Sample Questions Focused on Essay Revision Content Area

Sample Question 1

In context, which of the following is the best way to revise and combine sentences 1 and 2 (reproduced below)?

*Seaweed-based fuel could one day power your car. It is more than just an ingredient in a purifying face mask or a sushi roll.*

A. Seaweed-based fuel could one day power your car, it is more than just an ingredient in a purifying face mask or a sushi roll.
B. Seaweed-based fuel could one day power your car because it is more than just an ingredient in a purifying face mask or a sushi roll.
C. **Seaweed is more than just an ingredient in a purifying face mask or a sushi roll; seaweed-based fuel could one day power your car.**
D. Fuel from seaweed could one day power your car so it is more than just an ingredient in a purifying face mask or sushi roll.

**Explanation:**

Choice (C) is correct. The new sentence must be a logical and grammatical combination of the existing sentences, which indicate that “Seaweed-based fuel could one day power your car” and that “It” (presumably, seaweed) “is more than just an ingredient in a purifying face mask or a sushi roll.” Only (C) properly orders the two claims, first expressing that “Seaweed is more than just an ingredient . . .” and then, following a correct use of a semicolon to join two related independent clauses, narrowing the focus to “seaweed-based fuel.” The other choices introduce errors: choice (A) creates a comma splice (two independent clauses joined by only a comma), choice (B) provides an illogical cause-effect statement, and choice (D) contains a vague pronoun (“it”).

Sample Question 2

In context, where would the following sentence best be placed?

**There are a number of possible reasons for this.**

A. After sentence 2

B. **After sentence 4**

C. After sentence 6
D. After sentence 9

Explanation:

Choice (B) is correct. The new sentence, “There are a number of possible reasons for this,” needs to fit logically and grammatically between two existing sentences. Sentence 4 states that American scientists have “shied away from,” or ignored, kelp and seaweed as possible biofuels. Sentence 5 notes “One reason why seaweed may not have taken off as a fuel source.” Later in the passage, sentence 8 provides “Another reason for the U.S. avoidance of seaweed-based biofuel.” The new sentence fits logically and grammatically between sentences 4 and 5 because it introduces the reasons for “this” (American scientists’ neglect of kelp and seaweed as potential fuel sources)—reasons that are provided in the following sentences. On the contrary, if choices (A), (C), or (D) were chosen as the answer, “this” would refer to other things for which no reasons are given.

Sample Question 3

In context, which of the following sentences would best be inserted between sentences 9 and 10?

A. New research shows that seaweed may also possess the power to repair tissue damage in heart attack patients.
B. Planting a large-scale seaweed farm will likely meet with stiff opposition.
C. Maine Seaweed Co., for instance, harvests the seaweed naturally available along the U.S. coast.
D. Some say that seaweed-based fuel may one day be competitive with petroleum.

Explanation:

Choice (C) is correct. The new sentence needs to fit logically and grammatically between sentence 9 (“The U.S. is no stranger to seaweed harvesting”) and sentence 10 (“However, for the biobutanol project to be environmentally sustainable, seaweed cannot be harvested; it must be farmed”). The only sentence that provides a direct link back to sentence 9 and forward to sentence 10 is choice (C): “Maine Seaweed Co., for instance, harvests the seaweed naturally available along the U.S. coast.” This sentence provides the example of Maine Seaweed, a seaweed-harvesting company, to support the claim in sentence 9 that the U.S. is familiar with seaweed harvesting. And sentence 10
seems to refer back to the work of Maine Seaweed in stating that “However . . . seaweed cannot be harvested; it must be farmed.” Neither choice (A), choice (B), nor choice (D) offers the same explicit, logical link to sentences 9 and 10.

Sample Question 4

In context, which is the best revision to sentence 13 (reproduced below)?

*They say that the seaweed-based fuel would work better in automobiles than ethanol and be easier to transport.*

A. Replace “They say” with “Advocates contend”.

B. Replace “would work” with “would be”.

C. Delete “and be easier to transport”.

D. Insert “their” before “automobiles”.

Explanation:

Choice (A) is correct. It is unclear to whom the pronoun “They” in sentence 13 refers. In fact, there are no plural nouns in the sentences that come before sentence 13 to which “They” could possibly refer. “They” must, therefore, be replaced with a plural noun describing the people who “say that the seaweed-based fuel would work better in automobiles than ethanol and be easier to transport.” These people clearly support the use of seaweed as a biofuel, so it would be appropriate to refer to them as “Advocates.” In addition, they are making an argumentative claim, so it would be more precise to state that they “contend” than that they “say” what follows. None of the other three potential revisions—choices (B), (C), and (D)—solves the problem presented by “They,” and each is unnecessary.

*Question and answer content taken from The College Board (2014). The Texas Success Initiative Sample Questions.*