

Standard English Conventions

Question 1

Despite being a communal and participatory art form, _____ it serves as a historical record, and it strengthens the social bonds within a community.

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

- ☐ A folk music's two primary functions are that
- ☐ B folk music has two primary functions:
- ☐ C two primary functions are associated with folk music:
- ☐ D there are two primary functions of folk music:

Question 2

By studying quantum field theory and applying its principles, Hendrik Casimir made a prediction, proposing a unique force that arises from quantum fluctuations of the vacuum. In 1948 Casimir first described this _____ in 1997 it was first precisely measured by researcher Steve K. Lamoreaux.

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

- ☐ A Casimir effect,
- ☐ B Casimir effect
- ☐ C Casimir effect and
- ☐ D Casimir effect, and

Question 3

In 2014, a team of botanists led by Dr. Roxana Yockteng discovered every known genetic marker for horizontal meristems from the last few centuries. With this unique plant sample, the team was able to conclude how tissue-driven growth differs across _____ and what effect it has on the development of roots and branches in the plant.

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

- ☐ A species,
- ☐ B species:
- ☐ C species;
- ☐ D species

Question 4

Linguist Penelope Brown, _____ to understand how language is used to maintain social harmony, identified the use of "hedges"—words like "perhaps" or "sort of"—as a key politeness strategy in her work with Stephen C. Levinson.

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

- ☐ A seeks
- ☐ B sought
- ☐ C seeking
- ☐ D is seeking

Question 5

In Epicurean ethics, the ultimate goal is achieving a state of _____ state of tranquility, as described by the philosopher Epicurus, is a freedom from distress and worry that constitutes the highest form of pleasure and the ideal mental state for a human being.

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

- ☐ A ataraxia. As This
- ☐ B ataraxia This
- ☐ C ataraxia. This
- ☐ D ataraxia, This

Question 6

Psychologists Edward Deci and Richard Ryan's self-determination theory (1985), a framework for understanding human motivation, _____ between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, influencing research in education and organizational behavior.

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

- ☐ A have distinguished
- ☐ B are distinguishing
- ☐ C distinguish
- ☐ D has distinguished

Question 7

Bose-Einstein is a 1924 theory by the Indian physicist Satyendra Nath Bose. Like many of Bose's theories, Bose-Einstein, which describes a state of matter at near absolute zero, attempts to explain the entire quantum mechanical _____ using statistical methods, the then-unproven theory details a strange new form of matter.

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

- ☐ A phenomenon while
- ☐ B phenomenon:
- ☐ C phenomenon
- ☐ D phenomenon, while

Question 8

For billions of years, Earth has maintained liquid water (H₂O) on its surface despite the Sun's lower luminosity. When considering early Earth, this presents a paradox _____ the Sun was significantly dimmer then, providing too little energy to prevent the planet's oceans from freezing over.

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

- ☐ A investigated,
- ☐ B investigated:
- ☐ C investigated
- ☐ D investigated and

Question 9

The 2013 study “Acoustic levitation of a large solid sphere” describes one powerful acoustic levitation system in modern-day Switzerland. Researchers have noted the way lead _____ details the properties of standing (sound waves that remain in a constant position) and traveling (their conventionally mobile counterparts).

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

- ☐ A scientist Dimos Poulikakos
- ☐ B scientist, Dimos Poulikakos
- ☐ C scientist, Dimos Poulikakos,
- ☐ D scientist Dimos Poulikakos,

Question 10

In 1985, Belgian psychologist Jozef Nuttin introduced the 'name-letter effect,' the tendency to prefer letters in one's own name. Although each one of these initial preference tasks, which often involve rating the attractiveness of letters, _____ a person's bias toward his or her own initials, some, such as those used in implicit self-esteem tests, measure the speed of the preference rather than a conscious rating.

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

- ☐ A show
- ☐ B were shown
- ☐ C shows
- ☐ D are shown

Question 11

In his 1968 book *The Theatre of the Oppressed*, Brazilian dramatist Augusto Boal first articulated in detail his theory of "Forum Theatre"—the concept that the various social and political structures a spectator has experienced (hierarchy, injustice, power dynamics, etc.) _____ each potential action that spectator considers within a performance.

