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14 SAT Sentence Improvement No Problems
Questions, Answers, Detailed Explanations

1. Sam found a letter in the mailbox that does not belong to her.
- A) No Change
 - B) in the mailbox to her that does not belong
 - C) in the mailbox which does not belong to her
 - D) that does not belong to her in the mailbox
 - E) in the mailbox who does not belong to her

Answer: D

Explanation: The original sentence has a misplaced modifier: a word, phrase, or clause placed too far from the noun or pronoun it describes. This misplaced modifier makes the sentence appear as if Sam is opening up mail from other people's mailboxes! In order to clarify that Sam is not a mail thief, we need to place the phrase "that does not belong to her" directly after "letter". Now it's clear that Sam checked mail from her mailbox this morning.

2. To the boys' delight, the party bags contained cool sunglasses, candies that are sweet and sour, and pocket-sized flashlights.

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) candies that are sweet and sour, and
- C) candies that are sweet as well as sour, and
- D) sweet and sour candies, and
- E) candies, being sweet and sour, additionally

Answer: D

Explanation: The original sentence lacks parallelism; two members of this series already consist of an "adjective, noun" pairing; "cool sunglasses", and "pocket-sized flashlights". However, a third member, "candies that are sweet and sour", changes the parallel structure of the sentence. Despite the fact that the kids later find out that the candy is all sugar-free, this sentence still needs editing. In order to correct this parallelism error, ensure that the adjective "sweet and sour" comes before its noun "candies". Now you have three items in the grab bag "cool sunglasses", "sweet and sour candies", and "pocket-sized flashlights", all containing an "adjective, noun" sequence.

3. In 1978, a peak of non fashion, great amounts of people wear polyester jackets.

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) great amount of people were wearing
- C) great numbers of people wore
- D) a great amount of people wore
- E) large numbers of people are wearing

Answer: C

Explanation: Use the countable noun "number" when referring to an object you can actually count, such as 'people' or 'french fries'. The noun "amount" applies to non-countable nouns, such as water or mashed potatoes. The original sentence also contains a verb tense error. Since the sentence is referring to 1978, you need to use the past tense "wore". So for you who got this problem right, give yourself a large number of pats on the back.

4. Ann was certain that she would continue to receive good grades in Mr. Greenberg's history class as long as she would be able to turn in work for additional extra credit.

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) could turn in work for additional
- C) can turn in work for additional
- D) could turn in work for
- E) can turn in work for

Answer: D

Explanation: Anna won't receive any credit if you think the original version of the sentence is correct. The original sentence is redundant; 'Additional' means the same thing as 'extra', so you only need to use one of the two adjectives. Also the entire situation takes place in the past tense, not the present, so (E) is incorrect.

5. The federal Fish and Wildlife Service is expected to rule this week on whether to protect beluga sturgeon under the Endangered Species Act.

A) No Change

B) are expected to rule this week on whether to protect beluga sturgeon under the Endangered Species Act

C) have been expected to rule this week on whether to protect beluga sturgeon under the Endangered Species Act

D) is expected to rule this week about the protecting of beluga sturgeon by means of the Endangered Species Act

E) is being expected to rule this week on whether or not they should protect beluga sturgeon under the Endangered Species Act

Answer: A

Explanation: The federal Fish and Wildlife Service acts as a unit and therefore requires a singular verb such as "is". Choices B and C have subject-verb agreement and tense errors, while choice D and E are wordy and awkward. So remember two things: To not eat beluga sturgeon for dinner tonight and to choose choice A if the sentence is already good to go!

6. The automobile, popularized by Henry Ford, was invented around the same time as the Wright brothers developed the airplane and it is an important method of transportation.

A) NO CHANGE

B) The automobile, popularized by Henry Ford, was invented around the same time as the Wright brothers developed the airplane, and

C) Invented around the same time were the automobile, popularized by Henry Ford and the airplane, which the Wright brothers developed, and it

D) The automobile, popularized by Henry Ford, was invented around the same time as the Wright brothers developed the airplane and this is why it

E) An invention around the same time as the Wright brothers developed the airplane, the automobile, popularized by Henry Ford, it

Answer: B

Explanation: The original sentence is vague because it is unclear whether the pronoun (it) replaces the airplane or the automobile. Come on, haven't you driven a Ford lately? Only choice B makes it clear that the automobile is the important method of transportation.

7. Mr. Chung would like to retire, but retirement is unable to be afforded by him.

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) Mr. Chung would like to retire, but he cannot afford to do so.
- C) Mr. Chung would like to retire, but he is unable to afford that.
- D) Retirement is what Mr. Chung would like to do, but he cannot afford it.
- E) Retirement appeals to Mr. Chung, but he cannot afford stopping work.

