

Question ID 6377aab4

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 6377aab4

Rydra Wong, the protagonist of Samuel R. Delany’s 1966 novel *Babel-17*, is a poet, an occupation which, in Delany’s work, is not ____: nearly a dozen of the characters that populate his novels are poets or writers.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. infallible
- B. atypical
- C. lucrative
- D. tedious

ID: 6377aab4 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of Samuel R. Delany’s character Rydra Wong. As used in this context, “atypical” would mean unrepresentative or not common. The text indicates that Wong is one of “nearly a dozen” characters in Delany’s novels who are poets or writers. This context conveys that being a poet isn’t an atypical occupation for a character in one of Delany’s works.

Choice A is incorrect because “infallible” means to be accurate or without fault, which wouldn’t make sense in context. The text focuses on the fact that Delany has written many characters who are poets and writers. This context suggests that the occupation isn’t atypical for Delany, not that the occupation isn’t infallible, or problematic. Choice C is incorrect because “lucrative” means to be profitable, which wouldn’t make sense in context. If writing poet characters weren’t profitable, it wouldn’t be logical to explain this by citing that Delany gave many of his characters the same occupation. Choice D is incorrect because “tedious” means to be boring, which wouldn’t make sense in context. The text focuses on the fact that Delany has written many characters who are poets and writers. This context suggests that the occupation isn’t atypical for Delany, not that the occupation isn’t tedious.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 7cff9832

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 7cff9832

A journalist and well-respected art critic of nineteenth-century Britain, Lady Elizabeth Rigby Eastlake did not hesitate to publish reviews that went against popular opinion. One of her most divisive works was an essay questioning the idea of photography as an emerging medium for fine art: in the essay, Eastlake _____ that the value of photographs was informational rather than creative.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. exposed
- B. asserted
- C. discovered
- D. doubted

ID: 7cff9832 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. "Asserted" means "stated confidently." Eastlake "did not hesitate to publish reviews going against popular opinion," so we can assume that she was confident in sharing her opinions.

Choice A is incorrect. "Exposed" means "made visible by uncovering" and, when talking about ideas, tends to be used in relation to uncovering the truth. Eastlake was sharing an opinion, not uncovering a truth. Choice C is incorrect. "Discovered" means "found," but Eastlake was writing an opinion essay. She was writing her own opinion, not "discovering" a new universal truth. Choice D is incorrect. "Doubted" means "didn't believe in." We're told that Eastlake "questioned" the idea that photography could be fine art. Placing "doubted" in the blank would actually suggest that Eastlake argued that photos were valuable for creativity and not for information, which is the opposite of what we were told she believes.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 55b66091

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 55b66091

The discoverers of the minor planet 1227 Geranium named it after the plant genus that includes cranesbills. Most of the recently discovered minor planets, however, are given only an identification number, largely due to there being over 500,000 such bodies known at present, which makes the already challenging task of finding a unique name for each nearly _____.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. insurmountable
- B. feasible
- C. substantial
- D. unnecessary

ID: 55b66091 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of the difficulty in naming a large number of minor planets. In this context, "insurmountable" means impossible to overcome or too difficult to solve. The text establishes that coming up with distinct names for minor planets is already a difficult task that has become even more challenging because there are now more than 500,000 known minor planets. The logical conclusion is that finding unique names for such a vast number of celestial objects has become virtually impossible—or insurmountable—which explains why the majority of recently discovered minor planets receive only identification numbers instead of proper names.

Choice B is incorrect because "feasible" means possible to do or achieve, which would contradict the logic of the text. The text indicates that the task of naming minor planets has become more difficult because of their large number. The text then explains that this is why most new discoveries receive only identification numbers. If the task were feasible, there would be no reason to abandon the practice of giving proper names to minor planets in favor of using only numbers. Choice C is incorrect because "substantial" means considerable in size, amount, or importance. While the text does suggest that naming all minor planets would be a significant undertaking, describing the task as substantial wouldn’t logically explain why the naming practice has been largely abandoned in favor of using only identification numbers. The text suggests that the task has become virtually impossible (insurmountable), not merely large or significant. Choice D is incorrect because "unnecessary," which means not needed, would suggest that giving proper names to minor planets serves no purpose. However, the text doesn’t question the value or purpose of naming minor planets; rather, it explains that the sheer number of discoveries has made the already challenging naming task nearly impossible to complete. The text provides an example of a named minor planet (1227 Geranium), indicating that naming has been considered worthwhile but has become impractical because of the volume.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 6694e9cc

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 6694e9cc

The subscription model in which consumers who do not deliberately cancel their subscriptions automatically pay recurring fees for access to products and services benefits retailers when consumer _____ is high. Many of the 8.5 percent of subscribers who canceled their food and beverage subscriptions in January 2022 had stopped valuing their subscriptions long before then, but sellers profited from those customers’ passivity in the interim.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. inertia
- B. decisiveness
- C. evasion
- D. turnover

ID: 6694e9cc Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of when the subscription model benefits retailers. In this context, “inertia” means a tendency to remain inactive or unchanged. The text describes a subscription model in which consumers continue to pay recurring fees unless they actively cancel and indicates that retailers profit when consumers fail to cancel even after they have stopped valuing the subscription. The text reinforces this by stating that sellers profited from canceling customers’ “passivity in the interim”—that is, the period during which those customers had ceased valuing their subscriptions but had not yet acted to cancel. This context supports the idea that the model benefits retailers when consumer inertia is high—that is, when consumers tend to remain inactive rather than take action to cancel.

Choice B is incorrect because saying that the subscription model benefits retailers when consumer “decisiveness,” or quick and firm action, is high would contradict the text. The text indicates that retailers profit from consumer “passivity”—the failure to act—and decisive consumers would presumably cancel subscriptions promptly once they stopped valuing them, eliminating the retailers’ benefit. Choice C is incorrect because saying that the subscription model benefits retailers when consumer “evasion,” or active avoidance, is high wouldn’t make sense in this context. Evasion implies deliberate action to avoid something, but the text describes consumers as passive—they fail to cancel not because they actively avoid doing so but because they don’t take action at all. Choice D is incorrect because saying that the subscription model benefits retailers when consumer “turnover,” or the rate at which customers are replaced by new ones, is high would contradict the text. The text indicates that retailers profit when consumers continue paying without canceling, which means retailers benefit from retaining consumers, not from a high rate of consumer replacement.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID d9c8aab3

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: d9c8aab3

To demonstrate that the integrity of underground metal pipes can be assessed without unearthing the pipes, engineer Aroba Saleem and colleagues _____ the tendency of some metals’ internal magnetic fields to alter under stress: the team showed that such alterations can be measured from a distance and can reveal concentrations of stress in the pipes.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. hypothesized
- B. discounted
- C. redefined
- D. exploited

ID: d9c8aab3 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of using magnetism to detect stress in buried metal pipes. In this context, "exploited" means made productive use of. The text indicates that the magnetic fields of some metals change under stress and that Saleem and colleagues showed that it is possible to measure those changes from a distance, thereby demonstrating that the integrity of underground metal pipes can be evaluated without having to unearth them. This context thus indicates that Saleem and colleagues made productive use of, or exploited, this tendency of the metals’ magnetic fields.

Choice A is incorrect because in this context, "hypothesized" would mean made a tentative assumption to be evaluated in a study or experiment. Although Saleem and colleagues may have had one or more hypotheses for these experiments, the text presents the information about the tendency of some metals’ magnetic fields to change under stress as a known fact that the researchers made productive use of, not as a hypothesis to be evaluated. The text after the colon indicates that the researchers were not evaluating whether such changes occur but whether those changes can be measured at a distance. Choice B is incorrect because in this context, "discounted" would mean downplayed or ignored, but the text does not suggest that Saleem and colleagues minimized or ignored the tendency of the magnetic fields of some metals to change under stress. Rather, the text indicates that this tendency is the basis for Saleem and colleagues’ method of assessing the pipes’ integrity. Choice C is incorrect because nothing in the text indicates that Saleem and colleagues "redefined," or reevaluated or reformulated, the tendency of some metals’ magnetic fields to change under stress. Instead, the text indicates that the researchers made use of that tendency to demonstrate that it is possible to evaluate the integrity of underground pipes without unearthing them.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 2373633d

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 2373633d

Although science fiction was dominated mostly by white male authors when Octavia Butler, a Black woman, began writing, she did not view the genre as _____. Butler broke into the field with the publication of several short stories and her 1976 novel *Patternmaster*, and she later became the first science fiction writer to win a prestigious MacArthur Fellowship.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. legitimate
- B. impenetrable
- C. compelling
- D. indecipherable

ID: 2373633d Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it most logically completes the discussion of Octavia Butler’s career. In this context, “impenetrable” means impossible to enter. The text indicates that the field of science fiction was dominated by white males when Butler, a Black woman, started writing, but she published several science fiction short stories and a novel and later won a prestigious award; that is, Butler pursued science fiction writing and had success. This context suggests that Butler didn’t view the genre as impossible to enter.

Choice A is incorrect. In this context, “legitimate” would mean genuinely good or valid. Nothing in the text suggests that Butler didn’t think the science fiction genre was good or valid; in fact, it indicates that she pursued and made a successful career of publishing work in that field. Choice C is incorrect. In this context, “compelling” would mean attracting or demanding attention. The text indicates that Butler chose to write science fiction, so it wouldn’t make sense to say that she didn’t see the field as drawing her attention. Choice D is incorrect. To say that Butler didn’t consider science fiction “indecipherable,” or impossible to understand, would suggest that Butler did understand it. However, the text doesn’t address Butler’s ability to interpret works in the genre; rather, it focuses on Butler’s successful pursuit of writing science fiction.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 79a7d27b

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 79a7d27b

In the Indigenous intercropping system known as the Three Sisters, maize, squash, and beans form an _____ web of relations: maize provides the structure on which the bean vines grow; the squash vines cover the soil, discouraging competition from weeds; and the beans aid their two “sisters” by enriching the soil with essential nitrogen.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. indecipherable
- B. ornamental
- C. obscure
- D. intricate

ID: 79a7d27b Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of the Three Sisters intercropping system. As used in this context, “intricate” would mean made up of complexly related elements. The text indicates that in the Three Sisters system, maize, squash, and beans form a “web of relations” in which the crops interact in various ways. The text’s description of these interactions—the bean vines growing on the maize stalks, the squash vines keeping weeds away, and the beans adding nutrients that the maize and squash use—provides context suggesting that this “web of relations” is intricate.

Choice A is incorrect because describing the relationship among the crops in the Three Sisters system as “indecipherable,” or impossible to comprehend, would not make sense in context. Although the text presents the relationship as complex, the text’s description of the role that each crop plays makes it clear that the relationship is well understood, not indecipherable. Choice B is incorrect because the text discusses the practical benefits that each plant in the Three Sisters system provides to other members of the system, showing that the relationship among the crops that make up the system is not “ornamental,” or mainly serving a decorative purpose. Choice C is incorrect because describing the relationship among the crops in the Three Sisters system as “obscure,” or unknown or poorly understood, would not make sense in context. Although the text presents the relationship as complex, the text’s description of the role that each crop plays makes it clear that the relationship is well understood, not obscure.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 7c4d3897

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 7c4d3897

Text corpora such as the Bank of English are enormous collections of electronically stored texts that can be used for empirical testing of hypotheses regarding the frequency of typical word usage. If one has a _____ that the word “get” has a high incidence in English, for example, an analysis of a corpus can support that hypothesis by showing that “get” is the fifth most commonly used verb.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. recognition
- B. scheme
- C. supposition
- D. synopsis

ID: 7c4d3897 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of testing hypotheses regarding usage by means of text corpora. In this context, "supposition" refers to an assumption or hypothesis that is not yet proven. The text explains that text corpora can be used for "empirical testing of hypotheses regarding the frequency of typical word usage" and then provides a specific example of using corpus analysis to support a claim about the word "get." The word "supposition" precisely conveys this idea of an assumption or hypothesis about word frequency that can then be tested against empirical data.

Choice A is incorrect because it wouldn’t make sense to say that someone has a "recognition" that the word "get" has a high incidence in English. Recognition implies acknowledging something already established as true or valid, but the text indicates that corpus analysis is needed to support the claim about "get," suggesting its high frequency wasn’t already established or previously known. Choice B is incorrect because it wouldn’t make sense to say that someone has a "scheme" that the word "get" has a high incidence in English. A scheme is a plan or systematic arrangement, but the context indicates what’s needed is a preliminary hypothesis that can be tested with corpus data, not a plan related to word frequency. Choice D is incorrect because it wouldn’t make sense to say that someone has a "synopsis" that the word "get" has a high incidence in English. A synopsis is a summary or outline, but the text is discussing an initial hypothesis about word frequency that requires testing, not a condensed statement of existing information.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 39b8afaa

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 39b8afaa

Despite stated claims of global relevance, much major research on income inequality performed in the 2010s suffered from a myopic focus on a few countries in North America and Western Europe, partly due to limited data availability. Researchers would later _____ this shortcoming after gaining new access to banking records located in nations in Africa, such as Tunisia, and Eastern Europe, such as Hungary.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. presuppose
- B. categorize
- C. mitigate
- D. validate

ID: 39b8afaa Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of research on income inequality in the 2010s. In this context, "mitigate" means to make less severe or reduce the negative effects of something. The text first identifies a shortcoming in the research: a "myopic focus on a few countries" despite claims of "global relevance." The text then explains that researchers later gained access to new data from previously excluded regions (Africa and Eastern Europe). This context supports the idea that with these new data, researchers would be able to reduce, or mitigate, the identified shortcoming by incorporating a broader range of geographic regions into their studies of income inequality.

Choice A is incorrect because in this context, "presuppose" would mean to assume in advance that something is true, and it wouldn't make logical sense to say that researchers later assumed as true in advance a shortcoming they had already encountered. Choice B is incorrect because in this context, "categorize" would mean to classify or place into groups. The text indicates that researchers did something about the shortcoming that characterized research on income inequality in the 2010s—limited geographic scope—after they gained access to new data from previously excluded regions. Categorizing a shortcoming doesn't require access to or analysis of new data; it could be done without any new information, but by analyzing new data, researchers went beyond merely categorizing the shortcoming and instead took action to address it. Choice D is incorrect because in this context, "validate" would mean to confirm or substantiate something. The text indicates that researchers did something about a known shortcoming of research on income inequality in the 2010s—limited geographic scope—after they gained access to new data from previously excluded regions. Confirming an already known shortcoming doesn't require access to or analysis of new data; it could be done without any new information, but by analyzing new data, researchers went beyond merely validating the shortcoming and instead took action to make the shortcoming less severe.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 319d92c6

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 319d92c6

Before the Mariner 2 mission completed a successful flyby of Venus in 1962, astronomers’ ideas about the planet were little more than _____. Venus’s atmosphere is so thick that Earth-based observations had yielded very little information about the planet.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. summations
- B. conjectures
- C. conclusions
- D. exemplifications

ID: 319d92c6 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of pre-Mariner 2 ideas about Venus. In this context, “conjectures” means guesses or inferences formed without sufficient evidence. The text indicates that before the successful 1962 flyby, Earth-based observations of Venus had produced “very little information” because of the planet’s thick atmosphere. The limited scope of astronomers’ earlier knowledge of Venus is also emphasized by the text’s description of their ideas as being “little more than” something before the flyby. This context conveys that before Mariner 2 flew close to Venus, astronomers lacked the evidence needed for their ideas about the planet to be much more than conjectures, or guesses.

Choice A is incorrect. In this context, “summations” would be final conclusions reached by putting all information together. Because the text emphasizes that very *little* information about Venus was available before the 1962 flyby, it wouldn’t make sense to describe astronomers’ pre-Mariner 2 ideas about Venus as summations; the text suggests that astronomers didn’t have enough information to draw solid conclusions about Venus. Choice C is incorrect. In this context, “conclusions” would be reasoned final judgments or outcomes. Because the text emphasizes that very *little* information about Venus was available before the 1962 flyby, it wouldn’t make sense to describe astronomers’ pre-Mariner 2 ideas about Venus as conclusions; the text suggests that astronomers didn’t have what they would have needed to make informed judgments about Venus. Choice D is incorrect because it wouldn’t make sense to describe astronomers’ pre-Mariner 2 ideas about Venus as “exemplifications,” or examples that illustrate something; people’s ideas about a subject are the ideas themselves, not illustrations. Further, the text emphasizes that the astronomers had little information before 1962, suggesting they didn’t have much to work with to form examples.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID ad257794

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: ad257794

In addition to being an accomplished psychologist himself, Francis Cecil Sumner was a _____ increasing the opportunity for Black students to study psychology, helping to found the psychology department at Howard University, a historically Black university, in 1930.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. proponent of
- B. supplement to
- C. beneficiary of
- D. distraction for

ID: ad257794 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of Francis Cecil Sumner. As used in this context, “proponent of” means supporter of. The text says that Sumner helped to found the psychology department at historically Black Howard University in 1930. This is evidence that Sumner supported increasing the opportunity for Black students to study psychology.

Choice B is incorrect because the phrase “supplement to,” or addition to, wouldn’t make sense in context. The text discusses Sumner’s efforts to increase the number of Black psychology students, but it doesn’t make sense to describe him as an addition to his efforts. Choice C is incorrect because Sumner was already an accomplished psychologist himself when he helped to found the Howard University psychology department. While Black students were the beneficiaries of his efforts—that is, they received help because of his efforts—it wouldn’t make sense in this context to describe Sumner as a “beneficiary of” opportunities, because he was the one doing the helping. Choice D is incorrect because founding a psychology department at Howard University wouldn’t be a “distraction for” Sumner’s aim to increase the opportunity for Black students to study psychology—that is, it wouldn’t be something that draws Sumner’s attention away from that goal, but rather the opposite.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID d2d4b282

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: d2d4b282

Researcher Haesung Jung led a 2020 study showing that individual acts of kindness can _____ prosocial behavior across a larger group. Jung and her team found that bystanders who witness a helpful act become more likely to offer help to someone else, and in doing so, can inspire still others to act.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. require
- B. remember
- C. foster
- D. discourage

ID: d2d4b282 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of Jung and her team’s study of acts of kindness. In this context, “foster” means encourage or promote the development of. The text indicates that Jung and her team found that seeing a helpful (or prosocial) act makes a bystander more likely to help someone else, which can in turn inspire additional people to help others. That is, the team showed that single acts of kindness can foster additional prosocial acts across a group.

