,” 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 from the rest of the sentence. Choice B is incorrect because a conjunction 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 a dash can’t be paired with a comma in this way to separate the supplementary element from the rest of the sentence.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 0c7f9099

| 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: 0c7f9099

As cheesemaking practices spread throughout Europe and Asia during and after the Neolithic, divergent strategies for preserving milk \_\_\_\_\_ whereas rennet-coagulated cheesemaking became key to milk preservation in Europe and Southwest Asia, acid-heat coagulation methods became common among nomadic herding populations of the northeastern Eurasian steppe.

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

- A. emerged
- B. emerged and
- C. emerged:
- D. emerged,

ID: 0c7f9099 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation use within a sentence. A colon can be used between two main clauses to signal that what follows is an elaboration of what came before. In this choice, the colon correctly introduces the following explanation of the divergent milk preservation strategies that emerged.

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The main clause ("As...emerged") and the subordinate clause followed by another main clause ("whereas...steppe") are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction. Choice B is incorrect. Without a comma preceding it, the conjunction "and" can't be used in this way to join a main clause ("As...emerged") and a subordinate clause followed by another main clause ("whereas...steppe"). Choice D is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. A comma can't be used in this way to join a main clause ("As...emerged") and a subordinate clause followed by another main clause ("whereas...steppe").

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 9c2d0969

| 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: 9c2d0969

In 1959, marine biologist Dr. Albert Jones founded the Underwater Adventure Seekers, a scuba diving \_\_\_\_\_ that is the oldest club for Black divers in the United States and that has helped thousands of diving enthusiasts become certified in the field.

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

- A. club
- B. club,
- C. club—
- D. club, and

ID: 9c2d0969 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. “That is...field” is an essential supplement, so we should not use punctuation to separate it from “scuba diving club.” .

Choice B is incorrect. This choice creates a punctuation error. “That is...field” is an essential supplement, so we should not use a comma (or any kind of punctuation) to separate it from “scuba diving club.” . Choice C is incorrect. This choice creates a punctuation error. “That is...field” is an essential supplement, so we should not use a dash (or any kind of punctuation) to separate it from “scuba diving club.” . Choice D is incorrect. This choice creates a run-on sentence. It makes “that is...United States” into an awkward independent clause, but it also makes “that has...field” into its own awkward independent clause without the correct punctuation separating it.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 8d83b986

| 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: 8d83b986

In a 2016 study, Eastern Washington University psychologist Amani El-Alayli found that, among the study participants who experienced frisson (a physiological response akin to goosebumps or getting the chills) while listening to music, there was one personality trait that they scored particularly \_\_\_\_\_ openness to experience.

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

- A. high. On
- B. high on;
- C. high on
- D. high on:

ID: 8d83b986 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation use between a main clause and a supplementary phrase. In this choice, a colon is correctly used to mark the boundary between the main clause ("there...on") and the supplementary phrase ("openness to experience") and to introduce the information that identifies which personality trait participants scored especially high on.

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a rhetorically unacceptable sentence fragment beginning with "on" and separates a necessary preposition from the clause beginning with "there." Choice B is incorrect because a semicolon can't be used in this way to join the main clause ("there...on") and the supplementary phrase ("openness to experience"). A semicolon is conventionally used to join two main clauses, whereas a colon is conventionally used to introduce an element that explains or amplifies the information in the preceding clause, making the colon the better choice in this context. Choice C is incorrect because it fails to mark the boundary between the main clause ("there...on") and the supplementary phrase ("openness to experience").

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 20da2770

| 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: 20da2770

That Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* inspired imitators is evident from the existence of three near-contemporary “continuations” of the collection: *The Siege of Thebes*, which purports to be a new tale told during the pilgrims’ \_\_\_\_\_ *The Tale of Beryn*, which depicts the pilgrims as tourists; and *The Ploughman’s Tale*, which features a minor character from the original work.

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

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

ID: 20da2770 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is the punctuation of elements in a complex series. It’s conventional to use a semicolon to separate items in a complex series with internal punctuation, and in this choice, the semicolon after “return” is conventionally used to separate the first item (“*The Siege of Thebes*...return”) and the second item (“*The Tale of Beryn*...tourists”) in the series of tales. Moreover, the semicolon after “return” matches the semicolon used later to separate the second item and the third item (“and *The Ploughman’s Tale*...work”) in the series.

Choice A is incorrect because placing a period after “return” results in a rhetorically unacceptable sentence fragment beginning with “*The Tale of Beryn*.” Choice B is incorrect because it fails to use appropriate punctuation to separate the first item and the second item in the complex series. Choice D is incorrect because a comma after “return” doesn’t match the semicolon used later to separate the second and third items in the series.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID c70e2541

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

ID: c70e2541

Julia Alvarez’s 1994 novel *In the Time of the Butterflies*, a fictionalized account of the lives of the Mirabal \_\_\_\_\_ can serve as a starting point for those wanting to explore how the rule of dictator Rafael Trujillo has been represented in Dominican American literature.

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

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

ID: c70e2541 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 "sisters" pairs with the comma after "*Butterflies*" to separate the supplementary element "a fictionalized account of the lives of the Mirabal sisters" from the rest of the sentence. This supplementary element functions to describe the novel *In the Time of the Butterflies*, 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 comma and conjunction can’t be used 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 supplementary element from the rest of the sentence. Choice D is incorrect because it fails to use appropriate punctuation to separate the supplementary element from the rest of the sentence.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 621c4ffd

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

ID: 621c4ffd

For thousands of years, humans have used domesticated goats (*Capra hircus*) to clear land of unwanted vegetation. When it comes to their diets, goats are notoriously \_\_\_\_\_ they will devour all kinds of shrubs and weeds, leaving virtually no part of any plant unconsumed.

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

- A. indiscriminate and
- B. indiscriminate,
- C. indiscriminate
- D. indiscriminate:

ID: 621c4ffd Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation use between two main clauses. In this choice, a colon is correctly used to mark the boundary between one main clause ("goats are notoriously indiscriminate") and another main clause ("they will devour all kinds of shrubs and weeds") and to introduce the following explanation of goats' nondiscriminatory behavior when it comes to what they eat.

Choice A is incorrect because when coordinating two longer main clauses such as these, it's conventional to use a comma before the coordinating conjunction. Furthermore, the conjunction "and" fails to indicate that what follows is an explanation of goats' nondiscriminatory behavior when it comes to their diets. Choice B is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. A comma can't be used in this way to join two main clauses ("goats...indiscriminate" and "they...weeds"). Choice C is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The two main clauses ("goats...indiscriminate" and "they...weeds") are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID c9b82a58

| 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: c9b82a58

In 1986, conceptual artist Sophie Calle asked twenty-three people, all of whom had been born without sight, to describe “their image of beauty” in rich detail. Calle paired excerpts of these conversations with photographs—both of interviewees and the items they \_\_\_\_\_ to powerful effect in her exhibition *The Blind*.

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

- A. described, from hair to grass to sculptures
- B. described, from hair to grass to sculptures—
- C. described—from hair to grass to sculptures,
- D. described: from hair to grass to sculptures

ID: c9b82a58 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is the punctuation of supplementary elements within a sentence. The comma after "described" separates the first supplementary element ("both of interviewees and the items they described") from the second supplementary element ("from hair to grass to sculptures"). Furthermore, the dash after "sculptures" pairs with the dash after "photographs" to separate these two supplementary elements from the rest of the sentence. The pair of dashes, which operate at a higher organizing level than the comma, indicates that the elements between the dashes function together—in this case, the second supplement ("from...sculptures") describes the range of items mentioned in the first supplement—and could be removed without affecting the grammatical coherence of the sentence.

Choice A is incorrect because it fails to appropriately punctuate the supplementary elements in the sentence. A dash is needed after "sculptures" to separate the supplementary elements ("both...sculptures") from the rest of the sentence. Choice C is incorrect because it fails to appropriately punctuate the supplementary elements in the sentence. The two supplementary elements "both...described" and "from...sculptures" function together to describe the photographs, and placing a dash between them would make this relationship less clear, suggesting that the supplement "both...described" is a standalone element that could be removed without affecting the grammatical coherence of the sentence, which isn't the case. Choice D is incorrect because it fails to appropriately punctuate the supplementary elements in the sentence. A colon isn't conventionally used in this way to separate a supplementary element ("from hair to grass to sculptures") from the noun phrase it is modifying ("items they described"). Additionally, a dash is needed after "sculptures" to separate the supplementary elements ("both...sculptures") from the rest of the sentence.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 003e9ef2

| 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: 003e9ef2

In paleontology, the term “Elvis taxon” gets applied to a newly identified living species that was once presumed to be extinct. Like an Elvis impersonator who might bear a striking resemblance to the late musical icon Elvis Presley himself, an Elvis taxon is not the real thing, \_\_\_\_\_ is a misidentified look-alike.

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

- A. however but it
- B. however it
- C. however, it
- D. however. It

ID: 003e9ef2 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The clause “Like an Elvis impersonator...real thing” and the clause “it is...look-alike” are both independent clauses, so making them into two separate sentences is grammatically correct.

Choice A is incorrect. This choice creates a run-on sentence error. The clause “Like an Elvis impersonator...real thing” and the clause “it is...look-alike” are both independent clauses, so they need to be separated with at least a comma + a coordinating conjunction. This choice provides the coordinating conjunction “but,” but it’s missing a comma. Choice B is incorrect. This choice creates a run-on sentence error. The clause “Like an Elvis impersonator...real thing” and the clause “it is...look-alike” are both independent clauses, so they need to be separated with a semicolon, a colon, a dash, a period, or a comma + a coordinating conjunction. Choice C is incorrect. This choice creates a run-on sentence error. The clause “Like an Elvis impersonator...real thing” and the clause “it is...look-alike” are both independent clauses, so they need to be separated with at least a comma + a coordinating conjunction. This choice provides a comma, but it’s missing a coordinating conjunction.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 84bf96ab

| 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: 84bf96ab

Humans were long thought to have begun occupying the Peruvian settlement of Machu Picchu between 1440 and 1450 CE. However, a team led by anthropologist Dr. Richard Burger used accelerator mass spectrometry to uncover evidence that it was occupied \_\_\_\_ 1420 CE, according to Burger, humans were likely inhabiting the area.

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

- A. earlier. In
- B. earlier, in
- C. earlier, which in
- D. earlier in

ID: 84bf96ab 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 is used correctly to mark the boundary between one sentence (“However...earlier”) and another (“In...area”). The supplementary phrase “in 1420 CE” modifies “humans,” the subject of the third sentence.

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 comma splice. A comma can’t be used in this way to mark the boundary between sentences. Moreover, the subordinating conjunction “which” creates a confusing and illogical sentence that suggests that the supplementary phrase beginning with “in” modifies the previous information (“However...earlier”) rather than the information that follows. Choice D is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The sentences (“However...earlier” and “in...area”) are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID fa5970ee

| 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: fa5970ee

Stomata, tiny pore structures in a leaf that absorb gases needed for plant growth, open when guard cells surrounding each pore swell with water. In a pivotal 2007 article, plant cell \_\_\_\_\_ showed that lipid molecules called phosphatidylinositol phosphates are responsible for signaling guard cells to open stomata.

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

- A. biologist, Yuree Lee
- B. biologist Yuree Lee,
- C. biologist Yuree Lee
- D. biologist, Yuree Lee,

ID: fa5970ee Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of punctuation between titles and proper nouns. No punctuation is needed to offset the proper noun "Yuree Lee" from the title "plant cell biologist" that describes Lee.

Choice A is incorrect because no punctuation is needed. Choice B is incorrect because no punctuation is needed. Choice D is incorrect because no punctuation is needed around the proper noun "Yuree Lee." Setting the phrase off with punctuation suggests that it could be removed without affecting the coherence of the sentence, which isn't the case.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID a6e45850

| 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: a6e45850

For the past 20 million years, Earth’s magnetic poles in the far north and far south have remained roughly where they are today. This has not always been the \_\_\_\_\_ throughout geologic history, Earth’s magnetic poles have swapped places several times through a process called polar wandering.

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

- A. case, though
- B. case, though,
- C. case; though,
- D. case, though;

ID: a6e45850 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of punctuation within a sentence. Placing the semicolon after the supplementary adverb “though” correctly indicates that the contrast in the text is between the information in the first sentence (that Earth’s magnetic poles have remained fixed for the past 20 million years) and the initial clause of the second sentence (“This has not always been the case”), rather than between the two clauses of the second sentence.

Choice A is incorrect. Using the adverb “though” as the head of a subordinate clause illogically indicates that the information in the previous main clause (“This...case”) is contrary to the information in the subordinate clause. Instead, the information in the second clause (that Earth’s magnetic poles have swapped places several times) elaborates on the statement made in the previous clause (that Earth’s magnetic poles are not as fixed as they may seem). Choice B is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. Commas can’t be used in this way to punctuate a supplementary word or phrase between two main clauses. Choice C is incorrect. Using a semicolon after “case” places the adverb “though” inside the second main clause (“throughout...wandering”), illogically indicating that the information in the previous main clause is contrary to the information in the second one. Instead, the information in the second main clause (that Earth’s magnetic poles have swapped places several times) elaborates on the statement made in the previous clause (that Earth’s magnetic poles are not as fixed as they may seem).

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 64bc7de5

| 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: 64bc7de5

Within Earth’s biomes, there are four main types of desert: arid, semiarid, coastal, and cold. The roughly \_\_\_\_\_ is classified as an arid desert.

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

- A. 200,000 km<sup>2</sup> Puntland Desert,
- B. 200,000 km<sup>2</sup>, Puntland Desert
- C. 200,000 km<sup>2</sup> Puntland Desert
- D. 200,000 km<sup>2</sup>, Puntland Desert,

ID: 64bc7de5 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of punctuation between a modifier and a noun and also between a subject and a verb. No punctuation is needed when, as in this case, a modifying phrase (“roughly 200,000 km<sup>2</sup>”) precedes the noun phrase it modifies (“Puntland Desert”) to form the subject of the sentence. Additionally, no punctuation is needed between the subject (“The roughly...Desert”) and the main verb (“is classified”).

Choice A is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the subject and the main verb. Choice B is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the modifier and the noun phrase. Choice D is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the modifier and the noun phrase, nor is it needed between the subject and the main verb.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 3d798aa0

| 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: 3d798aa0

Dong Lai and Diego J. Muñoz’s work on circumbinary disk accretion—a process in which, due to gravity, material from an orbiting disk spirals inward and accumulates onto two stars or black holes—relies heavily on simulations. Lai and Muñoz recognize the need for direct \_\_\_\_\_ recommending evolving binary star systems as a promising avenue for future study.

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

- A. observation; however,
- B. observation, however,
- C. observation. However,
- D. observation, however;

ID: 3d798aa0 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 “observation” pairs with the comma after “however” to separate the supplementary adverb “however” from the rest of the sentence, which consists of a main clause (“Lai...observation”) followed by a participial phrase (“recommending...study”).

