SAT Timed Practice*: Writing

*These practice questions are designed to be taken within the specified time period without interruption in order to simulate an actual SAT section as much as possible.
Directions: For each question in this section, select the best answer from among the choices given and fill in the corresponding circle on the answer sheet.

The following sentences test correctness and effectiveness of expression. Part of each sentence or the entire sentence is underlined; beneath each sentence are five ways of phrasing the underlined material. Choice A repeats the original phrasing; the other four choices are different. If you think the original phrasing produces a better sentence than any of the alternatives, select Choice A; if not, select one of the other choices.

In making your choices, follow the requirements of standard written English; that is, pay attention to grammar, choice of words, sentence construction, and punctuation. Your selection should result in the most effective sentence – clear and precise, without awkwardness or ambiguity.

1. Mrs. Williams loves teaching biology, it is one of her favorite subjects.
   (A) biology, it
   (B) biology, which is a subject that
   (C) biology because it
   (D) biology and it
   (E) biology due to the fact that it

2. She is a wonderful teacher, and it is an honor to be taught by her.
   (A) to be taught by her
   (B) being taught by her
   (C) to be her student
   (D) that she is my teacher
   (E) getting to have her as a teacher

3. Taking a shot from center ice, the puck that I hit flew straight into the net.
   (A) ice, the puck that I hit flew
   (B) ice resulted in the puck flying
   (C) ice and the puck I hit flew
   (D) ice, I hit the puck
   (E) ice, the puck was hit

4. Although it’s unusually cool for this time of year and a great day to be outside.
   (A) year and a great day to be
   (B) year, it’s a great for being
   (C) year, regardless, it’s a great day to be
   (D) year, it’s a great day to be
   (E) year and is a great day for being

5. It is my sincere hope that you will consider joining Key Club.
   (A) It is my sincere hope
   (B) I sincerely hope
   (C) What I sincerely hope is
   (D) I am sincerely hoping
   (E) The thing that I hope sincerely is

6. After you answer the last question on the test, you should return to what questions, if any, that you skipped.
   (A) what questions, if any, that you
   (B) whatever questions you
   (C) the questions if any are
   (D) any questions that you
   (E) all those questions that you may have
7. Although most of us have not traveled to exotic lands, there is a natural desire to do this.
   (A) there is a natural desire to do this  
   (B) we naturally desire to do so  
   (C) our wanting to do it is natural  
   (D) the desire for us to do so is natural 
   (E) naturally there is a desire to

8. Contrary to what my grandmother believes, you cannot get sick from breathing cold air.
   (A) you cannot get sick from breathing cold air  
   (B) one cannot get sick just because they breathe cold air  
   (C) breathing cold air does not result in making you sick  
   (D) cold cannot make you sick if you breathe it  
   (E) cold air cannot cause sickness by being breathed

9. When I went away to college and I finally had to learn how to manage my time.
   (A) college and I finally had to learn  
   (B) college, I finally had to learn  
   (C) college was when I finally learned  
   (D) college, that’s when I finally learned  
   (E) college, it was time for me to finally learn

10. Joey’s friend Trevor enjoys playing the guitar, listing to music, and milkshakes.
    (A) playing the guitar, listening to music, and milkshakes  
    (B) playing the guitar and listening to music in addition to milkshakes  
    (C) playing the guitar, he also likes to listen to music and drink milkshakes  
    (D) guitar, music, and drinking milkshakes  
    (E) playing the guitar, listening to music, and drinking milkshakes

11. Before we can leave for our hike, our lunches must be packed and our canteens filled with water.
    (A) our lunches must be packed and our canteens filled with water  
    (B) it is necessary for us to pack our lunches and to fill our canteens with water  
    (C) we must pack our lunches and fill our canteens with water  
    (D) our lunches must be packed; we must also fill our canteens with water  
    (E) we must pack our lunches, in addition, we must fill our canteens with water
The following sentences test your ability to recognize grammar and usage errors. Each sentence contains either a single error or no error at all. No sentence contains more than one error. The error, if there is one, is underlined and lettered. If the sentence contains an error, select the one underlined part that must be changed to make the sentence correct. If the sentence is correct, select choice E. In choosing answers, follow the requirements of standard written English.

Add EXAMPLE?