Choice A is incorrect because nothing in the text suggests that Jung and her team found that single acts of kindness “require,” or depend on or make obligatory, broader prosocial (or helpful) behavior across a group. There’s no suggestion in the text that individual acts of kindness can only occur if other prosocial acts have already occurred, and the text indicates only that an act of kindness *can* inspire additional helpful acts, not that it necessarily will do so. Choice B is incorrect because the text focuses on a possible direct effect of individual acts of kindness, or single helpful actions, and it wouldn’t make sense to suggest that actions can “remember,” or hold a memory of, something. Choice D is incorrect because the text doesn’t indicate that Jung and her team found that single acts of kindness can “discourage,” or hinder, prosocial (or helpful) behavior across a group. On the contrary, the text states that Jung and her team found that seeing a helpful act makes a bystander *more* likely to help someone else, which can in turn inspire even more people to help others.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID dd376d37

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: dd376d37

In studying the use of external stimuli to reduce the itching sensation caused by an allergic histamine response, Louise Ward and colleagues found that while harmless applications of vibration or warming can provide a temporary distraction, such _____ stimuli actually offer less relief than a stimulus that seems less benign, like a mild electric shock.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. deceptive
- B. innocuous
- C. novel
- D. impractical

ID: dd376d37 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of Ward and colleagues’ findings. As used in this context, “innocuous” means mild or unharmed. The text describes the vibration and warming that Ward and colleagues used to alleviate itching as “harmless applications” and goes on to contrast these applications with another stimulus that actually offers more relief even though it seems to be stronger and “less benign.” This context conveys the idea that vibration and warming were innocuous stimuli.

Choice A is incorrect because the text focuses on a distinction between harmless stimuli and those that seem to be less benign. Nothing in the text suggests that any of the treatments are “deceptive,” or misleading; indeed, even the less effective ones are described as offering some relief. Choice C is incorrect because the text focuses on the amount of relief from itching offered by harmless stimuli and those that seem to be less benign. The text doesn’t suggest that any of these stimuli are “novel,” or original and new; heat, vibration, and electricity aren’t new inventions. Choice D is incorrect because it wouldn’t make sense to describe an application of vibration or warming as “impractical,” or not suitable for use. The text indicates that these harmless applications are useful in that they offer at least some temporary relief.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 3dcc6ca2

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 3dcc6ca2

Proposals to raise the age at which retirees begin receiving government transfers of funds are generally discussed in terms of the effects on transfer recipients, but Andria Smythe has argued that delaying such transfers could _____ wealth creation among working adults by lengthening the period in which they are providing financial support to their nonworking parents.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. stymie
- B. compound
- C. disparage
- D. outstrip

ID: 3dcc6ca2 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of the consequences of raising the age at which retirees begin receiving government funds. The text indicates that raising the age for these funds is usually discussed in terms of effects on fund recipients but that Andria Smythe is instead considering the effects on working family members who care for retirees. Smythe notes that raising the age for the funds would increase the length of time retirees are dependent on financial assistance from working family members. This is suggested to have an effect on wealth creation for those workers, and most logically, that effect would be disadvantageous. Thus, "stymie," which means to prevent or greatly hinder, is the most logical choice in context.

Choice B is incorrect because in this context, "compound" would most nearly mean multiply or greatly enhance. The text indicates that raising the age at which retirees are eligible for government funds will increase the amount of time retirees are dependent on working family members for financial support. This would likely have a negative rather than a positive effect on wealth creation. Choice C is incorrect because in this context, "disparage" would most nearly mean criticize or defame. Nothing in the text suggests that raising the age at which retirees are eligible for government funds would defame wealth creation among working adults. Choice D is incorrect because in this context, "outstrip" would most nearly mean to exceed, and nothing in the text indicates that the financial support provided to retirees would exceed the amount of wealth these workers can create. The text does suggest that workers providing funds to retirees works against those workers’ wealth accumulation, but not that the support to retirees exceeds the workers’ accumulated wealth.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID cb625cc4

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: cb625cc4

The following text is from F. Scott Fitzgerald’s 1925 novel *The Great Gatsby*.

[Jay Gatsby] was balancing himself on the dashboard of his car with that resourcefulness of movement that is so peculiarly American—that comes, I suppose, with the absence of lifting work in youth and, even more, with the formless grace of our nervous, sporadic games. This quality was continually breaking through his punctilious manner in the shape of restlessness.

As used in the text, what does the word “quality” most nearly mean?

- A. Standard
- B. Prestige
- C. Characteristic
- D. Accomplishment

ID: cb625cc4 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. “This quality” refers to Gatsby’s “resourcefulness of movement,” which is described as a characteristic or trait of his.

Choice A is incorrect. This isn’t what “quality” means in this context. Here, “this quality” refers to Gatsby’s “resourcefulness of movement,” which is described as a characteristic or trait of his. “Standard” is a synonym for a different definition of “quality”: the degree of excellence of something. Choice B is incorrect. This isn’t what “quality” means in this context. Here, “this quality” refers to Gatsby’s “resourcefulness of movement,” which is described as a characteristic or trait of his. “Prestige” would suggest a high status or an admirable reputation, which doesn’t match that description. Choice D is incorrect. This isn’t what “quality” means in this context. Here, “this quality” refers to Gatsby’s “resourcefulness of movement,” which is described as a characteristic or trait of his. “Accomplishment” would suggest an achievement, which doesn’t match that description.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 5e4d2131

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 5e4d2131

For a 2020 exhibition, photographer and neurobiologist Okunola Jeyifous _____ a series of new images based on a series of alphabet posters from the 1970s known as the “Black ABCs,” which featured Black children from Chicago. Jeyifous photographed the now-adult models and layered the photos over magnified images of the models’ cells, resulting in what he called “micro and macro portraiture.”

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. validated
- B. created
- C. challenged
- D. restored

ID: 5e4d2131 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it most logically and precisely completes the text’s discussion of Jeyifous’s series of images for the 2020 exhibition. In this context, “created” means produced. The text explains that Jeyifous, a photographer and neurobiologist, photographed adults who had appeared as children in posters from the 1970s, then combined those photographs with magnified images of the adults’ cells—a process that resulted in what he called “micro and macro portraiture.” This context suggests that Jeyifous drew on his dual interests in photography and neurobiology to produce the images for display in the exhibition.

Choice A is incorrect because there’s nothing in the text to suggest that Jeyifous “validated,” or corroborated, the series of images. The text describes Jeyifous’s process for composing the images but doesn’t describe Jeyifous making an effort to evaluate the images for their artistic or scientific legitimacy. Choice C is incorrect because there’s nothing in the text to suggest that Jeyifous “challenged,” or disputed, an aspect of the images; rather, the focus of the text is on the inspiration behind the images and the method Jeyifous used to achieve them. Choice D is incorrect because the text indicates that Jeyifous made the images himself using a combination of photography and magnified pictures of cells, not that he “restored,” or reconditioned, the images from a deteriorated state.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID a65b48fb

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: a65b48fb

Political blogs with conspicuous ideological alignments became an integral component of US media in the early 2000s. While some commentators lauded this development, asserting that such blogs had a welcome transparency missing from traditional news, less _____ observers countered that such blogs tended to ideological extremes that exacerbated political polarization to problematic levels.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. sanguine
- B. recalcitrant
- C. misanthropic
- D. earnest

ID: a65b48fb Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of political blogs. In this context, "sanguine" means optimistic. The text begins by noting the rise of political blogs with readily identifiable ideological alignments in the early 2000s. The text then indicates that some commentators saw this as a positive development, citing a reason why (their difference from traditional news). Finally, the text goes on to contrast those commentators with others who have a negative opinion of the rise of political blogs (because they increase political polarization among their readers). This context supports the idea that the second group of commentators is less positive than the first: thus, the second group of commentators is less optimistic, or sanguine.

Choice B is incorrect because it would not make sense in this context to describe those commentators who have a negative opinion of political blogs as less "recalcitrant," or obstinately uncooperative, than those commentators who supported political blogs. Choice C is incorrect because the text gives no indication that those commentators who have a negative opinion of political blogs are less "misanthropic," or less contemptuous of humankind, than those commentators who have a positive opinion of political blogs—there is no indication in the text that those commentators who like political blogs would be contemptuous of humankind at all. Choice D is incorrect because there is no evidence that those commentators who have a negative opinion of political blogs are less "earnest," or sincere, than those who have a positive opinion of such blogs—presumably, both groups of commentators hold their beliefs with equal conviction.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 5da0cec4

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 5da0cec4

In a 2019 study, Jeremy Gunawardena and colleagues found that the single-celled protozoan *Stentor roeseli* not only uses strategies to escape irritating stimuli but also switches strategies when one fails. This evidence of protozoans sophisticatedly “changing their minds” demonstrates that single-celled organisms may not be limited to _____ behaviors.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. aggressive
- B. rudimentary
- C. evolving
- D. advantageous

ID: 5da0cec4 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of single-celled organism behavior. As used in this context, “rudimentary” means basic or unsophisticated. According to the text, a study of the single-celled protozoan *Stentor roeseli* showed that the organisms can switch strategies for escaping certain stimuli, “sophisticatedly ‘changing their minds’” and using new strategies should other strategies fail. This context suggests that single-celled organisms may not be limited to behaviors that are basic or rudimentary, since the study showed that single-celled protozoans can respond complexly to irritating stimuli.

Choice A is incorrect because the text doesn’t suggest that single-celled organisms may not be limited to behavior that is “aggressive,” or threatening. Rather, the text suggests that single-celled organisms may not be limited to behaviors that are basic, since the study of *Stentor roeseli* showed that single-celled protozoans can respond complexly to irritating stimuli. Choice C is incorrect because the text doesn’t suggest that single-celled organisms may not be limited to behavior that is “evolving,” or advancing. Rather, the text suggests that single-celled organisms may not be limited to behaviors that are basic, since the study of *Stentor roeseli* showed that single-celled protozoans can respond complexly to irritating stimuli. Choice D is incorrect because the text doesn’t suggest that single-celled organisms may not be limited to behavior that is “advantageous,” or helpful. Rather, the text suggests that single-celled organisms may not be limited to behaviors that are basic, since the study of *Stentor roeseli* showed that single-celled protozoans can respond complexly to irritating stimuli.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 1550378d

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 1550378d

Players of online games are largely aware that the games collect their data, and they’re often willing to trade some privacy for a fun experience. But the games are often quite _____ about what data they collect and why. Because of this, data-privacy advocates are seeking to expand online players’ knowledge of data collection practices and improve their ability to navigate privacy-setting features in games.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. opaque
- B. abrasive
- C. ambivalent
- D. outspoken

ID: 1550378d Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of how online games disclose information about their data collection practices. In this context, “opaque” means that games deliberately avoid sharing clear information about data collection. The text indicates that data-privacy advocates are working to “expand online players’ knowledge of data collection practices” and improve players’ ability to navigate privacy settings. The fact that advocates are working to expand players’ knowledge about data collection and privacy settings implies that players currently lack clear information about these aspects of the games. This context therefore supports the idea that online games are often quite unclear, or opaque, about what data they collect and why.

Choice B is incorrect because describing online games as being “abrasive,” or harsh and irritating, about their data collection practices wouldn’t make sense in context. The text focuses on the clarity of the information about data collection that games share with players, not on the tone or manner in which this information is communicated. Choice C is incorrect because describing the games as “ambivalent,” or having mixed feelings, about their data collection practices wouldn’t make sense in context. The text isn’t discussing the game companies’ attitudes toward their own practices; it’s discussing the extent to which information about those practices is communicated to players. Choice D is incorrect because describing online games as “outspoken,” or frank and forthright, about their data collection practices would contradict the text. If the games were forthright about data collection, data-privacy advocates wouldn’t need to work to expand players’ awareness of this aspect of gaming. Instead, the text emphasizes the challenge of obtaining clear information about data collection in online games.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 4ed94fc6

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 4ed94fc6

The creation of Lotte Reiniger’s 1926 animated film *The Adventures of Prince Achmed* was _____ process. Over the course of three years, Reiniger and her collaborators painstakingly made more than 250,000 individual images of hand-cut paper silhouettes and repeatedly had to invent entirely new methods and tools to create the special effects Reiniger envisioned.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. a haphazard
- B. a contentious
- C. an ineffectual
- D. an arduous

ID: 4ed94fc6 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of the creation of *The Adventures of Prince Achmed*. In this context, "arduous" means that the process is marked by great labor or effort. According to the text, the creation of the 1926 animated film *The Adventures of Prince Achmed* took three years and was a painstaking process. Since the process was so long and required great efforts by Lotte Reiniger and her team, the creation of the film was therefore an arduous process.

Choice A is incorrect because the text doesn’t indicate that the creation of Reiniger’s film was "a haphazard," or disorganized, process. In fact, the text suggests that the creation process was quite meticulous and the team worked hard together to produce the envisioned effects. Choice B is incorrect. While the text does suggest that the creation of Reiniger’s film was a long and difficult process, it doesn’t suggest that the process was "a contentious" one, or one causing controversy or argument. The text suggests that the team worked together to produce the envisioned effects. Choice C is incorrect because rather than describing the process of creating the film as "ineffectual," or not having the effect it was intended to have, the text describes the process as ultimately successful despite the difficulty it involved.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 96de0f09

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 96de0f09

K.D. Leka and colleagues found that the Sun’s corona provides an advance indication of solar flares—intense eruptions of electromagnetic radiation that emanate from active regions in the Sun’s photosphere and can interfere with telecommunications on Earth. Preceding a flare, the corona temporarily exhibits increased brightness above the region where the flare is _____.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. antecedent
- B. impending
- C. innocuous
- D. perpetual

ID: 96de0f09 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of advance indications of solar flares. In this context the word "impending" means imminent or approaching. The text mentions a study by Leka and colleagues that found that the Sun’s corona provides an advance indication of solar flares. The text then points out why such an advance indication would be useful—solar flares can interfere with communications on Earth—and concludes by describing the characteristic of the corona that gives warning of a solar flare. The text indicates that this characteristic—increased brightness in a particular region of the corona—comes before the appearance of the flare. Therefore, in context, the best answer would indicate that the flare is approaching, or impending.

Choice A is incorrect. The best answer would be one that indicates that the increased brightness of the Sun’s corona precedes the appearance of the flare. But if the flare were "antecedent," or previous, then the flare would instead precede the appearance of the increased brightness of the corona, a statement that is logically inconsistent. Choice C is incorrect. The word "innocuous," or harmless, does not logically complete the text; since solar flares can interfere with communications on Earth, they cannot reasonably be described as innocuous. Choice D is incorrect. If the solar flares have an advance indication of their appearance, then there must therefore be a time before the appearance of the flares when they do not exist. But the word "perpetual," or never-ending, would in context indicate that the flare exists at the same time as the advance indication provided by the Sun’s corona, which would not make logical sense.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 779a2f58

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 779a2f58

The way in which individual elements are balanced within a photographic image tends to affect how viewers perceive it: symmetry tends to give the elements equal importance, asymmetry emphasizes differences, and radial balance (organizing the elements around a central point) emphasizes the center over the periphery. What a photograph conveys is therefore largely _____ how it is balanced.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. inhibited by
- B. contingent on
- C. obligated to
- D. reserved for

ID: 779a2f58 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of visual balance in photography. In this context, "contingent on" means conditional upon, or determined by. The text indicates that different ways of balancing elements in a photograph convey different ideas to viewers (for example, symmetrical composition tends to emphasize similarity among elements, whereas asymmetry tends to emphasize difference). Thus, there is a strong connection between what a photograph conveys and how its elements are balanced. Therefore, what a photo conveys is contingent on how it is balanced.

Choice A is incorrect. In this context, "inhibited by" most nearly means hindered or undermined by. The text indicates that different ways of balancing elements in a photograph convey different ideas to viewers, thereby indicating a relationship between image balance and what is conveyed. Although this explanation is consistent with a photographer choosing asymmetrical balance even while intending to convey similarity (associated with symmetrical balance), there is nothing to indicate that messages generally are inhibited by balance. Rather the implication is that balance is a tool photographers can use to craft their messages. Choice C is incorrect. In this context, "obligated to" means duty bound toward or answerable to. In context, it would not make sense to assert that a photograph’s message is obligated to how that photograph is balanced. Choice D is incorrect. In this context, "reserved for" most nearly means solely available to someone or held aside for some purpose. The text as a whole does not support the claim that a photograph’s message is reserved for how that photograph is balanced.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 17dc67ba

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 17dc67ba

According to a team of neuroeconomists from the University of Zurich, ease of decision making may be linked to communication between two brain regions, the prefrontal cortex and the parietal cortex. Individuals tend to be more decisive if the information flow between the regions is intensified, whereas they make choices more slowly when information flow is _____.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. reduced
- B. evaluated
- C. determined
- D. acquired

ID: 17dc67ba Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of how the flow of information between two regions of the brain may affect the ease of people’s decision making. In this context, "reduced" means decreased. The text presents the finding from a team of neuroeconomists that decision making may be connected to communication between the prefrontal cortex and the parietal cortex. In presenting this finding, the text suggests a contrast between people who tend to be more decisive and people who make decisions more slowly. According to the text, people tend to be more decisive when the flow of information between the two brain regions is intensified, or strengthened. On the other hand, this context suggests that people make choices more slowly when the flow of information between the two brain regions is decreased.

