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AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE · FREE RESOURCE

Skill Builders: 12 Mini-Passages with Questions

Short, focused drills for the multiple-choice section. Six reading mini-passages (5 questions each) and six student drafts (4 questions each). Every passage is original, written for this guide. Time yourself at about 80 seconds per question, then check the answer key and explanations at the end.

How to use this document. Do one set at a time. Read the passage once, answer the questions, and mark any you guessed. Then read the explanation for every question, including the ones you got right. Log misses in your error log using the skill code shown in the key.

Part 1: Reading mini-passages

Set R1: The harbor town (skills 1.A, 3.A, 5.B, 7.A, 7.B)

The following passage is from an essay written for this guide in the style of a nineteenth-century travel narrative.

Line numbers appear every five lines.

The town of Marrow Cove has made a virtue of its inconvenience. No road reaches it that a careful driver would call a road; (5) the last six miles are a shelf of loose gravel clinging to a cliff, and visitors arrive pale and silent, as if they had been delivered by a storm. The inhabitants take a certain pride in this. Ask one of them why the town has never paved the road, (10) and he will look at you as one looks at a child who has asked why the sea is wet. The road, he will explain, is the town's whole defense. A paved road would bring tour buses; tour buses would bring cafes; cafes would bring (15) rents; and rents would bring, in due course, the end of Marrow Cove as anyone now living has known it.

I came expecting to be charmed by this logic and found, to my surprise, that I was persuaded by it. The residents are not (20) romantics. They know the cost of their isolation: the clinic is two hours away, the school has eleven pupils, and the young people leave. But they have weighed these losses against the alternative and chosen. It is a rare thing, I reflected, to meet (25) people who have looked squarely at the price of their own way of life and declined to haggle.

1. The narrator's description of the road in lines 3–7 primarily serves to (A) warn readers that the town is dangerous to visit (B) establish the town's physical isolation and the unusual impression it makes on visitors (C) criticize the local government for neglecting its infrastructure (D) suggest that visitors to the town are unprepared and careless
2. The comparison in lines 9–11 ("as one looks at a child who has asked why the sea is wet") suggests that the inhabitants regard the question as (A) naive, because the answer seems obvious to them (B) rude, because it challenges their traditions (C) amusing, because it reveals the visitor's wit (D) difficult, because it raises a painful memory
3. The sequence in lines 13–16 ("A paved road would bring tour buses; tour buses would bring cafes...") is best described as (A) a series of unrelated observations that build to a conclusion (B) a chain of consequences that supports the residents' position (C) a list of benefits that the residents have overlooked (D) a set of contrasting predictions that the narrator disputes
4. In context, the word "haggle" (line 26) most nearly means (A) argue loudly (B) bargain for a better deal (C) express regret (D) postpone a decision
5. The narrator's attitude toward the residents in the second paragraph is best described as (A) amused skepticism (B) nostalgic longing (C) respectful admiration (D) cautious detachment

Set R2: The case for boredom (skills 1.B, 3.B, 5.A, 5.C, 7.A)

The following passage is from a contemporary opinion essay written for this guide.

Every parent has heard the complaint, and every parent has been tempted to cure it: "I'm bored." The cure is usually a screen. It works instantly, which is exactly the problem. (5) A child handed a device at the first sign of boredom learns that boredom is an emergency, something to be escaped rather than used.

Consider what boredom actually is. It is the mind's signal that nothing outside is (10) holding its attention, and the mind, being restless, begins to look inward. Out of that looking come daydreams, invented games, odd questions, and plans. Researchers who study creativity have long observed that (15) many original ideas arrive during stretches of idle time, not during effortful work. A culture that eliminates idleness may be eliminating the soil in which ideas grow.

To be sure, boredom is not always (20) fruitful, and a child left alone with nothing at all may simply sulk. The answer is not to abolish screens but to ration the rescue: let the complaint stand for a few minutes before intervening. Those few minutes are not neglect. (25) They are an invitation.

