SAT Grammar and Punctuation Foundation Guide

Simple sentence

A **simple sentence** follows the SVO (Subject-Verb-Object) pattern.

Examples:

- The dog chased the ball.
- Some boys are playing baseball.
- The high school girls designed bracelets.

1. SAT Sentence Patterns

These sentence patterns often begin with modifying phrases that precede the main subject and verb:

Skeleton 1.1

(Preposition) **Verb-ing** (present participle) + object**, subject + main verb** + object

Examples:

a) Running through the park, Alice felt completely free.

b) Upon seeing the results, the researchers reconsidered their initial assumptions.

c) Analyzing data collected from the deep-sea hydrothermal vents, oceanographers discovered a new species of bacteria that thrives in highly toxic, superheated waters.

Common Mistake: Dangling Modifiers

A *dangling modifier* is a phrase not clearly or logically related to the word it modifies. A dangling sentence violates the sentence structures discussed above.

- Incorrect: **Walking** down the street, the **oak tree** caught his eye.
- Correct: **Walking** down the street, **he** noticed the oak tree.

- Incorrect: **Standing** here in front of the graduates, **it** is a great honor for me to deliver this important speech.
- Correct: **Standing** here in front of the graduates, **I** am greatly honored to deliver this important speech.

SAT Question 1

Expecting a dramatic opening scene, _____

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

A. the lights dimmed just as the movie began as the audience noticed.

B. the audience noticed that the lights dimmed just as the movie began.

C. the movie began when the audience noticed that lights dimmed.

D. there were dimmed lights when the audience noticed the movie began.

SAT Question 2

Being the only student who had completed the advanced robotics course, _____ the new machine to the visiting engineers.

A) an invitation was given to Sarah to demonstrate

B) Sarah was invited to demonstrate

C) the visiting engineers invited Sarah to demonstrate

D) the demonstration of the machine was given by Sarah to

SAT Question 3

Reviewing the security footage from the night of the incident, _____

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

A) the detective’s main suspect was finally spotted near the back exit.

B) the stolen artwork was finally spotted by one of the detectives.

C) one of the detectives finally spotted the main suspect near the back exit.

D) it took the detective several hours to spot the main suspect.

Skeleton 1.2

Verb-ed (past participle)..., **subject + main verb** + object

Examples:

a) Inspired by the speech, the students took action.

b) Invited to the party, Sarah brought a tub of homemade strawberry ice cream to share with everyone.

c) Made with rich cream and vanilla beans, this ice cream melts perfectly on the tongue.

Dangling sentences:

- Incorrect: Made with fresh organic milk, the children loved the homemade ice cream.
- Correct: Made with fresh organic milk, the homemade ice cream was loved by the children.

- Incorrect: Cooked slowly for six hours, the family dog wouldn't stop sniffing the delicious beef stew.
- Correct: Cooked slowly for six hours, the delicious beef stew kept the family dog sniffing the air.

SAT Question 4

Surprised by the sudden pop quiz, _____

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

A) the classroom immediately fell into a nervous silence.

B) the students' groans could be heard all the way down the hallway.

C) it took the entire class several minutes to settle down.

D) the students quickly opened their textbooks to review the material.

SAT Question 5

Named the best achievement in modern civic engineering by the city council, _____

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

A) the architect received widespread praise for the new suspension bridge.

B) the new suspension bridge spans the river with an innovative steel design.

C) a prestigious award was given to the team behind the new suspension bridge.

D) it was the new suspension bridge that earned the architect widespread praise.