

ACT Writing Section - Passages and Test Questions

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Portrait Painting

Painting a portrait is like [1] people developing a meaningful friendship. The artist's process of a [2] making a picture involves not only painting, but also meeting a subject and getting to know him or her well. It is a process with many steps that [3] requires time, patience, care and honesty.

The process begins with a meeting. My friend Annabel is like [4] many more portrait painters in that clients come to her wanting their likeness captured in an artistic way unlike the typical quick point-and-shoot photography that is [5] extensively prevalent today.

Annabel's first job is to become familiar with the subject. She learns about the person's likes and dislikes, passions, quirks, and values [6] she uses this knowledge to come up with a portrait concept. The concept includes background setup, color scheme, wardrobe, canvas size and composition. [7] The choices she makes at this stage are vital because [8] these elements will communicate the subject's essence, aside from just his or her physical likeness.

The next step for a portrait [9] artist, after the concept, is agreed upon by the subject is to set up her studio and supplies. Annabel creates a sitting area in her studio according to her concept, stretches a new canvas, and chooses the best tools from [10] her meticulous smorgasbord of paints, brushes and other supplies.

Even though she will end up with a painted portrait, she begins with an underdrawing, using colored pencils to sketch the subject. Once that is complete, she then does an underpainting. [11] In this stage, she uses acrylic paints to create basic shadows and highlights that will guide her detail work later. Even this early on, the artist [12] must put the subject's personality in the painting.

When the underpainting is finished and dry, Annabel can finally begin painting the portrait. She starts with the shadows then moves on to the light colors, always [13] manipulating every single dollop of paint to create a realistic likeness, taking care to

honestly and accurately capture the person as a whole. Hours, even days, go by as the artist layers paint to render an image of the subject.

[14] With care and attention, the finished product will be more than just a portrait, but rather a piece of art that is evocative and that says something about the [15] subject as well as about the artist who created the piece.

1.

A. NO CHANGE

B. a person

C. someone

D. OMIT the underlined portion

2. The writer would like to suggest the painter's artistic contribution to the portrait of a subject. Given that all the choices are true, which one best accomplishes the writer's goal?

F. NO CHANGE

G. creating a unique piece

H. doing a one-of-a-kind portrait

J. taking great care and working on a picture

3.

A. NO CHANGE

B. requiring

C. require

D. have a requirement of

4.

E. NO CHANGE

F. many

G. of most

J. mostly

5.

A. NO CHANGE

B. frequently

C. commonplace and

D. OMIT the underlined portion

6.

F. NO CHANGE

G. this knowledge is used

H. and uses this knowledge

J. knowledge

7. The writer is considering deleting the sentence “The concept includes background setup, color scheme, wardrobe, canvas size and composition” from the paragraph.

Should the sentence be kept or deleted?

A. Kept, because it emphasizes that painting a portrait takes a lot of effort.

B. Kept, because it is relevant to the essay’s focus on what a painter does to create a very personal portrait.

C. Deleted, because the painter’s concept is irrelevant to the finished product.

D. Deleted, because the discussion of inanimate objects and concepts diminishes the essay’s focus on personal relationship.

8.

F. NO CHANGE

G. her decisions about these elements

H. the elements she chooses

J. the elements she decides on

9.

A. NO CHANGE

B. artist, after the concept is agreed upon by the subject,

C. artist, after the concept is agreed upon by the subject;

D. artist after the concept is agreed upon, by the subject,

10. The writer would like to indicate at this point that Annabel has an abundance of supplies that she takes care of. Given that all the choices are true, which one best accomplishes the writer’s goal?

F. NO CHANGE

G. her group of very well organized

H. some orderly shelves full of

J. a kind of immaculate array

11. Which of the following alternatives to the underlined portion would NOT be acceptable?

A. During this stage,

- B. At this point,
- C. For this process,
- D.** In the stage,

12. Which of the following alternatives to the underlined portion would NOT be acceptable?

- F.** should bring out the subject's personality from
- G. has to capture the subject's personality in
- H. needs to put the subject's personality into
- J. must bring the subject's personality to life within

13. Given that all the choices are true, which one provides the most specific detail and maintains the style and tone of the essay?

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. doing everything in her power
- C.** blending and smoothing the paint
- D. making sure the brush full of paint whisks this way and that way in an effort

14.