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

- ☐ A inform
- ☐ B has been informing
- ☐ C informs
- ☐ D is informing

Question 12

As a leading figure of the City Beautiful movement, Daniel Burnham, an American architect and urban designer, created comprehensive plans for numerous cities. Burnham didn't just design the _____ he also envisioned grand public spaces, influencing the development of modern city planning and civic architecture.

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

- ☐ A buildings, though;
- ☐ B buildings, though,
- ☐ C buildings; though
- ☐ D buildings though,

Question 13

The ice-spewing volcanoes of Enceladus, which eject water vapor and icy particles from deep, linear fractures, have offered planetary scientists evidence for a subsurface _____ to planetary scientist Carolyn Porco, who has stated that these jets “are erupting from a salty sea.”

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

- ☐ A ocean, according
- ☐ B ocean. According
- ☐ C ocean according
- ☐ D ocean; according

Question 14

American volcanologist Dorothy Vitaliano coined the term _____
new field studies the links between geology and folklore,
Vitaliano's work examines how ancient myths may record real
events, such as volcanic eruptions.

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

- ☐ A geomythology and this
- ☐ B geomythology. This
- ☐ C geomythology this
- ☐ D geomythology, this

Question 15

In 1974, the foundational work of American sociologist Harvey _____ was detailed in *A Simplest Systematics*, a seminal text on conversation analysis.

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

- ☐ A Sacks;
- ☐ B Sacks
- ☐ C Sacks,
- ☐ D Sacks:

Question 16

A new theory defines the key elements of psychological flourishing for individuals, communities, and nations to measure well-being. _____ proposed that this multifaceted construct of happiness could be scientifically measured and cultivated through specific interventions.

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

- ☐ A Psychologist, Martin Seligman,
- ☐ B Psychologist Martin Seligman,
- ☐ C Psychologist Martin Seligman
- ☐ D Psychologist Martin Seligman:

Question 17

In theater, the concept of the “fourth wall” suggests a separation, the idea of an invisible barrier between the actors on stage and the audience members watching them so intently that it feels almost like an act of voyeurism. When this convention is broken, however, the performance becomes a _____ audience directly acknowledged as part of the shared, live event.

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

- ☐ A dialogue, the
- ☐ B dialogue, and the
- ☐ C dialogue. The
- ☐ D dialogue; the

Question 18

In his 2004 book, philosopher Galen Strawson presented a view called realistic _____ against the dominant physicalist theories of mind and consciousness, which he felt failed to account for subjective experience, the renowned thinker proposed a form of panpsychism.

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

- ☐ A monism and Arguing
- ☐ B monism Arguing
- ☐ C monism, Arguing
- ☐ D monism. Arguing

Question 19

In a groundbreaking 2020 study, when the structural sand-hydrogel framework was inoculated with the photosynthetic cyanobacteria *Synechococcus* sp. PCC 7002, the result was a novel living building material, its potential so vast, so innovative, and so _____ that it has become known as “living concrete.”

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

- ☐ A sustainable,
- ☐ B sustainable:
- ☐ C sustainable;
- ☐ D sustainable

Question 20

Political scientists studying the "backfire effect," the observed phenomenon where corrections of misinformation can paradoxically strengthen a person's misperceptions, were intrigued to discover that the presentation of evidence contradicting a core belief, despite the validity of the source, often _____ an individual more certain of his or her original stance.

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

- ☐ A make
- ☐ B makes
- ☐ C made
- ☐ D making

Answers

Question 1

Correct Answer: B

This question tests **subject-modifier placement**. As a rule of thumb, modifiers should be placed right next to the words or phrases they modify.

The opening phrase "Despite being a communal and participatory art form" is a modifier that describes the subject of the sentence. This modifier must be immediately followed by the noun it modifies.

The modifier is describing *folk music* itself—folk music is the communal and participatory art form. Therefore, "folk music" must appear immediately after the comma.

