



SAT[®]

Digital SAT[®]

Sample Questions and
Answer Explanations

RW question 1

To dye wool, Navajo (Diné) weaver Lillie Taylor uses plants and vegetables from Arizona, where she lives. For example, she achieved the deep reds and browns featured in her 2003 rug *In the Path of the Four Seasons* by using Arizona dock roots, drying and grinding them before mixing the powder with water to create a dye bath. To intensify the appearance of certain colors, Taylor also sometimes mixes in clay obtained from nearby soil.

Which choice best states the main idea of the text?

- A) Reds and browns are not commonly featured in most of Taylor's rugs.
- B) *In the Path of the Four Seasons* is widely acclaimed for its many colors and innovative weaving techniques.
- C) Taylor draws on local resources in the approach she uses to dye wool.
- D) Taylor finds it difficult to locate Arizona dock root in the desert.

RW question 2

Jan Gimsa, Robert Sleight, and Ulrike Gimsa have hypothesized that the sail-like structure running down the back of the dinosaur *Spinosaurus aegyptiacus* improved the animal's success in underwater pursuits of prey species capable of making quick, evasive movements. To evaluate their hypothesis, a second team of researchers constructed two battery-powered mechanical models of *S. aegyptiacus*, one with a sail and one without, and subjected the models to a series of identical tests in a water-filled tank.

Which finding from the model tests, if true, would most strongly support Gimsa and colleagues' hypothesis?

- A) The model with a sail took significantly longer to travel a specified distance while submerged than the model without a sail did.
- B) The model with a sail displaced significantly more water while submerged than the model without a sail did.
- C) The model with a sail had significantly less battery power remaining after completing the tests than the model without a sail did.
- D) The model with a sail took significantly less time to complete a sharp turn while submerged than the model without a sail did.

RW question 3

"Ghosts of the Old Year" is an early 1900s poem by James Weldon Johnson. In the poem, the speaker describes experiencing an ongoing cycle of anticipation followed by regretful reflection: _____

Which quotation from "Ghosts of the Old Year" most effectively illustrates the claim?

- A) "The snow has ceased its fluttering flight, / The wind sunk to a whisper light, / An ominous stillness fills the night, / A pause—a hush."
- B) "And so the years go swiftly by, / Each, coming, brings ambitions high, / And each, departing, leaves a sigh / Linked to the past."
- C) "What does this brazen tongue declare, / That falling on the midnight air / Brings to my heart a sense of care / Akin to fright?"
- D) "It tells of many a squandered day, / Of slighted gems and treasured clay, / Of precious stores not laid away, / Of fields unreaped."

RW question 4

Participants' Evaluation of the Likelihood That Robots
Can Work Effectively in Different Occupations

Occupation	Somewhat or very unlikely (%)	Neutral (%)	Somewhat or very likely (%)
television news anchor	24	9	67
teacher	37	16	47
firefighter	62	9	30
surgeon	74	9	16
tour guide	10	8	82

Rows in table may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Georgia Tech roboticists De'Aira Bryant and Ayanna Howard, along with ethicist Jason Borenstein, were interested in people's perceptions of robots' competence. They recruited participants and asked them how likely they think it is that a robot could do the work required in various occupations. Participants' evaluations varied widely depending on which occupation was being considered; for example, _____

Which choice most effectively uses data from the table to complete the example?

- A) 82% of participants believe that it is somewhat or very likely that a robot could work effectively as a tour guide, but only 16% believe that it is somewhat or very likely that a robot could work as a surgeon.
- B) 47% of participants believe that it is somewhat or very likely that a robot could work effectively as a teacher, but 37% of respondents believe that it is somewhat or very unlikely that a robot could do so.
- C) 9% of participants were neutral about whether a robot could work effectively as a television news anchor, which is the same percent of participants who were neutral when asked about a robot working as a surgeon.
- D) 62% of participants believe that it is somewhat or very unlikely that a robot could work effectively as a firefighter.

RW question 5

Many animals, including humans, must sleep, and sleep is known to have a role in everything from healing injuries to encoding information in long-term memory. But some scientists claim that, from an evolutionary standpoint, deep sleep for hours at a time leaves an animal so vulnerable that the known benefits of sleeping seem insufficient to explain why it became so widespread in the animal kingdom. These scientists therefore imply that _____

Which choice most logically completes the text?

- A) it is more important to understand how widespread prolonged deep sleep is than to understand its function.
- B) prolonged deep sleep is likely advantageous in ways that have yet to be discovered.
- C) many traits that provide significant benefits for an animal also likely pose risks to that animal.
- D) most traits perform functions that are hard to understand from an evolutionary standpoint.

RW question 6

In recommending Bao Phi's collection *Sông I Sing*, a librarian noted that pieces by the spoken-word poet don't lose their _____ nature when printed: the language has the same pleasant musical quality on the page as it does when performed by Phi.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A) jarring
- B) scholarly
- C) melodic
- D) personal

RW question 7

The following text is from F. Scott Fitzgerald's 1925 novel *The Great Gatsby*.

[Jay Gatsby] was balancing himself on the dashboard of his car with that resourcefulness of movement that is so peculiarly American—that comes, I suppose, with the absence of lifting work in youth and, even more, with the formless grace of our nervous, sporadic games. This quality was continually breaking through his punctilious manner in the shape of restlessness.

As used in the text, what does the word “quality” most nearly mean?

