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Question: 1

Even if the end result [b] was inconclusive, the [c] experiment itself would be worth doing to give students [d] experience in quantitative analysis. [e] No error

- A. Even if
- B. was inconclusive
- C. experiment itself
- D. experience in
- E. No error

Answer: B

Explanation:

Because a hypothetical conditional is being used, the subjunctive is the appropriate form for the verb: in this case "were" instead of "was." To correct this sentence, the student should change "was" to "were." The subjunctive mood is required to show that the sentence is a hypothetical statement. Though this rule is often broken in colloquial speech, it is standard in the written form. The relative clause can come first for emphasis; if it does, there must be a comma separating the clauses. Here the modal verb "would" shows the proper hypothetical mood.

Question: 2

Less and less people take the time these days [b] to stop and [c] reflect on the sacrifices made by [d] previous generations. [e] No error

- A. Less and less
- B. to stop
- C. reflect on
- D. previous
- E. No error

Answer: A

Explanation:

"People" is a countable noun (2 people, 3 people, etc.), so "fewer and fewer" is the appropriate quantifier. You should use "less and less" with an uncountable noun, such as "time." B uses an infinitive of purpose appropriately. C uses a legitimate verb and preposition combination while D uses the adjective correctly.

Question: 3

Herodotus, [a] having traveled widely [b] in his time, was said [c] to be convinced of the [d] existence of other continents beyond the seas. [e] No error

- A. having traveled
- B. in his time
- C. to be
- D. existence of
- E. No error

Answer: E

Explanation:

Using a gerund to reduce an adjective clause as in A is acceptable. The time phrase "in his time" is effective here. "Said to be" implies that someone has said this about him. "Existence of" is a proper adjective and preposition collocation. This sentence contains no error.

Question: 4

In addition to a major, students [b] must select a community service opportunity [c] that involves volunteering in an underserved community, mentoring at-risk youth, or [d] environmental issues. [e] No error

- A. In addition to
- B. must select
- C. that
- D. environmental issues
- E. No error

Answer: D

Explanation:

Due to the dictates of parallelism, the third item in the list, "environmental issues," is awkward because the other two items in the list begin with gerunds whereas this is a noun phrase. The sentence begins with a completely appropriate transition. "Must select" is a properly framed modal verb. In the adjective clause, "that" is the appropriate adverb to use to head the clause.

Question: 5

Him smoking was the cause of the [b] rift between [c] him and his father, which threatened the delicate balance of their [d] broken home. [e] No error

- A. Him smoking
- B. rift between
- C. him
- D. broken

E. No error

Answer: A

Explanation:

When using a gerund as a subject, in this case "smoking," it is necessary to use a possessive pronoun, as in: Your snoring is keeping me awake. "His" is better than "him." Him is the object pronoun and cannot be used in this way. "Between" is the proper preposition to use in collocation with rift. "He" is the subject pronoun. "Broken" is the past participle of the verb break and can be used as an adjective.

Question: 6

The male bowerbird steals [a] guilelessly from [b] his neighbors and competitors [c] alike without ever paying a price for [d] it. [e] No error

- A. guilelessly
- B. his
- C. alike
- D. it
- E. No error

Answer: D

Explanation:

The pronoun refers to an implied noun, the bowerbird's stealing, but since the noun has not been expressed, it is unacceptable to use a pronoun here. We must replace it with the unexpressed idea.

Question: 7

Once the ice [a] had been broken by the band, [b] the boys and girls at the party started mingling without worrying [c] much about whom they were seen [d] with. [e] No error

- A. had been broken
- B. the
- C. much
- D. with
- E. No error

Answer: D

Explanation:

A sentence should not end with a preposition. Although the appropriate preposition is used, the ending could be rephrased to be "with whom they were seen." The past perfect in A places one action before another in the past. The definite article in B is appropriate as specific boys and girls are mentioned. "Much" is an appropriate adverb.

Question: 8

The teacher's efforts [a] to get the students [b] to not fidget while the class picture [c] was taken [d] were in vain. [e] No error

- A. to get
- B. to not
- C. was taken
- D. were
- E. No error

Answer: B

Explanation:

When negating either infinitives or gerunds, it is almost always best to put "not" first. In this case it should be "not to fidget." After "effort," it is necessary to use an infinitive. The passive voice is used in C because the agent, the photographer, is omitted from the sentence. "Were" is used in D to match the plural head noun: "His efforts...were in vain."

Question: 9

In those days, the [b] only thing that could get him motivated to get out of bed was the [c] prospect of receiving a letter [d] from his sister. [e] No error

- A. In those days
- B. only
- C. prospect of
- D. from his sister
- E. No error

Answer: E

Explanation:

There are no errors in diction, usage, idiom, or grammar. "In those days" is a perfectly good phrase to indicate time. "Only" is a modifier situated before a noun. "Of" belongs with prospect. The object of the preposition is clear and appropriate.

Question: 10

The goal of the competition, [a] to locate and capture the [b] colored flag of the [c] opposing team, [d] are based loosely on a military paradigm. [e] No error

- A. to locate
- B. colored flag

- C. opposing
- D. are based
- E. No error

Answer: D

Explanation:

The subject of the sentence and the verb do not agree. The head subject is "goal," a singular noun. The passive voice requires the sentence to read "is based." An infinitive is acceptable in B because it is the object of the reduced adjective clause, "which is to locate." "Colored" and "opposing" are the past and present participles of verbs, which can be used as adjectives.

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