

**SHSAT ELA Exam 1B (half-length):****ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS***Suggested Time - 45 Minutes*

29 Questions

**IMPORTANT NOTE**

The Revising/Editing section (Questions 1-10) is in two parts: Part A and Part B.

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**REVISING/EDITING Part A**

**DIRECTIONS:** Read and answer each of the following questions. You will be asked to recognize and correct errors in sentences or short paragraphs. Mark the best answer for each question.

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1. Read this paragraph.

(1) I love art class, which is an elective at my high school. (2) However, I almost failed every art class I took. (3) Fortunately, my many failing grades never stopped Mr. Chase, who was my instructor, to keep pushing me forward. (4) Thinking about it now, I realize I may never have become an artist without that class.

Which sentence contains a misplaced modifier?

- A. sentence 1
- B. sentence 2
- C. sentence 3
- D. sentence 4

2. Read this paragraph.

(1) Neither all the students in class nor Elizabeth have run for a student council seat before. (2) The boys and the girls are all intelligent, motivated, and interested in the well-being of the student body. (3) Billy agreed to run for student council once before, but all the other students never accepted until now. (4) Although politics is boring, everybody is going to make a change.

Which sentence should be revised to correct an inappropriate subject-verb agreement?

- A. sentence 1
- B. sentence 2
- C. sentence 3
- D. sentence 4

3. Which of the following sentences makes proper use of commas in punctuation?

- A. The swords which were dented and nicked hung on the wall among the other blades.
- B. The returning knights hung their swords, which were dented and nicked, in battle on the main wall.
- C. The returning knights hung their swords, that saw battle, in a place of honor on the far wall.
- D. The swords that saw battle were dented and nicked; however, the rest looked as if they had just been made.

## REVISING/EDITING Part B

**DIRECTIONS:** Read the passage below and answer the questions following it. You will be asked to improve the writing quality of the passage and to correct errors so that the passage follows the conventions of standard written English. You may reread the passage if you need to. Mark the best answer for each question.

### WHAT HAPPENED TO SCRAMBLED PARAGRAPHS?

(1) In 2017, the specialized high school admission test (SHSAT) replaced the scrambled paragraphs and logical reasoning verbal exam sections with revising-editing questions on a new SHSAT English Language Arts (ELA) exam. (2) In the past, these two sections represented a significant part of the verbal exam. (3) Average historical SHSAT raw verbal scores exceeded 25 out of 50 points or 50%, but the two eliminated sections were more difficult than the other section – a typical student scored below 10 raw points out 20 for both logical reasoning and scrambled paragraphs. (4) Students often spent more than an equal share of verbal preparation time on scrambled paragraphs and logical reasoning, not merely because they were difficult sections, but better scores on scrambled paragraphs and logic could help differentiate a student from the pack.

(5) The new revising-editing questions, which also account for twenty raw points on the new exam, include more familiar, less arcane topics that students have already seen in the classroom. (6) As a result, less reliance on outside test preparation should be required – a change by design that was one of the factors motivating the SHSAT alterations. (7) The majority of the new revising-editing questions refer to a passage and draw from the writing common core skills while remaining questions are stand-alone edits drawn from grammar or the language common core. (8) With the possible exception of grammar, the number of topics required to learn for these new sections is less than the scrambled paragraphs and logical reasoning sections they replace. (9) Even in the case of grammar, the official examples put forth suggest the grammar questions remain limited in scope; students should focus on a handful of crucial grammar topics to succeed, whereas grammar topics could quickly expand to include dozens or hundreds of nuanced issues. (10) In all, the discontinued exam sections accounted for the majority of preparation time for the verbal part of the exam despite representing a minority number of questions.

(11) The new sections can be mastered with less effort, by comparison, reducing the overall prep time by as much as one-third for the new SHSAT ELA exam. (12) Early practice results indicate students are scoring on average close to 70% on the new ELA revising-editing sections with minimal study or preparation. (13) That equates to a gain of up to four raw points on the SHSAT versus the old verbal sections. (14) Unless other parts of the ELA exam become more challenging, raw scores will likely rise, and the required number of correct answers needed to get into a specialized high school may also increase. (15) It should be noted, the scaled scores and cut-off levels may or may not change because they are by definition scaled or adjusted. (16) It also isn't clear how or even if this will alter the profile of admitted students. (17) It does, however, seem likely the number of correct answers to get the same scaled score will likely rise. (18) Be wary of any reported scaled scores and cut-off levels on practice exams as they may overstate student performance.