6. The writer's main purpose in the passage is to (A) criticize parents for relying on technology (B) argue that periods of boredom have value for children (C) report on research about creativity (D) explain how children use screens
7. The sentence "It works instantly, which is exactly the problem" (lines 3–4) functions primarily to (A) concede that screens are effective in a way that complicates the writer's argument (B) introduce a paradox: the cure's strength is also its weakness (C) provide evidence from research (D) shift the topic from parents to children
8. The reference to "researchers who study creativity" (lines 13–14) is used to (A) establish the writer's own expertise (B) provide support for the claim that idle time can produce ideas (C) contradict the claim in the first paragraph (D) introduce a counterargument

9. The metaphor of "soil" (line 17) implies that idleness is (A) an obstacle that ideas must overcome (B) a condition from which ideas can grow (C) a resource that is quickly exhausted (D) a natural enemy of effort
10. The third paragraph (lines 19–25) differs from the second primarily in that it (A) introduces a qualification of the writer's argument (B) shifts to a new topic (C) restates the thesis in different words (D) rejects the evidence of the second paragraph

Set R3: A letter to the editor (skills 1.A, 3.A, 5.B, 7.B, 7.C)

The following passage is a letter written for this guide.

To the Editor:

Your recent editorial on the proposed library closure was thoughtful, but it missed the point. You argued that the library should remain open (5) because it is "a cherished institution." I do not doubt that it is cherished. But affection is not a budget, and the council must find twelve percent in savings somewhere.

I would ask your readers to consider (10) a different question: what does our library do that no other institution in town does? It lends books, certainly, but so does the bookstore down the street, and so, increasingly, does every phone. What it alone provides is a place (15) where anyone, regardless of income, may sit warm and unquestioned for an afternoon. If that is the library's true function, then it is worth more than its book collection, and the council should say so.

20. Perhaps the library should stay open. But let us defend it for what it is, not for what it was.

Sincerely, Dana Whitcombe

11. The writer's first paragraph primarily serves to (A) praise the editorial's reasoning (B) acknowledge the editorial's point and then redirect the discussion (C) challenge the editorial's accuracy (D) express doubt about the council's authority
12. The phrase "affection is not a budget" (line 6) is best understood as (A) a criticism of the editorial writer (B) a contrast between emotional and financial considerations (C) an admission that the library is unimportant (D) a joke intended to relieve tension
13. The writer's reference to "every phone" (line 14) serves to (A) suggest that technology has made libraries obsolete (B) argue that books are no longer important (C) show that lending books is no longer the library's unique role (D) criticize readers for their reliance on devices
14. The tone of the final paragraph is best described as (A) hostile and dismissive (B) conciliatory yet firm (C) sentimental and nostalgic (D) indifferent and detached
15. Which of the following best describes the writer's argument? (A) The library should close because it is too expensive. (B) The library should stay open, but its defenders should stress its social function. (C) The library should be replaced by a bookstore. (D) The council should ignore public opinion about the library.

Set R4: The unfinished bridge (skills 1.B, 3.C, 5.A, 7.A, 7.C)

The following passage is an excerpt from a historical essay written for this guide.

Historians have long told the story of the Alder Street Bridge as a tale of failure. Begun in 1911 and abandoned in 1914, it stands to this day (5) as a pair of stone piers reaching toward each other across the river, never meeting. It was, the usual account goes, a victim of mismanagement and war.

That account is not wrong, but it is (10) incomplete. Records from the city's engineering office reveal that the bridge's designers had already, by 1913, concluded that the river's course was shifting and that the planned span would (15) not align. The project was not simply abandoned; it was quietly judged unsound by the very people who built it. If so, then the bridge is a less a monument to failure than a record of a hard decision (20) correctly made.

The distinction matters. A failure is something we regret; a decision is something we can learn from.

- 16.** The writer's primary purpose is to (A) describe the construction of the bridge (B) challenge a common interpretation of the bridge's history (C) praise the engineers for their skill (D) argue that the bridge should be completed
- 17.** The phrase "That account is not wrong, but it is incomplete" (line 9) marks a shift from (A) a description of the bridge to a prediction about its future (B) a summary of the conventional view to the writer's own argument (C) personal anecdote to statistical evidence (D) praise to criticism
- 18.** The writer uses the engineering office records (lines 10–13) primarily as (A) evidence supporting the writer's reinterpretation (B) background on the bridge's design (C) a source of conflict among the engineers (D) an example of poor record-keeping
- 19.** The final paragraph functions primarily to (A) summarize the history of the bridge (B) explain the significance of the writer's reinterpretation (C) introduce a new example (D) propose a solution to a problem
- 20.** The writer's tone can best be described as (A) measured and analytical (B) angry and accusatory (C) humorous and light (D) mournful and resigned

Set R5: The orchard (skills 1.A, 3.B, 5.B, 7.A, 7.C)

The following passage is an excerpt from a memoir written for this guide.