- F. NO CHANGE
- G. With careful
- H. It is made with care and
- J.** If created with care and

15.

- A.** NO CHANGE
- B. subject, and the artist is who
- C. subject, of which the artist
- D. subject, which is who the artist

Mount Lemmon

One of my favorite things about spring break is going to my grandparent's house in Bozeman, Montana with my family. Since I live in Tucson, Arizona, I am much more familiar with the desert, so I always look forward to visiting the lush, mountainous city full of trees and greenery where my grandparents live.

This year, however, my grandparents were in Europe during my spring break, so my mom said we would not be going to Bozeman. Instead, we would be staying home in Tucson, my boring, dry, dusty hometown. There would be no wooded, mountainous hikes for me. I imagined that my biggest adventure would be sweeping the dust off our patio. As it turns out, I was wrong.

The first day of my spring break, my mom told me we were going on a picnic. I figured we were just going to the dull, desolate park around the corner, but instead she drove outside of town toward a mountain I had always seen in the distance from my home. |19|

|1| It is called Mount Lemmon, and from the distance it looks like a rock-covered mountain without much greenery, but as my mom drove up the winding road, I was shocked to see the landscape become dotted with bright green shrubs. |2| After we reached the highest point, we were surrounded by pine trees that must have been at least one hundred feet tall. |3| There was even a little bit of snow on the ground. |4| I couldn't believe that within a one hour drive of a city that is so hot, dry, and barren there was a wonderland of nature! |22|

My mom, seeing my surprise told me: that the elevation of Mount Lemmon is 9,157 feet and that the mountain gets about 57 inches of snow every year. She also pointed to a large building in a clearing in the trees and told me it was an observatory used for astronomical research. I had no idea such a thing was up there! I had thought of becoming an astronomer, so I was thrilled to learn that I could go inside and look at the telescopes.

Every day during that spring break, I went up to Mount Lemmon. I'm sure I had enjoyed my time in Bozeman, Montana, if we had gone there, but I felt thrilled to have discovered so much mountainous nature practically in my own backyard.

16.

F. NO CHANGE

G. that has trees and greenery everywhere

H. with lots of peaks

J. OMIT the underlined portion

17. Which of the following alternatives to the underlined portion would NOT be acceptable?

A. over

- B. while
- C. throughout
- D. when I had

18.

F. NO CHANGE

- G. mom, said
- H. mom said,
- J. mom said;

19. The writer is considering deleting the first part of the preceding sentence, so that the sentence would read:

She drove just outside town toward a mountain I had always seen in the distance from my home.

If the writer were to make this change, the essay would primarily lose:

- A. details about what the narrator's neighborhood is like.
- B. an indication of what the narrator and his family typically do during spring break.
- C. a hint for the reader about what might eventually happen.
- D. the contrast between where they were going and where the narrator had anticipated they would go.**

20. Which of the following alternatives to the underlined portion would NOT be acceptable?

- F. As soon as we
- G. Once we
- H. We**
- J. When we

21.

A. NO CHANGE

- B. of been at least
- C. have been least
- D. of been least

22. Upon reviewing this paragraph, the author realizes he left some information out, so he composes the following sentence:

“As we went higher, there were fewer shrubs and more trees.”

The sentence should most logically be placed after Sentence:

F. 1

- G. 2
- H. 3
- J. 4

23.

A. NO CHANGE

B. mom, seeing my surprise, told me

C. mom, seeing my surprise told me,

D. mom seeing my surprise, told me

24. Which of the following alternatives to the underlined portion would NOT be acceptable?

F. been thinking of

G. thought about

H. thought to

J. been thinking about

25.

A. NO CHANGE

B. would have enjoyed

C. would enjoy

D. will enjoy

Pursuit of a Lifelong Dream

[1]

Mae Jemison, the first African American female to travel in space, was born in 1956 in Decatur, AL. Her family moved to Chicago when she was still very young so that her educational opportunities would be greater. Even as a small child, Jemison had a yearning to be a scientist and knew that she would one day travel to space, and although her parents encouraged her lofty ambitions, her teachers were not always as supportive. But despite her educators' dismissiveness, Jamison never wavered in her desire to be a scientist and one day go to space.

