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LESSON 5

INTERRUPTIONS

 In this lesson, you will learn to:


- Identify interruptions
- Use commas, dashes, and parentheses to punctuate interruptions correctly
- Solve questions involving interruptions

Introduction to Interruptions

Interruptions are phrases that “interrupt” the flow of sentences.

They are set off from the rest of the sentence using parallel punctuation: a pair of commas, a pair of dashes, or a pair of parentheses.


In the official explanations for the DSAT, they are referred to as “supplementary elements within sentences”. Some textbooks call them “nonessential elements”.

 **Warning:** Interruptions cannot contain a sentence’s main subject or main verb. You learned how to identify a main verb in **Lesson 4: Finite Verbs and Clauses**. To learn how to identify a main subject, see **Lesson 9: Basic Subject-Verb Agreement**.

 For example, take a look at the following sentences:


Mycoworks, a biotech company based in California, has created a new type of eco-friendly leather made from fungi. 

Mycoworks—a biotech company based in California—has created a new type of eco-friendly leather made from fungi. 

Mycoworks (a biotech company based in California) has created a new type of eco-friendly leather made from fungi. 

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All three of the sentences are punctuated correctly and mean basically the same thing, at least on the DSAT.¹ They tell the reader that the information being set off by punctuation is an interruption—in other words, it interrupts the flow of the sentence and can be removed without fundamentally changing the sentence’s meaning.

 For example:


MycoWorks ~~a biotech company based in California~~ has created a new type of eco-friendly leather made from fungi.

 MycoWorks... has created a new type of eco-friendly leather made from fungi.

Because the sentence still has the same fundamental meaning (and it still contains its main subject “**Mycoworks**” and its main verb “**has**”), the information between the commas / dashes / parentheses is an interruption.

Although interruptions can appear anywhere within a sentence, it’s very common for them to come between a sentence’s main subject and verb, as in the examples above.

Interruptions are also often used to provide a restatement of previously introduced information or a clarification of complicated terminology.

 Example:

Interruption

Transposons, *or jumping genes*, are DNA sequences that can change their position within a genome. ✓

In some cases, interruptions can be just one word. This is especially common with transition words like “therefore”, “however”, and “consequently”. Although these words most frequently appear at the beginning of a sentence, they can appear within a sentence as well.

 Example:

Interruption

The pundits were, *however*, amazed by the results of the election. ✓

Less frequently, interruptions are used to set off short statements like “critics agree”, “researchers argue”, and “experts suggest”.

 Example:

Interruption

In the face of global warming, *experts suggest*, immediate action is necessary. ✓

1. In reality, they have subtly different meanings, but this is not tested on the DSAT.



Exercise: Is it an interruption?

Instructions: Find and cross out the interruptions within the sentences. If there are no interruptions, write “NONE”.



Warning: Sentences may include commas and dashes that are not being used to set off interruptions.


Examples:

- a. *Chlamydoselachus anguineus* ~~also known as the frilled shark~~ is a deep-sea species that has remained largely unchanged for millions of years.
- b. Its unique features ~~such as its elongated body and gill slits~~ have led to speculation about its evolutionary history.



Tip: If you’re not sure whether a group of words is an interruption or not, try “**The Interruption Test**”. That is, try reading the sentence without that group of words. If the sentence makes sense when it is removed, then it is likely an interruption.



Notice, for instance, that the example sentences above still make basic sense when the interruption is removed:  *Chlamydoselachus anguineus*... is a deep-sea species that has remained largely unchanged for millions of years.



Its unique features... have led to speculation about its evolutionary history.

Remember, interruptions are often placed between a sentence’s main subject and main finite verb.

Exercises:

- 1a. New York City’s Initiative 1482B a measure requiring new buildings and major renovations to adopt bird-friendly designs is intended to combat the issue of bird collisions, a significant factor in declining avian populations.
- 1b. This groundbreaking legislation the most comprehensive in the country aims to save thousands of bird lives by mandating the use of materials that birds can easily identify.

2a. George Walker an African American composer, pianist, and organist achieved unprecedented success in the predominantly white field of classical music.

2b. In 1996, he became the first African American to win a Pulitzer Prize for Music for his work “Lilacs.”

