

W1.6

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Read the following passage and answer the question(s).

Wooden Instrument

Kamau's 8th grade class was assigned to write a report on the history of an instrument. This is the first draft of his report. It may contain errors.

(1) Did you know that small peices of wood could make a sound so sweet to the ear they could even be used as musical devices? This particular device is known as a xylophone. The xylophone is a percussion instrument that is struck with an object. They can come in many different shapes and sizes. Its unique tone and look made it appealing to people of all ages. The xylophone has been played in many different cultures, and in many different settings throughout time. Many of us may be familiar with this instrument, so many of us may not be familiar with its history.

(2) Long ago in the country of Africa, someone created this ancient instrument. Wooden pieces were placed on the shell of a fruit that was hollowed out and dried. Quite often it was made in the shape of a ladder. The mallets, or playing sticks, were made of wood with bowl-like balls at the end. The Africans carved arches underneath the wooden peices to create separate distinctive sounds. For centuries, these instruments were used and eventually changed, or evolved.

(3) During the 1500s, the Africans shared their instrument with the people of Central America. The Latinos loved the xylophone and eventually changed them into an instrument called the marimba. The marimba had a much wider range than the xylophone. Another difference is in the playing sticks. The xylophone's mallet is much harder than the marimba's mallet.

(4) The xylophone was also introduced to the people of Europe during the sixteenth century. This musical instrument became a popular piece in their folk music. The xylophone became even more popular during the 1800s when a Russian musician, by the name of Michael Gusikov, played it when he went on tours throughout Europe. After that, the xylophone became a common instrument that was played in many different orchestras.

(5) Eventually, the xylophone became popularized in America during the 1900s. The famous George Hamilton Green was a great xylophonist. He shared this instrument through his unique style of music. Green's xylophone had many wooden pieces, which gave off a wider range of sound.

(6) The xylophone is such a marvelous musical instrument that gives off a sound that is beautiful, pure, and cannot be compared. In time, this delightful device could be found in many different bands, orchestras, and even households. They are played by professionals in impressive orchestras. They can also be played by young toddlers who are first learning about music. This ancient instrument has come a long way.

(Question 1)

1

Read this sentence from the fifth paragraph.

The famous George Hamilton Green was a great xylophonist.

The underlined word in the sentence is too vague and needs to be substituted with a more descriptive word. Which of the following is a *better* word to replace the underlined word and keep the same idea in the sentence?

A good

B unbearable

C wealthy

D distinguished

Read the passage and answer the question(s).**When Commas Attack!****The following is a student's rough draft and may contain errors.**

(1) In the process of creative writing, grammar is often overlooked. This is unfortunate. Grammar is a set of accepted rules that can greatly increase the reader's understanding of the composition. Grammar is a roadmap, showing how to get where you are planning to go with your words. One of the core components of grammar is the comma. It can be a complex tool, yet simplistic after it is learned. The elusive comma is often misunderstood and misused: there are only a few times when a comma is mandatory; other times, style and interpretation play a big part in its use.

(2) Grammatical phrases such as "appositive" and "compound sentences" can be scary to any writer that has not mastered grammar. Appositives are pairings of two nouns that, in context, mean the same thing. For example, if one were to say, "My mother, Debra, is a good cook," then "Debra" would be the appositive. Notice that the appositive is enclosed in commas. Think of it as capturing a redundant noun and keeping it separate from the rest of the sentence. Compound sentences are a little friendlier. When you take two complete sentences and join them together, it is a compound sentence. These are usually separated by a linking word such as "and" or "but." However, the two sentences will fall apart unless you put a comma before the linking word: "The cats are gray, and the dogs are tan." Think of this comma as the pin that links two train cars together.

(3) Commas that do not have a rule are usually thought of as "style" commas. Depending on how one wants the sentence read, a comma can be placed in virtually any place. The comma can drastically change the meaning of the sentence. Some people will put a comma in a place where others would not. For example, lists of nouns require commas to separate each noun (e.g., dogs, cats, chickens). A linking word (from the same list of linking words used in compound sentences) is necessary before the last noun in the list (e.g., dogs, cats, and chickens). The controversy is over whether there should be a comma before the linking word ("and," in the previous example) as there is in compound sentences. There is no actual rule; this comma is a matter of style. Personally, if there were a list of pairs of items, it would make sense to me to put the comma there: "Cows and pigs, dogs and cats, and llamas and camels." It lets us know that "dogs and cats" is a separate pairing from "llamas and camels." Otherwise, it would seem as though dogs, cats, llamas, and camels are all linked together. Still, it is a matter of personal style whether that last comma is necessary.

