

# **The Complete GMAT® Sentence Correction Guide**

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**ALSO BY ERICA MELTZER**

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# Introduction

I know you're probably eager to get down to business (literally), so I've done my best to keep this part short. There are nevertheless a handful of points I feel obligated to make here, so if you'll humor me, I've outlined them below.

First, the Verbal section is at the end of the GMAT®. That may be an obvious fact, but if you haven't sat for a full-length standardized test recently, you may not be aware of the mental and psychological implications. By the time you arrive at your first Sentence Correction, you will have completed both the Essay and Quantitative portions of the exam. You will have already endured several hours of testing, and your energy and focus will, to some extent, be compromised. A portion of your brain will probably still be trying to think about whether you really should have picked (B) on number 15 of the previous section, or whether you multiplied a number by 10 when you should have multiplied it by 100 on number 35. Questions that might have seemed obvious two hours ago may seem confusing, and you may need an extra second or two to fully process the information in front of you.

Second, you will be taking the GMAT on a *screen*. Again, this fact may seem so basic that it barely seems worth mentioning, but if you are doing the majority of your preparation on paper, it should not be minimized. Reading on a computer is not the same as reading on paper. Although you may have scratch paper to work out your answers on, you cannot physically draw lines through answer choices, nor can you cross out non-essential portions of sentences to better focus your field of vision on the most relevant information. You are also more likely to overlook, insert, and misread letters and words – and unfortunately, the distinction between the correct answer and one or more of the incorrect answers can come down to a single word, even a single letter. Add in the fatigue factor and the second-guessing that often accompanies it, and you can end up with a recipe for disaster.

As a result, you must make sure to pay very close attention to which words the underlined portion of a sentence does and does not include. Your brain has a tendency to fill in words it expects to see, a phenomenon that is often exaggerated when you read on a screen. As long as your proctor does not object, you may even want to physically put your finger on the screen as you read. This might feel a bit ridiculous, but doing so can help ensure that you read what is actually written, as opposed to what your brain thinks should be written. (If you find this technique distracting, you are of course free to disregard it; I mention it because I happen to find it useful.)

To illustrate, consider the following question:

Among elephants living in families in the wild, older females often have the greatest vulnerability because their large tusks, which make the animals exceptionally attractive to poachers in search of ivory.

- (A) older females often have the greatest vulnerability because
- (B) older females are often the most vulnerable due to
- (C) older females often having the most vulnerability because
- (D) older females are often the most vulnerable and due to
- (E) older females are often the most vulnerable because of

This isn't an overly difficult question, but assuming you know that *because* rather than *due to* should be used (we'll get into why later), it does have the potential to be tricky for a reason entirely unrelated to grammar.

The original version of the sentence is in fact not a sentence at all but rather a fragment. The verb *make* belongs to the subject *which* – the subject of the clause set off by the comma – rather than to its intended subject, *tusks*.

As a result, the second clause (*because their large tusks, which make the animals exceptionally attractive to poachers in search of ivory*) is missing a main verb. (A) is therefore incorrect.

What people can easily *think* they see in the original version, however, is this:

...older females often have the greatest vulnerability **because of** their large tusks, which make the animals exceptionally attractive to poachers in search of ivory.

That, of course, is perfectly acceptable as a sentence. The problem is that it's not what's written! But because it's what a lot of people are *expecting* to see, their eye automatically fills in the word *of*. As a result, they pick (A) and get the question wrong, even though they understand perfectly well the concept being tested.

In contrast, (E), the correct answer, actually includes the word *of*. But if you don't notice exactly which words are included in each of those versions, you'll have no way of deciding between the answers.

So to reiterate: the difference between a pretty good score and a very good score is not just a matter of what you know, but also one of how carefully you work. On the GMAT, you have no choice but to sweat the details.

Lastly, Sentence Correction questions are interspersed with Reading Comprehension and Critical Reasoning questions. Sometimes, you may see a few Sentence Corrections in a row, and other times you may see a single Sentence Correction question bookended by other question types. By necessity, you must be able to flip in and out of grammar mode very quickly – the rules must be at your fingertips, so to speak. In addition, you can't afford to let yourself get thrown by a first Sentence Correction that appears after four Reading Comprehension questions. Because the test is adaptive, a careless mistake early on can have serious repercussions for your score. Again, an obvious point, but one that cannot be overemphasized.

The good news is that among the various types of questions that appear on the Verbal portion of the GMAT, Sentence Corrections are probably the most straightforward. Unlike Reading Comprehension and Critical Reasoning questions, which can ask you to wade through considerable amounts of information, Sentence Corrections are always limited to one sentence. As a result, they can provide a welcome respite from the kind of mental contortions required by the rest of the section. If you're properly prepared, they can be a relatively easy source of points.

That said, Sentence Corrections can pack an impressive amount of information – sometimes very confusing information – into a remarkably small amount of space. If you don't have a solid understanding of what you're looking for, these questions can on occasion be nearly as mind-bending as other types of GMAT questions. Like the other two Verbal question types, Sentence Corrections present you with a mass of information, some of which is relevant and some of which is not. In order to conserve your energy for more difficult question types, you must be able to distinguish between information that is relevant to answering the question, and information that is simply there to distract you. In a sentence of 30 words, for example, it is possible that only 10, or even fewer, will actually be important. Conversely, you must know when to take an entire sentence into account when only a single word is underlined. The purpose of this book is therefore to teach you just what you're up against, and to give you the tools to anticipate it.

At every point, I have sought to strike a balance between depth and clarity: I have attempted to discuss concepts sufficiently in-depth to allow you to understand the logic that underpins them as well as their applications to a variety of situations, while avoiding any potentially confusing information not directly applicable to the GMAT. Consequently, I occasionally simplify concepts in order to allow you to apply them more easily to the exam.

One note about the exercises in this book: In my very considerable experience teaching grammar for a range of standardized tests, I have found that the ability to recognize correct answers is by itself insufficient. Rather, to master material to the point at which you are virtually unshakeable during the actual exam, you must be accustomed to correcting errors yourself. And the harder the grammar, the better off you are being able to predict corrections before you even look at the answers. As a result, I have chosen not to place the exercises at the end of each chapter in multiple-choice format.

To help you see how the material in this book applies to actual released GMAT questions, I have provided a list of relevant questions from the 2017 *Official Guide for GMAT Review* and the 2017 *Official Guide for GMAT Verbal Review*. I have also referenced specific questions in those guides throughout the book in order to illustrate how certain rules are tested on the exam. You should, however, be aware that there are a few concepts covered in this book that are not tested or deemphasized in the 2017 guides. When that is the case, the concepts have appeared either in earlier editions of the *Official Guides* or in official GMAT practice software.

Erica Meltzer

## Sentence Correction Cheat Sheet

- 1) Don't ignore the non-underlined portion of the sentence; it may include key information.
- 2) Shorter = Better
- 3) Non-essential clauses are often used to distract from errors and "pad" sentences. Cross out to make sentences easier to manage.
- 4) Alternating singular and plural verbs = subject-verb agreement question. -S = singular; no -S = plural.
- 5) "Subject + conjugated verb" & nouns usually = right; -ING usually = wrong (with the exception of participles used to join clauses).
- 6) Make sure *it(s)* and *they/their* agree with their referents.
- 7) *Which* often = wrong answer. This word must refer back to the noun that immediately precedes it. The referent cannot just be implied.
- 8) *Which* = comma, *that* = no comma.
- 9) *Where* = places, not times, books, works of art, etc.
- 10) *Whose* = both people and things. *Who* = people only, *which* = things only.
- 11) *Due to* usually = wrong.
- 12) Use *such as*, not *like*, to introduce examples. Note that the construction *such* + noun + *as* is correct.
- 13) A participial phrase (e.g. *having gone, written in*) at the start of a sentence usually = dangling modifier.
- 14) Make sure modifiers (adjectives, adverbs, prepositional phrases) are placed next to the words they are intended to modify.
- 15) Know top word pairs: *not...but*, *both...and*, *between...and*, *so/such...that*, *from...to*, *(n)either...(n)or*, *just as...so*.
- 16) *Amount, much, less* = singular nouns; *number, many, fewer* = plural nouns.



