

Answer Explanations

SAT Practice Test #10

Section 1: Reading Test

QUESTION 1

Choice A is the best answer. Throughout the passage, the narrator refers to Miss Spivey’s 1938 class as “we” and “us” and describes interactions between Miss Spivey and her students as a firsthand observer, indicating that the narrator was a member of this 1938 class. Therefore, the narrator of the passage can best be described as one of Miss Spivey’s former students.

Choice B is incorrect because the narrator refers to Miss Spivey’s predecessor, Miss Chandler, by name, not as “I” or “me,” and therefore the narrator isn’t Miss Spivey’s predecessor. Choice C is incorrect because the passage identifies the narrator as a member of Miss Spivey’s 1938 class and also mentions the narrator’s mother and brother, Ralphord. Choice D is incorrect because the narrator refers to Miss Spivey by name and as “she” and “her,” not as “I” or “me,” and thus can’t be Miss Spivey herself.

QUESTION 2

Choice B is the best answer. The description of the train’s arrival in the first paragraph suggests that Threestep is a rural town: instead of a paved platform, the tracks are lined with “burned grass.” Meanwhile, the description of the school in the sixth paragraph implies that the community is small: instead of individual rooms for separate grade levels, the school’s single room contains twenty-six students spread “across seven grade levels.” Therefore, Threestep is mainly presented in the passage as a small rural town.

Choice A is incorrect because the narrator describes Threestep as uncomfortably hot for its residents, not as a summer retreat for vacationers. Choice C is incorrect because Miss Spivey refers to prominent universities located in other cities, not ones located in Threestep. Choice D is incorrect because in the first paragraph Threestep is characterized as a small rural town that is experiencing “hard times,” not as a comfortable suburb.

QUESTION 3

Choice D is the best answer. In the first paragraph, Miss Spivey remarks that the heat in Georgia is nothing compared to the heat she experienced in Timbuktu. Later in this paragraph the narrator states, “I believe her remark irritated some of the people gathered to welcome her on the burned grass alongside the tracks. When folks are sweating through their shorts, they don’t like to hear that this is *nothing* compared to someplace else.” Hence it can reasonably be inferred from the passage that some of the people at the train station regard Miss Spivey’s comment about the Georgia heat with resentment because they feel that she is minimizing their discomfort.

Choice A is incorrect because Miss Spivey informs the people at the train station that she has experienced even more extreme heat, so they wouldn’t have assumed that she is experiencing intense heat for the first time. Choice B is incorrect because the passage indicates that the people at the station know Miss Spivey is coming to Threestep to work, not that they doubt she will stay there very long. Choice C is incorrect because the passage doesn’t indicate that the people at the train station imagine that she is superior to them.

QUESTION 4

Choice B is the best answer. The previous question asks what can be inferred from the passage about the reaction of the people at the train station to Miss Spivey’s comment about the Georgia heat. The answer, that it can be reasonably inferred from the passage that some of the people at the train station regard Miss Spivey’s comment about the Georgia heat with resentment because they feel that she’s minimizing their discomfort, is best supported in the first paragraph: “I believe her remark irritated some of the people gathered to welcome her on the burned grass alongside the tracks. When folks are sweating through their shorts, they don’t like to hear that this is *nothing* compared to someplace else.”

Choices A, C, and D are incorrect because the cited lines don’t provide the best evidence for the answer to the previous question. Instead, they describe Miss Spivey’s appearance (choice A), reflect on why people viewed her arrival positively in spite of their irritation over her remark (choice C), and outline her education (choice D).

QUESTION 5

Choice A is the best answer. In the second paragraph, Miss Spivey describes a break she took from her formal education as a “fruitful intermission.” She explains that she “traveled extensively in the Near East and Africa with a friend of her grandmother’s, one Janet Miller” during this time. Therefore, Miss Spivey most likely uses the phrase “fruitful intermission” to indicate that she benefited from taking time off from her studies to travel.

Choice B is incorrect because Miss Spivey’s use of the phrase “fruitful intermission” doesn’t indicate that her travels with Janet Miller encouraged her to start medical school. Choice C is incorrect because Miss Spivey uses the phrase “fruitful intermission” to refer to a break in her formal education after boarding school, not during her early years there. Choice D is incorrect because Miss Spivey’s use of the phrase “fruitful intermission” doesn’t indicate that this break lasted longer than she had expected.

