

SAT Writing and Language Practice Test 19

Set 1

An Official, Certified...Criminal?

[1] The image is as old as computers themselves. [2] These are the hackers, immortalized in the 1995 cult classic film Hackers. [3] Of late, these "cybercriminals" have become the scourge of the American public 1 in recent years because of huge security breaches at major businesses. [4] "Hackers" are the reason we password-protect our WiFi networks and feel a twinge of skepticism every time we pay for something with a credit card. [5] A ponytailed group of geeks, their computer monitors reflecting brightly off of their glasses, breaks into some "mainframe" from an evil corporation.2

1.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. in the present day
- C. presently
- D. DELETE the underlined portion.

2. The best placement for sentence 5 would be

- A. where it is now.
- B. after sentence 1.
- C. after sentence 2.
- D. after sentence 3.

3 While the popular image of the hacker might not have changed, it has, in some cases, been given a bit of a makeover. Schools like Hack Reactor in San Francisco teach aspiring software engineers and wear the name "Hack" proudly as if it's a sign of 4 authenticities. In this line, a "hacker" is now seen as one whose powers can be used for good as well as ill. There is a new crop of hackers, called Certified Ethical Hackers (CEH), who can help to protect against 5 our evil counterparts and make computers safer for us all.

3. Which of the following would best introduce this paragraph by linking it to ideas from the previous paragraph?

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. Because hacking is a federal crime with a range of punishments,
- C. As identity theft becomes a more public problem,
- D. Although hackers' style is now more conventionally attractive,

4. Which of the following alternatives to the underlined portion would be LEAST acceptable?

- A. Realness
- B. Legitimacy
- C. Legality
- D. Genuineness

5.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. one's

- C. the
- D. their

Certified Ethical Hackers follow a course of study either at an Accredited Training Center or by self-study. The final exam is a 125 multiple-choice exam: it takes four hours and requires 70% correct to receive a passing score. There is another 6 certification Certified Network Defense Architect which has the same basic course and test but is available only for certain U.S. Government agents.⁷

6.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. certification, Certified Network Defense Architect,
- C. certification Certified Network Defense Architect,
- D. certification, Certified Network Defense Architect

7. The writer is considering deleting the phrase but is available only for certain U.S. Government agents from the preceding sentence, ending the sentence with a period after the word test.

Should this phrase be kept or deleted?

- A. Kept, because it helps to differentiate the two certifications mentioned in this paragraph.
- B. Kept, because it shows that CEHs also have an important role to play in maintaining national security.
- C. Deleted, because it contains information already stated in an earlier part of the paragraph.
- D. Deleted, because it suggests that hacking is only a problem in the United States.

CEHs combine many facets of computer study into 8 one typically. A company will hire a CEH to ensure maximum security of that company's network, whether that's company secrets or customer payment information or anything in between. Essentially, an ethical hacker does everything that an unethical one does, but he or she does so at the request of a particular organization. "We want you to hack us," says that organization, "so we 9 will have known how to avoid being hacked." It's kind of like the old saying, "It takes a crook to catch a thief," except in this case the "crook" is not a crook at all.¹⁰

Some in the computing community disparage the term. They say that "hacker" is a criminal designation, so saying "ethical hacker" is like saying "ethical thief," that is, an 11 contradiction of terms. This objection is of course overstated, and overwhelmingly, companies are happy to have "hackers" on staff. That designation can help to overcome the stodgy, impersonal image that corporations tend to have, and it can tap into a kind of underground energy that many find irresistible.

8.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. one, typically, a company
- C. one. Typically, a company
- D. one typically; a company

9.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. knew
- C. know

- D. would of known

10. At this point, the writer is considering adding the following true sentence:

To Catch a Thief was directed by Alfred Hitchcock and released in 1955.

Should the writer make this addition here?

- A. Yes, because it helps to clarify the origin of the saying cited in the previous sentence.
- B. Yes, because it is as relevant to the passage as the movie Hackers cited in the first paragraph.
- C. No, because it does not maintain this paragraph's focus on ethical hacking.
- D. No, because it mentions a movie that existed before computer hacking became widespread.

11.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. contradictory under terms.
- C. contradiction by terms.
- D. contradiction in terms.

Set 2

Taking Stock of Modern Investing

Time is a funny thing. Often, we can feel that we've been studying for hours and hours only to realize that it's been, say, 40 minutes. Or, if we're watching a football game, we may have a sense of constant action, 1 and that's what sports fandom is all about. Each of these 2 is plausible when we sit and think about it: we know that "time flies when you're having fun" and that it drags when you're not, but some statistics about time may surprise us. If time flies when you're having fun, what about when there's no "you" at all, or any other human for that matter?

1. Which of the following true choices best matches the style and tone of this paragraph?

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. while the average NFL play lasts only 6 to 7 seconds.
- C. yet people continue to watch football every Sunday.
- D. but there are some who find football boring as all get-out.

2.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. are
- C. was
- D. were

Increasingly, computers are running the world, and these computers operate on a completely separate time scale 3 than us. They can process many millions of operations in seconds, operations that would take us multiple lifetimes to complete. That's all fine if the computers are doing the work of computers—making calculations, assimilating data, or accessing that data. 4 But what about when computers 5 start working in human fields and competing with the human mind?

