

10.	Some traditional assumptions about how to treat jellyfish stings have recently been called into question: rinsing the affected areas with seawater, for example, only spreads the stings to a larger area.
11.	The world's first copyright law, which was established in Great Britain in 1709, was intended to protect books from illegal copying and distribution.
12.	The unusually large size of the Komodo dragon, the largest species of lizard, has been attributed to one of its ancient ancestors, the immense varanid lizard.
13.	Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party* was through an unprecedented worldwide grassroots movement exhibited to more than a million people in six countries on three continents.
14.	According to the *Motif-Index of Folk Literature*, a magisterial six-volume compilation of myths and legends collected by folklorists in the early twentieth century, many cultures have told similar stories to explain the occurrence of solar eclipses.
15.	A new software called DXplain [illegible] is helping doctors make diagnoses and avoid the types of errors that can sometimes cause harm to patients.

Two Commas vs. Period or Semicolon

Many introductory and transitional phrases that are often used to **begin** clauses can also be used non-essentially **within** clauses—often in the middle (surrounded by commas), but sometimes also at the end (after a single comma).

For example, the sentence below can be written multiple ways.

Correct: **Many scholars believe** that the Tower of London retained its original form until the reign of Richard the Lionheart at the end of the twelfth century.

Correct: The Tower of London retained its original form**, many scholars believe,** until the reign of Richard the Lionheart at the end of the twelfth century.

Correct: The Tower of London retained its original form until the reign of Richard the Lionheart at the end of the twelfth century, **many scholars believe**.

Although the second and third versions may sound odd to you, they are acceptable as long as the sentence makes sense when the non-essential information is removed.

The same is true of single-word transitions. Some common examples include *however, therefore, in fact, indeed, for example,* and *moreover.* (We actually saw some of these transitions used non-essentially in the previous chapter.)

As discussed earlier, these transitions should follow a period or semicolon when they are used to begin a sentence or clause. In the sentence below, for instance, the transition *however* is used to begin the second sentence/clause:

Correct: The Tower of London was built during the Norman **Conquest. However,**
(or: Conquest; however,) nearly a thousand years later, it still remains standing.

That transition can also be used non-essentially in the **middle of the sentence**. This construction is typically used for **contradictors** such as *however* and *though.*

Correct: The Tower of London was built during the Norman Conquest. Nearly a thousand years later**, however,** it still remains standing.

The commas around *however* tell us that if we cross out that word, the sentence will still make sense. And sure enough, when we eliminate it, we are left with a grammatically acceptable sentence:

Correct: Nearly a thousand years later…it still remains standing.

We can also place the transition at the end of the sentence.

Correct: The Tower of London was built during the Norman Conquest. Nearly a thousand years later it still remains standing**, however**.

In terms of meaning, placing the transition at the end of the clause rather than at the beginning or in the middle has no effect—the transition still serves to indicate the relationship between the second sentence and the first.

What we **cannot** do is this:

Incorrect: The Tower of London was built during the Norman Conquest**, however,** nearly a thousand years later, it still remains standing.

In the above version of the sentence, the two commas imply that the word *however* can be removed without affecting the sentence's essential meaning. But if we remove those commas, we end up with two independent clauses placed back-to-back, without any punctuation between them.

Incorrect: The Tower of London was built during the Norman Conquest nearly a thousand years later, it still remains standing.

Colon or Dash

Note that in some cases, a **colon** or **dash** may also be used after a non-essential word or phrase at the end of a sentence. This construction is acceptable when an explanation or definition follows.

Correct: Since the eighteenth century, artisans have attempted to reproduce the sound of a Stradivarius violin. None of them have succeeded, **however: the** tonal quality remains unique and unmatched by any other instrument maker.

Correct: Since the eighteenth century, artisans have attempted to reproduce the sound of a Stradivarius violin. None of them have succeeded, **however—the** tonal quality remains unique and unmatched by any other instrument maker.

In the sentence above, the colon or dash is acceptable because the statement following it serves to explain what is meant by *None of them have succeeded.*

Note: It is unlikely (although not impossible) that you would be asked to decide between a period or semicolon and a colon/dash in this question type, at least not without an additional error present. The emphasis is on testing your ability to identify which sentence non-essential information belongs to, not on asking you to make fine distinctions between punctuation marks.

To Summarize:

The need for two commas vs. a period, semicolon, or colon is determined solely by context. **If you are unsure which type of punctuation should be used, use the answer choices to plug in the necessary word(s), and read the passage without the transition.**

- If a single, logical sentence remains, the word or phrase is non-essential and must be set off by commas.

- If there are two sentences, the transition is being used to start a new sentence or clause and must come after a period, semicolon, or colon.

- If a transition is used non-essentially at the end of a sentence, it connects that sentence to the previous sentence or section of the passage. It must come after a comma and can be followed by a period, semicolon, or colon.