QUESTION 6

Choice A is the best answer. In the second paragraph, Miss Spivey tells her class that she went to Barnard College in New York City, which prompts Ralphord to ask her what she studied at “Barnyard College.” In response, Miss Spivey explains that Barnard College “was the sister school of Columbia University, of which, she expected, we all had heard.” This interaction implies that, contrary to Miss Spivey’s expectations, the names of prestigious East Coast schools aren’t common knowledge among her pupils. Thus the interaction between Miss Spivey and Ralphord serves mainly to suggest that Miss Spivey has an exaggerated view of what information should be considered common knowledge.

Choice B is incorrect because the interaction between Miss Spivey and Ralphord establishes an atmosphere of misunderstanding, not friendliness. Choice C is incorrect because Ralphord’s question demonstrates his naivety rather than his precociousness. Choice D is incorrect because the passage doesn’t suggest that Ralphord’s question is an attempt to amuse Miss Spivey.

QUESTION 7

Choice D is the best answer. The third paragraph describes Miss Spivey as having “wandered,” or walked aimlessly, into a lecture by John Dewey. Following her interactions with the professor, Miss Spivey was inspired to work as an educator; consequently, she “marched,” or walked purposefully, to sign up for the Teacher’s College. Hence, by describing Miss Spivey as having “wandered” in the former situation and “marched” in the latter, the narrator is most likely suggesting that Miss Spivey’s initial encounter with Dewey’s ideas was somewhat accidental but ultimately motivated her to decisive action.

Choices A and C are incorrect because the narrator’s description of Miss Spivey as having “wandered” into Dewey’s class and “marched” to sign up for the Teacher’s College suggests that her accidental encounter with him motivated her to begin studying to be a teacher, not that Dewey saw Miss Spivey as lacking confidence in her ability to teach (choice A) or that she was anxious to be in charge of her own classroom (choice C). Choice B is incorrect

because Miss Spivey didn't express a desire to teach in the poorest, most remote corner of America until two years after talking with Dewey over coffee.

QUESTION 8

Choice C is the best answer. According to the third paragraph, after two years at the Teacher's College, Miss Spivey told a woman from the WPA that "she wanted to bring democracy and education to the poorest, darkest, most remote and forgotten corner of America." Consequently, "they sent her to Threestep, Georgia," according to the fourth paragraph. Thus Miss Spivey ended up in Threestep as a direct result of talking with a woman at the WPA.

Choices A and B are incorrect because Miss Spivey ended up in Threestep as a direct result of talking with a woman at the WPA, not as an immediate consequence of her friendship with Janet Miller (choice A), or her decision to attend college in New York City (choice B). Choice D is incorrect because Miss Chandler is mentioned as Miss Spivey's predecessor in Threestep, but Miss Spivey's arrival in town doesn't occur as a direct result of Miss Chandler's retirement.

QUESTION 9

Choice C is the best answer. The ninth paragraph describes the students' reaction to Miss Spivey's announcement that she had seen camels on her trip to Baghdad: "We all hung there for a minute, thinking hard, until Mavis Davis spoke up." Mavis reminds the other students that camels appear in a story they are familiar with. Thus, when Miss Spivey announces that she had seen camels, the students' reaction suggests that they are baffled.

Choices A, B, and D are incorrect because when Miss Spivey announces that she had seen camels, the students' reaction suggests that they are baffled, not delighted (choice A), fascinated (choice B), or worried (choice D).

QUESTION 10

Choice B is the best answer. The previous question asks what the students' reaction suggests about them when Miss Spivey announces that she had seen camels. The answer, that their reaction suggests that they are baffled, is best supported in the ninth paragraph: "We all hung there for a minute, thinking hard, until Mavis Davis spoke up."

Choices A, C, and D are incorrect because the cited lines don't provide the best evidence for the answer to the previous question. Instead, they describe Miss Spivey's anticipation of a delighted or amazed response to her announcement that she had seen camels (choice A),

relay Mavis’s reference to a story familiar to the students (choice C), and reflect on the subdued nature of Miss Spivey’s response to Mavis (choice D).

