

SAT Practice Test 1: Answers & Explanations

Writing and Language Test



1. (A)	5. (D)	9. (C)	13. (C)	17. (C)	21. (D)	25. (C)	29. (B)	33. (C)	37. (A)	41. (B)
2. (C)	6. (D)	10. (A)	14. (D)	18. (B)	22. (C)	26. (D)	30. (D)	34. (D)	38. (D)	42. (B)
3. (D)	7. (D)	11. (A)	15. (A)	19. (A)	23. (A)	27. (A)	31. (A)	35. (C)	39. (D)	43. (D)
4. (B)	8. (C)	12. (A)	16. (C)	20. (C)	24. (A)	28. (D)	32. (B)	36. (A)	40. (A)	44. (A)

1) A

Concept(s) Tested: Noun Agreement

The sentence is discussing a "construction occupation." Carpentry is an occupation, so the correct answer must be (A). The other choices are incorrect because they equate "a carpenter" or "carpenters" to an occupation, which is illogical.

2) C

Concept(s) Tested: Precise Diction

The second sentence of the passage states, "carpenters participate in all phases of building construction," which means a carpenter must possess many skills. Using this information, we can infer that the most appropriate choice is (C) because "versatile" can mean "multipurpose," or possessing many skills. (A) is incorrect because a person, not an occupation, can be resourceful. (B) is inappropriate because describing something or someone as "handy" is too colloquial for a passage with a formal tone. (D) can be eliminated because it would not make sense in context.

3) D

Concept(s) Tested: In-Sentence Punctuation

If two independent clauses appear in the same sentence, they must be separated using a comma and a coordinating conjunction or a semicolon. (D) uses a semicolon to connect the two independent clauses, and is therefore the correct choice. (A) is incorrect because beginning a clause with "while" makes it a subordinate clause, which cannot be separated from an independent clause using a semicolon. We can eliminate choice (B) because an em dash cannot be used to separate two independent clauses, and (C) is incorrect because the conjunction "or" implies that only one of two choices can be true, which is not the case with the sentence at 3.

4) B

Concept(s) Tested: In-Sentence Punctuation, Sentence Boundaries

The phrase "from building highways to framing doors" is a non-essential prepositional phrase

describing the range of construction that carpenters may undertake. Generally, non-essential phrases are separated from the rest of a sentence using a pair of commas, parentheses, or em dashes. The only choice that does so is choice (B), which separates the phrase from the rest of the sentence with commas. The other choices are incorrect because they do not separate the phrase properly.

5) D

Concept(s) Tested: Transition Words and Phrases

The transition word at 5 must accurately convey the relationship between the physically demanding work environments of carpenters and the high rates of injury and illness among carpenters. (D) is the correct choice because it clearly illustrates that the high rates of carpentry-related illness and injury result from the difficult working conditions. (A) can be eliminated because the phrase "In fact" implies that the claim that follows it might be surprising based on previous information, which is not the case here. (B) is incorrect because "However" indicates contrast, which does not fit the context, and (C) is wrong because "Ultimately" generally signifies that what follows concludes or summarizes a main idea of a passage.

6) D

Concept(s) Tested: Graph Analysis

The graph reveals that the median number of days that truck drivers and carpenters spend recuperating from injuries or illnesses is 8 days per year, more days than any other profession listed in the table. The only choice that accurately conveys this information is (D). Because the y-axis of the graph displays number of days, not how much more likely someone in a certain profession is to become sick or injured, (A) and (C) are incorrect. (B) can be eliminated because truck drivers miss more days as carpenters due to injury or illness, so the claim that carpenters miss "more workdays than any other profession" is inaccurate.

7) **⇒** D
Concept(s) Tested: Noun Agreement
Because the author wants to explain what type of diploma most carpenters earn (high school diplomas), and because “diplomas” must be plural to correspond with the plural subject of the sentence, “carpenters,” the correct choice is (D). (A) is incorrect because it is singular; “a...diploma” does not agree in number with the plural noun “carpenters.” (B) and (C) are both incorrect because they do not provide a sufficient amount of information; there are many types of diplomas, so the correct choice must explain what type of diploma most carpenters earn before attending trade school.

