

Question ID 17d7ac54

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 17d7ac54

Interest in mechanotransduction, the mechanism by which cells sense and convert mechanical stimuli into biochemical signals, is expanding because of innovative work by biomedical scientists—many of whom, like neuroscience and biophysics expert Elba Serrano, _____ this mechanism to better understand how the body’s neurological and biomechanical systems interact.

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

- A. is studying
- B. has studied
- C. study
- D. studies

ID: 17d7ac54 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of verb forms within a sentence. The plural verb "study" agrees in number with the plural subject "many."

Choice A is incorrect because the singular verb "is studying" doesn't agree in number with the plural subject "many." Choice B is incorrect because the singular verb "has studied" doesn't agree in number with the plural subject "many." Choice D is incorrect because the singular verb "studies" doesn't agree in number with the plural subject "many."

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID d687aae3

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: d687aae3

Both Arteaga, in the state of Coahuila, and Lagos de Moreno, in the state of Jalisco, have been designated by Mexico as *pueblos mágicos* (magical villages) to celebrate these _____ natural beauty and unique cultural traditions.

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

- A. town
- B. town’s
- C. towns
- D. towns’

ID: d687aae3 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of possessive nouns. The plural possessive noun “towns’” correctly indicates that the natural beauty and unique cultural traditions belong to both Arteaga and Lagos de Moreno.

Choice A is incorrect because the context requires the plural possessive noun “towns’,” not the singular noun “town.” Choice B is incorrect because the context requires the plural possessive noun “towns’,” not the singular possessive noun “town’s.” Choice C is incorrect because the context requires the plural possessive noun “towns’,” not the plural noun “towns.”

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 86fb01fc

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 86fb01fc

Mathematician Grigori Perelman, sometimes in conjunction with mathematicians Richard S. Hamilton and Shing-Tung Yau, _____ credited with proving the Poincaré conjecture. Having built on Hamilton’s previous work to solve the proof, Perelman has insisted that Hamilton receive credit. Yau later found and closed gaps in Perelman’s proof, persuading some mathematicians that he deserves credit as well.

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

- A. are
- B. have been
- C. are being
- D. is

ID: 86fb01fc Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-verb agreement. The singular verb "is credited" agrees in number with the singular subject "mathematician Grigori Perelman."

Choice A is incorrect because the plural verb "are credited" doesn’t agree in number with the singular subject "mathematician Grigori Perelman." Choice B is incorrect because the plural verb "have been credited" doesn’t agree in number with the singular subject "mathematician Grigori Perelman." Choice C is incorrect because the plural verb "are being credited" doesn’t agree in number with the singular subject "mathematician Grigori Perelman."

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID f86f2087

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: f86f2087

A worker cooperative is a business that is owned and operated by its workers. This model stands in contrast to traditional models in which a smaller group of owners controls a company. Because the profits made by a cooperative are shared by all workers—who are also owners—the workers _____ directly from its success.

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

- A. benefit
- B. benefited
- C. were benefiting
- D. had benefited

ID: f86f2087 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of verbs to express tense. In this choice, the present tense verb “benefit” is consistent with the other present tense verbs (“is,” “stands,” and “are shared”) used to describe worker cooperatives and how they function.

Choice B is incorrect because the past tense verb “benefited” isn’t consistent with the other present tense verbs used to describe worker cooperatives and how they function. Choice C is incorrect because the past progressive tense verb “were benefiting” isn’t consistent with the other present tense verbs used to describe worker cooperatives and how they function. Choice D is incorrect because the past perfect tense verb “had benefited” isn’t consistent with the other present tense verbs used to describe worker cooperatives and how they function.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 2285c026

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 2285c026

The violins handmade in the seventeenth century by Italian craftsman Antonio Stradivari have been celebrated as some of the finest in the world. In close collaboration with musicians, Stradivari introduced changes to the shape of a traditional violin, flattening some of the instrument’s curves and making _____ lighter overall.

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

- A. those
- B. one
- C. them
- D. it

ID: 2285c026 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is pronoun–antecedent agreement. The singular pronoun “it” agrees in number with the singular antecedent “violin” and thus indicates that the traditional violin (and not its curves) was made lighter.

Choice A is incorrect because the plural pronoun “those” doesn’t agree in number with the singular antecedent “violin.” Choice B is incorrect because the singular pronoun “one” is ambiguous in this context; the resulting sentence leaves unclear what Stradivari made lighter. Choice C is incorrect because the plural pronoun “them” doesn’t agree in number with the singular antecedent “violin.”

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 27b28681

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 27b28681

Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* first appeared in 1855 as a slim collection of twelve poems, but Whitman would revise and expand it substantially over the next four decades. These extensive _____ the addition of hundreds of new poems, the removal of some existing ones, and the insertion of prefatory material, reflected the poet's evolving literary perspective and experience of the US Civil War.

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

- A. changes, including
- B. changes would include
- C. changes included
- D. changes, include

ID: 27b28681 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of verb forms within a sentence. The nonfinite present participle "including" is correctly used to form a supplementary element that interrupts the main clause "These extensive changes...reflected the poet's evolving literary perspective and experience of the US Civil War." This supplementary element, offset by commas after "changes" and "material," provides examples of the changes Whitman made to *Leaves of Grass*.

Choice B is incorrect because it results in an ungrammatical sentence. The finite modal verb "would include" can't be used in this way to form a supplementary element within the main clause. Choice C is incorrect because it results in an ungrammatical sentence. The finite past tense verb "included" can't be used in this way to form a supplementary element within the main clause. Choice D is incorrect because it results in an ungrammatical sentence. The finite present tense verb "include" can't be used in this way to form a supplementary element within the main clause.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 5b3d2657

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 5b3d2657

Recordings of electrical activity in the brain, _____ increased activity in brain areas associated with suppressing motor functions.

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

- A. electrograms show that while responding to hypothetical match scenarios, the most highly skilled soccer players have
- B. the most highly skilled soccer players responding to hypothetical match scenarios have electrograms that show
- C. responses to hypothetical match scenarios show that the most highly skilled soccer players have electrograms with
- D. hypothetical match scenario responses show that the most highly skilled soccer players captured in electrograms have

ID: 5b3d2657 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-modifier placement. This choice makes the noun “electrograms” the subject of the sentence and places it immediately after the modifying phrase “recordings of electrical activity in the brain.” In doing so, this choice clearly establishes that electrograms—and not other nouns or noun phrases in the sentence—are recordings of electrical activity in the brain.

Choice B is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the noun phrase “the most highly skilled soccer players” immediately after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that the players are recordings of electrical activity in the brain. Choice C is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the noun phrase “responses to hypothetical match scenarios” immediately after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that these responses are recordings of electrical activity in the brain. Choice D is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the noun phrase “hypothetical match scenario responses” immediately after the opening phrase illogically suggests that these responses are recordings of electrical activity in the brain.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 640d12e2

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 640d12e2

The African Games Co-production Market, one of over 180 annual international conferences supporting video game development, _____ the growth of the African gaming industry by helping start-up studios in Africa find partners.

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

- A. promote
- B. are promoting
- C. promotes
- D. have promoted

ID: 640d12e2 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The subject of the sentence is “The African Games Co-production Market.” That’s one market, so it’s a singular noun, which means it needs a singular verb. “Promotes” is the only singular verb among the choices.

Choice A is incorrect. This choice creates a subject-verb agreement error. The subject “The African Games Co-production Market” is singular, but the verb “promote” is plural. Choice B is incorrect. This choice creates a subject-verb agreement error. The subject “The African Games Co-production Market” is singular, but the verb “are promoting” is plural. Choice D is incorrect. This choice creates a subject-verb agreement error. The subject “The African Games Co-production Market” is singular, but the verb “have promoted” is plural.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID b9beb1e2

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: b9beb1e2

In October of 1648, representatives from 96 different parties convened to sign the final treaties of the Peace of Westphalia. The treaties, which brought an end to the Thirty Years’ War, _____ signed in the cities of Osnabrück and Münster, both located in the Holy Roman Empire–controlled region of Westphalia.

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

- A. were
- B. is
- C. was
- D. has been

ID: b9beb1e2 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-verb agreement. The plural verb “were signed” agrees in number with the plural subject “the treaties.”

Choice B is incorrect because the singular verb “is signed” doesn’t agree in number with the plural subject “the treaties.” Choice C is incorrect because the singular verb “was signed” doesn’t agree in number with the plural subject “the treaties.” Choice D is incorrect because the singular verb “has been signed” doesn’t agree in number with the plural subject “the treaties.”

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID d2df888f

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: d2df888f

While exploring Nevada’s Gypsum Cave in 1930, Seneca and Abenaki archaeologist Bertha Parker made her most famous discovery: the skull of a now-extinct ground sloth (*Nothrotheriops shastensis*) alongside human-made tools. Parker’s crucial finding was the first _____ humans in North America as far back as 10,000 years ago.

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

- A. places
- B. placed
- C. place
- D. to place

ID: d2df888f Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The object for the verb "was" is "first," and "to place" is acting as a modifier for "first." What was the finding? It was "the first." The first to do what? The first "to place humans in North America" 10,000 years ago. When a verb serves as a modifier within a noun phrase, it must be nonfinite (i.e., not conjugated to a specific subject). The infinitive form "to place" is the only nonfinite option among the choices that makes sense in context.

Choice A is incorrect. The object for the verb "was" is "first," and "places" is acting as a modifier for "first." What was the thing that Parker’s finding did? What was it the first to do? Place humans in North America 10,000 years ago. When a verb acts as a modifier, it must be nonfinite (i.e., not conjugated to a specific subject), but "places" is a finite form of the verb. Choice B is incorrect. The object for the verb "was" is "first," and "placed" is acting to modify "first." What was it that Parker’s finding was the first to do? Place humans in North America 10,000 years ago. When a verb acts as a modifier, it must be nonfinite (i.e., not conjugated to a specific subject), but "placed" is a finite form. "Placed" can also be a past participle, but that wouldn’t make sense here because the meaning of "the first placed humans" would be unclear. Choice C is incorrect. The object for the verb "was" is "first," and "place" is modifying "first." What was the thing that Parker’s finding did? What was it the first to do? Place humans in North America. When a verb acts as a modifier, it must be nonfinite (i.e., not conjugated to a specific subject), but "place" is a finite form of the verb. Additionally, "place" can’t serve as a noun here, because it results in an illogical sentence (the "finding" wasn’t "the first place").

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 6c3682db

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 6c3682db

Josephine Paddock and Florence Esté were among the 300 artists who exhibited at the 1913 Armory Show, a groundbreaking New York City art exhibition that introduced modernism to American audiences. Though shocking at the time, an abstract cubist painting exhibited by Marcel Duchamp—one of several works that received scorn from critics—_____ the Western art canon more than a century later.

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

- A. has entered
- B. have entered
- C. were entering
- D. enter

ID: 6c3682db Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-verb agreement. The singular verb "has entered" agrees in number with the singular subject "an abstract cubist painting." Choice B is incorrect because the plural verb "have entered" doesn't agree in number with the singular subject "an abstract cubist painting." Choice C is incorrect because the plural verb "were entering" doesn't agree in number with the singular subject "an abstract cubist painting." Choice D is incorrect because the plural verb "enter" doesn't agree in number with the singular subject "an abstract cubist painting."

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID f1790695

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: f1790695

Bonnie Buratti of NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory _____ data about Saturn’s rings collected by the *Cassini* spacecraft when she made an interesting discovery: the tiny moons embedded between and within Saturn’s rings are shaped by the buildup of ring material on the moons’ surfaces.

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

- A. studies
- B. has been studying
- C. will study
- D. was studying

ID: f1790695 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of verbs to express tense in a sentence. In this choice, the past progressive tense verb “was studying” is consistent with the other past tense verbs (e.g., “made” and “collected”) used to describe Buratti’s discovery. Further, the past progressive tense correctly indicates that an ongoing action in the past was occurring (she was studying) at the same time that another event occurred in the past (she made an interesting discovery).