## 15. IDIOMS AND DICTION

### I. Transitions

The GMAT is not overly concerned with testing your ability to identify logical relationships between statements, but questions do occasionally target this concept from an idiomatic standpoint.

Although correct and incorrect answers to transition questions may not directly hinge on the (mis)use of a particular conjunction – that is, there may be additional, unrelated factors that make the correct answer right and the incorrect answers wrong – certain transitions are nonetheless likely to appear only in correct answers, whereas others are likely to appear only in incorrect answers.

#### Cause-and-Effect: Because, Due To, When

In sentences involving causes and effects, you are likely to be asked to decide between *because* and *due to*. Note that it is unlikely (although not impossible) that you will encounter *due to* used correctly on the GMAT. **Because the misuse of this expression is so rampant, the GMAT is primarily concerned with your ability to recognize when it is incorrect.**

That said, the phrase *due to* can correctly be used before a noun, as a synonym for *caused by*. If you are not sure whether *due to* is appropriate, plug in *caused by* and check whether that phrase makes sense.

Incorrect: Most Tudor uprisings failed **due to (caused by)** the weakness of the rebels as well as the power of the reigning monarchs.

Correct: The failures of most Tudor uprisings were **due to (caused by)** the weakness of the rebels as well as the power of the reigning monarchs.

In addition, phrases including *due to* tend to be wordy and awkward, and often include gerunds. For example, consider the following sentences. The versions with *due to* are considerably less clean than those with *because*.

Incorrect: Completed in the 1860s, the Neuschwanstein castle in Germany is considered one of the seven wonders of the modern world **due to** its representing/the fact that it represents such an incredible feat of architecture.

Correct: Completed in the 1860s, the Neuschwanstein castle in Germany is considered one of the seven wonders of the modern world **because** it represents such an incredible feat of architecture.

**To reiterate:** GMAT answers containing the phrase *due to* may contain other, larger errors, but the appearance of *due to* in an answer choice is a pretty reliable tip-off that that answer is incorrect.

The primary **exception** to the “because is usually right” pattern involves the conjunction *for*, which can be used interchangeably with *because*.

Correct: Insider trading is considered an illicit activity, **for** the market is based on the principle that investors can gain an advantage only through skill in analyzing and interpreting available information.

If you encounter a set of answer choices that contain both *because* and *for*, the correct answer will depend on a separate factor. The use of *for* rather than *because* is purely stylistic and serves only as a distraction.

You should also be careful with *because* and *because of*: the former is a conjunction used to begin a clause while the latter functions as a preposition and is a synonym for *as a result of*.

Although you may easily hear errors involving *because* and *because of*, they can be (as discussed in the introduction) easy to overlook on a screen.

Correct: Insider trading is considered an illicit activity **because** the market is based on the principle that investors can gain an advantage only through skill in analyzing and interpreting available information.

Correct: Insider trading is considered an illicit activity **because of** the fact that investors can gain an advantage only through skill in analyzing and interpreting available information.

*When* should not be used to indicate cause-and-effect. It should only be used to refer to times or time periods.

Incorrect: The first astronauts were required to undergo mental evaluation before their flight **when** the psychological danger inherent in space travel was judged to be as important as the physiological one.

Correct: The first astronauts were required to undergo mental evaluation before their flight **because** the psychological danger inherent in space travel was judged to be as important as the physiological one.

## So That

Another cause-and-effect transition you should be familiar with is *so that*. When this construction appears among the answer choices, you should give it serious consideration because it is likely to represent the clearest, most idiomatic way of indicating that an action was performed in order to achieve a given result.

Incorrect: During the 1920s and 1930s, developers in Hawaii purchased excess sand leveled from California’s Manhattan Beach **so as to turn** Waikiki’s reef and rock beaches into sandy ones.

Correct: During the 1920s and 1930s, developers in Hawaii purchased excess sand leveled from California’s Manhattan Beach **so that they could turn** Waikiki’s reef and rock beaches into sandy ones. (or: **so that Waikiki’s rock beaches could be turned into sandy ones**).

## With + Gerund

One less common conjunction involves the construction “*with* ... –ING.” Although this construction is a general synonym for *and*, it serves more specifically to suggest that two actions are occurring at the same time. If you are asked to choose between “*with* ... –ING” and the continuer *and*, the former is more likely to be correct because it generally creates a clearer, more precise meaning.

Iffy: The increasingly global character of publishing has caused editors to be pulled in many different directions at once, **and** authors in multiple countries **make** competing demands.

Correct: The increasingly global character of publishing has caused editors to be pulled in many different directions at once, **with** authors in multiple countries **making** competing demands.

Note, however, that this is a case in which only the gerund is correct. Answers in which the word *with* is followed by a conjugated verb (or *that* + conjugated verb) will almost certainly be incorrect.

Incorrect: The increasingly global character of publishing has caused editors to be pulled in many different directions at once, **with** authors in multiple countries **that make** competing demands.

Note also that the construction “*with*...–ING” absolutely **cannot** be used interchangeably with a contradictor such as *but* or *yet*.

Incorrect: Hobbits are often associated with fantasy novels, **with some such creatures existing** as *homo floriensis*, a long extinct species that once lived among human beings.

Correct: Hobbits are often associated with fantasy novels, **but** some such creatures existed as *homo floriensis*, a long extinct species that once lived among human beings.

## In Addition vs. As Well As

Although these transitions have the same meaning and can both be used to join items in the middle of a sentence, only *in addition to* + gerund should be used to begin a sentence. Note that although *as well as* can be acceptably used at the start of a sentence in British English, that construction is not normally used in American English. As a result, it is highly unlikely to appear in correct answers on the GMAT.

Incorrect: **As well as** being considered the most sincere form of flattery, imitation may carry evolutionary benefits for both model and mimic alike.

Correct: **In addition to** being considered the most sincere form of flattery, imitation may carry evolutionary benefits for both model and mimic alike.

## II. Idiomatic Phrases and Constructions

Idioms are fixed phrases that are not correct or incorrect for any logical reason; they simply reflect the fact that certain phrases have evolved to be considered standard usage. Although English contains hundreds of idioms, it is probably not worth your while to devote an excessive amount of time to memorizing long lists of them. At the very least, you should not do so until you are consistently able to answer every other type of question correctly.

In addition, you should be aware that **some questions that appear to be testing idioms may in fact be solvable by other means**. For example, if you have the *Official Verb Guide*, you should take a look at question #236 on p. 260.

At first glance, it might seem that the question is testing *disturbing in* vs. *disturbing to*. In reality, however, the idiom is a distraction. The alternation between singular and plural verbs (*was, were, have*) and pronouns (*it, they*) indicates that the question is also testing subject-verb and pronoun agreement. If you recognize that the subject is plural (*Thomas Eakins' powerful style AND his choices of subject*), then (A) and (C) can be eliminated because they contain singular verbs, and (D) can be eliminated because it contains a singular pronoun. (E) can also be eliminated because it incorrectly uses the present perfect (*have been*) to refer to a finished action. That leaves (B). The idiom does not need to be considered at all.

That said, there are a handful of common constructions to which the GMAT is partial, and that you should make sure to know.

### A. Whether, If, and That

As a general rule, *whether* is switched both with *that* and *if*, but *that* and *if* are not switched with one another.

#### Whether vs. If

**Right = the question is whether**

**Wrong = the question is if**

In situations that refer to a choice between alternatives, *whether* should be used.

Incorrect: Bees often behave in what appears to be an agitated manner, but according to naturalists, **a persistent question is if** they are truly capable of experiencing emotions such as annoyance and irritation or are reacting instinctively to unexpected stimuli.

Correct: Bees often behave in what appears to be an agitated manner, but according to naturalists, **a persistent question is whether** they are truly capable of experiencing emotions such as annoyance and irritation or are reacting instinctively to unexpected stimuli.

Note that this rule holds even when the alternatives are not spelled out.

Incorrect: Mesopotamian clay tablets recording interest-bearing loans have established that the concept of debt dates to the ancient world, but **the question of if** the medieval Venetians were truly the inventors of corporate stock remains unanswered.