8) **⇒** C
Concept(s) Tested: Voice, Concision
Choice (C) is the clearest and most concise option because it is phrased using the active voice, and it conveys the idea that the carpenter is the one who finishes the apprenticeship. (A) is incorrect because it incorrectly implies that “having finished an apprenticeship” is nonessential to the meaning of the sentence. (B) can be eliminated because it relies on the passive voice (“an apprenticeship is finished by the carpenter”) to convey an idea that can easily be explained using the active voice (“the carpenter finishes an apprenticeship”). (D) is incorrect because it does not make clear who finishes the apprenticeship.

9) **⇒** C
Concept(s) Tested: Passage Development
The focus of paragraph 4 is that carpenters can advance their careers by becoming independent contractors or general construction supervisors. The only choice that focuses on carpenters advancing their careers is (C), making it the most appropriate answer.

10) **⇒** A
Concept(s) Tested: Verb Tense
The subject of the sentence is the Bureau of Labor Statistics, which is a singular noun. The nearest verb in the paragraph (predicts) is in the present tense and refers to the BLS. Thus, we can conclude that the correct form of the verb is present tense, third-person singular, making (A) the correct choice. (B) is incorrect because “project” does not correspond with third-person singular nouns. (C) and (D) can be eliminated because they are in incorrect tenses.

11) **⇒** A
Concept(s) Tested: Pronoun Use
To determine the correct answer, we must determine the subject of the sentence. We can reasonably infer that the subject of the previous sentence (**The Bureau**

of Labor Statistics) is the subject of the sentence at 11. Because “The Bureau” is singular, “it” is the appropriate pronoun, making (A) the correct choice. (B) and (D) are incorrect because they contain plural pronouns, which cannot accurately refer to “The Bureau,” and (C) is incorrect because “this” is a demonstrative pronoun that serves to “point” to a particular preceding noun or concept, which is inaccurate here.

12) **⇒** A
Concept(s) Tested: Precise Diction
Celestial bodies such as the Sun and Moon appear to humans in regular cycles of days and nights. Thus, their motions appear to be cyclical, making (A) the correct choice. (B) is incorrect because cynical means skeptical or distrustful. (C) can be eliminated because seismic relates to earthquakes or, more generally, vibrations of the earth’s surface, and (D) is inappropriate because sinister refers to something disturbing or evil.

13) **⇒** C
Concept(s) Tested: Concision
Of the choices at 13, (C) is the most concise. It does not contain any redundancies or ambiguous pronouns and is therefore the correct answer. (A) is incorrect because “everyday life” is assumed to be “normal,” making choice (A) redundant. We can eliminate (B) because the sentence describes “ancient civilizations,” which logically cannot describe “your life.” (D) is incorrect because the phrase “how people normally lived” is a less concise way of saying “daily life.”

14) **⇒** D
Concept(s) Tested: Precise Diction
A “harbinger” is a sign or indication of things to come. If religious authorities used astronomical event as harbingers, we can infer that they interpreted visible astronomical events in order to make predictions. Thus, (D) is the correct choice. The other choices do not make sense in the context of the sentence.

15) **⇒** A
Concept(s) Tested: In-Sentence Punctuation
The phrase “and the most puzzling” provides nonessential information, which must be set apart from the rest of the sentence using a pair of commas, em dashes, or parentheses. The correct choice is (A) because it is the only choice that uses a pair of the aforementioned punctuation to separate the interjection from the rest of the sentence. (B) and (D) fail to punctuate the end of the interjection, and (C) incorrectly uses a semicolon, which should only be used to separate two independent clauses.

16) **⇒** C**Concept(s) Tested: Voice, Concision**

Generally, using the active voice (placing the **subject** before the action it performs) conveys information more effectively than using the passive voice (placing the subject after the verb or omitting the subject altogether). Choice (A) can be eliminated because it does not say who recovered artifacts (omitting the subject). (B) and (D) are incorrect because saying that something was found *and* recovered is redundant. (C) is the correct answer because it uses the active voice, and it is concise.

17) **⇒** C**Concept(s) Tested: Passage Organization**

Sentence 5 indicates that the fragments of the recovered device were too corroded to be deciphered. It naturally would follow that the device remained an "archeological curiosity" for a half-century. Because the information in sentence 5 sets up the context for the information in sentence 3, (C) is the answer. (A) is incorrect because the sentence as it is now placed breaks up the logical flow about where the device was found and what it was named. (B) is incorrect because it breaks up the chronological order of the discovery. Finally, (D) is incorrect because the information in sentence 6 logically comes after the information in sentence 3; sentence 6 indicates why researchers can now "decode" the device.