Choice A is incorrect because the present tense verb “studies” isn’t consistent with the past tense verbs used to describe Buratti’s discovery. Choice B is incorrect because the present perfect progressive tense verb “has been studying” isn’t consistent with the past tense verbs used to describe Buratti’s discovery. Choice C is incorrect because the future tense verb “will study” isn’t consistent with the past tense verbs used to describe Buratti’s discovery.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 1a85d5c4

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 1a85d5c4

In 1930, Japanese American artist Chiura Obata depicted the natural beauty of Yosemite National Park in two memorable woodcuts: *Evening at Carl Inn* and *Lake Basin in the High Sierra*. In 2019, _____ exhibited alongside 150 of Obata’s other works in a single-artist show at the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

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

- A. it was
- B. they were
- C. this was
- D. some were

ID: 1a85d5c4 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is pronoun–antecedent agreement. The plural pronoun “they” agrees in number with the plural antecedent “woodcuts” and clearly identifies what was exhibited at the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

Choice A is incorrect because the singular pronoun “it” doesn’t agree in number with the plural antecedent “woodcuts.” Choice C is incorrect because the singular pronoun “this” doesn’t agree in number with the plural antecedent “woodcuts.” Choice D is incorrect because the plural pronoun “some” is illogical in this context (referring to “some” of two woodcuts).

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID d58cff43

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: d58cff43

In a US national election, one might expect major-party campaigns to focus on the most populous states. However, if polls and past voting data suggest that the outcome in a given state is a foregone conclusion, a campaign will not invest its resources there. Ultimately, a state’s voting record and polling data, not its population size, _____ its importance to campaigns.

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

- A. determines
- B. determining
- C. has determined
- D. determine

ID: d58cff43 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of verb forms in a sentence. The plural verb “determine” supplies the main clause with a finite main verb and agrees in number with the plural subject “a state’s voting record and polling data.”

Choice A is incorrect because the singular verb “determines” doesn’t agree in number with the plural subject “a state’s voting record and polling data.” Choice B is incorrect because it results in an ungrammatical sentence. The nonfinite participle “determining” doesn’t supply the main clause with a finite plural verb. Choice C is incorrect because the singular verb “has determined” doesn’t agree in number with the plural subject “a state’s voting record and polling data.”

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID a5a00b23

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: a5a00b23

Wanda Diaz-Merced is an astrophysicist who lost her sight when she was young. Diaz-Merced’s condition inspired her to develop software that can translate scientific data into sound. Sound-based tools _____ scientists to detect subtle patterns in data. Such patterns may not be evident in traditional graphs.

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

- A. has enabled
- B. enable
- C. is enabling
- D. enables

ID: a5a00b23 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-verb agreement. The plural verb "enable" agrees in number with the plural subject "sound-based tools."

Choice A is incorrect because the singular verb "has enabled" doesn’t agree in number with the plural subject "sound-based tools."
Choice C is incorrect because the singular verb "is enabling" doesn’t agree in number with the plural subject "sound-based tools."
Choice D is incorrect because the singular verb "enables" doesn’t agree in number with the plural subject "sound-based tools."

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID e7becedb

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: e7becedb

Official measurements of the Mississippi River’s length vary: according to the US Geological Survey, the river is 2,300 miles long, whereas the Environmental Protection Agency records its length as 2,320 miles. This disparity can be explained in part by the fact that rivers such as the Mississippi expand and contract as _____ sediment.

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

- A. they accumulate
- B. one accumulates
- C. it accumulates
- D. we accumulate

ID: e7becedb Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is pronoun-antecedent agreement. The plural pronoun “they” agrees in number with the plural antecedent “rivers” and clearly expresses the general statement that rivers expand and contract as they accumulate sediment. Secondly, the plural verb “accumulate” agrees in number with the plural pronoun and its plural antecedent.

Choice B is incorrect because the singular pronoun “one” doesn’t agree in number with the plural antecedent “rivers.” Choice C is incorrect because the singular pronoun “it” doesn’t agree in number with the plural antecedent “rivers.” Choice D is incorrect because the use of the personal pronoun “we” is illogical in this context; it suggests that a group of people (including the speaker) accumulate sediment, which doesn’t make sense.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID fdcab605

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: fdcab605

Every last second of space shuttle mission STS-79, which lasted ten days and three hours, _____ carefully monitored by a team of experts.

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

- A. have been
- B. are
- C. was
- D. were

ID: fdcab605 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-verb agreement. The singular verb "was" agrees in number with the singular subject "every last second."

Choice A is incorrect because the plural verb "have been" doesn't agree in number with the singular subject "every last second." Choice B is incorrect because the plural verb "are" doesn't agree in number with the singular subject "every last second." Choice D is incorrect because the plural verb "were" doesn't agree in number with the singular subject "every last second."

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 86980f69

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 86980f69

In 2016, engineer Vanessa Galvez oversaw the installation of 164 bioswales, vegetated channels designed to absorb and divert stormwater, along the streets of Queens, New York. By reducing the runoff flowing into city sewers, _____

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

- A. the mitigation of both street flooding and the resulting pollution of nearby waterways has been achieved by bioswales.
- B. the bioswales have mitigated both street flooding and the resulting pollution of nearby waterways.
- C. the bioswales’ mitigation of both street flooding and the resulting pollution of nearby waterways has been achieved.
- D. both street flooding and the resulting pollution of nearby waterways have been mitigated by bioswales.

ID: 86980f69 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-modifier placement. This choice makes the noun phrase “the bioswales” the subject of the sentence and places it immediately after the modifying phrase “By reducing...sewers.” In doing so, this choice clearly establishes that the bioswales—and not another noun in the sentence—are reducing runoff flowing into city sewers.

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the noun phrase “the mitigation...waterways” immediately after the modifying phrase results in unclear modification. The resulting sentence makes it hard to determine what is responsible for “reducing the runoff”: the bioswales or some other noun in the sentence. Choice C is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the noun phrase “the bioswales’ mitigation...waterways” immediately after the modifying phrase results in unclear modification. The resulting sentence makes it hard to determine what is responsible for “reducing the runoff”: the bioswales or some other noun in the sentence. Choice D is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the noun phrase “street flooding and the resulting pollution” immediately after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that the “flooding and pollution” are reducing runoff flowing into city sewers.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID b482b3c8

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: b482b3c8

The Proto-Nilotic language, common ancestor of fifty-five African languages with similar linguistic properties, _____ like all protolanguages, hypothetical: there’s no direct evidence these ancestral languages actually existed.

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

- A. is,
- B. are,
- C. have been,
- D. were,

ID: b482b3c8 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-verb agreement. The singular verb "is" agrees in number with the singular subject "the Proto-Nilotic language."

Choice B is incorrect because the plural verb "are" doesn’t agree in number with the singular subject "the Proto-Nilotic language." Choice C is incorrect because the plural verb "have been" doesn’t agree in number with the singular subject "the Proto-Nilotic language." Choice D is incorrect because the plural verb "were" doesn’t agree in number with the singular subject "the Proto-Nilotic language."

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 350e9346

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 350e9346

In a recent analysis of lyrical trends in 350,000 songs, researchers cite increases in certain measures, such as the ratio of choruses to verses, as evidence music lyrics are becoming more repetitive. For instance, from 1970 to 2020, _____ chorus-to-verse ratios trended similarly, with each genre’s data indicating that relative to the number of unique verses, the number of repeated choruses in songs increased.

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

- A. rocks and raps
- B. rock’s and rap’s
- C. rocks and rap’s
- D. rock and rap’s

ID: 350e9346 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of possessive nouns. The singular possessive nouns "rock’s" and "rap’s" correctly indicate that the chorus-to-verse ratios belong to the genres of rock and rap.

Choice A is incorrect because the context requires the singular possessive nouns "rock’s" and "rap’s," not the plural nouns "rocks" and "raps." Choice C is incorrect because the context requires the singular possessive noun "rock’s," not the plural noun "rocks." Choice D is incorrect because the context requires the singular possessive noun "rock’s," not the singular noun "rock." This choice incorrectly suggests that there was a single chorus-to-verse ratio for rock and rap together, whereas the ratio was calculated for each genre individually.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID a38bdd37

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: a38bdd37

A pioneer in the field of taphonomy (the study of how organic remains become fossils), _____ may be just as prevalent in the fossil record as those of thick-shelled organisms.

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

- A. fossils of thin-shelled organisms, Anna Behrensmeyer demonstrated in a 2005 analysis,
- B. Anna Behrensmeyer demonstrated in a 2005 analysis that fossils of thin-shelled organisms
- C. it was demonstrated in a 2005 analysis by Anna Behrensmeyer that fossils of thin-shelled organisms
- D. a 2005 analysis—by Anna Behrensmeyer—demonstrated that fossils of thin-shelled organisms

ID: a38bdd37 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-modifier placement. This choice makes the noun phrase “Anna Behrensmeyer” the subject of the sentence and places it immediately after the modifying phrase “a pioneer...fossils.” In doing so, this choice clearly establishes that Anna Behrensmeyer—and not another noun in the sentence—is a pioneer in the field of taphonomy.

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the noun phrase “fossils of thin-shelled organisms” immediately after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that the “fossils” are a pioneer in the field of taphonomy. Choice C is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the pronoun “it” immediately after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that “it” is a pioneer in the field of taphonomy. Choice D is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the noun phrase “a 2005 analysis” immediately after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that “a 2005 analysis” is a pioneer in the field of taphonomy.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 7a58cdc7

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 7a58cdc7

Several advantages—the ability to react strongly with chip components, to avoid interference from other waves, and to be confined within tiny circuits—_____ acoustic waves as a promising alternative to electrical waves for transmitting data on computer chips; as a result, researchers are invested in developing more acoustic wave-based chips.

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

- A. have positioned
- B. positioning
- C. by positioning
- D. having positioned

ID: 7a58cdc7 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of verb forms within a sentence. A main clause requires a finite (tensed) verb to perform the action of the subject. In this case, the subject is "several advantages," and the present perfect tense verb "have positioned" supplies the finite verb to indicate what has made acoustic waves a promising alternative to electrical waves.

Choice B is incorrect because it results in an ungrammatical sentence. The nonfinite participle "positioning" doesn't supply the main clause with a finite verb. Choice C is incorrect because it results in an ungrammatical sentence. The prepositional phrase "by positioning" doesn't supply the main clause with a finite verb. Choice D is incorrect because it results in an ungrammatical sentence. The nonfinite participle "having positioned" doesn't supply the main clause with a finite verb.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 00ef0f55

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 00ef0f55

Oyster mushrooms typically get their nutrients from the damp logs on which they grow, but the fungi are also carnivorous, with the ability to kill and consume microscopic worms known as nematodes. As researcher Yen-Ping Hsueh has shown, the mushrooms release a toxin that is deadly to nematodes that _____ in contact with it.

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

- A. has come
- B. comes
- C. is coming
- D. come

ID: 00ef0f55 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-verb agreement. The plural verb "come" agrees in number with the plural subject "nematodes."

Choice A is incorrect because the singular verb "has come" doesn't agree in number with the plural subject "nematodes." Choice B is incorrect because the singular verb "comes" doesn't agree in number with the plural subject "nematodes." Choice C is incorrect because the singular verb "is coming" doesn't agree in number with the plural subject "nematodes."

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 90081efe

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 90081efe

To fully describe the motion of an object requires knowing each of five _____ movement: displacement, time, initial velocity, final velocity, and acceleration. These are called kinematic variables.

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

- A. variable’s that characterize objects’
- B. variables that characterize objects’
- C. variables that characterize object’s
- D. variables that characterize objects

ID: 90081efe Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The conventions being tested are the use of plural and possessive nouns. The plural noun "variables" correctly indicates that there are multiple variables, and the plural possessive noun "objects'" correctly indicates that the movement of objects in general is being discussed.

Choice A is incorrect because the context requires the plural noun "variables," not the singular possessive noun "variable's." Choice C is incorrect because the context requires the plural possessive noun "objects'," not the singular possessive noun "object's." Choice D is incorrect because the context requires the plural possessive noun "objects'," not the plural noun "objects."

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 21b7a258

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 21b7a258

Slam poet Elizabeth Acevedo’s debut novel *The Poet X*, winner of the 2018 National Book Award for Young People’s Literature, is composed of _____ protagonist, fifteen-year-old Xiomara Batista.

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

- A. poems putatively written by the novel’s
- B. poem’s putatively written by the novel’s
- C. poem’s putatively written by the novels’
- D. poems putatively written by the novels’

ID: 21b7a258 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. Nothing belongs to the “poems” in the sentence, so it should not be possessive—just a simple plural noun. The protagonist does belong to the novel—it’s the protagonist of the novel—so “novel” needs to be a singular possessive noun.