4. Which revision of sentence 2 uses the most precise language?

- A. In the past, these two eliminated sections represented a significant part of the verbal exam.
- B. In the past, these two eliminated sections represented two out of three parts of the verbal exam.
- C. In the past, these two eliminated sections represented two out of three parts of the verbal exam comprising a critical twenty raw points on the SHSAT.
- D. In the past, these two eliminated sections comprised an important twenty raw points on the SHSAT.

5. Which sentence would best precede sentence 1 to introduce the main ideas for the passage?
- A. SHSAT scrambled paragraphs and logical reasoning exam sections did not reflect material students learned in the classroom and produced an unfair bias in favor of students able to afford expensive tutoring.
  - B. The specialized high school admission test has changed, and the result is that the exam appears to include topics more familiar to students.
  - C. The new SHSAT ELA exam sections will require fewer study hours than scrambled paragraphs and logical reasoning sections from previous years.
  - D. Students are performing better on the new specialized high school ELA test than previous verbal exams.
6. Which transition word or phrase should be added to the beginning of sentence 5?
- A. Although,
  - B. In addition,
  - C. On the other hand,
  - D. As a result,

7. Read this sentence.

Complaints about the SHSAT, including unequal access to expensive tutoring options for underrepresented demographics, called into question the efficacy of exam topics only taught outside the core classroom curriculum.

Where should this sentence be added to best support the ideas in the second paragraph (sentences 4–8)?

- A. between sentences 5 and 6
  - B. between sentences 6 and 7
  - C. between sentences 7 and 8
  - D. between sentences 4 and 5
8. Which of the following sentences inserted between sentences 17 and 18 would lessen the effectiveness of the ideas developed in the third paragraph?
- A. There is no reason to believe the NYC DOE student handbook practice exams published each year will not accurately represent typical SHSAT exam questions.
  - B. Practice exam results provide predictive value for the actual SHSAT exam scores obtained.
  - C. The traditional relationship between raw scores and the resulting scaled scores or admission cut-off levels will change in 2018.
  - D. It is impossible to provide complete coverage of the language common core in a limited number of sample exams.

9. Which sentence is unnecessary to develop the ideas presented in the final paragraph (sentences 14–18) and should be deleted?
- A. sentence 14
  - B. sentence 16
  - C. sentence 17
  - D. sentence 18
10. Which concluding sentence should be added after sentence 18 to best support the main idea of the passage?
- A. In conclusion, the new SHSAT ELA exam better reflects what students learn in the classroom, and that should lead to less dependence on outside test preparation as well as potentially improved raw scores.
  - B. The current disparity of specialized high school admissions between Black and Latino students and Caucasian and Asian students will likely fall in 2018 and beyond.
  - C. In conclusion, the city made the correct decision to modify the SHSAT exam to more closely align the test with material all students study in the classroom.
  - D. Many tutoring firms continue to report student results based on the old raw to scaled score conversion tables.

## READING COMPREHENSION

Questions 11-29

**DIRECTIONS:** Read the passage below and answer the questions following it. Base your answers **on information contained only in the passage**. You may reread a passage if you need to. Mark the best answer for each question.

### Passage 4:

Bad memories reside not only in our conscious mind, but they also leave a residue in our unconscious brain. New research reveals that actively trying to forget undesirable memories

5. can help eliminate this unconscious trace. In a recent experiment, researchers exposed pairs of images to test subjects and asked certain participants to attempt to forget the original image of the object. The researchers wanted to
10. see whether such willful forgetting could change how readily the test subjects could later identify a picture of that same object among hidden and scrambled images, visual noise. In most cases, once people have seen an image, a
15. coffee cup, for example, they can more easily identify another representation of that same coffee cup even if it is disguised. The human mind constructs a mental image of the coffee cup the first time around, which it retrieves
20. even in the presence of visual noise.

However, in the study, it turned out that participants had a harder time identifying an object within the background noise if they had first tried to forget the image. In addition,

25. active attempts to forget an object also modified the unconscious memory of that image the second time around. When people try to forget something, "Basically, they're turning off areas of the brain that normally see

30. that object in order to prevent it from returning into the conscious mind," said one study researcher.

- The brain stores the mental picture of an object like the first coffee cup in the visual
35. cortex, the part of the brain that does the "seeing." This kind of memory trace is distinct from a conscious memory that a person can recall. Researchers observed subjects' brain activity while viewing the images. They found
40. that when the researchers prompted subjects to remember a picture the participants had previously been told to forget, the operation of the visual perception areas of the brain was compromised compared with times when
45. researchers reminded subjects of images they had not tried to forget. According to researchers, this result indicates that people can willfully reduce reactivation of visual memories and prevent those images from coming into
50. their conscious mind.

- Although this finding suggests that actively trying not to remember could help people who have experienced trauma, the scientists say that trying to forget an emotionally powerful
55. memory may not be as easy as forgetting the memory of a coffee cup, as done in the experiments in the study. More research will be required.