[2]

Jemison was a versatile young woman whom, despite her strong interest in science, developed a passion for the arts. She started dancing when she was 11 and studied many forms of the art, from ballet to jazz to modern dance. [34] She has always

incorporated both science and dance into her life, and she is of the opinion that the two are connected, even though most people would say otherwise.

|3|

Jemison's ambitious nature did not end at her zeal for science and the arts. She worked hard academically, graduating high school early and entering Stanford University when she was just 16 years old. By the time she was 24, she earns a Doctor of Medicine degree. During medical school she traveled the world to administer medical care to underprivileged people in countries such as Thailand and Kenya. Afterward, she entered the Peace Corps and supervised medical facilities in Sierra Leone and Liberia, also working to develop vaccines there, where she was for two years.

|4|

Despite this, Jemison never forgot her lifelong dream of going to space. She applied to NASA and was accepted to it's astronaut program in 1987. For several years she worked for NASA on the ground, her responsibilities mostly involving--can you believe it?--launch support duties. It wasn't until five years later that, finally, she herself suited up for launch. |41|

|5|

Jemison was a specialist on mission STS-47 on the Space Shuttle Endeavour. This was a joint mission with the National Space Development Agency of Japan, and its purpose was to conduct experiments on life and material sciences. Her mission lasted eight days, therefore, it was a success. Shortly after her trip into space, Jemison resigned from NASA and went on to pursue work that dealt more with the connection between social science and its relation to technology.

|6|

Jemison has since been a professor at more than one prominent university.

31.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. opportunity's
- C. opportunitys'
- D. opportunities**

32. Which of the following alternatives to the underlined portion would NOT be acceptable?

- F. despite being dismissed by her educators
- G. despite dismissing her educators**
- H. even though she was dismissed by her educators
- J. even though her educators dismissed her

33.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. which,
- C. who,**
- D. OMIT the underlined portion

34. At this point, the writer is considering adding the following true statement:

Professional dancers are considered athletes as well as artists, practicing from 6 to 10 hours a day on average.

Should the writer add this sentence here?

- F. Yes, because it shows the amount of dedication required to become a professional dancer.
- G. Yes, because it is necessary to understanding the essay as a whole.
- H. No, because it is irrelevant and detracts from the main topic of the essay.**
- J. No, because it contains information that the reader can find elsewhere in the essay.

35. Which of the following alternatives to the underlined portion would NOT be acceptable?

- A. life and
- B. life; she
- C. life she**
- D. life. She

36.

- F. NO CHANGE
- G. had earned**
- H. has earned
- J. is earning

37. Which choice provides the most logical arrangement of the parts of this sentence?

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. supervised medical facilities in Sierra Leone and Liberia, where she spent two years, as well as worked to develop vaccines.
- C. spent two years in Sierra Leone and Liberia, where she supervised medical**

facilities and worked to develop vaccines.

D. worked to develop vaccines and supervised medical facilities there, where she was for two years in Sierra Leone and Liberia

38.

F. NO CHANGE

G. those things,

H. her pursuits in medicine,

J. those,

39.

A. NO CHANGE

B. its'

C. its

D. their

40.

F. NO CHANGE

G. involving nothing but boring old launch support duties.

H. involving launch support duties. How boring!

J. involving launch support duties.

41. If the writer were to delete the first part of the preceding sentence so that it read "Finally, she herself suited up for launch." the paragraph would primarily lose:

A. an irrelevant point about the passage of time

B. support for the essay's point that space travel was a dream that Jemison held onto over a long period of time

C. a direct connection to the previous paragraph

D. a critical point about how long NASA makes astronauts wait before sending them into space

42.

F. NO CHANGE

G. days, in addition, it

H. days and

J. days. Therefore

43.

A. NO CHANGE

- B. its relationship with
- C. how it relates to
- D. OMIT the underlined portion.

44. Given that all the choices are true, which one most effectively concludes and summarizes this essay?

F. NO CHANGE

G. Jemison's lifelong love of science and space, combined with her medical pursuits and artistic endeavors, makes her a well-rounded and valuable contributor in the fields of science and technology.

H. Combining her artistic and space interests, Mae Jemison once appeared as a character on the television show *Star Trek: The Next Generation*.

J. Jemison won many awards, including the *Essence* Science and Technology Award in 1988.

Question 45 asks about the preceding passage as a whole.