Correct: Mesopotamian clay tablets recording interest-bearing loans have established that the concept of debt dates to the ancient world, but **the question of whether** the medieval Venetians were truly the inventors of corporate stock remains unanswered.

Although the second option – namely that the medieval Venetians were *not* truly the inventors of corporate stock – is only implied, the use of *whether* is still required.

This rule also applies to verbs such as *choose*, *decide*, and *determine*. When you see the word *if* paired with these verbs (or any synonyms) in a GMAT sentence, you should automatically cross out all of the options containing that construction before you consider any other information.

## Whether vs. That

*Whether* is used to emphasize the possibility of more than one alternative, whereas *that* is used to indicate the existence of a single option. As a result, *whether* tends to be used in cases of uncertainty, whereas *that* tends to be used in situations that are clear-cut. For example, consider the following sentences.

Incorrect: During the Turing Test, an experiment devised by British mathematician Alan Turing, a panel of experts poses questions to unseen correspondents without knowing **that** they are human beings or machines.

Correct: During the Turing Test, an experiment devised by British mathematician Alan Turing, a panel of experts poses questions to unseen correspondents without knowing **whether** they are human beings or machines.

Because two alternatives are clearly presented in the above version, *whether* should be used.

Incorrect: Although origins of the koala bear are unclear, naturalists do not doubt **whether** the species descended from terrestrial wombat-like animals millions of years ago.

Correct: Although origins of the koala bear are unclear, naturalists do not doubt **that** the species descended from terrestrial wombat-like animals millions of years ago.

In this case, however, only one option is offered: the koala descended from terrestrial wombat-like animals. In addition, the phrase *do not doubt* indicates that the sentence is describing a settled matter rather than one that is still in question.

## B. Can it be Counted?

Some modifiers are used with nouns that are **countable** (or **quantifiable**). These words are used with **plural nouns**. Other modifiers are used with nouns that are **not countable**. These words are used with **singular nouns**.

Countable	Not Countable
Number	Amount
More	Much
Fewer	Less

### Amount vs. Number

Correct: Filled with office buildings dating back to the early 1900s, Los Angeles is also home to a vast **amount** of industrial space built from the turn of the twentieth century to the 1980s, a vestige of a once-robust manufacturing economy.

Because *space* is singular, *amount* should be used.

Correct: Filled with office buildings dating back to the early 1900s, Los Angeles is also home to a vast **number** of industrial warehouses built from the turn of the twentieth century to the 1980s, a vestige of a once-robust manufacturing economy.

Because *warehouses* is plural, *number* should be used.

### Much vs. Many

Correct: Moving between industries can be unsettling, but it offers workers **much** opportunity to learn new professional vocabularies, acquire new skills, and form new relationships.

Because *opportunity* is singular, *much* should be used.

Correct: Moving between industries can be unsettling, but it offers workers **many** opportunities to learn new professional vocabularies, acquire new skills, and form new relationships.

Because *opportunities* is plural, *many* should be used.

### Less vs. Few(er)

Correct: Because Antarctica is characterized by extreme temperatures and harsh living conditions, it supports **less** animal life than any other continent does.

Because *animal life* is singular, *less* should be used.

Correct: Because Antarctica is characterized by extreme temperatures and harsh living conditions, it supports **fewer** animal species than does any other continent.

Because *animal species* is plural, *fewer* should be used.

**Note:** as an alternative to *less*, the GMAT may test *little*, which is also used with singular nouns.

Correct: Because Antarctica is characterized by extreme temperatures and harsh living conditions, it supports **little** animal life.

## C. Additional Top GMAT Idioms

**A means of (+ noun) = a type of**

**A means to (+ verb) = a method of achieving (a goal)**

**Shortcut:** Because the GMAT is primarily concerned with the misuse of *a means of* (a rampantly misused expression), it is usually safe to work from the assumption that answers containing that phrase are incorrect.

Correct: After the completion of the Erie Canal, manufacturers located in the Great Lakes region began to rely on water as **a means of** transport.

Correct: Because large sections of the Great Lakes freeze in winter, manufacturers are unable to ship goods by water and are forced to find other **means to transport** their products.

**Appear as = appear in the form/role of**

**Appear to be = seem to be**

One way to decide between these two idioms is to plug in the phrase *seem(s) to be*, which is a synonym for *appear(s) to be*. If *seem to be* makes sense, then *appear to be* is correct. Otherwise, *appear as* should be used.

Incorrect: Although procrastination is a fundamental human drive, anxiety about it **appears as** a relatively recent phenomenon, one that arose only a few hundred years ago.

Correct: Although procrastination is a fundamental human drive, anxiety about it **appears to be** a relatively recent phenomenon, one that arose only a few hundred years ago.

Because it would make sense to say ...*anxiety about it seems to be a recent phenomenon*, the phrase *appears to be* is correct. Conversely, it is illogical to interpret the sentence to mean that anxiety appeared in the form of a recent phenomenon.

Now consider these sentences.

Incorrect: The senator will **appear to be** the keynote speaker at a benefit coordinated by a group of her supporters, a group that includes a number of prominent media personalities.

Correct: The senator will **appear as** the keynote speaker at a benefit coordinated by a group of her supporters, a group that includes a number of prominent media personalities.

The use of *appear to be* in the incorrect version implies that the senator only gave the impression of being the keynote speaker but actually was not. A far more logical meaning, one conveyed by the use of *as*, is that the senator appeared in the role of keynote speaker.

**As such = as it is, in itself**

**Thus = that way**

Correct: Camping is an inexpensive form of accommodation, and **as such (=as an inexpensive form of accommodation)**, it is popular among attendees of large open air events, including sporting matches and music festivals.

Correct: Although they collaborated with other partners early in their careers, Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein became a team with the creation of *Oklahoma!* in 1943 and remained **thus (=a team)** for the duration of their professional lives.

**Between = two things**

**Among = three or more things**

Correct: Carl Sagan attributed his sense of justice to his father, who helped sooth tensions **between** workers and managers in New York's turbulent garment industry.

Correct: Carl Sagan attributed his sense of justice to his father, who helped sooth tensions **among** workers, managers, and union leaders in New York's turbulent garment industry.

**Different from = right**

**Different than = wrong**

Incorrect: Scholars believe that lowland Mayan rituals were different **than** those of other ancient peoples because lowland Mayan culture developed in relative isolation.

Correct: Scholars believe that lowland Mayan rituals were different **from** those of other ancient peoples because lowland Mayan culture developed in relative isolation.

**Is best + past participle**

Correct: The distinctive Scottish tradition in political economy **is best understood** as a method that aims to understand order and progress from principles of human nature derived from experience.

**Known as = have an identity as**

**Known to be = understood as true**

In most cases, both are grammatically correct, and the use of one versus the other is too subtle to be tested on the GMAT. That said, there are some situations in which one connotation is clearly more appropriate.

Correct: Although she was unable to obtain academic credentials comparable to those of her male colleagues, Austrian-born psychoanalyst Melanie Klein became **known as** an innovator for her work with young children.

*Known as* is correct because the sentence describes Klein's professional identity, not an accepted fact.

Correct: Several dozen boats are **known to be** located hundreds of feet below the surface of the French Frigate Shoals, part of an enormous protected zone located in the South Pacific.

*Known to be* is correct here because the sentence is describing a generally accepted fact, not an identity.

**Such as = set up example(s)**

**Like = comparison between nouns**

Use *such as* to introduce examples or lists.\* *Like* should only be used to form comparisons.

Incorrect: As one of the first screenwriters to include details **like** stage directions and physical settings in her work, June Mathis helped make film into an art form.

Correct: As one of the first screenwriters to include **such** details **as** stage directions and physical settings in her work, June Mathis helped make film into an art form.

\*Note that this rule is violated in question #685 on p. 685 of the *Official Guide*. This is an exception, and you should assume that if you are directly tested on this rule, *such as* rather than *like* will be correct.



**The term x refers to y = right**

**The term x is y = wrong**

A term can only “refer to” a particular thing/activity; it cannot actually *be* that thing or activity.

