

IDIOMS, WORD PAIRS, CONJUNCTIONS, SEMI-COLONS and COLONS

IDIOMS: An idiom is a word or group of words that is only correct when used in a particular way---it is just the way you say it! On the SAT, often an idiom is used with an incorrect preposition. Your job will be to correct that preposition.

Some commonly mistaken idioms:

Agree *with* a person
 Agree *to* a proposal
 Agree *on* a plan

Aim *at* a target
 Aim *for* perfection

Part *with* a thing
 Part *from* a person

Wait *for* a person

Differ *with* someone
 Differ *from* something else

Preoccupied *with* a problem
 Arrive *in* a city

Incorrect

being that
 could of, should of, would of
 in back of
 off of, off from
 in contrast to
 concerned in
 preoccupied about
 different than
 kind of

Correct

since
 could have, should have, would have
 behind
 off (omit of and from)
 in contrast with
 concerned with
 preoccupied with
 different from
 rather

WORD PAIRS: The following pairs of words always go together. If you see one of the words in a sentence, the other word must also be there.

Either . . . or
 Neither . . . nor
 Both . . . and
 Not only . . . but also

As . . . as
 Between . . . and
 So/such . . . that
 More/less . . . than

Just as . . . so
 From . . . to
 At once . . . and
 No sooner . . . than

Exercises: Correct the incorrect idiom.

1. After the movie, she was kind of sad. _____
2. You could of listened more carefully to the tour guide. _____
3. The teacher asked the students to choose between green or red. _____
4. Being that you didn't study, you didn't do well on the test. _____
5. Nick did not agree with the proposal that had been submitted. _____
6. It is almost as difficult to find fresh fruit than it is to find fresh meat. _____
7. Hannah differed from Ali on many issues. _____
8. He arrived to New York on the early train. _____
9. Both the teachers but also the students enjoyed listening to the chorus. _____
10. The boys were preoccupied on the big game. _____
11. Not only was the sun shining, but the sky was blue too. _____
12. We had to wait on Katarina to arrive. _____
13. The gymnast aimed at perfection on her routine. _____
14. Mario's size differed substantially than the other seniors. _____

CONJUNCTIONS are “joining words”, they join two parts of a sentence. The SAT sometimes uses an incorrect conjunction to trick you. To determine what conjunction is needed, you must define the relationship between the two parts of the sentence.

Conjunctions can fit into three categories:

Continuers	Contradictors	Cause and Effect
and in addition furthermore moreover	but yet however	so therefore because since

Examples: The sun was shining, the sky was blue, *therefore* we went to the beach. (correct-cause and effect)
 Manny’s stellar performance on the exam was expected *furthermore*, his performance on the soccer field was impressive. (correct-continuer)
 I saved \$50 in order to purchase a gift for my mother; *however*, the gift was still too expensive for me to buy it. (correct-contradictor)

Exercises: Circle the conjunction in each sentence and correct it, if it needs correcting.

1. There is plenty of water now, and during the dry months we may run out. _____
2. John studied for the exam, so he failed. _____
3. The farm grows the best fruit therefore it is losing money. _____
4. The teacher yelled often and the students were scared of him. _____
5. He worked hard in the summer furthermore he was lazy during the school year. _____

SEMI-COLONS: When you see a run-on sentence on the exam, (two separate sentences that are not separated by the correct punctuation), you must correct the sentence by either using a period or using a semi-colon or change the wording so there are not two independent clauses.

Examples: I saw the woman drive her car she drove very fast. (incorrect)
 I saw the woman drive her car. She drove very fast. (correct-added a period)
 I saw the woman drive her car; she drove very fast. (correct-added a semi-colon)
 I saw the woman drive her car very fast. (correct-changed wording)

Another trick the SAT does is to use a conjunctive adverb and a comma to join the two sentences. If a comma precedes the conjunctive adverb, then it is a run on sentence. All the following conjunctive adverbs are usually preceded with a semi-colon: *however, consequently, moreover, therefore, nevertheless, otherwise, for example, that is, furthermore.*

Examples: Thomas needed new tires for his car; therefore, he went to the store to buy them. (correct)
 Miss Smith was happy with her class; furthermore, she was happy with her whole school. (correct)

COLONS must be used to precede a list and can be used to replace the word BECAUSE.

Examples: I love the colors of the rainbow: red, yellow, blue, green and orange.
 I do not like to visit my grandfather: he makes me do my homework.