Choice B is incorrect because "evaluated" means assessed, which wouldn’t make sense in context. According to the text, people tend to be more decisive when the flow of information between two brain regions is intensified, or strengthened. This suggests that people’s ease of decision making varies based on the rate of information traveling between the regions, not based on an effort to assess the information. Choice C is incorrect because "determined" means judged or influenced, neither of which would make sense in context. According to the text, people tend to be more decisive when the flow of information between two brain regions is intensified, or strengthened. This suggests that people’s ease of decision making varies based on the rate of information traveling between the regions, not based on an effort to judge or influence the information. Choice D is incorrect because "acquired" means developed or attained, neither of which would make sense in context. According to the text, people tend to be more decisive when the flow of information between two brain regions is intensified, or strengthened. This suggests that people’s ease of decision making varies based on the rate of information traveling between the regions, not based on the development or attainment of the information.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 9d463bd5

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 9d463bd5

The results of randomized clinical trials testing the efficacy of common medical interventions sometimes fail to _____ conclusions that practitioners reach based on their real-world observations of patients. While there are several possible reasons for this, one is that practitioners may overlook confounding variables that account for the results they attribute to the interventions in question.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. circumvent
- B. corroborate
- C. disseminate
- D. implement

ID: 9d463bd5 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of a relationship between the results of randomized clinical tests of how effective common medical interventions are and the conclusions practitioners reach about such interventions in real-world settings. In this context, "corroborate" means confirm or support with evidence. The text indicates that one possible explanation for the relationship being discussed is that practitioners may overlook confounding variables—that is, additional factors other than the medical interventions being investigated that affect the observed outcomes. This means that practitioners may assume that an outcome is the direct result of a medical intervention when it is actually the result of a combination of factors. Clinical trials take steps to rule out factors other than the one being studied, so if those extra factors are actually having an effect on real-world outcomes, the trials are likely to produce conclusions different from those practitioners reach in their real-world observations. In other words, clinical trials may fail to corroborate practitioners’ conclusions.

Choice A is incorrect because it wouldn’t make sense to say that the results of clinical trials could "circumvent," or find a way around or bypass, conclusions practitioners reach in real-world scenarios with patients; it’s possible that researchers conducting the trials might avoid engaging with practitioners’ conclusions, but findings from a study can’t choose to get around something. Choice C is incorrect because it wouldn’t make sense to say that the results of clinical trials could "disseminate," or spread widely, conclusions practitioners reach in real-world scenarios with patients; the researchers conducting the trials might choose to draw attention to practitioners’ conclusions, but findings from a study can’t spread anything. Choice D is incorrect because it wouldn’t make sense to say that the results of clinical trials could "implement," or put into effect, conclusions practitioners reach in real-world scenarios with patients; the researchers conducting the trials might consider practitioners’ conclusions, but findings from a study can’t put anything into effect.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 7488c1d2

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 7488c1d2

To entice study participants, psychology researchers commonly offer a gift card or other compensation. However, this practice may undercut the applicability of the study’s results: people who join a study in response to _____ may differ in important ways from a representative sample of the population of interest.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. a propensity
- B. an inducement
- C. a paradigm
- D. an appeasement

ID: 7488c1d2 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of how compensation in psychology studies may affect the applicability of results. In this context, “an inducement” means a reward offered to encourage a person to take a particular action. The text indicates that psychology researchers commonly offer rewards such as gift cards to encourage people to participate in their studies, potentially rendering the participant pool unrepresentative of the target population. This context supports the idea that participants are joining studies in response to an inducement.

Choice A is incorrect. While participants might join a study in response to “a propensity,” or a natural inclination, to do so, the text isn’t focused on participants’ predispositions. Rather, the text is concerned with the external rewards that researchers offer to attract participants. Choice C is incorrect because saying that participants join studies in response to “a paradigm,” or a typical model or framework, wouldn’t make sense in context. The text doesn’t address any such framework. Instead, it focuses on tangible rewards that researchers offer to attract study participants. Choice D is incorrect because saying that participants join a study in response to “an appeasement,” or a concession made to pacify a person, wouldn’t make sense in context. The text describes researchers offering gift cards and other forms of compensation to attract willing study participants, not to address anyone’s grievance or dissatisfaction.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 8c0d9830

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 8c0d9830

The following text is adapted from Upton Sinclair’s 1906 novel *The Jungle*. Marija is helping to manage her sister’s wedding.

It was [Marija’s] task to see that all things went in due form, and after the best home traditions; and, flying wildly hither and thither, bowling every one out of the way, and scolding and exhorting all day with her tremendous voice, Marija was too eager to see that others conformed to the proprieties to consider them herself.

As used in the text, what does the word “consider” most nearly mean?

- A. Take into account and follow
- B. Admire steadily and praise
- C. Come to a decision about
- D. Have an opinion on

ID: 8c0d9830 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer because as used in the text, "consider" most nearly means to take into account and follow. The text explains that Marija’s job was to make sure that her sister’s wedding proceeded in certain ways ("in due form") and that she loudly directed everyone’s actions all day. The text then indicates that Marija was so focused on ensuring that others "conformed to the proprieties"—that is, that they behaved in appropriate ways—that she failed to "consider them herself"; that is, she didn’t take standards of appropriate behavior into account and follow them in her own actions.

Choice B is incorrect. In some contexts, "consider" can mean to think about something in a positive way—which can involve admiration—but the text doesn’t suggest that Marija was so busy imposing "proprieties" (standards of appropriate behavior) on others that she didn’t admire and praise them herself. The context suggests it’s more likely that Marija did speak positively of "due form" and "the best home traditions" while ensuring others behaved in certain ways. Choice C is incorrect. In some contexts, "consider" can mean to come to a decision, but the text doesn’t suggest that Marija wasn’t able to make a decision for herself about the "proprieties" (standards of appropriate behavior) she ensured everyone else conformed to. Rather, the context conveys that Marija knew very clearly which behaviors others should follow as "due form" and "the best home traditions." Choice D is incorrect. In some contexts, "consider" can mean to have an opinion, but the text doesn’t suggest that Marija wasn’t able to have an opinion on the "proprieties" (standards of appropriate behavior) she was ensuring others conformed to. Rather, the context conveys that Marija had strong feelings about which behaviors were "due form" and "the best home traditions."

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID cc00fd81

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: cc00fd81

The fossil remains of the individual known as Oase 1, discovered in Romania in 2002, can help paleoanthropologists not only _____ steps in the evolution of hominids but also illuminate the Pleistocene epoch generally, revealing important details about the time in which Oase 1 lived.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. exploit
- B. discern
- C. prioritize
- D. yield

ID: cc00fd81 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of the utility of the Oase 1 fossil to paleoanthropologists. As used in this context, "discern" means to detect or recognize something, especially something hidden or obscure. The text indicates that the Oase 1 fossil can help paleoanthropologists recognize patterns in the evolutionary process and shed light on ("illuminate") the period in which Oase 1 lived. Thus, the fossil will enable researchers to gain insights into, or discern, facts that are still not well understood.

Choice A is incorrect because in this context, "exploit" would suggest that the paleoanthropologists are using "steps in the evolution of hominids," which does not make logical sense. Rather, the text is about how the Oase 1 fossil could help paleoanthropologists learn about hominid evolution and the Pleistocene epoch more generally. Choice C is incorrect because in this context, "prioritize" would suggest that either the paleoanthropologists are placing more importance on "steps in the evolution of hominids" than they are on something else not identified in the text or that they are placing these steps in some sort of order. Rather, the text is about how the Oase 1 fossil could help paleoanthropologists learn about hominid evolution and the Pleistocene epoch more generally. Choice D is incorrect because to say that paleoanthropologists could "yield" or generate "steps in the evolution of hominids" doesn’t make sense. The researchers may develop new insights into those evolutionary steps, but they do not create those steps themselves. Rather, the context makes it clear that they are detecting or discovering patterns based on their study of the Oase 1 fossil.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 3eb1f89c

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 3eb1f89c

The artisans of the Igoun Eronmwon guild in Benin City, Nigeria, typically _____ the bronze- and brass-casting techniques that have been passed down through their families since the thirteenth century, but they don't strictly observe every tradition; for example, guild members now use air-conditioning motors instead of handheld bellows to help heat their forges.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. experiment with
- B. adhere to
- C. improve on
- D. grapple with

ID: 3eb1f89c Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it most logically completes the text's discussion of bronze- and brass-casting techniques used by the Igoun Eronmwon guild. In this context "adhere to" would mean to act in accordance with. The text states that although members of the Igoun Eronmwon guild typically do something with techniques that have been passed down since the thirteenth century, they "don't strictly observe every tradition." By establishing a contrast with not always following traditions, the context suggests that guild members do typically adhere to traditional techniques.

Choice A is incorrect because in this context "experiment with" would mean to do something new with. Although using motors rather than manual bellows is presented as a new approach, the text establishes a contrast between what the guild members typically do with techniques that have been passed down over centuries and the idea that the members "don't strictly observe every tradition." The phrase "experiment with" wouldn't support the contrast because regularly trying new things with the techniques would be an example of not strictly following all traditions. Choice C is incorrect because in this context "improve on" would mean to make better. Although using motors rather than manual bellows might be an improved approach, the text establishes a contrast between what the guild members typically do with techniques that have been passed down over centuries and the idea that the members "don't strictly observe every tradition." The phrase "improve on" wouldn't support the contrast because regularly making changes to the techniques would be an example of not strictly following all traditions. Choice D is incorrect because in this context "grapple with" would mean to try hard to solve a difficult problem. Although bronze- and brass-casting are likely challenging tasks, nothing in the text suggests that the guild members have any particular difficulties with the techniques passed down since the thirteenth century.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 9b21a50f

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 9b21a50f

Some researchers believe that the genes that enable groundhogs and certain other mammals to hibernate through the winter by slowing their breathing and heart rates and lowering their body temperature may be _____ in humans: present yet having essentially no effect on our bodily processes.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. decisive
- B. lacking
- C. variable
- D. dormant

ID: 9b21a50f Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer because it logically completes the text’s discussion about genes related to hibernation. In this context, “dormant” means inactive. The text explains that the same genes that enable certain nonhuman mammal species to hibernate during the winter by altering their bodily processes are also found in our species but have “essentially no effect” on humans’ bodily processes. In other words, these genes don’t function in humans.

Choice A is incorrect because in this context, “decisive” means has the power to affect the outcome of something, but the text states that genes related to hibernation are instead inactive in humans—that is, the genes don’t affect humans’ bodily processes, although they are present in their bodies. Choice B is incorrect because in this context, “lacking” means missing, but the text states that the genes are present in humans, though inactive. Choice C is incorrect because “variable” means characterized by the potential to change, but the text indicates that these genes don’t change in their effect on humans’ bodily processes; instead, the genes are consistently inactive in humans.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 30457731

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 30457731

Ecologist Exequiel Ezcurra and colleagues found that the inhabitants of the Mexica empire used natural landmarks to track time with a high degree of _____. By observing the sun’s position in relation to various points on the mountains surrounding the Basin of Mexico, the Mexica were able to precisely identify the dates when significant events such as solstices occurred.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. precariousness
- B. exactitude
- C. resilience
- D. inconspicuousness

ID: 30457731 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of the method the inhabitants of the Mexica empire used to track time. In this context, "exactitude" means precision. The text indicates that the Mexica used the sun’s position relative to various natural landmarks to track the passage of time, explaining that such methods allowed the Mexica to accurately determine the dates of important events such as solstices. This context supports the idea that the Mexica people were able to track time with a high degree of precision, or exactitude.

Choice A is incorrect because in this context "precariousness" would mean instability, and there’s nothing in the text to suggest that the method used by the Mexica people to track time was unstable or produced unstable results. Rather, the text indicates that the method yielded precise results, allowing the Mexica to accurately determine the dates of significant events. Choice C is incorrect because in this context "resilience" would mean persistence, and there’s nothing in the text to suggest that the Mexica worked stubbornly in spite of obstacles in order to track time. Choice D is incorrect because in this context "inconspicuousness" would mean discreteness, and there’s nothing in the text to suggest that the Mexica wanted to track time without being noticed.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 6b37e088

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 6b37e088

In the 2010s, the price of pop music cassette tapes from the 1980s and 1990s rose dramatically, which had the counterintuitive effect of _____ demand: buyers who hadn't previously wanted to purchase vintage cassettes thronged the market, believing prices would continue to rise and the tapes could be resold later at a profit.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. exploiting
- B. monetizing
- C. appraising
- D. engendering

ID: 6b37e088 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of how rising prices affected demand for vintage cassette tapes. In this context, "engendering" means producing or causing to exist. The text indicates that the effect of a dramatic increase in the price of vintage cassettes was counterintuitive, or contrary to what would typically be expected. Generally, when prices rise, demand falls—but the text indicates that in this case, buyers who previously had no interest in cassettes "thronged the market" (that is, many of them began purchasing cassettes) because they saw the cassettes as potential investments. This context conveys that the rising prices surprisingly produced significant demand, producing many new buyers for vintage cassettes.

Choice A is incorrect because the text focuses on a rise in prices of vintage cassettes, and it wouldn't make sense to describe the price increase itself—rather than sellers of vintage cassettes—as "exploiting," or unfairly or selfishly taking advantage of, demand. Further, wanting to take advantage of new demand would be a motivation for a price increase, not a counterintuitive effect of it. Choice B is incorrect. In this context, "monetizing" would mean utilizing as a source of profit, and it wouldn't make sense to describe a price increase itself, rather than sellers of vintage cassettes, as using demand as a source of profit; moreover, seeking to profit when there's new demand would be a reason for price increases, not a counterintuitive effect of them. Choice C is incorrect. In this context, "appraising" would mean assessing the value or significance of something. The text focuses on a rise in prices of vintage cassettes, and while it would be reasonable to suggest that sellers might have appraised demand for those cassettes, it wouldn't make sense to suggest that a price increase itself could do such an assessment; moreover, an appraisal of demand would most likely precede a price increase rather than be an effect of it.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 0d945e1d

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 0d945e1d

To develop a method for measuring snow depth with laser beams, NASA physicist Yongxiang Hu relied on ____; identifying broad similarities between two seemingly different phenomena, Hu used information about how ants move inside colonies to calculate how the particles of light that make up laser beams travel through snow.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. a collaboration
- B. an accessory
- C. a contradiction
- D. an analogy

ID: 0d945e1d Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The text after the semicolon tells us that Hu "identif[ied] broad similarities between two seemingly different phenomena," comparing ants with light particles. Since an analogy seeks similarities between seemingly unrelated phenomena, this fits the context perfectly.

Choice A is incorrect. "A collaboration" refers to "an act of working with others," but what comes after the semicolon doesn't describe collaboration with other researchers. Instead, it shows a comparison between two different (but ultimately similar) scientific phenomena. Choice B is incorrect. "An accessory" can refer to "something added to increase attractiveness or usefulness." No accessories are described in this text. Choice C is incorrect. "A contradiction" means "a set of ideas or things that are opposed to or inconsistent with each other." The text describes how Hu used the similarity between ant and light particle movement to develop his method, so a word that refers to difference would not make sense here.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 4d993048

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 4d993048

Diego Velázquez was the leading artist in the court of King Philip IV of Spain during the seventeenth century, but his influence was hardly _____ Spain: realist and impressionist painters around the world employed his techniques and echoed elements of his style.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. derived from
- B. recognized in
- C. confined to
- D. repressed by

ID: 4d993048 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer because it most logically completes the discussion of the artist Diego Velázquez’s influence outside Spain. As used in this context, “confined to” means restricted to. The text says that Velázquez was the leading artist in the Spanish court during the seventeenth century, but it also notes that other painters around the world were influenced by his techniques and style. Thus, Velázquez’s influence was hardly (or almost not) confined to, or restricted to, Spain.

Choice A is incorrect because if Velázquez was a leading artist in Spain, it doesn’t make logical sense to claim that his influence was hardly (or almost not) derived from, or obtained from, Spain. Moreover, the other painters around the world who employed Velázquez’s techniques would by definition be influenced by Spanish style. Choice B is incorrect because if Velázquez was a leading artist in the court of King Philip IV of Spain, then his influence must have been widely recognized, or acknowledged, rather than being hardly (or almost not) recognized. Choice D is incorrect because the text gives no indication that deliberately limiting Velázquez’s influence outside Spain was ever considered by anyone. Thus, even if it is true that his influence was not repressed, or restrained, it doesn’t make logical sense to say so in this context.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 2e93296f

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 2e93296f

Set in a world where science fiction tropes exist as everyday realities, Charles Yu’s 2010 novel *How to Live Safely in a Science Fictional Universe* traces a time traveler’s quest to find his father. Because the journey at the novel’s center is so _____, with the protagonist ricocheting chaotically across time, the reader often wonders whether the pair will ever be reunited.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. haphazard
- B. premeditated
- C. inspirational
- D. fruitless

ID: 2e93296f Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of Yu’s novel. In this context, “haphazard” means marked by a lack of plan or order. The text indicates that the quest featured in the novel, which involves the protagonist bouncing across time, is chaotic and causes the reader to often wonder what will happen. This context suggests that the protagonist’s journey seems to be marked by a lack of order.

Choice B is incorrect because the text indicates that the journey featured in Yu’s novel involves a character “ricocheting chaotically,” or bouncing in a disordered way, across time and causes the reader to often wonder what will happen. It wouldn’t make sense to say that a chaotic journey seems “premeditated,” or characterized by forethought and planning. Choice C is incorrect because the text doesn’t give any indication that readers regard the journey in Yu’s novel as “inspirational,” or as causing extraordinarily creative or brilliant thoughts or actions; instead, the text focuses on the idea that the protagonist’s journey is chaotic, or disordered, and doesn’t give readers a clear sense of what will happen. Choice D is incorrect. Rather than suggesting that the journey featured in Yu’s novel is “fruitless,” or has an unsuccessful outcome, the text focuses on the idea that while reading about the protagonist’s chaotic movements across time, readers are often unsure of what will happen—that is, they don’t know whether the protagonist will be successful in finding his father.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 03ed2987

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 03ed2987

While recent scholarship has undermined claims that the works of twelfth-century Islamic philosopher Ibn Rushd were _____ other Muslim philosophers of his time, it is indisputable that his location in the Muslim-ruled area of what is now Spain meant that his works were primarily available thousands of miles west of the era’s center of Islamic thought.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. controversial among
- B. antagonistic toward
- C. imitated by
- D. inconsequential to

ID: 03ed2987 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of the twelfth-century Islamic philosopher Ibn Rushd. As used in this context, "inconsequential to" means not significant to. According to the text, Ibn Rushd’s works were primarily available in Spain, where he lived, far from central areas of the Muslim world, a fact that could support the conclusion that his influence on Muslim contemporaries was limited. The text implies, however, that recent scholarship has shown that his works still had an impact on other Muslim philosophers of his time. This context supports the idea that his works weren’t inconsequential to Islamic thought in this period.