(B) folk music has two primary functions: is the correct answer because "folk music" directly follows the modifier, correctly indicating that folk music is what the opening phrase describes.

Note that the colon at the end of (B) is also appropriate here, as it introduces the list of functions that follows in the remainder of the sentence.

Question 2

Correct Answer: D

Look at the clauses on both sides of the blank:

- 'In 1948 Casimir first described this _____'
- 'in 1997 it was first precisely measured by researcher Steve K. Lamoreaux.'

Both clauses are **independent clauses** because they each contain a subject and a verb and can stand alone as complete sentences.

In the SAT, to separate two independent clauses, we have to use either a

semicolon, a **period**, or a **comma + FANBOYS** (For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So). Looking at the answer choices, we see that option (D) provides "comma + and," which follows this rule since "and" is one of the FANBOYS coordinating conjunctions.

Therefore, **(D)** is the correct answer.

Note: Option (A) creates a comma splice error by using only a comma to separate two independent clauses. Option (C) uses "and" without a comma, which is incorrect when connecting two independent clauses.

Question 3

Correct Answer: D

Look at the clauses on both sides of the blank:

- "With this unique plant sample, the team was able to conclude how tissue-driven growth differs across species"
- "and what effect it has on the development of roots and branches in the plant"

The second clause begins with "and," which connects it to the first clause as part of a compound structure. Specifically, "how tissue-driven growth differs across species" and "what effect it has on the development of roots and branches" are both objects of the verb "conclude."

In the SAT, when two items are connected by "and" to form a compound structure, **no punctuation should separate them**. The word "and" itself provides the necessary connection between the two parallel elements.

Therefore, **(D) species** is the correct answer because no punctuation is needed before "and" when it connects compound elements within the same sentence structure.

Question 4

Correct Answer: C

This question tests **verb forms**, specifically the use of participles as modifiers.

The phrase between the commas describes linguist Penelope Brown and modifies the subject. When a descriptive phrase modifies a noun in this way, we need a **participle** (a verb form ending in -ing or -ed that functions as an adjective), not a conjugated verb.

The present participle "**seeking**" correctly creates a modifying phrase that describes Brown's intention or purpose. This construction is parallel to saying "Penelope Brown, who was seeking to understand..." but in a more concise form.

(C) seeking is the correct answer.

Note: Be careful not to confuse this with subject-verb agreement. Although we have a singular subject (Penelope Brown), this question is not testing whether we need a singular or plural verb. The structure requires a participle to create a modifying phrase, not a conjugated verb form.

Question 5

Correct Answer: C

Look at the clauses on both sides of the blank:

- 'In Epicurean ethics, the ultimate goal is achieving a state of ataraxia'
- 'This state of tranquility, as described by the philosopher Epicurus, is a freedom from distress and worry that constitutes the highest form of pleasure and the ideal mental state for a human being'

The first clause is an independent clause because it contains a subject ("the ultimate goal") and a predicate ("is achieving a state of ataraxia") and can stand alone as a complete sentence.

The second clause is also an independent clause because it has a subject ("This state of tranquility") and a predicate ("is a freedom from distress and worry") and can stand alone as a complete sentence.

In the SAT, to separate two independent clauses, we have to use a period or semicolon. Since only a period appears in the answer choices, we need choice **(C)**.

Therefore, **(C) ataraxia. This** is the correct answer.

Question 6

Correct Answer: D

This question tests **subject-verb agreement**. The subject of the sentence is "self-determination theory," which is a **singular noun** (even though it appears after a longer noun phrase). The verb must agree with this singular subject.

The phrase "Psychologists Edward Deci and Richard Ryan's" is possessive, modifying "self-determination theory." Don't be distracted by the plural "Psychologists"—it's not the subject of the sentence.

Since "self-determination theory" is singular, we need a **singular verb**. **(D) has distinguished** is the correct answer because "has" is the singular form of the present perfect tense.

