

COMMAS




1. Use them to separate items in a list of 3 or more.

Example: Please go to the store and pick up eggs, cheese, and milk.

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2. Use them to separate a parenthetical element from the rest of the sentence.

Example: The man, exhausted from a hard day's work, went home to go straight to bed.



3. When a sentence starts with a dependent clause followed by an independent clause, use a comma to separate the two clauses.

Example: If I get a good night's rest, I will ace the ACT.

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4. Use a comma to separate two adjectives when you put the word *and* between them or you could change the order of them.

Example: The old, grumpy man lounged in his armchair.

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5. If a sentence begins with a prepositional phrase or intro words, put a comma after it.

Example: At the end of the day, Judy was glad she studied for the ACT.

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6. Use a comma plus a coordinating conjunction to separate two independent clauses.

Example: I know I have two complete sentences, so I need to punctuate accordingly.

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7. Use a comma to separate a name or title (Appositive phrase).

Example My brother, Joe, is a really nice guy.

NOTE: IT IS ALSO ACCEPTABLE TO USE  
NO COMMAS HERE



The ACT likes to test this rule in a sneaky way. Look at the following two sentences:

The architect Bob Pelosi built a tall skyscraper in Ohio.

Architect Bob Pelosi built a tall skyscraper in Ohio.

Notice in the first sentence we have an appositive phrase and so we need to put commas around the name Bob Pelosi. However, in the second sentence all we did was get rid of the word 'the'. This actually changes the sentence, and now the name Bob Pelosi cannot be removed and still have a complete sentence. Therefore, the name is not an appositive phrase and there should be no commas.

ORGANIZATION  
STYLE  
STRUCTURE

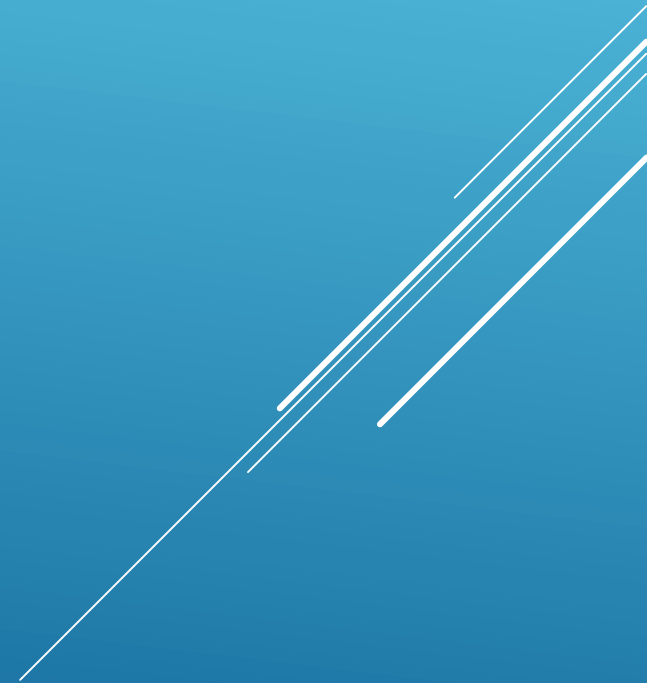


Function of:

Opening sentence

Closing sentence

Transition sentence



▶ Given all the choices are true which answer choice provides the best transition between the previous paragraph and the following paragraph?

▶ Think about main ideas

TYPE 1

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▶ Given all the choices are true,  
which choice best concludes the  
paragraph?

▶ Main idea, then cut-off point

TYPE 2

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- ▶ The writer wants to split this paragraph up to separate details about. . . from details about. . . Where should the writer begin the new paragraph?
- ▶ Look for concluding and opening sentences

TYPE 3

# TIMELINE QUESTIONS



▶ For these timeline questions, assess the order of events





- ▶ The writer is considering adding the following sentence. Where should the writer make this addition?

TYPE 1

▶ For the sake of the logic and coherence of the paragraph, sentence 3 should be placed. . .

TYPE 2

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- ▶ Choosing the correct words and imagery in a sentence, maintaining the style and tone of the passage, avoiding ambiguous pronoun references
- ▶ Not grammar questions

STYLE

Given all the choices are true which answer choice best describes. . . in a. . . tone?