Choice B is incorrect. This doesn’t complete the text in a way that conforms to the conventions of Standard English. This choice uses the singular possessive “poem’s,” but the text indicates that it should be the simple plural “poems”: there is more than one poem, and nothing belongs to the poems. Choice C is incorrect. This doesn’t complete the text in a way that conforms to the conventions of Standard English. This choice uses the singular possessive “poem’s,” but the text indicates that it should be the simple plural “poems”: there is more than one poem, and nothing belongs to the poems. This choice also uses the plural possessive “novels’,” which is incorrect because there is only one novel. Choice D is incorrect. This doesn’t complete the text in a way that conforms to the conventions of Standard English. This choice uses the plural possessive “novels’,” which is incorrect because there is only one novel, so it should be the singular possessive “novel’s.” .

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 617c45ff

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 617c45ff

Because a cycle of lunar phases _____ 29.5 days to complete, it’s possible to observe two full moons in a single month, one at the beginning and one at the end.

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

- A. are taking
- B. have taken
- C. take
- D. takes

ID: 617c45ff Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-verb agreement. The singular verb "takes" agrees in number with the singular subject "a cycle of lunar phases."

Choice A is incorrect because the plural verb "are taking" doesn’t agree in number with the singular subject "a cycle of lunar phases." Choice B is incorrect because the plural verb "have taken" doesn’t agree in number with the singular subject "a cycle of lunar phases." Choice C is incorrect because the plural verb "take" doesn’t agree in number with the singular subject "a cycle of lunar phases."

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID cff5bbab

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: cff5bbab

A popular suite of mapping and spatial analysis software, ArcGIS enables cartographers like Karachi Cartography founder Namra Khalid _____ maps by analyzing and arranging raw geospatial data.

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

- A. create
- B. to create
- C. creating
- D. created

ID: cff5bbab Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of verb forms within a sentence. The nonfinite to-infinitive verb “to create” is correctly used to form a subordinate clause that expresses how ArcGIS facilitates the creation of maps (by analyzing and arranging certain data).

Choice A is incorrect because it results in an ungrammatical sentence. The finite verb “create” can’t be used in this way to form a subordinate clause that expresses how ArcGIS facilitates the creation of maps. Choice C is incorrect because it results in an ungrammatical sentence. The nonfinite participle “creating” can’t be used in this way to form a subordinate clause that expresses how ArcGIS facilitates the creation of maps. Choice D is incorrect because it results in an ungrammatical sentence. The finite verb “created” can’t be used in this way to form a subordinate clause that expresses how ArcGIS facilitates the creation of maps.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 0f0e713c

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 0f0e713c

In the 1950s, a man named Joseph McVicker was struggling to keep his business afloat when his sister-in-law Kay Zufall advised him to repurpose the company’s product, a nontoxic, clay-like substance for removing soot from wallpaper, as a modeling putty for kids. In addition, Zufall _____ selling the product under a child-friendly name: Play-Doh.

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

- A. suggested
- B. suggests
- C. had suggested
- D. was suggesting

ID: 0f0e713c Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of verbs to express tense. In this choice, the simple past tense verb “suggested” properly indicates that Zufall offered her suggestion for the product’s name in the past. This verb tense is consistent with the previous sentence’s use of a simple past tense verb (“advised”) to describe Zufall’s advice to McVicker in the 1950s.

Choice B is incorrect because the present tense verb “suggests” doesn’t indicate that Zufall offered her suggestion in the past. Choice C is incorrect because the past perfect verb “had suggested” isn’t consistent with the previous sentence’s use of the simple past tense verb “advised” to describe Zufall’s advice to McVicker. Choice D is incorrect because the past progressive verb “was suggesting” isn’t consistent with the previous sentence’s use of the simple past tense verb “advised” to describe Zufall’s advice to McVicker.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 49213f80

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 49213f80

The Progressive Era in the United States witnessed the rise of numerous Black women’s clubs, local organizations that advocated for racial and gender equality. Among the clubs’ leaders _____ Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin, founder of the Women’s Era Club of Boston.

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

- A. was
- B. were
- C. are
- D. have been

ID: 49213f80 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested here is subject-verb agreement. The singular verb “was” agrees in number with the singular subject “Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin.”

Choice B is incorrect because the plural verb “were” doesn’t agree in number with the singular subject “Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin.” Choice C is incorrect because the plural verb “are” doesn’t agree in number with the singular subject “Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin.” Choice D is incorrect because the plural verb “have been” doesn’t agree in number with the singular subject “Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin.”

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 60ba1f93

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 60ba1f93

“Praise Song for the Day,” Elizabeth Alexander’s 2009 inaugural poem, asserts that “We cross dirt roads and highways...to see what’s on the other side.” Alexander’s use of “we” _____ Americans’ collective efforts and shared desire to seek new opportunity.

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

- A. evokes
- B. are evoking
- C. have evoked
- D. evoke

ID: 60ba1f93 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-verb agreement. The singular verb "evokes" agrees in number with the singular subject "Alexander’s use."

- Choice B is incorrect because the plural verb "are evoking" doesn’t agree in number with the singular subject "Alexander’s use."
- Choice C is incorrect because the plural verb "have evoked" doesn’t agree in number with the singular subject "Alexander’s use."
- Choice D is incorrect because the plural verb "evoke" doesn’t agree in number with the singular subject "Alexander’s use."

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID bdf2d352

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: bdf2d352

Rabinal Achí is a precolonial Maya dance drama performed annually in Rabinal, a town in the Guatemalan highlands. Based on events that occurred when Rabinal was a city-state ruled by a king, _____ had once been an ally of the king but was later captured while leading an invading force against him.

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

- A. *Rabinal Achí* tells the story of K'iche' Achí, a military leader who
- B. K'iche' Achí, the military leader in the story of *Rabinal Achí*,
- C. the military leader whose story is told in *Rabinal Achí*, K'iche' Achí,
- D. there was a military leader, K'iche' Achí, who in *Rabinal Achí*

ID: bdf2d352 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The modifier “Based on events...by a king,” is describing the drama “Rabinal Achí.” Modifiers need to be next to the subjects they describe, so “Rabinal Achí” needs to be the first word after the comma.

Choice B is incorrect. This doesn’t complete the text in a way that conforms to the conventions of Standard English. The modifier “Based on events...by a king,” is describing the drama “Rabinal Achí.” Modifiers need to be next to the subjects they describe, so “Rabinal Achí” needs to be the first word after the comma. Choice C is incorrect. This doesn’t complete the text in a way that conforms to the conventions of Standard English. The modifier “Based on events...by a king,” is describing the drama “Rabinal Achí.” Modifiers need to be next to the subjects they describe, so “Rabinal Achí” needs to be the first word after the comma. Choice D is incorrect. This doesn’t complete the text in a way that conforms to the conventions of Standard English. The modifier “Based on events...by a king,” is describing the drama “Rabinal Achí.” Modifiers need to be next to the subjects they describe, so “Rabinal Achí” needs to be the first word after the comma.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 19648d64

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 19648d64

Many folktales that originate in the Czech language start with a phrase that roughly translates to “there was, there was not.” Many tales that originate in English use “once upon a time.” Such phrases, known as story starters, _____ from language to language.

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

- A. vary
- B. has varied
- C. varies
- D. is varying

ID: 19648d64 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-verb agreement. The plural verb “vary” agrees in number with the plural subject “such phrases.” The supplementary phrase “known as story starters,” set off by commas, doesn’t change the subject’s number.

Choice B is incorrect. The singular verb phrase “has varied” doesn’t agree in number with the plural subject “such phrases.” Choice C is incorrect. The singular verb “varies” doesn’t agree in number with the plural subject “such phrases.” Choice D is incorrect. The singular verb phrase “is varying” doesn’t agree in number with the plural subject “such phrases.”

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID bd773a8d

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: bd773a8d

Legal scholars James Melton and Tom Ginsburg’s analysis of de jure judicial independence and its growth over decades _____ six constitutional features that enhance such independence, including judicial tenure and selection procedure. Albania’s constitution contains five of these features.

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

- A. are identifying
- B. identify
- C. have identified
- D. identifies

ID: bd773a8d Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-verb agreement. The singular verb "identifies" agrees in number with the singular subject "analysis."

Choice A is incorrect because the plural verb "are identifying" doesn’t agree in number with the singular subject "analysis." Choice B is incorrect because the plural verb "identify" doesn’t agree in number with the singular subject "analysis." Choice C is incorrect because the plural verb "have identified" doesn’t agree in number with the singular subject "analysis."

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 54a1acd0

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 54a1acd0

The present-day city of Dushanbe, Tajikistan, was for years the capital of the Tajik Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, one of many nominally autonomous republics within the Soviet Union. Like _____ peer autonomous Soviet socialist republics, the Tajik Republic was established along ethnolinguistic lines: most of the republic’s residents spoke Persian.

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

- A. their
- B. they’re
- C. its
- D. it’s

ID: 54a1acd0 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of possessive determiners. The singular possessive determiner "its" agrees in number with the singular subject "the Tajik Republic" and thus indicates that the other republics were its peers.

Choice A is incorrect because the plural possessive determiner "their" doesn’t agree in number with the singular subject "the Tajik Republic." Choice B is incorrect because "they’re" is the contraction for "they are," not a possessive determiner. Choice D is incorrect because "it’s" is the contraction for "it is" or "it has," not a possessive determiner.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID c3f92445

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: c3f92445

In 2015, a team led by materials scientists Anirudha Sumant and Diana Berman succeeded in reducing the coefficient of friction (COF) between two surfaces to the lowest possible level—superlubricity. A nearly frictionless (and, as its name suggests, extremely slippery) state, _____

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

- A. when their COF drops below 0.01, two surfaces reach superlubricity.
- B. two surfaces, when their COF drops below 0.01, reach superlubricity.
- C. reaching superlubricity occurs when two surfaces’ COF drops below 0.01.
- D. superlubricity is reached when two surfaces’ COF drops below 0.01.

ID: c3f92445 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-modifier placement. This choice makes the noun “superlubricity” the subject of the sentence and places it immediately after the modifying phrase “a nearly frictionless...state.” In doing so, this choice clearly establishes that superlubricity—and not another noun in the sentence—is being described as nearly frictionless and extremely slippery.

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. Regardless of the introductory “when...” clause, the main subject “two surfaces” follows the modifying phrase (“A nearly frictionless...state”), illogically suggesting that the surfaces are the nearly frictionless, extremely slippery state. Choice B is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the noun phrase “two surfaces” immediately after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that the surfaces are a nearly frictionless and extremely slippery state. Choice C is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the gerund phrase “reaching superlubricity” immediately after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that the act of reaching superlubricity is the nearly frictionless, extremely slippery state.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 25ee9bc5

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 25ee9bc5

Based on genetic evidence, archaeologists have generally agreed that reindeer domestication began in the eleventh century CE. However, since uncovering fragments of a 2,000-year-old reindeer training harness in northern Siberia, _____ may have begun much earlier.

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

- A. researcher Robert Losey has argued that domestication
- B. researcher Robert Losey’s argument is that domestication
- C. domestication, researcher Robert Losey has argued,
- D. the argument researcher Robert Losey has made is that domestication

ID: 25ee9bc5 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-modifier placement. This choice makes the noun phrase “researcher Robert Losey” the subject of the sentence and places it immediately after the modifying phrase “since...Siberia.” In doing so, this choice clearly establishes that researcher Robert Losey—and not another noun in the sentence—is who uncovered fragments of a 2,000-year-old reindeer training harness in northern Siberia.

Choice B is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the noun phrase “researcher Robert Losey’s argument” immediately after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that the “argument” is what uncovered fragments of a 2,000-year-old reindeer training harness in northern Siberia. Choice C is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the noun “domestication” immediately after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that “domestication” is what uncovered fragments of a 2,000-year-old reindeer training harness in northern Siberia. Choice D is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the noun phrase “the argument” immediately after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that the “argument” is what uncovered fragments of a 2,000-year-old reindeer training harness in northern Siberia.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 8ccd1c72

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 8ccd1c72

The musical scores of Japanese composer Hiroyuki Sawano are famous for their mysterious titles. Laden with emojis and seemingly meaningless words, and driven largely by Sawano’s “personal feeling and mood,” _____

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

- A. the listener can approach each piece free from expectations because of the titles.
- B. the titles allow the listener to approach each piece free from expectations.
- C. each piece can be approached by the listener free from expectations because of the titles.
- D. the listener’s approach to each piece because of the titles can be free from expectations.