Choice A is incorrect because a semicolon can’t be used in this way to join the main clause (“Lai...observation”) and the participial phrase (“recommending...study”) that follows the supplementary adverb “however.” A semicolon is conventionally used to join two main clauses, and “recommending...study” isn’t a main clause. Choice C is incorrect because placing a period after “observation” results in a rhetorically unacceptable sentence fragment beginning with “however.” Choice D is incorrect because a semicolon can’t be used in this way to join the main clause (“Lai...however”) and the participial phrase (“recommending...study”) that follows. A semicolon is conventionally used to join two main clauses, and “recommending...study” isn’t a main clause.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 7c08c775

| 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: 7c08c775

With a blend of traditional design elements, such as arched Gothic ceilings, and modern ones, such as floor-to-ceiling \_\_\_\_\_ design splits the difference between old and new, a mixture that is increasingly seen in home interiors in the US.

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

- A. windows; transitional
- B. windows—transitional
- C. windows. Transitional
- D. windows, transitional

ID: 7c08c775 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 introductory subordinate clause ("With...windows") and the main clause ("transitional design splits the difference between old and new").

Choice A is incorrect because a semicolon can't be used in this way to separate the subordinate clause ("With...windows") from the main clause ("transitional...new"). Choice B is incorrect because a dash can't be used in this way to separate the subordinate clause ("With...windows") from the main clause ("transitional...new"). Choice C is incorrect because it results in a rhetorically unacceptable sentence fragment beginning with "with."

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID e046c7fc

| 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: e046c7fc

The city of Amsterdam partnered with consultants to develop Public Eye—an ethical AI-powered crowd-monitoring \_\_\_\_\_ video streamed from cameras in heavily touristed areas, the AI algorithm determines crowd sizes without, in the interest of protecting individuals’ privacy, retaining the footage.

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

- A. system—analyzing
- B. system, analyzing
- C. system. Analyzing
- D. system analyzing

ID: e046c7fc 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 correctly to mark the boundary between one sentence ("The city...system") and another ("Analyzing...footage"). The participial phrase beginning with "analyzing" modifies the subject of the second sentence, "the AI algorithm."

Choice A is incorrect. Placing a dash before "analyzing" creates a confusing and ambiguous modifying element ("analyzing...areas") and a comma splice between "areas" and "the AI algorithm." (A comma can't be used in this way to mark the boundary between sentences.) 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 D is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The sentences ("The city... system" and "analyzing...footage") are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 60f8b1ee

| 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: 60f8b1ee

Luci Tapahonso is the inaugural poet laureate of the Navajo Nation. Her book *Sáanii Dahataal/The Women Are Singing*—a combination of fiction and memoir, poetry and \_\_\_\_\_ serves as a testament to her versatility as a writer.

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

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

ID: 60f8b1ee Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. “A combination of fiction and memoir, poetry and prose” is a nonessential supplement, so it needs to be set off from the rest of the sentence with a pair of matching punctuation marks. We already have a dash at the beginning of the supplement, so we need to add a dash at the end of the supplement to match.

Choice A is incorrect. This doesn’t complete the text in a way that conforms to the conventions of Standard English. “A combination of fiction and memoir, poetry and prose” is a nonessential supplement, so it needs to be set off from the rest of the sentence with a pair of matching punctuation marks. We already have a dash at the beginning of the supplement, so we need to add a dash at the end of the supplement to match. Choice B is incorrect. This doesn’t complete the text in a way that conforms to the conventions of Standard English. “A combination of fiction and memoir, poetry and prose” is a nonessential supplement, so it needs to be set off from the rest of the sentence with a pair of matching punctuation marks. We already have a dash at the beginning of the supplement, so we need to add a dash at the end of the supplement to match. Choice C is incorrect. This doesn’t complete the text in a way that conforms to the conventions of Standard English. “A combination of fiction and memoir, poetry and prose” is a nonessential supplement, so it needs to be set off from the rest of the sentence with a pair of matching punctuation marks. We already have a dash at the beginning of the supplement, so we need to add a dash at the end of the supplement to match.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID f783abc0

| 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: f783abc0

How do scientists determine what foods were eaten by extinct hominins such as Neanderthals? In the past, researchers were limited to studying the marks found on the fossilized teeth of skeletons, but in 2017 a team led by Laura Weyrich of the Australian Centre for Ancient DNA tried something \_\_\_\_\_ the DNA found in Neanderthals’ fossilized dental plaque.

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

- A. new: sequencing
- B. new; sequencing
- C. new, sequencing:
- D. new. Sequencing

ID: f783abc0 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. “A team...tried something new” is an independent clause leading to an explanation of what the new thing was. A colon can only be used at the end of an independent clause, and typically introduces further explanation that expands upon the first clause, which makes a colon the perfect choice here.

Choice B is incorrect. This choice results in a punctuation error. “Sequencing...dental plaque” can’t stand on its own as a sentence, and so it can’t be linked to the independent clause “a team...tried something new” with a semicolon. Only two independent clauses can be connected in this way. Choice C is incorrect. This choice results in a punctuation error. If “sequencing” is included in the first clause, it can no longer stand on its own as a complete idea. Since a colon can only come at the end of an independent clause, using one in this way creates an error. Choice D is incorrect. This choice results in a sentence fragment. “Sequencing... dental plaque” can’t stand on its own as a sentence.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 6c740a1d

| 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: 6c740a1d

In discussing Mary Shelley’s 1818 epistolary novel *Frankenstein*, literary theorist Gayatri Spivak directs the reader’s attention to the character of Margaret Saville. As Spivak points out, Saville is not the protagonist of Shelley’s \_\_\_\_\_ as the recipient of the letters that frame the book’s narrative, she’s the “occasion” of it.

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

- A. novel
- B. novel,
- C. novel; rather,
- D. novel, rather,

ID: 6c740a1d 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 semicolon to join a main clause (“Saville...novel”) and a second main clause (“she’s...it”) preceded by supplementary elements (“rather...narrative”).

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 it results in a comma splice. Without a conjunction following it, the comma after “novel” can’t be used in this way to join the two main clauses.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 0d4eda00

| 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: 0d4eda00

The pedagogy of the Suzuki method is rooted in several central \_\_\_\_\_ by Japanese violinist Shinichi Suzuki, who sought to parallel the linguistic learning environment, the method emphasizes playing instruments from a very young age and teaches students as young as three to play simple classical pieces such as “March in G.”

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

- A. tenets. Developed
- B. tenets developed
- C. tenets that, developed
- D. tenets, developed

ID: 0d4eda00 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation use between sentences. This choice correctly uses a period to mark the boundary between one sentence ("The pedagogy...tenets") and another ("Developed...‘March in G’"). The participial phrase "developed by Japanese violinist Shinichi Suzuki" modifies the subject of the next sentence, "the method."

Choice B is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The sentences ("The pedagogy...tenets" and "Developed...‘March in G’") are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction. Choice C is incorrect because it creates a confusing and illogical sentence structure. The relative pronoun "that" followed by a comma can’t be used in this way to mark the boundary between sentences. 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 sentences.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 0ef22e69

| 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: 0ef22e69

The Austronesian language family includes Tagalog, Malagasy, and some 1,200 other languages throughout the Pacific, making it one of the largest language families in the world and of keen interest to \_\_\_\_\_ of the University of Toronto.

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

- A. linguist, Diane Massam,
- B. linguist, Diane Massam
- C. linguist Diane Massam
- D. linguist: Diane Massam

ID: 0ef22e69 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of punctuation between titles and proper nouns. No punctuation is needed to set off the proper noun "Diane Massam" from the title that describes Massam, "linguist." Because "Diane Massam" is essential information identifying the "linguist," no punctuation is necessary.

Choice A is incorrect because no punctuation is needed before or after the proper noun "Diane Massam." Setting the linguist's name off with commas suggests that it could be removed without affecting the coherence of the sentence, which isn't the case. Choice B is incorrect because no punctuation is needed. Choice D is incorrect because no punctuation is needed.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID d5ba1e15

| 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: d5ba1e15

For her film *I Am Somebody* (1970), a documentary about a successful months-long strike held by Black female hospital workers in Charleston, South Carolina, director Madeline Anderson chose a narrator who had participated in the \_\_\_\_\_ by allowing the narrative to be shaped by one of their own, amplified the agency and power the workers possessed.

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

- A. protest. A decision that
- B. protest; a decision that,
- C. protest, a decision that,
- D. protest a decision that,

ID: d5ba1e15 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 after “protest” to mark the boundary between the main clause (“For...protest”) and the supplementary appositive (“a decision...possessed”) that provides additional information about Anderson’s choice of narrator. Furthermore, the comma after “that” pairs with the comma after “own” to separate the supplementary adverbial phrase “by allowing...own” from the rest of the appositive. This adverbial phrase functions to explain how Anderson’s choice of a narrator amplified the agency and power the hospital workers possessed, 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 a rhetorically unacceptable sentence fragment beginning with “a decision.” Choice B is incorrect because a semicolon can’t be used in this way to join the main clause (“For...protest”) and the supplementary appositive (“a decision...possessed”). A semicolon is conventionally used to join two main clauses, and “a decision...possessed” isn’t a main clause. Choice D is incorrect because it fails to mark the boundary between the main clause (“For...protest”) and the supplementary appositive (“a decision...possessed”) with appropriate punctuation.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 200d993b

| 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: 200d993b

Recent analysis of 32532 Thereus—an outer solar system object orbiting the Sun between Jupiter and Saturn—has determined its color to be gray, suggesting an icy composition. Such interpretations are ultimately \_\_\_\_\_ the object’s gray coloration may be an incidental effect of radiation, solar wind, or collisions with other objects rather than evidence of its physical makeup.

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

- A. speculative, though
- B. speculative, though;
- C. speculative; though
- D. speculative, though,

ID: 200d993b Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of punctuation in a sentence. This choice correctly uses a comma to separate the supplementary adverb "though" from the preceding main clause ("Such interpretations are ultimately speculative") and uses a semicolon to join the next main clause ("the object’s...makeup") to the rest of the sentence. Further, placing the semicolon after "though" indicates that the information in the preceding main clause (interpretations of an outer solar system object’s composition based on its color are ultimately speculative) is a qualification of the information in the previous sentence (the composition of an outer solar system object is suggested by its color).

Choice A is incorrect because it fails to mark the boundary between the two main clauses with appropriate punctuation. Choice C is incorrect because placing the semicolon after "speculative" illogically indicates that the information in the next main clause ("the object’s...makeup") is a qualification of the information in the previous clause ("Such...speculative"). Choice D is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. Commas can’t be used in this way to punctuate a supplementary word or phrase between two main clauses.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID db445fdc

| 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: db445fdc

In 1937, Chinese American screen actor Anna May Wong, who had portrayed numerous villains and secondary characters but never a heroine, finally got a starring role in Paramount Pictures’ *Daughter of Shanghai*, a film that \_\_\_\_\_ “expanded the range of possibilities for Asian images on screen.”

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

- A. critic, Stina Chyn, claims
- B. critic, Stina Chyn, claims,
- C. critic Stina Chyn claims
- D. critic Stina Chyn, claims,

ID: db445fdc Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The conventions being tested are punctuation use between titles and proper nouns and between verbs and integrated quotations. No punctuation is needed to set off the proper noun “Stina Chyn” from the title that describes Chyn, “critic.” Because “Stina Chyn” is essential information identifying the “critic,” no punctuation is necessary. Further, no punctuation is needed between the verb “claims” and the following quotation because the quotation is integrated into the structure of the sentence.

Choice A is incorrect because no punctuation is needed before or after the proper noun “Stina Chyn.” Setting the critic’s name off with commas suggests that it could be removed without affecting the coherence of the sentence, which isn’t the case. Choice B is incorrect because no punctuation is needed before or after the proper noun “Stina Chyn.” Setting the critic’s name off with commas suggests that it could be removed without affecting the coherence of the sentence, which isn’t the case. Additionally, no punctuation is needed between “claims” and the integrated quotation. Choice D is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the verb “claims” and its subject, “critic Stina Chyn.” Additionally, no punctuation is needed between the verb “claims” and the integrated quotation.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID f748a869

| 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: f748a869

In 1977, legendary Puerto Rican performer Rita Moreno won an Emmy Award, making her one of the rare talents to earn the highest honors in television, music, film, and stage entertainment—the Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, and Tony \_\_\_\_ the achievement is known as “winning the EGOT.”

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

- A. awards, respectively;
- B. awards; respectively
- C. awards, respectively—
- D. awards, respectively,

ID: f748a869 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 uses a comma to separate the supplementary adverb “respectively” from the rest of the supplementary element introduced by the dash after “entertainment” (“the Emmy...awards”), and it uses a semicolon to join the first main clause (“In...respectively”) and the second main clause (“the achievement...EGOT”).

Choice B is incorrect because placing the semicolon after “awards” illogically separates the supplementary adverb “respectively” from the supplementary element it belongs to (“the Emmy...awards”) and attaches it to the following main clause (“the achievement...EGOT”), resulting in a confusing and ungrammatical sentence. Choice C is incorrect. The dash after “respectively” pairs with the dash after “entertainment” to close the supplementary element (“the Emmy...respectively”), so it can’t also serve to mark the boundary between the two main clauses (“In...respectively” and “the achievement...EGOT”). The result fails to mark that boundary with appropriate punctuation. Choice D is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. Without a conjunction following it, the comma after “respectively” can’t be used in this way to join the first main clause (“In...respectively”) and the second main clause (“the achievement...EGOT”).

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID c4ba4894

| 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: c4ba4894

Seneca sculptor Marie Watt’s blanket art comes in a range of shapes and sizes. In 2004, Watt sewed strips of blankets together to craft a 10-by-13-inch \_\_\_\_\_ in 2014, she arranged folded blankets into two large stacks and then cast them in bronze, creating two curving 18-foot-tall blue-bronze pillars.

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

- A. sampler later,
- B. sampler;
- C. sampler,
- D. sampler, later,

ID: c4ba4894 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is the coordination of main clauses within a sentence. This choice uses a semicolon in a conventional way to join the first main clause (“In 2004...sampler”) and the second main clause (“in 2014...pillars”).

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. The word “later” is an adverb and cannot be used to join two main clauses unless it is preceded by a conjunction. Choice C is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. Without a conjunction following it, a comma can’t be used in this way to join two main clauses. Choice D is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. Without a conjunction following it, a comma can’t be used in this way to join two main clauses. The word “later” is an adverb and cannot be used to join two main clauses unless it is preceded by a conjunction.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 86dbec3a

| 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: 86dbec3a

The relationship between genomes and epigenomes reveals how cells with identical DNA develop different \_\_\_\_\_ whereas the genome in each cell contains a complete DNA sequence, the epigenome consists of chemical compounds that determine which traits in the sequence will be expressed.

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

- A. functions
- B. functions,
- C. functions and,
- D. functions:

ID: 86dbec3a Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of a colon within a sentence. In this choice, the colon correctly introduces the following explanation of the different functions of genomes and epigenomes.

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The two main clauses ("The relationship...functions" and "whereas...expressed") are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction. Choice B is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. A comma can't be used in this way to join two main clauses ("The relationship...functions" and "whereas...expressed"). Choice C is incorrect. Without a comma preceding it, the conjunction "and" can't be used in this way to join two main clauses. Furthermore, "and" fails to indicate that what follows is an explanation of how cells with identical DNA develop different functions.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 28e2ac70

| 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: 28e2ac70

Paintings by the renowned twentieth-century US \_\_\_\_\_ were featured in *Artist to Artist*, an exhibition at the Smithsonian Art Museum that paired the works of artists whose career trajectories intersected in meaningful ways.