18) **⇒** B**Concept(s) Tested: In-Sentence Punctuation**

This question requires one to determine the relationship between the first two clauses of the paragraph. The second clause elaborates on the information of the first clause by describing which features remained unclear. Thus, we can eliminate (A) and (D) because they signal contrast, not elaboration. The use of a colon in choice (B) shows that the second clause defines, describes, or elaborates on the first clause, making (B) the correct choice. A comma cannot be used to combine two independent clauses in a single sentence unless the comma is followed by a coordinating conjunction, making (C) incorrect.

19) **⇒** A**Concept(s) Tested: Passage Organization**

Sentence 1 of paragraph 3 describes the unclear inscriptions and obscure inner working of the mechanism uncovered in the 1970s, and sentence 2 jumps to the year 2006, when more was discovered about the mysterious mechanism. Thus, we can infer that the added sentence should be placed after sentence 1 because it explains that "researchers chose to ignore the device" for decades until more information about it could be gathered in 2006.

20) **⇒** C**Concept(s) Tested: Sentence Modifiers**

The underlined portion at 20 modifies the adjective "intricate." Adjectives must be modified, or described, using an adverb. Most adverbs are easily identifiable because they end in "-ly." Thus, (C) is the correct answer because it contains the adverb "incredibly," which makes sense both grammatically and when placed in the context of the sentence. All other choices contain an adjective rather than an adverb, making them grammatically incorrect.

21) **⇒** D**Concept(s) Tested: Verb Tense**

The verb that precedes the underlined portion at 21 is the past tense verb "was," and the verb that comes immediately after the underlined portion at 21 is the past tense verb "accommodated." Moreover, using the simple past tense makes sense in the context of the sentence. The Antikythera Mechanism is no longer fully intact, so the author must be referring to how the mechanism looked when it was intact in the past. Using these clues, we can infer that the correct answer is (D). Choices (A), (B), and (C) are incorrect because they each break the simple past tense pattern established by "was" and "accommodated."

22) **⇒** C**Concept(s) Tested: Relative Clauses**

The correct choice is (C) because it uses the correct relative pronoun (which) to add additional information about the seven hands. (A) is incorrect because two independent clauses connected by a comma must include a conjunction, such as "and." (B) is incorrect because semicolons can only connect independent clauses, and "marking" begins a phrase. (D) is incorrect because using the restrictive pronoun "that" might confuse readers. If the seven hands are "the ones that marked," the reader is left wondering if there were additional hands that marked other things.

23) **⇒** A**Concept(s) Tested: Precise Diction**

The correct answer is (A) because to underscore is to highlight or emphasize. Thus, "underscore" makes sense in context because "sinister" (evil-sounding) strings would logically serve to highlight a villain's speech. (B) and (C) are both incorrect because "undermine" and "undercut" both mean to weaken, which is the opposite of the intended meaning. "To understand" is to comprehend or recognize, which does not make sense in context, so (D) is incorrect.

24) **⇒** A

Concept(s) Tested: Combining Sentences

The relationship between the two sentences is one of cause and effect. (A) nicely illustrates this cause-effect relationship by using “so.” (B) is incorrect because “however” indicates a contrast, which is not the case here. (C) is incorrect because it is a less-direct way of saying what (A) says succinctly. (D) is incorrect for the same reason: it is too wordy.

25) **⇒** C

Concept(s) Tested: Pronoun Use

The pronoun at 25 refers to the subject of the sentence, “an audience.” Although an audience is made up of many individuals, the word “audience” itself is singular. Thus, the singular pronoun “it” is appropriate, making (C) correct. (A) is incorrect because “they” is plural whereas “an audience” is singular. (B) can be eliminated because “a person” cannot accurately stand in for an audience (a group of people), and (D) is incorrect because “someone” refers to a particular individual whereas an audience is a group of people.

26) **⇒** D

Concept(s) Tested: Appositives and Titles

The underlined portion at 26 gives Richard Wagner’s title (German composer), which should not be followed by a comma. The title serves as an adjective, which should not be separated from the noun it precedes and modifies. Likewise, a possessive noun (Wagner’s) should not be separated from the noun it describes (*The Ring Cycle*) with a comma, making (D) the only appropriate choice. Other choices use one or more commas to inappropriately separate Richard Wagner from his title or his work.

