

Critical Reading Practice Exam**Part 1: Identifying Sentence Errors**

Directions: Read the sentences carefully but quickly. Select the sentence that is grammatically correct.

1.
 - a. Cherie was known not only for her green thumb, but also for her ability to create visually pleasing designs.
 - b. Cherie was known not only for her green thumb and for her ability to create visually pleasing designs.
 - c. Cherie was known not only for her green thumb, both for her ability to create visually pleasing designs.
 - d. Cherie was known both for her green thumb, but also for her ability to create visually pleasing designs.

2.
 - a. The instructor wanted all of the students in the Tuesday evening horticulture class to prepare his or her notes during the week.
 - b. The instructor wanted all of the students in the Tuesday evening horticulture class to prepare one's notes during the week.
 - c. The instructor wanted all of the students in the Tuesday evening horticulture class to prepare their notes during the week.
 - d. The instructor wanted all of the students in the Tuesday evening horticulture class to prepare its notes during the week.

3.
 - a. Many farmers have found that they can sell their products more effectively at farmers' markets not roadside stands alone.
 - b. Many farmers have found that they can sell their products more effectively at farmers' markets, than roadside stands alone.
 - c. Many farmers have found that they can sell their products more effectively at farmers' markets at roadside stands alone.
 - d. Many farmers have found that they can sell their products more effectively at farmers' markets than at roadside stands alone.

4.
 - a. She liked to plant and harvest, but not weeding.
 - b. She liked to plant and harvesting, but not weeding.
 - c. She liked planting and harvesting, but not weeding.
 - d. She liked to planting, harvesting, but not weeding.

5.
 - a. Many people fear bees, however, honey bees are not aggressive and seldom sting.

- b. Many people fear bees; however, honey bees are not aggressive and seldom sting.
 - c. Many people fear bees; however honey bees are not aggressive and seldom sting.
 - d. Many people fear bees, however honey bees are not aggressive and seldom sting.
- 6.
- a. She walked over to the greenhouse with Betty and I.
 - b. She walked over to the greenhouse with Betty and me.
 - c. She walked over to the greenhouse with I and Betty.
 - d. She walked over to the greenhouse with Betty, and me.
- 7.
- a. Although Teresa likes to cook, she is not an adventurous eater.
 - b. Although Teresa likes to cook. She is not an adventurous eater.
 - c. Although Teresa likes to cook; she is not an adventurous eater.
 - d. Although Teresa likes to cook, but she is not an adventurous eater.
- 8.
- a. *Camellia sinensis* is a species of evergreen shrub or small tree whose leaves and leaf buds is used to produce tea.
 - b. *Camellia sinensis* is a species of evergreen shrub or small tree whose leaves and leaf buds are using to produce tea.
 - c. *Camellia sinensis* is a species of evergreen shrub or small tree whose leaves and leaf buds are used to produce tea.
 - d. *Camellia sinensis* is a species of evergreen shrub or small tree whose leaves and leaf buds are to produce tea.
- 9.
- a. Two practices of sustainable agriculture are crop rotation and soil amendment, and both designed to ensure that crops being cultivated can obtain the necessary nutrients for healthy growth.
 - b. Two practices of sustainable agriculture are crop rotation and soil amendment, are both designed to ensure that crops being cultivated can obtain the necessary nutrients for healthy growth.
 - c. Two practices of sustainable agriculture, crop rotation and soil amendment, both designed to ensure that crops being cultivated can obtain the necessary nutrients for healthy growth.
 - d. Two practices of sustainable agriculture, crop rotation and soil amendment, are both designed to ensure that crops being cultivated can obtain the necessary nutrients for healthy growth.
- 10.
- a. Water conservation will be a primary concern in years to come, if our society must learn how to use its water more efficiently.
 - b. Water conservation will be a primary concern in years to come, our society must learn how to use its water more efficiently.

