Comprehensive Drill: Module 2

This drill is set at the level of the harder Module 2, and it is built to be harder than most of what you'll meet there. Fourteen function questions and six overall structure questions are mixed the way the test mixes them, including one question about a numbered sentence and one about three underlined portions taken together. Each is modeled on a Hard question from the College Board's Question Bank or a question from the harder Module 2 of an Official Guide test. Expect the wrong answers to be closer than before: in most questions, three of the four choices begin with something true, and the difference lies in the second half, in a claim that goes a step too far, a cause handed to the wrong agent, or a relationship turned around. Every literary excerpt is word for word from the published text; words in square brackets are glosses. Work each one through Map, Name, Match, and when the choices start alike, read them from the back. Give yourself 24 minutes.

Question 1

In 1826 the naturalist John James Audubon reported that vultures find their food by sight alone: in his tests, the birds ignored a rotting carcass he had hidden under brush but tore at a stuffed deerskin left in the open. For more than a century afterward, many ornithologists assumed that birds in general had little sense of smell. Yet in the 1930s, workers at a California oil company noticed turkey vultures gathering above leaks in their gas pipelines, where a foul-smelling chemical added to the gas was escaping. Later field experiments confirmed that turkey vultures can find carcasses hidden beneath a forest canopy, where the birds could not have seen them from the air.

Which choice best describes the function of the underlined portion in the text as a whole?

A) It reports an unplanned observation that, the text indicates, was by itself enough to overturn the assumption described in the previous sentence.

B) It describes what turkey vultures did near pipeline leaks, presenting their behavior as an exception that Audubon's tests had already anticipated.

C) It presents a chance observation that cuts against an assumption described earlier, an observation that later research went on to support.

D) It introduces evidence that turkey vultures rely on smell, which the final sentence then qualifies by limiting it to forests.

Question 2

By the 1890s, electric motors were available to American factories, and in time many factory owners installed them. Yet for roughly three decades, output per worker grew no faster than it had in the age of steam. The full benefits of a new technology, it seems, often arrive only after people rebuild their work around it. Economic historian Paul David found that productivity rose sharply only in the 1920s, when factories abandoned the old layout—in which a single engine turned every machine through a system of overhead shafts and belts—and instead gave each machine its own small motor, freeing owners to arrange the floor around the flow of work.

Which choice best describes the function of the third sentence in the overall structure of the text?

A) It reveals what David expected to find before he examined how productivity changed in electrified factories.

B) It offers a general claim that, the text suggests, holds for every new technology without exception, as the history of factory motors before and after it shows.

C) It states a broad principle about new technologies, and the history of factory electrification on either side of it bears that principle out.

D) It puts forward a general rule about innovation, one that the sentences before it support but that David's findings, described after it, call into question.

Question 3

The following text is from William Congreve's 1695 play *Love for Love*. Valentine, a young gentleman who has spent his fortune, must stay inside his lodgings to avoid the people he owes money to. His servant has just reminded him that Angelica, the woman Valentine loves, cared nothing for him when he was rich, and that his witty friends now look down on him for being poor.

VALENTINE. Well, and now I am poor I have an opportunity to be revenged on them all. I'll pursue Angelica with more love than ever, and appear more notoriously her admirer in this restraint [confinement], than when I openly rivalled the rich fops that made court to her. So shall my poverty be a mortification to her pride, and, perhaps, make her compassionate [pity] the love which has principally reduced me to this lowness of fortune. And for the wits, I'm sure I am in a condition to be even with them.

Which choice best describes the function of the underlined portion in the text as a whole?

A) It flags one result Valentine hopes for as less certain than the results he states with confidence.
B) It suggests that Valentine doubts whether his poverty will wound Angelica's pride as he intends.
C) It shows Valentine admitting that his love for Angelica is what cost him his fortune.
D) It signals Valentine's fear that pursuing Angelica will leave him even poorer than he is now.

Question 4

Before a keyboard instrument can be played, it must be tuned, and for centuries tuners have had to choose between competing systems. In just intonation, the notes are adjusted so that the main chords of one chosen key sound perfectly smooth, free of the faint wavering that slightly mistuned notes produce; chords in more distant keys, however, sound harsh. In equal temperament, now the standard for pianos, every interval except the octave is made slightly impure, so that no chord is perfectly smooth but music can be played equally well in every key.

Which choice best describes the overall structure of the text?