Choice A is incorrect because the issue under consideration in the text is whether other Muslim philosophers of Ibn Rushd’s time had access to his works, not whether his works were "controversial among," or causing dispute among, other philosophers. Choice B is incorrect. The text implies that other Muslim philosophers of Ibn Rushd’s era were aware of his works, not that they were "antagonistic toward," or hostile toward, them. There is no suggestion that Ibn Rushd’s writings elicited hostility from his contemporaries. Choice C is incorrect because in this context, "imitated by" would mean followed as a model by. Although the text implies that Ibn Rushd’s works were at least somewhat available in regions that were at the center of Islamic thought during the period, it doesn’t specifically address in what ways his works influenced contemporary Muslim philosophers. Thus, the text doesn’t support the idea that other philosophers modeled their own works after Ibn Rushd’s works.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 80382cf7

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 80382cf7

Businesses typically try to promote themselves, but research by Michael Luca, Abhishek Nagaraj, and Gauri Subramani suggests that some do not _____ their marketing. The researchers studied restaurants in Texas and found that those listed on a popular review website (which can be done at no cost) had revenue increases of 5 percent on average, but 33 percent of restaurants studied never listed on the site.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. adorn
- B. optimize
- C. endorse
- D. counteract

ID: 80382cf7 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of business marketing practices. In this context, "optimize" means make the most effective possible use of available opportunities. The text indicates that though businesses typically try to promote themselves, they don’t always make use of effective tools for doing so, pointing to research showing that 33 percent of restaurants failed to use a free listing service that increased revenue by 5 percent on average for restaurants that did use the service. The text therefore suggests that by foregoing a free and effective marketing tool, some businesses aren’t making the best use of, or optimizing, marketing opportunities.

Choice A is incorrect because in this context, "adorn" would mean decorate or enhance the appearance of, and there’s nothing in the text to suggest that by failing to use a free and effective promotional tool, some businesses aren’t enhancing the appearance of their own marketing. The example in the text illustrates that some businesses aren’t utilizing an effective marketing opportunity, not that they aren’t improving the appearance of their marketing. Choice C is incorrect because in this context, "endorse" would mean openly approve or recommend, and the text’s discussion of the fact that some businesses have overlooked an effective marketing tool doesn’t support the idea that those businesses therefore don’t approve of their own marketing. Choice D is incorrect because in this context, saying that businesses don’t "counteract" their marketing would suggest that they don’t actively undermine it or make it ineffective. The text begins by stating that businesses typically try to promote themselves but then continues to imply that some businesses fail to take advantage of good opportunities to do so, citing the example of businesses that failed to use a free and effective marketing tool. Though it’s possible that those businesses that did use the site therefore didn’t unintentionally counteract their own marketing, the first sentence conveys that the text’s focus is on things that some businesses do and that some businesses don’t do when trying to promote themselves, and it wouldn’t make sense to say that any businesses would actively try to undermine their own marketing in pursuit of that goal.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 2913fed1

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 2913fed1

Critics have asserted that fine art and fashion rarely _____ in a world where artists create timeless works for exhibition and designers periodically produce new styles for the public to buy. Luiseño/Shoshone-Bannock beadwork artist and designer Jamie Okuma challenges this view: her work can be seen in the Metropolitan Museum of Art and purchased through her online boutique.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. prevail
- B. succumb
- C. diverge
- D. intersect

ID: 2913fed1 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion about the relationship between fine art and fashion. As used in this context, “intersect” means to connect or overlap. The text indicates that Jamie Okuma challenges the position held by critics because her work can be seen at an art museum and can be bought by the public from her online boutique. The text also presents the critics’ view as being influenced by a perception that fine artists create works that are “timeless” and meant for exhibition, whereas fashion designers periodically produce new styles that are meant for purchase. This context suggests that the critics believe that fine art and fashion tend not to overlap—in other words, that they rarely intersect.

Choice A is incorrect because it wouldn’t make sense in context to say that critics contend that fine art and fashion rarely “prevail,” or prove to be triumphant or widespread. The text indicates that Okuma is an example of an artist who demonstrates that it’s possible to make fine art that is also available to the public as fashion. Choice B is incorrect because it wouldn’t make sense in context to say that fine art and fashion rarely “succumb,” or surrender. The text establishes that unlike what critics believe, Okuma creates works that are in art museums and available for the public to purchase, suggesting that critics believe fine art and fashion rarely overlap, not that they rarely succumb. Choice C is incorrect because saying that critics believe that fine art and fashion rarely “diverge,” or disagree or move in different directions, wouldn’t make sense in context. The text presents Okuma’s work as both fine art and fashion, thereby undermining what the critics assert. This suggests that the critics believe that fine art and fashion rarely intersect rather than that the two rarely diverge.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 4785f739

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 4785f739

Interruptions in the supply chain for microchips used in personal electronics have challenged an economist’s assertion that retailers can expect robust growth in sales of those devices in the coming months. The delays are unlikely to _____ her projection entirely but will almost certainly extend its time frame.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. dispute
- B. withdraw
- C. underscore
- D. invalidate

ID: 4785f739 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of the economist’s claim about sales of personal electronic devices. In this context, “invalidate” most nearly means nullify or make invalid. The text indicates that interruptions in the supply of microchips for personal electronics “have challenged” the economist’s claim that sales of personal electronics will show strong growth in the coming months. The text goes on to clarify the effect of the delays on the economist’s projection, stating that the delays are very likely to extend the time frame over which the projected growth in sales will occur. This context suggests that the delays are unlikely to invalidate the economist’s projection entirely—the delays will probably alter the time frame of the projection, not nullify it or make it invalid.

Choice A is incorrect because saying that the delays are unlikely to “dispute,” or argue against, the economist’s projection wouldn’t make sense. Since the delays are an inanimate circumstance, they couldn’t argue against a prediction about the sales of personal electronics. Choice B is incorrect because saying that the delays are unlikely to “withdraw,” or remove from consideration, the economist’s projection wouldn’t make sense. Although the economist could withdraw her projection because of the delays, the delays themselves couldn’t withdraw her projection since they’re an inanimate circumstance and thus can’t choose to remove something from consideration. Choice C is incorrect because there’s nothing in the text to suggest that the delays will “underscore,” or emphasize, the economist’s projection. Instead, the text suggests that the delays are likely to extend the time frame of the economist’s projection but not to undermine the projection entirely.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 30912351

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 30912351

Like the 1945 play it reimagines—Federico García Lorca’s *The House of Bernarda Alba*—Marcus Gardley’s 2014 play *The House That Will Not Stand* prominently features women. In both plays, the all-female cast _____ an array of female characters, including a strong mother and several daughters dealing with individual struggles.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. engulfs
- B. encourages
- C. comprises
- D. provokes

ID: 30912351 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of Gardley’s play. In this context, “comprises” means constitutes or makes up the totality of, and the text indicates that *The House That Will Not Stand* had an “all-female cast” that stands in some relationship to “an array of female characters” in the play. Because all cast members are female, the characters must be played by these female cast members; therefore the cast constitutes, or comprises, the collection of characters.

Choice A is incorrect. In this context, “engulfs” would mean encloses or overwhelms, and although it is fairly common to describe an actor as embodying (or personifying realistically) a character, there is nothing in the text to suggest that the cast members enclosed or overwhelmed the characters they played. Choice B is incorrect because in this context, “encourages” would mean inspires with courage or hope. Although the text does mention “a strong mother and several daughters dealing with individual struggles,” which might suggest that there are moments of encouragement among the characters during the play, there is nothing to suggest that the cast members encouraged the characters they portrayed. Choice D is incorrect because, in this context, “provokes” would mean instigates or incites to anger. Nothing in the text addresses provocation or what it might mean for actors to provoke the characters they are playing.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID f765b05a

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: f765b05a

In 2016, Gabriela González and team announced that a chirping sound captured by Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory antennas was direct evidence of gravitational waves, which skeptics had argued would be too faint for detection. Detailed statistical analysis helped preclude claims of the event’s _____, confirming the signal at a confidence level of over 99%.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. inconspicuousness
- B. discretion
- C. ambiguity
- D. probability

ID: f765b05a Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of Gabriela González and team’s detection of gravitational waves. In this context, "ambiguity" means uncertainty or doubtfulness. The text explains that although skeptics had thought that direct evidence of gravitational waves would be too faint to be detected, researchers led by González claimed that a chirping sound captured by Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory antennas nevertheless provided such evidence. The text goes on to say that detailed statistical analysis confirmed the observation of gravitational waves with a high degree of confidence—that is, with near certainty—a finding that helped to preclude, or rule out, any claims that the signal’s attribution to gravitational waves might be ambiguous or doubtful.

Choice A is incorrect. In this context, "inconspicuousness" would mean the quality of being unnoticeable or difficult to detect. Although the text indicates that skeptics had doubted whether gravitational waves could be observed directly because of their presumed faintness (which suggests that gravitational waves were expected to be difficult to detect), the blank portion of the text isn’t referring to the possibility that gravitational waves are unnoticeable or undetectable. Instead, the focus of the last sentence is González’s team’s observation of a chirping sound that they attributed to gravitational waves, and it wouldn’t make sense to say that through statistical analysis, they ruled out the possibility that the sound they observed was undetectable. Rather, the skeptical view presented in the text suggests that there could be some ambiguity about the source of the chirping, but statistical analysis virtually eliminated this uncertainty. Choice B is incorrect because in this context, "discretion" would mean good judgment, and it wouldn’t make sense to say that an event, such as the detection of gravitational waves, would show judgment, much less that the event’s capacity to exercise good judgment would be precluded by statistical analysis confirming its attribution. Choice D is incorrect because in this context, "probability" would mean likelihood, and the text states that statistical analysis, which confirmed the signal with a high degree of confidence, suggests the likelihood that the chirping sound was produced by gravitational waves, not that the analysis helped to preclude this likelihood.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID a0bcafb6

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: a0bcafb6

Stars form in cloudlike swirls of gas and dust that cannot be touched, but astrophysicist Nia Imara believes these formations need not remain completely _____ to researchers: she uses simulation data and sophisticated 3D printers to produce interactive models of these stellar nurseries.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. repeatable
- B. explicable
- C. regrettable
- D. intangible

ID: a0bcafb6 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of how Nia Imara facilitates the study of star formations. As used in this context "intangible" means unable to be physically handled or touched. The text states that star formations cannot be touched, and then goes on to explain that Imara created a special model to research star formations. In other words, despite the fact that real star formations are intangible, thanks to Imara, researchers can handle models of star formations to better understand them.

Choice A is incorrect because "repeatable" means can be duplicated or done again, which wouldn’t make sense in context. The text indicates that the swirls of gas and dust in which stars form are untouchable, but that Nia Imara has produced interactive models of them. It would therefore be illogical to suggest that Imara believes that the formations need not be duplicated and then go on to say that she has copied them. Choice B is incorrect because "explicable" means explainable or understandable, which wouldn’t make sense in context. The text does not suggest that Nia Imara believes that star formations can be fully explained but rather that she produced interactive models to physically study them because researchers are unable to touch them directly. Choice C is incorrect because "regrettable" means distressing or unfortunate, which wouldn’t make sense in context. The text does not suggest that Imara believes the researchers regret the star formations or find them distressing, but rather that she uses interactive models to physically study them.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 449c4204

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 449c4204

The province of Xoconochco was situated on the Pacific coast, hundreds of kilometers southeast of Tenochtitlan, the capital of the Aztec Empire. Because Xoconochco’s location within the empire was so _____, cacao and other trade goods produced there could reach the capital only after a long overland journey.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. unobtrusive
- B. concealed
- C. approximate
- D. peripheral

ID: 449c4204 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of the location of the province of Xoconochco within the Aztec Empire. As used in this context, “peripheral” means situated toward the outer bounds rather than the center. The text indicates that Xoconochco was located on a coast, hundreds of kilometers away from the capital of the Aztec Empire. The text also states that trade between the province and the capital required “a long overland journey.” This context suggests that Xoconochco was situated toward an edge of the empire’s territory rather than near its center.

Choice A is incorrect because it wouldn’t make sense in context to refer to Xoconochco’s location within the Aztec Empire as “unobtrusive,” or not blatant or undesirably prominent; it’s not clear how a province’s physical location would or wouldn’t be blatant. Instead of focusing on how noticeable Xoconochco’s location was, the text emphasizes the province’s distance from the capital of the empire, pointing out that because of this distance trade between the two required “a long overland journey.” Choice B is incorrect because the text indicates that the province of Xoconochco was located on a coast far from the capital of the Aztec Empire, not that it was “concealed,” or kept out of sight or hidden from view. Nothing in the text suggests that Xoconochco was actually hidden such that people couldn’t see it, and being hidden wouldn’t necessarily result in trade between the province and the capital requiring “a long overland journey.” Choice C is incorrect because to say that Xoconochco’s location within the Aztec Empire was “approximate” would mean that the location either wasn’t precisely correct or was close to some other location. Neither of these meanings would make sense in context because the text indicates that Xoconochco’s location is known and that it was far from the empire’s capital, so there’s no reason to characterize the location as either not precisely correct or close to another location.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID d81043b8

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: d81043b8

According to a US tax policy expert, state taxes are _____ other factors when considering an interstate move. Even significant differences in state taxation have almost no effect on most people’s decisions, while differences in employment opportunities, housing availability, and climate are strong influences.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. consistent with
- B. representative of
- C. overshadowed by
- D. irrelevant to

ID: d81043b8 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of the factors that influence peoples’ decisions to move to a different state. As used in this context, “overshadowed by” means to be surpassed by or caused to seem less important than other factors affecting a move. The text indicates that, according to a US tax policy expert, when people think about an interstate move, state taxes have little effect on their decisions, while employment opportunities, housing availability, and climate have a very strong effect. This context suggests that people consider these other factors to be more important than state taxes.

Choice A is incorrect because the text indicates that state taxes aren’t as important a consideration as other factors when people are thinking of moving to another state. The context doesn’t suggest that state taxes are “consistent with,” or in agreement with these other factors. Choice B is incorrect because it wouldn’t make sense in context to say that state taxes are “representative of,” or typical of, other factors. Taxes aren’t an example of employment opportunities, housing availability, and climate, which are the other factors listed in the text. Choice D is incorrect because it wouldn’t make sense in context to say that state taxes are “irrelevant to,” or unconnected or unimportant to other factors. State taxes are irrelevant to peoples’ decisions, not to other factors. In other words, although the text suggests that state taxes may be irrelevant to people considering a move to another state, the other factors mentioned in the text, such as employment opportunities, are unable to have an opinion about state taxes. Furthermore, the text indicates that significant differences in state taxes have almost no effect on peoples’ choices to move, but they aren’t completely unimportant.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 14e6e3fe

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 14e6e3fe

Containing over 160 billion base pairs of DNA resulting from polyploidy (whole genome duplication) and accumulation of noncoding DNA without significant deletion, the genome of *Tmesipteris oblancheolata* (New Caledonian fork fern) is the largest known among eukaryotes—and, given the high biological costs of extremely large genomes, is unlikely to be _____.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. protracted
- B. superseded
- C. curtailed
- D. obviated

ID: 14e6e3fe Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of the fork fern’s enormous genome. In this context, "superseded" means surpassed or exceeded by something else. The text establishes that this plant has "the largest known" genome among eukaryotes and mentions "the high biological costs of extremely large genomes," suggesting there are natural constraints that make it biologically disadvantageous to maintain such massive genetic material. This context supports the idea that it’s unlikely another organism will evolve an even larger genome that would replace this plant’s record—that is, its status as having the largest genome is unlikely to be superseded.

Choice A is incorrect because in this context, "protracted" would mean drawn out over time or space, and the text focuses on the record size of the New Caledonian fork fern’s genome and the fact that extremely large genomes carry "high biological costs." This information suggests that the biological upper limit for genome size may have been reached and that the New Caledonian fork fern’s genome is therefore unlikely to be surpassed, or superseded, not that it’s unlikely to be protracted. Choice C is incorrect because in this context, "curtailed" would mean cut short or reduced, and the text focuses on the record size of the New Caledonian fork fern’s genome and the fact that extremely large genomes carry "high biological costs." This information suggests that the biological upper limit for genome size may have been reached and that the New Caledonian fork fern’s genome is therefore unlikely to be surpassed, or superseded, not that it’s unlikely to be curtailed. Choice D is incorrect because in this context, "obviated" would mean made unnecessary or redundant, and the text focuses on the record size of the New Caledonian fork fern’s genome and the fact that extremely large genomes carry "high biological costs." This information suggests that the biological upper limit for genome size may have been reached and that the New Caledonian fork fern’s genome is therefore unlikely to be surpassed, or superseded, not that it’s unlikely to be obviated.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID c557b041

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: c557b041

The following text is from the 1989 novel *The Ancient Child* by Kiowa writer N. Scott Momaday. The main character has achieved tremendous commercial success as a painter.

More and more often he was asked to compromise his art or himself in one way or another, and more often than not he did so, for he was inclined to be passive and naïve; it was difficult for him to say no. Those who exhibited his work, who praised and purchased it, and who demanded its proliferation began to determine it.

©1989 by N. Scott Momaday

As used in the text, what does the word “determine” most nearly mean?

- A. Conclude
- B. Dictate
- C. Evaluate
- D. Select

ID: c557b041 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because as used in the text "determine" most nearly means "dictate." The text describes the relationship between the main character and those who exhibit, praise, and purchase his artwork. The text states that the main character is often asked to change his art or himself based on outside influences, and he usually acquiesces. Because the main character admits that those who support his work often shape it based on their demands, it follows that those outside influences dictate, or guide or dominate, the direction his work takes.