11. Which of the following is the best title for this passage?

- A. The Mysteries of the Unconscious Mind
- B. Bad Memories
- C. Altering the Visual Cortex
- D. Willful Control of Memory

12. Which of the following best defines the difference between conscious and unconscious memory?

- A. A person can actively revisit a conscious memory.
- B. The visual cortex stores conscious memories.
- C. Conscious memories can be forgotten.
- D. Conscious memory is vivid and unconscious memories form in trace amounts only.

13. The passage suggests which of the following is true if a test subject has seen an object once.
- A. They have an unconscious desire to drink coffee.
  - B. They more easily identify the object unless masked by visual noise.
  - C. The subject cannot forget the object more easily by trying harder.
  - D. The subject forms an unconscious image of the object.
14. What is the purpose of the study outlined in the passage?
- A. To study the impact of virtual noise on the unconscious mind
  - B. To test if memory recall changes when subjects attempt not to remember
  - C. To examine if memories of traumatic experiences can be willfully forgotten
  - D. To test the limits of reactivation of the visual cortex
15. The phrase “visual noise” most likely represents which of the following?
- A. The imperfect image registered in the visual cortex
  - B. A scrambled image of a coffee cup
  - C. Inability to identify the second image of the same object
  - D. A mixed-up picture of any viewed item
16. In line 43, “The visual perception areas of the brain” most likely refers to which of the following?
- A. The unconscious mind.
  - B. The frontal lobe of the brain
  - C. The visual cortex
  - D. The conscious mind
17. Which of the following people are most likely to benefit from continued advances in this study?
- A. A war veteran returning home from battle
  - B. An engineer doing post-doctoral work
  - C. A high diver in Acapulco
  - D. A medical researcher in cardiology

**Passage 5:**

At a very young age, little Yani got into her father's oil paints and then painted over her father's beautiful painting. At that moment, Wang Shiquiang knew that his daughter would be a talented, successful artist. Her

5. father asked little Yani why she had done this, and she told him matter-of-factly, "Papa, I was helping you paint. I want to paint and paint!" From earliest childhood Yani watched her father paint and, when she was two years old, he gave her a brush to "play" at painting.

Wang Yani was born in the small town of Gongcheng, China in the year 1975. At the age of four years, Yani was already an avid painter, and a well-known artist who viewed a few of her works of art asked Yani to

15. demonstrate her technique before various famous artists from the city of Shanghai. The group unanimously agreed that the child should host a personal art exhibition despite her youth. By the ripe old age of eight, Yani was already famously painting her favorite subject, mischievous monkeys, throughout China. China even produced an official postage stamp with one of Yani's works of art. The young child prodigy had fast become a worldwide star in the world of art and a Chinese national treasure.
20. Surrounded from birth by art and artists, it is not a surprise Yani too became an artist. However, she has never had any formal training in painting styles. Her father pursued a unique, hands-off approach

**18.** Which of the following best tells what this passage is about?

- A. Yani's attitude toward art
- B. the work of a child prodigy
- C. the importance of children's art in China
- D. how Yani's parents taught her to paint

**19.** How was Yani's talent first discovered?

- A. China created a postage stamp from her painting.
- B. Yani had a solo exhibition at the Smithsonian.
- C. An influential local artist saw Yani's paintings.
- D. Yani destroyed one of her father's beautiful paintings.

- encouraging Yani to develop self-confidence in her talents. Wang Shiquiang even refrained from his own painting to avoid influencing Yani's style.

Critics immediately recognized the talent in Yani's early creations—paintings of monkeys and animals inspired by trips to the zoo. Yani painted in the expressive xieyi style instead of the gongbi style, which requires deliberate, delicate strokes. According to one critic, "The paintings seemed to flow from Yani spiritually as if she invented the style of art." Yani chooses her colors and makes her bold, wet, overlapping strokes swiftly and with unparalleled certainty. Yani's more recent subjects include landscapes and people as well as animals. She has had solo exhibitions in dozens of major museums including the Smithsonian where she was the youngest artist displayed in a solo exhibition at the age of fourteen.

45. What motivates Yani to paint? How did she learn her craft? Where will the future take this bright, young artist? At sixteen, she gave these answers: "When you pick up a brush don't even ask anyone for help. Because the most wonderful thing about painting is being left alone with your own imagination. You must tell a story to yourself using colors, paper, and paint – these are all you have to depend on. I do not paint to get praise from others, but to play a game of endless joy," she said, "and I will just go on with it naturally."