- c. Water conservation will be a primary concern in years to come, and our society must learn how to use its water more efficiently.
 - d. Water conservation will be a primary concern in years to come, so our society must learn how to use its water more efficiently.
- 11.
- a. As Bryan climbed the tree, the branches creaked under his weight.
 - b. Climbing the tree, the branches creaked under Bryan's weight.
 - c. While climbing the tree, the branches creaked under Bryan's weight.
 - d. Bryan climbed the tree, the branches creaked under his weight.
- 12.
- a. Exhausted after a long day on the links, I parked the golf cart outside the garage.
 - b. Exhausted after a long day on the links, the golf cart was parked outside the garage.
 - c. I was exhausted after a long day on the links, the golf cart was parked outside the garage.
 - d. Exhausted after a long day on the links, the golf cart was parked by me outside the garage.
- 13.
- a. My gas mileage was radically improved by me using the tips from the owner's manual.
 - b. I radically improved my gas mileage by using the tips from the owner's manual.
 - c. Radically improved my gas mileage by using the tips from the owner's manual.
 - d. My gas mileage radically improved by using the tips from the owner's manual.
- 14.
- a. Harriet who is almost six feet tall, can reach the top shelf.
 - b. Harriet, who is almost six feet tall can reach the top shelf.
 - c. Harriet, who is almost six feet tall, can reach the top shelf.
 - d. Harriet who is almost six feet tall can reach the top shelf.
- 15.
- a. No one asked me whether I wanted to attend the meeting.
 - b. No one asked me, whether I wanted to attend the meeting.
 - c. No one asked me whether I wanted, to attend the meeting.
 - d. No one asked me whether I wanted to attend, the meeting.
- 16.
- a. Walking across campus, Hannah drenched by the cloudburst.
 - b. Walking across campus, Hannah was drenched by the cloudburst.
 - c. Walking across campus, Hannah drenches by the cloudburst.
 - d. Walking across campus, Hannah drenching the cloudburst.
- 17.
- a. We chosen the most appropriate breeds for our flock, so now we can order our chicks.
 - b. We have chose the most appropriate breeds for our flock, so now we can order our chicks.
 - c. We choose the most appropriate breeds for our flock, so now we can order our chicks.

- d. We have chosen the most appropriate breeds for our flock, so now we can order our chicks.
- 18.
- He asked "Is it Saturday?"
 - He asked, "Is it Saturday?"
 - He asked, Is it Saturday?
 - He asked Is it Saturday?
- 19.
- The use of available city space, such as rooftop gardens or community plots, for growing food crops is another way to achieve greater sustainability.
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- 20.
- After the truck was repaired, it ran perfect again.
 - After the truck was repaired, it run perfect again.
 - After the truck was repaired, it run perfectly again.
 - After the truck was repaired, it ran perfectly again.

PART 2—Improving Sentences

Directions

- Read the entire sentence carefully but quickly and ask yourself whether the underlined portion is correct or whether it needs revision.
- Read the choices below the sentence, which replace the underlined portion of the sentence. Choose the one that results in a clear, precise sentence that meets the requirements of standard written English. (There may be more than one answer that is grammatically acceptable; choose the clearest, most readable option.)
- Write your answer in the space provided.

_____21. She is the doctor that offered the advice.

- that offered the advice
- that the advice offered
- who that advice offered
- who offered the advice
- which offered the advice

_____22. The more space they have, the happier and healthier your chickens will be, overcrowding contributes to disease and feather picking.

- A. chickens will be, overcrowding
- B. chickens will be overcrowding
- C. chickens will be; overcrowding
- D. chickens will be, and overcrowding
- E. chickens will be, but overcrowding

_____23. A slow, soaking rain is the best for establishing tiny plants, which can be washed away by a downpour.

- A. tiny plants, which can be washed away
- B. tiny plants, who can be washed away
- C. tiny plants, that can be washed away
- D. tiny plants, can be washed away
- E. tiny plants can be washed away

_____24. Creeping thyme (such as *Thymus serpyllum* 'Coccineus,' the red creeping thyme) will spread over the years; thereby keeping the weeding you have to do to a minimum.

- A. years; thereby keeping the weeding you have to do to a minimum.
- B. years, thereby reducing the need to weed.
- C. years, thereby keeping the weeding you have to do.
- D. years; thereby reducing the need to weed.
- E. years; thereby cutting down the amount of weeding you have to do.

_____25. Unfortunately, many urban and suburban landscapes are populated by non-native plants that support very few biodiversity.

- A. support very few biodiversity
- B. support very small biodiversity
- C. support very little biodiversity
- D. support very minor biodiversity
- E. support very unhealthy biodiversity

_____26. Raccoons typically make their dens in hollow trees, ground burrows, or brush piles but will use barns, attics, or an abandoned buildings.