QUESTION 11

Choice D is the best answer. Throughout the passage, the author contends that efforts to make driving more unpleasant can curtail the negative environmental effects of car use, such as the rapid growth of “energy-hungry subdivisions.” According to the second paragraph, “one of the few forces with a proven ability to slow the growth of suburban sprawl has been the ultimately finite tolerance of commuters for long, annoying commutes.” Consequently, according to the last paragraph, “from an environmental perspective, inconvenient travel is a worthy goal.” Thus the main purpose of the passage is to argue that one way to reduce the negative environmental effects of traffic is to make driving less agreeable.

Choice A is incorrect because the author introduces the claim that efforts to reduce traffic actually increase traffic as a supporting point, not as the main purpose of the passage. Choice B is incorrect because, in the second paragraph, the author does dispute the environmental value of making car travel more convenient, but this isn’t the main purpose of the passage. Choice C is incorrect because the negative environmental consequences of car-focused development and suburban sprawl are supporting details of the passage, not its main purpose.

QUESTION 12

Choice A is the best answer. In the first paragraph, the author states, “Building good transit isn’t a bad idea, but it can actually backfire if the new trains and buses merely clear space on highway lanes for those who would prefer to drive—a group that, historically, has included almost everyone with access to a car.” In this sentence, the author bases his claim about the unintended consequences of building public transit on the expectation that most people would prefer to drive a car than take trains and buses. Hence this sentence best supports the idea that the author assumes that, all things being equal, people would rather drive than take mass transit.

Choices B, C, and D are incorrect because the cited lines don’t provide the best support for the idea that the author assumes that, all things being equal, people would rather drive than take mass transit. Instead, they argue that in order to have positive environmental effects, new transit options have to persuade a substantial number of people not to drive (choice B), contend that unpopular efforts to make driving less convenient are necessary to reduce driving (choice C), and connect increased commute times to a reduction in suburban sprawl (choice D).

QUESTION 13

Choice A is the best answer. The first paragraph states, “That means that a new transit system has to be backed up by something that impels complementary reductions in car use.” In other words, new public transportation initiatives need to be supported, or reinforced, by policies that reduce car use. Thus “backed up,” as used in the passage, most nearly means supported.

Choices B, C, and D are incorrect because in the context of the passage, “backed up” means supported, not copied (choice B), substituted (choice C), or jammed (choice D).

QUESTION 14

Choice B is the best answer. In the first paragraph, the author introduces some proposals for reducing car traffic by making driving slower and less convenient. However, he also acknowledges that “those ideas are not popular.” Thus, in the first paragraph, the author concedes that his recommendations aren’t widely supported.

Choice A is incorrect because, in the first paragraph, the author doesn’t indicate that his recommendations are costly to implement. Choice C is incorrect because the author concedes that his recommendations are unpopular with the general public, not strongly opposed by experts. Choice D is incorrect because the author suggests that his recommendations are environmentally beneficial in the long term, not environmentally harmful in the short term.

QUESTION 15

Choice C is the best answer. In the second paragraph, the author argues that “if, in a misguided effort to do something of environmental value, municipalities take steps that make long-distance car commuting faster or more convenient . . . we actually make the sprawl problem worse.” That is, measures that make driving more convenient actually harm the environment because they encourage more people to live in suburban developments, which represents wasteful expansion in his view. Therefore, based on the passage, the author would most likely characterize many attempts to improve traffic as well intentioned but ultimately leading to environmental harm.

Choices A, B, and D are incorrect because the author doesn’t characterize attempts to improve traffic as doomed to fail due to drivers’ reluctance to change their behavior (choice A), as overestimating drivers’ tolerance of long commutes (choice B), or as viable only if they make driving more economical and productive (choice D).

QUESTION 16

Choice C is the best answer. The previous question asks how the author would most likely characterize many attempts to improve traffic. The answer, that the author would most likely characterize such attempts as well intentioned but ultimately leading to environmental harm, is best supported in the second paragraph: “If, in a misguided effort to do something of environmental value, municipalities take steps that make long-distance car commuting faster or more convenient—by adding lanes, building bypasses, employing traffic-control measures that make it possible for existing roads to accommodate more cars with fewer delays, replacing tollbooths with radio-based systems that don’t require drivers even to slow down—we actually make the sprawl problem worse.”