My grandfather's orchard had eleven trees, a number he never explained. They stood in two crooked rows behind the house, their branches (5) so tangled that in August the fruit hung like a rumor, visible only to someone who knew where to look. He knew. He would walk out each morning in his (10) undershirt, run a thumb along a branch as if reading it, and come back with a pear in each pocket. I was a child of the supermarket, accustomed to fruit that announced itself under bright lights, (15) and I thought the whole performance a kind of magic.

It was years before I understood that it was not magic but attention. He had studied those trees for forty summers. (20) What looked to me like instinct was only knowledge so thoroughly learned that it had become invisible.

- 21.** The comparison "the fruit hung like a rumor" (lines 5–6) suggests the fruit was (A) abundant and easy to gather (B) hidden and perceptible only to the knowledgeable (C) of poor quality (D) the subject of local gossip
- 22.** The narrator's reference to "a child of the supermarket" (line 13) serves to (A) show that the narrator preferred store-bought fruit (B) contrast the narrator's experience with the grandfather's (C) criticize modern shopping habits (D) explain why the narrator disliked the orchard

23. The shift in the second paragraph is from (A) a childhood perception to an adult understanding (B) description of a place to description of a person (C) humor to seriousness (D) praise to criticism
24. The statement that “knowledge so thoroughly learned... had become invisible” (lines 20–21) suggests that (A) expertise often looks effortless to observers (B) the grandfather was secretive (C) the narrator lacked curiosity (D) the orchard was neglected
25. The tone of the passage is best described as (A) nostalgic and appreciative (B) bitter and regretful (C) neutral and clinical (D) sarcastic and critical

Set R6: A commentary on noise (skills 1.B, 3.C, 5.C, 7.B, 7.C)

The following passage is from an essay written for this guide.

We have become a people who cannot bear silence. In offices, in cars, in elevators, in the very aisles of the stores where we (5) shop, a low and persistent music fills the air, chosen by no one and heard by everyone. We call it ambiance. It would be more honest to call it fear.

For what is silence, if not the (10) condition in which we must hear our own thoughts? And what is a thought, to a mind unaccustomed to hearing one, but an intruder? So we have built a world in which the intruder never gets in, (15) in which every pause is filled before it can become a pause, in which the only unplanned silence is the one that follows a power failure. Then, briefly, we remember what the world sounds like.

26. The writer’s use of “ambiance” and “fear” (lines 6–7) is best described as (A) a contrast between an accepted label and a more critical interpretation (B) a definition of two terms (C) an example of a logical fallacy (D) a comparison that favors the first term
27. The two questions in lines 9–13 primarily serve to (A) request information from the reader (B) lead the reader toward the writer’s conclusion (C) express uncertainty (D) introduce a counterargument
28. The syntax of lines 13–16 (“in which every pause is filled... in which the only unplanned silence...”) is notable for its (A) use of parallel clauses to build the writer’s point (B) use of short, simple sentences (C) reliance on fragments (D) shift between first and third person
29. The final sentence (“Then, briefly, we remember what the world sounds like”) creates an effect of (A) quiet irony, since the power failure restores what we have lost (B) alarm (C) comic relief (D) scientific detachment
30. The writer’s attitude toward modern noise is best described as (A) enthusiastic approval (B) critical concern (C) neutral observation (D) puzzled curiosity

Part 2: Student-draft mini-passages (writing questions)

Each draft below is numbered by sentence. Read the draft, then answer the questions about revising it.