- A. barns, attics, or an abandoned buildings.
- B. barns, attics, or abandoned buildings.
- C. barns, attics or an abandoned building.
- D. barns, an attic, or an abandoned building.
- E. barns, attics, abandoned buildings.

_____27. You can slow the spread of invasive species—and prevent new invasions—by being a thoughtful responsible and vocal steward of your own property.

- A. thoughtful responsible and vocal
- B. thoughtful; responsible, and vocal
- C. thoughtful, responsible, and vocal
- D. thoughtful, responsible; and vocal
- E. thoughtful responsible, and vocal

____ 28. Rhode Island Reds and Barred Plymouth Rocks are docile, reasonably quiet, dual-purpose chicken breeds that handle confinement well.

- A. docile, reasonably quiet, dual-purpose
- B. docile reasonably quiet dual-purpose
- C. docile, reasonably quiet; dual-purpose
- D. docile and reasonably quiet and dual-purpose
- E. docile, reasonably quiet, and dual-purpose

____ 29. Most college students don't get enough sleep, for optimal brain function.

- A. enough sleep, for optimal
- B. enough sleep; for optimal
- C. enough sleep to be optimal
- D. enough sleep for optimal
- E. enough sleep as optimal

____ 30. Part-time college students are thirty-eight percent.

- A. Part-time college students are thirty-eight percent.
- B. Thirty-eight percent of college students attend school part-time.
- C. Part-time college students make up thirty-eight percent.
- D. Thirty-eight percent are part-time students.
- E. College students are thirty-eight percent of part-time.

____ 31. The researchers set out to confirm whether these plant-based milks really were the healthy and wholesome alternatives to cow's milk they've been branded as.

- A. The researchers set out to confirm whether these plant-based milks really were the healthy and wholesome alternatives to cow's milk they've been branded as.
- B. The researchers set out to find out whether these plant-based milks really were healthy and wholesome alternatives to cow's milk as branded.
- C. The researchers set out to confirm if these plant-based milks really were the healthy and wholesome alternatives to cow's milk.
- D. The researchers set out to learn whether these plant-based milks really were—as they have been branded—healthy and wholesome alternatives to cow's milk.
- E. The researchers set out to identify whether these plant-based milks really were the healthy and wholesome alternatives to cow's milk.

____ 32. In the scheme of high school sports, it is often argued by players that there is bias and coaches play favorites.

- A. In the scheme of high school sports, it is often argued by players that there is bias and coaches play favorites.
- B. In high school sports, it is often argued that there is bias and coaches play favorites.
- C. Some players argue that high school sports are biased and that coaches play favorites.
- D. It is often argued in the biased realm of high school sports that coaches play favorites.
- E. In the scheme of high school sports, there is often bias and coaches play favorites.

____ 33. A cup of tea has less than half the caffeine as a cup of coffee.

- A. less than half the caffeine as a cup of coffee.
- B. less than half the caffeine of a cup of coffee.
- C. less than half as much caffeine for a cup of coffee.
- D. less than half caffeine as a cup of coffee.
- E. less than half the caffeine with a cup of coffee.

____ 34. The grocery store was crowded with shoppers, who were stocking up on necessities before the snowstorm arrived.

- A. with shoppers, who were stocking up on necessities
- B. with shoppers stocked up on necessities
- C. with shoppers who stocked up on necessities
- D. with shoppers that stock up on necessities
- E. with shoppers that stocked up on necessities

____ 35. A healthy lawn increases the value of your property, prevented erosion, and adds oxygen to the air.

- A. increases the value of your property, prevented erosion, and adds oxygen to the air.
- B. increases the value of your property, prevented erosion, and added oxygen to the air.
- C. increase the value of your property, prevent erosion, and add oxygen to the air.
- D. increases the value of your property, prevents erosion, and adds oxygen to the air.
- E. increase the value of your property, prevent erosion, and adds oxygen to the air.

____ 36. Raking the leaves might keep your lawn healthy and neat but it can create environmental issues, depending on what you do with those raked leaves.