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- 3a. For the first time, researchers have recorded a video of a puffin a type of seabird with a short beak using a tool.
- 3b. The video published on the website of the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* depicts a puffin scratching its feathers with a twig.
- 3c. This breakthrough makes puffins the first known tool-using seabirds—meaning that these creatures now join the ranks of dolphins, crows, and primates.
-

- 4a. A fragment of a statue of King George III which was toppled by American patriots in 1776 and transformed into musket balls was discovered in a Connecticut garden in 1991.
- 4b. Now, the artifact a lead arm is expected to fetch \$15,000 to \$25,000 at auction.
- 4c. The statue once located in Manhattan’s Bowling Green Park was dismantled by about 40 soldiers and sailors just days after the signing of the Declaration of Independence.
-

- 5a. Victorian-era convicts’ tattoos contrary to popular belief were not symbols of criminal affiliation but rather expressions of fashionable sentiments, according to researchers Robert Shoemaker and Zoe Alker.
- 5b. Utilizing the extensive Digital Panopticon database, they found that tattoos which became prevalent across various social classes provided a unique lens into the lives of ordinary individuals who typically left no historical records.
-

- 6a. Scotland’s Callanish standing stones arranged nearly 5,000 years ago have long puzzled researchers.
- 6b. However, recent geophysical surveys reveal a star-shaped pattern possibly created by a massive lightning strike several thousand years ago in the earth surrounding one stone.

Answers and explanations are at the end of the lesson.

PART 2: PUNCTUATING INTERRUPTIONS

As mentioned previously, interruptions are set off from the rest of the sentence with paired punctuation—that is, a pair of commas, dashes, or parentheses.

Wrong answer choices on the DSAT may, for example, illogically pair a comma with a dash, or a dash with a parenthesis.

In this section, we'll look at some basic situations involving interruptions and discuss how to punctuate them properly.

 **Rule #1:** If an interruption starts with a parenthesis, it should end with a parenthesis—and vice versa.

In some ways, parentheses are the easiest type of punctuation tested on the SAT. Unlike a comma or a dash, a parenthesis **must** be paired with another parenthesis—no exceptions.

 Examples:

Frida Kahlo's captivating 1949 self-portrait *Diego y yo* (*Diego and I* set a new record as the most expensive artwork by a Latin American artist ever sold at auction, fetching \$34.9 million. ✗


Frida Kahlo's captivating 1949 self-portrait *Diego y yo* (*Diego and I*) set a new record as the most expensive artwork by a Latin American artist ever sold at auction, fetching \$34.9 million. ✓

 Here's a straightforward example question:

In 1803, Jane Austen sold the rights to her novel _____ (*Northanger Abbey*) for £10 to a publisher who decided not to publish it and sat on the manuscript for 13 years. Distraught, Austen eventually bought the novel back for the same amount she had initially sold it for.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A) *Lady Susan* later renamed
- B) *Lady Susan*—later renamed
- C) *Lady Susan* (later renamed
- D) *Lady Susan*, later renamed

 **Explanation:** The convention being tested is the punctuation of a supplementary element within a sentence. Applying the interruption test, we get: In 1803, Jane Austen sold the rights to her novel *Lady Susan* later renamed *Northanger Abbey* for £10 to a publisher who decided not to publish it and sat on the manuscript for 13 years.

That means “later renamed *Northanger Abbey*” is an interruption, so it should be set off from the rest of the sentence with paired punctuation.

Choice A is incorrect. Because the interruption ends with a parenthesis after “*Abbey*”, it should begin with a parenthesis after “*Susan*”. However, this choice does not place any punctuation after “*Susan*”.



Choice B is incorrect. Because the interruption ends with a parenthesis after “*Abbey*”, it should begin with a parenthesis after “*Susan*”. However, this choice uses a dash after “*Susan*,” not a parenthesis. ❌

Choice D is incorrect. Because the interruption ends with a parenthesis after “*Abbey*”, it should begin with a parenthesis after “*Susan*”. However, this choice uses a comma after “*Susan*,” not a parenthesis.