27) **⇒** A

Concept(s) Tested: Participial Phrases

The phrase “Composed over the course of 26 years” does not require any additional information to be comprehensible or grammatically correct, so (A) is the most concise, and therefore correct, answer. Other choices add unnecessary participles to the phrase, making the phrase more convoluted and wordy.

28) **⇒** D

Concept(s) Tested: Precise Diction

(D) is the best choice because the verb “to span” suggests that something begins and ends within a certain period of time. Thus, to claim that the plot spans three generations means “the plot of takes place over three generations.” (A) is incorrect because logically, a plot can include events over three generations, but it cannot “include” the generations themselves. (B) is incorrect because “to traverse” means to cross or travel, which is not close in meaning to “take place.”

(C) can be eliminated because “enclose” is illogical when discussing plots.

29) **⇒** B

Concept(s) Tested: Concision

The correct choice is (B) because it serves as an appositive that summarizes the same information as all the other choices using fewer words and without redundancies. (A) contains a redundancy, as ruler and leader mean the same thing. (C) and (D) both unnecessarily turn the appositive phrase “ruler of the gods” into a relative clause, making the choices needlessly wordy.

30) **⇒** D

Concept(s) Tested: Pronoun Use/Case

Choice (A) is incorrect because the clause “many of them have leitmotifs” is an independent clause, so it cannot be separated from the preceding independent clause by just a comma. Instead, a relative clause is needed to further describe the characters. “Which” is the relative pronoun used to refer to things, and “who” and “whom” refer to people. Since the pronoun refers to “a huge cast of characters” (people), we can eliminate (B). The pronoun follows the preposition “of,” so the pronoun must be the object of a preposition. Thus, the answer must be (D) because “whom” is the objective case form of “who.”

31) **⇒** A

Concept(s) Tested: Passage Development

Choice (A) is correct because it prepares for the claim that Wotan’s leitmotif changes based on how he is feeling. (B) is too general to clearly relate to the rest of the paragraph. (C) is incorrect because the rest of the paragraph discusses Wotan’s leitmotif, not the relationship between minor characters and leitmotifs. (D) can be eliminated because the paragraph does not mention instrumentation.

32) **⇒** B

Concept(s) Tested: Transition Words and Phrases, Sentence Modifiers

This question requires you to recognize the relationship between the ideas that “leitmotifs provide musical cues” and that they “add emotional weight to” the opera. Both ideas focus on the ways leitmotifs help an audience understand the opera, with the second idea simply adding to the discussion. Thus, (B) is the most appropriate answer. Although the two sentences discuss the same topic, the second idea is not a consequence or result of the first idea, so (A) is incorrect. (C) can be eliminated because the two ideas do not contrast with or contradict each other, making “Conversely” inappropriate. (D) is incorrect because the second idea, that leitmotifs “add emotional weight to” the opera, should not come as a surprise or cause confusion based on the first idea, as implied by the adverb “Quizzically.”

33) **⇒ C****Concept(s) Tested: Passage Development**

As written, the paragraph inappropriately concludes by offering specific information about the use of leitmotifs in action and adventure films, information that demands further elaboration. (B) and (D) are incorrect because, like (A), they require elaboration, making them inappropriate conclusions. (C) is correct because it supports the information in the first part of the sentence—that leitmotifs have survived for well over a century. (C) provides a statement that succinctly summarizes the paragraph as well as the entire passage.

34) **⇒ D****Concept(s) Tested: In-Sentence Punctuation**

Choice (A) is incorrect because a semicolon separates two independent clauses, and the phrase "their shape" is not an independent clause. (B) is incorrect because an exclamation point breaks the tone of the passage, which is one of academic neutrality. (C) is incorrect because parentheses are generally used to set aside nonessential interjections; because the phrase "their shape" adds essential information to the sentence, it should not be set aside in parentheses. The correct choice is (D) because the em dash can separate a description (*a common feature*) from what it describes (*their shape*).

35) **⇒ C****Concept(s) Tested: Passage Organization**

The information in the sentence elaborates on the writer's point about shape in sentence 3, and should therefore go after it. (C) is the correct choice. (A) is incorrect because sentence 1 only states that the universe has produced a large number of stars and planets. This information is not logically connected to the added sentence. Likewise, (B) only includes a statement that there are hundreds of billions of stars and planets in the Milky Way. At this point, the paragraph has not yet mentioned anything about the spherical shape of stars and planets. Finally, (D) is incorrect because it would interrupt sentence 4, which sets up the information that follows, from concluding the paragraph.