12. Neither of the ideas you have suggested are feasible, but we appreciate your efforts.
   A   B   C
   No error
   D   E

13. Amy currently lives in North Carolina, but
   A
   she spent the majority of her life
   B   C
   in central Florida. No error
   D   E

14. To be sure everything runs smoothly, the
   A
   manager schedules regular meetings that all
   B   C
   employees had to attend. No error
   D   E

15. Someone who attended the benefit dinner left
   A
   their glasses at the registration desk. No error
   B   C   D   E

16. I enjoyed that movie more than any movie I have seen this year. No error
   D   E

17. Do you think Jessica will invite you and me to her sixteenth birthday party? No error
   D   E

18. Whom do you think will win this weekend’s big game against the Tigers? No error
   D   E

19. I have been walking all day; I can’t wait to set down and relax for a few minutes.
   A   B   C
   No error
   D   E

20. After reading both books, I must say that I like the first one more than the second one.
   A   B
   No error
   C   D   E

21. Let’s go out for lunch today; we don’t hardly ever spend time together. No error
   D   E

22. We need to look in the situation more carefully before we make a decision.
   A   B
   No error
   C   D   E
23. The discovery of two theaters built during Shakespeare’s time have excited both scholars and archeologists. No error

24. Although Maggie and Hannah both hoped to be a finalist in the talent show, neither of them made it past the first round. No error

25. If one wants to be a concert pianist, you must practice for several hours a day. No error

26. Last night I babysat for two children, the youngest of which refused to go to sleep. No error

27. Will you call Trisha and find out whether or not she and Brad want to study for the chemistry test? No error

28. I can’t believe you’re taking Jack to the concert even though I like the band more than him. No error

29. There has been major changes in Cyndi’s attitude toward school lately. No error
Questions 30-35 are based on the following passage.

(1) As students face challenges and try to maintain control of their lives, some begin to develop eating disorders. (2) The two most common eating disorders are anorexia and bulimia. (3) About one in every one hundred 16- to 18-year-olds has anorexia nervosa. (4) Bulimia is even more common. (5) Eating disorders are most common in teenage girls, but they also affect teenage boys. (6) People with anorexia starve themselves, avoid high-calorie foods, and exercise constantly. (7) A normal amount of exercise is important for staying healthy. (8) Those with bulimia eat huge amounts of food and later throw it up. (9) Although people with eating disorders will be quick to say that there’s nothing wrong with them, it is important that their friends and family do not give in to their denial and that help is sought for them immediately.

30. Omitting which of the following sentences would improve the unity of the paragraph?

(A) Sentence 3
(B) Sentence 4
(C) Sentence 5
(D) Sentence 7
(E) Sentence 9

31. In context, which of the following is the best way to combine sentences 3 and 4?

(A) About one in every one hundred 16- to 18-year-olds has anorexia nervosa, and bulimia is even more common.
(B) About one in every one hundred 16- to 18-year-olds has anorexia nervosa, bulimia is even more common.
(C) About one in every one hundred 16- to 18-year-olds has anorexia nervosa, however, bulimia is even more common.
(D) Bulimia is even more common than anorexia nervosa, which affects about one in every one hundred 16- to 18-year-olds.
(E) Anorexia nervosa, which is not as common as bulimia, affects about in every one hundred 16- to 18-year-olds.

32. Which of the following revisions to sentence 8 is needed to make it consistent with the rest of the passage?

(A) Change “throw” to “threw.”
(B) Change “you” to “they.”
(C) Replace “it” with “the food.”
(D) Add “people” after “Those.”
(E) Change “with” to “who have”

33. In context, which of the following is the best way to revise the underlined portion of sentence 9?

(A) friends and family must not give in to their denial, instead they must seek help immediately
(B) friends and family must seek help for them immediately rather than give in to their denial
(C) it is important for friends and family not to give in to their denial but to seek help for them immediately instead
(D) their denial must not be given in to, and help must be sought immediately
(E) friends and family must remember that it is important not to give in to their denial; however, help should be sought immediately
34. Which of the following sentences would be the most effective conclusion for this paragraph?

   (A) In conclusion, it is important to know about eating disorders.
   (B) Thank you for taking the time to learn about eating disorders.
   (C) We should learn as much as we can about eating disorders so we can help ourselves and others.
   (D) Education, treatment, and support can save the lives of anorexia and bulimia victims.
   (E) To conclude, many students develop eating disorders.

35. This paragraph best represents which type of writing?

   (A) persuasive
   (B) narrative
   (C) expository
   (D) creative
   (E) descriptive
SAT Writing Timed Section: Answers and Explanations

Answers

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Explanations

1. **C.** The original sentence is a comma splice (two complete sentences stuck together with a comma). Choices B and E are unnecessarily wordy. Choice D, while not wordy, is a compound sentence and therefore requires a comma before *and*.

2. **C.** Choice C changes the voice from passive to active and is brief. Choices A and B are passive voice, and choice D is awkward. Choice E is unnecessarily wordy.

3. **D.** The participial phrase (“Taking a shot from center ice”) must modify the noun or pronoun closest to it. Since the puck did not take the shot, choices A and E won’t work. Choice C changes the sentence to a fragment, and choice B is awkward. Choice D moves *I* to the subject slot; it is also clear and concise.

4. **D.** The original sentence is a fragment, as is choice E. Although choices B and C are structurally sound, choice D is a better choice because it’s clearer and more concise. (Seeing a pattern yet??)

5. **B.** The sentence is clear and concise.

6. **D.** Choices A and B inappropriately use *what* and *whatever* as adjectives. Choice C changes the voice to passive, and choice E is wordy.