A) It notes a choice that tuners face, describes one option and its drawback, and then presents a second option that removes that drawback without costing any chord its smoothness.
B) It identifies a decision, presents one option with its cost, and then presents another that trades what the first achieves for a different advantage.
C) It describes a flaw in the way pianos are tuned, explains what causes the flaw, and then presents a system that tuners invented to remove it.
D) It sets out a decision tuners must make, explains one approach and its weakness, and then argues that a second approach is superior for every keyboard instrument.

Question 5

A 2021 study led by psychologist Dane McCarrick tested the idea that the presence of a home crowd can sway soccer referees. Taking advantage of the COVID-19 pandemic, when professional matches were played in empty stadiums, the team compared nearly 5,000 matches from fifteen European leagues, some played before the pandemic in front of fans and the rest played without them. Without fans, the home teams' advantage in points nearly halved, and away teams were called for fewer fouls and shown fewer yellow cards relative to home teams, though the researchers found that this shift in referees' calls was much smaller once they accounted for home teams' dominating play less.

Which choice best describes the function of the underlined sentence in the text as a whole?

A) It describes the comparison that allowed the team to conclude that referees' calls, rather than changes in play, accounted for most of the shift in home advantage.

B) It describes the comparison the team used, explaining why matches played before the pandemic were left out of the analysis.

C) It describes the comparison the team used, which the final sentence shows proved that crowds have no effect at all on referees' decisions.

D) It explains how the researchers set up a comparison, between matches with fans and matches without them, capable of testing the idea stated in the first sentence.

Question 6

In 2018, archaeobotanist Amaia Arranz-Otaegui and colleagues reported finding charred crumbs of flatbread in a fireplace at Shubayqa 1, a 14,400-year-old site in northeastern Jordan, some four thousand years before the earliest known farming. Making the bread would have taken great effort: its makers had to gather wild cereals such as einkorn, separate the grain from its husks, and grind it, and they also mixed in flour made from the tubers of a marsh plant called club-rush. The team therefore suggests that a taste for bread, a food so costly to produce from wild plants, may have been one of the things that encouraged people in the region to begin growing cereals.

Which choice best describes the function of the underlined portion in the text as a whole?

A) It lays out the labor behind the bread, giving the reason its makers favored it over other foods made from wild plants.

B) It details how much labor went into making the bread, a burden that the reasoning in the final sentence depends on.

C) It describes how laborious the bread was to make, which the team takes to show that bread was eaten only on rare occasions.

D) It establishes that the bread was costly to produce, which the team takes as proof that a taste for bread was what led people in the region to begin growing cereals.

Question 7

The following text is from E. F. Benson's 1922 novel *Miss Mapp*. Miss Elizabeth Mapp lives in the small English town of Tilling.

Anger and the gravest suspicions about everybody had kept her young and on the boil.

She sat, on this hot July morning, like a large bird of prey at the very convenient window of her garden-room, the ample bow of which formed a strategical point of high value. This garden-room, solid and spacious, was built at right angles to the front of her house, and looked straight down the very interesting street which debouched [opened out] at its lower end into the High Street of Tilling.

Which choice best describes the function of the underlined sentence in the text as a whole?

A) It shows the suspicious nature that the first sentence attributes to Miss Mapp at work on one particular morning, as she keeps watch from her window.

B) It explains how the garden-room is positioned in relation to the front of Miss Mapp's house and to the street below it.

C) It depicts Miss Mapp keeping watch from a well-placed window, a vantage point that the following sentence indicates she had the garden-room built to provide.

D) It portrays Miss Mapp keeping watch at her window, showing that her suspicion of her neighbors has grown stronger than it was in earlier years.

Question 8

A giraffe's neck, which can be nearly two meters long, contains only seven vertebrae, the same number as a mouse's. Developmental biologist Frietson Galis has proposed an explanation: in mammals, the genes that set the number of neck vertebrae also shape other parts of the body early in development, so a change in that number tends to come with serious defects, including childhood cancers. Almost every mammal, from bats to whales, keeps the count at seven. Sloths and manatees are the exceptions, and Galis and her colleagues suggest why: their unusually slow metabolisms and inactive lives may make such defects less costly, loosening the constraint.

Which choice best describes the overall structure of the text?

A) It explains a surprising fact about one animal, cites cases among other animals that contradict it, and then argues that the original explanation must be wrong.

B) It traces an odd feature of one animal to its cause, observes that nearly every related animal shares it, and then claims that the few exceptions are immune to the defects described earlier.