Set W1: Community gardens (skills 2.A, 4.A, 6.A, 8.A)

1. Community gardens are growing in popularity across the country. (2) They give neighbors a place to work together. (3) Many gardens also provide fresh produce to people who otherwise might not have access to

it. (4) A garden in my town started with just ten volunteers. (5) Today it feeds more than sixty families. (6) For these reasons, towns should support them with public funds.

31. The writer wants to add a sentence after sentence 1 that clearly states the claim of the paragraph. Which choice best accomplishes this? (A) I have always liked gardening. (B) Towns should consider public funding for community gardens because they deliver social and nutritional benefits. (C) Gardens are plants. (D) Some people do not like vegetables.

32. The writer wants to improve the transition between sentences 3 and 4. Which choice best accomplishes this? (A) A garden in my town started with just ten volunteers. (B) The benefits are not only theoretical: a garden in my town started with just ten volunteers. (C) Anyway, a garden in my town started with just ten volunteers. (D) Ten volunteers are not many.

33. The writer is considering combining sentences 4 and 5. Which choice best maintains the meaning and improves the flow? (A) A garden in my town started with just ten volunteers, and today it feeds more than sixty families. (B) A garden in my town started with just ten volunteers, but today it feeds sixty families. (C) A garden in my town started with just ten volunteers; today more than sixty families. (D) Started with just ten volunteers, today a garden in my town feeds more than sixty families, it grew.

34. The writer wants to revise sentence 6 to better conclude the paragraph. Which choice best accomplishes this? (A) That's all I have to say. (B) Because of these benefits, towns should invest public funds in community gardens. (C) Gardens are nice. (D) Funds are important.

Set W2: Later school start times (skills 2.B, 4.B, 6.B, 8.B)

1. Many high schools start before 8:00 a.m. (2) Teenagers need about nine hours of sleep. (3) Research shows that adolescents' body clocks run later than those of adults. (4) Students who start school later tend to have better attendance. (5) Some people worry that later start times will interfere with sports practice. (6) Schools can address this by adjusting practice schedules.

35. The writer wants to add evidence after sentence 3 to support the claim. Which choice best accomplishes this? (A) Sleep is something everyone does. (B) A study of several districts found that students who began school later reported more hours of sleep on school nights. (C) I like to sleep late. (D) Teachers wake up early.

36. Where would the sentence "Others fear that families' morning routines will be disrupted" best fit? (A) After sentence 1 (B) After sentence 5 (C) After sentence 2 (D) After sentence 6

37. The writer wants to revise sentence 4 to emphasize the effect on learning. Which choice best does this? (A) Students who start school later tend to have better attendance and, as a result, more time in class to learn. (B) Attendance is good. (C) Students like later starts. (D) Later starts are later.

38. In sentence 6, the writer wants to be more specific. Which choice best does this? (A) Schools can fix this. (B) Schools can address this by holding practices after classes end, with lights for evening fields. (C) Schools can do something. (D) Practice schedules exist.

Set W3: Reading for pleasure (skills 2.A, 4.C, 6.C, 8.C)

1. Fewer teenagers read for pleasure than a generation ago. (2) Some blame smartphones. (3) Others point to heavy homework loads. (4) The causes are probably several. (5) Whatever the cause, the loss is real,

because reading builds vocabulary and attention. (6) Schools can help by setting aside time for free reading each day.

- 39.** The writer wants to acknowledge a counterargument. Which sentence, added after sentence 4, best does this? (A) Of course, some teenagers read more than ever. (B) Reading is good. (C) Books are long. (D) Phones are small.
- 40.** Which revision of sentence 5 best maintains the formal tone of the passage? (A) Anyway, it's bad, since reading makes you smarter. (B) Whatever the cause, the loss is significant, since reading builds vocabulary and sustained attention. (C) Whatever, reading is awesome. (D) The loss is real, because, like, reading builds stuff.
- 41.** The writer wants to add a concluding sentence after sentence 6. Which choice best does this? (A) The end. (B) A daily reading period would cost little and could restore a habit that many students have lost. (C) Reading is hard. (D) Schools are buildings.
- 42.** The writer wants to combine sentences 2 and 3. Which choice best does this? (A) Some blame smartphones, while others point to heavy homework loads. (B) Some blame smartphones others point to heavy homework loads. (C) Smartphones. Homework. (D) Some blame smartphones and heavy homework loads others.