(4) It is nearly as confusing to try to explain how to use a comma as it is to actually use them. However, as with anything, practice makes perfect. In the entirety of this essay, there are 42 commas. Most of these commas are not explained in this essay. Some are there because they must be there, due to grammatical rules. Others are there because I, the writer, feel that the sentences are easier read with the commas in the places I chose to put them (note the appositive in that sentence, caged like a rabid animal). It is natural now for me to place a comma where it should be, and I often do not even notice them. Ultimately, I assure you, the reader appreciates a good comma.

(Questions 2-3)

2

Read this sentence from paragraph 2 of the rough draft.

Compound sentences are a little friendlier.

What is the *best* word to replace the underlined word in the sentence and still convey the same meaning?

- A sociable
- B easier
- C amicable
- D affable

3

Which word would *best* replace the underlined word in the following sentence from the passage without changing its meaning?

It is nearly as confusing to try to explain how to use a comma as it is to actually use them.

A frustrating

B messy

C clarifying

D perplexing

Read the passage and answer the following question(s).

Flying High in the Spring

This passage may contain errors.

1) Kites are flags of brilliant color, tatters of rainbows against an azure March sky. 2) They plunge, skip, and shudder in March winds that are sometimes strong. 3) Kites seem to represent the desire of many humans—to enjoy the empowering freedom of defying gravity. 4) Kite flying is a springtime tradition in almost any city in North America that enjoys mild springtime weather. 5) Legend has it that Benjamin Franklin once flew a kite to perform an experiment of monumental significance. 6) In 1752, after some French electricians had already confirmed Franklin's electrifying theory! 7) For many people, kite flying seems to represent the beginning of spring. 8) Benjamin Franklin's experiment with this very old symbol of spring included a key tied to the end of the kite string. 9) A time when people celebrate warm weather and sometimes fierce winds, perfect for the pastime. 10) As a Northern California resident, I like kite flying best in early April when the weather is really warm and fragrant with early flowers.

11) In some cities, kite flying contests are held. 12) In some places, children create their own kites and enter them in contests to win prizes for design, shape, color, and being able to fly. 13) In some American cities, kite flying festivals start the beginning of everyone's favorite season. 14) Then it happens. 15) It is the sudden strike of that mysterious annual illness—spring fever! 16) Do you feel it yet?

(Questions 4-5)

4

In order to improve word choice, which word is the *best* replacement for the underlined word in this sentence from the passage?

They plunge, skip, and shudder in March winds that are sometimes strong.

- A powerful B torrential C ravenous D tyrannical

5

In order to organize the first paragraph, which sentence should be moved?

- A sentence 2 B sentence 3 C sentence 7 D sentence 9

Read the following passage and answer the question(s).

Homemade Tamales

This is the first draft of Mike's essay. It may contain errors.

(1) Miguel and his brother, Tony, ran past the fruit stands and newspaper stands to reach the festival. (2) The courtyard in front of city hall was filled with music, colorful dresses, and lots of yummy food. (3) It was Cinco de Mayo. (4) On this day, people all around the world celebrate the Mexican victory over the French. (5) Every year, Miguel looked forward to Cinco de Mayo. (6) It was hard to sleep the night before because of all the excitement.

(7) Even though Miguel's family lived in Los Angeles, many people celebrated the holiday. (8) Miguel and his brother heard the sounds of the parade coming towards them. (9) They ran over by First Street. (10) Miguel and Tony could catch a glimpse of the amazing spectacle. (11) The two boys heard the sound of Mexican folk music and saw the green, red, and white flags waving in the air. (12) He saw many important people riding in old fashioned cars waving to everyone. (13) Miguel thought the most exciting part of the parade was when the Mexican cowboys threw candy at all the kids.