ID: 8ccd1c72 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-modifier placement. This choice makes the noun phrase “the titles” the subject of the sentence and places it immediately after the modifying phrases “laden with emojis and seemingly meaningless words, and driven largely by Sawano’s ‘personal feeling and mood.’” In doing so, this choice clearly establishes that the titles—and not another noun in the sentence—are being described as laden with emojis and driven by Sawano’s personal feeling.

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of “the listener” immediately after the modifying phrases illogically suggests that the listener, rather than the titles, is laden with emojis and driven by Sawano’s personal feeling. Choice C is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of “each piece” (i.e., musical score) immediately after the modifying phrases illogically suggests that the pieces, rather than the titles of the pieces, are laden with emojis and driven by Sawano’s personal feeling. Choice D is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of “the listener’s approach” immediately after the modifying phrases illogically suggests that the listener’s approach, rather than the titles, is laden with emojis and driven by Sawano’s personal feeling.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 5140d6fc

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 5140d6fc

French philosopher René Descartes doubted whether he could prove his own existence. Eventually, he found proof in his famous phrase “I think, therefore I am.” The _____ complexity: only those who exist would be able to ponder their existence.

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

- A. phrases’ simplicity masks its
- B. phrases simplicity masks their
- C. phrase’s simplicity masks their
- D. phrase’s simplicity masks its

ID: 5140d6fc Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The conventions being tested are the use of possessive nouns and the use of possessive determiners. The singular possessive noun "phrase’s" correctly indicates that there is only one simple phrase. The singular possessive determiner "its" agrees in number with the singular possessive noun "phrase’s," reinforcing the idea that there is only one simple yet complex phrase.

Choice A is incorrect because the context requires the singular possessive noun "phrase’s," not the plural possessive noun "phrases’." Choice B is incorrect because the context requires the singular possessive noun "phrase’s" and the corresponding singular possessive determiner "its," not the plural noun "phrases" and the corresponding plural possessive determiner "their." Choice C is incorrect because the context requires the singular possessive determiner "its," not the plural possessive determiner "their."

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 37a096b3

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 37a096b3

In the eastern Chinese city of Suzhou, known as a hub for silk manufacturing, a unique tradition of embroidery _____ back over two thousand years—one that includes iconic double-sided stitching with different images on each side—remains popular with modern audiences, preserving the city’s cultural heritage.

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

- A. dates
- B. date
- C. dating
- D. has dated

ID: 37a096b3 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of verb forms within a sentence. The sentence’s subject is “a unique tradition of embroidery,” and its finite main verb is “remains.” This choice correctly uses the nonfinite present participle “dating” to form an integrated participial phrase (“dating...years”) that modifies the subject, providing additional information about how far back the tradition goes.

Choice A is incorrect because it results in an ungrammatical sentence. Using the finite present tense verb “dates” creates a second finite verb in the main clause, which already has the finite verb “remains” as its main verb. Choice B is incorrect because it results in an ungrammatical sentence. Using the finite present tense verb “date” creates a second finite verb in the main clause, which already has the finite verb “remains” as its main verb. Furthermore, the plural verb “date” doesn’t agree in number with the singular subject, “a unique tradition of embroidery.” Choice D is incorrect because it results in an ungrammatical sentence. Using the finite present perfect tense verb “has dated” creates a second finite verb in the main clause, which already has the finite verb “remains” as its main verb.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID cb1a7cfa

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: cb1a7cfa

Nuhād al-Ḥaddād, known as Fairuz, was one of the most beloved Lebanese singers of the twentieth century. Her broad singing repertoire—which included traditional forms, such as the Arabic *qasida* and *maqam*, alongside modern pop and jazz styles—lent Fairuz a timeless, cross-generational appeal, _____ her the moniker “the soul of Lebanon.”

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

- A. earned
- B. had earned
- C. earning
- D. earn

ID: cb1a7cfa Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The word "earning" is being used to introduce an additional modifying phrase, which describes how Fairuz’s repertoire lent her cross-generational appeal. When a verb ends in -ing and doesn’t have a helper verb like "is" before it, it can be used to modify a noun or verb. This is appropriate here.

Choice A is incorrect. The underlined verb is being used to introduce additional descriptive information, which is set off from the rest of the sentence by a comma. Because there is no subject here, a finite form of the verb (like "earned") creates an error. We need another form of the verb that doesn’t require a subject and can introduce descriptive information. Choice B is incorrect. The underlined verb is being used to introduce additional descriptive information, which is set off from the rest of the sentence by a comma. Because there is no subject here, a finite form of the verb (like "had earned") creates an error. We need another form of the verb that doesn’t require a subject and can introduce descriptive information. Choice D is incorrect. The underlined verb is being used to introduce additional descriptive information, which is set off from the rest of the sentence by a comma. Because there is no subject here, a finite form of the verb (like "earn") creates an error. We need another form of the verb that doesn’t require a subject and can introduce descriptive information.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID c2e4a567

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: c2e4a567

Increased gender diversity is revitalizing the field of economics, according to Harvard’s Claudia Goldin. The trailblazing accomplishments of Goldin, winner of the 2023 Nobel Prize in Economics for her work on women in the labor force, _____ to the value of scholars of diverse backgrounds in spurring research into previously unexplored, but vitally important, topics.

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

- A. attests
- B. has attested
- C. is attesting
- D. attest

ID: c2e4a567 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-verb agreement. The plural verb "attest" agrees in number with the plural subject "trailblazing accomplishments."

Choice A is incorrect because the singular verb "attests" doesn’t agree in number with the plural subject "trailblazing accomplishments." Choice B is incorrect because the singular verb "has attested" doesn’t agree in number with the plural subject "trailblazing accomplishments." Choice C is incorrect because the singular verb "is attesting" doesn’t agree in number with the plural subject "trailblazing accomplishments."

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 676e462a

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 676e462a

Known as Earth’s “living skin,” biocrusts are thin layers of soil held together by surface-dwelling microorganisms such as fungi, lichens, and cyanobacteria. Fortifying soil in arid ecosystems against erosion, _____

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

- A. a recent study’s estimate is that these crusts reduce global dust emissions by 60 percent each year.
- B. an estimated 60 percent reduction in global dust emissions each year is due to these crusts, according to a recent study.
- C. these crusts reduce global dust emissions by an estimated 60 percent each year, according to a recent study.
- D. a recent study has estimated that these crusts reduce global dust emissions by 60 percent each year.

ID: 676e462a Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The subject of the modifier "fortifying soil in arid ecosystems against erosion" is "biocrusts." Subject-modifier placement requires a modifier and its subject to be next to each other, so "biocrusts" or some variant meaning "biocrusts" (in this case, "these crusts") must begin the missing clause.

Choice A is incorrect. Modifiers and their subjects must go next to each other. The subject of the modifier "fortifying soil in arid ecosystems against erosion" is "biocrusts," not "a recent study’s estimate." Choice B is incorrect. Modifiers and their subjects must go next to each other. The subject of the modifier "fortifying soil in arid ecosystems against erosion" is "biocrusts," not "an estimated 60 percent reduction." Choice D is incorrect. Modifiers and their subjects must go next to each other. The subject of the modifier "fortifying soil in arid ecosystems against erosion" is "biocrusts," not "a recent study."

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 713bf969

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 713bf969

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, automobiles were commonly referred to as horseless carriages after the older technology they still resembled. Known as the Brass Era, this period in automotive design is remembered for its grandeur and artistry, its vehicles _____ by collectors for their ornate detailing and gleaming brass fittings.

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

- A. are highly prized
- B. had been highly prized
- C. highly prized
- D. were highly prized

ID: 713bf969 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of verb forms in a sentence. The nonfinite past participle phrase "highly prized" is correctly used to form a supplementary element that modifies the main clause "this...artistry," describing memorable features of Brass Era automotive design.

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. Using the finite present tense verb phrase "are highly prized" creates a second main clause in the sentence, and two main clauses can't be joined in this way with only a comma after "artistry." Choice B is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. Using the finite past perfect tense verb phrase "had been highly prized" creates a second main clause in the sentence, and two main clauses can't be joined in this way with only a comma after "artistry." Choice D is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. Using the finite past tense verb phrase "were highly prized" creates a second main clause in the sentence, and two main clauses can't be joined in this way with only a comma after "artistry."

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 48823388

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 48823388

Despite being cheap, versatile, and easy to produce, _____ they are made from nonrenewable petroleum, and most do not biodegrade in landfills.

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

- A. there are two problems associated with commercial plastics:
- B. two problems are associated with commercial plastics:
- C. commercial plastics’ two associated problems are that
- D. commercial plastics have two associated problems:

ID: 48823388 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-modifier placement. This choice ensures that the modifying phrase “despite being cheap, versatile, and easy to produce” appears immediately before the noun it modifies, “commercial plastics,” clearly establishing that the commercial plastics—and not another noun in the sentence—are being described as cheap, versatile, and easy to produce.

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the function word “there” immediately after the modifying phrase illogically and confusingly suggests that “there” is cheap, versatile, and easy to produce. Choice B is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the noun “two problems” immediately after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that the “problems” are cheap, versatile, and easy to produce. Choice C is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the noun phrase “commercial plastics’ two associated problems” immediately after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that the “problems” are cheap, versatile, and easy to produce.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID d3508a94

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: d3508a94

Inventor John Friedman created a prototype of the first flexible straw by inserting a screw into a paper straw and, using dental floss, binding the straw tightly around the _____. When the floss and screw were removed, the resulting corrugations in the paper allowed the straw to bend easily over the edge of a glass.

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

- A. screw’s thread’s.
- B. screws’ threads.
- C. screw’s threads.
- D. screws threads’.

ID: d3508a94 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of plural and possessive nouns. The singular possessive noun “screw’s” and the plural noun “threads” correctly indicate that there is only one screw and it has multiple threads.

Choice A is incorrect because the context requires the plural noun “threads,” not the singular possessive noun “thread’s.” Choice B is incorrect because the context requires the singular possessive noun “screw’s,” not the plural possessive noun “screws’.” Choice D is incorrect because the context requires the singular possessive noun “screw’s” and the plural noun “threads,” not the plural noun “screws” or the plural possessive noun “threads.”

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 1c09d493

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 1c09d493

In knot theory (the mathematical study of curved, closed loops), knots are characterized by their crossing numbers—that is, the number of times the knotted thread crosses over itself. The trefoil knot and the figure-eight knot, each with a crossing number below five, _____ among the simplest possible knots with the fewest number of crossings.

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

- A. was
- B. are
- C. has been
- D. is

ID: 1c09d493 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-verb agreement. The plural verb "are" agrees in number with the plural compound subject "the trefoil knot and the figure-eight knot." The two types of knots joined by "and" function as a plural subject and thus require a plural verb.

Choice A is incorrect because the singular verb "was" doesn't agree in number with the plural compound subject "the trefoil knot and the figure-eight knot." Choice C is incorrect because the singular verb "has been" doesn't agree in number with the plural compound subject "the trefoil knot and the figure-eight knot." Choice D is incorrect because the singular verb "is" doesn't agree in number with the plural compound subject "the trefoil knot and the figure-eight knot."

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 78bcc359

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 78bcc359

When a given term—“self-fulfilling prophecies” and “role models” are two well-known examples—is generally accepted and frequently used, _____ susceptible to obliteration by incorporation (OBI). In cases of OBI, widely used terms are rarely, if at all, attributed to the individuals who coined them.

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

- A. they often become
- B. these often become
- C. this often becomes
- D. it often becomes

ID: 78bcc359 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is pronoun-antecedent agreement. The singular pronoun “it” agrees in number with the singular antecedent “a given term” and clearly indicates that the term becomes susceptible to obliteration by incorporation.