C) It reports a finding about giraffes, describes the genes responsible for that finding, and then explains why giraffes evolved long necks despite those genes.

D) It explains a surprising fact about one animal, notes that the fact holds for nearly all similar animals, and then offers a reason that a few of them differ.

Question 9

Many electric utilities now mail customers "home energy reports" that compare each household's electricity use with that of similar homes nearby, sometimes adding a smiling face for households that use less than their neighbors. Studying about 600,000 households, some of which received such reports, economist Hunt Allcott found that the reports cut electricity use by an average of only about 2 percent. Allcott nevertheless judged the reports a promising policy tool, noting that their effect equaled what a short-run increase of 11 to 20 percent in electricity prices would be expected to achieve.

Which choice best describes the function of the underlined portion in the text as a whole?

A) It supplies a benchmark that Allcott used to show that the reports cut electricity use by the same amount in every household that received them.

B) It supplies a comparison suggesting that utilities should pair the reports with an 11 to 20 percent increase in electricity prices.

C) It identifies an alternative policy that, according to Allcott, would match the reports' effect only in the short run, whereas the reports' effect would persist.

D) It recasts a result that seems minor by setting it beside what a different approach to cutting electricity use would accomplish.

Question 10

The phrase "Silk Road," popularized by the German geographer Ferdinand von Richthofen in 1877, has encouraged popular histories to picture a single great highway along which caravans carried Chinese silk thousands of kilometers to Rome. Historian Valerie Hansen has argued, however, that documents recovered from desert sites along the routes, including contracts, travel passes, and letters, tell a different story: most trade was carried on in small quantities over short distances between neighboring oasis towns, and few of the merchants who used the routes ever traveled their full length.

Which choice best describes the function of the underlined portion in the text as a whole?

A) It sketches the popular image of the Silk Road that Hansen's evidence calls into question, especially regarding how far most goods were carried.

B) It sketches a popular picture of the Silk Road that, according to the text, Hansen rejects entirely, arguing that no goods ever crossed the whole of Asia.

C) It conveys a popular view of the routes that Hansen disputes, both for the distances goods traveled and for which goods were traded most often.

D) It offers an account of the routes that Hansen treats as accurate for luxury goods but not for everyday ones.

Question 11

The following text is from Ulysses S. Grant's 1885 memoir. In 1845, Grant, then a young U.S. Army lieutenant stationed in Texas, watched soldiers hitch newly purchased, untrained mules to army supply wagons for the first time; teams of five were harnessed with "leaders" in front and "wheel" mules nearest the wagon.

All being ready, the hold would be slackened and the team started. The first motion was generally five mules in the air at one time, backs bowed, hind feet extended to the rear. After repeating this movement a few times the leaders would start to run. This would bring the breeching [a strap around the animal's hindquarters] tight against the mules at the wheels, which these last seemed to regard as a most unwarrantable attempt at coercion and would resist by taking a seat, sometimes going so far as to lie down.

Which choice best describes the function of the underlined sentence in the text as a whole?

A) It conveys the soldiers' frustration at being ordered to handle animals that they had never learned to drive.

B) It describes the resistance of one group of mules as if the animals were objecting to unfair treatment.

C) It describes, in human terms, how the lead mules reacted once the team had been started.

D) It describes the wheel mules' response to a tightening of the harness that the soldiers had carried out in order to get the team moving.

Question 12

Field guides, from Roger Tory Peterson's *A Field Guide to the Birds* (1934) to David Allen Sibley's *The Sibley Guide to Birds* (2000), have been built chiefly to help readers put a name to a bird they have seen. Many birders complain, though, that a guide organized mainly around pictures can leave its users stranded in the woods, where birds are far more often heard than seen: a reader who knows only a species' markings may never identify the warbler singing somewhere high in the leaves. A few guides answer this complaint by treating each species' songs and calls as carefully as its plumage.

Which choice best describes the overall structure of the text?

A) It identifies the chief purpose of a kind of book, weighs the two examples it names against each other, and then declares the newer one better suited to birders who mostly hear birds.

B) It identifies the chief purpose of a kind of book, gives two examples of it, and then, after relaying a common objection to such books, turns to guides that drop that purpose altogether in order to meet it.

C) It identifies the chief purpose of a kind of book, gives two examples of it, and then, after relaying a common objection to such books, turns to guides that address it.

D) It explains how birding grew more popular after 1934, credits field guides for that growth, and then recommends a new design for future guides.