Incorrect: In the Middle Ages, **the term “arts” was a wide range of fields**, including geometry, grammar, and astronomy; not until the nineteenth century did it come to denote activities such as painting, drawing, and sculpting.

Correct: In the Middle Ages, **the term “arts” referred to a wide range of fields**, including geometry, grammar, and astronomy; not until the nineteenth century did it come to denote activities such as painting, drawing, and sculpting.

**Try to = right**

**Try and = wrong**

Incorrect: In an effort to attract more patrons, the museum is venturing into the rapidly evolving field of “visitor engagement” in order to **try and** reach everyone from children to seasoned scholars.

Correct: In an effort to attract more patrons, the museum is venturing into the rapidly evolving field of “visitor engagement” in order to **try to** reach everyone from children to seasoned scholars.

**With the exception of = right**

**Excepting = wrong**

Incorrect: During the Spanish Civil War, many Catalan writers were forced into exile and, **excepting** Salvador Espriu, ceased to publish new works until after democracy had been reestablished.

Correct: During the Spanish Civil War, many Catalan writers were forced into exile and, **with the exception of** Salvador Espriu, ceased to publish new works until after democracy had been reestablished.

The chart on the following page lists a number of additional idioms for reference. But **to reiterate**: the chance that any given idiom will be tested on the GMAT is quite small, and I do not advocate devoting large amounts of time to memorizing idioms if there are other rule or logic-based question types you have not yet mastered.

Additional Common Idioms		
Bring about Complain about Concerned about Curious about Excited about Particular about Think about Wonder about Worry about  Appear as Established as Known as Regard as Think of x as  Adept at Dated at Successful at  Connection between Relationship between  Accompanied by Amazed by Awed by Confused by Encouraged by Fascinated by Followed by Impressed by Outraged by Perplexed by Puzzled by Shocked by Stunned by Surprised by x predates y by  Account for Celebrated for Compensate for Criticize for Endure Famous for Known for Last for Look out for Named for Necessary for Prized for Recognized for/as	Responsible for Strive for Substitute x for y Tolerance for Wait for Watch for  Apparent from Away from Defend from Differ(ent) from Far from Protect from  Engage in Enter into Have confidence in Insight into Interest in Result in Succeed in/at Take pride in  Appreciation of At the expense of Characteristic of Command of Composed of Comprised of Conceive of Consist of Convinced of Devoid of (Dis)approve of In advance of In awe of In the hope(s) of In recognition of (In)capable of Mastery of Offer of Predecessor of Proponent of Source of Suspicious of Take advantage of Typical of Understanding of Variety of With the exception of	Based on Do research on Draw (up)on Dwell on Elaborate on Expend x on y Expert on Focus on Influence on Insist (up)on Reflect on Rely on  Control/Power over Mull over  Alternative to Attribute to Attuned to Averse to Central to Devoted to Exclusive to Flock to Immune to Impervious to In contrast to In order to In relation to Increase/Decrease to Listen to Native to Parallel to Prefer x to y Recommend x to y Similar to Subject to Threat to Try to Unique to  Biased toward Indifferent toward Tendency toward  Associated with Correlate with (In)consistent with Identify with Preoccupied with Simultaneously with Sympathize with (Un)familiar with x is contrasted with y

### III. Commonly Confused Words

This type of diction error is not a focus of the GMAT, but questions involving it are not beyond the scope of the test. These errors are created by switching two identical- or similar-sounding but differently-spelled words. A list of commonly confused words is provided on the following page; however, the pairs below are somewhat more complicated than the others and require further explanation.

#### Affect vs. Effect

This set can be exceptionally confusing because each word in the pair can function as both a verb and a noun. One set of rules governs their most common uses, and another set of rules governs their less common uses – uses that would not be out of bounds for the GMAT to test.

**Affect** is most often used as a verb meaning “to influence,” or “to have an effect on.”

Correct: Consumer advocates caution that even seemingly low error rates in credit score calculations can **affect** numerous customers because each credit bureau has hundreds of millions of files.

Less commonly, it can be used as a noun meaning “to feign,” or “to adopt in a pretentious manner.”

Correct: Voiceover work often requires that quiz-show champion Arthur Chu **affect** a Chinese accent rather than speak in the meticulous American English that now comes naturally to him.

**Effect** is most often used as a noun meaning “an impact.”

Correct: Benjamin Franklin demonstrated his enthusiasm for inoculating people against smallpox by collaborating on numerous studies that demonstrated the procedure’s protective **effects**.

Less commonly, it can be used as a verb meaning “to bring about a change.”

Correct: An executive’s ability to **effect** a change within a company depends on his or her capacity to engage successfully with key members of the franchise community.

#### Lie vs. Lay

**Lie = recline or remain.** Not followed by a direct object (noun or pronoun).

**Lay = set down.** Followed by a direct object (noun or pronoun).

Infinitive	Simple Past	Past Participle
Lie	Lay	Lain
Lay	Laid	Laid

To determine whether *lie* or *lay* should be used, check to see whether the verb is followed by a noun or pronoun.

Correct: Some bacteria spores can **lie** dormant in soil for centuries because they have so thoroughly adapted to extreme weather conditions that neither intense heat nor bitter cold is capable of destroying them.

Since the bolded verb is not followed by a noun or pronoun, *lie* is correct.

Now consider this sentence:

Correct: Ancient communities created the first bridges by taking planks from fallen trees and **laying** them across ravines and small bodies of water.

Because the verb is followed by the (object) pronoun *them*, the correct form is *laying*.

Unfortunately, things get a bit more complicated. Although *lie* and *lay* look and sound different in the present tense, the simple past of *lie* is also *lay*.

Correct: The bacteria spores **lay** dormant in the soil for centuries, having adapted so thoroughly to extreme weather conditions that neither intense heat nor bitter cold was capable of destroying them.

The **past participle** of *lie* (used after any form of *to be* or *to have*) is *lain*:

Correct: The bacteria spores **had lain** dormant in the soil for centuries, having adapted so thoroughly to extreme weather conditions that neither intense heat nor bitter cold was capable of destroying them.

In contrast, the **simple past** and **past participle** of *lay* are the same: *laid*.

Correct: Ancient communities created the first bridges when they took planks from fallen trees and **laid** them across ravines and small bodies of water.

Correct: Ancient communities created the first bridges when they took planks from fallen trees and, having **laid** them across ravines and small bodies of water, proceeded to walk across.

Commonly Confused Words	
Adverse – difficult, unfavorable Averse (to) – inclined to avoid	Discreet – cautious, guarded Discrete – distinct, separate
Allusion – reference Illusion – not real	Elicit – evoke Illicit – illegal
Appraise – assess the value of Apprise – inform	Eminent – distinguished Imminent – about to occur
Capital – (1) geographic seat of government; (2) wealth Capitol – legislature building	Ensure – guarantee Insure – obtain insurance for
Censor – suppress unacceptable/controversial works Censure – punish, reprimand	Precede – come before Proceed – continue
Council – noun, governing body Counsel – verb, to give advice	Principal – most important Principle – rule

## Exercise: Idioms and Diction

In the following sentence, identify and correct any diction that appears. Some sentences may not contain an error. (Answers p. 200)