Choice A is incorrect because the plural pronoun “they” neither agrees in number with the singular antecedent “a given term” nor clearly indicates that the given term—not another plural noun in the sentence, such as “examples”—becomes susceptible to obliteration by incorporation. Choice B is incorrect because the plural pronoun “these” neither agrees in number with the singular antecedent “a given term” nor clearly indicates that the given term—not another plural noun in the sentence, such as “examples”—becomes susceptible to obliteration by incorporation. Choice C is incorrect because the singular pronoun “this” is ambiguous in this context, leaving unclear what exactly becomes susceptible to obliteration by incorporation.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID f0fc062e

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: f0fc062e

In the canon of North African literature, Moroccan author Driss Chraïbi’s 1954 novel *The Simple Past* (*Le Passé simple*) looms large. A coming-of-age story, a social meditation, and a sober gaze into the dark maw of French colonialism, _____ interrogates systemic power with memorable intensity.

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

- A. Morocco gained its independence two years before the publication of Chraïbi’s debut novel, which
- B. Chraïbi’s debut novel, published two years before Morocco gained its independence,
- C. Chraïbi wrote a debut novel that, published two years before Morocco gained its independence,
- D. published two years before Morocco gained its independence, Chraïbi wrote a debut novel that

ID: f0fc062e Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. Subject-modifier placement requires a modifier and its subject to be next to each other. The subject of the modifier "a coming-of-age story...colonialism" is Chraïbi’s novel *The Simple Past*, so the subject "Chraïbi’s debut novel" fits perfectly after this introductory modifying phrase.

Choice A is incorrect. Modifiers and their subjects must go next to each other. The introductory modifier "a coming-of-age story...colonialism" is describing Chraïbi’s novel, not Morocco. However, this choice places Morocco directly next to that modifier. Choice C is incorrect. Modifiers and their subjects must go next to each other. The introductory modifier "a coming-of-age story...colonialism" all describes Chraïbi’s novel, not Chraïbi himself. However, this choice places Chraïbi directly next to that modifier. Choice D is incorrect. Modifiers and their subjects must go next to each other. The modifier "a coming-of-age story..." is describing Chraïbi’s novel, so that needs to be the subject immediately after the modifier. This choice adds another modifier that describes Chraïbi’s novel, but then puts "Chraïbi" himself—not the novel—right after that modifier, which doesn’t make sense. Chraïbi wasn’t "published two years before" Moroccan independence; his novel *The Simple Past* was.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 766e527a

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 766e527a

In Marisol's 1968 sculpture *Mi Mama y Yo*, gone are the types of pop culture references that made the Parisian-born Venezuelan American artist a star at the height of the pop art movement. In _____ place is a far more personal subject: a sculptural depiction of the artist as a young girl with her mother.

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

- A. its
- B. they're
- C. their
- D. it's

ID: 766e527a Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of possessive determiners. The plural possessive determiner "their" agrees in number with the plural noun "types" and thus indicates that the more personal subject matter of Marisol's 1968 sculpture takes the place of those types of pop culture references that made Marisol a star.

Choice A is incorrect because the singular possessive determiner "its" doesn't agree in number with the plural noun "types." Choice B is incorrect because "they're" is the contraction for "they are," not a possessive determiner. Choice D is incorrect because "it's" is the contraction for "it is" or "it has," not a possessive determiner.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 87bdcfd3

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 87bdcfd3

Entomologists Yash Sondhi and Samuel Fabian have tried to explain why moths fly erratically around light sources at night. Knowing that flying insects keep their backs pointed toward sunlight during the day, _____

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

- A. the researchers theorize that moths, mistaking nighttime lights for the Sun, continually try to reorient their bodies while flying near such lights.
- B. the researchers’ theory is that moths mistake nighttime lights for the Sun, continually trying to reorient their bodies while flying near such lights.
- C. moths mistake nighttime lights for the Sun and continually try to reorient their bodies while flying near such lights, the researchers theorize.
- D. moths continually try to reorient their bodies while flying near nighttime lights, the researchers theorize, mistaking such lights for the Sun.

ID: 87bdcfd3 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-modifier placement. This choice makes the noun phrase "the researchers" the subject of the sentence and places it immediately after the modifying phrase "knowing...day." In doing so, this choice clearly establishes that the researchers—and not another noun in the sentence—know that flying insects keep their backs pointed toward sunlight during the day.

Choice B is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the noun phrase "the researchers’ theory" immediately after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that the researchers’ theory knows that flying insects keep their backs pointed toward sunlight during the day. Choice C is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the noun "moths" immediately after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that moths know that flying insects keep their backs pointed toward sunlight during the day. Choice D is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the noun "moths" immediately after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that moths know that flying insects keep their backs pointed toward sunlight during the day.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 014e1dd4

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 014e1dd4

The ghazal, a poetic form originating in seventh-century Arabic poetry, has an intricate structure. The twentieth-century Kashmiri American poet Agha Shahid Ali explains that each one of a ghazal’s couplets, while adhering to the patterns of rhyme (*qafia*) and refrain (*radif*) established in the poem’s opening lines (*matla*), _____ thematically and logically autonomous, resulting in a poem with “a stringently formal disunity.”

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

- A. is
- B. were
- C. have been
- D. are

ID: 014e1dd4 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of verb forms within a sentence. The singular verb "is" agrees in number with the singular subject "each one of a ghazal’s couplets." While the prepositional phrase "of a ghazal’s couplets" within the subject contains a plural noun, the head of the subject ("each one") is singular, indicating that each individual couplet (not the couplets as a group) is "thematically and logically autonomous," or self-standing.

Choice B is incorrect because the plural verb "were" doesn’t agree in number with the singular subject "each one of a ghazal’s couplets." Choice C is incorrect because the plural verb "have been" doesn’t agree in number with the singular subject "each one of a ghazal’s couplets." Choice D is incorrect because the plural verb "are" doesn’t agree in number with the singular subject "each one of a ghazal’s couplets."

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 8832dddb

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 8832dddb

Water in the North Atlantic Ocean is pushed eastward by powerful winds, but the rotation of Earth and interference from nearby landmasses together cause _____ to swirl into a massive, churning whirlpool—also called the North Atlantic Gyre—that spins clockwise.

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

- A. these
- B. those
- C. them
- D. it

ID: 8832dddb Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is pronoun-antecedent agreement. The singular pronoun "it" agrees in number with the singular antecedent "water" and clearly indicates that the water swirls into a whirlpool.

Choice A is incorrect. The plural pronoun "these" neither agrees in number with the singular antecedent "water" nor clearly indicates that the water—not another plural noun in the sentence, such as "landmasses" or "winds"—swirls into a whirlpool. Choice B is incorrect. The plural pronoun "those" neither agrees in number with the singular antecedent "water" nor clearly indicates that the water—not another plural noun in the sentence, such as "landmasses" or "winds"—swirls into a whirlpool. Choice C is incorrect. The plural pronoun "them" neither agrees in number with the singular antecedent "water" nor clearly indicates that the water—not another plural noun in the sentence, such as "landmasses" or "winds"—swirls into a whirlpool.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 3cc73025

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 3cc73025

African American Percy Julian was a scientist and entrepreneur whose work helped people around the world to see. Named in 1999 as one of the greatest achievements by a US chemist in the past hundred years, _____ led to the first mass-produced treatment for glaucoma.

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

- A. Julian synthesized the alkaloid physostigmine in 1935; it
- B. in 1935 Julian synthesized the alkaloid physostigmine, which
- C. Julian’s 1935 synthesis of the alkaloid physostigmine
- D. the alkaloid physostigmine was synthesized by Julian in 1935 and

ID: 3cc73025 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-modifier placement. This choice makes the noun phrase “Julian’s 1935 synthesis” the subject of the sentence and places it immediately after the modifying phrase “named...years.” In doing so, this choice clearly establishes that Julian’s 1935 synthesis of the alkaloid physostigmine—and not another noun in the sentence—was named in 1999 as one of the greatest achievements by a US chemist in the past hundred years.

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the noun “Julian” immediately after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that Julian himself was named as one of the greatest achievements by a US chemist in the past hundred years. Choice B is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the prepositional phrase “in 1935” immediately after the modifying phrase illogically and confusingly suggests that “in 1935” was named as one of the greatest achievements by a US chemist in the past hundred years. Choice D is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the noun phrase “the alkaloid physostigmine” immediately after the modifying phrase illogically and confusingly suggests that the alkaloid physostigmine itself (not the synthesis of it) was named as one of the greatest achievements by a US chemist in the past hundred years.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 03c94899

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 03c94899

English poet and Shakespeare contemporary John Donne’s _____ much admired during his lifetime (1572–1631) and in the decades that followed, had, at the time of their enthusiastic rediscovery by the early twentieth-century modernists, been essentially gathering dust for the intervening 250 years.

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

- A. works were
- B. works, were
- C. works,
- D. works had been

ID: 03c94899 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of punctuation and verb forms within a sentence. This choice leaves the verb "admired" in its nonfinite past participle form to function within a supplementary element ("much...followed"). Offset by commas after "works" and "followed," this supplementary element interrupts the main clause ("English poet and Shakespeare contemporary John Donne’s works...had...been essentially gathering dust...") with additional information about the works’ reception during Donne’s lifetime.

Choice A is incorrect because it fails to offset the supplementary element ("much...followed") with appropriate punctuation, and using the finite verb "were much admired" results in an ungrammatical sentence. Choice B is incorrect because using the finite verb "were much admired" results in an ungrammatical sentence. Choice D is incorrect because it fails to offset the supplementary element ("much...followed") with appropriate punctuation, and using the finite verb "had been much admired" results in an ungrammatical sentence.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID fd088738

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: fd088738

Cheng Dang and her colleagues at the University of Washington recently ran simulations to determine the extent to which individual snow _____ affect the amount of light reflecting off a snowy surface.

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

- A. grain’s physical properties’
- B. grains’ physical properties
- C. grains’ physical property’s
- D. grains physical properties

ID: fd088738 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of plural and possessive nouns. The plural possessive noun “grains” and the plural noun “properties” correctly indicate that the simulations involved multiple snow grains and that those snow grains had several properties.

Choice A is incorrect because the context requires the plural possessive noun “grains” and the plural noun “properties,” not the singular possessive noun “grain’s” and the plural possessive noun “properties’.” Choice C is incorrect because the context requires the plural noun “properties,” not the singular possessive noun “property’s.” Choice D is incorrect because the context requires the plural possessive noun “grains’,” not the plural noun “grains.”

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID cafcd8ba

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: cafcd8ba

Author Madeline L’Engle, _____ to create a suspenseful tone that draws the reader in, begins her novel *A Wrinkle in Time* with descriptions of “wraithlike shadows” and “the frenzied lashing of the wind.”

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

- A. looked
- B. looks
- C. is looking
- D. looking

ID: cafcd8ba Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of verb forms within a sentence. The nonfinite present participle verb “looking” is correctly used to form a subordinate clause that describes the intent behind how L’Engle begins her novel.

Choice A is incorrect because the finite past tense verb “looked” can’t be used in this way to form a subordinate clause. Choice B is incorrect because the finite present tense verb “looks” can’t be used in this way to form a subordinate clause. Choice C is incorrect because the finite present progressive tense verb “is looking” can’t be used in this way to form a subordinate clause.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID c1e1b8f8

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: c1e1b8f8

When a given industry—water and electricity are two well-known examples—carries high infrastructural start-up costs and other barriers that discourage competition, _____ of just one or two suppliers per municipality. Such industries are known as natural monopolies.

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

- A. these often consist
- B. they often consist
- C. it often consists
- D. this often consists

ID: c1e1b8f8 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is pronoun-antecedent agreement. The singular pronoun "it" agrees in number with the singular antecedent "industry" and clearly indicates that the industry consists of just one or two suppliers per municipality.

Choice A is incorrect. The plural pronoun "these" neither agrees in number with the singular antecedent "industry" nor clearly indicates that the industry—not another plural noun in the sentence, such as "start-up costs" or "barriers"—consists of just one or two suppliers per municipality. Choice B is incorrect because the plural pronoun "they" doesn't agree in number with the singular antecedent "industry." Choice D is incorrect because the singular pronoun "this" is ambiguous in this context; the resulting sentence leaves unclear what consists of just one or two suppliers per municipality.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID f6704bc7

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: f6704bc7

Supported by biochemical analyses of over 2,000 skeletons from the Middle Ages, _____

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

- A. vegetables and grains were, a 2022 study found, the primary components of early medieval rulers’ diets.
- B. early medieval rulers’ diets were found, in a 2022 study, to have primarily consisted of vegetables and grains.
- C. the primary components of early medieval rulers’ diets were vegetables and grains, according to a 2022 study.
- D. findings from a 2022 study suggested that vegetables and grains were the primary components of early medieval rulers’ diets.