Set W4: Public transit (skills 2.A, 4.A, 6.B, 8.A)

1. Our city's bus system is underused. (2) Buses run only every forty minutes. (3) Riders cannot rely on them. (4) Cities that run buses more frequently have seen ridership rise. (5) Our city should increase service on its busiest routes. (6) This would cost money.
- 43.** The writer wants to add a sentence after sentence 3 to explain why frequency matters. Which choice best does this? (A) A rider who misses a bus may wait nearly an hour for the next one, which makes the system impractical for anyone with a schedule. (B) Buses are big. (C) I take the bus sometimes. (D) Schedules are printed on paper.
- 44.** Which revision of sentence 6 best prepares for a counterargument? (A) This would cost money, but the added ridership could offset much of the expense. (B) This would cost money. (C) Money is a problem. (D) Costs exist.
- 45.** The writer wants to combine sentences 2 and 3. Which choice best does this? (A) Buses run only every forty minutes, so riders cannot rely on them. (B) Buses run only every forty minutes riders cannot rely on them. (C) Buses run only every forty minutes. And so riders cannot rely on them. (D) Because forty minutes, buses cannot be relied on.
- 46.** Where should the writer insert "Frequency, not fares, is what most riders say they want"? (A) After sentence 1 (B) After sentence 3 (C) After sentence 5 (D) After sentence 6

Set W5: Museum admission (skills 2.B, 4.B, 6.A, 8.B)

1. Many museums charge admission. (2) Some people say this keeps them from visiting. (3) A few museums have experimented with free days. (4) Visitors on free days tend to include more first-time guests. (5) Museums depend on admission fees. (6) A balanced approach might be best.

47. The writer wants to add evidence after sentence 4. Which choice best does this? (A) A survey at one museum found that nearly half the visitors on its free day had never visited before. (B) Museums are old. (C) I like museums. (D) Free is a price.
48. The writer wants to make sentence 6 more specific. Which choice best does this? (A) Maybe something could work. (B) A balanced approach, such as a monthly free day paired with reduced-price evenings, might preserve revenue while widening access. (C) Balance is good. (D) Approaches differ.
49. Which change to sentence 5 would best show the relationship to the preceding sentences? (A) Even so, museums depend on admission fees, so free access must be managed carefully. (B) Museums depend on admission fees. (C) Fees exist. (D) Museums are buildings.
50. The writer considers deleting sentence 2. Should the writer make this change? (A) Yes, because it repeats the idea in sentence 1. (B) No, because it introduces the concern that the rest of the paragraph responds to. (C) Yes, because it is not related to the topic. (D) No, because it provides a statistic.

Set W6: Wildlife corridors (skills 2.A, 4.C, 6.C, 8.C)

1. Roads divide habitats. (2) Animals that cross them risk being struck. (3) Wildlife corridors, such as overpasses and tunnels, can reduce these collisions. (4) In one region, an overpass cut collisions sharply. (5) Corridors are expensive to build. (6) Still, the savings from fewer accidents can offset much of the cost.
51. The writer wants to add a sentence after sentence 1 that introduces the problem. Which choice best does this? (A) Animals live in many places. (B) As roads multiply, animals that once ranged freely find their territories cut into pieces. (C) Roads are made of asphalt. (D) I saw a deer once.
52. Which revision of sentence 4 best provides specific evidence? (A) In one region, an overpass reduced collisions by more than eighty percent over five years. (B) An overpass worked. (C) Overpasses exist. (D) Collisions are bad.
53. The writer wants to maintain the formal tone in sentence 6. Which choice best does this? (A) But, whatever, it pays for itself. (B) Still, the savings from fewer accidents can offset much of the cost. (C) It's cheap in the end, so yeah. (D) No big deal.
54. The writer wants to add a concluding sentence. Which choice best does this? (A) Communities that weigh both costs and benefits may find that protecting wildlife also protects drivers. (B) The end. (C) Animals are great. (D) Roads are long.

