

Official SAT Practice

Lesson Plans

for Teachers by Teachers

LESSON 6

Writing and Language— Organization

Subscore: Expression of Ideas

Focus: Revising a text for organization

Objectives:

Students will

- understand the role that organization plays in improving the structure of a passage to enhance logic and cohesion.
- identify effective introductions and conclusions.

Before the Lesson:

- Preview and print (if necessary) the student materials.

Introductory Activity | 30 minutes

1. Ask students to think about essays that they have written for school. What purpose do introductions and conclusions have? What makes them effective or ineffective?
2. Ask for volunteers to read aloud the introduction and conclusion paragraphs of a text that they may have read portions of in a previous activity: "Dong Kingman: Painter of Cities." Discuss the following:
 - a. What is effective about the introduction? What does the writer include to give the reader context about the topic? What could be changed to improve the introduction? Why?
 - b. What is effective/ineffective about the conclusion? Is the ending satisfying to the reader? Why or why not?
 - c. What is the best possible answer to Question 22 about the new addition to the conclusion? Be sure that students focus on which sentence best captures the writer's intent: Kingman's enduring legacy. Why do each of the other responses not quite do that?

Rationale for Question #22:

Explanation: Choice B is the best answer because it concludes the passage with a sentence that emphasizes the enduring legacy of Kingman's work by indicating that museums continue to make Kingman's iconic paintings accessible to the public.

Choice A is not the best answer because it concludes the passage with a sentence that acknowledges that the works of other painters are more famous than Kingman's (which downplays, rather than emphasizes, the enduring legacy of Kingman's work) and offers only a general assertion that Kingman's work is "well regarded by many people."

Choice C is not the best answer because instead of referring to the enduring legacy of Kingman's work, it concludes the passage with a sentence that recalls a detail the passage provides about Kingman's early life.

Choice D is not the best answer because it concludes the passage with a sentence that is too vague and general to emphasize effectively an enduring legacy of Kingman's work. It is not clear what the idea of refreshing a long-lasting tradition is intended to mean or how (or even whether) this represents an enduring legacy. Moreover, referring to Kingman's work as "but one example" downplays the significance of any potential legacy that might be suggested

3. Next, let students know that the second way in which they will be asked to improve writing passages on the Writing and Language Test is to analyze the use of transitional words and phrases. You will probably want to check for prior understanding of students' knowledge of transitions by asking them to use the following common transitions in sentences: *for example*; *therefore*; *however*; *in contrast*; *despite*; *thus*; and *yet*. Then, ask students how transitions assist the reader in understanding a text? In addition to transitional words like these, writers also construct their sentences so that they flow into one another naturally without big jumps in logic, so explain to students that two of the main goals of good paragraph writing are:
 - a. Cohesion, in which a paragraph is unified around a single main idea; and
 - b. Logical progression of ideas that a reader can follow.

4. Ask a volunteer to read aloud the portions of the text about transportation planners. Afterward, ask students to identify the transitions that were used and to discuss their effectiveness or ineffectiveness. Then, ask them to try to answer Questions 4 and 7, both of which ask about transitional words and phrases. Be sure that you spend some time discussing why the best answers are the ones described below, paying close attention to the ways that the best responses help to create cohesion and clarity between ideas. With these rationales in mind, ask students to rewrite a portion of a sentence in the excerpt that uses an effective transitional word or phrase.

Rationale for #4:

Choice A is the best answer because it effectively signals the shift in the paragraph to the example of the work a transportation planner might perform if he or she were employed in a rural area and asked to consider the effects of building a new factory “on the outskirts of a small town.”

Rationale for #7:

Explanation: Choice B is the best answer because the transitional phrase “For instance” logically indicates that what follows provides an example related to the previous sentence. “Representatives from the local public health department” is an example of the kinds of people with whom transportation planners work.

Choice A is not the best answer because the transitional word “Next” indicates sequence, which is not logical given that what follows provides an example related to the previous sentence.

Choice C is not the best answer because the transitional word “Furthermore” indicates addition, which is not logical given that what follows provides an example related to the previous sentence.

Choice D is not the best answer because the transitional word “Similarly” indicates comparison or likeness, which is not logical given that what follows provides an example related to the previous sentence.

5. Remind students that in their individual practice, they will be focusing on how writers use organization elements—introductions, conclusions, and transitions—to present coherent and cohesive paragraphs.

Group/Pair Discussion/Activity (None for this lesson)

Individual Application | 15 minutes

1. Working with the text about vanishing bees that they may have read earlier, ask students to read the passages and consider how effectively the writer introduces the topic and concludes the piece. Also, ask students to add at least one transitional word or phrase to the second paragraph of the passage that might make it more cohesive or to identify effective ones that are already included. Then, direct students to answer Questions 17 and 22, and ask them to be prepared to explain why they chose the answers they did.

Rationale for #17:

Choice A is the best answer. It adequately introduces the paragraph's main topic in a grammatically complete and standard manner. In addition, its use of the passive voice ("Studies have offered") establishes a pattern that the next sentence maintains ("One reason that is often cited"). Choices B and C are incorrect because each is redundant. In B, there is no need to refer to bees vanishing and "this trend" in the same sentence. In C, there is no need to specify that "reasons . . . may explain." Choice D is incorrect because if the paragraph were to begin with the sentence "One reason that is often cited . . .," the writer's discussion of studies of CCD would not be introduced smoothly and effectively.

