

SAT Problem Set 3

Words in Context, Structure, Purpose, Cross-Text Connection

1. While life is a special _____ of complex chemistry, the elements involved are nothing special: carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, etc., are among the most abundant elements in the universe. Complex organic chemistry is surprisingly common. Amino acids, just like those that make up every protein in our bodies, have been found in the tails of comets. There are other organic compounds in Martian soil. And 6,500 light years away, a giant cloud of space alcohol floats among the stars.

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

- A) model B) kind C) unit D) design

2. The following text is adapted from Herman Melville's 1851 novel, *Moby Dick*; or *The Whale*. Call me Ishmael. Some years ago—never mind how long precisely—having little or no money in my purse, and nothing particular to interest me on shore, I thought I would sail about a little and see the watery part of the world. Whenever I find myself growing grim about the mouth; whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul; whenever I find myself involuntarily pausing before coffin warehouses, and bringing up the rear of every funeral I meet—then, I account it high time to get to sea as soon as I can. With a philosophical flourish Cato throws himself upon his sword; I quietly take to the ship. There is nothing surprising in this. If they but knew it, almost all men in some _____, some time or other, cherish very nearly the same feelings towards the ocean with me.

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

- A) rank B) degree C) standard D) diploma

3. Behavioral activation is a type of talk therapy that helps teens get unstuck from negative mood spirals by noticing a _____ between what they do and how they feel, and gradually adding more small and enjoyable actions back into life. Behavioral activation has the goal of decreasing avoidance, bolstering peer connection, and improving engagement in rewarding activities. It also incorporates parent involvement so parents gain tools for supporting their adolescent children.

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

- A) relevance B) bond C) correspondence D) attachment

4. The researchers found that variance among the sites did not increase over the millennia, leading them to conclude that stabilizing forces were maintaining forest diversity. "Our findings indicate there are factors that _____ populations at relative abundances that are

consistent from one place to another," said scientist James Clark. "Our study doesn't identify what those stabilizing forces are, however."

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

- A) supervise B) manage C) balance D) administer

5. 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.
6. 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.

7. 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 8 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.
8. The following text is adapted from Jerome K. Jerome's 1889 novel *Three Men in a Boat (To Say Nothing of the Dog)*. The narrator is traveling by boat with Harris and another friend. [Harris] told us anecdotes of how he had gone across the [English] Channel when it was so rough that the passengers had to be tied into their [beds], and he and the captain were the only two living souls on board who were not ill. Sometimes it was he and the second mate who were not ill; but it was generally he and one other man. If not he and another man, then it was he by himself.

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

- A) It indicates the reason for Harris's eagerness to resume traveling.
 - B) It hints at Harris's feeling that during an earlier boat trip, others didn't include him in activities.
 - C) It emphasizes that Harris always boasts about his own constitution when speaking of a previous boat trip.
 - D) It reveals that although Harris claims to prefer solitary activities when traveling, he actually enjoys having company.
9. Several studies have found negligible electoral consequences for governments that impose fiscal austerity measures, yet some European governments recently suffered electorally due to their austerity programs. Evelyne Huebscher and colleagues attribute this incongruity to governments' tendency—not followed in the recent European cases—to implement austerity programs strategically to avoid electoral costs (e.g., setting spending cuts to take effect only after the next election), which has obscured the inherent political risks of austerity measures in the election data scholars have examined.

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

- A) It explains a discrepancy between what has been observed in study settings and what has been observed in real-world settings that the text goes on to assert is attributable to the studies not using real-world data.
- B) It identifies a conflict between research findings and recent events that the text goes on to suggest is a consequence of a complicating factor in the data used to generate those findings.
- C) It presents a long-standing divergence in research findings that the text goes on to say is due to different groups of researchers using data that derive from different electoral circumstances.
- D) It describes a recent exception to a general pattern in research findings that the text goes on to explain is a result of researchers underestimating the significance of inconsistencies in the data they've analyzed.

10. Text 1

Graphic novels are increasingly popular in bookstores and libraries, but they shouldn't be classified as literature. By definition, literature tells a story or conveys meaning through language only; graphic novels tell stories through illustrations and use language only sparingly, in captions and dialogue. Graphic novels are experienced as series of images and not as language, making them more similar to film than to literature.

Text 2

Graphic novels present their stories through both language and images. Without captions and dialogue, readers would be unable to understand what is depicted in the illustrations: the story results from the interaction of text and image. Moreover, Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home* and many other graphic novels feature text that is as beautifully written as the prose found in many standard novels. Therefore, graphic novels qualify as literary texts.

Based on the texts, how would the author of Text 2 most likely respond to the overall argument presented in Text 1?

- A) By asserting that language plays a more important role in graphic novels than the author of Text 1 recognizes
- B) By acknowledging that the author of Text 1 has identified a flaw that is common to all graphic novels
- C) By suggesting that the story lines of certain graphic novels are more difficult to understand than the author of Text 1 claims
- D) By agreeing with the author of Text 1 that most graphic novels aren't as well crafted as most literary works are