(14) Once the parade was over, Miguel and Tony went to see their mother. (15) She spent the last few days making homemade tamales for the celebration. (16) Tony loved her tamales so much. (17) He couldn't wait to get his hands on them. (18) Her tamale stand was next to a piñata stand. (19) A piñata is a paper container filled with delicious candy and treats. (20) While Tony was eating the tamales, Miguel walked over to see all the colorful piñatas. (21) Each piñata was special. (22) Some piñatas were shaped like wild animals. (23) Some were familiar cartoon characters.

(24) After Miguel and Tony spent time with their mother, they walked over to city hall to hear the mayor's speech. (25) As they got closer, they saw a big picture of General Zaragoza posted on the building. (26) The great general was very important to Mexico's victory. (27) The entire stage where notable people spoke was lined with both Mexican flags. (28) Everyone quieted down to hear the mayor's speech. (29) Miguel did not understand everything the mayor said, but he was impressed when the mayor said part of the speech in Spanish. (30) Miguel didn't know the mayor spoke Spanish. (31) He said in Spanish, "Este es un día glorioso." (32) That meant, "It is a glorious day."

(33) When the celebration was coming to an end, the two boys helped their mother clean up her tamale stand. (34) They watched the clean up crew take down the pictures and flags. (35) They saw all the other merchants take down their tables and pack up all their goods. (36) Tony's father couldn't make it to the Cinco de Mayo party because he had to work overtime. (37) The courtyard in front of city hall was nearly empty except for a handful of people. (38) Tony was sad because the day was over. (39) Miguel noticed his brother's sadness and told him to cheer up. (40) Tony couldn't understand why Miguel had a smile on his face.

(Question 6)

6

Read the following sentences from the passage.

Some piñatas were shaped like wild animals. Some were familiar cartoon characters

Which is the *best* way to combine the two sentences?

- A Since some piñatas were shaped like wild animals, others were shaped like familiar cartoon characters.
- B Some piñatas were shaped like wild animals which were familiar cartoon characters.
- C Some piñatas were shaped like wild animals, while others were shaped like familiar cartoon characters.
- D Even if some were shaped like wild animals, others were familiar cartoon characters.

Read the passage and answer the following question(s).

The Kimono



Keiko was ashamed of the kimono. Aunt Fumika had presented it to her tonight after dinner. This visit from Aunt Fumika had been long awaited by the family. Keiko's parents had sacrificed much to arrange for Aunt Fumika's journey, and now Aunt Fumika would be here for six weeks. Now, the kimono from faraway Japan hung forlornly in the closet. It seemed to wonder if Keiko would ever wear it. Its intricate embroidery of red and pink floral design was embarrassing to Keiko. She was distressed by her inner rejection of something that represented her ethnic heritage.

The kimono was traditional. Its flowery brightness was perfectly suited for spring and summer. Summer vacation had just begun and her aunt was delighted to have given her special niece such an appropriate present. Now all of her niece's friends would know that Keiko's people came from Japan. The red and pink blossoms and green bamboo on her kimono were sure to bring her good fortune. Aunt Fumika had expressed these things that night at dinner, her ink-black eyes shining as Keiko had unfolded the kimono from its musty box.

Now Keiko lay in bed, agonizing. How would her friends react to seeing her in traditional Japanese dress instead of her usual California summer attire of a tank top, shorts, and sandals? Would her friends mock her or appreciate her ethnic pride? Each night for the next week, Keiko lay in bed staring at the moonlit patterns on the kimono in the closet. It seemed to reproach her.

Eight nights after Aunt Fumika's arrival, Keiko served a traditional Japanese dessert of *ohagi*. As the family savored the rich warmth of the sweet rice balls, Aunt Fumika began to talk of life in Japan. Aunt Fumika spoke perfect English, though accented. Keiko could understand every precise word. Keiko listened intently to the cadences of her aunt's sentences. They seemed to be swept along by a tide of emotion. In Aunt Fumika's voice, she could hear fierce pride, deep homesickness, and bittersweet nostalgia.

Keiko pictured the kimono in her closet, smothered behind a thick section of tank tops, sundresses, shorts, and swimsuits. Suddenly, the shame burning in Keiko's throat became painful.