Answer Key and Explanations

Q	ANS	SKILL	Q	ANS	SKILL	Q	ANS	SKILL
1	B	1.A	19	B	5.C	37	A	4.B
2	A	7.B	20	A	7.C	38	B	8.B
3	B	5.B	21	B	7.A	39	A	4.C
4	B	7.A	22	B	1.A	40	B	8.C
5	C	7.C	23	A	5.B	41	B	6.C

Q	ANS	SKILL	Q	ANS	SKILL	Q	ANS	SKILL
6	B	1.B	24	A	3.B	42	A	6.B
7	B	5.A	25	A	7.C	43	A	4.A
8	B	3.B	26	A	7.A	44	A	6.B
9	B	7.A	27	B	5.A	45	A	6.B
10	A	5.C	28	A	7.B	46	B	6.A
11	B	5.B	29	A	7.C	47	A	4.B
12	B	7.B	30	B	7.C	48	B	8.B
13	C	3.B	31	B	2.A	49	A	6.A
14	B	7.C	32	B	6.A	50	B	6.A
15	B	1.B	33	A	6.B	51	B	2.A
16	B	1.B	34	B	6.C	52	A	4.B
17	B	5.B	35	B	4.B	53	B	8.C
18	A	3.C	36	B	6.A	54	A	6.C

Reading explanations (Sets R1–R6)

- 1. B.** Lines 3–7 describe a road that is barely a road and visitors who arrive “pale and silent.” The point is the town’s isolation and its effect on visitors. (A) overstates; the passage is wry, not alarmed. (C) has no support, since the residents are *proud* of the road. (D) misreads the humor.
- 2. A.** The child who asks why the sea is wet asks a question with an obvious answer; the comparison suggests the residents find the question naive. (B), (C), and (D) import feelings the comparison does not support.
- 3. B.** Each step causes the next (“would bring... would bring...”), building the residents’ case that paving leads to the town’s loss. (A) misses the causal link. (C) and (D) reverse the sequence’s purpose.
- 4. B.** To “haggle” is to bargain over a price, and the sentence is about people who will not bargain over the price of their way of life. (A) is the casual sense of quarreling; (C) and (D) do not fit.
- 5. C.** The final sentence calls this “a rare thing” and says the narrator was “persuaded”; the attitude is respectful admiration. (A) fits the first paragraph’s wryness but not the second. (B) is wrong; there is no longing for the past. (D) ignores the narrator’s engagement.
- 6. B.** The whole essay argues that boredom is useful. (A) is a side note. (C) and (D) are too narrow.
- 7. B.** The sentence calls the cure’s speed “exactly the problem”: a strength that is also a weakness, which is a paradox. (A) is half right but “concede” overstates it, since the writer never gives ground.
- 8. B.** The researchers are cited as evidence for the claim that idle time produces ideas. (A) is wrong because the writer does not claim expertise. (C) and (D) misstate the function.