ID: f6704bc7 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-modifier placement. This choice makes the noun phrase "findings from a 2022 study" the subject of the sentence and places it immediately after the modifying phrase "supported...Ages." In doing so, this choice clearly establishes that the findings—and not another noun in the sentence—are supported by the biochemical analyses.

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of "vegetables and grains" immediately after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that vegetables and grains are supported by biochemical analyses. Choice B is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of "early medieval rulers’ diets" immediately after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that the rulers’ diets are supported by biochemical analyses. Choice C is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of "the primary components" immediately after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that the primary components are supported by biochemical analyses.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 2d9816c9

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 2d9816c9

Professional American football player Fred Cox invented one of the world’s most popular toys. In the 1970s, he came up with the idea for the Nerf football, which _____ of the harder and heavier regulation football.

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

- A. were a smaller, foam version
- B. are smaller, foam versions
- C. were smaller, foam versions
- D. is a smaller, foam version

ID: 2d9816c9 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-verb agreement and agreement between nouns. The singular verb “is” and the singular noun “version” both agree in number with the relative pronoun “which.” In this context, “which” functions as a singular subject because it refers to the singular noun “the Nerf football.”

Choice A is incorrect because the plural verb “were” doesn’t agree in number with the singular noun phrase “the Nerf football” that it’s modifying. Choice B is incorrect because the plural verb “are” and the plural noun “versions” don’t agree in number with the singular noun phrase “the Nerf football” that they’re modifying. Choice C is incorrect because the plural verb “were” and the plural noun “versions” don’t agree in number with the singular noun phrase “the Nerf football” that they’re modifying.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 29427be9

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 29427be9

American abstract artist Richard _____ his installations to make passersby keenly aware of how one’s movements are affected by the physical features of one’s environment, assembles large-scale steel plates into sculptures that dominate the outdoor spaces they occupy.

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

- A. Serra is intending
- B. Serra, intends
- C. Serra, intending
- D. Serra intends

ID: 29427be9 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of verb forms within a sentence. This choice pairs the comma after "Serra" with the comma after "environment" and uses the nonfinite present participle "intending" to correctly form a supplementary phrase describing the reaction Serra intends his sculptures to provoke. This supplementary phrase appears between the noun phrase that it modifies ("American abstract artist Richard Serra") and the finite present tense verb ("assembles"), which functions as the sentence’s main verb and describes what Serra does.

Choice A is incorrect because it results in an ungrammatical sentence. The finite present continuous tense verb "is intending" can’t be used in this way in conjunction with the finite present tense verb "assembles," which already functions as the main verb in the sentence. Choice B is incorrect because it results in an ungrammatical sentence. The finite present tense verb "intends" can’t be used in this way to supplement the noun phrase "American abstract artist Richard Serra." Choice D is incorrect because it results in an ungrammatical sentence. The finite present tense verb "intends" can’t be used in this way in conjunction with the finite present tense verb "assembles," which already functions as the main verb in the sentence.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 359d139a

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 359d139a

Featuring jagged peaks of black ink surrounded by hazy swirls of blue and green paint, Zhang Daqian’s 1983 painting *Panorama of Mount Lu* is inspired by the tradition of *qinglü shanshui*, a type of Chinese landscape painting _____ by the use of blue and green hues to depict ethereal, otherworldly landscapes.

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

- A. has been characterized
- B. will be characterized
- C. characterized
- D. is characterized

ID: 359d139a Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of verb forms within a sentence. The nonfinite past participle "characterized" is correctly used within a supplementary element that modifies the main clause "Zhang...*shanshui*," defining *qinglü shanshui* and explaining some of its identifying traits.

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. Using the finite present perfect tense verb "has been characterized" creates a second main clause in the sentence, and the two main clauses can’t be joined in this way by only the comma before "a type." Choice B is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. Using the finite future tense verb "will be characterized" creates a second main clause in the sentence, and the two main clauses can’t be joined in this way by only the comma before "a type." Choice D is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. Using the finite present tense verb "is characterized" creates a second main clause in the sentence, and the two main clauses can’t be joined in this way by only the comma before "a type."

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 44e1ddc0

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 44e1ddc0

The soundtrack to Mira Nair’s 1991 film *Mississippi Masala* expressively captures the clashing of cultures that happens when _____ (a young Indian woman from Uganda and a young African American man from Mississippi) meet. Featured throughout the film are songs from Uganda’s Afrigo Band, the Indian composer L. Subramaniam, and the Mississippi blues musician Sam Chatmon.

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

- A. it’s two protagonists
- B. its two protagonist’s
- C. it’s two protagonist’s
- D. its two protagonists

ID: 44e1ddc0 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The conventions being tested are the use of possessive determiners and the use of plural nouns. The singular possessive determiner "its"—which agrees in number with the singular noun phrase "Mira Nair’s 1991 film *Mississippi Masala*"—and the plural noun "protagonists" correctly indicate that Nair’s film has multiple protagonists.

Choice A is incorrect because "it’s" is the contraction for "it is," not a possessive determiner. Choice B is incorrect because the context requires the plural noun "protagonists," not the singular possessive noun "protagonist’s." Choice C is incorrect because the context requires the possessive determiner "its" and the plural noun "protagonists," not the contraction "it’s" or the singular possessive noun "protagonist’s."

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID e61ed6ff

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: e61ed6ff

During a 2022 expedition led by research zoologist Andrea Quattrini, scientists discovered a new species of black coral off the coast of Puerto Rico. Like other black corals, the newly discovered species, which they named *Aphanipathes puertoricensis*, has coiled branching structures that _____ it survive in the deep sea.

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

- A. has helped
- B. helps
- C. helping
- D. help

ID: e61ed6ff Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of verb forms within a sentence. The plural verb “help” provides the relative clause beginning with “that” with a finite verb and agrees in number with the plural subject “coiled branching structures.”

Choice A is incorrect because the singular verb “has helped” doesn’t agree in number with the plural subject “coiled branching structures.” Choice B is incorrect because the singular verb “helps” doesn’t agree in number with the plural subject “coiled branching structures.” Choice C is incorrect because it results in an ungrammatical sentence. The nonfinite participle “helping” doesn’t supply a finite verb to the relative clause beginning with “that.”

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 200574b9

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 200574b9

Instead of sleeping on soft pillows, ancient Egyptians slept on hard, elevated headrests, their design _____ airflow, protection from insects, and hairstyle maintenance over comfort.

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

- A. had prioritized
- B. was prioritizing
- C. prioritized
- D. prioritizing

ID: 200574b9 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of verb forms within a sentence. The nonfinite present participle “prioritizing” is correctly used to form a supplementary element that modifies “their design,” describing what the headrests’ design prioritized.

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. The finite past perfect verb “had prioritized” creates a second main clause in the sentence, and the comma after “headrests” can’t be used in this way to join two main clauses. Choice B is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. The finite past progressive verb “was prioritizing” creates a second main clause in the sentence, and the comma after “headrests” can’t be used in this way to join two main clauses. Choice C is incorrect because it results in a comma splice. The finite past tense verb “prioritized” creates a second main clause in the sentence, and the comma after “headrests” can’t be used in this way to join two main clauses.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID e88b05e7

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: e88b05e7

If an animal can recognize itself in a reflective surface (“the mirror test”), it is considered to have self-awareness. In a recent study, scientists _____ for evidence of self-awareness in snakes, species that rely primarily on olfactory rather than visual processing, adapted the test to foreground smell, modifying the scent trails of North American eastern garter snakes and African ball pythons.

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

- A. searched
- B. searching
- C. were searching
- D. have searched

ID: e88b05e7 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of verb forms within a sentence. The nonfinite present participle “searching” is correctly used to form a supplementary element that modifies the subject “scientists,” indicating that the scientists who adapted the test were looking for evidence of self-awareness in snakes.

Choice A is incorrect because it results in an ungrammatical sentence. The finite past tense verb “searched” can’t be used in this way to form a supplementary element that indicates what evidence the scientists who adapted the test were looking for. Choice C is incorrect because it results in an ungrammatical sentence. The finite past progressive verb “were searching” can’t be used in this way to form a supplementary element that indicates what evidence the scientists who adapted the test were looking for. Choice D is incorrect because it results in an ungrammatical sentence. The finite present perfect verb “have searched” can’t be used in this way to form a supplementary element that indicates what evidence the scientists who adapted the test were looking for.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 1d24a21e

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 1d24a21e

In assessing the films of Japanese director Akira Kurosawa, _____ have missed his equally deep engagement with Japanese artistic traditions such as Noh theater.

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

- A. many critics have focused on Kurosawa’s use of Western literary sources but
- B. Kurosawa’s use of Western literary sources has been the focus of many critics, who
- C. there are many critics who have focused on Kurosawa’s use of Western literary sources, but they
- D. the focus of many critics has been on Kurosawa’s use of Western literary sources; they

ID: 1d24a21e Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-modifier placement. This choice makes the noun phrase “many critics” the subject of the sentence and places it immediately after the modifying phrase “in assessing...Kurosawa.” In doing so, this choice clearly establishes that it is the critics—and not another noun in the sentence—who assess Kurosawa’s films.

Choice B is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the noun phrase “Kurosawa’s...sources” immediately after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that his use of Western literary sources is what assesses Kurosawa’s films. Choice C is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the function word “there” immediately after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that “there” is what assesses Kurosawa’s films. Choice D is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the noun phrase “the focus...critics” immediately after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that the critics’ focus is what assesses Kurosawa’s films.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 439dd708

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 439dd708

During the American Civil War, Thomas Morris Chester braved the front lines as a war correspondent for the *Philadelphia Press*. Amplifying the voices and experiences of Black soldiers _____ of particular importance to Chester, who later became an activist and lawyer during the postwar Reconstruction period.

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

- A. were
- B. have been
- C. are
- D. was

ID: 439dd708 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-verb agreement. The singular verb "was" agrees in number with the singular subject "amplifying." Gerunds such as "amplifying" are always singular.

Choice A is incorrect because the plural verb "were" doesn't agree in number with the singular subject "amplifying." Choice B is incorrect because the plural verb "have been" doesn't agree in number with the singular subject "amplifying." Choice C is incorrect because the plural verb "are" doesn't agree in number with the singular subject "amplifying."

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID aa2641ca

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: aa2641ca

Established in 1936 by African American novelist Richard Wright, _____ it would become a vital part of the creative movement known as the Chicago Black Renaissance.

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

- A. the South Side Writers Group provided a valuable forum for Chicago writers to share ideas;
- B. Chicago writers in the South Side Writers Group had a valuable forum for sharing ideas;
- C. writers shared ideas at a valuable forum known as the South Side Writers Group in Chicago;
- D. Chicago was where the South Side Writers Group provided a valuable forum for writers to share ideas;

ID: aa2641ca Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-modifier placement. This choice makes the noun phrase “the South Side Writers Group” the subject of the sentence and places it immediately after the modifying phrase “established in 1936 by African American novelist Richard Wright.” In doing so, this choice clearly indicates that the South Side Writers Group—and not another noun in the sentence—was established in 1936 by Richard Wright.

Choice B is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the noun phrase “Chicago writers” immediately after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that the Chicago writers were established in 1936 by Richard Wright. Choice C is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the noun phrase “writers” immediately after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that the writers were established in 1936 by Richard Wright. Choice D is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the noun phrase “Chicago” immediately after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that Chicago was established in 1936 by Richard Wright.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 0306371f

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 0306371f

A species of *Byropsis* algae produces toxins to avoid being eaten by predators. However, in some cases, the toxins the organism uses to protect itself from predation actually _____ its attractiveness to predators. The Hawaiian sea slug, for example, not only tolerates *Byropsis* toxins but actually uses them for protection in the same way the algae does.

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

- A. is increasing
- B. increase
- C. increases
- D. has increased

ID: 0306371f Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-verb agreement. The plural verb "increase" agrees in number with the plural subject "toxins."