Punctuating Transitions

On the SAT, some questions will ask you to determine whether transitions are used non-essentially (set off by commas) or used to begin a clause (after a period, semicolon, or colon).

For example, consider the question below.

Led by a team from the University of California, San Diego, researchers have developed a new series of algorithms enabling four-legged robots to navigate challenging terrain while avoiding obstacles. Until now, most approaches have involved either vision or speed and sense of movement the new system combines both options, allowing robots to anticipate changes in their environment and change course when an object is in their way.

1 Mark for Review

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

Ⓐ movement, however,

Ⓑ movement, however;

Ⓒ movement; however,

Ⓓ movement however,

Traditionally, most approaches to robotic navigation have involved either vision or speed and sense of direction. A new system developed by a team from the University of California, San Diego, along with other researchers, combines both _____ created by the group are able to anticipate changes in their environment and change course when an object is in their path.

1 Mark for Review

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

Ⓐ systems, though the four-legged robots

Ⓑ systems, though. The four-legged robots

Ⓒ systems, though, the four-legged robots

Ⓓ systems; though, the four-legged robots

Because he is commonly viewed as a champion of free scientific inquiry, Galileo is generally thought of as a strict proponent of rationalism. He was also deeply influenced by humanistic _____ he derived much of his inspiration from art, particularly Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

1 Mark for Review

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

Ⓐ inquiry, however:

Ⓑ inquiry, however,

Ⓒ inquiry however ,

Ⓓ systems, however ,

Quick Check: Punctuating Transitions (answers p. 208)

1. The difference between hot things and cold things is the level of agitation in their molecules. For example, the water molecules in a hot kettle are in a state of excitement, careening around and colliding into each other rapidly. When they condense on a pane of _____ the very same water molecules are in a much calmer state.

- Ⓐ glass, though
- Ⓑ glass, though,
- Ⓒ glass. Though,
- Ⓓ glass though

"Reasoning"

2. Weighing in at 165 tons or more, blue whales (*Balaenoptera musculus*) are the largest animals on Earth. They have been the subject of decades of _____ still have many unanswered questions about their biology and ecology.

- Ⓐ research, though, scientists
- Ⓑ research; though, scientists
- Ⓒ research, though. Scientists
- Ⓓ research, though scientists

3. According to one study, dolphins appear to refer to one another by using specific series of clicks and squeaks. Whether these vocalizations should truly be considered names and are used in a way that is comparable to human ones remains controversial among animal _____ preliminary findings suggest that that may in fact be the case.

- Ⓐ researchers, however,
- Ⓑ researchers; however,
- Ⓒ researchers, however;
- Ⓓ researchers however,

4. The quest to decipher the Rosetta Stone was complicated by the unique nature of ancient Egyptian writing. The scholars who sought to decode it had primarily worked with alphabetic languages like English and French, in which letters represent different sounds. Hieroglyphic _____ was a hybrid system. Its hundreds of characters alternately represented sounds, objects, and ideas.

- Ⓐ script, in contrast,
- Ⓑ script in contrast
- Ⓒ script, in contrast:
- Ⓓ script; in contrast

Non-Essential Clauses with Dashes and Parentheses

Many of the non-essential clauses you are asked to work with on the SAT will be constructed using commas; however, these clauses can also be set off by **dashes** and **parentheses**.

Correct: The Tower of London—**which was begun by William the Conqueror in 1078**—is one of the largest and most imposing fortifications in England.

Correct: The Tower of London **(which was begun by William the Conqueror in 1078)** is one of the largest and most imposing fortifications in England.

Why use dashes or parentheses? For stylistic reasons. In comparison to commas, dashes create a stronger break. Parentheses imply that information is less important than either commas or dashes do.

Despite these differences, **two commas, two dashes, and two parentheses are all grammatically interchangeable**.

The only **exception** involves **transitions** (e.g., *however*, *therefore*, *in fact)*, which **must be surrounded by commas** when they are used non-essentially.

Otherwise, you will not be asked to choose among these types of punctuation when they are used correctly. You will, however, be asked to recognize when they are used *incorrectly*.

The most important thing to know is that either two commas, two dashes, or two parentheses should be used—you cannot mix and match.

For instance, a non-essential clause begun by a comma should not end with a dash or close parenthesis, and a non-essential clause begun by an open parenthesis should not end with a comma or dash.

For example, consider the sentence below.

The Norman _____ that occurred in 1066—marked an important step in the development of the English language.

1 Mark for Review

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

Ⓐ Conquest, an event

Ⓑ Conquest—an event

Ⓒ Conquest an event

Ⓓ Conquest: an event

Today, the city of London (which was originally built by the Romans along the banks of the Thames more than two thousand years _____ home to a number of extremely modern neighborhoods.

1 Mark for Review

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

Ⓐ ago, is

Ⓑ ago; is

Ⓒ ago is

Ⓓ ago) is

In the decades following the Norman invasion of England in 1066, many important defensive structures were built. For example, the Tower of _____ remains one of the largest and most imposing fortifications in England.