1.	For decades, scientist debated about if bears truly hibernate because the drop in body temperature of wintering bears is modest in comparison to the drop in body temperature of smaller hibernating animals.
2.	Some eucalyptus species have attracted attention from the horticultural industry because they have such desirable traits as providing lumber and producing oils for cleaning.
3.	Roman women could only exercise political power through men, the only people considered true citizens, for female participation in politics was forbidden throughout the Roman Empire.
4.	Nijinsky's genius as a dancer laid in his capacity to express through movement the emotions and subtleties of thoughts that others could express only through speech.
5.	Many of Mary Shelley's works contain the notion that cooperation between individuals, and more specifically cooperation between women, could represent a means to improve society.
6.	Throughout the Romantic period, a significant amount of adventurous artists and writers flocked to Lake Geneva to savor its inspiring mountain scenery and serene atmosphere.
7.	Culture has become a force that may accelerate human evolution due to people having no choice but to adapt to pressures and technologies of their own creation.
8.	A rebellion from the rigid academic art that predominated during the nineteenth century, the Art Nouveau movement was inspired by natural forms and structures.
9.	During the 1940s, French poet Victor Segalen was considered as a minor figure; however, his reputation later began to soar, first in France and then internationally.
10.	If people spend time in a room with others who are yawning, it is almost certain whether those individuals will begin to yawn as well.
11.	In creating psychoanalysis, Freud developed therapeutic techniques like free association and transference, establishing their central role in the analytic process.
12.	After it was announced that the former president would appear to be the convention's keynote speaker, several thousand people registered to attend, more than twice as many as had been expected.
13.	The term "Baroque" was originally the eccentric redundancy and noisy abundance of details that characterized seventeenth century artistic production—a sharp contrast to the clear and sober rationality of the Renaissance.
14.	Books, diaries, and newspapers recording African American life during the Harlem Renaissance abound, but far less documents chronicling the lives of African American during the 1930s have been preserved.
15.	With the exception of his Academy Award performance in the 1967 film <i>Cool Hand Luke</i> , actor George Kennedy was a peripheral player, a sidekick to the star or a foil for the comedian.
16.	A consumer should approach a potential tax-preparations company with many questions, regardless of if the company's employees possess formal accounting credentials.

17.	Although Korean lacquerware of the Goryeo period was highly prized throughout East Asia, it was also quite delicate, and only a small amount of pieces are known to have survived until the present day.
18.	Even though oil prices have rebounded, bolstered by a variety of technical market factors and some optimistic forecasts from oil producers, analysts doubt that a significant price recovery is imminent.
19.	The ENIAC computer, contrasting with its predecessor, the EDVAC, ran on a binary rather than a decimal system and was able to store program instructions in its electronic memory.
20.	Early in the nineteenth century, the last of the property restrictions that prevented white males from voting in the United States were abolished, but 50 years later, the question of if voting rights should be extended to other groups – particularly women and former slaves – remained controversial.
21.	Modern chemistry prevents insects from ravaging crops, lifts stains from carpets, and saves lives, with the constant exposure to chemicals taking a toll on many people's health.
22.	The words “based on a true story” give marketers a hook, one that appeals to movie-goers seeking something different than the established brands and pre-existing characters featured in the majority of films.
23.	Although birds are not generally known for their intelligence, recent findings have established whether parrots often possess skills similar to those of human toddlers.
24.	Some global banks show an alarming willingness to facilitate the flow of illegal money; in certain cases, they even counsel financial institutions about how to evade regulators' grasp.
25.	Although many traits are governed by a group of genes acting in concert, genes often have multiple functions, and altering a large amount of genetic material could affect unforeseen changes in an organism.
26.	Even though the idea of layering solar cells over plastic materials to capture energy from the sun is far from original, past attempts have been ineffective because problems involving low energy yields as well as the use of colored rather than transparent materials.
27.	Elephants typically live in core, bond, and clan groups, with core groups that comprise close relatives and bond and clan groups including more distant ones.
28.	John Dryden was removed from the post of British poet laureate—a post that was normally held for life—due to his staunchly refusing to swear an oath of allegiance to the king.
29.	Chopin's charming and sociable personality attracted loyal groups of friends and admirers like Liszt and George Sand, but his private life was often painful and difficult.
30.	The mineral azurite, a mineral produced by the weathering of copper deposits, has an exceptionally deep blue hue and thus has historically been associated with the color of winter skies.

## Official Guide Idiom and Diction Questions

Question #	Page	
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692	686	In contrast to
697	687	Research/Do research on
699	687	With...-ING
703	688	Attribute to
715	690-691	Expert on
727	693	Due to vs. Because
734	695	Expend on, Account for
755	700	Appear as/to be
759	700-701	A means to
770	703	But vs. With...-ING
773	703	Diction: Lie vs. Lay
783	706	With the exception of
785	706	Agree to be
805	710	Considered as/to be
807	710	Dated at
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199	252	<i>Of</i> + Gerund vs. That
207	254	Dependent on...as
209	254	Except for, With the exception of
217	254	Think of x as
221	256	Decrease to
224	257	Unnecessary preposition
230	258	Fewer vs. Less
233	259	Number vs. Amount
237	260	Established as
238	260	As well as
253	263	Thus
265	266	Fewer vs. Less
267	267	Like vs. Such as
274	268	Influence on
277	269	Little, Few
296	273	Is best
300	274	Like vs. Such as

## Multiple-Choice Practice Questions (Answers p. 202)

1. Precipitation in California is often erratic, and when arriving, tends to fall in the mountainous northern and eastern parts of the state rather than the populous and fertile southern and western ones.
  - (A) when arriving, tends to fall
  - (B) when arriving, has a tendency of falling
  - (C) when it arrives, it tends in falling
  - (D) when it arrives, tending to fall
  - (E) when it arrives, it tends to fall
2. Some people contend that the distinction between an extreme sport and a conventional one has as much to do with marketing as with the level of danger involved or how much adrenaline is generated.
  - (A) with the level of danger involved or how much adrenaline is generated
  - (B) with the level of danger that is involved or the adrenaline amount it generates
  - (C) with the level of danger involved or the amount of adrenaline generated
  - (D) to the danger level involved or the amount of adrenaline being generated
  - (E) to the level of danger involved or the amount of adrenaline it generates
3. Just who inspired English painter John Constable's marvelously enigmatic cloud studies, much prized by collectors, have never been entirely clear.
  - (A) studies, much prized by collectors, have
  - (B) studies, much prized by collectors, has
  - (C) studies, many of them prized by collectors, have
  - (D) studies, many of which are prized by collectors,
  - (E) studies, and many of them prized by collectors, has
4. James Joyce is best known for *Ulysses* (1922), a landmark work in which the episodes of Homer's *Odyssey* are paralleled in an array of contrasting literary styles, with the stream of consciousness narration most prominent among them.
  - (A) in which the episodes of Homer's *Odyssey* are paralleled in an array of contrasting literary styles, with the stream of consciousness narration most prominent among them
  - (B) where the episodes of Homer's *Odyssey* are a parallel array of contrasting literary styles, with the stream of consciousness narration being most prominent among these
  - (C) where the episodes of Homer's *Odyssey* are paralleled in an array of contrasting literary styles, with the stream of consciousness narration is most prominent among these
  - (D) in which the episodes of Homer's *Odyssey* is paralleled in an array of contrasted literary styles, and the stream of consciousness narration is most prominent among these
  - (E) in which the episodes of Homer's *Odyssey* are paralleled in a contrasting array of literary styles, with the stream of consciousness narration most prominent among it
5. By day, hippos enjoy bathing in water to cool themselves down, which might have contributed to their reputation for being relatively sluggish and sedentary.
  - (A) which might have contributed to their reputation for being
  - (B) which might contribute to its reputation for being
  - (C) and this might have contributed to their reputation to be
  - (D) a preference that might contribute to their reputation for being
  - (E) a preference which might have contributed to their reputation to be