- A) Characteristic
- B) Standard
- C) Prestige
- D) Accomplishment

RW question 8

The work of molecular biophysicist Enrique M. De La Cruz is known for _____ traditional boundaries between academic disciplines. The university laboratory that De La Cruz runs includes engineers, biologists, chemists, and physicists, and the research the lab produces makes use of insights and techniques from all those fields.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

- A) reinforcing
- B) anticipating
- C) epitomizing
- D) transcending

RW question 9

Some studies have suggested that posture can influence cognition, but we should not overstate this phenomenon. A case in point: In a 2014 study, Megan O'Brien and Alaa Ahmed had subjects stand or sit while making risky simulated economic decisions. Standing is more physically unstable and cognitively demanding than sitting; accordingly, O'Brien and Ahmed hypothesized that standing subjects would display more risk aversion during the decision-making tasks than sitting subjects did, since they would want to avoid further feelings of discomfort and complicated risk evaluations. But O'Brien and Ahmed actually found no difference in the groups' performance.

Which choice best states the main purpose of the text?

- A) It presents the study by O'Brien and Ahmed to critique the methods and results reported in previous studies of the effects of posture on cognition.
- B) It argues that research findings about the effects of posture on cognition are often misunderstood, as in the case of O'Brien and Ahmed's study.
- C) It explains a significant problem in the emerging understanding of posture's effects on cognition and how O'Brien and Ahmed tried to solve that problem.
- D) It discusses the study by O'Brien and Ahmed to illustrate why caution is needed when making claims about the effects of posture on cognition.

RW question 10

The following text is from Herman Melville's 1854 short story "The Lightning-Rod Man."

The stranger still stood in the exact middle of the cottage, where he had first planted himself. His singularity impelled a closer scrutiny. A lean, gloomy figure. Hair dark and lank, mattedly streaked over his brow. His sunken pitfalls of eyes were ringed by indigo halos, and played with an innocuous sort of lightning: the gleam without the bolt. The whole man was dripping. He stood in a puddle on the bare oak floor: his strange walking-stick vertically resting at his side.

Which choice best states the function of the underlined sentence in the text as a whole?

- A) It sets up the character description presented in the sentences that follow.
- B) It establishes a contrast with the description in the previous sentence.
- C) It elaborates on the previous sentence's description of the character.
- D) It introduces the setting that is described in the sentences that follow.

RW question 11

Text 1

What factors influence the abundance of species in a given ecological community? Some theorists have argued that historical diversity is a major driver of how diverse an ecological community eventually becomes: differences in community diversity across otherwise similar habitats, in this view, are strongly affected by the number of species living in those habitats at earlier times.

Text 2

In 2010, a group of researchers including biologist Carla Cáceres created artificial pools in a New York forest. They stocked some pools with a diverse mix of zooplankton species and others with a single zooplankton species and allowed the pool communities to develop naturally thereafter. Over the course of four years, Cáceres and colleagues periodically measured the species diversity of the pools, finding—contrary to their

expectations—that by the end of the study there was little to no difference in the pools' species diversity.

Based on the texts, how would Cáceres and colleagues (Text 2) most likely describe the view of the theorists presented in Text 1?

- A) It is largely correct, but it requires a minor refinement in light of the research team's results.
- B) It is not compelling as a theory regardless of any experimental data collected by the research team.
- C) It may seem plausible, but it is not supported by the research team's findings.
- D) It probably holds true only in conditions like those in the research team's study.

RW question 12

While researching a topic, a student has taken the following notes:

- Maika'i Tubbs is a Native Hawaiian sculptor and installation artist.
- His work has been shown in the United States, Canada, Japan, and Germany, among other places.
- Many of his sculptures feature discarded objects.
- His work *Erasure* (2008) includes discarded audiocassette tapes and magnets.
- His work *Home Grown* (2009) includes discarded pushpins, plastic plates and forks, and wood.

The student wants to emphasize a similarity between the two works. Which choice most effectively uses relevant information from the notes to accomplish this goal?

- A) *Erasure* (2008) uses discarded objects such as audiocassette tapes and magnets; *Home Grown* (2009), however, includes pushpins, plastic plates and forks, and wood.
- B) Like many of Tubbs's sculptures, both *Erasure* and *Home Grown* include discarded objects: *Erasure* uses audiocassette tapes, and *Home Grown* uses plastic forks.
- C) Tubbs's work, which often features discarded objects, has been shown both within the United States and abroad.
- D) Tubbs completed *Erasure* in 2008 and *Home Grown* in 2009.

RW question 13

Iraqi artist Nazik Al-Malaika, celebrated as the first Arabic poet to write in free verse, didn't reject traditional forms entirely; her poem "Elegy for a Woman of No Importance" consists of two ten-line stanzas and a standard number of syllables. Even in this superficially traditional work, _____ Al-Malaika was breaking new ground by memorializing an anonymous woman rather than a famous man.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?

- A) in fact,
- B) though,
- C) therefore,
- D) moreover,

RW question 14

According to Naomi Nakayama of the University of Edinburgh, the reason seeds from a dying dandelion appear to float in the air while _____ is that their porous plumes enhance drag, allowing the seeds to stay airborne long enough for the wind to disperse them throughout the surrounding area.

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

- A) falling,
- B) falling:
- C) falling;
- D) falling

RW question 15

Rabinal Achí is a precolonial Maya dance drama performed annually in Rabinal, a town in the Guatemalan highlands. Based on events that occurred when Rabinal was a city-state ruled by a king, _____ had once been an ally of the king but was later captured while leading an invading force against him.

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

- A) *Rabinal Achí* tells the story of K'iche' Achí, a military leader who
- B) K'iche' Achí, the military leader in the story of *Rabinal Achí*,
- C) there was a military leader, K'iche' Achí, who in *Rabinal Achí*
- D) the military leader whose story is told in *Rabinal Achí*, K'iche' Achí,