45. For the sake of the logic and coherence of this essay, Paragraph 5 should be placed:

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

Luges and Luging

Luges are small sleds designed to achieve high speeds, and their roots stem back to ancient Egypt, when the construction of pyramids required sled-like apparatus to more easily transport heavy rocks with ease. Today, however, luges are predominantly used for sport.

Luges are made of fiberglass and steel and are constructed to fit the exact measurements of a particular athlete. It has two sharp metal blades on the bottom of the sled that touch the ice and a fiberglass platform that an athlete lies on. |48| Typical luges are designed to be ridden on ice tracks; but more recently, athletes have developed street luges, which have wheels and are simplest in design.

|1| Lugging appeals to people, seeking adventure because it is incredibly fast. |2| Unlike traditional sleds used for recreation, luges are ridden by athletes lying face up, as this position allows the luger to be more aerodynamic and gain higher speeds. |3| Ice luges can reach speeds up to 90 miles and hour. |4| For this reason, lugging is often considered one of the most dangerous Olympic sports. |5| Equipment for both ice and street lugging is similar. |6| Both sports require specialized body suits, gloves, and helmets that have face masks. |7| Although having good aerodynamics is important in achieving high speeds, helmets are designed to go over the rider's chin to avoid wind drag.

Being a successful luger require a combination of strength and relaxation. Luges can actively steer the device with their calves, most athletes feel like the greatest control comes from relaxing into position and becoming “one” with the sled. They know when to relax in the track into a bump instead of resisting it, or when to ease into a curve. Being too tense in one’s luge leads to less control instead of more. Whether an athlete is on the ice or the street, they have their best chance at success when they can calmly navigate the nuances of the track and allow themselves to reach, incredible speeds.

46.

F. NO CHANGE

G. effortlessly

H. with little difficulty

J. OMIT the underlined portion and end the sentence with a period.

47.

A. NO CHANGE

B. One has

C. They have

D. Which have

48. The writer is considering deleting the preceding sentence. Should this sentence be kept or deleted?

F. Kept, because it helps the reader visualize what the equipment looks like.

G. Kept, because it allows the reader to understand how the equipment has changed over time.

H. Deleted, because it does not support the main topic of the essay.

J. Deleted, because it is an unnecessary description that confuses the reader.

49.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. tracks, but**
- C. tracks--but
- D. tracks but

50.

- F. NO CHANGE
- G. most simple
- H. simpler**
- J. more simpler

51.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. people, seeking adventure
- C. people seeking adventure
- D. people seeking adventure;

52. Which of the following alternatives to the underlined position would be LEAST acceptable?

- F. up since
- G. up. This
- H. up. Yet**
- J. up because

53.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. Whereas
- C. Even if
- D. Because**

54. Which choice fits most specifically with the information at the end of this sentence?

- F. NO CHANGE**
- G. be worn
- H. be put on
- J. go on a person's head

55. If the writer were to divide the preceding paragraph into two shorter paragraphs, the new paragraph should begin with Sentence:

- A. 3
- B. 4
- C. 5
- D. 6

56.

F. NO CHANGE

G. requires

H. required

J. did require

57.

A. NO CHANGE

B. device, but

C. device, so

D. device

58. The best placement for the underlined portion would be:

F. where it is now

G. after the word *know*.

H. after the word *bump*.

J. after the word *it*.

59.

A. NO CHANGE

B. reach

C. reach--

D. reach;

60. If the writer were to delete this final paragraph from the essay, which of the following would be lost?

F. A detailed description of the type of track that lugers race on.

G. A scientific explanation of how luges travel down tracks with incredible speed.

H. A plea for lugers to be more careful with their equipment since it can be dangerous at such high speeds.

J. A comment about the relationship that successful lugers have with their luge boards and the tracks they race on.

Cephalopods: Intelligent Sea Dwellers

|1|

Some have millions of neurons in their brains as well as their arms. Others have three hearts, green blood and are able to see backwards. Others learn to control their startle-escape response, perceiving when is and is not appropriate to propel their bodies away from a situation that is particular in nature. These tentacled invertebrates called cephalopods, don't merely float through the ocean mindlessly; they display great intelligence, astounding scientists, and marine enthusiasts alike. Many of the cognitive traits of these large-bodied sea creatures were once only thought to belong only to higher vertebrates, but studies of these beasts have shown that intelligent life really does exist in our oceans.