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

- A. artists: Thomas Hart Benton and Jackson Pollock,
- B. artists Thomas Hart Benton and Jackson Pollock
- C. artists Thomas Hart Benton, and Jackson Pollock,
- D. artists, Thomas Hart Benton and Jackson Pollock

ID: 28e2ac70 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of punctuation around noun phrases. No punctuation is needed because the coordinated noun phrase "Thomas Hart Benton and Jackson Pollock" is a restrictive appositive, meaning that it provides essential identifying information about the noun phrase before it, "the renowned twentieth-century US artists."

Choice A is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the noun phrase "the renowned twentieth-century US artists" and the restrictive appositive "Thomas Hart Benton and Jackson Pollock." Additionally, no punctuation is needed between the sentence's subject ("paintings by the renowned twentieth-century US artists Thomas Hart Benton and Jackson Pollock") and the main verb ("were featured"). Choice C is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the coordinated elements "Thomas Hart Benton" and "Jackson Pollock." Additionally, no punctuation is needed between the sentence's subject ("paintings by the renowned twentieth-century US artists Thomas Hart Benton and Jackson Pollock") and the main verb ("were featured"). Choice D is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the noun phrase "the renowned twentieth-century US artists" and the restrictive appositive "Thomas Hart Benton and Jackson Pollock."

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 20f98424

| 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: 20f98424

Philosopher Peter Kivy was a leading figure in musical \_\_\_\_\_ evidenced by his belief that instead of evoking particular emotions, such as sadness or joy, compositions elicit a listener’s emotional response to the structure and artistry of the music itself, Kivy’s approach to the study of music was decidedly formalist.

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

- A. aesthetics as
- B. aesthetics and as
- C. aesthetics, as
- D. aesthetics. As

ID: 20f98424 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 ("Philosopher...aesthetics") and another ("As...formalist"). The long adverbial element "as evidenced...itself" modifies the content in the following clause to support the claim that Kivy’s approach was formalist.

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The sentences ("Philosopher...aesthetics" and "As...formalist") are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction. Choice B is incorrect. Without a comma preceding it, the conjunction "and" can’t be used in this way to join sentences. 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: Hard

# Question ID fac40584

| 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: fac40584

A study published by Rice University geoscientist Ming Tang in 2019 offers a new explanation for the origin of Earth’s \_\_\_\_\_ structures called arcs, towering ridges that form when a dense oceanic plate subducts under a less dense continental plate, melts in the mantle below, and then rises and bursts through the continental crust above.

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

- A. continents geological
- B. continents: geological
- C. continents; geological
- D. continents. Geological

ID: fac40584 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation use between a main clause and a supplementary phrase. In this choice, a colon is correctly used to mark the boundary between the main clause (“A study...continents”) and the supplementary phrase (“geological...above”) and to introduce the following explanation of the origin of Earth’s continents.

Choice A is incorrect because it fails to mark the boundary between the main clause (“A study...continents”) and the supplementary phrase (“geological...above”) with appropriate punctuation. Choice C is incorrect because a semicolon can’t be used in this way to join the main clause (“A study...continents”) and the supplementary phrase (“geological...above”). A semicolon is conventionally used to join two main clauses, whereas a colon is conventionally used to introduce an element that explains or amplifies the information in the preceding clause, making it the better choice in this context. Choice D is incorrect because it results in a rhetorically unacceptable sentence fragment beginning with “geological.”

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 441029e6

| 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: 441029e6

A group of ecologists led by Axel Mithöfer at the Max Planck Institute for Chemical Ecology in Germany examined the defensive responses of two varieties of the sweet potato \_\_\_\_\_ TN57, which is known for its insect resistance, and TN66, which is much more susceptible to pests.

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

- A. plant.
- B. plant;
- C. plant
- D. plant:

ID: 441029e6 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation use between a main clause and a supplementary phrase. In this choice, a colon is correctly used to mark the boundary between the main clause (“A group...plant”) and the supplementary element (“TN57...pests”) and to introduce the following elaboration on the specific varieties of sweet potato plants that were examined.

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a rhetorically unacceptable sentence fragment beginning with “TN57.” Choice B is incorrect because a semicolon can’t be used in this way to join the main clause (“A group...plant”) and the supplementary element (“TN57...pests”). A semicolon is conventionally used to join two main clauses, whereas a colon is conventionally used to introduce an element that explains or amplifies the information in the preceding clause. Choice C is incorrect because it fails to mark the boundary between the main clause (“A group...plant”) and the supplementary element (“TN57...pests”) with appropriate punctuation.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 6ab2cf5d

| 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: 6ab2cf5d

In biology, many initially disordered systems will naturally move toward greater order according to the principle of self-organization, a conceptual framework for pattern \_\_\_\_\_ biologists believe can be used to explain a range of organic phenomena, from population dynamics to the sociality of bees and ants.

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

- A. formation, that some
- B. formation. Some
- C. formation that some
- D. formation; some

ID: 6ab2cf5d Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use and punctuation of an integrated relative clause. In this choice, the relative pronoun “that” is used to create an integrated relative clause that modifies the preceding noun phrase “a conceptual framework for pattern formation.” No punctuation is necessary between the noun phrase and the relative clause because the relative clause is supplying essential information about the framework.

Choice A is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the noun phrase (“a conceptual...formation”) and the integrated relative clause beginning with “that.” Choice B is incorrect because it results in a confusing and ungrammatical sentence. Choice D is incorrect because it results in an ungrammatical sentence. A semicolon is used to join two main clauses or items in a complex series, and what follows “formation” is neither of these.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 8f3cd34b

| 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: 8f3cd34b

On July 23, 1854, a clipper ship called the *Flying Cloud* entered San Francisco \_\_\_\_\_. left New York Harbor under the guidance of Captain Josiah Perkins Creesy and his wife, navigator Eleanor Creesy, a mere 89 days and 8 hours earlier, the celebrated ship set a record that would stand for 135 years.

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

- A. Bay and having
- B. Bay. Having
- C. Bay, having
- D. Bay having

ID: 8f3cd34b Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation use between sentences. In this choice, the period after “Bay” is used correctly to mark the boundary between one sentence (“On...Bay”) and another sentence that begins with a supplementary phrase (“Having...years”). Here, the supplementary phrase beginning with “having” modifies the subject of the second sentence, “the celebrated ship.”

Choice A is incorrect. Without a comma preceding it, the conjunction “and” can’t be used in this way to join sentences. Choice C is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. A comma can’t be used in this way to join two sentences. Choice D is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The sentences (“On...Bay” and “having...years”) are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 7b6aa781

| 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: 7b6aa781

In modern plays, actors typically won't acknowledge the \_\_\_\_\_ do so breaks the fourth wall, a metaphorical barrier between actors and audiences that allows viewers to suspend the knowledge that they're watching a staged performance.

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

- A. audience. As to
- B. audience to
- C. audience. To
- D. audience, to

ID: 7b6aa781 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 correctly to mark the boundary between one sentence ("In modern...audience") and another ("To do...performance").

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a rhetorically unacceptable sentence fragment beginning with "as." Choice B is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The sentences ("In modern...audience" and "To do...performance") are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction. 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 sentences.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID ebae4298

| 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: ebae4298

Along with carbon dioxide concentration and temperature, light intensity affects the chemical reaction rate of \_\_\_\_\_ as light intensity increases, so does the rate at which the reactants (water and carbon dioxide) are converted into their products (glucose and oxygen).

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

- A. photosynthesis and
- B. photosynthesis,
- C. photosynthesis:
- D. photosynthesis

ID: ebae4298 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of punctuation in a sentence. In this choice, a colon is correctly used to mark the boundary between one main clause ("Along with...photosynthesis") and another main clause ("as light...oxygen") and to introduce the following explanation of how light intensity affects photosynthesis.

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

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 77c8d3b5

| 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: 77c8d3b5

Roughly 300 nights a year, when the cold air descending from the Andes Mountains meets the warm air rising from Venezuela’s coastal Lake Maracaibo, the result is a spectacular lightning storm, its strikes so bright, so localized, and so \_\_\_\_\_ that it has become known as “Maracaibo’s Lighthouse.”

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

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

ID: 77c8d3b5 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is the punctuation of an integrated relative clause. No punctuation is needed before the relative clause beginning with "that" because the content of the relative clause ("that...Lighthouse") is integral to the meaning of the coordinated adjectival phrase ("so bright, so localized, and so dependable") that it modifies.

Choice A is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the coordinated adjectival phrase ("so bright...dependable") and the integrated relative clause that modifies it. Choice B is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the coordinated adjectival phrase ("so bright...dependable") and the integrated relative clause that modifies it. Choice D is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the coordinated adjectival phrase ("so bright...dependable") and the integrated relative clause that modifies it.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 3cc45d15

| 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: 3cc45d15

Featuring works by the photographers Lola Álvarez Bravo and Else “Yva” Neuländer-Simon, the 2021 exhibition *The New Woman Behind the Camera* set out to provide a wide-ranging overview of photography by women in the 1920s through the \_\_\_\_\_ given the collection’s breadth of more than 120 photos, its efforts were largely successful.

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

- A. 1950s, and
- B. 1950s and
- C. 1950s
- D. 1950s,

ID: 3cc45d15 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A 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 ("Featuring...1950s") and the second main clause ("given...successful").

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

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 295b3027

| 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: 295b3027

With the development of new technologies that use natural resources more efficiently, the overall consumption of those resources might be expected to decrease. Economists have observed that improvements in efficiency often correlate negatively with resource \_\_\_\_ efficiency gains, lowering the cost of use, may increase demand to the extent that resource consumption ultimately rises.

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

- A. conservation, though,
- B. conservation; though
- C. conservation, though;
- D. conservation, though

ID: 295b3027 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 separate the supplementary adverb "though" from the preceding main clause ("Economists...conservation") and uses a semicolon to join the next main clause ("efficiency gains...rises") to the rest of the sentence. Further, placing the semicolon after "though" indicates that the information in the preceding main clause ("improvements in efficiency often correlate negatively with resource conservation") is contrary to what might be assumed from the information in the previous sentence (resource consumption would be expected to decrease with the development of new, more efficient technologies).

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. Commas can't be used in this way to punctuate a supplementary word or phrase between two main clauses. Choice B is incorrect because it fails to mark the boundary between the two main clauses ("Economists...though" and "efficiency gains....rises") with appropriate punctuation. Moreover, placing the semicolon after "conservation" illogically indicates that the information in the next clause (gains in efficiency may lead to an increase in resource consumption) is contrary to the information in the previous clause ("improvements in efficiency often correlate negatively with resource conservation"). Choice D is incorrect because placing a comma after "conservation" illogically indicates that the information in the next clause (gains in efficiency may lead to an increase in resource consumption) is contrary to the information in the previous clause ("improvements in efficiency often correlate negatively with resource conservation").

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 73694f97

| 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: 73694f97

Joshua Hinson, director of the language revitalization program of the Chickasaw Nation in Oklahoma, helped produce the world’s first Indigenous-language instructional app, Chickasaw \_\_\_\_\_ Chickasaw TV, in 2010; and a Rosetta Stone language course in Chickasaw, in 2015.

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

- A. Basic; in 2009, an online television network;
- B. Basic; in 2009, an online television network,
- C. Basic, in 2009; an online television network,
- D. Basic, in 2009, an online television network,

ID: 73694f97 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is the punctuation of items in a complex series. It’s conventional to use a semicolon to separate items in a complex series with internal punctuation, and in this choice, the semicolon after “2009” is conventionally used to separate the first item (“the world’s...2009”) and the second item (“an online...2010”) in the series of things that Hinson helped create. Further, the comma after “Basic” correctly pairs with the comma after “app,” and the comma after “network” correctly pairs with the comma after “TV” to set off the supplemental elements (“Chickasaw Basic” and “Chickasaw TV”) that provide the names of the app and the TV network, respectively. Altogether, the punctuation in this choice results in a sentence that clearly indicates that Hinson helped make a language app in 2009, an online TV network in 2010, and a language course in 2015.

Choice A is incorrect because it fails to punctuate the complex series in a way that makes clear that Hinson helped make a language app in 2009, an online TV network in 2010, and a language course in 2015. Choice B is incorrect because it fails to punctuate the complex series in a way that makes clear that Hinson helped make a language app in 2009, an online TV network in 2010, and a language course in 2015. Choice D is incorrect because the comma after “2009” doesn’t match the semicolon used to separate the second and third items in the complex series.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 2a41f78a

| 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: 2a41f78a

Alberto Gabriele, author of *Reading Popular Culture in Victorian Print*, tracks the transnational dissemination of works by author Mary Elizabeth Braddon via the magazine \_\_\_\_\_ from 1866 to 1899 and distributed throughout the Australian cities of Melbourne, Adelaide, and Hobart; the continental European cities of Brussels, Paris, and Turin; and cities in Turkey, India, and Jamaica, this magazine helped make Braddon’s serialized novels globally available.

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

- A. *Belgravia*; published
- B. *Belgravia*. Published
- C. *Belgravia* published
- D. *Belgravia*, published

ID: 2a41f78a Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B 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 the first sentence (“Alberto...*Belgravia*”) and the second (“Published...available”). The participial phrase beginning with “published” contains a complex series punctuated with commas and semicolons (“the Australian cities of Melbourne, Adelaide, and Hobart; the continental European cities of Brussels, Paris, and Turin; and cities in Turkey, India, and Jamaica”), and this participial phrase modifies the subject of the second sentence, “this magazine.”

Choice A is incorrect. Using a semicolon to join two main clauses in this way in combination with the semicolons that separate the items in the complex series would result in an ambiguous and confusing sentence. Choice C is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. With no punctuation after “*Belgravia*,” the participial phrase “published...Jamaica” reads as an integrated modifier within the noun phrase “the magazine *Belgravia*,” and the first main clause (“Alberto...Jamaica”) is then joined to a second main clause (“this...available”) using only a comma. A comma can’t be used in this way to join two main clauses. Choice D is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. A comma can’t be used in this way to join two main clauses.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 12ff7648

| 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: 12ff7648

Po’Pay was a Tewa leader from Ohkay Owingeh, a pueblo located about twenty-five miles north of present-day Santa Fe, New Mexico. He was instrumental in organizing the Pueblo Revolt of \_\_\_\_\_ as a result of his leadership, the Spanish colonizers were expelled from the region for a time.

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

- A. 1680
- B. 1680 and
- C. 1680,
- D. 1680, and

ID: 12ff7648 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is the coordination of main clauses within a sentence. This choice correctly uses a comma and the coordinating conjunction “and” to join the first main clause (“He...1680”) and the second main clause (“as...time”).

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: Hard

# Question ID c92f9518

| 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: c92f9518

In his *Naturalis historia*, Pliny the Elder praised Hipparchus’s star catalog, a second-century BCE list of roughly 850 different stars’ celestial positions. For centuries, scholars dreamed about locating a copy of this legendary lost \_\_\_\_\_ fantasy (partially) became reality in 2022, when researchers uncovered traces of the star catalog on a palimpsest, a reused parchment.