Choice C is correct. The parenthesis after “*Susan*” and the parenthesis after “*Abbey*” work together to let the reader know that “later renamed *Northanger Abbey*” is an interruption. ✅

 Here’s another test-style question:

A group of international scientists is advocating for a Global Library of Underwater Biological _____ to catalog Earth’s submerged noises, such as whales’ clicks and boats’ hums.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A) Sounds, (GLUBS)
- B) Sounds, (GLUBS),
- C) Sounds—(GLUBS)
- D) Sounds (GLUBS)


 **Explanation:** The convention being tested is the punctuation of a supplementary element within a sentence. Applying the interruption test, we get: A group of international scientists is advocating for a Global Library of Underwater Biological (GLUBS) to catalog Earth’s... Because “GLUBS” is an interruption, it should be set off from the rest of the sentence with punctuation. *Continued...*


Choice A is incorrect. The comma after “Sounds” is unnecessary. The parentheses surrounding GLUBS already set it off from the rest of the sentence. ❌

Choice B is incorrect. The comma after “Sounds” and the comma after “(GLUBS)” are unnecessary. The parentheses surrounding GLUBS already set it off from the rest of the sentence. ❌

Choice C is incorrect. The dash after “Sounds” is unnecessary. The parentheses surrounding GLUBS already set it off from the rest of the sentence. ❌

Choice D is correct. The parentheses around “GLUBS” work together to let the reader know that this is an interruption. ✅

 **Tip:** There can never be any punctuation immediately before an opening parenthesis, so you could have eliminated choices A, B, and C immediately.

 **Rule #2:** If an interruption starts with a comma, it should end with a comma (and vice versa).

 Examples:

interruption

The ruins at Fountains Abbey, *a tranquil British monastery* were once home to a major medieval tannery. ❌

The ruins at Fountains Abbey *a tranquil British monastery*, were once home to a major medieval tannery. ❌


The ruins at Fountains Abbey, *a tranquil British monastery*, were once home to a major medieval tannery. ✅

 Here’s a slightly challenging test-style question:

Wassailing, an Anglo-Saxon tradition practiced since the medieval era in _____ making noise with pots and pans to ward off evil spirits and ensure a bountiful apple harvest.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A) England—involves
- B) England involves,
- C) England, involves
- D) England involves

 **Explanation:** The convention being tested is the punctuation of a supplementary element within a sentence.

Applying the interruption test, we get: ~~Wassailing an Anglo-Saxon tradition practiced since the medieval era in England~~ involves making noise with pots and pans to ward off evil spirits and ensure a bountiful apple harvest.

Because “an Anglo-Saxon tradition practiced since the medieval era in England” is an interruption, it should be set off from the rest of the sentence with punctuation.

Choice A is incorrect. Because the interruption begins with a comma after “Wassailing”, it should end with a comma after “England”. However, Choice A uses a dash after “England,” not a comma. ❌

Choice B is incorrect. Because the interruption begins with a comma after “Wassailing”, it should end with a comma after “England”. However, Choice B illogically places a comma after “involves”. Remember, an interruption cannot include a sentence’s main verb. ❌

Choice D is incorrect. Because the interruption begins with a comma after “Wassailing”, it should end with a comma after “England”. However, Choice D does not place any punctuation after “England”. ❌

Choice C is correct. The comma after “Wassailing” and the comma after “England” work together to let the reader know that this is an interruption. ✅

 **Rule #3:** If an interruption starts with a dash, it should end with a dash (and vice versa).¹

 Examples:


interruption

Artist Maurizio Cattelan’s *Comedian—a banana duct-taped to a wall* sold for \$120,000 at Art Basel Miami Beach, sparking debate on art’s value and the artist’s role. ❌


Artist Maurizio Cattelan’s *Comedian, a banana duct-taped to a wall*—sold for \$120,000 at Art Basel Miami Beach, sparking debate on art’s value and the artist’s role. ❌

Artist Maurizio Cattelan’s *Comedian—a banana duct-taped to a wall*—sold for \$120,000 at Art Basel Miami Beach, sparking debate on art’s value and the artist’s role. ✅

1. Do not confuse a dash (—) with a hyphen (-). Notice that the dash is longer. Dashes are used to set off interruptions (among other things), but hyphens are used to make compound words, such as “duct-taped” in the example above. Hyphens are not directly tested on the SAT, but they may appear near dashes, causing confusion.

 Here's a test-style question:

<p>Ethel Payne, born in 1911, emerged as a pioneering figure in journalism and civil rights, earning the title “First Lady of the Black Press.” Payne’s groundbreaking _____ from highlighting racial disparities in housing, employment, and healthcare to covering the White House—eventually led to her becoming the first Black woman commentator on a national network in 1972.</p>	<p>Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?</p> <p>A) work—</p> <p>B) work</p> <p>C) work,</p> <p>D) work;</p>
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 **Explanation:** The convention being tested is the punctuation of a supplementary element within a sentence (an interruption).