6. The starling, a bird mentioned in one of Shakespeare's plays, was first introduced in the United States in 1890 and has since become a significant pest species.
- (A) was first introduced in the United States in 1890 and has since become
  - (B) were first introduced in the United States in 1890 and has since become
  - (C) was first introduced to the United States in 1890 and would since become
  - (D) was first introduced to the United States in 1890 and since became
  - (E) were first introduced to the United States in 1890 and since has become
7. The outsourcing of hospital workers has become relatively common in the last decade, driven by a combination of factors including a desire for efficiency gains as well as the growing pressure on hospitals to measure quality and keeping people healthy after they are discharged.
- (A) a desire for efficiency gains as well as the growing pressure on hospitals to measure quality and keeping
  - (B) a desire for efficiency gains as well as the growing pressure on hospitals to measure quality and they keep
  - (C) a desire for gains in efficiency as well as the growing pressure on hospitals to measure quality and keep
  - (D) a desire for gains in efficiency as well as the growing pressure on hospitals in measuring quality and to keep
  - (E) a desire for gains in efficiency as well as the growth of pressure on hospitals that measure quality and keep
8. Contrasting with the works of the rationalists, Hume held that passion rather than reason governs human behavior and postulated that humans can have knowledge only of the objects of experience.
- (A) Contrasting with the works of the rationalists,
  - (B) In contrast with the rationalists' work,
  - (C) In contrast to those of the rationalists,
  - (D) Unlike those of the rationalists,
  - (E) Unlike the rationalists,
9. Categorized as a "red" volcano as a result of the lava that periodically spews from its crater, a depression measuring 2,100 feet across and 750 feet deep, many cataclysmic explosions have been associated with Mt. Vesuvius since the volcano's most famous eruption in 79 A.D.
- (A) many cataclysmic explosions have been associated with Mt. Vesuvius since the volcano's most famous eruption in 79 A.D.
  - (B) they have associated many cataclysmic explosions with Mt. Vesuvius since its most famous eruption in 79 A.D.
  - (C) and many cataclysmic explosions were associated with Mt. Vesuvius since its most famous eruption in 79 A.D.
  - (D) Mt. Vesuvius has exploded cataclysmically many times since its most famous eruption in 79 A.D.
  - (E) Mt. Vesuvius has erupted cataclysmically many times since its most famous one in 79 A.D.
10. The wandering albatross, the first albatross ever to be described by naturalists, is a large seabird that belongs to the albatross family and found primarily in the seas around Antarctica.
- (A) and found primarily in the seas around Antarctica
  - (B) and that is found primarily in the seas around Antarctica
  - (C) and primarily found in the Antarctic seas
  - (D) being found primarily in the seas around Antarctica
  - (E) and are found primarily in the seas around Antarctica
11. All of the country's political parties agree as to whether constitutional reform is necessary to address chronic instability and other pressing issues, but when it comes to deciding what kind of reform, they can only agree to disagree.
- (A) agree as to whether constitutional reform is necessary to address
  - (B) agree that constitutional reform is necessary to address
  - (C) have an agreement of constitutional reform being necessary to address
  - (D) agree that constitutional reform is necessary for the addressing of
  - (E) agree about whether constitutional reform is necessary to address

5. In response to **being** criticized for the poor nutritional value of its food, the restaurant chain has altered its menu to include a variety of more healthful options.

6. A new hybrid approach to environmentalism **combines** existing public lands with private resources and a businesslike approach to land preservation, thus restoring wildlife and benefiting citizens.

7. Correct

8. The **depiction** of ordinary, everyday subjects in art has a long history, although scenes from daily life were often squeezed into the edges of compositions or shown at a smaller scale.

9. Correct

10. Although big vine production of grapes is not economically feasible, it demonstrates the vine's natural **ability** to produce fruit in an environmentally sustainable manner.

11. **(As) one** of the most powerful leaders of his era, Sultan Suleyman I, known as Suleyman the Magnificent, was responsible for the expansion of the Ottoman Empire from Asia Minor to North Africa.

12. The combination of spiritual fervor and close emotional self-scrutiny makes St. Augustine's *Confessions* read **as if they were** the work of a great novelist or poet.

13. According to experts, people have the best chance of succeeding at their goals when **they have** an incentive—a financial, social, or physical cost—not to fail.

14. Because **she experimented (or: because of her experiments)** with stream of consciousness narratives and the underlying psychological motives of her characters, Woolf is considered a major innovator in English literature.

15. California is able to supply a third of the United States' vegetables and two-thirds of its fruits and nuts because **it has** the cold, wet winters and dry, sunny summers that characterize a Mediterranean climate.

16. Some planets that are very different from our own may have the potential **to turn** current theories of solar system formation upside down.

17. In his novel *Parallel Stories*, the Hungarian author Peter Nadas is concerned not only with historical events but also with their role **in influencing** people's everyday lives and emotions.

18. The Sherlock Holmes form of mystery novel **revolves** around a baffling crime that is ultimately solved by an eccentric master detective and his assistant, who summarizes the most interesting cases for the public.

19. Although **she did not publish** her first novel until she was 40 years old, Wharton became an exceptionally prolific writer: in addition to her seven novellas, 15 novels, and 85 short stories, she published poetry, books on design, travel, literary and cultural criticism, and a memoir.

20. Correct

### Idioms and Diction (p. 151)

1. For decades, scientist debated **whether** bears truly hibernate because the drop in body temperature of wintering bears is modest in comparison to the drop in body temperature of smaller hibernating animals.

2. Correct

3. Correct

4. Nijinsky's genius as a dancer **lay** in his capacity to express through movement the emotions and subtleties of thoughts that others could express only through speech.

5. Correct

6. Throughout the Romantic period, a significant **number** of adventurous artists and writers flocked to Lake Geneva to savor its inspiring mountain scenery and serene atmosphere.

7. Culture has become a force that may accelerate human evolution **because people have** no choice but to adapt to pressures and technologies of their own creation.

8. A rebellion **against** the rigid academic art that predominated during the nineteenth century, the Art Nouveau movement was inspired by natural forms and structures.

9. During the 1940s, French poet Victor Segalen was **considered a** minor figure; however, his reputation later began to soar, first in France and then internationally.
10. If people spend time in a room with others who are yawning, it is almost certain **that** those individuals will begin to yawn as well.
11. In creating psychoanalysis, Freud developed therapeutic techniques **such as** free association and transference, establishing their central role in the analytic process.
12. After it was announced that the former president would appear **as** the convention's keynote speaker, several thousand people registered to attend, more than twice as many as had been expected.
13. The term "Baroque" originally **referred to** the eccentric redundancy and noisy abundance of details that characterized seventeenth century artistic production—a sharp contrast to the clear and sober rationality of the Renaissance.
14. Books, diaries, and newspapers recording African American life during the Harlem Renaissance abound, but far **fewer** documents chronicling the lives of African American during the 1930s have been preserved.
15. Correct
16. A consumer should approach a potential tax-preparations company with many questions, regardless of **whether** the company's employees possess formal accounting credentials.
17. Although Korean lacquerware of the Goryeo period was highly prized throughout East Asia, it was also quite delicate, and only a small **number** of pieces are known to have survived until the present day.
18. Correct
19. The ENIAC computer, **unlike (or: in contrast to)** its predecessor, the EDVAC, ran on a binary rather than a decimal system and was able to store program instructions in its electronic memory.
20. Early in the nineteenth century, the last of the property restrictions that prevented white males from voting in the United States were abolished, but 50 years later, the question of **whether** voting rights should be extended to other groups – particularly women and former slaves – remained controversial.
21. Modern chemistry prevents insects from ravaging crops, lifts stains from carpets, and saves lives, **but** the constant exposure to chemicals **takes** a toll on many people's health.
22. The words "based on a true story" give marketers a hook, one that appeals to movie-goers seeking something different **from** the established brands and pre-existing characters featured in the majority of films.
23. Although birds are not generally known for their intelligence, recent findings have established **that** parrots often possess skills similar to those of human toddlers.
24. Correct
25. Although many traits are governed by a group of genes acting in concert, genes often have multiple functions, and altering a large amount of genetic material could **effect** unforeseen changes in an organism.
26. Even though the idea of layering solar cells over plastic materials to capture energy from the sun is far from original, past attempts have been ineffective **because of** problems involving low energy yields as well as the use of colored rather than transparent materials.
27. Elephants typically live in core, bond, and clan groups, with core groups **comprising** close relatives and bond and clan groups including more distant ones.
28. John Dryden was removed from the post of British poet laureate—a post that was normally held for life—**because he staunchly refused** to swear an oath of allegiance to the king.
29. Chopin's charming and sociable personality attracted loyal groups of friends and admirers **such as (or: including)** Liszt and George Sand, but his private life was often painful and difficult.
30. Correct

## Answers and Explanations: Multiple Choice Practice Questions

### 1. E: Sentence vs. fragment; Idiom: gerund vs. infinitive

Precipitation in California is often erratic, and when arriving, tends to fall in the mountainous northern and eastern parts of the state rather than the populous and fertile southern and western ones.