Choice A is incorrect because the text doesn't suggest that outside influences "conclude," or end, the main character's work. The text states that many supporters of the main character's art "demand its proliferation," not its conclusion. Choice C is incorrect because the text doesn't suggest that outside influences are "evaluating," or judging the main character's work. According to the text, the main character's art has already achieved great commercial success, with many people exhibiting, purchasing, and praising his work. Thus, outsiders have already supported the main character's work and are not questioning or evaluating its success or worth. They are instead influencing its initial direction. Choice D is incorrect because the text doesn't suggest that outside influences "select," or choose the main character's work. According to the text, the main character's art has already achieved great commercial success, with many people exhibiting, purchasing, and praising his work. Thus, outsiders have already supported the main character's work and are not selecting it. They are instead influencing its initial direction.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 4de34bdb

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 4de34bdb

It is by no means _____ to recognize the influence of Dutch painter Hieronymus Bosch on Ali Banisadr’s paintings; indeed, Banisadr himself cites Bosch as an inspiration. However, some scholars have suggested that the ancient Mesopotamian poem *Epic of Gilgamesh* may have had a far greater impact on Banisadr’s work.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. substantial
- B. satisfying
- C. unimportant
- D. appropriate

ID: 4de34bdb Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer because it most logically completes the sentence about the influences on Banisadr’s work. In context, “It is by no means” followed by “unimportant” conveys how it is relevant to recognize Bosch’s influence on Banisadr. The text points out that the artist himself cites Bosch as an inspiration, and then goes on to claim that *The Epic of Gilgamesh* has had a more significant influence than Bosch.

Choice A is incorrect because “substantial,” which means weighty or meaningful, incorrectly suggests that it wouldn’t be meaningful to acknowledge Bosch’s influence on Banisadr. The phrase “indeed, Banisadr himself cites Bosch as an inspiration” doesn’t support this suggestion. Choice B is incorrect because “satisfying,” which means pleasing, incorrectly suggests that it wouldn’t be pleasing to acknowledge Bosch’s influence on Banisadr. The phrase “indeed, Banisadr himself cites Bosch as an inspiration” doesn’t support this suggestion. Choice D is incorrect because “appropriate,” which means suitable, incorrectly suggests that it wouldn’t be proper to acknowledge Bosch’s influence on Banisadr. The phrase “indeed, Banisadr himself cites Bosch as an inspiration” doesn’t support this suggestion.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 4d5990fb

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 4d5990fb

Disproving the common misconception of Native art as _____, the painters whose work appears in the collection at the National Museum of the American Indian employ a range of styles. There are artists working in the traditional arts of their specific tribal communities, artists working in European modernist or American abstract expressionist art traditions, and artists blending various traditions into something wholly new.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. uncontroversial
- B. individualistic
- C. theoretical
- D. homogeneous

ID: 4d5990fb Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of the art at the National Museum of the American Indian. In this context, "homogenous" means uniform or highly similar. The text explains that the painters whose works are included in this museum’s collection employ an array of artistic styles, both Native and non-Native, traditional and new. Given this high degree of stylistic diversity, it is a misconception that Native art is uniform, or homogenous.

Choice A is incorrect because the text doesn’t consider whether Native art is controversial, or causes disagreement or discussion; instead, the text discusses the stylistic diversity of the collection of the National Museum of the American Indian. Choice B is incorrect. Although the text indicates that some of the artists whose work is represented in the collection of the National Museum of the American Indian blend various artistic traditions into highly individual styles of their own, this is not the primary focus of the text. Instead, the text is concerned with how Native art is often mistakenly perceived as uniform, when in fact it is stylistically diverse. Choice C is incorrect because the text never implies that people mistakenly conceive of Native art as theoretical, or concerned with philosophical or abstract issues; instead, the text’s discussion of Native art is framed around this art’s stylistic diversity versus the misconception of it as homogenous.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID c06835bb

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: c06835bb

In editor Lisa Yaszek’s introduction to her anthology *The Future Is Female! More Classic Science Fiction Stories by Women*, Yaszek identifies an increasing sense of _____ feminist mode of writing in the 1970s, in contrast to many woman-authored science fiction stories of the 1920s to 1960s whose politics were less deliberately signaled.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. a prudently
- B. an overtly
- C. a cordially
- D. an inadvertently

ID: c06835bb Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of Yaszek’s introduction to her science fiction anthology. In this context "overtly" means openly or without concealment. The text draws a contrast between the lack of "deliberately signaled" political themes in woman-authored science fiction from the 1920s to the 1960s and what Yaszek notes about woman-authored science fiction from the 1970s. This contrast implies that the work from the 1970s did clearly reflect feminist political themes. In other words, the text indicates that unlike women who wrote science fiction in the 1920s to the 1960s, the women who wrote science fiction in the 1970s expressed overtly feminist themes.

Choice A is incorrect. In this context "prudently" would mean cautiously, which might plausibly describe the women who wrote science fiction from the 1920s to the 1960s, in that they tended to avoid revealing their political views; however, the text contrasts these authors with the women writing science fiction in the 1970s, thereby suggesting that the authors writing in the 1970s were not restrained in that way. Choice C is incorrect because in this context "cordially" would mean politely, and nothing in the text indicates that politeness was a significant factor for women writing science fiction either from the 1920s to the 1960s or in the 1970s. The text draws a contrast between the lack of "deliberately signaled" political themes in woman-authored science fiction from the 1920s to the 1960s and what Yaszek notes about woman-authored science fiction from the 1970s. It’s unclear how "less deliberately signaled" politics and an increasing sense of politeness toward feminism would constitute a meaningful contrast. Choice D is incorrect because in this context, "inadvertently" would mean unintentionally, and nothing in the text suggests that Yaszek thought the feminist elements of the woman-authored science fiction from the 1970s arose without deliberate effort.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID b134ee38

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: b134ee38

The following text is adapted from Nathaniel Hawthorne’s 1837 story “Dr. Heidegger’s Experiment.” The main character, a physician, is experimenting with rehydrating a dried flower.

At first [the rose] lay lightly on the surface of the fluid, appearing to imbibe none of its moisture. Soon, however, a singular change began to be visible. The crushed and dried petals stirred and assumed a deepening tinge of crimson, as if the flower were reviving from a deathlike slumber.

As used in the text, what does the phrase “a singular” most nearly mean?

- A. A lonely
- B. A disagreeable
- C. An acceptable
- D. An extraordinary

ID: b134ee38 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer because as used in the text, “singular” most nearly means extraordinary. The text portrays an experiment in which a character rehydrates a dried rose by infusing it with moisture. After prolonged contact with the liquid, the rose begins to absorb it, undergoing an exceptional transformation: its color deepens, its previously “crushed and dried” petals shift, and the entire flower revives “from a deathlike slumber.” In other words, an extraordinary change is visible in the flower.

Choice A is incorrect. Although in some contexts “singular” can mean of or relating to an individual or to a single instance of something, this usage doesn’t imply loneliness or an otherwise unsatisfactory condition of isolation. Moreover, the text doesn’t attribute such a condition to the rose. Choice B is incorrect. Although “singular” has several related meanings, none of them relate to being disagreeable or unpleasant. Moreover, the text doesn’t portray the change undergone by the rose as necessarily disagreeable. Choice C is incorrect because “singular” means extraordinary, not acceptable. The change is portrayed as striking, not barely satisfactory.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID b25faecd

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: b25faecd

Eighteenth-century historian Edward Gibbon thought the only character defect of the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius was his mild temperament—though the emperor was widely considered virtuous, his overly permissive nature led him to _____ the vices of those who surrounded him.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. indulge
- B. despise
- C. moderate
- D. criticize

ID: b25faecd Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius. In this context, "indulge" means treat with excessive leniency. The text states that according to historian Edward Gibbon, Marcus Aurelius, who was widely considered virtuous, had only a single character flaw: his mild temperament. The text suggests that because of this flaw, Marcus Aurelius had an overly permissive nature. This context, in turn, supports the idea that Marcus Aurelius treated the vices, or evils, of those around him with excessive leniency, indulging rather than punishing those vices.

Choice B is incorrect. While the text does state that Marcus Aurelius was widely considered virtuous, it gives no indication that he was inclined to "despise," or hate, others’ vices. Rather, the text suggests that he showed undue tolerance for these vices because of his overly permissive nature—that is, his inclination to allow others to do as they wished. Choice C is incorrect because the text’s description of Marcus Aurelius as overly permissive suggests that he showed undue tolerance for others’ vices, not that he tried to "moderate" those vices, or lessen their intensity. Choice D is incorrect because the text’s description of Marcus Aurelius as overly permissive suggests that he showed undue tolerance for others’ vices, not that he attempted to "criticize," or speak disapprovingly of, those vices.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 472bd320

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 472bd320

Domesticated thousands of years ago by Indigenous people in South America, cacao, the plant from which chocolate is made, deviates structurally from the wild plant it is descended from. Maize (corn), another crop domesticated by Indigenous Americans, shows so little resemblance to any wild plant that genetic research was necessary to _____ teosinte grass as its ancestor.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. acquire
- B. develop
- C. attract
- D. confirm

ID: 472bd320 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of the identification of maize’s wild ancestor. In this context, to "confirm" means to establish the truth or correctness of something. The text explains that maize "shows so little resemblance to any wild plant that genetic research was necessary" to establish its ancestry, which was ultimately traced to teosinte grass. This context conveys the idea that scientific verification was required to establish an ancestral relationship with certainty—that is, to confirm teosinte grass as maize’s ancestor.

Choice A is incorrect because to "acquire" means to obtain or gain possession of something. Although their research likely required scientists to acquire samples of maize and teosinte grass, the text does not suggest that this was the ultimate goal of their work, which instead probed the connection between the two plants. Choice B is incorrect because to "develop" means to create something or to promote the growth of something, and the ancestral relationship between teosinte grass and maize already existed as a biological fact in the deep past, which scientists then verified through research; because this relationship already existed, the scientists can’t be said to have either created it or encouraged its growth. Choice C is incorrect because to "attract" means to entice something or to bring about a relationship or connection between two things, while the ancestral relationship between teosinte grass and maize already existed as a biological fact; rather than bringing about the relationship between the two plants, the scientists instead verified the prior existence of it.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 757b656b

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 757b656b

Yanzhe Fu et al. suggest that the extinct aquatic insect *Karataviella popovi* utilized a brood care strategy that mitigated the risk of oxygen deficiency. This determination rests on the researchers’ analysis of fossils uncovered at a particularly _____ site: China’s Haifanggou Formation, which has yielded a vast diversity of fossils, including those of long-proboscid scorpionflies.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. fruitful
- B. unassailable
- C. obscure
- D. quantified

ID: 757b656b Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of the fossil site from which the evidence about brood care in *K. popovi* was recovered. In this context, “fruitful” means abundantly productive. The text indicates that the researchers drew their evidence from fossils found in China’s Haifanggou Formation, a location that has yielded a vast diversity of fossils. The information about the site yielding a vast diversity of fossils supports the characterization of the Haifanggou Formation as particularly productive, or fruitful.

Choice B is incorrect because there is nothing in the text to support characterizing the Haifanggou Formation as a site that is particularly “unassailable,” or not open to attack, question, or criticism. The text emphasizes that the site has yielded a vast diversity of fossils, suggesting that it is a particularly productive location for fossil hunters, not that it cannot be challenged. Choice C is incorrect because there is nothing in the text to support characterizing the Haifanggou Formation as a site that is particularly “obscure,” or poorly understood or relatively unknown. In fact, the text notes that the Haifanggou Formation has yielded a vast diversity of fossils, suggesting that the site is not an obscure one. Choice D is incorrect because “quantified” means expressed or measured as a quantity, which does not describe the productiveness the context calls for. Although the text indicates that the Haifanggou Formation has yielded a vast diversity of fossils, that fact suggests that the site can be characterized as particularly productive, not as particularly quantified.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID ac4c9c04

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: ac4c9c04

Diadromous fish migrate between freshwater and marine biomes during their life cycle. The migration’s obligate nature is why diadromous fish can be _____ those that are merely euryhaline (able to tolerate high salinity): the euryhaline blackchin tilapia can survive high salinity, but its life cycle does not involve relocation to a different biome, as does that of the diadromous wild salmon.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. demarcated from
- B. reconstituted as
- C. conflated with
- D. derived from

ID: ac4c9c04 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of diadromous fish. In this context, "demarcated from" means separate or set apart from. The text indicates that diadromous fish differ from euryhaline fish in that diadromous fish "migrate between freshwater and marine biomes during their life," whereas euryhaline fish do not relocate to a different biome because they can tolerate higher salinity environments. Therefore, this context suggests that because of differences between their migration patterns, diadromous fish are distinct and can be demarcated from euryhaline fish.

Choice B is incorrect. Although the text states that diadromous fish migrate and relocate, the text does not suggest that diadromous fish would be "reconstituted as," or formed again as, anything new. Only their environments change and not the fish themselves. Choice C is incorrect because the text does not suggest that diadromous fish can be "conflated with," or combined with, euryhaline fish. Instead, the text distinguishes the two types of fish by pointing out their differences with regard to migration and tolerance for salinity. Choice D is incorrect because the text indicates that based on migration habits and tolerance for salinity, diadromous fish are different from euryhaline fish; so it would not make logical sense to say that diadromous fish would be "derived from," or be an extension of or result from, euryhaline fish.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID b551c971

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: b551c971

Stephen Hannock’s luminous landscape paintings are appealing to viewers but have elicited little commentary from contemporary critics, a phenomenon that may be due to the very fact that the paintings seem so _____. Many critics focus their attention on art that is cryptic or overtly challenging.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. innovative
- B. subversive
- C. profound
- D. accessible

ID: b551c971 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. When talking about a thing, “accessible” means “easy to understand.” This sets up the contrast in the next sentence, which tells us that critics mostly focus on art that is “cryptic or challenging” (meaning not easy to understand).

Choice A is incorrect. This doesn’t fit the logic of the text. The next sentence tells us that critics focus on art that is mysterious and challenging. If Hannock’s paintings are “innovative” (meaning advanced and original), then critics probably would comment on them. Choice B is incorrect. This doesn’t fit the logic of the text. The next sentence tells us that critics focus on art that is mysterious and challenging. If Hannock’s paintings are “subversive” (meaning disruptive and revolutionary), then critics probably would comment on them. Choice C is incorrect. This doesn’t fit the logic of the text. The next sentence tells us that critics focus on art that is mysterious and challenging. If Hannock’s paintings are “profound” (meaning very deep and insightful), then critics probably would comment on them.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID af154abc

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: af154abc

Drivers who strongly believe that the toll they must pay to use the Lewis and Clark Bridge, which spans the Ohio River to connect Indiana and Kentucky, is currently too high are unlikely to be _____ a proposal to increase the toll. Advocates for a higher toll are likely to have more success if they instead direct their arguments toward a more persuadable segment of the population.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. receptive to
- B. apprised of
- C. incensed by
- D. cited in

ID: af154abc Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of driver attitudes toward a toll increase. In this context, "receptive to" would mean open to or willing to consider something. The text focuses on drivers who think the current toll for the Lewis and Clark Bridge is too high, suggesting that advocates for increasing that toll would have better success presenting their arguments to "a more persuadable segment of the population" rather than to those drivers. This context suggests that the drivers who strongly believe the toll is already too high are not persuadable—that is, that they are unlikely to be willing to consider the toll-increase proposal.

Choice B is incorrect because "apprised of" means informed about or made aware of something, and nothing in the text suggests that the drivers who think a toll is already too high wouldn’t be informed of a proposal for an even higher toll; in fact, the text implies that advocates of the proposal would "direct their arguments" in favor of the increase to those drivers, even though they would likely be more successful focusing on people who are more open to hearing their arguments. Choice C is incorrect. In this context, "incensed by" would mean angered or outraged by something. The text focuses on drivers who feel that a current toll is too high, and it wouldn’t make sense to suggest that those drivers would be *unlikely* to be angered by a proposal for the toll to be increased; indeed, drivers who think the toll is already too high likely would be angered by a move to raise it even higher. Choice D is incorrect. In this context, "cited in" would mean referred to or mentioned in something. Although it’s reasonable to suggest that a proposal to raise a toll might not make any mention of drivers who think the toll is already too high, the text focuses on how those drivers and other people are likely to react to arguments in favor of the proposal, not on whether those drivers would be cited in the proposal itself.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID bc8fb41e

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: bc8fb41e

Scientists studying marine ecosystems were surprised by the extent of internal carbon recycling by red coralline algae. While some _____ of carbon was expected, the scientists found that the algae reabsorb nearly 40% of the carbon dioxide they produce during calcification processes and harness it for photosynthesis.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. imitation
- B. supply
- C. examination
- D. reuse

ID: bc8fb41e Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of internal carbon recycling by red coralline algae. In this context, “reuse” means using something again rather than disposing of it as waste. The text describes scientists’ surprise at “the extent of” internal carbon recycling by the algae, characterizing this finding as a departure from the more limited degree of activity that the scientists had expected to observe. The text goes on to explain that, in contrast to the scientists’ expectation that “some” carbon would be affected by the activity being described, the algae were found to “reabsorb nearly 40% of the carbon dioxide they produce during calcification processes and harness it for photosynthesis,” a specific example of their extensive capacity for taking in carbon and recycling, or reusing, it. Because the scientists thought the algae would use some of their own carbon dioxide again but were surprised by the extent of this activity, the context supports the idea that some reuse of carbon was expected.

Choice A is incorrect because it wouldn’t be logical in context to state that some “imitation,” or reproduction of something else, of carbon was expected. The text discusses the algae’s reabsorption and reuse of the carbon dioxide they produce, not any process by which carbon copies or reproduces something. Choice B is incorrect because stating that some “supply,” or available amount, of carbon was expected wouldn’t fit the contrast established within the text. The text contrasts the scientists’ expectations about carbon recycling in algae with their actual observations, noting that the scientists anticipated a more limited version of the recycling process they observed. This context doesn’t suggest that the scientists merely anticipated the presence of some amount of carbon. Choice C is incorrect because it wouldn’t be logical in context to state that some “examination,” or careful inspection, of carbon was expected. The text isn’t discussing scientists’ inspection of carbon, and carbon itself isn’t something that engages in inspection. Rather, the text focuses on the algae’s reabsorption and reuse of the carbon dioxide they produce.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 6445e0ac

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 6445e0ac

Seminole/Muscogee director Sterlin Harjo _____ television’s tendency to situate Native characters in the distant past: this rejection is evident in his series *Reservation Dogs*, which revolves around teenagers who dress in contemporary styles and whose dialogue is laced with current slang.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. repudiates
- B. proclaims
- C. foretells
- D. recants

ID: 6445e0ac Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of Sterlin Harjo’s approach to representing Native characters on television. As used in this context, “repudiates” means rejects or refuses to have anything to do with. The text indicates that television shows tend to depict Native characters as living long ago, but that Harjo’s series *Reservation Dogs* focuses on Native teenagers in the present day, representing a “rejection” of the typical approach to depicting Native characters. This context thus indicates that Harjo repudiates television’s general tendency regarding Native characters.