Choices A, B, and D are incorrect because the cited lines don’t provide the best evidence for the answer to the previous question. Instead, they assert that public transit improvements must be supported by measures to reduce car use (choice A), indicate that tolerance for long commutes has grown recently, but has a natural limit (choice B), and elaborate on why improvements in public transport can fail to decrease road use (choice D).

QUESTION 17

Choice D is the best answer. The second paragraph discusses how efforts to make commuting more convenient can have the unintended consequence of encouraging people to live farther away from their jobs: “If you cut commuting time by 10 percent, people who now drive fifty miles each way to work can justify moving five miles farther out, because their travel time won’t change.” Therefore, according to the passage, reducing commuting time for drivers can have the effect of making drivers more willing to live farther from their places of employment.

Choices A, B, and C are incorrect because the passage doesn’t suggest that reducing commuting time can make drivers more productive employees (choice A), can cause mass transit to be extended farther into suburban areas (choice B), or can result in less government funding for mass transit (choice C).

QUESTION 18

Choice C is the best answer. The last paragraph asserts, “No one ever promotes a transit scheme by arguing that it would make traveling less convenient.” In other words, nobody advocates, or pushes for, changes to the transportation system by arguing that they would make traveling less convenient. Thus “promotes,” as used in the passage, most nearly means advocates.

Choices A, B, and D are incorrect because in the context of the passage, “promotes” means advocates, not upgrades (choice A), serves (choice B), or develops (choice D).

QUESTION 19

Choice B is the best answer. Figure 1 presents data related to the effect of route capacity reduction on selected regions. In the row pertaining to Southampton city center, the number 5,316 appears under the heading “Vehicles per day on altered road” in the column that specifies “Before alteration.” Thus, according to figure 1, the number of vehicles that traveled on the altered road through Southampton city center per day before the route was altered is 5,316.

Choice A is incorrect because 3,081 is the number of vehicles per day that traveled on the Southampton city center road after it was altered, not before. Choice C is incorrect because 24,101 is the number of vehicles per day that traveled on roads surrounding the Southampton city center road after it was altered. Choice D is incorrect because 26,522 is the number of vehicles that traveled on roads surrounding the Southampton city center road before it was altered.

QUESTION 20

Choice B is the best answer. In the first paragraph, the author of the passage argues that “to have environmental value . . . a new transit system has to be backed up by something that impels complementary reductions in car use—say, the physical elimination of traffic lanes.” According to figure 1, reducing route capacity resulted in a net reduction in regional traffic in all five areas studied. Therefore, the data in figure 1 support the author’s argument because the data show that reducing road capacity can lead to a net reduction in traffic.

Choice A is incorrect. Figure 1 data support the author’s argument that route capacity reduction results in a reduction of car use, but the figure doesn’t provide data relating to the “induced traffic” phenomenon. Choices C and D are incorrect because figure 1 data support, not weaken, the author’s argument that route capacity reduction such as elimination of traffic lanes results in reduction of traffic.

QUESTION 21

Choice D is the best answer. Figure 2 presents data related to an opinion poll of transportation engineers. According to the y-axis label, the engineers were asked whether a significant road space reallocation could result in people changing various aspects of their driving. The graph shows four different answer possibilities: “yes,” “yes (in exceptional circumstances),” “no,” and “don’t know.” The question asks for the aspect of driver behavior that the engineers surveyed thought was least likely to change in the event of a reallocation of road space according to figure 2: when they travel,

their means of traveling, how often they make a journey, or their driving style. Of these four choices, “their driving style,” received the smallest percentage of “yes” and “yes (in exceptional circumstances)” responses and the largest percentage of “no” responses. Hence, based on figure 2, the engineers surveyed were most skeptical of the idea that, in the event of a reallocation of road space, drivers would change their driving style.

Choices A, B, and C are incorrect because, according to figure 2, when the engineers were asked whether they thought that drivers would change when they travel (choice A), their means of traveling (choice B), or how often they make a journey (choice C) in the event of a significant road space reallocation, they gave more “yes” or “yes (in exceptional circumstances)” answers, and fewer “no” answers than they gave in response to the question of whether they thought drivers would change their driving style. Thus the engineers were less skeptical of these potential changes than they were of the idea that drivers would change their driving style in the event of a significant road space reallocation.