**20.** What does the passage suggest was the reaction of the group of Shanghai artists to Yani's paintings?

- A. Yani's style was natural and unique as if she invented it herself.
- B. She had potential but required more instruction in xieyi painting.
- C. Her talent was worthy of display at an art gallery or museum.
- D. She was overly influenced by her father's style.

**21.** Which of the following best depicts Yani's style of painting?

- A. finely detailed
- B. strongly influenced by European artists
- C. difficult to create
- D. created with bold strokes

**22.** What is the main reason why Yani's paintings are so remarkable?

- A. The subject matter of each is unique and unusual.
- B. A very young child created them.
- C. They showed a striking mastery of different styles.
- D. The style is new and used only by Yani.

**23.** What is the most likely reason Yani continues to paint?

- A. to engage in creative, delightful adventures
- B. to display imaginative narratives on canvas
- C. to please the critics
- D. to prove she is more than just another child prodigy



**Passage 6:**

- Barbara W. Tuchman, skilled at writing histories of men at war and on the brink of war, was once described in the paper as a fifty-year-old housewife and mother of three. In truth, she was also a famous historian, author, winner of two Pulitzer Prizes and described as a national treasure. Tuchman found it difficult to be a writer simply because she was a woman. "If a man is a writer," she once said, "everybody tiptoes around past the locked door of the breadwinner. But if you're an ordinary female housewife, people say, "This is just something Barbara wanted to do; it's not professional." It was Mrs. Tuchman's fourth book, "The Guns of August," a study of the opening month of World War I, that made her famous after it came out in 1962, winning her the first of two Pulitzer Prizes.

- Barabara Tuchman could have settled for a comfortable, conventional life as the wife of a prominent physician. She was born in New York in a family eminent in finance and public service. However, Tuchman took up the historian's profession when her three daughters grew older. She had a unique skill for researching not just factual details but immersing herself and ultimately her readers side by side with the personalities in history. Before Tuchman wrote "The Guns of August," she rented a Renault sedan and toured the appropriate battlefields in Europe. When she

- took notes, it was always on index cards measuring 4 by 6 inches, a convenient size, she said, for storing in shoeboxes and carrying in her purse. It was just this down to earth style that helped her convey the range of thoughts and emotions of historical characters as well as the factual detail. She did not have an academic title or even a graduate degree. "It's what saved me," she later said. "If I had taken a doctoral degree, it would have stifled my writing capacity." She confessed the secret to her success was "being in love with the subject matter."

- "How can it interest others if it doesn't interest you?" she declared. At the National Portrait Gallery in 1978, she told an audience, "the writer's object should be to hold the reader's attention. I want the reader to turn the page and keep on turning to the end." She added, "This is accomplished only when the narrative moves steadily ahead, not when it comes to a weary standstill, overloaded with every item uncovered in the research." Onward, the readers, turned, until this housewife from New York City became a best-selling author, respected historian, and authored a second Pulitzer Prize winning book, *Stillwell and the American Experience in China: 1911-1945*.

24. Which of the following is the best title for this passage?

- A. The Complete Biography of Barbara Tuchman
- B. The Art of Recording History at War
- C. Barbara Tuchman: From NYC Housewife to Prize-Winning Historian.
- D. Barbara Tuchman, Her Influence on History

25. According to the passage, which of the following is an accurate assessment of Barbara Tuchman's research?

- A. She failed to graduate from college, so writing, not research, was her strength.
- B. She focused only on character development.
- C. She stored her research in small boxes and bags.
- D. She won the Pulitzer Prize for her research efforts.

26. Which of the following is **not** a quote from Barbara Tuchman in the passage?

- A. "If I had taken a doctoral degree it would have stifled my writing..."
- B. "Everybody tiptoes around the past..."
- C. "be in love with the subject matter."
- D. "I want the reader to turn the page and keep on turning to the end."

27. For what purpose did the author mention Barbara Tuchman "was once described in the paper as a fifty-year-old housewife and mother of three" in lines (2-4)?

- A. to contrast one idea with another.
- B. to provide an example of an earlier point
- C. to examine a detail in the life of the subject
- D. to highlight that Tuchman's path to professional acclaim was unusual

28. Barbara Tuchman is most likely to offer which of the following lessons to authors of history?

- A. Always research and double check the facts.
- B. Engage the reader more like a novelist than a dry historian.
- C. Approach each topic with the same high level of professionalism.
- D. It is critical to live at the heart of the publishing world in Manhattan to achieve success.

29. What advice might the author of this passage have for the columnist in the paper referenced on line 3?

- A. Don't judge a book by its cover.
- B. Writing history is serious business.
- C. Barbara Tuchman is a national treasure.
- D. You can be anything you want to be if you put your mind to it.

END EXAM 1B