Applying the interruption test, we get: Payne’s groundbreaking work ~~from highlighting racial disparities in housing, employment, and healthcare to covering the White House~~ eventually led to her becoming the first Black woman commentator on a national network in 1972.

Because “from highlighting racial disparities in housing, employment, and healthcare to covering the White House” is an interruption, it should be set off from the rest of the sentence with punctuation.

Choice B is incorrect. Because the interruption ends with a dash after “White House”, it should start with a dash after “work”. However, Choice B does not use any punctuation to mark the beginning of the interruption. ❌

Choice C is incorrect. Because the interruption ends with a dash after “White House”, it should start with a dash after “work”. However, Choice C uses a comma, not a dash. ❌

Choice D is incorrect. Because the interruption ends with a dash after “White House”, it should start with a dash after “work”. However, Choice D illogically uses a semicolon, not a dash, creating a sentence fragment (“from highlighting...in 1972”). ❌


Choice A is correct. The dash after “work” and the dash after “White House” work together to let the reader know that this is an interruption. ✅

 Here's a challenging test-style question:


Researchers have utilized the Precision Integrated-Optics Near-infrared Imaging Experiment (PIONIER) to obtain detailed images of the red giant star P1 Gruis's surface. The _____ approximately 530 light years from Earth, is enveloped in convective cells—turbulent plasma regions responsible for heat transport.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A) star situated
- B) star—situated
- C) star) situated
- D) star, situated

 **Explanation:** Applying the interruption test, we get: The star ~~situated approximately 530 light years from Earth~~, is enveloped in convective cells—turbulent plasma regions responsible for heat transport.

Because “situated approximately 530 light years from Earth” is an interruption, it should be set off from the rest of the sentence with punctuation.


 **Warning:** Don't be confused by the dash after “cells”. Dashes and commas do not necessarily appear in pairs. That dash is being used to mark the boundary between the main sentence and the closing supplement (“turbulent plasma... heat transport”).


Choice A is incorrect. Because the interruption ends with a comma after “Earth”, it should begin with a comma after “star”. However, this choice does not place any punctuation after “star”. ❌

Choice B is incorrect. Because the interruption ends with a comma after “Earth”, it should begin with a comma after “star”. This choice uses a dash, making it seem as if the interruption extends to “convective cells”. However, this cannot be the case since “is enveloped” is the sentence's main verb, and an interruption cannot contain a sentence's main verb. ❌

Choice C is incorrect. Because the interruption ends with a comma after “Earth”, it should begin with a comma after “star”. However, this choice places an opening parenthesis after “star”, not a comma. ❌

Choice D is correct. The comma after “Earth” and the comma after “star” work together to let the reader know that “situated approximately...from Earth” is an interruption. ✅

 **Warning:** Not everything that is between a pair of commas or dashes is an interruption. You will need to use logic to determine what is an interruption and what is not.

 For example:

The Lord Howe Island stick insect, once thought to be extinct, ~~was miraculously found living on Ball's Pyramid,~~ an Australian volcano, in 2001. ❌

Here, “was miraculously found living on Ball’s Pyramid” is not an interruption. The sentence **does not** make sense when this element is removed. You may also notice that it contains the sentence’s main verb “**was**”, something an interruption can't do.

 **Final Tips:**

- Interruptions must be set off with matching punctuation. Use a pair of commas, a pair of dashes, or a pair of parentheses. Mixing punctuation types is always incorrect.
- Interruptions cannot contain the sentence’s main subject or verb. If removing a phrase disrupts the sentence’s meaning or structure, it’s likely not an interruption.
- Use “The Interruption Test”. Try reading the sentence without the phrase. If the sentence still makes sense, the phrase is an interruption.
- Not all phrases between commas or dashes are interruptions. If removing the phrase makes the sentence grammatically incorrect or changes its meaning, it is not an interruption.