Choice A is incorrect because the singular verb "is increasing" doesn't agree in number with the plural subject "toxins." Choice C is incorrect because the singular verb "increases" doesn't agree in number with the plural subject "toxins." Choice D is incorrect because the singular verb "has increased" doesn't agree in number with the plural subject "toxins."

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 3879c2f3

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 3879c2f3

In her 1983 book *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*, sociologist Arlie Russell Hochschild first explored at length her conception of a “sociology of emotions”—the idea that the various cultural and ideological frameworks a person has internalized (class, gender, political affiliation, etc.) _____ each emotional reaction that person has within a situation.

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

- A. underlies
- B. is underlying
- C. underlie
- D. has been underlying

ID: 3879c2f3 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-verb agreement. The plural verb "underlie" agrees in number with the plural subject "frameworks."

Choice A is incorrect because the singular verb "underlies" doesn't agree in number with the plural subject "frameworks." Choice B is incorrect because the singular verb "is underlying" doesn't agree in number with the plural subject "frameworks." Choice D is incorrect because the singular verb "has been underlying" doesn't agree in number with the plural subject "frameworks."

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID f170a512

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: f170a512

Solarpunk is an art movement that imagines renewable energy–powered technology infused complementarily into nature. In Paolo Bacigalupi’s solarpunk short story “Efficiency,” an artificial intelligence that absorbs sustainable energies, redistributing them through intricate networks of weights and generators, _____ Chicago’s energy grid.

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

- A. have been powering
- B. power
- C. powers
- D. are powering

ID: f170a512 Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-verb agreement. The singular verb "powers" agrees in number with the singular subject "an artificial intelligence."

Choice A is incorrect because the plural verb "have been powering" doesn’t agree in number with the singular subject "an artificial intelligence." Choice B is incorrect because the plural verb "power" doesn’t agree in number with the singular subject "an artificial intelligence." Choice D is incorrect because the plural verb "are powering" doesn’t agree in number with the singular subject "an artificial intelligence."

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID b7d115d4

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: b7d115d4

Woven from recycled yarn and hand tufted using a carpet weaving technique passed down by the artist’s Turkish grandmother, _____ so lush and tactilely inviting that you are tempted to reach out and touch them.

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

- A. the topological tapestries of Argentine textile artist Alexandra Kehayoglou are
- B. the Argentine textile artist Alexandra Kehayoglou creates topological tapestries that are
- C. when she creates her topological tapestries, Argentine textile artist Alexandra Kehayoglou makes them
- D. Alexandra Kehayoglou is an Argentine textile artist whose topological tapestries are

ID: b7d115d4 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-modifier placement. This choice makes the noun phrase "topological tapestries" the subject of the sentence and places it immediately after the modifying phrase "woven...grandmother." In doing so, this choice clearly establishes that the topological tapestries—and not another noun in the sentence—are being described as woven from recycled yarn and hand tufted.

Choice B is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the noun phrase "Argentine textile artist Alexandra Kehayoglou" immediately after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that Kehayoglou is woven from recycled yarn and hand tufted. Choice C is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the pronoun "she" and the noun phrase "Argentine textile artist Alexandra Kehayoglou" after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that Kehayoglou is woven from recycled yarn and hand tufted. Choice D is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the noun "Alexandra Kehayoglou" immediately after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that Kehayoglou is woven from recycled yarn and hand tufted.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 31255f5e

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 31255f5e

Unique among animal species, humans use our vocal apparatuses primarily for two separate communicative purposes: to talk and to sing. The question of what cross-cultural traits distinguish these distinct modes, and secondarily what pressures led humans to develop them in the first place, _____ neuropsychologist Daniela Sammler’s 2024 study “Signatures of Speech and Song: ‘Universal’ Links despite Cultural Diversity.”

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

- A. animates
- B. have animated
- C. animate
- D. animating

ID: 31255f5e Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-verb agreement. The singular verb "animates" agrees in number with the singular subject "question." Choice B is incorrect because the plural verb "have animated" doesn’t agree in number with the singular subject "question." Choice C is incorrect because the plural verb "animate" doesn’t agree in number with the singular subject "question." Choice D is incorrect because it results in an ungrammatical sentence. The nonfinite participle "animating" doesn’t supply the clause with a finite verb.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 25345c56

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 25345c56

A model created by biologist Luis Valente predicts that the rate of speciation—the rate at which new species form—on an isolated island located approximately 5,000 kilometers from the nearest mainland _____ triple the rate of speciation on an island only 500 kilometers from the mainland.

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

- A. being
- B. to be
- C. to have been
- D. will be

ID: 25345c56 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is finite and nonfinite verb forms within a sentence. Relative clauses, such as the one beginning with “that,” require a finite verb, a verb that can function as the main verb of a clause. This choice correctly supplies the clause with the finite future tense verb “will be.”

Choice A is incorrect because the nonfinite participle “being” doesn’t supply the clause with a finite verb. Choice B is incorrect because the nonfinite to-infinitive “to be” doesn’t supply the clause with a finite verb. Choice C is incorrect because the nonfinite to-infinitive “to have been” doesn’t supply the clause with a finite verb.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 10f20645

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 10f20645

Artist Yto Barrada’s exhibition *Ways to Baffle the Wind* incorporates sculptures, textiles, and films. Barrada’s pieces, utilizing elements as disparate as plant-dyed fabrics, wire crab traps filled with stones, and cotton balls dangling above a fan, _____ the ways humans attempt to organize and regulate nature.

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

- A. explore
- B. has explored
- C. explores
- D. exploring

ID: 10f20645 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-verb agreement. The plural verb “explore” agrees in number with the plural subject “Barrada’s pieces.”

Choice B is incorrect because the singular verb phrase “has explored” doesn’t agree in number with the plural subject “Barrada’s pieces.” Choice C is incorrect because the singular verb “explores” doesn’t agree in number with the plural subject “Barrada’s pieces.” Choice D is incorrect because the nonfinite participle “exploring” doesn’t supply the main clause with a finite verb.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID b54d5f32

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: b54d5f32

It can take time for proposed amendments to the US Constitution to become law. For example, the Twenty-Second Amendment, which limits the number of _____ can serve, was first proposed in 1947 but wasn't approved by the required three-fourths majority of state legislatures until 1951.

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

- A. terms presidents
- B. term's presidents
- C. term's president's
- D. terms president's

ID: b54d5f32 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of plural nouns. The plural nouns "terms" and "presidents" correctly indicate that the amendment involves multiple terms and applies to presidents in general.

Choice B is incorrect because the context requires the plural noun "terms," not the singular possessive noun "term's." Choice C is incorrect because the context requires the plural nouns "terms" and "presidents," not the singular possessive nouns "term's" and "president's." Choice D is incorrect because the context requires the plural noun "presidents," not the singular possessive noun "president's."

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID a2074e21

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: a2074e21

Ten of William Shakespeare’s plays are classified as histories. Although each one of these plays, which include *Henry V* and *Richard III*, _____ on a single historical figure (specifically, an English king), some, such as *Henry VI Part One* and *Henry VI Part Two*, feature different episodes from the same monarch’s life.

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

- A. focuses
- B. focus
- C. are focused
- D. were focused

ID: a2074e21 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-verb agreement. The singular verb “focuses” agrees in number with the singular subject “each one of these plays.” While the prepositional phrase “of these plays” within the subject contains a plural noun, the head of the subject (“each one”) is singular, indicating that each individual play focuses on a single historical figure.

Choice B is incorrect because the plural verb “focus” doesn’t agree in number with the singular subject “each one of these plays.” Choice C is incorrect because the plural verb “are focused” doesn’t agree in number with the singular subject “each one of these plays.” Choice D is incorrect because the plural verb “were focused” doesn’t agree in number with the singular subject “each one of these plays.”

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID cddb4183

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: cddb4183

A government body officially known as the Althing, _____

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

- A. the world’s oldest parliaments include one which first met in 930 CE, Iceland’s.
- B. Iceland’s parliament is one of the oldest in the world, first meeting in 930 CE.
- C. the first meeting of one of the oldest parliaments in the world, Iceland’s, was in 930 CE.
- D. 930 CE was the year when Iceland’s parliament, one of the oldest parliaments in the world, first met.

ID: cddb4183 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-modifier placement. This choice makes the noun phrase "Iceland’s parliament" the subject of the sentence and places it immediately after the modifying phrase "a government body officially known as the Althing." In doing so, this choice clearly establishes that Iceland’s parliament—and not another noun in the sentence—is the government body known as the Althing.

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the noun phrase "the world’s oldest parliaments" immediately after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that the world’s oldest parliaments are a government body known as the Althing. Choice C is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the noun phrase "the first meeting" immediately after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that the first meeting of Iceland’s parliament was a government body known as the Althing. Choice D is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the noun phrase "930 CE" immediately after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that the year 930 CE is a government body known as the Althing.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 944f7c2e

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 944f7c2e

In the list “Adorable Things” from Sei Shōnagon’s *Pillow Book*, the author delights in baby sparrows, a face drawn on a melon, and a young courtier in ceremonial garb. So shrewd an observer is Shōnagon, a lady-in-waiting to Empress Teishi, that her book’s musings on tenth-century Japanese courtly life _____ readers a thousand years later.

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

- A. fascinate
- B. has fascinated
- C. fascinates
- D. is fascinating

ID: 944f7c2e Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-verb agreement. The plural verb "fascinate" agrees in number with the plural subject "musings."

Choice B is incorrect because the singular verb "has fascinated" doesn’t agree in number with the plural subject "musings." Choice C is incorrect because the singular verb "fascinates" doesn’t agree in number with the plural subject "musings." Choice D is incorrect because the singular verb "is fascinating" doesn’t agree in number with the plural subject "musings."

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID d07e1039

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: d07e1039

Researchers studying the “terra-cotta army,” the thousands of life-size statues of warriors found interred near the tomb of Emperor Qin Shi Huang of China, were shocked to realize that the shape of each statue’s ears, like the shape of each person’s ears, _____ unique.

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

- A. are
- B. is
- C. were
- D. have been

ID: d07e1039 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-verb agreement. The singular verb "is" agrees in number with the singular subject "the shape."

Choice A is incorrect because the plural verb "are" doesn’t agree in number with the singular subject "the shape." Choice C is incorrect because the plural verb "were" doesn’t agree in number with the singular subject "the shape." Choice D is incorrect because the plural verb "have been" doesn’t agree in number with the singular subject "the shape."

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 1f5f78ec

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 1f5f78ec

In Death Valley National Park’s Racetrack Playa, a flat, dry lakebed, are 162 rocks—some weighing less than a pound but others almost 700 pounds—that move periodically from place to place, seemingly of their own volition. Racetrack-like trails in the _____ mysterious migration.

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

- A. playas sediment mark the rock’s
- B. playa’s sediment mark the rocks
- C. playa’s sediment mark the rocks’
- D. playas’ sediment mark the rocks’

ID: 1f5f78ec Answer

Correct Answer: C

Rationale

Choice C is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of plural and possessive nouns. The singular possessive noun “playa’s” and the plural possessive noun “rocks’” correctly indicate that the sediment is that of one playa (the Racetrack Playa) and that there are multiple rocks that have mysteriously migrated across the sediment.

Choice A is incorrect because the context requires the singular possessive noun “playa’s” and the plural possessive noun “rocks’,” not the plural noun “playas” and the singular possessive noun “rock’s.” Choice B is incorrect because the context requires the plural possessive noun “rocks’,” not the plural noun “rocks.” Choice D is incorrect because the context requires the singular possessive noun “playa’s,” not the plural possessive noun “playas’.”

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID d3c331b0

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: d3c331b0

Star actress Kiki Omeili, who has appeared in 47 Nollywood films, is one of numerous luminaries to be pictured in Nigerian portraitist Iké Udé’s exhibition *Nollywood Portraits*. _____ referred to Nollywood—Nigeria’s \$3 billion film industry—as “Africa’s vivid mirror par excellence,” honors its legacy with his vivid classical portraits of Omeili and her peers.

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

- A. Udé, has
- B. Udé has
- C. Udé
- D. Udé, having

ID: d3c331b0 Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of verb forms and punctuation within a sentence. The sentence’s subject is “Udé,” and its finite main verb is “honors.” This choice correctly uses the nonfinite participle “having referred” to form a supplementary element (“having...excellence”) describing Udé. The comma after “Udé” appropriately marks the boundary before that supplementary element.