36) **⇒ A****Concept(s) Tested: Precise Diction**

The correct choice will convey the idea that gravity pulls particles toward a nebula. The verb closest in meaning to "pull toward" is "draw," because one meaning of "to draw something" is to pull it in a specific direction. (B) is incorrect because "to captivate" is to interest, which, in the context of nebulae formation, is unrelated to "pull toward." To evoke is to bring something to mind, which cannot be applied to nebulae, making (C) incorrect.

Although "to lure" someone or something means to attract or draw, luring is a conscious act. Because nebulae cannot consciously do anything, choice (D) is incorrect.

37) **⇒ A****Concept(s) Tested: Precise Diction**

All the choices mean approximately the same thing: to group together. However, only (A) is accurate based on the context in which the word is used. Inanimate objects (particles in this case) can "cluster" because clustering is not necessarily a conscious action. The other choices are incorrect because they describe conscious acts.

38) **⇒ D****Concept(s) Tested: Sentence Modifiers**

Choice (D) is correct because one-syllable comparative modifiers such as "fast" take "-er" and "-est" endings. They do not use "more." Choice (A) is incorrect because it uses both "more" and an "-er" ending, which is redundant. (B) is incorrect because "rapid" is an adjective, and an adverb is needed here. The correct form is "more rapidly." (C) is incorrect because, like (A), it places "more" with "fast."

NOTE: the modifier "faster" may be used as an adjective or an adverb. However, most adverbs will have an "-ly" ending.

39) **⇒ D****Concept(s) Tested: Verb Tense**

Choice (D) is correct because the present tense is appropriate to describe an ongoing process. There are also present-tense verbs before and after the underlined portion, meaning the present tense is used consistently in the paragraph. (A) is incorrect because it is in the present perfect tense, which breaks the pattern established by the surrounding verbs "continues" and "becomes." (B) can be eliminated because "acquiring" is not a verb at all: words ending in "-ing" function as adjectives or nouns, depending on context. (C) is incorrect because "acquired" is in the past tense, which is inconsistent with the present-tense verbs "continues" and "becomes."

40) **⇒ A****Concept(s) Tested: Commonly Confused Words**

The underlined portion at 40 is showing possession or ownership, over the phrase "gravitational field." Thus, the correct choice is (A) because "its" is the possessive form of the pronoun "it." (B) is incorrect because "it's" is a contracted form of "it is." (C) can be eliminated because, much like the possessive pronouns "his" or "hers," the possessive pronoun "its" does not need an apostrophe. And (D) is

incorrect because “it is” does not make sense in the context of the sentence.

41)  B

Concept(s) Tested: Participial Phrases

Choice (B) is correct because the participial phrase “surrounded by...” should be separated by a comma to avoid confusion. We can eliminate (A) because the inclusion of the participle “being” muddies the meaning of the sentence while making it less concise. (C) is incorrect because the use of the reflexive pronoun “itself” adds nothing of value to the sentence and implies a conscious act. Choice (D) makes the second clause of the sentence into an independent clause, which creates a run-on sentence.

42)  B

Concept(s) Tested: Concision

Choices (A) and (D) can be eliminated because they use unnecessarily convoluted phrasing to get their points across. Phrases such as “acquire a sufficient amount of mass” and “the process of fusion” can be made less wordy without any loss of meaning. (B) is correct because it conveys the same information as (A) using fewer words. (C) is incorrect because it moves the subject of the clause (gas giants) to the middle of the sentence, muddying the meaning of the sentence.

43)  D

Concept(s) Tested: Combining Sentences

The information in the second clause elaborates on the information on the first clause. Choices (A), (B), and (C) are incorrect because they include words that imply that the second clause is an effect of or a contrast to the previous clause, which is incorrect. Only choice (D) appropriately separates the two independent clauses by using a semicolon, which suggests that the two ideas are closely related without explicitly illustrating the nature of the relationship.

44)  A

Concept(s) Tested: Passage Development

The last paragraph discusses the role of gravity in the formation of spheres, with the last sentence explaining why only some celestial objects are spherical. Thus, it makes sense that the final sentence will elaborate on this concept, so (A) is the correct answer. (B) is incorrect because it introduces a topic that is unrelated to the discussion of gravity, the main focus of the paragraph. (C) is incorrect because it introduces a law of gravity that would require further elaboration. Finally, (D) is incorrect because it abruptly transitions to a general claim about Isaac Newton, which, again, would require further elaboration.