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

- A. work, that
- B. work that
- C. work. That
- D. work and that

ID: c92f9518 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 correctly to mark the boundary between one sentence ("For...work") and another ("That...parchment").

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 ("For...work" and "that...parchment") are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction. Choice D is incorrect. Without a comma preceding it, the conjunction "and" can’t be used in this way to join sentences.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 31cca369

| 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: 31cca369

The 1977 play *And the Soul Shall Dance* depicts two Japanese American farming families in Depression-era Southern California. Critics have noted the way pioneering \_\_\_\_\_ compares the experiences of *issei* (Japanese nationals who emigrated to America) and *nisei* (their American-born children).

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

- A. playwright, Wakako Yamauchi,
- B. playwright, Wakako Yamauchi
- C. playwright Wakako Yamauchi,
- D. playwright Wakako Yamauchi

ID: 31cca369 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of punctuation between titles and proper nouns. No punctuation is needed to set off the proper noun "Wakako Yamauchi" from the title that describes Yamauchi, "pioneering playwright." Because "Wakako Yamauchi" is essential information identifying the "pioneering playwright," no punctuation is necessary.

Choice A is incorrect because no punctuation is needed before or after the proper noun "Wakako Yamauchi." Setting the playwright's name off with commas suggests that it could be removed without affecting the coherence of the sentence, which isn't the case. Choice B is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the title "pioneering playwright" and the proper noun "Wakako Yamauchi." Choice C is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the proper noun "Wakako Yamauchi" and the verb "compares."

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID dd53de12

| 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: dd53de12

The forty-seven geothermal springs of Arkansas’ Hot Springs National Park are sourced via a process known as natural groundwater recharge, in which rainwater percolates downward through the earth—in this case, the porous rocks of the hills around Hot \_\_\_\_\_ collect in a subterranean basin.

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

- A. Springs to
- B. Springs: to
- C. Springs—to
- D. Springs, to

ID: dd53de12 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 dash after “Springs” pairs with the dash after “earth” to separate the supplementary element “in this case, the porous rocks of the hills around Hot Springs” from the rest 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 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: Hard

# Question ID 76407481

| 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: 76407481

The poem *Beowulf* begins with the word “hwæt,” which is an Old English \_\_\_\_\_ as “hark!” or “listen!” in some versions, the word was playfully rendered as “bro!” by Maria Dahvana Headley in her 2020 translation of the poem.

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

- A. exclamation, translated
- B. exclamation and translated
- C. exclamation translated
- D. exclamation. Translated

ID: 76407481 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 ("The poem...exclamation") and another sentence that begins with a supplementary element ("Translated...poem"). The supplementary element "translated as 'hark!' or 'listen!' in some versions" modifies the subject of the second sentence, "the word" (referring to hwæt).

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a comma splice after "exclamation." 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 C is incorrect because it results in a comma splice after "versions." A comma can't be used in this way to mark the boundary between sentences.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 025e138d

| 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: 025e138d

Jetties—long, narrow structures that extend from a landmass into the water—are often constructed to protect coastlines from erosion. Jetties can sometimes have the opposite \_\_\_\_\_ obstructing the natural flow of sand along the shore can lead to increased erosion in some areas.

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

- A. effect, though;
- B. effect, though
- C. effect; though
- D. effect, though,

ID: 025e138d 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 uses a comma to separate the supplementary adverb "though" from the preceding main clause ("Jetties can sometimes have the opposite effect") and uses a semicolon to join the next main clause ("obstructing...areas") to the rest of the sentence. Further, placing the semicolon after "though" logically indicates that the information earlier in this sentence (that jetties can sometimes cause erosion) is contrary to what might be assumed from the information in the previous sentence (that jetties are often constructed for the purpose of protecting coastlines from erosion).

Choice B is incorrect because it fails to mark the boundary between the two main clauses with appropriate punctuation. With "though...areas" functioning as a subordinate clause following the comma, this choice illogically indicates that the following information (that obstructing the natural flow of sand along the shore can sometimes lead to erosion) is contrary to the information earlier in the sentence (that jetties can sometimes cause erosion). Instead, the information following "though" supports the previous claim about the erosive effects of jetties. Choice C is incorrect because it's not conventional to use a semicolon in this way to separate a main clause from a dependent clause. Further, it illogically indicates that the following information (that obstructing the natural flow of sand along the shore can sometimes lead to erosion) is contrary to the information earlier in the sentence (that jetties can sometimes cause erosion). Instead, the information following "though" supports the previous claim about the erosive effects of jetties. Choice D is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. Commas can't be used in this way to set off a supplementary word or phrase between two main clauses.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID fbfd1f7b

| 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: fbfd1f7b

The Arctic-Alpine Botanic Garden in Norway and the Jardim Botânico of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil are two of many botanical gardens around the world dedicated to growing diverse plant \_\_\_\_\_ fostering scientific research; and educating the public about plant conservation.

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

- A. species, both native and nonnative,
- B. species, both native and nonnative;
- C. species; both native and nonnative,
- D. species both native and nonnative,

ID: fbfd1f7b Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is the punctuation of items in a complex series (a series including internal punctuation). The semicolon after “nonnative” is correctly used to separate the first item (“growing diverse plant species, both native and nonnative”) and the second item (“fostering scientific research”) in the series of things that botanical gardens are dedicated to. Further, the comma after “species” is correctly used to separate the noun phrase “diverse plant species” and the supplementary phrase “both native and nonnative” that modifies it.

Choice A is incorrect because a comma (specifically, the comma after “nonnative”) can’t be used in this way to separate items in a complex series. Choice C is incorrect because a semicolon can’t be used in this way to separate the noun phrase “diverse plant species” and the supplementary phrase “both native and nonnative” that modifies it. Further, a comma can’t be used in this way to separate items in a complex series. Choice D is incorrect because it fails to use appropriate punctuation to separate the noun phrase “diverse plant species” and the supplementary phrase “both native and nonnative” that modifies it. Further, a comma can’t be used in this way to separate items in a complex series.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 89ea1dd0

| 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: 89ea1dd0

On sunny days, dark rooftops absorb solar energy and convert it to unwanted heat, raising the surrounding air \_\_\_\_\_ a light-colored covering to an existing dark roof, either by attaching prefabricated reflective sheets or spraying on a paint-like coating, helps combat this effect.

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

- A. temperature; by adding
- B. temperature, adding
- C. temperature. Adding
- D. temperature by adding

ID: 89ea1dd0 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 correctly to mark the boundary between the first sentence (“On...temperature”) and the second sentence (“Adding...effect”). The gerund phrase beginning with “adding” is the subject of the second sentence, and the verb phrase “helps combat this effect” describes what adding a light-colored covering can do.

Choice A is incorrect because a semicolon can’t be used in this way to join the sentence “On...temperature” and the supplementary phrases that follow. Doing so leaves the verb phrase “helps combat” without a subject and thus results in a grammatically unconventional sentence. 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 D is incorrect. This choice results in a confusing and illogical sentence that suggests that adding a light-colored covering to an existing dark roof raises the temperature of the surrounding air. Furthermore, it creates ambiguity by leaving the verb phrase “helps combat” without a subject (so it isn’t clear what helps combat the effect).

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 734d6377

| 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: 734d6377

The radial velocity method, a means of indirect planetary discovery, has detected previously unknown exoplanets at vast distances from \_\_\_\_\_ the gas giant 55 Cancri d; at 60 light-years away, the Neptune-like planet Pi Mensae d; and, as of 2023, over 1,000 other exoplanets that are too far away and dim to be observed directly.

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

- A. Earth at 41 light-years away:
- B. Earth: at 41 light-years away,
- C. Earth, at 41 light-years away,
- D. Earth at 41 light-years away,

ID: 734d6377 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of punctuation within a sentence. In this choice, a colon is correctly used after the main clause (“The radial...Earth”) to introduce the complex series that follows. Furthermore, the comma after “away” is conventionally used to separate the supplementary phrase “at 41 light-years away” from the noun phrase it describes (“the gas giant 55 Cancri d”), the first item in the series.

Choice A is incorrect because placing a colon after “away” illogically separates the supplementary phrase “at 41 light-years away” from the noun phrase it describes (“the gas giant 55 Cancri d”) and attaches it to the main clause (“The radial...away”), resulting in a confusing and illogical sentence. Choice C is incorrect because a comma cannot be used in this way to mark the boundary between a main clause (“The radial...Earth”) and a complex series. Choice D is incorrect because it fails to mark the boundary between the main clause (“The radial...Earth”) and the complex series that follows with appropriate punctuation.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 74b203cd

| 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: 74b203cd

That the expansionist appetites of colonial European powers had their sights set on his country was evident to Siam’s King \_\_\_\_\_ deterring those ambitions through international diplomacy and domestic reform was perhaps his foremost achievement. Though his reign ended roughly twenty years before Siam became known by its modern name of Thailand, King Chulalongkorn is often credited with ushering the nation into modernity.

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

- A. Chulalongkorn;
- B. Chulalongkorn that
- C. Chulalongkorn,
- D. Chulalongkorn

ID: 74b203cd 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 uses a semicolon in a conventional way to join the first main clause (“That...Chulalongkorn”) and the second main clause (“detering...achievement”).

Choice B is incorrect. Using the conjunction “that” to introduce “detering...achievement” as a subordinate element of the main clause (“That...Chulalongkorn”) results in a confusing and ungrammatical sentence. Choice C is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. Without a conjunction following it, a comma can’t be used in this way to join two main clauses. Choice D is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The two main clauses are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID cab09799

| 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: cab09799

After immigrating from Mexico and obtaining U.S. citizenship, Octaviano Ambrosio Larrazolo entered politics, earning a reputation for being a fervent defender of Hispanic civil rights. In 1919 Larrazolo was elected governor of \_\_\_\_\_. In 1928 he became the nation’s first Hispanic U.S. Senator.

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

- A. New Mexico and
- B. New Mexico,
- C. New Mexico, and
- D. New Mexico

ID: cab09799 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 ("In 1919 Larrazolo was elected governor of New Mexico") and the second main clause ("in 1928 he became the nation’s first Hispanic US Senator").

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

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 7d31be24

| 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: 7d31be24

Using natural debris, such as dried \_\_\_\_\_ such as plastic bags; and more traditional art supplies, such as tree glue, Ghanaian artist Ed Franklin Gavua creates his striking Yiiiikakaii African masks, which he hopes can help viewers rethink how waste is used in their communities.

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

- A. leaves, man-made trash:
- B. leaves; man-made trash,
- C. leaves, man-made trash,
- D. leaves; man-made trash;

ID: 7d31be24 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is the punctuation of elements in a complex series. It’s conventional to use a semicolon to separate items in a complex series with internal punctuation, and in this choice, the semicolon after "leaves" is conventionally used to separate the first item ("natural debris, such as dried leaves") and the second item ("man-made trash, such as plastic bags") in the series of materials used by Gavua. Further, the comma after "trash" correctly separates the noun phrase "man-made trash" from the supplementary phrase ("such as plastic bags") that describes it.

Choice A is incorrect because a comma after "leaves" doesn’t match the semicolon used later to separate the second and third items in the series ("man-made...bags" and "and...glue"). Additionally, it’s not conventional to use a colon in this way to separate a supplementary phrase ("such as plastic bags") from the noun phrase it modifies ("man-made trash"). Choice C is incorrect because a comma after "leaves" doesn’t match the semicolon used later to separate the second and third items in the series ("man-made...bags" and "and...glue"). Choice D is incorrect because it’s not conventional to use a semicolon in this way to separate a supplementary phrase ("such as plastic bags") from the noun phrase it modifies ("man-made trash").

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 2f8baddd

| 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: 2f8baddd

Scala is referred to as a compiled programming language because it typically incorporates a compiler—a tool that translates lines of code into executable commands. Compiling isn’t exclusive to certain programming \_\_\_\_\_ any language can incorporate this tool.

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

- A. languages. However,
- B. languages; however,
- C. languages, however,
- D. languages, however;

ID: 2f8baddd 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 separate the supplementary adverb “however” from the preceding main clause (“Compiling...languages”) and uses a semicolon to join the next main clause (“any...tool”) to the rest of the sentence. Further, placing the semicolon after “however” indicates that the information in the preceding main clause (“compiling isn’t exclusive to certain programming languages”) is contrary to what might be assumed from the information in the previous sentence (Scala’s status as a compiled programming language might suggest that compiling is unique to certain languages).

Choice A is incorrect because placing a period after “languages” and starting a new sentence with “however” illogically indicates that the information in the next sentence (any language can incorporate a compiler) is contrary to the information in the previous sentence (“compiling isn’t exclusive to certain programming languages”). Instead, the information following “however” supports the previous claim. Choice B is incorrect because placing the semicolon after “languages” illogically indicates that the information in the next main clause (any language can incorporate a compiler) is contrary to the information in the previous clause (“compiling isn’t exclusive to certain programming languages”). Instead, the information following “however” supports the previous claim. Choice C is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. Commas can’t be used in this way to punctuate a supplementary word or phrase between two main clauses.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID ceb5e824

| 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: ceb5e824

From afar, African American fiber artist Bisa Butler’s portraits look like paintings, their depictions of human faces, bodies, and clothing so intricate that it seems only a fine brush could have rendered them. When viewed up close, however, the portraits reveal themselves to be \_\_\_\_\_ stitching barely visible among the thousands of pieces of printed, microcut fabric.

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

- A. quilts, and the
- B. quilts, the
- C. quilts; the
- D. quilts. The

ID: ceb5e824 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation use between a main clause and a supplementary phrase. This choice correctly uses a comma to mark the boundary between the main clause (“the portraits...quilts”) and the supplementary noun phrase (“the stitching...fabric”) that provides a further description of how the portraits can be identified as quilts.

Choice A is incorrect. A comma and the conjunction “and” can’t be used in this way to join a main clause and a supplementary noun phrase. Choice C is incorrect because a semicolon can’t be used in this way to join a main clause and a supplementary noun phrase. Choice D is incorrect because it results in a rhetorically unacceptable sentence fragment beginning with “the stitching.”

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 45adafe0

| 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: 45adafe0

Nigerian author Buchi Emecheta’s celebrated literary oeuvre includes *The Joys of Motherhood*, a novel about the changing roles of women in 1950s \_\_\_\_\_ a television play about the private struggles of a newlywed couple in Nigeria; and *Head Above Water*, her autobiography.

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

- A. Lagos, *A Kind of Marriage*,
- B. Lagos; *A Kind of Marriage*,
- C. Lagos, *A Kind of Marriage*:
- D. Lagos; *A Kind of Marriage*

ID: 45adafe0 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is the punctuation of items in a complex series (a series including internal punctuation). In this choice, the semicolon after “Lagos” is conventionally used to separate the first item (“*The Joys... Lagos*”) and the second item (“*A Kind...Nigeria*”) in the series. Further, the comma after “*Marriage*” correctly separates the title “*A Kind of Marriage*” from the supplementary phrase (“a television...Nigeria”) that describes it.