- A. and neat but it can create environmental issues, depending
- B. and neat, but it can create environmental issues, it depends
- C. and neat but it can create environmental issues, dependent
- D. and neat, but it can create environmental issues depending
- E. and neat, but it can create environmental issues, depending

____ 37. She won the contest, and she didn't feel that the judging was fair.

- A. contest, and she didn't
- B. contest, but she didn't
- C. contest, so she didn't

- D. contest, for she didn't
- E. contest, she didn't

___38. None of us wanted to attend the meeting. Although all of us enjoyed the coffee and pastries.

- A. meeting. Although
- B. meeting. And
- C. meeting, although
- D. meeting, and
- E. meeting; although

___39. Companion plants, for example the "three sisters," benefit from one another, offering some of the same benefits as crop rotation.

- A. Companion plants, for example the "three sisters," benefit from one another, offering some of the same benefits as crop rotation.
- B. Companion plants, for instance the "three sisters," benefit from one another, offering some of the same benefits as crop rotation.
- C. Companion plants, such as the "three sisters," benefit from one another, offering some of the same benefits as crop rotation.
- D. Companion plants, example the "three sisters," benefit from one another, offering some of the same benefits as crop rotation.
- E. Companion plants, maybe the "three sisters," benefit from one another, offering some of the same benefits as crop rotation.

___40. Putting younger chickens into an older flock can be traumatic to both sets of chickens and not recommended.

- A. can be traumatic to both sets of chickens and not recommended.
- B. can be traumatic to both sets of chickens; it is not recommended.
- C. can be traumatic to both sets of chickens so is not recommended.
- D. can be traumatic to both sets of chickens, not recommended.
- E. can be traumatic to both sets of chickens, it is not recommended.

Part 3: Reading Comprehension

Directions:

Read the following passage. When you have finished reading, choose the best answer to each question. If you don't know all of the words in the passage, use context to determine their meaning.

Choosing the Best Native Plants for Maryland Gardens

As most gardeners know, there are many benefits to choosing native plants. They require less maintenance than other species; they require less water, fertilizer, and pesticide, which benefits the environment and saves you time and money. In addition, because plants and animals in a particular environment evolve over time to support one another, using the right native plants promotes biodiversity. An appropriate native plant provides habitat and food for the local fauna and attracts desirable pollinators.

Once you decide to use natives, though, it's not always so easy to identify appropriate plants for the situation. Almost all gardeners understand the basic definition of a native plant: it's a plant that naturally occurs in the area where you plan to grow it. "It's a plant that belongs here," many gardeners might explain. That's true, and yet it can be misleading, because it's not easy to say where "here" is. Reading a list of "Maryland native plants," for example, is only a starting point. The state of Maryland contains a wide variety of different growing situations, and no single plant will thrive in all of them.

Plants don't respect property boundaries or political borders; they don't care who owns their soil or what government controls it. They grow where they are best suited to grow, in areas that may be quite specialized. Even within a single ecoregion, the growing conditions can vary considerably, and a plant is only truly native in conditions where it might grow on its own.

When you examine a particular region—even a fairly specific, limited area—you'll find a wide range of different plants with different characteristics. Consider, for example, the Chesapeake Rolling Coastal Plain ecoregion (which is a Level IV ecoregion, the most specific designation used by the U.S. government). This is a fairly small area. Mostly contained in southeastern Maryland, it covers most of Washington, D.C., and a small fragment of northern Virginia. It runs along parts of the southeastern border of Maryland up to the Chesapeake Bay and the Potomac River, although other parts of that coastal edge belong to the neighboring Chesapeake-Pamlico Lowlands and Tidal Marshes.

Even an area as small as this encompasses many specific environments. The plants that naturally grow in a brackish coastal wetland along the Bay differ from the plants that grow well in a freshwater inland bog. This area contains forests, swamps, beaches, and meadows, just to name some of its spaces, and every different area is home to different plants. A small difference in microclimate can mean that a plant can't survive in your garden plot, even though it thrives in the garden across the street.

In other words, if you need to find the right species to plant in your very wet front yard, it's not enough to identify a native Maryland plant from a list (or even a native Maryland plant that likes a lot of water). Instead, you have to ask what kind of plants would generally grow in the same sort of area that you're trying to fill. A plant that naturally grows only on the forest floor won't behave like a native plant if you plant it in your sunny front garden, even if it's considered a native to your region.

While finding appropriate plants may seem like a daunting task, there's one easy shortcut that can help you identify the best choices for your garden: go check out a natural area of the same kind and find out what grows there. Rather than combing through book after book or scrolling endlessly on the internet, get outdoors. You may have spaces very close by, whether they're parks or just someone's land, that resemble your own. (If the natural area is on private property, make sure you ask permission—most landowners won't mind if you look around, as long as you ask nicely first.)