END OF LESSON QUIZ: INTERRUPTIONS

1

Intellectual humility—acknowledging the fallibility of one’s _____ has seen burgeoning interest amongst social scientists in the past two decades. The series *Conversations on Intellectual Humility*, funded by Berkeley’s Greater Good Science Center, pairs scholars with community leaders to explore the concept’s practical manifestations.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A) beliefs
- B) beliefs—
- C) beliefs,
- D) beliefs;

2

The Society for the Protection of Underground Networks _____ initiative founded by evolutionary biologist Toby Kiers and microbial ecologist Colin Averill, aims to map Earth’s vital yet threatened mycorrhizal fungi. By collecting 10,000 fungal DNA samples worldwide and employing machine learning, SPUN will create open-source maps to better understand the effect of climate change on these communities.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A) (SPUN)—an
- B) (SPUN), an
- C) (SPUN). An
- D) (SPUN) an

3

The Muscogee (Creek) Nation has a long history of democratic rule, as demonstrated by archaeological evidence at places like Cold Springs, a site in central Georgia. Radiocarbon analysis shows the plaza, bordered by flat-topped earthen mounds and three circular _____ dates to around 500 CE—more than a thousand years before the founding of the US Congress.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A) buildings,
- B) buildings—
- C) buildings
- D) buildings:

4

Hiroshige III, a Japanese artist, played a significant role in the rise of Japonisme, a 19th-century Western art movement inspired by Japanese aesthetics. Hiroshige’s woodblock _____ their unique perspectives and depictions of everyday life, influenced Westerners involved in the Art Nouveau movement.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A) prints with
- B) prints. With
- C) prints, with
- D) prints—with

5

In a discovery at Rutland Water Nature Reserve in England, naturalist Joe Davis stumbled upon the largest and most complete ichthyosaur skeleton in the UK. Measuring over 32 feet in length, this colossal marine _____ apex predator that roamed the seas around 250 to 90 million years ago—boasts a 6.5-foot-long skull weighing about a ton.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A) reptile was an
- B) reptile—an
- C) reptile, was an
- D) reptile, an

6

The Red Power movement of the 1960s and 70s saw a resurgence in pan-Indigenous identity. Art and writing—including publications such as _____ allowed activists and non-activists alike to engage and contribute. Poetry, traditional prayer songs, and lyrical stories challenged colonial rule and linked Indigenous people to their land.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A) *Red Power* newspaper
- B) *Red Power*—newspaper
- C) *Red Power* newspaper—
- D) *Red Power* newspaper,

7

Technical photographer James Barker was chosen to document the historic civil rights march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama in 1965. Barker captured intimate scenes of the marchers, seeking to "carve out personalities of people and interactions." His _____ on specific individuals rather than the crowd, provide a unique perspective on this pivotal event in American history.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A) photographs focused
- B) photographs, focused
- C) photographs—focused
- D) photographs: focused

8

Scientists are using a gene-editing technique to engineer tomatoes that produce capsaicin, the compound responsible for the spicy flavor in peppers. The technique, called Transcription Activator-Like Effector _____ may allow them to create a more efficient, less finicky source of capsaicinoids, which are known for their anti-inflammatory properties.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A) Nucleases (TALENs)
- B) Nucleases, (TALENs),
- C) Nucleases (TALENs)—
- D) Nucleases (TALENs),

9

Kawahara Asako and other women _____ defied traditional gender roles in Japan during the Boshin War, a civil conflict between the shogunate and the Meiji government in the 19th century. Reshaping societal perspectives about women’s capabilities, such *Onna-musha* took on both combat and leadership roles.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A) warriors or *Onna-musha*,
- B) warriors or *Onna-musha*
- C) warriors, or *Onna-musha*,
- D) warriors, or *Onna-musha*

10

Henrique Alvim Corrêa’s illustrations for H.G. Wells’ *The War of the Worlds*, published in 1906, showcase a dynamic style and themes of eroticism and violence. Wells, who claimed Corrêa “did more for my work with his brush than I with my _____ impressed by the imaginative and terrifying images, which included surreal landscapes and encounters with Martians.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A) pen,” was
- B) pen” was
- C) pen,” and was
- D) pen” was,

11

Aymaran heroine Bartolina Sisa Vargas, born around 1750 in Q’ara Qhatu, Viceroyalty of Peru (present-day _____ was an inspirational leader who fought against the Spanish. Her legacy lives on in the Bartolina Sisa Confederation, a union organization for Indigenous and peasant women in Bolivia.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A) Bolivia,)
- B) Bolivia),
- C) Bolivia
- D) Bolivia)