Rationale for #22:

Choice A is the best answer because the passage already has an appropriate concluding sentence that addresses "the future of efforts to combat CCD." This sentence supports the last paragraph's focus on "commonsense measures" by outlining potential CCD-prevention efforts such as "[a] decrease in the use of certain pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides" and stating that these efforts "could begin a shift in a favorable direction." Choices B, C, and D are incorrect because they don't address "the future of efforts to combat CCD" that the question demands. Choice B describes the current impact of diminishing bee populations instead of discussing the future. Choice C introduces a new topic that departs from the paragraph's main topic. Choice D introduces a related topic that needs further elaboration.

2. Students should reflect on their current abilities to improve a written piece for organization.

Homework | 20 minutes

- Students with limited score information from their College Board accounts should consider taking Diagnostic Quiz 4—Writing.
- As students continue to practice on the Writing portion of Official SAT® Practice on Khan Academy®, they should make note of the questions that ask about introductions, conclusions, and effective transitions. Teachers may want to ask students to take a screenshot of or copy these questions for discussion the next day.
- Now is a good time to direct students to the SAT Writing and Language Test Strategies portion of the Tips and Strategies tab on Official SAT Practice.

Student Materials—Lesson 6

Introductory Activity

Introduction paragraph:

A 1954 documentary about renowned watercolor painter Dong Kingman shows the artist sitting on a stool on Mott Street in New York City’s Chinatown. A crowd of admiring spectators **12** watched as Kingman squeezes dollops of paint from several tubes into a tin watercolor **13** box, from just a few primary colors. Kingman creates dozens of beautiful hues as he layers the translucent paint onto the paper on his easel. Each stroke of the brush and dab of the sponge transforms thinly sketched outlines into buildings, shop signs, and streetlamps. The street scene Kingman begins composing in this short film is very much in keeping with the urban landscapes for which he is best known.

Conclusion paragraph:

During his career, Kingman exhibited his work **21** internationally. He garnered much acclaim. In 1936, a critic described one of Kingman’s solo exhibits as “twenty of the freshest, most satisfying watercolors that have been seen hereabouts in many a day.” **22**

22

The writer wants to conclude the passage with a sentence that emphasizes an enduring legacy of Kingman’s work. Which choice would best accomplish this goal?

- A) Although Kingman’s work might not be as famous as that of some other watercolor painters, such as Georgia O’Keeffe and Edward Hopper, it is well regarded by many people.
- B) Since Kingman’s death in 2000, museums across the United States and in China have continued to ensure that his now-iconic landscapes remain available for the public to enjoy.
- C) The urban landscapes depicted in Kingman’s body of work are a testament to aptness of the name chosen for Kingman when he was just a boy.
- D) Kingman’s work was but one example of a long-lasting tradition refreshed by an innovative artist with a new perspective.

Transitions:

The work of transportation planners generally includes evaluating current transportation needs, assessing the effectiveness of existing facilities, and improving those facilities or **3** they design new ones. Most transportation planners work in or near cities, **4** but some are employed in rural areas. Say, for example, a large factory is built on the outskirts of a small town. Traffic to and from that location would increase at the beginning and end of work shifts. The transportation **5** planner's job, might involve conducting a traffic count to determine the daily number of vehicles traveling on the road to the new factory. If analysis of the traffic count indicates that there is more traffic than the **6** current road as it is designed at this time can efficiently accommodate, the transportation planner might recommend widening the road to add another lane.

Transportation planners work closely with a number of community stakeholders, such as government officials and other interested organizations and individuals. **7** Next, representatives from the local public health department might provide input in designing a network of trails and sidewalks to encourage people to walk more. **8** According to the American Heart Association, walking provides numerous benefits related to health and well-being. Members of the Chamber of Commerce might share suggestions about designing transportation and parking facilities to support local businesses.

4

Which choice results in the most effective transition to the information that follows in the paragraph?

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) where job opportunities are more plentiful.
- C) and the majority are employed by government agencies.
- D) DELETE the underlined portion and end the sentence with a period.

7

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) For instance,
- C) Furthermore,
- D) Similarly,

Independent Activity

17 studies have offered several possible reason that bees are vanishing. One reason that is often cited is the use of pesticides called neonicotinoids, which are absorbed by plants and linger much longer than do topical pesticides. **18** Chemicals such as herbicides and fungicides may also play a role, contaminating the pollen that bees typically feed on and inhibiting healthy insect maturation.

Given the role that honeybees play in agriculture, the impact of this loss of hives on fruit, vegetable, seed, and nut crops **19** is not be scoffed at. A reduction in bee numbers leads to less pollination, which in turn leads to smaller harvests and higher food prices. Some farmers have resorted to renting hives from beekeepers to pollinate their **20** crops; when there is a shortage of bees this being an expensive proposition. Other farmers have increased **21** they're dependence on costly hand-pollination by human worker. Furthermore, there may be sociological repercussions. Agroecologist Alexandra-Maria Klein has suggested that rising produce prices could lead to an increase in obesity as people turn to cheaper, less wholesome fare.

Though the precise causes of CCD are yet unclear, some commonsense measures may be taken. A decrease in the use of certain pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides, as well as greater attention to the nutrition, habitat, and genetic diversity of managed hives, could begin a shift in a favorable direction. **22**

17

Which choice most smoothly and effectively introduces the writer's discussion of studies of CCD in this paragraph?

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) Bees are vanishing, and according to studies there are several possible reasons for this trend.
- C) Several possible reasons, offered by studies, may explain why bees are vanishing.
- D) DELETE the underlined sentence.

22

The writer wants a conclusion that addresses the future of efforts to combat CCD. Which choice results in the passage having the most appropriate concluding sentence?

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) Still, bee colonies have experienced such devastating losses that the consequences of the issue have been felt worldwide.
- C) Although CCD is a relatively new phenomenon, scientists have been studying other aspects of honeybees for over a century.
- D) Genetic variation in bee colonies generally improves bees' productivity, disease resistance, and ability to regulate body temperature.