When you visit, take a camera and photograph the plants. If you don't know what kind of plants you're seeing, that's fine; you can identify them later when you get home. There are many online tools—even apps!—to help you classify and identify plants. One word of caution: do not attempt to take native plants from their habitats to grow at home or show to an expert, even if the plants look plentiful to you. Many wild plants will not survive transplanting, and removing them may do irreversible damage to the ecological system there. Instead, get a good photo.

Once you've found some possibilities you like in a place that seems similar to your own, you can research them to find out whether they're truly native to the area, how well they grow for home gardeners, and how you can obtain plants locally. Some species you may have to grow yourself from seeds, while others may be for sale in nurseries or from catalogs.

When you finally choose your plants, you can plan your garden and get started! You can also seek more detailed guidance. Organizations such as the University of Maryland Extension and the Maryland Native Plant Society hold workshops and classes where you can learn more and meet other gardeners; many organizations also have contact information to allow you to ask an expert. The more you learn about native plants, the more fascinating they become. You may even find yourself developing enough expertise that you can help advise other gardeners who are just starting to explore native plants.

41. What is an ecoregion?
 - A. A local government.
 - B. A designated area with specific land and climate characteristics.
 - C. The same thing as a county.
 - D. A protected wildlife preserve.

42. A Level IV ecoregion is...
 - A. The most specific area designation.
 - B. The least specific area designation.
 - C. Not found in Maryland.
 - D. Used only for zoning purposes.

43. What is brackish water?
 - A. Water without salt (fresh water).
 - B. Water that contains some salt (seawater and fresh water, mixed).
 - C. Seawater.
 - D. Polluted water.

44. How does a native plant fit in with the local wildlife?
 - A. It provides food for the organisms that have evolved to eat it.
 - B. The local insects pollinate it.
 - C. It creates habitat for animals who have developed to live in it.
 - D. All of the above.

45. What is a native plant?
 - A. A plant that naturally occurs in a place where you plan to plant it.
 - B. A non-invasive plant.
 - C. A plant that originated in your state.
 - D. All of the above.

46. Why would you visit a natural area similar to your planting area?

- A. To observe the plants and other wildlife there.
 - B. To take flowers or leaves of plants home with you to identify.
 - C. To take cuttings or seeds or to dig up plants to transplant to your home.
 - D. Both A and C.
47. What is a microclimate?
- A. A cooler area than the rest of the state.
 - B. A place where only a few plants can grow.
 - C. A collection of plants that can only grow in a few places.
 - D. A set of growing conditions that are slightly different from the conditions nearby.
48. How can you obtain native plants for your garden?
- A. Grow them from seeds.
 - B. Buy them from a nursery.
 - C. Grow them from cuttings you harvest at a national park.
 - D. Either A or B.
49. How do native plants conserve resources?
- A. They grow anywhere, which means that you can save time on planning.
 - B. They require little watering if they're correctly chosen for your landscape.
 - C. They don't require rich soil, since most of them do not flower.
 - D. All of the above.
50. How can you identify a plant?
- A. Ask an expert.
 - B. Look on the internet.
 - C. Use an app.
 - D. Any of the above.

ANSWER KEY

- | | |
|-------|-------|
| 1. A | 43. B |
| 2. C | 44. D |
| 3. D | 45. A |
| 4. C | 46. A |
| 5. B | 47. D |
| 6. B | 48. D |
| 7. A | 49. B |
| 8. C | 50. D |
| 9. D | |
| 10. D | |
| 11. A | |
| 12. A | |
| 13. B | |
| 14. C | |
| 15. A | |
| 16. B | |
| 17. D | |
| 18. B | |
| 19. A | |
| 20. D | |
| 21. D | |
| 22. C | |
| 23. A | |
| 24. B | |
| 25. C | |
| 26. B | |
| 27. C | |
| 28. A | |
| 29. D | |
| 30. B | |
| 31. D | |
| 32. C | |
| 33. B | |
| 34. A | |
| 35. D | |
| 36. E | |
| 37. B | |
| 38. C | |
| 39. C | |
| 40. B | |
| 41. B | |
| 42. A | |