

SAT Writing and Language Sample Paper 1

More and more of our lives are mechanized, and at some point, we have to start wondering, what's the limit of that mechanization? Many factory workers in the 19th century thought their jobs ¹ were safe but we know now that they were wrong. Many people ² in today's world believe their jobs are safe, but how safe are those jobs really?

Studies abound that ask whether man or machine is better at particular tasks, and the results are not always so obvious. Sure, a machine is obviously ³ better at say, welding huge pieces of steel together, but what would you say if someone told you people are more likely to open up to a machine than to a psychologist? Or that a machine could write a quicker, more efficient news story than an experienced reporter could?

1.

A. NO CHANGE

B. were safe, but we know

C. were safe; but we know

D. were safe. But we know

2.

A. NO CHANGE

B. in todays world believe their jobs

C. in todays world believe they're jobs

D. in today's world believe their jobs

3.

A. NO CHANGE

B. better at, say welding

C. better at, say, welding

D. better at say welding

These questions may seem overly pessimistic (or overly optimistic depending on ⁴ your point of view); however, some recent studies have been truly remarkable. Take Ellie, a computer program used primarily to diagnose patients with ⁵ depression, PTSD and other mood disorders. Many patients found it easier to talk to "Ellie" than ⁶ to a real person: she didn't react in some of those seemingly judgmental ways that a person would, and her voice ⁷ never broke on top of that she could help psychologists to diagnose mental illnesses better than human observation could. She could detect facial movements or voice tones that a person might have not heard or ignored.

4.

A. NO CHANGE

B. your point of view), however,

- C. you're point of view), however,
 - D. you're point of view); however,
- 5.

- A. NO CHANGE
 - B. depression, PTSD, and other
 - C. depression, PTSD, and, other
 - D. depression, PTSD, and other,
- 6.

- A. NO CHANGE
 - B. to a real person, she
 - C. to a real person; but she
 - D. to a real person she
- 7.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. never broke, on top of that,
- C. never broke. On top of that,
- D. never broke; on top, of that,

Whether Ellie is the way of the future is yet to be determined. We can't know right now, but there is no question that she raises some interesting questions, not only about 8 the work of psychologists', but also about all of what we think are definitively human activities.

On the other side of the discussion, however, there's some evidence that humans may have the upper hand. In some of the more basic 9 tasks those learned before the age of about 10 humans have a huge upper hand. Computers can do the complex thinking, but one thing with which they have a lot of trouble is, paradoxically, simplicity. Sure, a computer 10 can tell your washer's and dryer's what a perfect washing and drying cycle is, but can it fold your laundry? Your GPS can tell you the fastest route to the next state, but can it tell you the prettiest way to go or the best restaurants along the way? Not without humans!

8.

- A. NO CHANGE
 - B. psychologists work
 - C. the work of psychologists
 - D. the work of psychologist's
- 9.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. tasks those learned before the age of about 10, humans

- C. tasks, those learned before the age of about 10 humans
D. tasks, those learned before the age of about 10, humans
10.

A. NO CHANGE

- B. can tell your washer and dryer what
C. can tell you're washers and dryers
D. can tell you're washer and dryer

While the battle of man against machine rages 11 on. The questions will persist. No matter who wins, though, humans will almost assuredly find ways to adapt: that's something we've been doing for thousands of years, which is something that no computer can say.

11.

A. NO CHANGE

- B. on; the
C. on—the
D. on,

War and Peace (1869) is 1 well-known and famous mainly for its length. Not many readers, especially in the modern day, 2 has the time or the patience to work through Leo Tolstoy's 1,400 pages, countless characters, and plot twists. 3 They are missing a major opportunity, not only because the novel is more fun than its page count suggests, but also because it marks the end of a particular moment in history.

1.

A. NO CHANGE

- B. famous and well-known
C. famously well-known
D. well-known

2.

A. NO CHANGE

- B. have
C. are having
D. do have

3.