Question 13

Many of the world's largest earthquakes begin beneath the ocean floor, where faults are best studied with instruments placed close by. Yet most seismometers sit on land, since models built for the seafloor are costly to make, hard to put in place, and difficult to service once they are there. In a 2019 study, Nathaniel Lindsey and colleagues instead sent laser pulses through a 20-kilometer stretch of an existing undersea fiber-optic cable off the California coast and measured how passing seismic waves stretched the glass, turning the cable into thousands of closely spaced sensors.

Which choice best describes the function of the underlined portion in the text as a whole?

A) It explains why seismometers seldom sit where the first sentence says they would be most useful, setting up the approach described next.

B) It recounts the problems that Lindsey and colleagues ran into while installing seismometers on the seafloor.

C) It explains why seismometers on land cannot detect earthquakes that begin beneath the ocean floor.

D) It explains why seafloor seismometers are rare, a shortage that the next sentence says Lindsey and colleagues overcame by placing thousands of small seismometers along an undersea cable.

Question 14

The following text is from C. N. and A. M. Williamson's 1902 novel *The Lightning Conductor*. In a letter to her father, Molly Randolph, a young American touring France with her aunt in a motorcar, describes leaving a hotel. Rattray is the car's chauffeur, and the car is started by turning a crank called the starting-handle.

Rattray bustled about with an oil-can in his hand, then loaded up our luggage, and all was ready. With more dignity than confidence I mounted to the high seat beside Aunt Mary. This time, with one turn of the handle, the motor started, so contrary is this strange beast, the automobile. One day you toil at the starting-handle half an hour, the next the thing comes to life with a touch, and nobody can explain why. Bowing to madame and the hotel people, we sailed gracefully out of the hotel yard, Rattray too-tooing a fanfaronade [showy flourish] on the horn. It was a splendid start!

Taken together, the underlined portions most clearly serve which function in the text as a whole?

A) To suggest that the car started at once this time because Rattray had oiled it before the travelers set out

B) To show that the travelers' grand manner masks their certainty that the motorcar will fail them

C) To convey the air of ceremony, and even of show, with which the travelers make their departure from the hotel

D) To emphasize Rattray's wish to impress the hotel guests with his skill at the wheel

Question 15

Why humans, alone among living primates, have a chin remains an open question. To test one long-standing idea—that the chin evolved to brace the lower jaw against the stresses of chewing—anthropologist Nathan Holton and colleagues tracked how the jaws of a group of people changed shape from early childhood into adulthood, years during which the forces of chewing increase greatly. If the chin were such a brace, its growth should have left the jaw better able to resist those forces. As the chin grew more prominent, the team found, the jaw grew no better at resisting them.

Which choice best describes the overall structure of the text?

A) It introduces a long-standing puzzle, explains how one team's study settled it, and then describes how other researchers confirmed the result.

B) It notes an unsettled question, explains how researchers tested one possible answer to it, and then reports a result that they take to favor a competing answer.

C) It identifies a puzzle, summarizes a study of one proposed solution, and then reports that the jaw grew less able to resist chewing forces as the chin became more prominent.

D) It points to a question that remains open, describes how one team checked a proposed answer, and then reports a finding that fails to support that answer.

Question 16

Over the past few decades, many companies have removed office walls and cubicles, expecting open floor plans to spark conversation among employees. When Ethan Bernstein and Stephen Turban used wearable sensors to track workers at two companies before and after such a move, however, they found that face-to-face interaction fell by roughly 70 percent while email and messaging increased, apparently because people surrounded by colleagues seek privacy by withdrawing. The lesson for managers is clearest where collaboration is the main reason for tearing down walls: in such offices, an open layout may undercut the very purpose it was chosen to serve.

Which choice best describes the function of the underlined sentence in the text as a whole?

A) It draws a practical lesson from the study, warning that open layouts tend to reduce employees' productivity.

B) It applies the study's result to a practical decision, noting which firms have the most reason to heed it because of what they hope an open layout will do.

C) It turns the study's result into advice for managers, aiming its warning at offices built for collaboration and implying that in other offices walls can come down with no loss of face-to-face interaction.

D) It suggests that firms most concerned with protecting workers' privacy should hold on to their walls and cubicles.

Question 17

The following text is from Ouida's 1872 story "A Dog of Flanders." Nello, a poor boy who lives with his grandfather and his dog, Patrasche, has long been the playmate of little Alois, the daughter of a prosperous miller. The miller, who disapproves of Nello, has just ordered his wife to keep the two children apart.