Choice A is incorrect because the comma after “Lagos” doesn’t match the semicolon used later in the series to separate the second item (“*A Kind...Nigeria*”) from the third item (“and...autobiography”). Choice C is incorrect because the comma after “Lagos” doesn’t match the semicolon used later in the series to separate the second item (“*A Kind...Nigeria*”) from the third item (“and...autobiography”). Additionally, a colon can’t be used in this way to separate the title “*A Kind of Marriage*” from the supplementary phrase (“a television...Nigeria”) that describes it. Choice D is incorrect because it fails to use appropriate punctuation to separate the title “*A Kind of Marriage*” from the supplementary phrase (“a television...Nigeria”) that describes it.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 82a9b0f6

| 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: 82a9b0f6

Hegra is an archaeological site in present-day Saudi Arabia and was the second largest city of the Nabataean Kingdom (fourth century BCE to first century CE). Archaeologist Laila Nehmé recently traveled to Hegra to study its ancient \_\_\_\_\_ into the rocky outcrops of a vast desert, these burial chambers seem to blend seamlessly with nature.

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

- A. tombs. Built
- B. tombs, built
- C. tombs and built
- D. tombs built

ID: 82a9b0f6 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 “tombs” is used correctly to mark the boundary between one sentence (“Archaeologist...tombs”) and another (“Built...nature”).

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. Without a comma preceding it, the conjunction “and” can’t be used in this way to join the two sentences. Choice D is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The sentences (“Archaeologist...tombs” and “Built...nature”) are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID eec227cb

| 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: eec227cb

In 1943, in the midst of World War II, mathematics professor Grace Hopper was recruited by the US military to help the war effort by solving complex equations. Hopper’s subsequent career would involve more than just \_\_\_\_\_ as a pioneering computer programmer, Hopper would help usher in the digital age.

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

- A. equations, though:
- B. equations, though,
- C. equations. Though,
- D. equations though

ID: eec227cb Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of punctuation to mark boundaries between supplements and clauses. The comma after “equations” is used to separate the independent clause (“Hopper’s...equation”) from the supplementary adverb phrase “though.” The colon after “though” is used to mark the boundary between the clause ending with “though” and the following clause (“as...age”). A colon used in this way introduces information that illustrates or explains information that has come before it. In this case, the colon after “though” introduces the following explanation of how Hopper’s subsequent career would involve more than just solving equations: she would become a pioneering computer programmer.

Choice B is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. A comma can’t be used in this way to join two independent clauses (“Hopper’s...though” and “as...age”) such as these. Choice C is incorrect because it results in an illogical sequence of sentences. Placing the period after “equations” and beginning the next sentence with “Though” illogically suggests that the following information (that Hopper would help usher in the digital age) is contrary to the information in the previous sentence (Hopper’s subsequent career would involve more than just solving equations). Instead, the information that follows supports the information from the previous sentence by explaining how her work and influence extended beyond solely solving equations. Choice D is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The two independent clauses (“Hopper’s...though” and “as...age”) are fused without punctuation.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 3a1de1f6

| 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: 3a1de1f6

While light is known as one of the fastest-moving substances, it slows down when passing through some types of matter. One such type of matter is a form of cooled, condensed gas called a Bose-Einstein condensate \_\_\_\_\_. Dutch physicist Lene Hau famously used a BEC to slow a beam of light to a complete halt.

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

- A. (BEC),
- B. (BEC) and
- C. (BEC);
- D. (BEC)

ID: 3a1de1f6 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 semicolon to join the first main clause ("One...(BEC)") and the second main clause ("Dutch...halt").

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

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 09151f47

| 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: 09151f47

Sociologist Alton Okinaka sits on the review board tasked with adding new sites to the Hawai’i Register of Historic Places, which includes Pi’ilanihale Heiau and the Ōpaeka’a Road Bridge. Okinaka doesn’t make such decisions \_\_\_\_\_ all historical designations must be approved by a group of nine other experts from the fields of architecture, archaeology, history, and Hawaiian culture.

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

- A. single-handedly, however;
- B. single-handedly; however,
- C. single-handedly, however,
- D. single-handedly however

ID: 09151f47 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is the punctuation of a supplementary word or phrase between two main clauses. This choice correctly uses a comma to separate the supplementary adverb “however” from the preceding main clause (“Okinaka doesn’t...single-handedly”) and a semicolon to join the next main clause (“all...culture”) to the rest of the sentence. Further, placing the semicolon after “however” correctly indicates that the information in the preceding main clause (Okinaka doesn’t make such decisions single-handedly) is contrary to what might be assumed from the information in the previous sentence (Okinaka sits on the review board that adds new sites to the Hawaii Register of Historic Places).

Choice B is incorrect because placing the semicolon after “single-handedly” and the comma after “however” illogically indicates that the information in the next main clause (all historical designations must be approved by a group of experts) is contrary to the information in the previous clause (Okinaka doesn’t make such decisions single-handedly). Choice C is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. Commas can’t be used in this way to punctuate a supplementary word or phrase between two main clauses. Choice D is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The two main clauses are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 0eda705e

| 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: 0eda705e

The Mission 66 initiative, which was approved by Congress in 1956, represented a major investment in the infrastructure of overburdened national \_\_\_\_\_. It prioritized physical improvements to the parks’ roads, utilities, employee housing, and visitor facilities while also establishing educational programming for the public.

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

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

ID: 0eda705e 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 to correctly join the first main clause (“The Mission...parks”) and the second main clause that begins with “it.”

Choice A is incorrect. When coordinating two longer main clauses such as these, it’s conventional to use a comma before the coordinating conjunction. 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 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: Hard

# Question ID a91326ea

| 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: a91326ea

While the ancient Celts—Iron Age peoples who inhabited parts of western and central Europe—weren’t a single unified group, their art often featured common elements. These included intricate patterns of interlocking spiral lines, which often held symbolic \_\_\_\_\_ of birds, horses, and other animals; and inlaid enamel accents.

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

- A. significance; depictions
- B. significance, depictions
- C. significance: depictions
- D. significance. Depictions

ID: a91326ea Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is the punctuation of elements in a complex series. It’s conventional to use a semicolon to separate items in a complex series with internal punctuation, and in this choice, the semicolon after “significance” is conventionally used to separate the first item (“intricate...significance”) and the second item (“depictions...animals”) in the series of common elements found in Celtic art. Moreover, the semicolon after “significance” matches the semicolon used later to separate the second item (“depictions...animals”) and the third item (“and...accents”) in the series.

Choice B is incorrect because a comma after “significance” doesn’t match the semicolon used later to separate the second and third items in the series (“depictions...animals” and “and...accents”). Choice C is incorrect because a colon can’t be used in this way to separate items in a complex series. Choice D is incorrect because placing a period after “significance” results in a rhetorically unacceptable sentence fragment beginning with “depictions.”

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 13cea4cd

| 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: 13cea4cd

As jazz singer Sarah Vaughan honed her vocal abilities—acquiring a sophisticated timbre and precise control over pitch, dynamics, and \_\_\_\_\_ she earned comparisons to opera icon Leontyne Price, one of her personal heroes. The comparisons highlight how Vaughan, a jazz star, had transcended genre boundaries with her singing prowess.

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

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

ID: 13cea4cd Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of punctuation within a sentence. The dash after “vibrato” pairs with the dash after “abilities” to separate the supplementary element (“acquiring...vibrato”) from the rest of the sentence. This supplementary element functions to describe the vocal abilities Vaughan developed, 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 a colon can’t be paired with a dash in this way to separate the supplementary element 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 D is incorrect because it fails to use appropriate punctuation to separate the supplementary element from the rest of the sentence.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 6261d8d0

| 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: 6261d8d0

The Limón technique, developed by Mexican-born dancer and choreographer Jose Limón, is known for its emphasis on breath control and its interplay of weight and \_\_\_\_\_ dancers may explore, for example, the moment of mid-air suspension at the top of a jump.

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

- A. weightlessness
- B. weightlessness which
- C. weightlessness,
- D. weightlessness;

ID: 6261d8d0 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 uses a semicolon in a conventional way to join the first main clause ("The Limón...weightlessness") and the second main clause ("dancers...jump").

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. The relative pronoun "which" can't be used in this way to join two main clauses. 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: Hard

# Question ID c81e6c4f

| 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: c81e6c4f

Researchers studying magnetosensation have determined why some soil-dwelling roundworms in the Southern Hemisphere move in the opposite direction of Earth’s magnetic field when searching for \_\_\_\_\_ in the Northern Hemisphere, the magnetic field points down, into the ground, but in the Southern Hemisphere, it points up, toward the surface and away from worms’ food sources.

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

- A. food:
- B. food,
- C. food while
- D. food

ID: c81e6c4f Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is colon use within a sentence. A colon used in this way introduces information that illustrates or explains information that has come before it. In this case, the colon introduces the following explanation of why some roundworms in the Southern Hemisphere move in the opposite direction of Earth’s magnetic field.

Choice B is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. A comma can’t be used in this way to join two long independent clauses (“Researchers...food” and “in...sources”) such as these. Choice C is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The two clauses (“Researchers...food” and “in...sources”) are fused without punctuation. Furthermore, the conjunction “while” fails to indicate that what follows is an explanation of why some roundworms in the Southern Hemisphere move in the opposite direction of Earth’s magnetic field. Choice D is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The two clauses (“Researchers...food” and “in...sources”) are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID b7b18879

| 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: b7b18879

A recent study tracked the number of bee species present in twenty-seven New York apple orchards over a ten-year period. \_\_\_\_\_ found that when wild growth near an orchard was cleared, the number of different bee species visiting the orchard decreased.

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

- A. Entomologist Heather Grab:
- B. Entomologist, Heather Grab,
- C. Entomologist Heather Grab
- D. Entomologist Heather Grab,

ID: b7b18879 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation use between a name and title and between a subject and a verb. No punctuation is needed between the proper noun “Heather Grab” and “entomologist,” the title that describes Grab. Additionally, no punctuation is needed between the sentence’s subject (“Entomologist Heather Grab”) and the main verb (“found”) that indicates what Grab did.

Choice A is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the subject and the verb. Choice B is incorrect because no punctuation is needed. Setting the entomologist’s name off with commas suggests that it could be removed without affecting the coherence of the sentence, which isn’t the case. Choice D is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the subject and the verb.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 0276c8da

| 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: 0276c8da

*Butterfly* is a 1988 painting by the Japanese artist Ay-O. Like many of Ay-O’s paintings, *Butterfly*, which portrays a swimmer performing the butterfly stroke, attempts to make use of the entire visual light \_\_\_\_\_ sporting rainbow-striped goggles, the rainbow-hued swimmer splashes through a wavy rainbow of water.

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

- A. spectrum
- B. spectrum:
- C. spectrum while
- D. spectrum, while

ID: 0276c8da Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of a colon within a sentence. In this choice, the colon correctly introduces the following description of how the painting makes use of the entire visual light spectrum by depicting a rainbow-hued swimmer.

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The main clauses ("Like...spectrum" and "sporting...water") are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction. Choice C is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The main clauses ("Like...spectrum" and "while...water") are fused without punctuation. Furthermore, the conjunction "while" fails to indicate that what follows is a description of how the painting makes use of the entire visual light spectrum. Choice D is incorrect because it results in a logically confusing sentence. The conjunction "while," which suggests that what follows is occurring at the same time as or despite what came before, fails to indicate that what follows is a description of how the painting makes use of the entire visual light spectrum.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID d6fe291c

| 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: d6fe291c

On November 2, 1772, amid rising tensions with Great Britain, Boston colonists formed the Boston Committee of Correspondence. By 1774, what had started as a local means of mobilizing support for the Patriot cause had grown into something far more \_\_\_\_\_ network of such committees that, facilitating communication among the colonies, helped lay the groundwork for the Continental Congress.

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

- A. extensive: a
- B. extensive; a
- C. extensive, it was a
- D. extensive. A

ID: d6fe291c Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of a colon within a sentence. In this choice, the colon is correctly used to introduce the following explanation of what the Patriot cause had grown into by 1774.

Choice B is incorrect because a semicolon can't be used in this way to join the main clause ("what...extensive") and the supplementary element ("a network...Congress"). A semicolon is conventionally used to join two main clauses, whereas a colon is conventionally used to introduce an element that explains or amplifies the information in the preceding clause, making the colon the better choice in this context. Choice C is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. The addition of the pronoun and verb "it was" forms the start of a new main clause in the sentence, and a comma can't be used in this way to mark the boundary between two main clauses. Choice D is incorrect because it results in a rhetorically unacceptable sentence fragment beginning with "a network."

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 7d90b83f

| 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: 7d90b83f

The 2022 Nobel Prize in Chemistry was awarded to three pioneers in the field of click chemistry: two-time Nobel laureate Barry Sharpless, who coined the term “click chemistry” in 1998; Carolyn Bertozzi, founder of the Bertozzi Group at \_\_\_\_\_ and Morten Meldal, a professor at the University of Copenhagen in Denmark.

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

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

ID: 7d90b83f Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. This choice correctly uses a semicolon to punctuate a complex list (which is made up of items that have commas in them).

Choice A is incorrect. This is a complex list, indicated by the semicolon between "1998" and "Carolyn Bertozzi." What comes after the blank is a separate list item, so punctuation is needed after "Stanford." Choice B is incorrect. This is a complex list, indicated by the semicolon between "1998" and "Carolyn Bertozzi." The items in this list have internal punctuation in the form of commas and must therefore be separated by semicolons to avoid confusion. Choice C is incorrect. This is a complex list, indicated by the semicolon between "1998" and "Carolyn Bertozzi." Colons aren't used to separate items in a list.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID fef27017

| 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: fef27017

Between 322 and 184 BCE, the Maurya Empire established a complex economic system that, through trade and centralized \_\_\_\_\_ funded major infrastructure projects throughout the Indian subcontinent. This included the building of many roads, canals, and hospitals.

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

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

ID: fef27017 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 "taxation" pairs with the comma after "that" to separate the supplementary element "through trade and centralized taxation" from the rest of the sentence. This supplementary element functions to identify the funding source of the Mauryan economy, 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 colon 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 dash 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 supplementary element from the rest of the sentence.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID b728bbf6

| 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: b728bbf6

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) tracks comparative price list data for its thirty-eight member countries. For instance, in July 2021, a hypothetical basket of goods priced at 100 US dollars (USD) in the United States would have cost 62 USD and 110 USD in fellow OECD \_\_\_\_\_ and Luxembourg, respectively.

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

- A. nations, Chile
- B. nations; Chile
- C. nations: Chile
- D. nations Chile

ID: b728bbf6 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of punctuation between titles and proper nouns. No punctuation is needed to set off the coordinated noun phrase "Chile and Luxembourg" from the title that describes the two countries, "fellow OECD nations." Because the proper nouns "Chile and Luxembourg" are essential information identifying the "fellow OECD nations," no punctuation is necessary.

Choice A is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the country names ("Chile and Luxembourg") and the title ("fellow OECD nations") describing them. Further, setting the countries' names off with commas suggests that they could be removed without affecting the coherence of the sentence, which isn't the case. Choice B is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the country names ("Chile and Luxembourg") and the title ("fellow OECD nations") describing them. Choice C is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the country names ("Chile and Luxembourg") and the title ("fellow OECD nations") describing them. Placing a colon after "nations" would confusingly suggest that these were the costs of the basket of goods for "fellow OECD nations" in general, not for Chile and Luxembourg specifically.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID a3c9df26

| 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: a3c9df26

Over twenty years ago, in a landmark experiment in the psychology of choice, professor Sheena lyengar set up a jam-tasting booth at a grocery store. The number of jams available for tasting \_\_\_\_\_ some shoppers had twenty-four different options, others only six. Interestingly, the shoppers with fewer jams to choose from purchased more jam.