12

In her recent book, novelist Annie Proulx highlights three types of _____ bogs, and swamps, and describes the varied roles each of the three have in carbon sequestration, wildlife support, and shoreline preservation. The book, titled *Fen, Bog & Swamp: A Short History of Peatland Destruction and Its Role in the Climate Crisis*, asks readers to take immediate action to protect these vital peatlands, particularly English Fens.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A) peatlands fens (peat-accumulating wetlands fed by mineral rich water),
- B) peatlands (fens, peat-accumulating wetlands fed by mineral rich water),
- C) peatlands fens—(peat-accumulating wetlands fed by mineral rich water)—
- D) peatlands, fens (peat-accumulating wetlands fed by mineral rich water),

LESSON 5: ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS

Exercise

- 1a. New York City's Initiative 1482B ~~a measure requiring~~ **new buildings and major renovations to adopt bird-friendly designs** is intended to combat the issue of bird collisions, a significant factor in declining avian populations.
- 1b. This groundbreaking legislation ~~the most comprehensive in the country~~ aims to save thousands of bird lives by mandating the use of materials that birds can easily identify.
- 2a. George Walker ~~an African American composer, pianist, and organist~~ achieved unprecedented success in the predominantly white field of classical music.
- 2b. In 1996, he became the first African American to win a Pulitzer Prize for Music for his work "Lilacs." **NONE**
- 3a. For the first time, researchers have recorded a video of a puffin ~~a type of seabird with a short beak~~ using a tool.
- 3b. The video ~~published on the website of the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*~~ depicts a puffin scratching its feathers with a twig.
- 3c. This breakthrough makes puffins the first known tool-using seabirds—meaning that these creatures now join the ranks of dolphins, crows, and primates. **NONE**
- 4a. A fragment of a statue of King George III ~~which was toppled by American patriots in 1776 and transformed into musket balls~~ was discovered in a Connecticut garden in 1991.
- 4b. Now, the artifact ~~a lead arm~~ is expected to fetch \$15,000 to \$25,000 at auction.
- 4c. The statue ~~once located in Manhattan's Bowling Green Park~~ was dismantled by about 40 soldiers and sailors just days after the signing of the Declaration of Independence.
- 5a. Victorian-era convicts' tattoos ~~contrary to popular belief~~ were not symbols of criminal affiliation but rather expressions of fashionable sentiments, according to researchers Robert Shoemaker and Zoe Alker.
- 5b. Utilizing the extensive Digital Panopticon database, they found that tattoos ~~which became prevalent across various social classes~~ provided a unique lens into the lives of ordinary individuals who typically left no historical records.
- 6a. Scotland's Callanish standing stones ~~arranged nearly 5,000 years ago~~ have long puzzled researchers.
- 6b. However, recent geophysical surveys reveal a star-shaped pattern ~~possibly created by a massive lightning strike several thousand years ago~~ in the earth surrounding one stone.

End of Lesson Quiz

- | | |
|-------------|-------------|
| 1. B | 4. C |
| 2. B | 5. B |
| 3. A | 6. C |

LESSON 5 • INTERRUPTIONS

7. **B**

10. **A**

8. **D**

11. **B**

9. **C**

12. **D**

1. The convention being tested is the use and punctuation of a supplemental element within a sentence (an interruption). Applying the interruption test, we get: Intellectual humility—~~acknowledging the fallibility of one’s beliefs~~—has seen burgeoning interest amongst social scientists in the past two decades.

Therefore, “acknowledging the fallibility of one’s beliefs” is an interruption. Because this interruption starts with a dash, it should end with a dash.

Choices A, C, and D are incorrect. Because the interruption “acknowledging the fallibility of one’s beliefs” begins with a dash before “acknowledging”, it should end with a dash after “beliefs”. However, these choices do not place the correct punctuation after “beliefs” ❌

Choice B is correct. Because the interruption “acknowledging the fallibility of one’s beliefs” begins with a dash, it should end with a dash. This choice correctly places a dash after “beliefs”. ✅

2. Applying the interruption test, we get: The Society for the Protection of Underground Networks (SPUN) ~~an initiative founded by evolutionary biologist Toby Kiers and microbial ecologist Colin Averill~~, aims to map Earth’s vital yet threatened mycorrhizal fungi.