Or

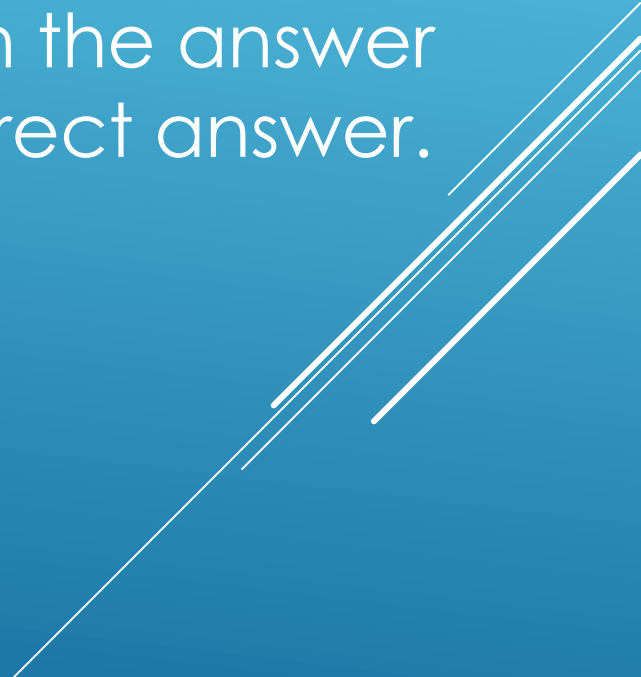
Given all the choices are true which answer choice best illustrates. . . ?

Or

Which choice best emphasizes. . . ?

STYLE QUESTIONS

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- ▶ The key to these problems asking about choosing correct words and maintaining the style and tone is to pay attention to the adjectives in the question and the answer choices. If you can match up the adjectives they are looking for in the question with the adjectives in the answer choice, you will almost always arrive at the correct answer.
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▶ Add

▶ Delete

▶ Revise

STRATEGY

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A paragraph should always contain certain key elements. These are:

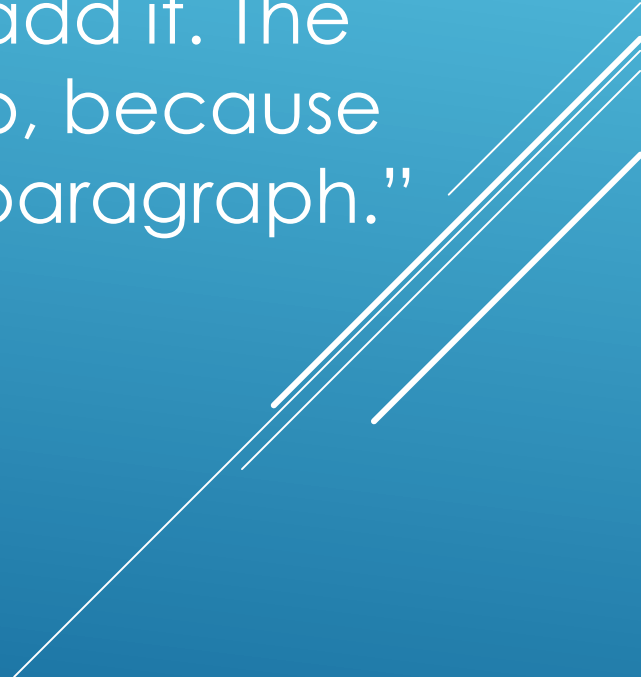
- A thesis statement or main idea
- Examples or sentences that support and strengthen your main idea
- A conclusion or transition sentence that restates the main idea of the paragraph and introduces the topic of the next paragraph if there is one. So when you are being asked to add, delete, or revise info in a paragraph, you want to think about how it affects these key elements of the paragraph. What you may have noticed is that the main idea is the big part of a paragraph and so for these strategy questions you always want to have a clear idea of what the main idea of the paragraph is.

▶ The author is considering adding the following sentence here. Should the writer make this addition?

TYPE 1

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- ▶ If the sentence supports the main idea, you want to add it and usually your answer choice will say something like, “Yes, because it supports the idea that. . . .”
  - ▶ If the sentence has nothing to do with the main idea at all or introduces new information you do NOT want to add it. The correct answer choice will say something like, “No, because it distracts the reader from the main point of the paragraph.”
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- ▶ The author is considering deleting the preceding sentence (or part of the sentence). If the author were to do so, the paragraph (or sentence) would primarily lose. . .


TYPE 2

- ▶ The correct answer choice will simply summarize what the piece being deleting is stating.



- ▶ The author's main purpose was to write a passage describing. . . Does the passage fulfill that goal?

TYPE 3

- ▶ After the question you always have two answer choices that say yes followed by explanations and two answer choices that say no followed by explanations.
  - ▶ Think of this question as a main idea from the reading section!
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- ▶ In the preceding sentence, the writer is considering replacing . . . to read . . . Should the writer make this revision?

TYPE 4

- ▶ Ask yourself if the extra wording is restating something that has already been stated. If it is restating something, DO NOT revise the sentence and pick the answer choice that says something like, “No, because it repeats information that is stated previously in the paragraph/sentence.”
- ▶ Ask yourself if the wording supports the main idea of the paragraph. If it doesn't, DO NOT revise the sentence and pick the answer choice that says something like, “No because it introduces information that is not related to the focus of the passage/paragraph.”
- ▶ Ask yourself does the extra wording further clarify or make a comparison to something that was previously stated. If it does, DO revise the sentence and pick the answer choice that says something like “Yes, because it further clarifies. . .” or “Yes, because it draws a comparison to. . . stated previously in the sentence.”