- 9. B.** Soil is where things grow, so the metaphor says idleness is a condition for ideas to grow. (A), (C), and (D) contradict the metaphor.
- 10. A.** The third paragraph begins "To be sure" and admits boredom is not always fruitful, a qualification. (B) and (D) are wrong, and (C) misses the new element.
- 11. B.** The writer grants the editorial's point ("I do not doubt that it is cherished") and then redirects to the budget. (A) goes too far. (C) and (D) are not in the text.
- 12. B.** "Affection is not a budget" contrasts feeling with finance. (A) is too personal; (C) overreads; (D) misreads tone.
- 13. C.** Phones can also lend books, so lending is no longer unique. (A) and (B) go beyond the text. (D) is wrong.
- 14. B.** "Perhaps the library should stay open" is conciliatory, while "let us defend it for what it is" is firm. (A), (C), and (D) do not fit.
- 15. B.** The writer wants the library kept but defended for its social function. (A), (C), and (D) contradict the letter.
- 16. B.** "Historians have long told... That account is... incomplete" signals a challenge to the common view. (A) and (C) are too narrow. (D) is unsupported.
- 17. B.** The sentence moves from the conventional story to the writer's own claim. (A), (C), and (D) do not match.
- 18. A.** The records are the evidence for the new interpretation. (B), (C), and (D) misstate their role.
- 19. B.** The last paragraph explains why the distinction matters ("a failure is regretted; a decision is learned from"). (A), (C), and (D) do not fit.
- 20. A.** The tone is calm and analytical. (B), (C), and (D) overstate.
- 21. B.** A rumor is something you catch only if you know where to listen; the fruit is perceptible only to those who know. (A), (C), and (D) miss the figurative sense.
- 22. B.** The "child of the supermarket" contrasts the narrator's experience of fruit with the grandfather's. (A), (C), and (D) overread.
- 23. A.** The first paragraph is a child's view ("I thought... magic"); the second is the adult's understanding ("It was years before I understood"). (B), (C), and (D) do not match.
- 24. A.** Expert knowledge looks like effortless instinct. (B), (C), and (D) are unsupported.
- 25. A.** The memoir is warm and appreciative. (B), (C), and (D) do not fit.
- 26. A.** "Ambiance" is the accepted label; "fear" is the writer's sharper reading. (B), (C), and (D) misdescribe the contrast.
- 27. B.** The questions steer the reader toward the claim that people avoid silence to avoid their own thoughts. (A) misses that they are rhetorical; (C) and (D) are wrong.
- 28. A.** The repeated "in which" clauses are parallel and accumulate force. (B), (C), and (D) are not true of the lines.
- 29. A.** The ironic effect is that only a power failure restores the sounds we have lost. (B), (C), and (D) overstate or misread.
- 30. B.** The writer is critical and concerned. (A), (C), and (D) do not fit.

Writing explanations (Sets W1–W6)

- 31. B.** It states the paragraph's claim and connects to sentences 2–6. The others are irrelevant or unfocused.
- 32. B.** It signals a shift from general benefit to a specific example and keeps a formal tone. (C) is too casual; (A) has no transition; (D) is a non sequitur.
- 33. A.** It combines the sentences smoothly with correct punctuation and meaning. (B) changes the figure; (C) is a fragment; (D) is a run-on.
- 34. B.** It restates the claim with the supporting reasons ("these benefits"). The others are weak or off-task.
- 35. B.** Specific study evidence supports the claim about sleep. The others are not evidence.
- 36. B.** The sentence introduces another concern, and sentence 5 begins the concerns about sports, so it belongs after 5. (A), (C), and (D) interrupt the logic.
- 37. A.** It connects attendance to learning. The others are vague or off-topic.
- 38. B.** It is specific and workable. The others are vague.
- 39. A.** "Of course, some teenagers read more than ever" acknowledges a counterpoint. The others do not.
- 40. B.** It preserves the formal tone. The others use casual diction.
- 41. B.** It concludes with a specific recommendation tied to the argument. The others are weak.
- 42. A.** It combines the sentences with correct parallel structure and punctuation. (B) is a run-on; (C) and (D) are broken.
- 43. A.** It explains why infrequency matters. The others do not.
- 44. A.** It acknowledges the cost and answers it. The others do not prepare a counterargument.
- 45. A.** It uses "so" to show the causal link. (B) is a run-on; (C) and (D) are awkward or ungrammatical.
- 46. B.** After sentence 3 ("Riders cannot rely on them"), the sentence names what riders want. The other placements do not follow logically.
- 47. A.** It provides specific evidence. The others are not evidence.
- 48. B.** It specifies the approach and its purpose. The others are vague.
- 49. A.** "Even so" marks the concession, and the clause links it to the caution. (B), (C), and (D) do not show the relationship.
- 50. B.** Sentence 2 introduces the concern that sentence 3 and 4 respond to. Deleting it would weaken the logic. (A), (C), and (D) misstate the sentence's role.
- 51. B.** It introduces the problem in a way that leads to sentence 2. The others are irrelevant.
- 52. A.** It supplies specific evidence. The others do not.
- 53. B.** It preserves the formal tone. The others are casual.
- 54. A.** It concludes by tying the costs and benefits to the argument. The others are weak.

Score yourself

READING (30 QUESTIONS)

Count correct: ____ / 30

WRITING (24 QUESTIONS)

Count correct: ____ / 24

Interpreting the result. A score of about 70% or higher on a set means the skill is solid. Below 60%, return to the matching skills guide and the question-type guide, then try the set again in a week.

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