

SAT Writing and Language Practice Test 23

Set 1

Look It Up!

[1] Imagine you're texting someone, and the two of you get into a heated debate. [2] They correct our spelling. [3] Finally, to prove your point once and for all, you write a voluminous, paragraph-long text, only to see that your interlocutor has responded, "TL; DR." [4] Now, you might know that this means "too long, didn't read," but what if you don't? 1 [5] Well, Urban Dictionary can save the day. [6] Just type the phrase into Google and see what turns 2 down. [7] Dictionaries have a way of showing up in every facet of our digital lives. [8] They translate pages in foreign languages. [9] They define words that we think we know and those we've never heard of. [10] Dictionaries are everywhere.³

1. The writer is considering deleting the phrase what if you don't?, and adjusting the punctuation accordingly. Should this phrase be kept or deleted?

- A. Kept, because it adds variety to a paragraph full of declarative sentences.
- B. Kept, because it poses a question that is answered in the following sentence.
- C. Deleted, because it is a rhetorical question to which the answer is already implied.
- D. Deleted, because no part of the paragraph goes on to answer it.

2.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. in.
- C. back.
- D. up.

3. The best placement for sentence 2 would be

- A. where it is now.
- B. at the beginning of the paragraph.
- C. after sentence 5.
- D. after sentence 8.

In fact, dictionaries are so prevalent that it's easy to forget that they 5 have not always existed. The word "dictionary" was in fact not coined until John of Garland published his *Dictionarius* in 1220 to help readers with their Latin diction. 5 Furthermore, 6 numerous dictionaries appeared throughout the Middle Ages and the Early Modern period; the first noteworthy English dictionary came from Samuel Johnson, whose *Dictionary of the English Language* was published first in 1755. Johnson's opus remains the first modern dictionary, containing consistent spellings, variant definitions, textual 7 usages, and alphabetical, arrangements. Johnson's dictionary was the law of the lexicon until 1884, when the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) began its reign, which continues today.

4.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. were not
- C. did not
- D. did not have

5. The writer is considering replacing the word diction with pronunciation. Should the writer make the change or keep the sentence as is?

- A. Make the change, because pronunciation is the more commonly used word.
- B. Make the change, because diction has an imprecise meaning in the sentence.
- C. Keep the sentence as is, because diction helps to explain the term given earlier in the sentence.
- D. Keep the sentence as is, because pronunciation means something contrary to diction.

6.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. indeed, numerous dictionaries
- C. a number of dictionaries
- D. while numerous dictionaries

7.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. usages, and, alphabetical
- C. usages, and alphabetical
- D. usages and alphabetical,

Johnson's American counterpart was Noah Webster, who published his first dictionary in 1806. Webster's best-known work *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, was published in 1828. The text was based in large part on Johnson's dictionary, though it included 12,000 words that had not appeared in previous dictionaries. In addition, Webster was a spelling reformer who thought English spellings were overly ornate and complex. As a result, when Americans write "color" and "gray" where the English write 10 other things, Americans have Noah Webster to thank.

11 What is interesting about these two dictionaries, and about the history of dictionaries in general, is how clearly they show the different directions that language can be pulled. On the one hand, a new dictionary should solidify the language in a new way—it should settle old disputes and give definitive definitions. On the other hand, each dictionary update shows that language is fluid and that no printed word can contain the varieties of language as it is actually used. After all, the OED may have told the world that "selfie" was the word of the year in 2013, but didn't the world know that already?

8.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. work, *An American Dictionary of the English Language*
- C. work, *An American Dictionary of the English Language*,
- D. work *An American Dictionary of the English Language*

9. Which of the following true statements would best emphasize the unique achievement of Webster's dictionary?

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. words that drew from languages varying from Old English to Sanskrit.
- C. words, which is a heck of a lot of words.
- D. words from many sources, including books and speeches.

10.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. colour and "grey,"

- C. differently,
- D. DELETE the underlined portion, placing the comma after the word write.

11.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. Both what is interesting about these two dictionaries and what is interesting about dictionaries in general,
- C. About the history of dictionaries in general, but in particular about these two,
- D. These two dictionaries are interesting, but so is the history of dictionaries in general,

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)

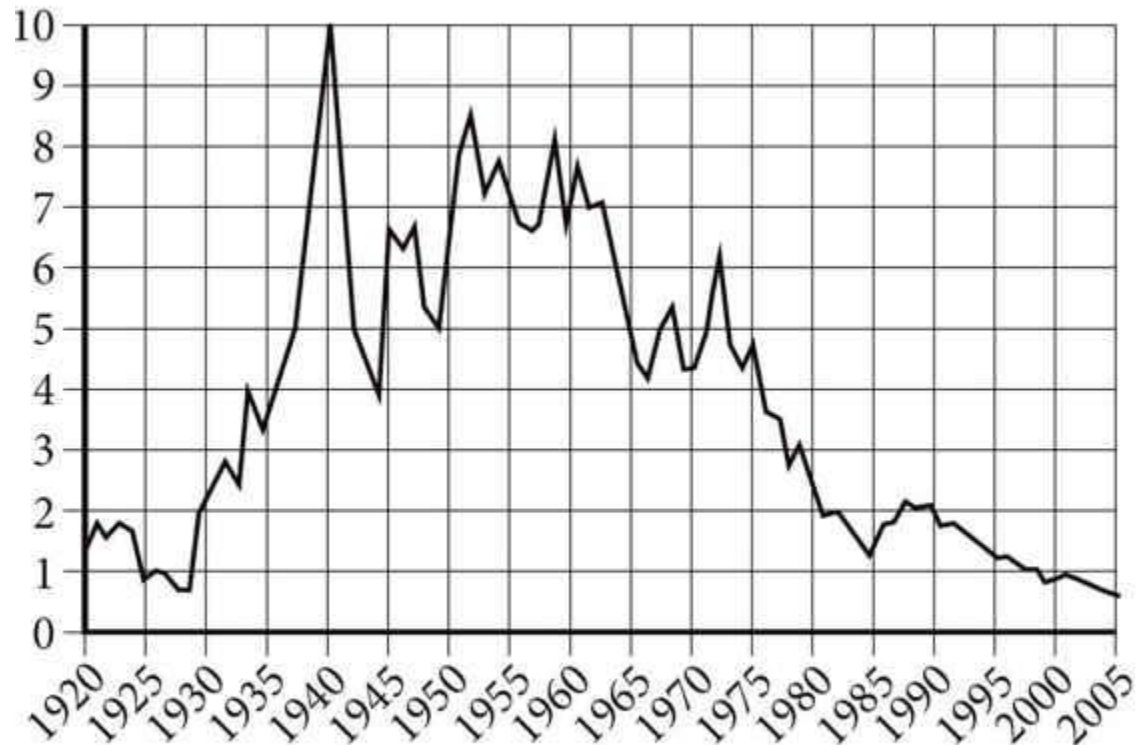


Image courtesy SG Global Strategy Research

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 a 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,