Choice B is incorrect because the text describes Harjo’s “rejection” of the typical approach to representing Native characters on television, so it wouldn’t make sense to say that Harjo “proclaims,” or declares or affirms, television’s general tendency regarding Native characters. Harjo is described as refusing to follow the pattern of depicting Native characters in the distant past, not as proclaiming that pattern. Choice C is incorrect because the text describes television’s tendency to represent Native characters in the distant past as something that is already occurring, not as something that Harjo “foretells,” or predicts will happen in the future. The text is focused on Harjo’s “rejection” of this pattern, not on any predictions he may have about it. Choice D is incorrect because saying that Harjo “recants” something would mean that he withdraws a previously held belief, and it wouldn’t make sense to say that Harjo recants television’s tendency to represent Native characters as living in the past. No beliefs previously held by Harjo are mentioned. Additionally, a tendency isn’t a belief and thus isn’t something that can be recanted.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 8666088e

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 8666088e

Barring major archaeological discoveries, we are unlikely to ever have _____ account of ancient Egypt under the female pharaoh Hatshepsut, as much of the evidence of her reign was deliberately destroyed by her successors.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. an imaginative
- B. a superficial
- C. an exhaustive
- D. a questionable

ID: 8666088e Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of historical evidence about ancient Egypt under the reign of the pharaoh Hatshepsut. In this context, "an exhaustive" account would be a thorough one. The text states that much of the evidence from her reign was purposely destroyed—in other words, there is a lack of surviving records. This context conveys that unless there are major new archaeological discoveries, an exhaustive account of Hatshepsut’s reign is unlikely.

Choice A is incorrect because in this context, "an imaginative" account would be an account based on imagination, or ideas and speculation, rather than facts. The text indicates that much of the evidence of Hatshepsut’s reign was deliberately destroyed, and a lack of evidence actually makes it more likely that accounts will be imaginative to some degree and not strictly factual. Choice B is incorrect because in this context, "a superficial" account would be one that is lacking in depth or concerned only with what is obvious. The text indicates that most evidence of Hatshepsut’s reign was purposely destroyed, which suggests that accounts of that time are likely already somewhat superficial, since there is little information available to support deeper knowledge. Further, it would be illogical to suggest that discovering major new evidence would make it more likely that accounts would be superficial. Choice D is incorrect because "a questionable" account would be one likely to be challenged or doubted, and since the text suggests that little evidence of Hatshepsut’s reign has survived, accounts of that time probably involve some speculation and thus may already be open to doubt. Further, it would be illogical to suggest that discovering major new evidence would make it more likely that accounts would be questionable.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 59ed1f31

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 59ed1f31

The güiro, a musical instrument traditionally made from a dried and hollowed gourd, is thought to have originated with the Taíno people of Puerto Rico. Players use a wooden stick to scrape along ridges cut into the side of the gourd, creating sounds that are highly _____. the sounds produced by güiros can differ based on the distance between the ridges, the types of strokes the player uses, and the thickness of the gourd.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. overlooked
- B. powerful
- C. routine
- D. variable

ID: 59ed1f31 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of the sounds made by güiros. In this context, “variable” means able to change. The text begins by explaining that güiros are instruments made out of hollowed gourds with ridges cut into their sides and that players scrape the ridges with wooden sticks to produce sounds. The text goes on to say that güiros’ sounds can change depending on gourd thickness, the distance between ridges, and the types of strokes the player uses, thus supporting the idea that the sounds created by these instruments are variable.

Choice A is incorrect because “overlooked” means not being seen or noticed, and there is nothing in the text to suggest that the sounds produced by güiros are overlooked or not noticed. Choice B is incorrect because in this context, “powerful” would mean having a great ability to produce an effect. While it’s possible that the sounds produced by güiros have a strong effect on listeners, the text doesn’t discuss this aspect of their sounds. Choice C is incorrect because “routine” means usual and unvarying, and there is nothing in the text to suggest that the sounds produced by güiros are unvarying. In fact, the text describes how the sounds produced by güiros can differ based on several factors.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 368e65f2

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 368e65f2

The Illustrated History of San Mateo County, published in 1878, features several illustrations by Grafton Tyler Brown showing the California county’s farms, residences, and businesses. It was _____ for a business to be featured, since being included suggested that a business was an important part of the community.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. risky
- B. misleading
- C. advantageous
- D. unremarkable

ID: 368e65f2 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of businesses being featured in *The Illustrated History of San Mateo County*. In this context, "advantageous" means beneficial or providing a favorable position. The text explains that being included in the book "suggested that a business was an important part of the community," and it can be inferred that an enhanced reputation within the local community would benefit a business, commercially or otherwise. This context supports the idea that being featured in this publication would be advantageous.

Choice A is incorrect because in this context, "risky" would suggest that being featured in *The Illustrated History of San Mateo County* might have negative consequences for a business. However, the text implies only positive outcomes since inclusion indicated importance within the local community. Choice B is incorrect because "misleading" would mean deceptive or deliberately giving a wrong impression, but the text doesn’t indicate there was something deceptive about being featured in *The Illustrated History of San Mateo County*; rather, it suggests that inclusion indicated community importance. Choice D is incorrect because "unremarkable" would mean common or ordinary, which doesn’t make sense in context. The text suggests that inclusion in *The Illustrated History of San Mateo County* instead conferred a special status on a business by conveying its importance in the local community.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 1d69bcd3

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 1d69bcd3

One popular theory of the origin of the Moon, the “big whack,” posits that a protoplanet called Theia collided with Earth, flinging debris into orbit that eventually coalesced into the Moon. Until recently, Theia was _____, but researcher Qian Yuan and colleagues now claim to have identified pieces of the protoplanet in the lowermost section of Earth’s mantle.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. desultory
- B. spurious
- C. veritable
- D. notional

ID: 1d69bcd3 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of Theia and the origin of the Moon. In this context, "notional" means theoretical or only an idea. The text indicates that although something was once true of Theia, the protoplanet one theory holds collided with Earth and created debris that became the Moon, researchers now claim to have identified pieces of it deep in Earth’s mantle. In other words, having direct evidence of Theia is a new development. This context suggests that before evidence was found, Theia was only theoretical—that is, that it was notional.

Choice A is incorrect because the text doesn’t suggest that Theia, a protoplanet, was "desultory," which in this context would mean moving away from the matter at hand; indeed, the text focuses on the "big whack" theory of the origin of the Moon and indicates that Theia is a central part of that theory. Choice B is incorrect because the text makes the point that something was true of Theia until recently and suggests that this has changed now that researchers believe they have found pieces of the protoplanet deep in Earth’s mantle. It wouldn’t make sense to say that Theia was actually "spurious," or false, until researchers found direct evidence of the protoplanet. (Although Theia’s existence might not have been certain, it would not have been false simply because there was no evidence of it.) Choice C is incorrect because the text makes the point that something was true of Theia until recently and suggests that this has changed now that researchers believe they have found pieces of the protoplanet deep in Earth’s mantle. It wouldn’t make sense to say that Theia was "veritable," or real, before researchers found direct evidence of its existence: the evidence would instead confirm that Theia was real.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 1232f204

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 1232f204

The percentage of US forest land that a 2023 federal report identified as being either mature or old growth exceeds other recent estimates. Given how little _____ there is among scientists regarding the scope of these categories, this discrepancy shouldn't be surprising: forest researchers regularly dispute one another's classifications.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. deliberation
- B. vigilance
- C. interest
- D. consensus

ID: 1232f204 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer because it most logically completes the text's discussion of US forest land classifications. In this context, "consensus" means agreement. The text indicates that a percentage given in a US forest land report differs from other estimates and that this discrepancy isn't surprising, given that forest researchers regularly dispute one another's classifications of parts of US forest land as either mature or old growth. This context conveys that there is little agreement when it comes to these categories.

Choice A is incorrect because the text states that there is often dispute among forest researchers about classifications of US forest land as either mature or old growth, which directly indicates that when it comes to these categories, there is much "deliberation," or discussion and consideration, not little deliberation. Choice B is incorrect because the text indicates that there is often dispute among forest researchers about classifications of US forest land as either mature or old growth; this doesn't imply that there is little "vigilance," or careful attention, among researchers when it comes to these categories but rather conveys that researchers do pay attention to forest land classifications and question one another's decisions. Choice C is incorrect because the text indicates that there is often dispute among forest researchers about classifications of US forest land as either mature or old growth; this doesn't imply that there is little "interest," or concern, among researchers when it comes to these categories but rather conveys that researchers are concerned with forest land classifications and pay attention to one another's classifications.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 0363b987

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 0363b987

The Polynesian languages, a group of related languages originating on islands in the Pacific, typically have _____ array of consonant sounds. For example, the Mangareva language of the South Pacific has nine consonants, and ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i, the language of the Native Hawaiian people, has eight. Globally, however, the median number of consonants per language is over twenty-two.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. an unvarying
- B. a musical
- C. an exclusive
- D. a modest

ID: 0363b987 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of Polynesian languages. In this context, “modest” means relatively limited or small. The text begins with a statement about the array, or number, of consonant sounds in these languages. It then gives examples of one Polynesian language that has nine consonants and one that has eight consonants before noting that the global median number of consonants per language is more than twenty-two; in other words, the numbers of consonants in the Polynesian examples are well below the global median number. This context conveys that the text is making the point that the Polynesian languages have a modest array of consonant sounds.

Choice A is incorrect. In this context, “unvarying” would mean unchanging. The text focuses on comparing the typical numbers of consonant sounds in Polynesian languages to the global median number of consonants per language, not on conveying that the number of consonant sounds in Polynesian languages typically doesn’t vary; the text makes no mention of the number of consonants changing within a language or language group. Choice B is incorrect because the text is focused on the quantity of consonant sounds in Polynesian languages, not the idea that those consonants are “musical,” or pleasantly harmonious and like music; the text discusses only the numbers of consonants in Polynesian languages and the global median number of consonants per language, not the way consonants sound. Choice C is incorrect. In this context, “exclusive” would mean limited to a single group. The text discusses the typical numbers of consonant sounds in Polynesian languages and gives two examples of languages with consonant numbers below the global median number of consonants per language, but it doesn’t suggest that the array, or number, of consonant sounds in Polynesian languages is exclusive to those languages—that is, that Polynesian languages are the only ones with eight to nine consonants.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 3e182b7c

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 3e182b7c

Steiger Butte Drum, a family ensemble from the Klamath Tribes of the Pacific Northwest, collaborated with composer Michael Gordon to create *Natural History*, a work featuring traditional drumming and vocals alongside an orchestra and chorus. Steiger Butte Drum’s participation is _____ to the piece: members not only contributed to its composition but also must be included in all performances.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. tangential
- B. subsequent
- C. analogous
- D. integral

ID: 3e182b7c Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of Steiger Butte Drum’s contributions to the musical work *Natural History*. In this context, “integral” means essential or necessary to the whole. The text states that Steiger Butte Drum not only took part in the piece’s creation, collaborating with composer Michael Gordon on it, but also “must be included in all performances.” This context clearly indicates that the ensemble’s participation is essential, or integral, to the piece, both in its creation and its performance.

Choice A is incorrect because in this context, “tangential” would mean peripheral or of little relevance to something. The text emphasizes the importance of Steiger Butte Drum’s involvement in both the composition and performance of *Natural History*, indicating their role is central, not tangential. Choice B is incorrect because in this context, “subsequent” would mean following after or coming later than something else. The text doesn’t establish a temporal sequence where the participation of Steiger Butte Drum followed after the creation of *Natural History*; rather, it indicates that the ensemble was involved with the piece from the beginning, having worked with Michael Gordon during the creation process. Choice C is incorrect because in this context, “analogous” would mean similar or comparable to something else, and the text doesn’t compare Steiger Butte Drum’s participation in the creation and performances of *Natural History* to anything else; instead, it describes the nature and importance of the ensemble’s involvement.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 6450d5b2

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 6450d5b2

Science fiction has long served as a _____ real-world technological advancements. Indeed, from Jules Verne’s 1865 novel *From the Earth to the Moon* inspiring developments in aerospace engineering to the television show *Star Trek* sparking the design of the ancestor of today’s smartphones, these narratives have spurred many actual innovations.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. constraint to
- B. sponsor of
- C. catalyst of
- D. diversion from

ID: 6450d5b2 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of science fiction’s relationship to real-world technological advancements. In this context, “catalyst of” means something that prompts the development of. The text indicates that science fiction narratives have “spurred many actual innovations,” giving as examples Verne’s *From the Earth to the Moon* “inspiring” aerospace engineering developments and *Star Trek* “sparking” the design of early analogues of smartphones. Thus, this context supports the idea that science fiction has prompted the development of, or served as a catalyst of, real-world technological advancements.

Choice A is incorrect because saying that science fiction has served as a “constraint to,” or limitation on, real-world technological advancements would contradict the text, which indicates that science fiction has inspired technological innovation rather than inhibited it. Choice B is incorrect because describing science fiction as a “sponsor of,” or an entity who takes on responsibility for, real-world technological advancements wouldn’t make sense in context. A sponsor provides material support for an undertaking, often by providing funds for the undertaking or by overseeing its management, but the text describes science fiction as inspiring or sparking ideas for innovation, not as financially backing technological development or taking direct responsibility for overseeing it. Choice D is incorrect because in this context, a “diversion from” would mean either a distraction from or a deviation from, which contradicts the text’s examples of science fiction inspiring real-world technological advancements. It therefore wouldn’t make sense to say that science fiction has distracted people from such advancements or that the innovations science fiction depicts deviate from actual innovations.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 7e6e2ce1

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 7e6e2ce1

In 1776, the United States sent Benjamin Franklin to France to try to win the country’s support in the United States’ fight for independence from Great Britain. Franklin was very popular in France. This _____ surely helped him to convince France to assist the United States.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. thoughtfulness
- B. esteem
- C. controversy
- D. sincerity

ID: 7e6e2ce1 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of Benjamin Franklin’s popularity in France. In this context, "esteem" means high regard. The text indicates that Franklin was very popular, or highly regarded, in France, where he sought the country’s support for the United States in its fight for independence, and indicates that his status helped him achieve his goal. The context therefore suggests that being held in high regard by the people likely helped Franklin convince France to help the United States.

Choice A is incorrect because the text directly indicates that it was Franklin’s popularity that likely helped him convince France to help the United States, not his "thoughtfulness" (which in this context would mean either his careful reasoning and attention or his kind consideration of others’ needs). Choice C is incorrect because the text doesn’t suggest that there was any "controversy," or dispute, about Franklin’s presence in France; instead, the text states that Franklin was very popular in France and directly indicates that this status likely helped him convince France to help the United States. Choice D is incorrect because the text directly indicates that it was Franklin’s popularity that likely helped him convince France to help the United States, not his "sincerity," or his honesty.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 666176f6

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 666176f6

In a study of residential mobility in Washington, DC, LaTanya Brown-Robertson et al. found that increases in household spending power (via tax credits) had mixed effects on mobility decisions, possibly because residential location choices are not fully reducible to economic factors but are also _____ noneconomic factors such as access to strong local social networks.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. transposed with
- B. mediated by
- C. decoupled from
- D. antecedent to

ID: 666176f6 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of residential mobility decisions. In this context, "mediated by" means influenced or affected by something. The text establishes that increasing household spending power (an economic factor) produced "mixed effects" on mobility decisions. The text then explains that residential choices are "not fully reducible to economic factors," which means that these decisions don’t simply rely on how much money is available to spend on a residential move but on other factors as well. According to the text, noneconomic considerations, such as access to social networks, also play a significant role. Thus, "mediated by" accurately captures this relationship where noneconomic factors influence what might otherwise be purely economic decisions.

Choice A is incorrect because "transposed with" would suggest that economic and noneconomic factors are being switched or interchanged when making residential mobility decisions, which wouldn’t make logical sense in this context. The text indicates that these factors coexist and jointly influence such decisions. Choice C is incorrect. The phrase "decoupled from" means separated or disconnected from, which would suggest that economic factors are completely separate from noneconomic factors. This would contradict the text’s main point that residential mobility decisions involve multiple factors being considered simultaneously rather than in isolation. Choice D is incorrect because "antecedent to," which means something prior or earlier, would indicate that noneconomic factors come before economic ones in time or sequence. The text doesn’t establish this chronological relationship. Instead, the text indicates that economic factors (household spending power) and noneconomic factors (access to social networks) simultaneously influence residential mobility decisions.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID fe376620

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: fe376620

At the turn of the twentieth century, Black residents of Richmond, Virginia, had few formal options for banking and other financial services. To _____ this situation, Maggie Lena Walker chartered the St. Luke Penny Savings Bank in 1903. The bank went on to provide home loans and savings opportunities to thousands of Black families over the following decades.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. prolong
- B. rectify
- C. retain
- D. highlight

ID: fe376620 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of how Maggie Lena Walker addressed the lack of financial services available to Black residents in Richmond, Virginia, at the turn of the twentieth century. In this context, "rectify" means to correct or remedy something undesirable. The text indicates that by chartering the St. Luke Penny Savings Bank in 1903, Walker took action to provide local Black residents with greater access to financial services like home loans and savings opportunities. This context supports the idea that she aimed to rectify the undesirable situation affecting these residents.

