

Improving Paragraphs

Here are some general hints for Improving Paragraphs.

1. Read the entire essay quickly to determine its overall meaning. The essay is meant to be a draft, so don't be surprised if you notice errors. Don't linger over those errors.
2. Make sure that your answer about a particular sentence or sentences makes sense in the context of the passage as a whole.
3. Choose the best answer from among the choices given, even if you can imagine another correct response.

Directions:

The following passage is an early draft of an essay. Some parts of the passage need to be rewritten. Read the passage and select the best answer for the question that follows. In making your decision, follow the conventions of standard written English. (Typical essays are approximately 225 words.)

Passage:

(1) Every year we hear more and more people complaining about the extended commercialism of the winter holiday season. (2) Every year stores put out decorations and holiday merchandise earlier and earlier. (3) Yet every year retailers complain that sales are not what they should be. (4) When will retailers learn? (5) The public knows how to keep its own schedule. (6) When we do not buy holiday gifts far in advance, shoppers are saying that they do not want to think about the winter holidays too early.

1. **Question:** which of the following is the best version of the underlined portion of sentence 6 (reproduced below) ?

When we do not buy holiday gifts far in advance, shoppers are saying that they do not want to think about the winter holidays too early.

- (A) When we do not buy holiday gifts far in advance, shoppers
- (B) When shoppers do not buy holiday gifts far in advance, they
- (C) In fact, shoppers' holiday gifts are not bought far in advance; they
- (D) Consequently, by our not buying these far in advance, shoppers
- (E) In contrast, when we do not do so, it is because shoppers

Passage:

(1) In the last fifty years, computers in many forms have become increasingly accessible. (2) For example, today the calculator is regarded as an essential tool for basic calculations by students and business people. (3) Word processing is considered indispensable by most writers, researchers, and office workers. (4) In addition, many families use computers to organize information, to balance budgets, and to provide entertainment.

2. **Question:** Which of the following would be the most suitable sentence to insert immediately after sentence 1?

- (A) The race is on to produce the "ultimate" computer.
- (B) I have found the computer somewhat difficult to learn to operate.
- (C) Many people are understandably intimidated by computers.
- (D) They are now so common that they have a profound effect on daily life.
- (E) Modern telephones belong to the family of computers.

Passage: (The paragraphs below are the first two paragraphs of a passage that appeared in the test.)

(1) I have just read an excellent book called "Having Our Say: The Delany Sisters' First 100 Years." (2) Usually I do not enjoy autobiographies. (3) I could hardly put this one down. (4) It is about Sadie Delany, who is 103 years old, and her "little" sister Bessie, she is 101.

(5) The sisters grew up in North Carolina in times that were not easy for African Americans. (6) Around 1916 they moved to New York City and went to Columbia University at their father's urging. (7) He tells them, "You are college material. (8) And if you don't go, shame on you!" (9) Sadie became a teacher and Bessie a dentist. (10) The second Black woman dentist in New York.

3. Question: In context, which is the best version of "He tells them" in sentence 7?

- (A) (As it is now)
- (B) Their father tells them,
- (C) This is because he tells them,
- (D) He had told them,
- (E) His suggestion was:

Passage: (The paragraph below is the first paragraph of a passage that appeared in the test.)

(1) Until the discovery of the Rosetta stone, the hieroglyphic writing of the ancient Egyptians was indecipherable to scholars. (2) Egyptian hieroglyphic writing died out in the third century A.D. (3) The ancient Egyptian religion died out. (4) Priests were the ones who mostly used this type of writing. (5) For centuries afterward, no one knew how to read the many inscriptions on Egyptian temple walls. (6) Nevertheless, in 1799, the Rosetta Stone was found near the town of Rashid (called Rosetta by the English) in the Nile Delta in Egypt. (7) Here was the key to deciphering hieroglyphic writing.

4. Question: Which of the following is the best way to combine sentences 2, 3, and 4 (reproduced below) in order to convey clearly the relationship of the ideas?

Egyptian hieroglyphic writing died out in the third century A.D. The ancient Egyptian religion died out. Priests were the ones who mostly used this type of writing.

- (A) Egyptian hieroglyphic writing, used mainly by priests, died out in the third century A.D. along with the ancient Egyptian religion.
- (B) The ancient Egyptian religion died out in the third century A.D., as did Egyptian hieroglyphic writing, and it had been used mainly by priests.
- (C) Egyptian hieroglyphic writing and the ancient Egyptian religion died out in the third century A.D., being used primarily by the priests.
- (D) In the third century A.D., Egyptian hieroglyphic writing died out, but the ancient religion's priests were who used it most, and it ceased.
- (E) Dying out in the third century A.D. was Egyptian hieroglyphic writing, the same time as the ancient Egyptian religion and its priests, the primary users.

Answers

- 1. B
- 2. D
- 3. D
- 4. A