Choice A is incorrect because using the finite verb “has referred” creates an ungrammatical sentence. The sentence already has the finite main verb “honors,” so “has referred” can’t also function as a second main verb here without additional punctuation or conjunctions. Moreover, no punctuation is needed when a subject (“Udé”) is immediately followed by a finite verb (“has referred”). Choice B is incorrect because using the finite verb “has referred” creates an ungrammatical sentence. The sentence already has the finite main verb “honors,” so “has referred” can’t also function as a second main verb here without additional punctuation or conjunctions. Choice C is incorrect because using the finite verb “referred” creates an ungrammatical sentence. The sentence already has the finite main verb “honors,” so “referred” can’t also function as a second main verb here without additional punctuation or conjunctions.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID d1c65571

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: d1c65571

Far from being modern inventions, _____ more than 5,000 years ago.

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

- A. Sumerians in ancient Mesopotamia used drinking straws
- B. drinking straws were used by Sumerians in ancient Mesopotamia
- C. the use of drinking straws by Sumerians in ancient Mesopotamia happened
- D. ancient Mesopotamia was home to Sumerians who used drinking straws

ID: d1c65571 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. Modifiers and their subjects must go next to each other. The modifier “far from being modern inventions” must be describing “drinking straws,” because those are the only possible inventions in this sentence.

Choice A is incorrect. Modifiers and their subjects must go next to each other. The modifier “far from being modern inventions” can’t be describing “Sumerians,” because they are a group of people, not an invention. Choice C is incorrect. Modifiers and their subjects must go next to each other. The modifier “far from being modern inventions” can’t be describing “the use of drinking straws,” because it is not “the use” of drinking straws that is an invention—it is the drinking straws themselves. Choice D is incorrect. Modifiers and their subjects must go next to each other. The modifier “far from being modern inventions” can’t be describing “Ancient Mesopotamia,” because that is a place, not an invention.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID fa025ecf

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: fa025ecf

Tracy Fullerton’s *Walden, a game*, an unlikely fusion of the writings of nineteenth-century transcendentalist Henry David Thoreau with today’s open-world video games, _____ players to explore a digital version of Walden Pond, the idyllic natural setting featured in Thoreau’s book *Walden*.

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

- A. invites
- B. invite
- C. are inviting
- D. have invited

ID: fa025ecf Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-verb agreement. The singular verb “invites” agrees in number with the singular subject “Tracy Fullerton’s *Walden, a game*.”

Choice B is incorrect because the plural verb “invite” doesn’t agree in number with the singular subject “Tracy Fullerton’s *Walden, a game*.” Choice C is incorrect because the plural verb “are inviting” doesn’t agree in number with the singular subject “Tracy Fullerton’s *Walden, a game*.” Choice D is incorrect because the plural verb “have invited” doesn’t agree in number with the singular subject “Tracy Fullerton’s *Walden, a game*.”

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 9544af6a

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 9544af6a

Tortoises can be found in many works of literature. For example, in Tom Stoppard's 1993 play *Arcadia*, there is a tortoise that _____ by two names (Plautus and Lightning) and appears in both of the play's parallel timelines. As a character, the tortoise symbolizes the connection between the past and present.

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

- A. goes
- B. will have gone
- C. went
- D. had gone

ID: 9544af6a Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of verbs to express tense in a sentence. In this choice, the present tense verb "goes" is consistent with the other present tense verbs ("appears" and "symbolizes") used to describe the tortoise in Stoppard's play. Furthermore, it's conventional to use the present tense when discussing a literary work.

Choice B is incorrect because the future perfect tense verb "will have gone" isn't consistent with the other present tense verbs used to describe the tortoise in Stoppard's play. Choice C is incorrect because the past tense verb "went" isn't consistent with the other present tense verbs used to describe the tortoise in Stoppard's play. Choice D is incorrect because the past perfect tense verb "had gone" isn't consistent with the other present tense verbs used to describe the tortoise in Stoppard's play.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID fe93e03f

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: fe93e03f

The Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI), a commonly used measure of competition between companies in a particular market, ranges from a score of zero to 10,000 points. Compared with that of a highly concentrated market—that is, a market controlled by very few companies—_____

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

- A. a market that is less concentrated will have a much lower HHI score.
- B. the HHI score of a less concentrated market will be much lower.
- C. when a market is less concentrated, its HHI score will be much lower.
- D. a less concentrated market will have an HHI score that is much lower.

ID: fe93e03f Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-modifier placement. This choice makes the noun phrase "the HHI...market" the subject of the sentence and places it immediately after the modifying phrase "compared...market." In doing so, this choice clearly establishes that the HHI score of a less concentrated market—and not another noun in the sentence—is being compared with the HHI score of a highly concentrated market.

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of "a market that is less concentrated" immediately after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that a market is being compared with an HHI score. Choice C is incorrect because it results in a confusing, illogical sentence. The placement of the modifier "when a market is less concentrated" after "a highly concentrated market" is contradictory. Furthermore, it's ambiguous what "its" is referring to in "its HHI score," resulting in an illogical comparison. Choice D is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of "a less concentrated market" immediately after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that a market is being compared with an HHI score.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID d8530372

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: d8530372

Oglala Lakota poet Layli Long Soldier’s star quilt poems offer an unusually open-ended reading experience. With _____ eight panels of text stitched together in the shape of a traditional eight-pointed Lakota star quilt, the poems present viewers with a seemingly infinite number of ways to read them.

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

- A. their
- B. it’s
- C. they’re
- D. its

ID: d8530372 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of possessive determiners. The plural possessive determiner "their" agrees in number with the plural noun "the poems," thus indicating that the poems had eight panels of text stitched together in the shape of a traditional eight-pointed Lakota star quilt.

Choice B is incorrect because "it’s" is the contraction for "it is" or "it has," not a possessive determiner. Choice C is incorrect because "they’re" is the contraction for "they are," not a possessive determiner. Choice D is incorrect because the singular possessive determiner "its" doesn’t agree in number with the plural noun "the poems."

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID f71697d7

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: f71697d7

In January 1776, Thomas Paine published *Common Sense*, an appeal for freedom from the British monarchy that famously helped ignite the desire for independence among the American colonists. After the colonies achieved their independence, Paine moved to Paris, where the provocative _____ would contribute to another revolution—the French Revolution.

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

- A. authors political writings
- B. author’s political writings
- C. author’s political writing’s
- D. authors’ political writings’

ID: f71697d7 Answer

Correct Answer: B

Rationale

Choice B is the best answer. The conventions being tested are the use of plural and possessive nouns. The singular possessive noun "author’s" correctly indicates that the political writings are those of Thomas Paine, and the plural noun "writings" correctly indicates that multiple works by Paine are being discussed.

Choice A is incorrect because the context requires the singular possessive noun "author’s," not the plural noun "authors." Choice C is incorrect because the context requires the plural noun "writings," not the singular possessive noun "writing’s." Choice D is incorrect because the context requires the singular possessive noun "author’s" and the plural noun "writings," not the plural possessive nouns "authors'" and "writings'."

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID ce80743f

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: ce80743f

Wanting to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Alaska Purchase, _____ up with a motto that best captured the state’s unique character. The commission selected “North to the Future,” submitted by Juneau journalist Richard Peter, as its winning entry.

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

- A. a contest sponsored by the Alaska Centennial Commission would award \$300 to an individual who came
- B. an award of \$300 would go to an individual in a contest sponsored by the Alaska Centennial Commission for coming
- C. \$300 would be awarded to an individual by the Alaska Centennial Commission in a contest for coming
- D. the Alaska Centennial Commission sponsored a contest that would award \$300 to an individual who came

ID: ce80743f Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-modifier placement. This choice makes the noun phrase "the Alaska Centennial Commission" the subject of the sentence and places it immediately after the modifying phrase "wanting... Purchase." In doing so, this choice clearly establishes that the Alaska Centennial Commission—and not another noun in the sentence—wanted to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Alaska Purchase.

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the noun phrase "a contest" immediately after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that the contest wanted to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Alaska Purchase. Choice B is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the noun phrase "an award of \$300" immediately after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that the award of \$300 wanted to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Alaska Purchase. Choice C is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the noun phrase "\$300" immediately after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that the \$300 wanted to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Alaska Purchase.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID d8dd0668

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: d8dd0668

In 1966, Emmett Ashford became the first African American to umpire a Major League Baseball game. His energetic gestures announcing when a player had struck out and his habit of barreling after a hit ball to see if it would land out of _____ transform the traditionally solemn umpire role into a dynamic one.

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

- A. bounds helped
- B. bounds, helping
- C. bounds that helped
- D. bounds to help

ID: d8dd0668 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is finite verb use in a main clause. A main clause requires a finite verb to perform the action of the subject (in this case, Ashford’s “gestures” and “habit”), and this choice supplies the finite past tense verb “helped” to indicate what Ashford’s gestures and habit helped accomplish.

Choice B is incorrect because the non-finite participle “helping” doesn’t supply the main clause with a finite verb. Choice C is incorrect because the relative clause “that helped” doesn’t supply the main clause with a finite verb. Choice D is incorrect because the non-finite to-infinitive “to help” doesn’t supply the main clause with a finite verb.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID ee06fd88

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: ee06fd88

Recent pollen analyses of the Aran Islands have led some researchers to propose that the now treeless islands were once wooded. This hypothesis _____ that certain trees, such as *P. sylvestris*, survived without interruption or human intervention throughout the Holocene cannot stand, researchers Michael O’Connell and Karen Molloy counter, unless other explanations can first be ruled out.

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

- A. suggesting
- B. suggested
- C. suggests
- D. has suggested

ID: ee06fd88 Answer

Correct Answer: A

Rationale

Choice A is the best answer. The convention being tested is the use of verb forms within a sentence. The nonfinite present participle "suggesting" is correctly used to form a restrictive participial phrase ("suggesting...Holocene") within the main clause ("This hypothesis...cannot stand..."). This participial phrase functions as part of the sentence’s subject ("This...Holocene"), providing essential identifying information about what the hypothesis states—namely, that certain trees survived without interruption or human intervention throughout the Holocene.

Choice B is incorrect because it results in an ungrammatical sentence. The finite verb "suggested" can’t be used in this way within the subject of the sentence. Choice C is incorrect because it results in an ungrammatical sentence. The finite verb "suggests" can’t be used in this way within the subject of the sentence. Choice D is incorrect because it results in an ungrammatical sentence. The finite verb "has suggested" can’t be used in this way within the subject of the sentence.

Question Difficulty: Hard

Question ID 3a1b783b

Assessment	Test	Domain	Skill	Difficulty
PSAT 8/9	Reading and Writing	Standard English Conventions	Form, Structure, and Sense	

ID: 3a1b783b

Forming extensive networks via mycorrhizal association—that is, a symbiotic relationship between plants and fungi—_____

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

- A. it is the entanglement of pine trees’ roots and the fungus *Tricholoma matsutake*’s fungal hyphae that makes nutrient transport possible.
- B. the transport of nutrients is possible through the entanglement of pine trees’ roots and the fungus *Tricholoma matsutake*’s fungal hyphae.
- C. nutrients can be transported through the entanglement of pine trees’ roots and the fungus *Tricholoma matsutake*’s fungal hyphae.
- D. pine trees and the fungus *Tricholoma matsutake* can transport nutrients through their entangled tree roots and fungal hyphae.

ID: 3a1b783b Answer

Correct Answer: D

Rationale

Choice D is the best answer. The convention being tested is subject-modifier placement. This choice makes the noun phrase "pine trees and the fungus *Tricholoma matsutake*" the subject of the sentence and places it immediately after the modifying phrase "forming...association." In doing so, this choice clearly establishes that the pine trees and fungus—and not another noun in the sentence—are forming the networks.

Choice A is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of the it-cleft "it is" immediately after the modifying phrase illogically and confusingly suggests that "it" is forming extensive networks. Furthermore, it’s not conventional to follow a long introductory modifying element with an it-cleft construction because it results in an unnecessarily wordy and confusing sentence, such as this. Choice B is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of "the transport of nutrients" immediately after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that the transport of nutrients is forming extensive networks. Choice C is incorrect because it results in a dangling modifier. The placement of "nutrients" immediately after the modifying phrase illogically suggests that nutrients are forming extensive networks.

Question Difficulty: Hard