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

- A. varied:
- B. varied,
- C. varied, while
- D. varied while

ID: a3c9df26 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of a colon within a sentence. In this choice, the colon is used in a conventional way to introduce the following description of how the number of jams available varied.

Choice B is incorrect because it creates a comma splice. A comma can't be used in this way to join two main clauses ("the number...varied" and "some...six"). Choice C is incorrect because it results in an illogical and confusing sentence. Using the conjunction "while" to join the main clause ("the number...varied") with the following clause's description of the number of jams available suggests that the variation in the number of jams is in contrast to some shoppers having twenty-four options. Choice D is incorrect because it results in an illogical and confusing sentence. Using "while" in this way suggests that the number of jams available varied during the time in which some shoppers had twenty-four options and others had six. The sentence makes clear, however, that what follows "varied" is a description of the variation, not a separate, simultaneous occurrence.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 96d1c257

| 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: 96d1c257

Detroit natives Timothy Paule and Nicole Lindsey have combined their two passions, Detroit and beekeeping, to improve the health of their city’s flowers and other vegetation. In 2017, the couple converted a vacant lot in the city into an \_\_\_\_\_ in the years that followed they acquired nine additional lots and established more than 35 hives.

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

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

ID: 96d1c257 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. Both clauses in this sentence could stand alone as complete sentences, which means they are both independent clauses. This choice uses a comma plus a coordinating conjunction to link them together, which is one of the correct ways to link two independent clauses.

Choice A is incorrect. This choice results in a run-on sentence error. Both clauses in this sentence could stand alone as complete sentences, which means they are both independent clauses. A comma by itself is not enough punctuation to link two independent clauses. Choice C is incorrect. This choice results in a run-on sentence error. Both clauses in this sentence could stand alone as complete sentences, which means they are both independent clauses. Independent clauses can only be linked in a few ways, including with a comma plus a coordinating conjunction. This choice uses the coordinating conjunction “and,” but it is missing the comma beforehand. Choice D is incorrect. This choice results in a run-on sentence error. Both clauses in this sentence could stand alone as complete sentences, which means they are both independent clauses. Independent clauses need to have certain kinds of punctuation marks between them. This choice doesn’t use any punctuation between the two clauses.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 3f5c3225

| 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: 3f5c3225

Increasing the heat on an uncovered boiling pot of water does not increase the temperature of the water. What increases is the rate at which the water turns to \_\_\_\_\_ a pressure cooker pot, though, an airtight seal traps the vapor in the pot, creating pressure that allows the temperature of the water to increase past its boiling point.

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

- A. vapor. With
- B. vapor with
- C. vapor, with
- D. vapor and with

ID: 3f5c3225 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 is used correctly to mark the boundary between one sentence ("What...vapor") and another ("With...point").

Choice B is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The sentences ("What...vapor" and "with...point") 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: Hard

# Question ID dc10f1f8

| 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: dc10f1f8

Sociologist Todd Gitlin co-opted the term “recombinant,” normally used in reference to genetic engineering, to describe serialized television shows of the 1980s. Gitlin’s use of the term referenced TV studios’ practice of repackaging successful narrative formulas as new \_\_\_\_\_ even shows that varied only slightly from other shows still attracted sizeable audiences.

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

- A. content, in that era
- B. content; in that era,
- C. content in that era,
- D. content, in that era,

ID: dc10f1f8 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B 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 ("Gitlin’s...content") and the second main clause beginning with a supplementary phrase ("in...audiences"). Further, placing a comma after "era" separates the supplementary phrase "in that era" from the rest of the main clause that follows ("even...audiences").

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. Further, this choice fails to mark the boundary between the supplementary phrase "in that era" and the rest of the main clause that follows ("even...audiences"). Choice C is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The two main clauses ("Gitlin’s...content" and "in...audiences") are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction. Choice D is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. Without a conjunction following it, a comma can’t be used in this way to join two main clauses.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID df52033a

| 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: df52033a

In 2018, a team of researchers led by Dr. Caitlin Whalen compiled every available measurement of ocean mixing rates from the past two decades. With this novel data set, the team was able to determine how current-driven mixing varies across \_\_\_\_\_ and what impact it has on the distribution of heat and nutrients in the ocean.

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

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

ID: df52033a Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation between coordinates in a sentence. The two elements "how...regions" and "what...ocean" work together as coordinates to complete the description of what the team was able to determine. Because there are only two coordinates in this case (as opposed to a series of three or more), no punctuation is needed between them.

Choice A is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the coordinates "how...regions" and "what...ocean." Choice B is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the coordinates "how...regions" and "what...ocean." Choice C is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the coordinates "how...regions" and "what...ocean."

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID e44327fb

| 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: e44327fb

Key-value pairs are an important aspect of JavaScript Object Notation (JSON), an electronic file format for storing and transmitting data. Keys function as labels, while values contain the actual information. In a JSON file storing data about fire belly \_\_\_\_\_ instance, you could encounter a key such as “species” with the associated value of “*Cynops orientalis*.”

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

- A. newts. For
- B. newts, for
- C. newts: for
- D. newts; for

ID: e44327fb 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 “newts” pairs with the comma after “instance” to separate the supplementary element “for instance” from the rest of the sentence. The supplementary element appears between the prepositional phrase (“In...newts”) and the main clause of the sentence (“you... *orientalis*”) and signals that the sentence is presenting an example of how keys and values function in JSON files.

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a sentence fragment (“In a JSON file storing data about fire belly newts”). Choice C is incorrect because a colon can’t be paired with a comma in this way to separate the supplementary element “for instance” from the rest of the sentence. Choice D is incorrect because a semicolon can’t be paired with a comma in this way to separate the supplementary element “for instance” from the rest of the sentence.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID e2f27ae9

| 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: e2f27ae9

The Balkan nation of Bosnia and Herzegovina does not have one president but \_\_\_\_\_ as members of the office of the presidency, one representing the nation’s Bosniaks, one its Serbs, and one its Croats, these elected officials take turns serving as the office’s chairperson.

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

- A. three, known
- B. three. Known
- C. three who are known
- D. three, who are known

ID: e2f27ae9 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B 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 (“The Balkan...three”) and another (“Known...chairperson”). While the supplementary element (“known...Croats”) could logically be attached to either the first main clause (“The Balkan...three”) or the second main clause (“these elected...chairperson”), end-of-sentence punctuation is needed to indicate to which sentence the supplementary element belongs.

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. In this choice, the first sentence, consisting of a main clause (“The Balkan...three”) and supplementary element (“known...Croats”), is incorrectly joined with a second main clause (“these elected...chairperson”) using a comma. A comma can’t be used in this way to join two sentences. Choice C is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. In this choice, the first sentence, consisting of a main clause (“The Balkan...three”) and a relative clause (“who are...Croats”), is incorrectly joined with a second main clause (“these elected...chairperson”) using a comma. A comma can’t be used in this way to join two sentences. Additionally, this choice omits the comma needed after “three” to mark the beginning of the supplementary relative clause (“who are known...Croats”). Choice D is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. In this choice, the first sentence, consisting of a main clause (“The Balkan...three”) and a supplementary relative clause (“who are...Croats”), is incorrectly joined with a second main clause (“these elected...chairperson”) using a comma. A comma can’t be used in this way to join two sentences.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 85b53b74

| 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: 85b53b74

Arms outstretched, right wrist over left with both hands dangling, South Korean musician Psy galloped from one foot to the other in the iconic dance of his 2012 international hit song “Gangnam Style.” Later, a statue depicting Psy’s arm-positioning during the dance was erected in the place that inspired the song’s \_\_\_\_\_ Gangnam District in Seoul, South Korea.

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

- A. name;
- B. name.
- C. name
- D. name—

ID: 85b53b74 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 dash after the main clause (“Later...name”) to introduce the supplementary element (“Gangnam...Korea”) that identifies the place that inspired the song’s name.

Choice A is incorrect because a semicolon can’t be used in this way to join the main clause (“Later...name”) and the supplementary element (“Gangnam...Korea”). A semicolon is conventionally used to join two main clauses. Choice B is incorrect because it results in a rhetorically unacceptable sentence fragment beginning with “Gangnam.” Choice C is incorrect because it fails to mark the boundary between the main clause and the supplementary element with appropriate punctuation.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 3190eed2

| 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: 3190eed2

Chondrites are stony meteorites that are undifferentiated—that is, their contents have not melted and separated into distinct layers. They are hardly \_\_\_\_\_ many chondrites experience aqueous alteration as a result of exposure to fluids, as well as fracturing, veining, and localized melting due to collisions with other objects.

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

- A. pristine, though
- B. pristine, though;
- C. pristine; though
- D. pristine, though,

ID: 3190eed2 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of punctuation within a sentence. This choice correctly uses a comma to separate the supplementary adverb "though" from the preceding main clause ("They are hardly pristine") and uses a semicolon to join the two main clauses ("They...though" and "many...objects"). Further, placing the semicolon after "though" indicates that the information in the preceding main clause (chondrites are far from pristine) is contrary to what might be assumed from the information in the previous sentence (chondrites have been generally unaltered by their environment).

Choice A is incorrect because placing the comma after "pristine" and using "though" as a subordinating conjunction illogically indicates that the information in the next main clause (many chondrites have experienced damage) is contrary to the information in the previous clause (chondrites are far from pristine). Choice C is incorrect because placing the semicolon after "pristine" illogically indicates that the information in the next main clause (many chondrites have experienced damage) is contrary to the information in the previous clause (chondrites are far from pristine). Choice D is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. Without a conjunction following it, the comma after "though" can't be used in this way to join two main clauses.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 95001433

| 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: 95001433

On March 23, 2021, a gust of wind wreaked havoc on global trade. *Ever Given*, an international shipping container vessel, became lodged in Egypt’s Suez Canal, a major shipping route between Europe and Asia. The vessel took six days to \_\_\_\_\_ it’s as heavy as two thousand blue whales when fully loaded.

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

- A. dislodge in part due to its sheer size,
- B. dislodge, in part due to its sheer size:
- C. dislodge, in part due to its sheer size,
- D. dislodge, in part, due to its sheer size

ID: 95001433 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation between main clauses and a supplementary element. This choice correctly uses a comma to mark the boundary between the main clause ("The vessel took six days to dislodge") and the supplementary element ("in part due to its sheer size") that provides additional information on why the vessel was difficult to dislodge. Additionally, this choice correctly uses a colon to introduce another main clause that describes the vessel's size ("it's as heavy as two thousand blue whales when fully loaded").

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 two main clauses ("The vessel...size" and "it's...loaded"). Additionally, it fails to mark the boundary between the main clause ("The vessel took six days to dislodge") and the supplementary element ("in part due to its sheer size"). 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 main clauses ("The vessel...size" and "it's...loaded"). Choice D is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The two main clauses ("The vessel...size" and "it's...loaded") are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID c4388f3c

| 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: c4388f3c

Latin America is known to have dozens, if not hundreds, of popular dance forms. Only five of these dances are included in international ballroom dance \_\_\_\_\_ rumba, samba, cha-cha-cha, paso doble, and jive—the last of which is grouped with the other Latin dances despite not having Latin roots.

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

- A. competitions, however:
- B. competitions, however,
- C. competitions, however;
- D. competitions; however,

ID: c4388f3c Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is the punctuation of supplementary elements within a sentence. This choice correctly uses a comma to separate the supplementary adverb "however" from the preceding main clause ("only...competitions"), and it uses a colon to introduce the list of dances that follows ("rumba...jive"). Further, placing the colon after "however" rather than before indicates that the information in the preceding main clause (only...competitions) is contrary to what might be assumed from the information in the previous sentence (Latin America has many more dance forms).

Choice B is incorrect. The comma after "however" can't be used in this way to introduce a series ("rumba...jive"). Choice C is incorrect because it isn't conventional to use a semicolon in this way to introduce a series of items, such as the list of dances. Choice D is incorrect because placing the semicolon after "competitions" illogically indicates that the following list of five Latin American dances ("rumba...jive") is contrary to the information in the previous clause (only five Latin American dances are included in international ballroom dance competitions).

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID b73b70d4

| 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: b73b70d4

In 2008, two years after the death of science fiction writer Octavia Butler, the Huntington Library in \_\_\_\_\_ received a collection of more than 8,000 items, including Butler’s private notes, research materials, manuscripts, photos, and drawings. Today, the Octavia E. Butler Collection is one of the most researched archives at the library.

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

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

ID: b73b70d4 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. No punctuation should separate the subject of the sentence (“the Huntington Library in California”) from its verb (“received”).

Choice A is incorrect. No punctuation should separate the subject of the sentence (“the Huntington Library in California”) from its verb (“received”). Choice B is incorrect. No punctuation should separate the subject of the sentence (“the Huntington Library in California”) from its verb (“received”). Choice C is incorrect. No punctuation should separate the subject of the sentence (“the Huntington Library in California”) from its verb (“received”).

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 518e8c44

| 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: 518e8c44

The haiku-like poems of Tomas Tranströmer, which present nature- and dream-influenced images in crisp, spare language, have earned the Swedish poet praise from leading contemporary \_\_\_\_\_ them Nigerian American essayist and novelist Teju Cole, who has written that Tranströmer’s works “contain a luminous simplicity.”

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

- A. writers. Among
- B. writers among
- C. writers; among
- D. writers, among

ID: 518e8c44 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation use between a main clause and a supplementary phrase. This choice correctly uses a comma to mark the boundary between the main clause (“The haiku-like...writers”) and the supplementary phrase (“among...Cole”) that specifies a contemporary writer who has praised Tomas Tranströmer’s haiku-like poems.

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a rhetorically unacceptable sentence fragment beginning with “among.” Choice B is incorrect because it fails to mark the boundary between the main clause and the supplementary phrase with appropriate punctuation. Choice C is incorrect because a semicolon can’t be used in this way to join the main clause (“The haiku-like...writers”) and the supplementary phrase (“among...Cole”).

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID cb20115e

| 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: cb20115e

In crafting her fantasy fiction, Nigerian-born British author Helen Oyeyemi has drawn inspiration from the classic nineteenth-century fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm. Her 2014 novel *Boy, Snow, Bird*, for instance, is a complex retelling of the story of Snow White, while her 2019 novel \_\_\_\_\_ offers a delicious twist on the classic tale of Hansel and Gretel.

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

- A. *Gingerbread*—
- B. *Gingerbread*,
- C. *Gingerbread*
- D. *Gingerbread*:

ID: cb20115e Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation between a subject and a verb. When, as in this case, a subject (“her 2019 novel *Gingerbread*”) is immediately followed by a verb (“offers”), 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 D is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the subject and the verb.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 63589ebe

| 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: 63589ebe

In February 1919, following the end of the First World War, women from ten countries around the world convened the Inter-Allied Women’s Conference in Paris. The conference’s goals were \_\_\_\_\_ ensure women’s participation in the proceedings of the Paris Peace Conference, to secure the right of women to serve in the League of Nations, and to advocate for human rights.