Choice A is incorrect because in this context, "prolong" would mean to lengthen something in time. The text indicates that at the turn of the twentieth century, Black residents in Richmond, Virginia, were faced with a lack of formal banking options. The text then states that Walker founded a new bank that provided these residents with financial services. Therefore, instead of prolonging the situation, she took steps to rectify, or correct, it. Choice C is incorrect because in this context, "retain" would mean to continue to have or to keep something. According to the text, at the turn of the twentieth century, Black residents in Richmond, Virginia, had few formal banking options, and Walker chartered a new institution to provide these residents with expanded financial services; therefore, she took steps to rectify, not retain, the situation. Choice D is incorrect because in this context, "highlight" would mean to emphasize or call attention to something, but the text indicates that Walker took concrete steps beyond merely drawing attention to the situation Black residents were facing in Richmond, Virginia, at the turn of the twentieth century. According to the text, Walker worked to rectify, or correct, the lack of formal banking options that were available to these residents by establishing a bank that provided them with home loans and savings opportunities.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 6e8f8169

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 6e8f8169

Some scientists have suggested that mammals in the Mesozoic era were not a very _____ group, but paleontologist Zhe-Xi Luo’s research suggests that early mammals living in the shadow of dinosaurs weren’t all ground-dwelling insectivores. Fossils of various plant-eating mammals have been found in China, including species like *Vilevolodon diplomylos*, which Luo says could glide like a flying squirrel.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. predatory
- B. obscure
- C. diverse
- D. localized

ID: 6e8f8169 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of the kinds of mammals alive during the Mesozoic era. As used in this context, “diverse” means to have a significant amount of variety. The text indicates that some scientists have suggested that Mesozoic mammals can’t be characterized in a certain way, then contrasts the view put forward by those scientists with Luo’s research, which shows that Mesozoic mammals “weren’t all ground-dwelling insectivores” and instead were “various.” This context suggests that some scientists have viewed Mesozoic mammals as being all alike, or not a very diverse group.

Choice A is incorrect because it wouldn’t make sense to say that some scientists have suggested that Mesozoic mammals weren’t very “predatory,” or that they didn’t prey on other animals, since the text establishes a contrast between what some scientists have suggested and Luo’s research showing that Mesozoic mammals “weren’t all ground-dwelling insectivores.” This context suggests that some scientists have regarded Mesozoic mammals as all being insectivores, or animals that prey on insects, not that some scientists have suggested that Mesozoic mammals didn’t prey on other animals. Choice B is incorrect because it wouldn’t make sense to say that some scientists have suggested that Mesozoic mammals weren’t very “obscure,” or concealed or not well known, since the text establishes a contrast between what some scientists have suggested and Luo’s research showing that Mesozoic mammals were a varied group. There’s no contrast between saying that the mammals weren’t concealed or well known and the mammals being varied. Choice D is incorrect because it wouldn’t make sense to say that some scientists have suggested that Mesozoic mammals weren’t very “localized,” or confined to a particular area, since the text establishes a contrast between what some scientists have suggested and Luo’s research showing that Mesozoic mammals were a varied group. There’s no contrast between saying that the mammals weren’t localized and the mammals being varied. Although the text mentions mammal fossils found in China, nothing in the discussion of Luo’s research addresses the limits of Mesozoic mammal habitats.

Question ID 653f24b0

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 653f24b0

In a 2022 study, Nicolás M. Morato and colleagues attempted to resolve a long-standing paradox: although water is critical to most reactions that enable life, during the earliest stages of Earth’s history—when most of the planet’s surface was covered by oceans—the presence of water likely _____ the formation of proteins and other biomolecules that are found in all living organisms.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. reflected
- B. hampered
- C. imitated
- D. exploited

ID: 653f24b0 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of a scientific paradox regarding water and life during Earth’s early history. In this context, “hampered” means hindered or impeded. The text discusses a paradox, or a situation that seems to contradict itself, and indicates that one half of the paradox is that the presence of water is necessary to support most biochemical reactions that enable life. The contradictory idea, then, would be a case of the presence of water not supporting such reactions; this context suggests that the other half of the paradox is that when oceans covered most of the planet, the water likely hindered or impeded a biochemical process (the formation of biomolecules) that is important for all living organisms.

Choice A is incorrect. In this context, “reflected” would mean showed or gave an indication. The text focuses on a paradox, or a seemingly self-contradictory situation, having to do with the role of water in supporting life; since the first part of the paradox has to do with water usually being essential for enabling life, the second part of the paradox should have to do with water having a negative effect on life, and water being an indication of a biomolecular process important for life wouldn’t be a negative thing. Choice C is incorrect. In this context, “imitated” would mean mimicked or copied, and it isn’t clear what it would mean to say that water being present on early Earth’s surface somehow copied the creation of biomolecules in living organisms. Choice D is incorrect. In this context, “exploited” would mean used or took advantage of, and it isn’t clear what it would mean to say that the presence of water—the fact of water being present—on early Earth’s surface somehow took advantage of a biomolecular process occurring in living organisms.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID c6c41d8d

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: c6c41d8d

Cuttlefish appear to be surprisingly _____ at exercising self-control: in a 2021 study conducted by behavioral ecologist Alexandra Schnell, these cephalopods routinely demonstrated restraint by delaying gratification, waiting for a favorite treat instead of instantly devouring a readily available meal.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. awkward
- B. imaginative
- C. manageable
- D. competent

ID: c6c41d8d Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of self-control in cuttlefish. In this context, "competent" means capable. The text describes a study in which cuttlefish demonstrated an ability to exercise restraint by waiting for a favorite treat instead of eating a meal that was already available to them. That is, by delaying gratification, the cuttlefish in the study demonstrated that they were capable of, or competent at, exercising self-control.

Choice A is incorrect because nothing in the text suggests that in demonstrating self-control, cuttlefish are "awkward," or lacking skill or grace. If anything, the text indicates that cuttlefish appear to be surprisingly skilled at exercising self-control. Choice B is incorrect because in this context, "imaginative" would mean creative, and there’s nothing in the text to suggest that cuttlefish demonstrate creativity. Instead, the text focuses on the fact that cuttlefish seem to be capable of exercising restraint and self-control. Choice C is incorrect because in this context, "manageable" would mean capable of being controlled. Although the text indicates that the cuttlefish in the study demonstrated restraint by waiting for a favorite treat instead of devouring a readily available meal (which suggests their ability to control themselves), it doesn’t suggest that cuttlefish are thus also able to be managed or controlled by others.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID ab7b4c67

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: ab7b4c67

Economists often assert that countries looking to increase their reliance on solar energy should expand their capacity for storage; having an ample reserve of stored energy can mitigate the effects of _____ solar energy collection caused by unpredictable shifts in cloud cover and haze.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. developments of
- B. fluctuations in
- C. calibrations with
- D. incentives for

ID: ab7b4c67 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of solar energy collection and storage. In this context, "fluctuations in" means irregular changes in. The text notes that economists recommend that countries that want to rely more on solar energy (energy captured from sunlight) should attempt to expand their storage capacity. The text goes on to explain that having a large amount of stored solar energy can lessen the negative effect of "unpredictable shifts in cloud cover and haze"—that is, unpredictable changes in environmental conditions that at times limit sunlight. This context suggests that having ample solar energy stored and ready to use can mitigate the issue of fluctuations in solar energy collection caused by irregular patterns of sunlight availability.

Choice A is incorrect because in this context, "developments of solar energy collection" would most clearly refer to the creation of ways to collect solar energy (energy captured from sunlight). The text focuses on collection and the idea that having stored energy can mitigate, or make less bad, the effects of a problem caused by unpredictable changes that affect sunlight ("cloud cover and haze"); there’s no reason to think that the creation of new collection methods would be viewed as a problem that would need to be mitigated. Choice C is incorrect because in this context, "calibrations with" would most clearly refer to precise adjustments for a particular purpose. The text focuses on the collection of solar energy (energy captured from sunlight) and the idea that having stored energy can mitigate, or make less bad, the effects of a problem caused by unpredictable changes that affect sunlight ("cloud cover and haze"); there’s no reason to think that precision in something related to solar energy collection would be viewed as a problem that would need to be mitigated. Choice D is incorrect. The text focuses on the collection of solar energy (energy captured from sunlight) and the idea that having stored energy can mitigate, or make less bad, the effects of a problem caused by unpredictable changes that affect sunlight ("cloud cover and haze"); nothing in the text suggests that "incentives for," or rewards for, solar energy collection would be viewed as a problem that would need to be mitigated, especially in countries that want to rely more on solar energy than they already do.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID da2b6d13

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: da2b6d13

The recently observed gamma ray burst GRB 230307A lasted for 200 seconds, _____ for a burst generated by the merger of neutron stars. Bursts caused by neutron mergers typically last fewer than 2 seconds.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. a coincidence
- B. a reprieve
- C. an incident
- D. an oddity

ID: da2b6d13 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of the duration of gamma ray burst GRB 230307A. In this context, "an oddity" is something that is odd or unusual. The text explains that the burst lasted for 200 seconds and that other bursts generated by neutron mergers have usually lasted fewer than 2 seconds. In other words, the duration of gamma ray burst GRB 230307A was unusual.

Choice A is incorrect because the text focuses on a difference between the duration of gamma ray burst GRB 230307A and the typical duration of bursts caused by neutron mergers, not "a coincidence," or a point of correspondence, between them; the text indicates that GRB 230307A lasted much longer than what is typical of other bursts. Choice B is incorrect. In this context, "a reprieve" would be either a temporary relief from something or a delay of a punishment, neither of which would make sense as something that the duration of a gamma ray burst could provide to the burst itself. Choice C is incorrect. Although it would make sense to refer to gamma ray burst GRB 230307A itself as "an incident," or a thing that occurred, the missing word describes the duration of the burst, and it doesn’t make much sense to describe a length of time as an incident. Further, the sentence emphasizes that the burst’s duration was very unusual, not simply that the burst occurred.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 7155dbe8

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 7155dbe8

Despite how _____ they may seem on first glance, the works of the philosopher Georg Hegel have proven to be quite influential. Readers who manage to penetrate Hegel’s frustratingly dense prose often find that his thrillingly original and profound ideas wind up shaping their own thinking.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. authoritative
- B. opaque
- C. empirical
- D. facile

ID: 7155dbe8 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of Hegel’s works. In this context, "opaque" means difficult to understand or unclear. The text creates a contrast between the initial impression given by Hegel’s works and their influence and insight, noting that readers must "penetrate Hegel’s frustratingly dense prose" to access his important ideas. This context clearly establishes that Hegel’s writing is initially challenging to comprehend, or opaque.

Choice A is incorrect because "authoritative" means influential or clearly accurate. Hegel’s works may be authoritative, but it wouldn’t make logical sense in context to say that although his works seem authoritative, they have been influential. Instead, the text focuses on the fact that Hegel’s works are challenging to read, but that working through the dense prose can be rewarding. Choice C is incorrect because referring to Hegel’s works as "empirical," which means factual or verifiable, would suggest that they are based on observation or experience rather than theory. The text, however, doesn’t address this aspect of Hegel’s philosophy. Instead, it focuses on the difficulty of understanding his writing. Choice D is incorrect because describing Hegel’s works as "facile," which means superficial or simplistic, would directly contradict the text’s characterization of his writing as "frustratingly dense" and requiring effort to understand.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 015124ce

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 015124ce

As discussed by scholar Anna Mladentseva, many artworks produced in the mid-1990s to the early 2000s exclusively for exhibition on the internet, such as Sinae Kim’s *Genesis* (2001), have become inaccessible because viewing them requires the use of _____ software (most notably Adobe Flash, discontinued in 2021).

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. defunct
- B. arcane
- C. ubiquitous
- D. extraneous

ID: 015124ce Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of artworks that were produced for exhibition on the internet. In this context, "defunct" means no longer existing or functioning. According to the text, many artworks that were produced in the mid-1990s to the early 2000s for exhibition on the internet have become inaccessible due to their reliance on certain software. As an example, the text cites Sinae Kim’s *Genesis*, which relied on software that was discontinued in 2021. This context supports the idea that the software is defunct.

Choice B is incorrect because the text indicates that viewing artworks produced in the mid-1990s to the early 2000s for exhibition on the internet requires the use of software. Artists generally want their works to be seen by many people, so it wouldn’t make sense for creators of internet art to require the use of software that is "arcane," or known or knowable to only a few people. Moreover, the text states that a prominent example of software used to view these artworks is Adobe Flash, which was discontinued in 2021, meaning it’s now defunct. Choice C is incorrect because "ubiquitous" would mean found everywhere, which wouldn’t make sense in this context. The text indicates that the reason why many artworks that were produced in the mid-1990s to the early 2000s for exhibition on the internet have become inaccessible has to do with the software required for viewing them. According to the text, one example of such software is Adobe Flash, which was discontinued in 2021, meaning it’s now defunct. Choice D is incorrect because nothing in the text suggests that the software used to view artworks produced in the mid-1990s to the early 2000s for exhibition on the internet is "extraneous," or irrelevant. Instead, the text indicates that use of specific software is required to view certain artworks from this period and that the discontinuation of the software renders the works inaccessible.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 0a62e572

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 0a62e572

For her 2021 art installation *Anthem*, Wu Tsang joined forces with singer and composer Beverly Glenn-Copeland to produce a piece that critics found truly _____. they praised Tsang for creatively transforming a museum rotunda into a dynamic exhibit by projecting filmed images of Glenn-Copeland onto a massive 84-foot curtain and filling the space with the sounds of his and other voices singing.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. restrained
- B. inventive
- C. inexplicable
- D. mystifying

ID: 0a62e572 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of the art installation *Anthem*. In this context, “inventive” means characterized by invention and creativity. The text explains that critics’ responses to the installation involved praise for Tsang’s creative transformation of a space into a dynamic exhibit with huge images and lots of sound. This context conveys that the critics found the piece particularly creative.

Choice A is incorrect because the text indicates that critics praised the installation for being dynamic and including huge images and lots of sound, and it wouldn’t make sense to describe such an exhibit as “restrained,” or limited and not extravagant or showy. Choice C is incorrect because it wouldn’t make sense to say that critics found the installation “inexplicable,” or incapable of being explained or interpreted, since the critics were able to explain their praise for the installation’s transformation of a space with huge images and lots of sound. Choice D is incorrect because the text focuses on the idea that critics praised Tsang for creatively transforming a space into a dynamic exhibit, not that they found the installation “mystifying,” or bewildering and hard to understand. Nothing in the text suggests that the critics couldn’t understand the piece.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 008c4fb7

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 008c4fb7

Handedness, a preferential use of either the right or left hand, typically is easy to observe in humans. Because this trait is present but less _____ in many other animals, animal-behavior researchers often employ tasks specially designed to reveal individual animals’ preferences for a certain hand or paw.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. recognizable
- B. intriguing
- C. significant
- D. useful

ID: 008c4fb7 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion about handedness in animals. As used in this context, “recognizable” means apparent or identifiable. The text indicates that handedness is “easy to observe in humans,” but that animal-behavior researchers use special tasks to determine handedness in other animals. This context and the use of “less” before the blank indicate that compared with handedness in humans, handedness in other animals is less recognizable.

Choice B is incorrect because there’s nothing in the text to suggest that handedness is less “intriguing,” or fascinating, in nonhuman animals than it is in humans. The text focuses on how easy it is to observe handedness in humans as compared with other animals; the text doesn’t suggest that handedness is more fascinating in humans. Choice C is incorrect because there’s nothing in the text to suggest that handedness is less “significant,” or important or meaningful, in nonhuman animals than it is in humans. The text focuses on how easy it is to observe handedness in humans as compared with other animals; the text doesn’t suggest that handedness is more significant in humans. Choice D is incorrect because “useful,” or functional or helpful, wouldn’t make sense in context. The text focuses on the ease with which researchers can determine whether an animal or person is right- or left-handed, not on how useful handedness in nonhuman animals is compared with handedness in humans.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 406e16e5

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 406e16e5

The author’s claim about the relationship between Neanderthals and *Homo sapiens* is _____, as it fails to account for several recent archaeological discoveries. To be convincing, his argument would need to address recent finds of additional hominid fossils, such as the latest Denisovan specimens and *Homo longi*.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. disorienting
- B. tenuous
- C. nuanced
- D. unoriginal

ID: 406e16e5 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of the author’s claim about the relationship between Neanderthals and *Homo sapiens*. As used in this context, “tenuous” means lacking substance. The end of the first sentence states that the author’s claim didn’t consider certain key pieces of evidence—“recent archaeological discoveries”—and is therefore weak.

Choice A is incorrect because it wouldn’t make sense in context to refer to the author’s claim as “disorienting,” or confusing. The text suggests that the author’s claim is insubstantial, not that it’s difficult to grasp. Choice C is incorrect because referring to the claim as “nuanced,” or subtle, wouldn’t make sense in context. According to the text, the claim is incomplete because it didn’t consider certain key information about recent archaeological finds; it doesn’t suggest that what’s in the claim lacks precision. Choice D is incorrect because saying that the claim is “unoriginal,” or imitative, wouldn’t make sense in context. The text faults the claim because it doesn’t consider certain key information about recent archaeological finds; it doesn’t suggest that the author’s claim lacks originality.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 137f0294

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 137f0294

In 1891, design artist William Morris cofounded the Kelmscott Press, which printed editions of books using preindustrial methods. Historians argue that Morris’s repudiation of industrialization is _____ the Kelmscott editions’ use of handmade materials and intricate ornamentation reminiscent of medieval manuscripts: these meticulously handcrafted elements exemplify the artistry involved.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. insensible to
- B. manifest in
- C. scrutinized by
- D. complicated by

ID: 137f0294 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of the Kelmscott Press’s books. In this context, "manifest in" means evident or apparent from. The text states that the Kelmscott Press, which was cofounded by William Morris, produced its books using preindustrial methods. The text notes the similarity between those methods, which include the use of handmade materials and intricate ornamentation, and methods used in the creation of medieval manuscripts. This context suggests that Morris’s repudiation of industrialization is apparent from, or manifest in, the methods and materials his company employed.