7. **B.** Choices A and E state that there *is* a desire, but not that it is our desire! Choices C and D are the wordy and awkward distractors.

8. **A.** Sadly, some teachers say not to use *you* in your writing. However, used correctly, *you* is perfectly acceptable. In choice B, there is disagreement between pronoun (plural *they*) and antecedent (singular *one*). Choice E contains a passive voice verb, and choices C and D are your usual wordy options.

9. **B.** Choice A is a sentence fragment. Choices C and D are awkward because of the repetition of *when* in the sentences. Choice E is just wordy.

10. **E.** This question is all about parallel structure. Choices A, B, and D are all not parallel. Choice C, while parallel, turns the sentence into a comma splice.

11. **C.** Choices A and D both contain passive voice verbs. Choice E makes the sentence a comma splice. Choices B and C are essentially the same, but choice C is more concise and hence the better choice.

12. **C.** Subject/verb agreement: The singular subject *neither* requires the verb *is* rather than *are*. Don’t be fooled when the test writers put lots of extra words (especially plural words) between the subject and the verb.

13. **B.** Verb tense: If she spent most of her life in Florida, we can assume her life is over. However, since we know she currently lives in North Carolina, we must change *spent* to *has spent*.

14. **D.** Shift in verb tense: *Runs* and *schedules* are present tense verbs, but *had* is past. Therefore, *had* should be *have*.

15. **C.** Pronoun/antecedent agreement: *Someone* is singular, so the plural pronoun *their* must be changed to *his* (or *her*).

16. **C.** Use of modifiers: We’re comparing *that movie* and *any other movie* I have seen. We can’t compare *that movie* and *any movie* I have seen because *that movie* is among the movies I have seen.
17. E. Don’t be tricked by choice C. *Me* (an objective pronoun) is correct because it’s acting as the direct object.
18. A. Pronoun case: *Whom* is an objective pronoun and should be changed to *who*, a nominative pronoun, because it’s acting as the subject of the clause beginning with *who will win*.
19. D. Word usage: *Set* should be *sit* because there is no direct object. *Down* tells where (an adverb question) rather than what (a direct object question).
20. C. Word usage: Use *than* for comparison and *then* for time sequence.
21. C. Double negative: *Don’t hardly* is a double negative. *Don’t* can be removed altogether.
22. B. Idiom: The correct expression is *look into*, not *look in*.
23. C. Subject/verb agreement: The singular subject *discovery* requires the verb *has* rather than *have*. Again, watch out for subjects and verbs that are separated by lots of other words.
24. B. Number agreement: Maggie and Hannah can’t be *one* finalist; rather, they hoped to be *finalists*.
25. A. Pronoun case: Notice the shift in pronoun case from *one* to *you*. To be correct, *one* must be changed to *you*. Note that you could also change *you* to *he or she*, but *you* is not underlined.
26. B. Use of modifiers: Use the comparative form (*younger*) to compare two things (*children* in this case). Use the superlative form (*youngest*) only if comparing three or more things.
27. E. Don’t be tricked by choice C. *She* is the correct pronoun because it’s acting as part of the subject of *want*. Did you think chemistry should be capitalized? School subjects are capitalized only when they’re languages (English, Spanish) or when they’re followed by numbers (Algebra I).
28. D. Pronoun use: This sentence represents incomplete structure. We’re really saying, “I like the band more than *he does*.” Therefore, we must use *he* rather than *him*.
29. A. Subject/verb agreement: Watch out for sentences that begin with *there*, which is never a subject. The subject of this sentence is *changes*; therefore, the verb must be *have* rather than *has*.
30. D. Although the statement is true, it doesn’t belong in this paragraph, which focuses on abnormal and unhealthy behavior.
31. A. Several choices seem to be possible, so use the process of elimination. Choices B and C are comma splices, so we can rule those out. Choice E focuses primarily on anorexia by mentioning bulimia only in the subordinate clause. We want to focus on both in this paragraph. Choice D seems like a great choice, but remember that you’re to choose the sentence that works best in context. Sentence 2 ends with the word *bulimia*, so starting sentence 3 with the same word is a little awkward. We’re left with choice A, which is structurally sound and works well in context.
32. B. Use the process of elimination again. Choice A is a comma splice. Choice D is passive voice. Choices C and E are needlessly wordy. Choice B gets the job done well.
33. B. The rest of the paragraph is written in third person, so we shouldn’t have a second person pronoun (*you*) stuck in the middle.
34. D. When concluding an informative paragraph such as this one, it is not appropriate to thank your reader, so eliminate choice B. Since the rest of the paragraph is written in third person, we can eliminate choice C with its first person pronouns (*we*). Choices A and E are way too general; in fact, E just repeats the topic sentence. A good conclusion does more than that. Like choice D, it sums up and helps the reader see the significance of the information.
35. C. Writing that informs, explains, defines, clarifies, or instructs as its primary purpose is called *expository*.