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

- A. threefold: to
- B. threefold. To
- C. threefold to
- D. threefold; to

ID: 63589ebe Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of punctuation within a sentence. In this choice, the colon correctly introduces the series of goals held by the 1919 Inter-Allied Women’s Conference.

Choice B is incorrect because placing a period after "threefold" results in a rhetorically unacceptable sentence fragment beginning with "To." Choice C is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The main clause ("The conference’s goals were threefold") and the series supplement ("to...rights") are fused without punctuation. Choice D is incorrect because a semicolon can’t be used in this way to introduce a series. A semicolon is conventionally used to join two main clauses, whereas a colon is conventionally used to introduce a series, making the colon the better choice in this context.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 48ff0d18

| 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: 48ff0d18

Researcher Lin Zhi developed a process for increasing the tensile strength—measured in gigapascals, or GPa—of silkworm \_\_\_\_\_ dissolving and reweaving the silk in a solution of iron metal ions, zinc, and sugar, Zhi increased the amount of force required to stretch it from approximately 0.5 GPa to 2 GPa.

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

- A. silk, by
- B. silk by
- C. silk and by
- D. silk. By

ID: 48ff0d18 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The independent clauses "researcher Lin Zhi...silk" and "by dissolving...2 GPa" can be grammatically separated by a period. They can stand alone as sentences, and this is the only choice that lets them do that.

Choice A is incorrect. This choice results in a grammar error called a comma splice. "Researcher Lin Zhi...silk" and "by dissolving... 2 GPa" are both independent clauses. They need to either be separated with punctuation like a period or a semicolon, or they need to be connected by a comma and a coordinating conjunction like "and." A comma alone isn't enough. Choice B is incorrect. This choice results in a grammar error called a run-on sentence. "Researcher Lin Zhi...silk" and "by dissolving...2 GPa" are both independent clauses. They need to either be separated with punctuation like a period or a semicolon, or they need to be connected by a comma and a coordinating conjunction like "and." Choice C is incorrect. This choice results in a grammar error called a run-on sentence. "Researcher Lin Zhi...silk" and "by dissolving...2 GPa" are both independent clauses. The coordinating conjunction "and" isn't enough to link them by itself. We need a comma, too.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 1652da19

| 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: 1652da19

Eli Eisenberg, a genetics expert at Tel Aviv University in Israel, recently discovered that \_\_\_\_\_ have a special genetic ability called RNA editing that confers evolutionary advantages.

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

- A. cephalopods, ocean dwellers that include the squid, the octopus, and the cuttlefish
- B. cephalopods—ocean dwellers—that include the squid, the octopus, and the cuttlefish,
- C. cephalopods, ocean dwellers that include: the squid, the octopus, and the cuttlefish,
- D. cephalopods—ocean dwellers that include the squid, the octopus, and the cuttlefish—

ID: 1652da19 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. In this choice, the dash after "cephalopods" pairs with the dash after "cuttlefish" to clearly separate the supplementary element "ocean dwellers that include the squid, the octopus, and the cuttlefish" from the rest of the sentence. This supplementary element functions to explain what cephalopods are, 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 that explains what cephalopods are from the rest of the sentence. Choice B is incorrect because it fails to use appropriate punctuation to separate the supplementary element that explains what cephalopods are from the rest of the sentence. Choice C is incorrect because it fails to use appropriate punctuation to separate the supplementary element that explains what cephalopods are from the rest of the sentence.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID c2a7673e

| 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: c2a7673e

The field of geological oceanography owes much to American \_\_\_\_ Marie Tharp, a pioneering oceanographic cartographer whose detailed topographical maps of the ocean floor and its multiple rift valleys helped garner acceptance for the theories of plate tectonics and continental drift.

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

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

ID: c2a7673e Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. “Marie tharp” is essential information that completes the first clause — the first clause doesn’t function without it. So we don’t want to separate it with punctuation.

Choice A is incorrect. This choice creates a punctuation error. “The field of geological oceanography owes much to American geologist” is unclear: which geologist are we talking about? We need the “Marie Tharp” for clarity, which means it’s essential information and should not be separated by a comma. Choice C is incorrect. This choice creates a punctuation error. “The field of geological oceanography owes much to American geologist” is unclear: which geologist are we talking about? We need the “Marie Tharp” for clarity, which means it’s essential information and should not be separated by a semicolon. Choice D is incorrect. This choice creates a punctuation error. “The field of geological oceanography owes much to American geologist” is unclear: which geologist are we talking about? We need the “Marie Tharp” for clarity, which means it’s essential information and should not be separated by a colon.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 4e39e9e1

| 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: 4e39e9e1

Gathering accurate data on water flow in the United States is challenging because of the country’s millions of miles of \_\_\_\_\_ the volume and speed of water at any given location can vary drastically over time.

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

- A. waterways and the fact that,
- B. waterways, and the fact that,
- C. waterways, and, the fact that
- D. waterways and the fact that

ID: 4e39e9e1 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation within two coordinated noun phrases. When, as in this case, a noun phrase (“the country’s millions of miles of waterways”) is coordinated with another noun phrase (“the fact”) followed by an integrated relative clause (“that the volume...time”), no punctuation is needed.

Choice A is incorrect because no punctuation is needed. Choice B is incorrect because no punctuation is needed. Choice C is incorrect because no punctuation is needed.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 13809bdb

| 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: 13809bdb

The term “retroflex” derives from Latin and means “bent back,” an apt descriptor for the branch of consonants—retroflex consonants—pronounced with the tongue curling up and back in the mouth. In many languages, including English, these consonants are \_\_\_\_\_ in some dialects of Mandarin, however, four such consonants (“ch,” “sh,” “zh,” and “r”) are relatively common.

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

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

ID: 13809bdb 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 uses a semicolon in a conventional way to join the first main clause ("In many...rare") and the second main clause ("in some...common") in this sentence.

Choice A is incorrect. Joining the first main clause ("In many...rare") and the second main clause ("in some...common") with the conjunction "and" conflicts with the use of "however" later in the sentence, resulting in a confusing and illogical sentence. 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 because it results in a run-on sentence. The two main clauses are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 67d9e4a1

| 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: 67d9e4a1

Beatrix Potter is perhaps best known for writing and illustrating children’s books such as *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* (1902), but she also dedicated herself to mycology, the study of \_\_\_\_\_ more than 350 paintings of the fungal species she observed in nature and submitting her research on spore germination to the Linnean Society of London.

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

- A. fungi; producing
- B. fungi. Producing
- C. fungi producing
- D. fungi, producing

ID: 67d9e4a1 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation use between two supplementary phrases following the coordinate clause (“but she...mycology”). This choice correctly uses a comma to mark the boundary between the supplementary noun phrase (“the study of fungi”) that defines the term “mycology” and the supplementary participial phrase (“producing...London”) that provides additional information about the extent to which Potter dedicated herself to mycology.

Choice A is incorrect because a semicolon can’t be used in this way to join two supplementary phrases following a coordinate clause. Choice B is incorrect because it results in a rhetorically unacceptable sentence fragment beginning with “producing.” Choice C is incorrect. The lack of punctuation results in a sentence that illogically suggests that the study of fungi is producing more than 350 paintings.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID ab334e14

| 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: ab334e14

Recently unearthed Neronian tools in France dating to 54,000 years ago and attributed to *Homo sapiens* may provide evidence that interactions between Neanderthals and modern humans occurred 10,000 years earlier than was previously \_\_\_\_\_ finding that, if true, would overturn current theories about *H. sapiens* migration during the Upper Paleolithic.

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

- A. supposed; a
- B. supposed. A
- C. supposed a
- D. supposed, a

ID: ab334e14 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 ("Recently...supposed") and the supplementary element ("a finding...Paleolithic") that provides additional information about the implications of the Neronian tool discovery.

Choice A is incorrect because a semicolon can't be used in this way to join the main clause ("Recently...supposed") and the supplementary element ("a finding...Paleolithic"). Choice B is incorrect because it results in a rhetorically unacceptable sentence fragment beginning with "a finding." Choice C is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The main clause ("Recently...supposed") and the supplementary element ("a finding...Paleolithic") are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 6b07b1f2

| 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: 6b07b1f2

During the decades-long movement to codify the rights of Latinos in the US, certain events were pivotal: the founding of social justice group the League of United Latin American Citizens in \_\_\_\_\_ *Katzenbach v. Morgan* court decision in 1966, which affirmed the rights of Latino voters, is another such event.

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

- A. 1929. For one, the
- B. 1929, for one, the
- C. 1929 for one, the
- D. 1929, for one. The

ID: 6b07b1f2 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The conventions being tested are punctuation use between sentences and the punctuation of a supplementary element. This choice correctly uses a period to mark the boundary between one sentence ("During...one") and another ("The *Katzenbach v. Morgan*...event") and uses a comma to separate the supplementary phrase "for one" from the preceding main clause. Further, placing the period after "for one" correctly indicates that the information in the preceding main clause ("the founding...1929") is the first example provided of a pivotal event in the Latino rights movement.

Choice A is incorrect because placing the period after "1929" illogically indicates that the information in the next main clause (describing the *Katzenbach v. Morgan* court decision) is the first example provided of a pivotal event in the Latino rights movement; rather, it's a second example. Choice B is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. A comma can't be used in this way to join two main clauses. Choice C is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. A comma can't be used in this way to join two main clauses. Moreover, it fails to use appropriate punctuation to separate the supplementary element "for one" from the preceding main clause.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID baab8c05

| 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: baab8c05

A conceptual artist and designer embraced by both the art world and the fashion \_\_\_\_\_ Mary Ping was chosen to curate the exhibition *Front Row: Chinese American Designers* for the Museum of Chinese in America.

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

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

ID: baab8c05 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D 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 (“A conceptual artist...world”), which describes Mary Ping, and the main clause (“Mary...America”).

Choice A is incorrect because it fails to mark the boundary between the supplementary phrase (“A conceptual artist...world”) and the main clause (“Mary...America”) with appropriate punctuation. Choice B is incorrect because a colon can’t be used in this way to join the supplementary phrase (“A conceptual artist...world”) and the main clause (“Mary...America”). In this context, the colon incorrectly suggests that the information in the supplementary phrase is an explanation or amplification of the information in the main clause (Mary Ping being chosen to curate the exhibition), which isn’t the case. Choice C is incorrect because a semicolon can’t be used in this way to join the supplementary phrase (“A conceptual artist...world”) and the main clause (“Mary...America”). Semicolons are conventionally used to separate two main clauses or to separate items in a complex series.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 8daeb4f3

| 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: 8daeb4f3

In addition to advocating for South America’s independence in two political treatises, the *Cartagena Manifesto* and the *Letter from Jamaica*, Simón Bolívar personally led armies against the Spanish, liberating three South American territories—New Granada (present-day Colombia and Panama), Venezuela, and Quito (present-day \_\_\_\_\_ from colonial rule.

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

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

ID: 8daeb4f3 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 “Ecuador” and the closing parenthesis pairs with the dash after “territories” to separate the supplementary element (“New...Ecuador”) from the rest of the sentence. The supplementary element specifies the three South American territories that Simón Bolívar liberated, 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. Furthermore, punctuation isn’t needed between “Ecuador” and the closing parenthesis. Choice B is incorrect because it fails to use appropriate punctuation 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 to separate the supplementary element from the rest of the sentence.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 526444f5

| 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: 526444f5

The Tantaquidgeon Museum in Uncasville, Connecticut, was founded in 1931 with the goal of showcasing the culture and history of the Mohegan \_\_\_\_\_. Today, nearly a century later, it is the oldest Native-owned and -operated museum in the country.

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

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

ID: 526444f5 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. This choice uses a comma and a coordinating conjunction (“and”) to join two independent clauses (“The Tantaquidgeon...Tribe” and “Today...country”).

Choice B is incorrect. This choice results in a grammar error known as a run-on sentence. The clauses before and after “Tribe” are both independent, so they need to be separated with some sort of punctuation. Choice C is incorrect. This choice results in a grammar error known as a run-on sentence. The clauses before and after “and” are both independent, so they can’t be linked with just a conjunction. A comma would also be required. Choice D is incorrect. This choice results in a grammar error called a comma splice. The clauses before and after “Tribe” are both independent, so they can’t be linked with just a comma. A coordinating conjunction like “and” or “but” would also be required.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 9fbd369d

| 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: 9fbd369d

As the fourteenth US librarian of Congress, Carla Hayden has many responsibilities. These include overseeing the Library of Congress’s collections, which boast more than 162 million \_\_\_\_\_ the US Copyright Office, which registers copyright claims and advises Congress on copyright law; and appointing the US poet laureate.

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

- A. items managing
- B. items, managing
- C. items; managing
- D. items. Managing

ID: 9fbd369d Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is the punctuation of elements in a complex series. It’s conventional to use a semicolon to separate items in a complex series with internal punctuation, and in this choice, the semicolon after "items" is conventionally used to separate the first item ("overseeing...items") and the second item ("managing...law") in a list of Hayden’s responsibilities.

Choice A is incorrect because it fails to use appropriate punctuation to separate the first item and the second item in the complex series. Choice B is incorrect because a comma after "items" doesn’t match the semicolon used later to separate the second and third items in the series ("managing...law" and "and appointing the US poet laureate"). Choice D is incorrect because it results in a rhetorically unacceptable sentence fragment beginning with "Managing."

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 2b9244cd

| 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: 2b9244cd

In 2021, Mexican biologist Martha Lydia Macías-Rubalcava led a review of the scientific literature related to endophytic fungi (i.e., fungi that live inside a host \_\_\_\_\_ researching 120 endophytic fungi–produced compounds, she found that their phytotoxicity can make them viable alternatives to chemical herbicides for controlling weeds.

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

- A. plant). By
- B. plant), by
- C. plant) and by
- D. plant) by

ID: 2b9244cd 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 is used correctly to mark the boundary between one sentence ("In...plant") and another ("By...weeds"). The prepositional phrase beginning with "by" modifies the subject of the next sentence, "she," which refers to Macías-Rubalcava.

Choice B is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. A comma can't be used in this way to join two sentences. Choice C is incorrect. Without a comma preceding it, the conjunction "and" can't be used in this way to join two sentences. Choice D is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The two sentences are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 501005cc

| 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: 501005cc

As a behavioral economist, Katy Milkman of the University of Pennsylvania recognizes that people sometimes make irrational economic decisions. Milkman’s research can thus address anomalies that neoclassical economic \_\_\_\_\_ assume that people are consistently rational decision-makers—cannot explain.

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

- A. models—which
- B. models, which
- C. models which
- D. models which—

ID: 501005cc Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of punctuation within a sentence. The dashes after "models" and "decision-makers" correctly separate the supplementary element "which assume that people are consistently rational decision-makers" from the rest of the sentence. This punctuation indicates that this element could be removed without affecting the grammatical coherence 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 it interrupts the sentence at an illogical and grammatically incoherent point. The dash should be placed before "which," not after it, to mark the beginning of the supplementary element.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 5811ab2f

| 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: 5811ab2f

In the 1950s, novel audio technologies allowed the addition of another instrument to jazz and swing \_\_\_\_\_ relatively quiet instrument, its full range of sound was finally audible alongside the blaring brass instruments of the time, allowing flautists like Bennie Maupin and Bobbi Humphrey to perform with other jazz greats.