Pushing away her plate of half-eaten *ohagi*, she jumped up and ran from the room, tears streaking her cheeks. She pounded up the stairs, ignoring her aunt's confused cries and her mother's worried questions. In her bedroom, she gently took the kimono from the closet, slipped it off its hanger, and pulled it on. Her tears of shame became tears of pride, the same pride she'd heard in Aunt Fumika's voice.

Smiling, she emerged from her bedroom, and walked triumphantly down the stairs into the dining room. Aunt Fumika stood with a gasp of pleasure and came toward her, arms outstretched.

"Beautiful, Keiko," she murmured, her voice catching as she clasped her niece to her in a warm embrace. In that moment, Keiko knew she had done exactly the right thing.

(Questions 7-8)

7

Which word would **BEST** replace the underlined word to improve the meaning of the following sentence from the passage?

Now all of her niece's friends would know that Keiko's people came from Japan.

A aunt

B persons

C ancestors

D clothing

8

How should the author change the underlined portion of the following sentence from the passage to make it the MOST dramatic?

This visit from Aunt Fumika had been long-awaited by the family.

A eagerly anticipated by

B postponed by

C wanted by

D alarming to

Read the following passage and answer the question(s).

The Coffee Cart

For extra credit, Jack's English teacher encouraged each student to write a letter to the school board about a new idea that could be implemented in the school. This is the first draft of Jack's letter. It may have some errors.

Dear School Board of Cedarwood High School,

(1) I am writing this letter to request that the school board permit the Pro Start program to start and run a coffee cart on the school campus. (2) The Pro Start program is a course that combines culinary skills with business economics of the industry, and it is similar to the former class called *Home Economics*. (3) It has come to my attention that some schools in the area have already applied this great business plan, and it is running successfully. (4) I would like to share with you the reasons why running a coffee cart will benefit the entire student body.

(5) High school is supposed to be a preparatory school for life, whether it is for college or the work force. (6) Students take classes that are educational, enlightening, and are something of value. (7) For example, every senior has the privilege of taking a class called economics. (8) Most of what is taught to the students is through a big hard bound book. (9) I believe it is also essential for a school to teach they're students this subject in a practical way. (10) What better way to do this approach than through a student-run coffee cart?

(11) Isn't it the objective of teachers to train students to be responsible and for keeping them accountable? (12) According to Senator Jon Billings, "it absolutely is the job of educators to nurture responsibility, a teacher's work is to prepare them for their future." (13) The students will be liable for completely running the cart. (14) Whether it be through set up or clean up, purchasing supplies, running the register, or depositing the day's receipts, the students would be overseeing all aspects of the business. (15) All of these skills will better equip the student for their future, even if it isn't in the food service industry.

(16) Coffee is a beverage that is widely beloved and served at almost every street corner. (17) Not only is it quite tasty, it also has many beneficial perks. (18) No pun intended. (19) Coffee has been proven to help with memory and cognitive performance. (20) According to Dr. Jeffers, "Coffee helps to improve awareness, alertness, and aids in applicable learning." (21) This deliciously aromatic brew is also valuable because it has other health benefits like lowering cholesterol and lowering the risk of diabetes. (22) No, it isn't as healthy as tomato juice or green beans, but who wants to digest those things at 8:00 in the morning?

(23) If I can put my two cents in, I really believe that this coffee cart program would be the greatest teaching tool for the student body. (24) You have the opportunity to help the students learn by experience. (25) I know the board is quite busy and has a lot on their plate, but I would appreciate it if you could take the time to really consider this idea.

Sincerely,

Jack Green

(Questions 9-10)

9

Which sentence could *best* be added to the beginning of the fourth paragraph to improve the transition between the third and fourth paragraphs?

- A** I have shared with you the importance of hands-on learning; now I would also like to discuss the benefits of coffee.
- B** There are over 74 million people enrolled in school throughout the United States.
- C** Many people would agree that much of learning takes place outside the classroom.
- D** I am currently a senior at Cedarwood High School and am planning on attending college next fall.

10

Read this sentence from the letter.

What better way to do this approach than through a student-run coffee cart?

Which of the following words or groups of words is the best way to replace the underlined word in the sentence and still keep the same meaning?

A carry out

B fix

C lecture

D take place