Therefore, “an initiative... Colin Averill” is an interruption. Because this interruption ends with a comma, it should start with a comma.

Choice A is incorrect. Because “an initiative... Colin Averill” ends with a comma after “Averill”, it should start with a comma after “(SPUN)”. However, this choice illogically places a dash after “(SPUN)” ❌

Choice C is incorrect. Because “an initiative ... Colin Averill” ends with a comma after “Averill”, it should start with a comma after “(SPUN)”. However, this choice illogically places a period “(SPUN)”, creating a sentence fragment since “The Society for the Protection of Underground Networks (SPUN)” lacks a finite verb. ❌

Choice D is incorrect. Because “an initiative ... Colin Averill” ends with a comma after “Averill”, it should start with a comma after “(SPUN)”. However, this choice does not place any punctuation after “(SPUN)” ❌

Choice B is correct. Because the interruption “an initiative ... Colin Averill” ends with a comma after “Averill”, it should start with a comma after “(SPUN)”. This choice correctly places a comma after “(SPUN)” ✅

3. The convention being tested is the use and punctuation of a supplemental element within a sentence (an interruption). Applying the interruption test, we get:

Radiocarbon analysis shows the plaza, ~~bordered by flat-topped earthen mounds and three circular buildings~~ dates to around 500 CE—more than a thousand years before the founding of the US Congress.

Therefore, “bordered by ... circular buildings” is an interruption. Because this interruption ends with a comma, it should start with a comma.

Choices B, C, and D are incorrect. Because the interruption “bordered by ... circular buildings” begins with a comma after “plaza”, it should end with a comma after “buildings”. However, these choices do not place the correct punctuation after “buildings”. ❌

Choice A is correct. Because the interruption “bordered by ... circular buildings” begins with a comma after “plaza”, it should end with a comma after “buildings”. This choice correctly places a comma after “buildings”. ✅

4. The convention being tested is the use and punctuation of a supplemental element within a sentence (an interruption). Applying the interruption test, we get: Hiroshige’s woodblock prints ~~with their unique perspectives and depictions of everyday life~~, influenced Westerners involved in the Art Nouveau movement.

Therefore, “with their... everyday life” is an interruption. Because this interruption ends with a comma, it should start with a comma.

Choices A and D are incorrect. Because the interruption “with their... everyday life” ends with a comma after “life”, it should begin with a comma after “prints”. However, choice A does not place any punctuation after “prints” and choice D illogically places a dash after “prints”. ❌

Choice B is incorrect. You cannot place a period between a subject such as “[woodblock] prints” and its verb (in this case, “influenced”). This choice creates two sentences fragments. ❌

Choice C is correct. Because the interruption “with their... everyday life” ends with a comma after “life”, it should begin with a comma after “prints”. This choice correctly places a comma after “prints”. ✅

5. Applying the interruption test, we get: ... this colossal marine reptile, ~~an apex predator that roamed the seas around 250 to 90 million years ago~~—boasts a 6.5-foot-long skull weighing about a ton.

Therefore, “an apex ... years ago” is an interruption. Because this interruption ends with a dash after “ago”, it should start with a dash after “reptile”.

Choice A is incorrect. Because “an apex ... years ago” ends with a dash after “ago”, it should start with a dash after “reptile”. However, this choice does not place any punctuation after “reptile”. Moreover, it illogically inserts the finite verb “was”. The sentence already has a main finite verb (“boasts”). ❌

Choices C and D are incorrect. Because “an apex ... years ago” ends with a dash after “ago”, it should start with a dash after “reptile”. However, these choices illogically place a comma after “reptile”. Moreover, choice C illogically inserts the finite verb “was”. The sentence already has a main finite verb (“boasts”). ❌

Choice B is correct. This choice correctly places a dash after “reptile”. ✅

6. Applying the interruption test, we get: Art and writing—~~including publications such as *Red Power* newspaper~~—allowed activists and non-activists alike to engage and contribute.

Therefore, “including publications such as *Red Power* newspaper” is an interruption. Because this interruption starts with a dash, it should end with a dash.