3.

- A. NO CHANGE

- B. from ours.
- C. from us.
- D. than we do.

4. If the writer were to delete the phrase-making calculations, assimilating data, or accessing that data from the previous sentence (ending the sentence at the word computers), the essay would primarily lose

- A. a clarification of a term used earlier in the same sentence.
- B. a complete list of the tasks that computers perform well.
- C. a metaphor for the intrusion of technology into modern life.
- D. nothing at all, because the information is stated explicitly in the following paragraph.

5.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. take the human field and the mind in competition with its working?
- C. field the human mind and start working and competing with it?
- D. work starting and competing in human fields and the mind?

Broader questions of artificial intelligence 6 aside; the contemporary stock market offers an interesting test case. There's no question that the average holding period has gone down significantly since the 1950s, but a recent study has shown that the data no longer fits an obvious trend. In 2014, the average holding period for a stock in the U.S. was 22 seconds. 7 In 1920, it was even lower! Granted, the stock market has gone through some troubling permutations: many young people treat investing in the stock market like "investing" in the poker tables at Las Vegas, and people are less likely than ever to stay loyal to certain brands.8

Average holding period for a stock on the NYSE (years)

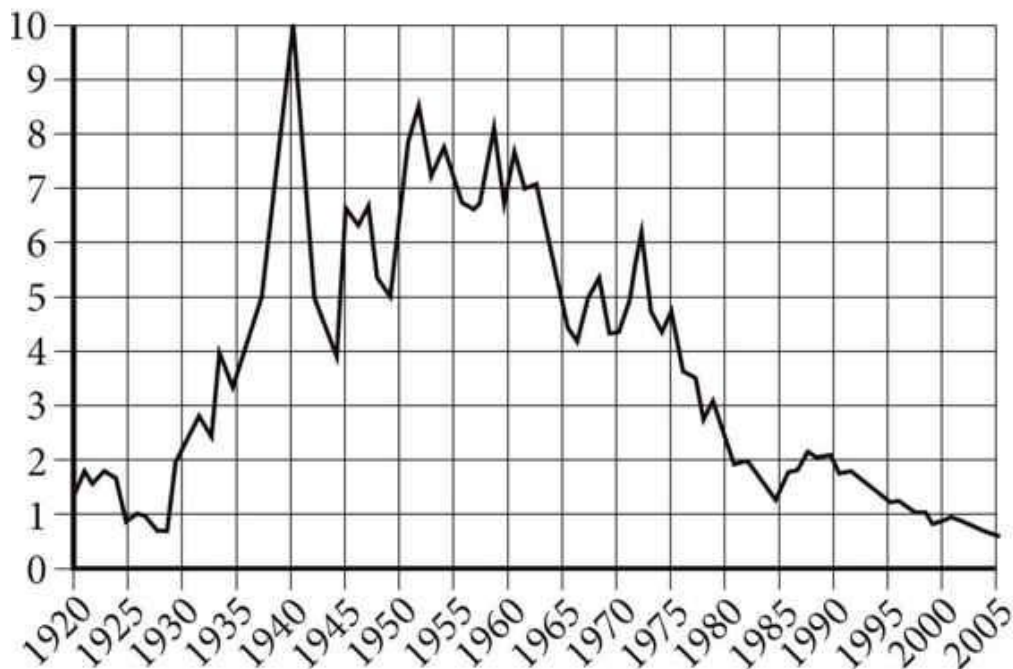


Image courtesy SG Global Strategy Research

6.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. aside. The
- C. aside—the
- D. aside, the

7. Which of the following gives information consistent with the graph?

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. It peaked in 1975!
- C. What a change a decade makes!
- D. In 1940, it was 10 years!

8. If the author were to remove the quotation marks from the preceding sentence, the sentence would primarily lose

- A. nothing at all, because the punctuation does not influence the meaning of the word in quotations.
- B. a suggestion that the author wishes he could find a more precise word.
- C. an indication that the author is using the word investing ironically.
- D. a direct quotation from one of the investors discussed in the essay.

However, 22 seconds is simply not human time. That essentially means owning a stock for less time than it takes to complete the transaction online or with a broker. The number is so low because stock trading has come to be almost exclusively the province of powerful trading computers, which can buy and sell stocks in milliseconds. After all, 22 seconds is the average, so if there are still some human traders keeping 10 your stocks for 10 years, that must make a stunning number of computer transactions.

In the end, 11 the trend toward mechanized training is probably irreversible, regardless of what governments try to do to intervene. The question remains, though, what are the purely human activities left to us? Is there anything they can do that we can do better?

9. Which of the following alternatives to the underlined portion would be LEAST acceptable?

- A. work
- B. responsibility
- C. realm
- D. state

10.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. their
- C. they're
- D. his or her

11.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. the trend, toward mechanized training, is probably irreversible,
- C. the trend toward mechanized training is, probably, irreversible,

- D. the trend, toward mechanized training, is, probably, irreversible,