QUESTION 22

Choice D is the best answer. The first paragraph asserts that textbook authors in the early 1990s believed that “sensations of pressure and vibration . . . travel only along myelinated, fast-signaling nerve fibers.” Thus, based on the passage, textbook authors in the early 1990s would most likely have expected that the ability to perceive vibrations would be impaired as a result of blocking fast fibers.

Choices A, B, and C are incorrect because the passage indicates that textbook authors in the early 1990s believed blocking fast nerve fibers would impair sensations of vibration, not that blocking would increase the firing rate of other fibers (choice A), cause gentle stimuli to be perceived as painful (choice B), or make the body compensate by using slow fibers to sense pressure (choice C).

QUESTION 23

Choice B is the best answer. The previous question asks what condition textbook authors in the early 1990s would most likely have expected to result from blocking fast fibers. The answer, that they would most likely have expected blocking fast fibers to result in an impairment of the ability to perceive vibrations, is best supported in the first paragraph, which refers to the views of textbook authors in the early 1990s: “Sensations of pressure and vibration were believed to travel only along myelinated, fast-signaling nerve fibers, which also give information about location.”

Choices A, C, and D are incorrect because the cited lines don’t provide the best evidence for the answer to the previous question. Instead, they assert that textbook authors in the early 1990s believed

slow-conducting nerves responded only to pain and temperature stimuli (choice A), noted that blocking slow fibers only seemed to reduce sensitivity to warmth or small painful shocks (choice C), and knew that fast-conducting fibers responded to touch at a signal rate of 35 to 75 m/s (choice D).

QUESTION 24

Choice A is the best answer. The second paragraph states, “Håkan Olausson and his Gothenburg University colleagues Åke Vallbo and Johan Wessberg wondered if slow fibers responsive to gentle pressure might be active in humans as well as in other mammals.” In other words, the researchers wondered if these nerves were present, or existent, in humans and other mammals. Therefore, in the context of the passage, the word “active” most nearly means present.

Choices B, C, and D are incorrect because in the context of the passage, “active” most nearly means present, not attentive (choice B), movable (choice C), or restless (choice D).

QUESTION 25

Choice C is the best answer. The second paragraph states, “Using a technique called microneurography, in which a fine filament is inserted into a single nerve to capture its electrical impulses, the scientists were able to measure how quickly—or slowly—the nerves fired.” In other words, the researchers used the technique known as microneurography to record, or register, the electrical signals sent by nerve fibers. Therefore, in the context of the passage, the word “capture” most nearly means record.

Choices A, B, and D are incorrect because in the context of the passage, “capture” most nearly means record, not occupy (choice A), seize (choice B), or influence (choice D).

QUESTION 26

Choice C is the best answer. According to the passage, different types of nerve fibers carry signals at different speeds, either fast or slow. The second paragraph outlines a study led by Håkan Olausson in 1993 that measured the response time of nerves when exposed to gentle pressure. Olausson and his team found that “soft stroking prompted two different signals” in test subjects’ nerve fibers, “one immediate and one delayed.” Therefore, the conclusion that is best supported by the findings of Olausson’s 1993 experiment is that gentle pressure is sensed not only by fast fibers but also by slow fibers.

Choices A and D are incorrect because according to the passage, Olausson’s 1993 study didn’t compare how signal speed was affected by stimulation in different bodily areas (choice A) or by different

amounts of pressure applied to the nerve (choice D). Choice B is incorrect because the passage notes that only human hairy skin contains slow nerve fibers, not that hair causes signal speeds to slow.

QUESTION 27

Choice B is the best answer. The previous question asks which conclusion is best supported by the findings of Olausson’s 1993 experiment. The answer, that Olausson’s 1993 experiment best supports the conclusion that gentle pressure is sensed not only by fast fibers but also by slow fibers, is best supported in the second paragraph: Olausson’s team “showed that soft stroking prompted two different signals, one immediate and one delayed.”

Choices A, C, and D are incorrect because the cited lines don’t provide the best evidence for the answer to the previous question. Instead, they describe a technique used by Olausson’s team (choice A), quantify the amount of time between the fast signals and the slow signals observed by Olausson’s team (choice C), and introduce a further study conducted by Olausson’s team in 1999 (choice D).