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

- A. music, the flute, a
- B. music. The flute, a
- C. music; the flute, a
- D. music: the flute. A

ID: 5811ab2f Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of punctuation within and between sentences. In this choice, the colon correctly introduces the name of the instrument (the flute) that novel audio technologies allowed to be added to jazz and swing. In addition, the period is used to correctly mark the boundary between one sentence ("In...flute") and another ("A relatively...greats").

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. A comma can't be used in this way to join two main clauses ("In...quiet instrument" and "its...greats"). Choice B is incorrect. In standard English, it's unconventional to form a sentence in this way with two uncoordinated subjects ("the flute" and "its full range of sound"), and the lack of a clear main subject results in an awkwardly constructed and confusing sentence. Choice C is incorrect. In standard English, it's unconventional to form an independent clause in this way with two uncoordinated subjects ("the flute" and "its full range of sound"), and the lack of a clear main subject results in an awkwardly constructed and confusing clause.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 467ca468

| 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: 467ca468

Fernando Palma Rodríguez creates robotic sculptures that combine mechanical elements with materials like feathers, soil, and seeds. The artist is from a rural farming community outside Mexico City, and he studied engineering in college. The natural and mechanical \_\_\_\_\_ highlight these two aspects of his background.

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

- A. materials that Palma Rodríguez uses in his art,
- B. materials that Palma Rodríguez uses in his art
- C. materials, that Palma Rodríguez uses in his art,
- D. materials, that Palma Rodríguez uses in his art

ID: 467ca468 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is the punctuation of an integrated relative clause within a sentence. No punctuation is needed between the noun phrase (“The natural and mechanical materials”) and the integrated relative clause (“that Palma Rodríguez uses in his art”). The integrated relative clause provides essential information about the materials, so no punctuation should separate it from the noun phrase it modifies. Additionally, no punctuation is needed between the sentence’s subject (“The natural and mechanical materials that Palma Rodríguez uses in his art”) and its main verb (“highlight”).

Choice A is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the sentence’s subject (“The natural...art”) and its main verb (“highlight”). Choice C is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the noun phrase (“The natural...materials”) and the integrated relative clause (“that...art”) that modifies it. Additionally, no punctuation is needed between the sentence’s subject (“The natural...art”) and its main verb (“highlight”). Choice D is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the noun phrase (“The natural...materials”) and the integrated relative clause (“that...art”) that modifies it.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 10f7ac75

| 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: 10f7ac75

Jamaican British artist Willard Wigan is known for his remarkable \_\_\_\_\_ so small that they are best viewed through a microscope, Wigan’s sculptures are made from tiny natural materials, such as spiderweb strands.

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

- A. microsculptures creations
- B. microsculptures, creations
- C. microsculptures. Creations
- D. microsculptures and creations

ID: 10f7ac75 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation between sentences. In this choice, the period is used to correctly mark the boundary between one sentence ("Jamaican...microsculptures") and another ("Creations...strands"). The noun phrase beginning with "creations" modifies the subject of the next sentence, "Wigan’s sculptures."

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The sentences ("Jamaican...microsculptures" and "Creations...strands") are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction. 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 D is incorrect. Without a comma preceding it, the conjunction "and" can’t be used in this way to join sentences.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 6c160d2d

| 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: 6c160d2d

In 1955, Indian Bengali filmmaker Satyajit Ray released his first movie, *Pather* \_\_\_\_\_ quiet black-and-white drama about a family in rural India, Ray’s film was quite different from the loud, colorful action-romance movies that were popular at the time.

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

- A. *Panchali* a
- B. *Panchali*, which was a
- C. *Panchali*, a
- D. *Panchali*. A

ID: 6c160d2d 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...*Panchali*") and another ("A quiet...time"). The phrase beginning with "a quiet" modifies the subject of the next sentence, "Ray’s film."

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

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID a10c4f7a

| 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: a10c4f7a

American writer Edwidge Danticat, who emigrated from Haiti in 1981, has won acclaim for her powerful short stories, novels, and \_\_\_\_\_ her lyrical yet unflinching depictions of her native country’s turbulent history, writer Robert Antoni has compared Danticat to Nobel Prize–winning novelist Toni Morrison.

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

- A. essays, praising
- B. essays and praising
- C. essays praising
- D. essays. Praising

ID: a10c4f7a 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 “essays” is used correctly to mark the boundary between one sentence (“American...essays”) and another (“praising...Morrison”). The participial phrase beginning with “Praising” modifies the subject of the second sentence, “writer Robert Antoni.”

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 C is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. The sentences (“American...essays” and “Praising...Morrison”) are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 978a7f27

| 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: 978a7f27

Digital artist Jung (Lulu) Chen primarily uses a suite of software tools to create illustrations for children’s books. To manifest the warm and welcoming atmospheres that are a signature of her \_\_\_\_\_ she occasionally relies on more traditional art techniques, such as painting with watercolors.

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

- A. work, though,
- B. work, though
- C. work; though,
- D. work, though;

ID: 978a7f27 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of punctuation within a sentence. The comma after "work" pairs with the comma after "though" to separate the supplementary element "though" from the rest of the sentence. This supplementary element signals that what follows is an exception to Chen using software tools to create illustrations, and the pair of commas indicates that this element could be removed without affecting the grammatical coherence of the sentence.

Choice B is incorrect because the comma after "work" must be paired with a comma after "though" to separate the supplementary element from the rest of the sentence. Choice C 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 D 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.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID a66d8f86

| 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: a66d8f86

Quantum particles of light—photons—provide an unhackable means of transmitting encryption keys over networks, as attempts to observe particles in quantum states will invariably alter the particles \_\_\_\_\_ dismantle any information they transmit.

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

- A. and in the process,
- B. and, in the process,
- C. and in the process—
- D. and, in the process

ID: a66d8f86 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. This choice uses paired punctuation in the form of two commas to set off the nonessential phrase "in the process."

Choice A is incorrect. The phrase "in the process" is a nonessential element and needs to be set off with paired punctuation. We need a comma after "and" to match the one after "process." Choice C is incorrect. The phrase "in the process" is a nonessential element and needs to be set off with paired punctuation, so we would need a dash after "and" to match the one following "process." Choice D is incorrect. The phrase "in the process" is a nonessential element and needs to be set off with paired punctuation. We would need a comma after "process" to match the one following "and."

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 961a8575

| 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: 961a8575

When external forces are applied to common glass made from silicates, energy builds up around minuscule defects in the material, resulting in fractures. Recently, engineer Erkka Frankberg of Tampere University in Finland used the chemical \_\_\_\_\_ to make a glassy solid that can withstand higher strain than silicate glass can before fracturing.

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

- A. compound, aluminum oxide
- B. compound aluminum oxide,
- C. compound, aluminum oxide,
- D. compound aluminum oxide

ID: 961a8575 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of punctuation around noun phrases. No punctuation is needed because the noun phrase “aluminum oxide” is a restrictive appositive, meaning that it provides essential identifying information about the noun phrase before it, “the chemical compound,” and thus doesn’t require punctuation around it.

Choice A is incorrect because no punctuation is needed. Choice B is incorrect because no punctuation is needed. Choice C is incorrect because the noun phrase “aluminum oxide” is a restrictive appositive. Setting the phrase off with punctuation suggests that it could be removed without affecting the coherence of the sentence, which isn’t the case.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID fa32e106

| 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: fa32e106

For scientists to produce new iron nanoparticles of a specific size or strength, they must first be able to monitor reactions between oxygen and existing iron nanoparticles at a near-atomic level of detail. Fortunately, chemistry \_\_\_\_\_ and his colleagues at Temple University recently developed a new approach that does just that.

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

- A. professor Yugang Sun
- B. professor Yugang Sun,
- C. professor, Yugang Sun,
- D. professor, Yugang Sun

ID: fa32e106 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of punctuation between titles and proper nouns. No punctuation is needed between the proper noun “Yugang Sun” and the title that describes Sun, “chemistry professor.” Furthermore, no punctuation is needed after “Sun” because “chemistry professor Yugang Sun and his colleagues at Temple University” functions as the coordinated subject of the sentence, and together Sun and colleagues performed the action of developing a new approach to producing iron nanoparticles.

Choice B is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the proper noun “Yugang Sun” and the coordinated noun phrase “and his colleagues at Temple University.” Choice C is incorrect because no punctuation is needed before or after the proper noun “Yugang Sun.” Setting off the professor’s name with commas suggests that it could be removed without affecting the coherence of the sentence, which isn’t the case. Choice D is incorrect because no punctuation is needed between the title “chemistry professor” and the proper noun “Yugang Sun.”

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 918c076b

| 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: 918c076b

A subseasonal weather forecast attempts to predict weather conditions three to four weeks in \_\_\_\_ its predictions are therefore more short-term than those of the seasonal forecast, which attempts to predict the weather more than a month in advance.

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

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

ID: 918c076b Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The clause “A subseasonal...advance” and the clause “its predictions...forecast” are both independent clauses, so using a semicolon to separate them is grammatically correct.

Choice A is incorrect. This choice creates a run-on sentence error. The clause “A subseasonal...advance” and the clause “its predictions...forecast” are both independent clauses, so a comma is not enough to separate them. Choice B is incorrect. This choice creates a run-on sentence error. The clause “A subseasonal...advance” and the clause “its predictions...forecast” are both independent clauses, so they need to be separated with specific punctuation (a period, a semi-colon, a colon, a dash, or a comma + a coordinating conjunction). Choice D is incorrect. This choice creates a run-on sentence error. The clause “A subseasonal...advance” and the clause “its predictions...forecast” are both independent clauses, so the word “and” by itself is not enough to separate them. There would need to be a comma before “and” for this choice to work.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 50986e2b

| 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: 50986e2b

Since the nineteenth century, Egyptologists have commonly divided ancient Egyptian history into three primary \_\_\_\_ Old Kingdom (2700–2200 BCE), the Middle Kingdom (2050–1800 BCE), and the New Kingdom (1550–1100 BCE). Some historians, however, criticize the names of these periods for revealing more about the culture of the mainly European Egyptologists than that of ancient Egypt itself.

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

- A. periods. The
- B. periods: the
- C. periods; the
- D. periods, the

ID: 50986e2b Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is punctuation use between a main clause and an enumerated series. In this choice, a colon is correctly used after the main clause (“Since...periods”) to introduce the series identifying the three primary periods of ancient Egyptian history.

Choice A is incorrect because placing a period after “periods” results in a rhetorically unacceptable sentence fragment beginning with “the Old Kingdom.” Choice C is incorrect because a semicolon can’t be used in this way to introduce a series. A semicolon is conventionally used to join two main clauses or to separate items in a complex series, neither of which is the case here. Choice D is incorrect because a comma is not conventionally used to mark the boundary between the main clause (“Since...periods”) and an enumerated series (“the Old Kingdom...(1550–1100 BCE)”) that contains internal commas. Using a comma in this way creates ambiguity about which commas separate elements in the series and which mark other boundaries in the sentence, making the colon the best choice.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 7e30b2e0

| 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: 7e30b2e0

To serve local families during the Great Depression, innovative New York City librarian Pura Belpré offered storytelling in both English and Spanish, an uncommon \_\_\_\_\_ celebrated *el Día de los Tres Reyes Magos*, an important community holiday; and put on puppet shows dramatizing Puerto Rican folktales.

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

- A. practice, at the time
- B. practice at the time;
- C. practice, at the time,
- D. practice at the time,

ID: 7e30b2e0 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is the punctuation of elements in a complex series. It’s conventional to use a semicolon to separate items in a complex series with internal punctuation, and in this choice, the semicolon after "time" is conventionally used to separate the first item ("offered...time") and the second ("celebrated...holiday") in the series of activities that librarian Pura Belpré offered. Moreover, the semicolon after "time" matches the semicolon used later to separate the second item ("celebrated...holiday") and the third ("and...folktales") in the series.

Choice A is incorrect because it fails to use appropriate punctuation to separate the first item and the second item in the complex series. Furthermore, a comma isn’t needed between the noun "practice" and the prepositional phrase "at the time" because the prepositional phrase is essential to the full meaning of the phrase "an uncommon practice at the time." Choice C is incorrect because a comma after "time" doesn’t match the semicolon used later to separate the second ("celebrated...holiday") and third ("and...folktales") items in the series. Furthermore, a comma isn’t needed between the noun "practice" and the prepositional phrase "at the time" because the prepositional phrase is essential to the full meaning of the phrase "an uncommon practice at the time." Choice D is incorrect because a comma after "time" doesn’t match the semicolon used later to separate the second ("celebrated...holiday") and third ("and...folktales") items in the series.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 817a9286

| 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: 817a9286

The first computerized spreadsheet, Dan Bricklin’s *VisiCalc*, improved financial recordkeeping not only by providing users with an easy means of adjusting data in spreadsheets but also by automatically updating all calculations that were dependent on these \_\_\_\_\_ to VisiCalc’s release, changing a paper spreadsheet often required redoing the entire sheet by hand, a process that could take days.

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

- A. adjustments prior
- B. adjustments, prior
- C. adjustments. Prior
- D. adjustments and prior

ID: 817a9286 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 correctly to mark the boundary between the first sentence (“The...adjustments”) and the second sentence (“Prior...days”). Because the adverbial phrase beginning with “prior” indicates when changing a spreadsheet required redoing the sheet by hand, that phrase belongs with the second sentence.

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a run-on sentence. Two sentences are fused without punctuation and/or a conjunction. 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 D is incorrect. Without a comma preceding it, the conjunction “and” can’t be used in this way to join the sentences.

Question Difficulty: Hard

# Question ID 31be2837

| 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: 31be2837

During the English neoclassical period (1660–1789), many writers imitated the epic poetry and satires of ancient Greece and Rome. They were not the first in England to adopt the literary modes of classical \_\_\_\_\_ some of the most prominent figures of the earlier Renaissance period were also influenced by ancient Greek and Roman literature.

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

- A. antiquity, however
- B. antiquity, however,
- C. antiquity, however;
- D. antiquity; however,

ID: 31be2837 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is the punctuation of a supplementary phrase following a clause. This choice uses a comma to separate the supplementary adverb phrase "however" from the independent clause it modifies ("They...antiquity") and uses a semicolon to join the first independent clause ("They...antiquity") and the second independent clause ("some...literature"). Further, placing the semicolon after "however" indicates that the information in the clause that this is part of (that neoclassical writers were not the first to adopt classical literary modes) is contrary to what might be assumed from the information in the previous sentence (that the neoclassical writers were unique in imitating classical epic poetry and satires).

Choice A is incorrect because it fails to mark the boundary after "however" between the two independent clauses with appropriate punctuation. Choice B is incorrect because the comma after "however" can't be used in this way to mark the boundary between the two independent clauses. Choice D is incorrect because placing the semicolon after "antiquity" illogically indicates that the information in the clause that this is part of (that prominent Renaissance figures were also influenced by classical literature) is contrary to the information in the previous clause (that neoclassical writers were not the first to adopt classical literary modes).

Question Difficulty: Hard