A. NO CHANGE

- B. Those readers
C. Many of them
D. Some

Czech novelist Milan Kundera cited Tolstoy as the last novelist who could 1 be possessing the sum of his era's human knowledge. This may seem like an odd claim. Some people may be very intelligent, others may be know-it-alls, but is it really possible to know everything? A book like War and Peace makes the case that it is possible to know it all, or at least that it was possible, 5 alongside Tolstoy's other great novels and non-fiction writings. Shakespeare 6 seemed to have an emotional vocabulary that was advanced for his age, but Tolstoy lived in 7 an era of facts and discoveries, and his novels show the fruits of his vast study. It is frankly conceivable that a man with Tolstoy's leisure, intelligence, and curiosity 8 learns about his age's most current findings in literature, politics, religion, and science.

4.

A. NO CHANGE

B. of had

C. possess

D. possessed

5. If the punctuation were adjusted accordingly, the best placement for the underlined portion would be

A. where it is now.

B. at the beginning of the sentence.

C. after the word that.

D. after the word least.

6.

A. NO CHANGE

B. seems having

C. has

D. seemingly has

7.

A. NO CHANGE

B. an era,

C. a historical time period,

D. one,

8.

A. NO CHANGE

B. had been learning

C. could have learned

D. are learning

The very fact that such an achievement is impossible now shows us just how much things have changed since Tolstoy's death in 1910. 9 This was the year, in fact, that

Virginia Woolf cited in her oft-quoted remark, "On or about 1910 human character changed." If we at least entertain the idea that she is correct, we can begin to see why she would be willing to make such a grandiose remark. After 1910, the twentieth century started in earnest. Knowledge became more complex as it became more specialized, and although airplanes seemed to make the world a smaller place, the differences among all the places in that small world truly emerged.

9. The writer is considering deleting the phrase since Tolstoy's death in 1910 and ending the sentence with a period after the word changed. Should the phrase be kept or deleted?

- A. Kept, because it contributes to the essay's biographical sketch of the author of *War and Peace*.
- B. Kept, because it introduces a topic of discussion that is continued throughout the paragraph.
- C. Deleted, because the remainder of the paragraph describes the insignificance of Tolstoy's death.
- D. Deleted, because the paragraph as a whole is focused on the achievements of another author.

War and Peace is the great document of that pre-1910 era, of a moment when the great scientists were also into philosophy and when the great mathematicians were also the great theologians. A great discovery in one field could also be another. Although it was certainly remarkable, it was also possible for a man like Tolstoy to have a fundamental grasp of all that united the many branches of knowledge. Tolstoy's achievement is impossible today, but it is a wonderful reminder of the value of intellectual curiosity and cosmopolitanism. No matter how brilliant and refined we may become, we can always stand to be reminded that there is a world outside of our immediate circle.

10.