QUESTION 28

Choice D is the best answer. This sentence from the fourth paragraph outlines a quandary that arose from the 1999 study conducted by Olausson’s team: “But why exactly humans might have such fibers, which respond only to a narrow range of rather subtle stimuli, was initially mystifying.” The passage presents this line of inquiry as a justification for the team’s subsequent research on CT fibers. Thus this sentence serves mainly to show a problem from the perspective of Olausson’s team.

Choices A, B, and C are incorrect. The cited lines serve mainly to show a problem from the perspective of Olausson’s team, not to identify factors Olausson had previously failed to consider (choice A), propose a solution to a dilemma encountered by Olausson (choice B), or anticipate a potential criticism of Olausson by the reader (choice C).

QUESTION 29

Choice A is the best answer. According to the fifth paragraph, Olausson set out to discover, in his team’s 1999 research, whether a CT nerve “can distinguish *where* the brush touches the arm, and whether it can discern the difference between a goat-hair brush and a feather. Most importantly, could that same fiber convey a pleasant sensation?” Therefore, it can reasonably be inferred that one of the intended goals of the 1999 experiment was to determine the precise nature of sensations that CT fibers can convey.

Choices B, C, and D are incorrect because in their 1999 research, Olausson's team didn't seek to determine the relationship between human body hair and CT fiber function (choice B), the role played by CT fibers in the perception of pain (choice C), or the effects of microneurography on CT fiber signaling (choice D).

QUESTION 30

Choice D is the best answer. In the 1999 study, Olausson's team conducted experiments on a patient known as G.L. The researchers wanted to learn more about what type of sensations slow-conducting CT nerve fibers transmit, and G.L. was of special interest to them, according to the sixth paragraph: "More than 2 decades earlier . . . she had lost responsiveness to pressure, and a nerve biopsy confirmed that G.L.'s quick-conducting fibers were gone. . . . But she could still sense warmth, suggesting that her slow-conducting unmyelinated fibers were intact." The fact that G.L.'s slow-conducting fibers were still intact while her other nerves were unresponsive allowed Olausson's team to study her slow-conducting CT fibers in isolation. Thus the main purpose of the sixth paragraph is to indicate why G.L.'s medical condition was of value to Olausson's experiment.

Choices A, B, and C are incorrect because the sixth paragraph doesn't indicate that Olausson's team set out to relieve any of the neurological conditions that G.L. exhibited (choice A), compare G.L.'s nerve function with that of other adults (choice B), or detail any procedures that G.L. had experienced during previous experiments (choice C).

QUESTION 31

Choice A is the best answer. According to the last paragraph, "in normal subjects, both the somatosensory and insular cortices were activated [by gentle brushing], but only the insular cortex [which processes emotion] was active when researchers brushed G.L.'s arm." Therefore, according to the passage, G.L. differed from Olausson's other test subjects in terms of the number of cortices activated in the brain during gentle brushing.

Choice B is incorrect because the passage doesn't address the physical dimensions of the somatosensory cortex in G.L. or other test subjects. Choice C is incorrect because G.L. differed from other test subjects in terms of the number of cortices activated in the brain during gentle brushing, not in terms of the intensity of nerve signals required to activate the insular cortex. Choice D is incorrect because MRI scanning is discussed in the passage as a method used to locate brain activity, not as a focus of study in Olausson's research.

QUESTION 32

Choice B is the best answer. According to the last paragraph, Olausson’s 1999 research, in which CT fibers were stimulated, “solidified the notion that CT fibers convey a more emotional quality of touch.” Hence humans experience an emotional aspect of touch when CT fibers are exposed to a stimulus, according to the passage.

Choice A is incorrect because the passage doesn’t indicate that humans experience an emotional aspect of touch when brain cortices are shielded from nerve signals. Choice C is incorrect because the suppression of G.L.’s pain-sensing fibers did help Olausson study CT fibers in isolation and determine that they transmit an emotional aspect of touch, but the passage doesn’t suggest that suppressing these fibers is what allows humans to experience this emotional aspect of touch. Choice D is incorrect because the passage indicates that CT fibers transmit an emotional aspect of touch rather than conscious aspects of sensation, not that humans must ignore the conscious aspects of sensation in order to experience the emotional aspects of touch.