Answer: B

Explanation: The original sentence is in the passive voice. In this awkward sentence, the subject (Mr. Chung) is receiving the action (retirement). You need change the sentence from the passive voice to the active voice. Don't be passive, you can do it! In sentences written in active voice, the subject performs the action expressed in the verb; the subject acts. Only choice B clearly states that the subject (he or Mr. Chung) is unable to afford retirement.

8. After experiencing the exhilaration of her first stage performance and watching her costar John's lackluster effort, Diane realized that she loved acting more than John.

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) she loved acting more than John's love of acting
- C) she did love acting more than John
- D) John did not love acting more than her
- E) she loved acting more than John did

Answer: E

Explanation: The original sentence makes an improper comparison; Diane loves acting more than John does, not more than John himself! Choice E corrects this error. Choice A, C, and D repeat the error. Choice B also makes an improper comparison because you're comparing acting to love of acting-not parallel!

9. The police reprimanded everyone at the graduation party, they didn't seem very sympathetic to the fact that it was our senior year.

(A) NO CHANGE

(B) at the graduation party, seemingly the fact that it was our senior year did not make them sympathetic

(C) at the graduation party without being sympathetic to the fact that it was our senior year

(D) at the graduation party they didn't, despite the fact that it was our senior year, seem very sympathetic

(E) at the graduation party; they didn't seem very sympathetic to the fact that it was our senior year

Answer E:

Explanation: The original sentence is a run-on sentence that runs longer than the busted graduation party. The grammar mistake occurs because the comma is used to join two independent clauses. Only choice E avoids the run-on problem and properly uses a semicolon to join two clauses. Other ways to avoid writing a run-on sentence include: Writing the two clauses as two separate sentences, or inserting a coordinating conjunction after the comma.

10. As the procrastinating decreases, the less homework I have left to complete at the last minute.

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) As there is less procrastinating
- C) The less one procrastinates
- D) The less I procrastinate
- E) The less procrastination is done by me

Answer: D

Explanation: This sentence has an idiom problem. The correct idiom is (the less the less), so you can eliminate A and B. Now look for the answer choice that both keeps the pronouns consistent and the entire sentence parallel. Choice D takes care of the job.

11. Your optimistic attitude and soothing tone of voice give people hope.

- A) give people hope
- B) gives hope to one
- C) give one hope in hearing it
- D) gives people hope
- E) give hope to the people

Answer: A

Explanation: Choice C is too wordy and choice E sounds like a campaign speech. The sentence is already written correctly because the plural subject (attitude AND voice) agrees with the verb (give).

12. Research has indicated that, with diabetes on the rise, incorporation of buckwheat into the diet could help provide a safe, easier, and inexpensive way to lower glucose levels and reducing the risk of complications associated with the disease.

- A) safe, easier, and inexpensive way to lower glucose levels and reducing the risk of
- B) safe, easy, and inexpensive way to lower glucose levels and reducing the risk of
- C) safer, easier, and inexpensive way to lowering glucose levels and reduce the risk of
- D) safer, easier, and less expensive way to lower glucose levels and reducing the risk of
- E) safe, easy, and inexpensive way to lower glucose levels and reduce the risk of

Answer: E

Explanation: The original sentence needs more buckwheat and correct parallel construction (lower and reducing). Sentence choice E makes sure the series of adjectives (safe, easy, inexpensive) are written in the same logical structure.

13. Sir Alexander Fleming, an immunologist, whose reputation as the discoverer of penicillin almost rivals that of Jonas Salk, who invented the polio vaccine.

- A) Sir Alexander Fleming, an immunologist, whose reputation as the discoverer of penicillin
- B) Sir Alexander Fleming, who was an immunologist and whose reputation as the discoverer of penicillin
- C) An immunologist with a reputation as the discoverer of penicillin, Sir Alexander Fleming
- D) Sir Alexander Fleming was an immunologist whose reputation as the discoverer of penicillin
- E) An immunologist, Sir Alexander Fleming who was the discoverer of penicillin and whose reputation

Answer: D

Explanation: Is your sentence immune to fragments? All but choice D lack a main verb for the sentence, and thus are fragments. Answer D corrects the problem by adding the active verb (was).

14. An artificial sweetener, such as aspartame or sucralose, is said to contain no calories by the body's not converting it into energy.

- A) by the body's not converting it into energy
- B) by the body's not converting them into energy
- C) because the body does not convert them into energy
- D) due to the body's not converting the energy in them
- E) because the body does not convert it into energy

Answer: E

Explanation: Accept no substitutes, choice E is the only answer that both properly links the singular subject, "artificial sweetener" with the correct singular pronoun "it", and uses the correct cause and effect link "because" to explain why artificial sweetener contains no calories.