Note: Be careful not to be misled by the plural noun "Psychologists" at the beginning of the sentence. The actual subject is "self-determination theory," which comes after the possessive phrase. Always identify the main subject of the sentence, ignoring modifying phrases that might contain plural nouns.

Question 7

Correct Answer: B

Look at the clauses on both sides of the blank:

- "Bose-Einstein, which describes a state of matter at near absolute zero, attempts to explain the entire quantum mechanical phenomenon"
- "the then-unproven theory details a strange new form of matter"

The first clause is an independent clause (it has a subject "Bose-Einstein" and a complete predicate "attempts to explain"). The second clause is also an independent clause (it has a subject "the then-unproven theory" and a complete predicate "details a strange new form of matter").

In the SAT, to separate two independent clauses, we can use a semicolon, a period, or a colon. Looking at the answer choices, only the colon appears as an option.

The colon is particularly appropriate here because the second clause provides a specific explanation of what the theory does—it introduces details about the "strange new form of matter" that the theory describes.

Therefore, **(B) phenomenon:** is the correct answer.

Question 8

Correct Answer: B

Look at the clauses on both sides of the blank:

- "When considering early Earth, this presents a paradox investigated"
- "the Sun was significantly dimmer then, providing too little energy to prevent the planet's oceans from freezing over"

The first clause is an independent clause with the subject "this" and the predicate "presents a paradox investigated." The second clause is also an independent clause with the subject "the Sun" and the predicate "was significantly dimmer then."

In the SAT, to separate two independent clauses where the second clause explains or elaborates on the first, we can use a **colon** or a **dash**. In this case, the second clause explains what the paradox is—specifically, that the

Sun was dimmer but Earth still had liquid water.

A colon is appropriate here because the first clause is a complete sentence that introduces what follows: the explanation of the paradox.

Therefore, **(B) investigated:** is the correct answer.

Question 9

Correct Answer: A

This question tests the punctuation rule for names and titles.

The relevant rule is: when a title (like "scientist") comes before a name, we need to determine if the information is essential or non-essential. If the name is essential (meaning we need it to identify which specific person we're talking about), we use no commas. If the name is non-essential (meaning the title alone is sufficient), we use two commas to set it off.

To test this, we can try removing the name "Dimos Poulikakos" from the sentence. If we read "Researchers have noted the way lead scientist details the properties...", the sentence becomes unclear—we don't know *which* lead scientist is being discussed. This tells us the name is essential information that identifies the specific scientist, so no commas should be used.

Therefore, **(A)** is the correct answer because it treats the name as essential information and correctly uses no punctuation between "scientist" and "Dimos Poulikakos."

Question 10

Correct Answer: C

This question tests *subject-verb agreement*.

The subject of the sentence is "each one of these initial preference tasks."

Although this phrase contains the plural word "tasks," the actual subject is "each one," which is singular. The phrase "of these initial preference tasks" is a prepositional phrase that modifies "each one" but does not affect the number of the subject.

Since "each one" is singular, we need a singular verb. The verb must agree with this singular subject.

(C) shows is the correct answer because it is the singular form of the verb that agrees with "each one."

Important note: Be careful not to be distracted by plural nouns that appear between the subject and the verb. The phrase "of these initial preference tasks" contains the plural noun "tasks," but this does not change the fact that the main subject "each one" is singular. Always identify the true subject of the sentence when checking for subject-verb agreement.

Question 11

Correct Answer: A

This question tests **subject-verb agreement**.

The subject of the sentence is "the various social and political structures a spectator has experienced (hierarchy, injustice, power dynamics, etc.)." This is a **plural subject** because "structures" is plural—the phrase lists multiple examples (hierarchy, injustice, power dynamics).

Since the subject is plural, the verb must also be **plural**. Among the answer choices, only **(A) inform** is a plural verb form that agrees with the plural subject "structures."

(A) is the correct answer.

Note: This question may appear to test verb tenses because options (B), (C), and (D) use different tenses and aspects. However, the primary issue here is subject-verb agreement. The context describes a general theory about how structures influence spectators, which supports the simple

present tense "inform." Be careful not to be distracted by the complex verb forms in the other options—the straightforward plural verb is correct.