- (A) when arriving, tends to fall
- (B) when arriving, has a tendency of falling
- (C) when it arrives, it tends in falling
- (D) when it arrives, tending to fall
- (E) when it arrives, it tends to fall**

A subject + conjugated verb should follow the conjunction *when*; the gerund is not idiomatically acceptable. (A) and (B) include the gerund *arriving* and thus can be eliminated.

(C) is incorrect because the verb *tend* should be followed by the infinitive (*to fall*) rather than the gerund (*falling*).

(D) is incorrect because the main clause is a fragment that lacks a subject + conjugated verb: *tending to fall in the mountainous northern and eastern parts of the state rather than the populous and fertile southern and western ones* is not a complete sentence.

(E) is correct because it supplies a subject + verb (*it tends*) for the main clause and uses the infinitive (*to fall*) after the verb *tends*.

### 2. C: Parallel structure

Some people contend that the distinction between an extreme sport and a conventional one has as much to do with marketing as with the level of danger involved or how much adrenaline is generated.

- (A) with the level of danger involved or how much adrenaline is generated
- (B) with the level of danger that is involved or the adrenaline amount it generates
- (C) with the level of danger involved or the amount of adrenaline generated**
- (D) to the danger level involved or the amount of adrenaline being generated
- (E) to the level of danger involved or the amount of adrenaline it generates

This question requires that you deal with two types of parallel structure simultaneously. The first clue is the presence of the word pair *as much...as*. Because the preposition *with* is used after the first half of the word pair, it must be used after the second half as well: *as much to do with x as with y*. Don't get distracted by *to*; it's part of the infinitive *to do* and doesn't affect the parallel structure.

Based on that information, you can eliminate (D) and (E).

Now look at the second type of parallel structure: the constructions on either side of the word *or* must match as well. (A) is not parallel because the first side starts with a noun (*the level*) and the second side contains a pronoun (*how*).

While (B) does contain two nouns (*level...the adrenaline amount*), the structure is not parallel. The phrase *that is* appears in the first item but not in the second.

(C) is correct because the two sides match: each contains the structure *noun + of + noun* immediately followed by a past participle (*involved, generated*).

### 3. B: Subject-verb agreement

Just who inspired English painter John Constable's marvelously enigmatic cloud studies, much prized by collectors, have never been entirely clear.

- (A) studies, much prized by collectors, have
- (B) studies, much prized by collectors, has**
- (C) studies, many of them prized by collectors, have
- (D) studies, many of which are prized by collectors,
- (E) studies, and many of them prized by collectors, has

The fact that (A) and (C) contain the plural verb *have*, while (B) and (E) contain the singular verb *has* tells you that this question is testing subject-verb agreement.

The sentence contains a non-essential clause; even though the end of it is underlined, you may want to cross it out in order to simplify the sentence: *Just who inspired English painter John Constable's marvelously enigmatic cloud studies...have never been entirely clear.*

The key to answering the question is to recognize that the subject is not the plural noun *cloud studies*, which is located closest to the verb, but rather *Just who*. When *who* is used as a subject this way, it is always singular and requires a singular verb. That eliminates (A) and (C).

(B) is correct because the phrase *much prized by collectors* correctly functions as a non-essential clause describing the noun *cloud studies*, and the sentence makes sense when the non-essential clause is removed (*Just who inspired English painter John Constable's marvelously enigmatic cloud studies...has never been entirely clear*).

(D) is incorrect because this version is missing a main verb (*has*); the sentence no longer makes grammatical sense when the non-essential clause is removed.

(E) is incorrect because the construction *and many of them prized by collectors* is awkward and rhetorically unacceptable; a non-essential clause that describes a noun should not normally begin with *and*.

#### 4. A: Relative pronoun; Pronoun Agreement; Subject-verb agreement; Misplaced modifier

James Joyce is best known for *Ulysses* (1922), a landmark work in which the episodes of Homer's *Odyssey* are paralleled in an array of contrasting literary styles, with the stream of consciousness narration most prominent among them.

- (A) **in which the episodes of Homer's *Odyssey* are paralleled in an array of contrasting literary styles, with the stream of consciousness narration most prominent among them**
- (B) where the episodes of Homer's *Odyssey* are a parallel array of contrasting literary styles, with the stream of consciousness narration being most prominent among these
- (C) where the episodes of Homer's *Odyssey* are paralleled in an array of contrasting literary styles, with the stream of consciousness narration is most prominent among these
- (D) in which the episodes of Homer's *Odyssey* is paralleled in an array of contrasted literary styles, and the stream of consciousness narration is most prominent among these
- (E) in which the episodes of Homer's *Odyssey* are paralleled in a contrasting array of literary styles, with the stream of consciousness narration most prominent among it

Don't get too distracted by the fact that the original version of the sentence is awkward. If you look at the answer choices, you'll notice that some answer choices contain *where* while others contain *in which*. If you remember that *where* should only be used to refer to places, then you can eliminate (B) and (C).

(A) is correct because it uses the plural pronoun *them* to refer to the plural noun *styles*. The use of *with* after the comma is also idiomatically acceptable.

(D) is incorrect because the plural noun *episodes* is the subject of the singular verb *is*; the singular noun *Odyssey* is part of the prepositional phrase *of Homer's Odyssey*. In addition, the pronoun *these*, which appears at the end of the sentence, should be followed by a noun.

(E) is incorrect because the singular pronoun *it* is used to refer to the plural noun *styles*. In addition, *contrasting* modifies *literary styles* and should be placed next to that phrase rather than next to *array* (the styles are contrasting, not the array itself).

## 5. D: Pronoun: missing referent; Idiom: gerund vs. infinitive

By day, hippos enjoy bathing in water to cool themselves down, which might have contributed to their reputation for being relatively sluggish and sedentary.

- (A) which might have contributed to their reputation for being
- (B) which might contribute to its reputation for being
- (C) and this might have contributed to their reputation to be
- (D) a preference that might contribute to their reputation for being**
- (E) a preference which might have contributed to their reputation to be

The pronoun *which* must refer to the noun that comes immediately before it. In this case, however, there is no noun, only a verb (*cool themselves down*), and a verb cannot act as a referent. That eliminates (A) and (B).

(C) is incorrect because *this* should be followed by a noun, and *reputation* should be followed by *for* + gerund rather than by an infinitive.

Logically, *which* must refer to the fact that hippos enjoy bathing to cool themselves, and both (D) and (E) correctly convey that idea by supplying the noun *preference*.

(D) is correct because the correct idiom is *reputation for* + gerund.

(E) is incorrect because *which* should only be used after a comma; *that* should be used after *preference*. In addition, *reputation to be* is idiomatically incorrect; *reputation for being* should be used instead.

## 6. A: Verb form; Subject-verb agreement

The starling, a bird mentioned in one of Shakespeare's plays, was first introduced in the United States in 1890 and has since become a significant pest species.

- (A) was first introduced in the United States in 1890 and has since become**
- (B) were first introduced in the United States in 1890 and has since become
- (C) was first introduced to the United States in 1890 and would since become
- (D) was first introduced to the United States in 1890 and since became
- (E) were first introduced to the United States in 1890 and since has become

The sentence contains a non-essential clause, so you might want to start by crossing it out in order to simplify the sentence: *The starling...was first introduced in the United States in 1890 and has since become a significant pest species.*

Next, the word *since* is a tip-off that the present perfect (*has/have* + *past participle*) is required – the sentence is describing an action that began in the past (1890) and that is continuing into the present. Based on that information, you can eliminate (C) and (D).

(B) and (E) can be eliminated because the subject is the singular noun *the starling*, whereas the verb *were* is plural. Notice how this error becomes apparent when the non-essential clause is removed.

That leaves (A), which correctly uses the present perfect (*has become*) and the singular verb *was*.

Notice that the preposition issue (*of* vs. *to*) is a distractor here; either is acceptable.

## 7. C: Parallel structure; Logical construction

The outsourcing of hospital workers has become relatively common in the last decade, driven by a combination of factors including a desire for efficiency gains as well as the growing pressure on hospitals to measure quality and keeping people healthy after they are discharged.