1 Mark for Review

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

Ⓐ London, (which was begun by William the Conqueror in 1078),

Ⓑ London, (which was begun by William the Conqueror in 1078)

Ⓒ London (which was begun by William the Conqueror in 1078),

Ⓓ London (which was begun by William the Conqueror in 1078)

The Tower of London was constructed as a prison in the eleventh century (the year _____ but over the centuries it has been used as everything from a treasury to an armory.

1 Mark for Review

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

Ⓐ	(1078 to be exact);
Ⓑ	1078, to be exact,
Ⓒ	1078 to be exact),
Ⓓ	1078 to be exact—

Exercise: Non-Essential Clauses with Commas, Dashes, and Parentheses (answers p. 209)

1. Despite the fact that parrots are well known for their long lives and advanced _____ their lifespans and relative brain size are comparable to those of primates—it is unclear whether the two traits have influenced each other.

- Ⓐ cognition—
- Ⓑ cognition,
- Ⓒ cognition
- Ⓓ cognition:

2. Carnivorous species of flora such as the pitcher plant use a variety of techniques (including nectar, smells, and bright _____ and their traps deploy sheer drops, smooth surfaces that cannot be scaled, or blockades of bristles that prevent prey from escaping.

- Ⓐ colors that lure insects,
- Ⓑ colors that lure insects),
- Ⓒ colors that lure insects—
- Ⓓ colors that lure insects;

3. Timothy O'Hara, deputy head of marine sciences at Australia's Museum Victoria, is leading an effort to develop a database of marine biodiversity worldwide. Because tackling every ocean species in existence is such a monumental task, O'Hara and his team are focusing on the brittle _____ and collecting historical records from 1,614 oceanic expeditions spanning the last century.

- Ⓐ star, (a spindlier, more delicate cousin of the famous sea star),
- Ⓑ star (a spindlier, more delicate cousin of the more famous sea star)
- Ⓒ star (a spindlier, more delicate cousin of the more famous sea star),
- Ⓓ star, (a spindlier, more delicate cousin of the more famous sea star)

4. The poet W.H. Auden's contradictions made him a difficult person to fathom. Although he appeared to lead a chaotic existence, he was also obsessively punctual and adhered to a strict work schedule. His poems, which on the surface appear to be simple, straightforward _____ defy easy understanding as well.

Ⓐ compositions—often

Ⓑ compositions often

Ⓒ compositions often,

Ⓓ compositions, often

5. On the streets of London, pink hollyhocks creep over high brick walls, and ivy climbs over courtyards. Offices and museums set aside valuable real estate for patches of green with fruit trees and flowers. With more than 300 gardens—some public, others private, many _____ is one of Europe's greenest capitals.

Ⓐ secret, the city

Ⓑ secret the city

Ⓒ secret—the city

Ⓓ secret: the city

Commas with Names and Titles

When a name or title appears in the middle of a sentence—that is, not as the first or last words—there are generally only two correct options:

1) No commas (essential)

2) Two commas (non-essential): one before and one after the name or title

Occasionally, a single comma may be required after the name or title, for reasons discussed later in this chapter, but that should not be a major cause for concern.

In terms of SAT Writing, the most important thing to know is that questions are primarily concerned with testing the unnecessary use of commas. As a result, correct answers tend to include no punctuation around the name or title.

For example, consider the following question.

Born Elaine Potter Richardson in Antigua, Caribbean-American _____ began her career as a journalist, only later turning to fiction. In 1985, she published the novel *Annie John*, a semi-autobiographical story of a young girl growing up in Antigua.

1 Mark for Review

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

Ⓐ author, Jamaica Kincaid

Ⓑ author Jamaica Kincaid

Ⓒ author, Jamaica Kincaid,

Ⓓ author Jamaica Kincaid,

To determine how long ago Easter Island formed, _____ added a large plateau to reconstructions of volcanic activity that is known to have occurred beneath the island. Their findings suggest that a shift in tectonic plates far beneath the Earth's surface could have resulted in the island's creation 165 million years ago.

1 Mark for Review

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

Ⓐ	researchers, Yamirka Rojas-Agramonte and Douwe van Hinsbergen,
Ⓑ	researchers Yamirka Rojas-Agramonte and Douwe van Hinsbergen
Ⓒ	researchers Yamirka Rojas-Agramonte, and Douwe van Hinsbergen
Ⓓ	researchers Yamirka Rojas-Agramonte and Douwe van Hinsbergen,

Annie John, a semi-autobiographical story of a young girl growing up in Antigua, was published to great critical acclaim in 1985. The novel's _____ had only recently turned to fiction, having spent the early years of her career as a journalist.

1 Mark for Review

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

Ⓐ author, Jamaica Kincaid,

Ⓑ author Jamaica Kincaid

Ⓒ author, Jamaica Kincaid

Ⓓ author Jamaica Kincaid,