Question 12

Correct Answer: A

Look at the clauses on both sides of the blank:

- 'Burnham didn't just design the buildings, though'
- 'he also envisioned grand public spaces'

The first clause is **independent**—it contains a subject ("Burnham") and a predicate ("didn't just design") and expresses a complete thought. The second clause is also **independent**—it has a subject ("he") and a predicate ("envisioned") and can stand alone.

In the SAT, to separate two independent clauses, we must use either a **semicolon** or a **comma + FANBOYS** (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so). However, "though" is **not** a FANBOYS conjunction—it's a transition word that belongs to the first clause as an aside comment.

Since "though" is part of the first independent clause and functions as non-essential information at the end, it should be set off with a comma before it. Then, because we're connecting two independent clauses, we need a semicolon after "though" to properly separate them.

Therefore, **(A)** is the correct answer.

Question 13

Correct Answer: A

Look at the clauses on both sides of the blank:

- "The ice-spewing volcanoes of Enceladus, which eject water vapor and icy particles from deep, linear fractures, have offered planetary scientists

evidence for a subsurface ocean"

- "according to planetary scientist Carolyn Porco, who has stated that these jets 'are erupting from a salty sea.'"

The first clause is an **independent clause**—it contains a subject ("The ice-spewing volcanoes") and a complete predicate and can stand alone as a sentence.

The second clause begins with "according to," which is a **prepositional phrase**. This makes it a **dependent clause** that cannot stand alone and must be attached to the independent clause.

In the SAT, when attaching a dependent clause that begins with a prepositional phrase to an independent clause, we use a **comma**. Periods, semicolons, and no punctuation are not appropriate here because the dependent clause must remain connected to the main sentence.

Therefore, **(A)** is the correct answer.

Question 14

Correct Answer: B

Look at the clauses on both sides of the blank:

- "American volcanologist Dorothy Vitaliano coined the term geomythology"
- "this new field studies the links between geology and folklore"

The first clause is an independent clause—it has a subject ("American volcanologist Dorothy Vitaliano") and a complete verb ("coined"), making it a complete sentence that can stand alone.

The second clause is also an independent clause—it has a subject ("this new field") and a complete verb ("studies"), making it another complete sentence that can stand alone.

In the SAT, to separate two independent clauses, we have to use a **period** or **semicolon**. Looking at the answer choices, only (B) provides a period

between these two independent clauses.

Therefore, **(B) geomythology. This** is the correct answer.

Note: (D) creates a comma splice error by attempting to connect two independent clauses with only a comma and a pronoun. Remember that comma + pronoun (without FANBOYS) cannot separate two independent clauses.

Question 15

Correct Answer: B

Look at the clauses on both sides of the blank:

- 'In 1974, the foundational work of American sociologist Harvey Sacks'
- 'was detailed in A Simplest Systematics, a seminal text on conversation analysis.'

The first part is not an independent clause because it lacks a verb for the subject "work." The second part contains the verb "was detailed" that completes the sentence. Together, they form one continuous independent clause with the structure: "the foundational work...was detailed in A Simplest Systematics."

Since "Harvey Sacks" is simply the name completing the phrase "American sociologist Harvey Sacks," and the sentence continues without interruption, no punctuation is needed after the name. The name is an essential part of identifying which sociologist's work is being discussed.

Therefore, **(B)** is the correct answer.

Note: Be careful not to treat this as a clause separation issue. The key is recognizing that "Harvey Sacks" is an essential identifier within a single sentence structure, requiring no punctuation.

Question 16

Correct Answer: C

This question tests the punctuation rule for names and titles.

The relevant rule is: when a title precedes a name, use either no commas (if the information is essential) or two commas (if the information is non-essential). The key test is whether you can remove the name and the sentence still makes complete sense.

Let's apply this test: If we remove "Martin Seligman" from the sentence, we get "Psychologist proposed that this multifaceted construct..." This sentence is incomplete and unclear—we need to know *which* psychologist proposed this theory.