- (A) a desire for efficiency gains as well as the growing pressure on hospitals to measure quality and keeping
- (B) a desire for efficiency gains as well as the growing pressure on hospitals to measure quality and they keep
- (C) a desire for gains in efficiency as well as the growing pressure on hospitals to measure quality and keep**
- (D) a desire for gains in efficiency as well as the growing pressure on hospitals in measuring quality and to keep
- (E) a desire for gains in efficiency as well as the growth of pressure on hospitals that measure quality and keep

The phrase *as well as* indicates that this question is testing parallel structure; the constructions on either side of must match. The first item begins with a noun (*desire*), a construction that is retained in all of the answer choices. As a result, the second item must begin with a noun as well.

That line of reasoning might prompt you to start with (E); however, that answer does not really make sense. The sentence indicates that the hospitals being pressured are ones that are *already* measuring quality and keeping people healthy after they are discharged. Given the context of the sentence, a more logical meaning is that the hospitals are being pressured to start measuring quality and keeping people healthy. So even though (E) is grammatically correct, it's wrong.

If you look at the other answers carefully, you can notice that they don't actually contain parallel construction errors. *Growing* simply acts as an adjective that modifies the noun *pressure*, so the two sides are parallel after all.

When you look at (A)-(D), remember that the constructions on either side of the transition *and* must be parallel too.

(A) is incorrect because *measure* and *keeping* are not parallel.

(B) is incorrect because *to measure* and *they keep* are not parallel.

(C) is correct because *to measure* and *keep* can be considered parallel. The word *to* "applies" to *keep*; it is not necessary to repeat it.

(D) is incorrect because *in measuring* and *to keep* are not parallel.



## 8. E: Faulty comparison; Idiom

Contrasting with the works of the rationalists, Hume held that passion rather than reason governs human behavior and postulated that humans can have knowledge only of the objects of experience.

- (A) Contrasting with the works of the rationalists,
- (B) In contrast with the rationalists' work,
- (C) In contrast to those of the rationalists,
- (D) Unlike that of the rationalists,
- (E) Unlike the rationalists,**

The original version of the sentence incorrectly compares the works of the rationalists (things) to Hume (person). In addition, the phrase *contrasting with* is not idiomatic; the correct idiom is *in contrast to*. Since the non-underlined part of the comparison involves a person, the underlined portion must be changed to refer to people.

(B) contains the same error as (A), comparing the rationalists' work to Hume. In addition, the phrase *in contrast with* is not idiomatic.

(C) and (D) are both incorrect because they simply replace the noun *works* with pronouns (*that* and *those*). Grammatically, they re-create the original error.

Only (E) correctly compares the rationalists to Hume.

## 9. D: Dangling modifier; Pronoun agreement: missing referent

Categorized as a "red" volcano as a result of the lava that periodically spews from its crater, a depression measuring 2,100 feet across and 750 feet deep, many cataclysmic explosions have been associated with Mt. Vesuvius since the volcano's most famous eruption in 79 A.D.

- (A) many cataclysmic explosions have been associated with Mt. Vesuvius since the volcano's most famous eruption in 79 A.D.
- (B) they have associated many cataclysmic explosions with Mt. Vesuvius since its most famous eruption in 79 A.D.
- (C) many cataclysmic explosions were associated with Mt. Vesuvius since its most famous eruption in 79 A.D.
- (D) Mt. Vesuvius has exploded cataclysmically many times since its most famous eruption in 79 A.D.**
- (E) Mt. Vesuvius has erupted cataclysmically many times since its most famous one in 79 A.D.

The key to recognizing what this question is testing is to cross out the non-essential clause, which is strategically placed to obscure the error: *Categorized as a "red" volcano as a result of the lava that periodically spews from its crater...many cataclysmic explosions have been associated with Mt. Vesuvius since the volcano's most famous eruption in 79 A.D.*

What is "categorized as a red volcano as a result of the lava that periodically spews from its crater?" Logically, Mt. Vesuvius. Since *Mt. Vesuvius* does not appear at the beginning of the clause in question, the modifier is dangling. In order to fix the error, *Mt. Vesuvius* must be placed at the beginning of the clause. That eliminates (A), (B), and (C).

(D) is correct because it places *Mt. Vesuvius* after the comma and uses the singular pronoun *its* to refer to Vesuvius.

(E) is incorrect because the pronoun *one* should logically refer to the noun *eruption*; however, only the verb *erupted* appears, and a verb cannot act as a referent.

#### 10. B: Parallel structure

The wandering albatross, the first albatross ever to be described by naturalists, is a large seabird that belongs to the albatross family and found primarily in the seas around Antarctica.

- (A) and found primarily in the seas around Antarctica
- (B) and that is found primarily in the seas around Antarctica**
- (C) and primarily found in the Antarctic seas
- (D) being found primarily in the seas around Antarctica
- (E) and are found primarily in the seas around Antarctica

The key to understanding how this question functions is to recognize that the underlined portion of the sentence is part of the clause beginning with *that*, and that the correct version must be parallel to the non-underlined portion of that clause, and that clause only – the rest of the sentence is effectively irrelevant.

(A) is incorrect because *found primarily* should be *is found primarily*. The albatross is not *a large seabird that found around Antarctica* – it is *a large seabird that is found around Antarctica*.

(B) is correct because it supplies the verb *is* before *found*, creating the passive construction that makes the sentence logical. In addition, the word *that* makes this version parallel to the beginning of the clause: *that belongs...that is found*.

(C) is incorrect because *primarily found* should be *is primarily found*. This version contains the same error as (A).

(D) is incorrect because the gerund *being* is not parallel to the verb *belongs* in the non-underlined portion of the clause.

(E) is incorrect because the plural verb *are* does not agree with the singular subject, *a large seabird*.

#### 11. B: Idiom

All of the country's political parties agree as to whether constitutional reform is necessary to address chronic instability and other pressing issues, but when it comes to deciding what kind of reform, they can only agree to disagree.

- (A) agree as to whether constitutional reform is necessary to address
- (B) agree that constitutional reform is necessary to address**
- (C) have an agreement of constitutional reform being necessary to address
- (D) agree that constitutional reform is necessary for the addressing of
- (E) agree about whether constitutional reform is necessary to address

The correct idiom is *agree that*, eliminating (A), (C), and (E).

(D) is incorrect because the construction *necessary for the addressing of* is awkward and unidiomatic. *Necessary* should be followed by the infinitive rather than the gerund.

## 12. E: Diction; Pronoun: ambiguous referent

Even an act as apparently benign as eliminating mosquitoes could have serious ecological affects because they interact with other species in ways that scientists do not yet fully understand.

- (A) eliminating mosquitoes could have serious ecological affects because they interact
- (B) the elimination of mosquitoes can have serious ecological affects because mosquitoes interact
- (C) eliminating mosquitoes could have serious ecological affects because they interact
- (D) to eliminate mosquitoes can have serious ecological effects because they interact
- (E) eliminating mosquitoes could have serious ecological effects because mosquitoes interact**

If you look through the answer choices, you can notice that (A), (B), and (C) contain *affects* whereas (D) and (E) contain *effects*. The word in question functions as a noun, so *effects* is the correct version. That eliminates (A)-(C).

(D) is incorrect because the gerund *eliminating* rather than the infinitive *to eliminate* is more idiomatic here. *Can* should be *could*: the phrase *scientists do not yet fully understand* indicates that the sentence is describing a hypothetical situation. Finally *they* is ambiguous because there are two plural nouns to which it could potentially refer: *mosquitoes* and *ecological effects*.

(E) is correct because it uses the gerund (=noun) *eliminating* to refer to “an act,” and the conditional *could* to refer to a hypothetical situation. In addition, the inclusion of the noun *mosquitoes* removes the ambiguity created by the pronoun *they*.

## 13. D: Pronoun agreement; Tense; Transition

One historical theory posits that an important effect of the Industrial Revolution was that living standards for the general population began to increase consistently for the first time in history, while an opposing theory holds that it did not begin to improve meaningfully until the late 1800s.

- (A) while an opposing theory holds that it did not begin
- (B) while an opposing theory holds that they have not begun
- (C) but an opposing theory holds that it did not begin
- (D) but an opposing theory holds that they did not begin**
- (E) with an opposing theory holding that it did not begin