The poor mother was terrified, and promised humbly to do his will. Not that she could bring herself altogether to separate the child from her favorite playmate, nor did the miller even desire that extreme of cruelty to a young lad who was guilty of nothing except poverty. But there were many ways in which little Alois was kept away from her chosen companion; and Nello, being a boy proud and quiet and sensitive, was quickly wounded, and ceased to turn his own steps and those of Patrasche, as he had been used to do with every moment of leisure, to the old red mill upon the slope.

Which choice best describes the function of the underlined portion in the text as a whole?

A) It identifies qualities in Nello that explain why the miller's wife could not bring herself to separate the two children altogether.

B) It identifies traits that made Nello quick to feel hurt, suggesting that he withdrew from the mill before anything had been done to keep Alois from him.

C) It identifies traits that account for how readily Nello was hurt and stopped visiting the mill once Alois was kept from him.

D) It names qualities that explain why Nello stayed away from the mill, as the miller had directly ordered him to do.

Question 18

In 1998, physicist John Anderson and colleagues reported that NASA's Pioneer 10 and Pioneer 11 spacecraft, coasting out of the solar system, were slowing down very slightly more than the Sun's gravity could explain. Because this "Pioneer anomaly" was tiny but stubborn, some physicists wondered whether it revealed a flaw in the accepted theory of gravity. Slava Turyshev and colleagues instead recovered decades of the probes' engineering records and built a detailed model of how heat from each spacecraft's power sources and instruments radiated into space; the model showed that heat escaping more in one direction than in others could account for all of the extra slowing. If so, the anomaly calls for no new physics at all.

Which choice best describes the overall structure of the text?

A) It describes a small puzzle in spacecraft data, explains how a team found an ordinary cause that could account for it, and then says what that would mean for a bolder idea.

B) It reports an unexpected measurement, explains how physicists used it to revise the theory of gravity, and then describes why that revision was later abandoned.

C) It reports a slight but persistent anomaly, shows how researchers linked it to an everyday source, and then argues that the original measurements should be thrown out as mistaken.

D) It presents a slight anomaly in spacecraft measurements, shows how researchers explained part of it with ordinary physics, and then says that a bolder idea is still needed for the rest.

Question 19

Because the surviving records of medieval European book production name mostly monks, historians had long assumed that the artists who painted the period's most lavish illuminated manuscripts were men. In 2019, Anita Radini, Christina Warinner, and colleagues examined the hardened dental plaque of a woman who was buried at a small religious community in Dalheim, Germany, sometime between about 1000 and 1160 CE. Trapped in the plaque were particles of lapis lazuli, a blue stone that, ground into the pigment ultramarine, was as costly as gold and reserved for the finest books; she most likely swallowed them while repeatedly shaping the tip of her brush with her lips.

Which choice best describes the function of the underlined sentence in the text as a whole?

A) It presents an assumption that the plaque analysis challenges, explaining that historians based it on the high cost of the materials used in lavish manuscripts.

B) It gives the grounds on which historians long based an assumption, setting up the discovery that, the text suggests, undercuts it.

C) It gives the reasoning behind an assumption that, according to the text, the plaque analysis shows to hold for most but not all of the period's manuscript artists.

D) It introduces a debate among historians that, according to the text, the woman's burial site has now settled.

Question 20

In July 1518, a woman in Strasbourg began dancing in the street and, by some accounts, could not stop; within weeks, dozens of others had joined her, some dancing until they collapsed. Poisoning by ergot, a fungus that grows on rye, cannot explain the outbreak: ergot restricts blood flow to the limbs and causes convulsions, which would have made days of coordinated dancing nearly impossible. Nor were the dancers members of a cult performing a ritual, since witnesses describe them as pleading for help. Historian John Waller instead argues that the dancing was a mass psychogenic illness, set off by the extreme stress of famine and disease and shaped by a local belief that an angry saint could curse people with compulsive dancing.

Which choice best describes the overall structure of the text?

A) It recounts a strange episode, questions how many people really took part, and then argues that the outbreak was smaller than early accounts claimed.

B) It narrates an odd outbreak and gives reasons to reject two proposed causes before turning to a historian who traces the dancing to a belief that the townspeople took up to cope with famine.

C) After describing a strange outbreak and dismissing two explanations, it closes with a historian's account, which it faults for leaving the dancers' pleas for help unexplained.

D) It recounts a strange episode, explains why two suggested causes cannot be right, and then sets out the account a historian favors instead.