Choice A is incorrect because there is nothing in the text to suggest that Morris’s repudiation of industrialization is "insensible to," or unaware of or lacking perception of, the use of handmade materials and intricate ornamentation in the production of the Kelmscott editions. Instead, the text suggests that the methods and materials used to produce the Kelmscott editions are evidence of Morris’s repudiation of industrialization. Choice C is incorrect because it would not make sense to say that Morris’s repudiation of industrialization was "scrutinized by," or examined closely by, the Kelmscott editions’ use of handmade materials and intricate ornamentation. Although creating the Kelmscott editions may have involved examining the books closely, the text does not mention this aspect of Morris’s work, and in any case, the action of using certain materials to create those editions cannot scrutinize Morris’s attitude toward industrialization. Choice D is incorrect because the text gives no indication that Morris’s repudiation of industrialization is "complicated by," or made more complex or difficult by, the Kelmscott Press’s use of preindustrial methods and handcrafted elements to produce books. Instead, the text presents those methods as exemplifying Morris’s repudiation of industrialization.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 29c85a7d

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 29c85a7d

People sometimes dismiss a claim if it comes from a source they regard as self-interested, but from a strictly logical perspective, the source of a claim is _____. it has no direct bearing on whether the claim is true.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. indistinct
- B. irrelevant
- C. indisputable
- D. implicit

ID: 29c85a7d Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion about people’s tendency to dismiss claims from sources perceived as self-interested, or acting for their own advantage. In this context, "irrelevant" means not applicable to the matter at hand. The text explains that as a matter of logical reasoning, the source of a claim has nothing to do with the claim’s truthfulness—a claim is either true or false in actuality, regardless of where it originates. This context suggests that even though people may distrust a claim based on its source, the source of the claim is actually irrelevant.

Choice A is incorrect because in this context, "indistinct" would mean uncertain or not clearly recognizable. Instead of suggesting that the source of a claim can’t be determined with certainty, the text suggests that recognizing a source and having an opinion of it simply doesn’t matter because as a matter of logic, a claim is true or false in actuality, regardless of where it originates. Choice C is incorrect because in this context, "indisputable" would mean impossible to question or deny. Although the text suggests that it isn’t logical to assume a claim is false just because its source appears to be self-interested, it doesn’t go so far as to suggest that the source of a claim can’t be questioned—the text instead makes the point that from a logical standpoint, the source of a claim doesn’t matter because the claim is either true or false in and of itself. Choice D is incorrect because in this context, "implicit" would mean suggested or understood without being directly expressed. Nothing in the text suggests that logically, the source of a claim is only suggested; instead of addressing whether sources can be directly identified, the text focuses on the idea that sources don’t matter because a claim is true or false in actuality, regardless of where it originates.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 4789a674

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 4789a674

Recent measurements of the mass of the *W* boson (a subatomic particle) were notable not only for the mere fact that the particle’s mass differed from expectations but for the _____ of that difference: the measured mass of the *W* boson was seven standard deviations higher than predicted by the standard model of particle physics.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. cause
- B. existence
- C. implication
- D. scale

ID: 4789a674 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of the *W* boson. In this context, "scale" means size or extent. The text indicates that recent measurements of the *W* boson were remarkable because they revealed the subatomic particle’s mass to be much greater ("seven standard deviations higher") than had been expected based on a standard model. This context conveys not only that the measurements differed from predictions but also that the extent of the difference was very large.

Choice A is incorrect. Although the text indicates that there was a very large difference between the predicted mass and the actual measured mass of the subatomic particle, it doesn’t explain the cause of, or reason behind, that difference. Choice B is incorrect because it wouldn’t make sense to say that the measurements of the subatomic particle were notable because they differed from expectations and also because a difference existed between the measurements and what had been predicted; the text would be repeating the idea that there was a difference instead of adding to that idea. Choice C is incorrect because the text doesn’t convey any implications of, or consequences of or conclusions drawn from, the fact that the mass of the subatomic particle differed from expectations; the context indicates only that the actual measured mass was much higher than the predicted mass.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID d8c08cb6

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: d8c08cb6

Austin McCoy has argued that historians have tended to _____ rank-and-file workers in analyses of changes in organized labor in the United States in the decades following the Second World War, presenting political, business, and labor leaders as the major actors and ordinary workers as nearly devoid of agency.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. epitomize
- B. marginalize
- C. extol
- D. substantiate

ID: d8c08cb6 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of how historians have treated rank-and-file (ordinary) workers in their analyses. In this context, "marginalize" means treat as unimportant or relatively powerless within a group or society. The text explains that according to Austin McCoy, historians have tended to treat "political, business, and labor leaders" as the "major actors" involved in making changes in organized labor in the period after the Second World War. By emphasizing the contributions of these leaders, historians have in effect minimized the contributions of ordinary workers, treating them as relatively unimportant and "nearly devoid of agency," thereby marginalizing them.

Choice A is incorrect. In this context, "epitomize" would mean either serve as an ideal example of something or make into an example of something, neither of which would make sense. In stating that historians have tended to characterize political, business, and labor leaders as the primary actors responsible for changes in the post-Second World War labor movement in a manner that minimizes the influence of ordinary workers, the text suggests that historians have tended to present ordinary workers as unimportant to or uninfluential within the movement, not that historians themselves serve as examples of ordinary workers, or that historians in their analyses have made ordinary workers into examples of the changes that occurred. Choice C is incorrect because in this context, "extol" would mean praise highly or glorify. The text states that historians have tended to present ordinary workers as being "nearly devoid of agency," thereby minimizing their importance. It therefore wouldn’t make sense to say that in doing so, historians have tended to praise or glorify them. Choice D is incorrect because "substantiate" would mean verify with evidence, and nothing in the text suggests that historians have verified rank-and-file workers or their contributions in their analyses. If anything, the text suggests the opposite, implying that by minimizing workers’ agency in organized labor, historians have likely overlooked evidence demonstrating their influence.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 92e3c4bd

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 92e3c4bd

Birds sing to communicate over potentially great distances. For this reason, many researchers believe that birds in densely vegetated habitats generally sing at lower frequencies than birds living in comparatively sparse habitats, since dense vegetation tends to _____ the distance that high-frequency sounds can travel.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. exceed
- B. diminish
- C. encompass
- D. conceal

ID: 92e3c4bd Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of birdsong. In this context, "diminish" means reduce or lessen. The text establishes that birds sing to communicate over potentially large distances and that researchers believe that birds that live in densely vegetated habitats sing at lower frequencies than birds that live in comparatively sparsely vegetated habitats. The text then explains that researchers hold this belief due to some effect of dense vegetation on the distance that high-frequency sounds can travel. If birds sing to communicate over long distances, it would be logical to conclude that researchers believe that birds in densely vegetated habitats sing at lower frequencies than birds in relatively sparse habitats do because dense vegetation diminishes the distance that high-frequency sounds can travel.

Choice A is incorrect because nothing in the text suggests that dense vegetation can "exceed," or surpass or go beyond, the distance that high-frequency sounds can travel. The text suggests that dense vegetation reduces the distance that high-frequency sounds can travel, not that dense vegetation goes farther than that distance. Choice C is incorrect because it would not be sensible to say that dense vegetation can "encompass," or enclose or encircle, the distance that high-frequency sounds can travel. The distance that sounds can travel is not an object that can be enclosed or encircled by vegetation. Choice D is incorrect because there is no information in the text indicating that dense vegetation can "conceal," or hide or keep from being observed, the distance that high-frequency sounds travel. Instead, the text suggests that dense vegetation reduces the distance that high-frequency sounds can travel.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 47d36f09

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 47d36f09

Given that the conditions in binary star systems should make planetary formation nearly impossible, it’s not surprising that the existence of planets in such systems has lacked _____ explanation. Roman Rafikov and Kedron Silsbee shed light on the subject when they used modeling to determine a complex set of factors that could support planets’ development.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. a discernible
- B. a straightforward
- C. an inconclusive
- D. an unbiased

ID: 47d36f09 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s description of efforts to explain the existence of planets in binary star systems. As used in this context, describing an explanation as “a straightforward” one would mean that the explanation is direct and uncomplicated. The text asserts that since it should be “nearly impossible” for planets to form in binary star systems, it’s “not surprising” that there isn’t a straightforward explanation for the existence of planets in such systems; the fact that one potential approach involves “complex” factors offers further contextual support for this idea.

Choice A is incorrect because it would not make sense in context to say that there isn’t “a discernible” explanation—meaning an explanation capable of being perceived—for the existence of planets in binary star systems. The text discusses just such an explanation offered by Roman Rafikov and Kedron Silsbee, which indicates that their explanation can be discerned. Choice C is incorrect because the text emphasizes how difficult it is to explain the existence of planets in binary star systems, suggesting that the situation isn’t marked by the lack of “an inconclusive” explanation—an explanation that does not resolve the issue—but rather that if any explanations have been offered, they’ve likely been inconclusive ones. Choice D is incorrect because nothing in the text suggests that there is a lack of “an unbiased,” or impartial and unprejudiced, explanation for the existence of planets in binary star systems. The text indicates that it’s difficult to explain the existence of planets in such systems and it describes one attempt to do so, but there is no evidence that explanations from Roman Rafikov and Kedron Silsbee or others are biased.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID c2b3fe65

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: c2b3fe65

In the search for new impact craters on Mars, the roles of seismic monitoring and orbital imaging as data sources are _____. when vibrations detected with seismic monitoring indicate roughly where an impact has occurred, researchers can use orbital images of that relatively limited area of the rocky surface to precisely locate a new crater.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. interchangeable
- B. complementary
- C. exhaustive
- D. redundant

ID: c2b3fe65 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of how seismic monitoring and orbital imaging are used to find impact craters on Mars. In this context, “complementary” means combining in such a way that each contributes something the other lacks. The text describes how two data sources work together: seismic monitoring detects vibrations that indicate the rough location of an impact, and orbital imaging is then used to examine that limited area in detail to pinpoint the exact location of the crater. Each method does something the other does not—seismic monitoring narrows the search area, while orbital imaging provides the precise location—and together they accomplish what neither could alone. This context supports the idea that the two methods’ roles are complementary.

Choice A is incorrect because describing the roles of seismic monitoring and orbital imaging as “interchangeable,” or able to be substituted for each other, would contradict the text. The text indicates that the two methods perform different functions in sequence (seismic monitoring narrows the area; orbital imaging pinpoints the crater), so they cannot be substituted for each other. Choice C is incorrect because describing the roles of seismic monitoring and orbital imaging as “exhaustive,” or comprehensive in covering all possibilities, wouldn’t be logical in context. The text describes how the two methods work together to perform a particular two-step task (locating new impact craters), not whether they collectively address every possible aspect of Mars research. Choice D is incorrect because describing the roles of seismic monitoring and orbital imaging as “redundant,” or unnecessarily duplicative, would contradict the text. The text indicates that each method performs a distinct function in finding impact craters on Mars—rough localization versus precise localization—so neither method duplicates the other’s contribution.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID a4f1ead6

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: a4f1ead6

Economist Jingting Fan argues that the effects of international trade may display spatial variation at sub-national levels. For instance, imported goods may reduce expenses for a country’s average consumer, but for consumers living far from ports, high intranational transport costs could _____ the price advantages associated with imports.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. nullify
- B. denigrate
- C. underestimate
- D. misconstrue

ID: a4f1ead6 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer because it logically completes the text’s discussion of imported goods and consumer prices. In this context, "nullify" most nearly means negate or undermine. The text indicates that importing goods to a country can reduce consumer prices in that country, then cautions that the costs of transporting goods within the country is also a factor. These transportation costs likely raise the prices that must be paid by people who live far from the ports of entry. Therefore, the intranational transportation costs could nullify the price advantages to consumers of importing goods.

Choice B is incorrect. In this context, "denigrate" would most nearly mean disparage or deny the importance of. Since transportation costs would not be capable of denying the importance of price advantages, it would not make sense to state that intranational transportation costs denigrate the price advantages of importing goods. Choice C is incorrect. In this context, "underestimate" would most nearly mean predict a lower value for, or to undervalue, someone or something. Though transportation costs might be undervalued, they cannot themselves undervalue something else, so it would not make sense to state that intranational transportation costs underestimate the price advantages of importing goods. Choice D is incorrect. In this context, "misconstrue" would most nearly mean misunderstand. Since transport costs are not capable of understanding, it would not make sense to claim that intranational transportation costs misconstrue the price advantages of importing goods.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID c1ed6f31

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: c1ed6f31

The following text is adapted from James Baldwin’s 1956 novel *Giovanni’s Room*. The narrator is riding in a taxi down a street lined with food vendors and shoppers in Paris, France.

The multitude of Paris seems to be dressed in blue every day but Sunday, when, for the most part, they put on an unbelievably festive black. Here they were now, in blue, disputing, every inch, our passage, with their wagons, handtrucks, their bursting baskets carried at an angle steeply self-confident on the back.

©1956 by James Baldwin

As used in the text, what does the word “disputing” most nearly mean?

- A. Arguing about
- B. Disapproving of
- C. Asserting possession of
- D. Providing resistance to

ID: c1ed6f31 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer because as used in the text, "disputing" most nearly means providing resistance to. The narrator is in a taxi as it drives down a street lined with so many food vendors and shoppers that the narrator describes them as "the multitude of Paris," meaning an immense group of people. The street is essentially a large open-air market, and there are so many people pushing small wagons of goods and carrying shopping baskets that "every inch" of the taxi’s progress is impeded. In other words, the people are providing resistance to the taxi’s attempt to drive down the street.

Choice A is incorrect. Although in some contexts, "disputing" can mean arguing, the narrator doesn’t portray the shoppers and vendors as arguing with the driver of the taxi or, indeed, arguing at all. Choice B is incorrect. Although in some contexts, "disputing" can mean expressing disapproval, the narrator doesn’t suggest that the shoppers and vendors necessarily disapprove of the taxi’s attempt to drive down the street. Instead, their combined presence along the street has the effect of impeding the taxi’s progress. Choice C is incorrect because, as the narrator explains, both the multitude of people and the taxi are using a public space (a street) at the same time. The narrator doesn’t go so far as to suggest that the people feel that they, and not the taxi, possess exclusive access to the street.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 003a8c1a

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 003a8c1a

As an undergraduate researcher in anthropology, Jennifer C. Chen contributed to a groundbreaking study challenging the accepted view that among prehistoric peoples, female participation in hunting was _____. The research team’s review of data from late Pleistocene and early Holocene burials in the Americas revealed that, in fact, as many as half of the hunters in those populations were female.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. inevitable
- B. satisfactory
- C. negligible
- D. commonplace

ID: 003a8c1a Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of the study of female participation in hunting among prehistoric peoples. In this context, “negligible” means not significant enough to be worth considering. The text says that the study challenged the accepted view of female participation in hunting among prehistoric peoples. The text goes on to say that the researchers found that “in fact, as many as half” the hunters in the groups studied were female. The phrase “in fact” establishes a contrast indicating that the finding that as many as half the hunters were female differs from the accepted view. This context suggests, then, that the accepted view is that female participation in hunting was negligible.

Choice A is incorrect because the text indicates that the study challenged the accepted view by showing that as many as half of hunters among prehistoric peoples were female, which suggests that the accepted view is that female participation was low, not that female participation was “inevitable,” or unavoidable. Nothing in the text suggests that the accepted view is that prehistoric peoples could not avoid female participation in hunting. Choice B is incorrect because nothing in the text suggests that the accepted view of female participation in hunting among prehistoric peoples is that such participation was “satisfactory,” or sufficient to meet a requirement or demand. There is no information in the text about any demands or requirements regarding female participation in hunting, let alone any information about how much female participation in hunting would be enough to satisfy those demands or requirements. Instead, the text indicates that the study challenged the accepted view by showing that as many as half the hunters in the groups studied were female, suggesting that the accepted view is that female participation in hunting was low. Choice D is incorrect because the text indicates that the study challenged the accepted view by showing that as many as half of hunters among the prehistoric peoples studied were female, which suggests that the accepted view is that female participation was low, not that female participation was “commonplace,” or ordinary or unremarkable. Although the study under discussion suggests that female participation may have been commonplace, that study is presented as challenging the accepted view, not as reinforcing the accepted view.

Question ID 841bbd98

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Craft and Structure	Words in Context	

ID: 841bbd98

There are many famous examples of election pollsters making inaccurate predictions in presidential elections. But neuroscientist and election pollster Sam Wang has said that these prediction failures should not lead campaigns to _____ election polling entirely. Polling is about more than just predicting the winner; throughout campaigns, it helps strategists identify where their efforts are most likely to be effective.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A. distort
- B. enact
- C. neglect
- D. supplement

ID: 841bbd98 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer because it most logically completes the text’s discussion of election polling. In this context, to “neglect” would mean to disregard or pay insufficient attention to something. The text states that there have been many cases of election pollsters incorrectly predicting presidential elections and then says that neuroscientist and pollster Sam Wang notes that campaigns shouldn’t react to these failures in a certain way. The text then adds that polls are valuable for informing strategists’ efforts throughout campaigns, not just for predicting the outcome. This context conveys that Wang’s advice is not to neglect, or disregard, polling because even though it sometimes fails to predict the winner, it can help improve campaign strategies.

Choice A is incorrect. In this context, to “distort” would mean to give a false or misleading account. Though the text states that many election pollsters have failed in their predictions in presidential elections, it gives no indication that Wang would therefore argue that campaigns shouldn’t react to such polling failures by giving inaccurate accounts of election polling. Instead, the text emphasizes that polls have value beyond predicting winners, suggesting that Wang’s point is that campaigns shouldn’t stop polling entirely. Choice B is incorrect because it wouldn’t make sense to suggest that Wang encourages campaigns not to “enact,” or establish, election polling; the text indicates that election polling is something that already takes place and that has value for campaign strategies even if it sometimes leads to inaccurate predictions of winners, suggesting an argument in favor of continuing to use election polling. Choice D is incorrect. Although the text indicates that many election pollsters have failed in their predictions in presidential elections, there’s no reason to think Wang would say that these failures should lead campaigns *not* to “supplement,” or add to, election polling; it would be reasonable to suggest that campaigns *would* want to consider more than just election polling information if that information may lead to inaccurate predictions. Moreover, the text’s main point is that polls provide some utility even if their predictions may be inaccurate, which suggests that Wang’s recommendations pertain to whether campaigns should or shouldn’t use polling data, not whether polling data should or shouldn’t be supplemented with other kinds of information.