|2|

The most commonly known cephalopod, the octopus, has a highly complex nervous system and the largest brain of any invertebrate. It expressed intelligence in its ability to change shape and color, and has proven to have a remarkable memory, the ability to remember things. Scientists have shown that octopuses have the ability to learn information and can demonstrate playful behavior, characteristics that only intelligent creatures have.

|3|

Another surprisingly intelligent cephalopod is the cuttlefish, a tentacled creature which only lives one to two years but in its short lifespan demonstrates more intelligence than most invertebrates. [70] This chameleon-like creature has tentacles so dexterous that they work just like human hands.

|4|

Squid have eight arms and two longer tentacles. Certain species of squid in groups hunt for prey and have displayed an ability to effectively communicate with the other squid around them. This cooperation takes remarkable intelligence, which is astounding for a creature with a tiny, donut-shaped brain that surrounds its esophagus.

|5|

Although the octopus, cuttlefish and squid demonstrate their own unique expressions of intelligence, they share the physical attributes that are the basis for such perception: large brains and complex nervous systems. [74] Such a fact makes one

wonder, if such biological complexity exists in animals we may have once written off as dull, without a doubt there is potential for intelligence in other creatures we've not yet thought to challenge?

61.

A. NO CHANGE

B. millions, of neurons,

C. millions of neurons

D. millions, of neurons

62.

F. NO CHANGE

G. the ability

H. have the ability

J. able

63. Which of the following alternatives to the underlined portion would NOT be acceptable?

A. response. They perceive

B. response and perceive

C. response in order to perceive

D. response. Perceiving

64.

F. NO CHANGE

G. just such situations.

H. a particular nature situation.

J. particular situations.

65.

A. NO CHANGE

B. invertebrates, called cephalopods,

C. invertebrates, called cephalopods

D. invertebrates called cephalopods;

66.

F. NO CHANGE

G. intelligence, astounding scientists and marine enthusiasts

H. intelligence, astounding scientists, and marine enthusiasts,

J. intelligence astounding, scientists and marine enthusiasts

67. Which of the following alternatives to the underlined portion would NOT be acceptable?

- A. vertebrates, yet
- B. vertebrates studies**
- C. vertebrates; however, studies
- D vertebrates. Studies

68.

- F. NO CHANGE
- G. was expressing
- H. had expressed
- J. expresses**

69.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. memory, which humans have, as well as other animals.
- C. memory, remembering things impressively.
- D. memory.**

70. The writer is considering deleting the following phrase from the preceding sentence (and ending the sentence with a period after *creature*):

which only lives one to two years but in its short lifespan demonstrates more intelligence than most invertebrates

Should this phrase be kept or deleted?

- F. Kept, because it provides important information about how long a cuttlefish typically lives.
- G. Kept, because it emphasizes the remarkableness of the cuttlefish's intelligence.**
- H. Deleted, because it contradicts the previous paragraph, which makes it clear that cephalopods do not have a short lifespan.
- J. Deleted, because this information is provided in the next paragraph.

71. Given that all the choices are true, which one most specifically describes the dexterity of the tentacles?

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. have the ability to use things just like human hands.
- C. are able to do the things human hands can do.
- D. can hold and manipulate objects as well as human hands.**

72. Given that all the choices are true, which one would LEAST effectively introduce the subject of Paragraph 4?

F. NO CHANGE

G. The squid is another cephalopod known for its intelligence.

H. According to researchers, another form of cephalopod intelligence is communication, a behavior exhibited by squid.

J. Another intelligence cephalopod, the squid, demonstrates an ability to communicate with others of its species.

73. The best placement for the underlined portion would be:

A. where it is now.

B. after the word *prey*.

C. after the word *have*.

D. after the word *effectively*.

74. The writer is considering deleting the following clause from the preceding sentence (revising the capitalization accordingly):

Although the octopus, cuttlefish and squid demonstrate their own unique expressions of intelligence,

Should this clause be kept or deleted?

F. Kept, because it is the only way the reader will know that these cephalopods express intelligence differently from one another.

G. Kept, because it provides specific information about the “they” referred to in the second half of the sentence.

H. Deleted, because it contradicts the essay’s main point by implying that these creatures are not similar but rather quite different.

J. Deleted, because it misleads the reader into thinking the paragraph is about intelligence rather than biology.

75.

A. NO CHANGE

B. nevertheless

C. indeed

D. perhaps