Since the name is essential to identify the specific person, we should use **no commas** around it.

Looking at what comes after the name, we see "proposed that..." which is a verb starting a new clause. Since we're connecting the subject "Psychologist Martin Seligman" to its verb "proposed," we don't need any punctuation between them.

Therefore, **(C) Psychologist Martin Seligman** is the correct answer because it correctly uses no commas around the essential identifying information and no punctuation before the verb.

Question 17

Correct Answer: A

Look at the clauses on both sides of the blank:

- "When this convention is broken, however, the performance becomes a dialogue"
- "the audience directly acknowledged as part of the shared, live event"

The first clause is an independent clause—it contains a subject ("the performance") and a complete verb ("becomes") and expresses a complete thought.

The second clause is a dependent clause. It lacks a main verb and cannot stand alone as a complete sentence. The phrase "audience directly acknowledged" is a noun phrase with a past participle modifier, not an independent clause.

In the SAT, to separate an independent clause and a dependent clause that provides additional description, we need to use either a comma or no punctuation at all. Since the dependent clause here is non-essential information (an appositive phrase that renames "dialogue"), we use a comma.

Additionally, this sentence does not require a coordinating conjunction like "and" because the second part is not an independent clause that needs to be connected to the first.

Therefore, **(A)** is the correct answer.

Question 18

Correct Answer: D

Look at the clauses on both sides of the blank:

- "In his 2004 book, philosopher Galen Strawson presented a view called realistic monism"
- "Arguing against the dominant physicalist theories of mind and consciousness, which he felt failed to account for subjective experience, the renowned thinker proposed a form of panpsychism"

The first clause is an **independent clause** because it contains a subject ("philosopher Galen Strawson") and a complete predicate ("presented a view called realistic monism"), making it a complete sentence that can stand alone.

The second clause is also an **independent clause**. Although it begins with "Arguing," this is a participial phrase that modifies "the renowned thinker." The core of this clause is "the renowned thinker proposed a form of panpsychism," which is a complete sentence with its own subject and predicate.

In the SAT, to separate two independent clauses, we have to use a **period or semicolon**. Since only a period appears in the answer choices, that is what we need.

Therefore, **(D) monism. Arguing** is the correct answer.

Question 19

Correct Answer: D

Look at the clauses on both sides of the blank:

- "when the structural sand-hydrogel framework was inoculated with the photosynthetic cyanobacteria *Synechococcus* sp. PCC 7002, the result was a novel living building material, its potential so vast, so innovative, and so _____"

- "that it has become known as 'living concrete.'"

The first clause is an independent clause (it can stand alone as a complete sentence). The second clause beginning with "that" is a dependent clause (it cannot stand alone).

In the SAT, to separate an independent clause and a dependent clause, we cannot use a semicolon or colon. We can only use a comma or no punctuation at all.

However, this question also tests items in a list. The phrase "so vast, so innovative, and so _____" is a list of three parallel items describing the potential. In a list like this, items are separated by commas, and the word "and" connects the final item without requiring additional punctuation after it.

Therefore, **(D)** is the correct answer because no punctuation is needed after "sustainable" in this parallel list structure.

Question 20

Correct Answer: B

This question tests **subject-verb agreement**. To solve it, we need to identify the subject of the sentence and ensure the verb agrees with it in number.

The main subject of this sentence is "the presentation of evidence contradicting a core belief." While this phrase is long and complex, the core subject is "the presentation," which is **singular**. The phrase "of evidence contradicting a core belief" is a prepositional phrase that modifies "presentation" but doesn't affect the number of the subject.

Since the subject "the presentation" is singular, we need a singular verb form. Looking at our options, **(B) makes** is the only singular verb form that fits. The verb must agree with "presentation" (singular), not with "evidence" or "belief," which might distract us as they appear closer to the verb.

(B) makes is the correct answer.

Note: This question contains a common trap where additional information between the subject and verb can distract you. Always identify the main subject (in this case, "presentation") and ignore the modifying phrases when checking agreement.