Choice A is incorrect. Because “including publications such as *Red Power* newspaper” begins with a dash before “including”, it should end with a dash after “newspaper”. ❌

Choice B is incorrect. Because this choice places a dash after “*Red Power*” rather than “newspaper”, it does not capture the full interruption. ❌

Choice D is incorrect. Because “including publications such as *Red Power* newspaper” begins with a dash, it should end with a dash after “newspaper”, but this choice uses a comma after “newspaper”. ❌

Choice C is correct. This choice correctly places a dash after the interruption. ✅

7. Applying the interruption test, we get: His photographs ~~focused on specific individuals rather than the crowd~~, provide a unique perspective...

Thus, “focused on... the crowd” is an interruption. Because this interruption ends with a comma after “crowd”, it should begin with a comma after “photographs”. ⚠️ Warning: “focused” is not acting as a finite verb in this context. It is a nonfinite past participle that provides additional detail about the “photographs”. The sentence’s main finite verb is “provide”.

Choice A is incorrect. Because the interruption ends with a comma after “crowd”, it should start with a comma after “photographs”. However, choice A does not put any punctuation after “photographs”. ❌

Choices C and D are incorrect. Because the interruption ends with a comma after “crowd” it should start with a comma after “photographs”. However, choice C illogically places a dash after “photographs”, and choice D illogically places a colon after “photographs”. ❌

Choice B is correct. This choice correctly places a comma after “photographs”. ✅

8. Applying the interruption test, we get: The technique ~~called Transcription Activator-Like Effector Nucleases (TALENs)~~, may allow them to create a more efficient, less finicky source of capsaicinoids...

Therefore, “called Transcription ... (TALENs)” is an interruption. Because this interruption starts with a comma, it should end with a comma.

Choice A is incorrect. Because the interruption “called Transcription ... (TALENs)” starts with a comma, it should start with a comma after “(TALENs)”. However, this choice does not place any punctuation after “(TALENs)”. ❌

Choice B is incorrect. This choice illogically places a comma before “(TALENs)”. A comma cannot come before an opening parenthesis. ❌

Choice C is incorrect. Because the interruption “called Transcription ... (TALENs)” starts with a comma, it should end with a comma after “(TALENs)”. However, this choice places a dash after “(TALENs)”. ❌

Choice D is correct. This choice correctly places a comma after “(TALENs)”. ✅

9. Applying the interruption test, we get: Kawahara Asako and other women warriors ~~or *Onna-musha*~~ defied traditional gender roles in Japan during the Boshin War..

Therefore, “or *Onna-musha*” is an interruption, and it should be set off from the rest of the sentence with a pair of commas, dashes, or parentheses.

Choice A is incorrect. The interruption “or *Onna-musha*” should be set off from the rest of the sentence with a pair of commas, dashes, or parentheses. This choice places a comma after “*Onna-musha*” but it does not place a comma after “warriors”, so it is incorrect. ✗

Choice B is incorrect. Because “or *Onna-musha*” is an interruption, it should be set off from the rest of the sentence with a pair of commas, dashes, or parentheses. This choice does not use any punctuation to set off the interruption, so it is incorrect. ✗

Choice D is incorrect. The interruption “or *Onna-musha*” should be set off from the rest of the sentence with a pair of commas, dashes, or parentheses. This choice places a comma after “warriors” but it does not place a comma after “*Onna-musha*”, so it is incorrect. ✗

Choice C is correct. This choice correctly places commas before and after the interruption “or *Onna-musha*”. ✓

10. Applying the interruption test, we get: Wells, ~~who claimed Corrêa “did more for my work with his brush than I with my pen”~~ was impressed by the imaginative and terrifying images...

Therefore, “who claimed ... my pen” is an interruption. Because this interruption begins with a comma before “who”, it should end with a comma after “pen”.

Choice B is incorrect. Because the interruption “who claimed ... my pen” begins with a comma before “who”, it should end with a comma after “pen”. ✗

Choice C is incorrect. Although this choice correctly uses commas to set off the interruption (“who... pen”), it illogically inserts the coordinating conjunction “and”, creating a sentence fragment (“Wells.. And was impressed..”). ✗

Choice D is incorrect. By placing a comma after “was”, this choice illogically suggests that “was” is part of the interruption, creating a sentence fragment (“Wells.. impressed by”). ✗

Choice A is correct. Because “who claimed... my pen” begins with a comma before “who”, it should end with a comma after “pen”. This choice correctly places a comma after the interruption. ✓