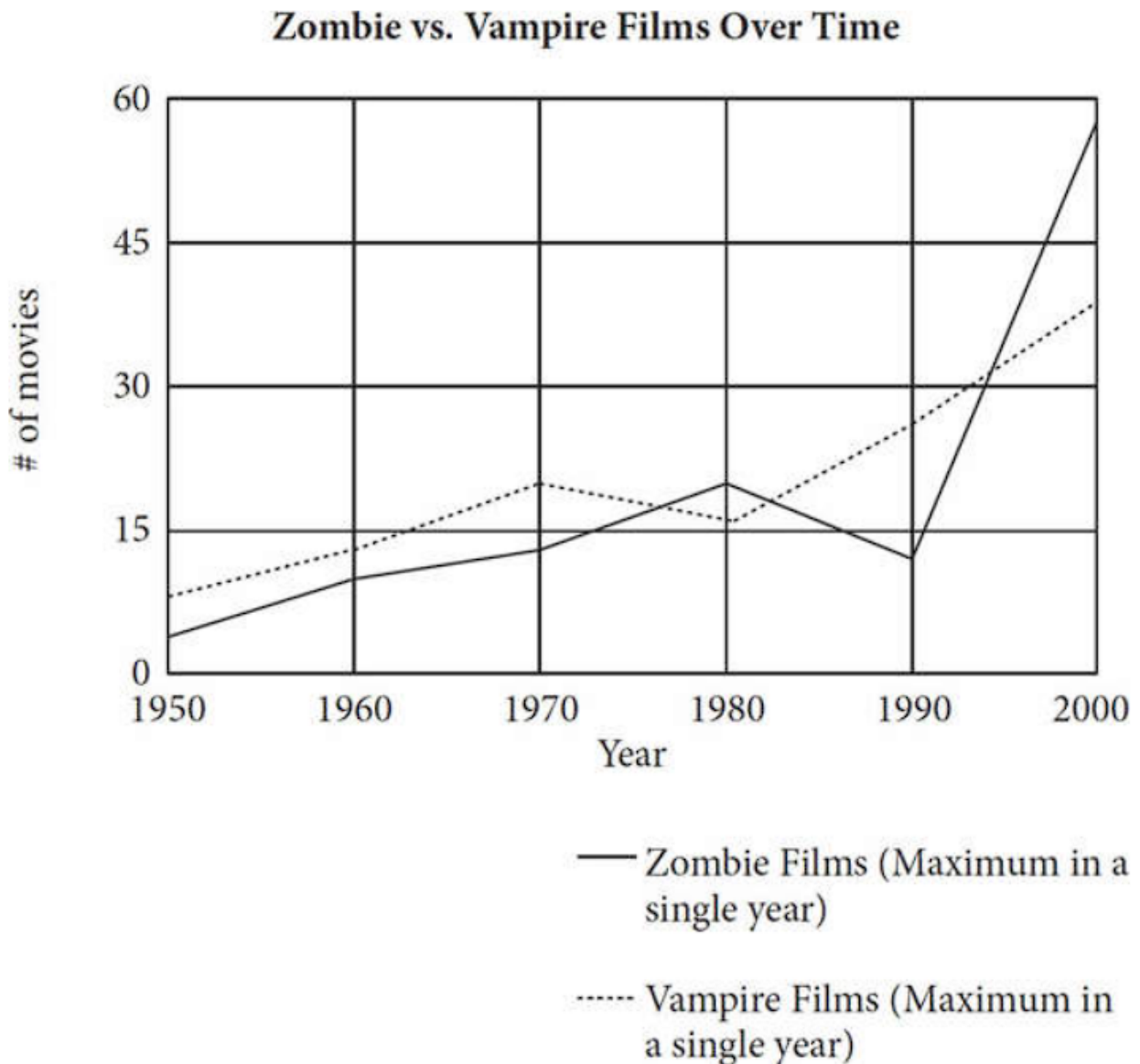
- A. NO CHANGE
- B. fascinated with philosophical inquiry
- C. interested in philosophy
- D. the great philosophers

11.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. another field.
- C. a great discovery for another.
- D. the same thing elsewhere.

1 Genre in Hollywood movies is a constant but inconstant thing. Horror, Western, Sci-Fi: all of these are staples of Hollywood production, but the amount varies widely. For example, as the number of Westerns has stayed at or below about 25 per year since the 1960s, the number of Horror films, especially Zombie and Vampire films, 2 has risen

dramatically between 1960 and 2000, during which time the production of Vampire films has increased nearly six-fold.



1. Which of the following choices would best introduce the essay by pointing to the potential confusion in how to understand the role of genre in Hollywood films?

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. While many movie genres are staples in Hollywood, the popularity of these genres has changed over time.
- C. Everyone knows that the highest form of Hollywood film is the drama.
- D. There's a lot that you may not know about how films are made in Hollywood.

2. Which of the following gives information consistent with the graph?

- A. NO CHANGE

B. has risen dramatically between 1960 and 2000, during which time the production of Zombie films has increased nearly six-fold.

C. has declined sharply between 1960 and 2000, during which time the production of Zombie films has decreased to almost a sixth.

D. has declined sharply between 1960 and 2000, during which time the production of Zombie films has increased nearly four-fold.

[2]

While the saying goes that there's "no accounting for the public's taste," 3 lots of people like lots of different things. Why should the number of Westerns have remained relatively low while the number of Zombie films has skyrocketed? Maybe we should ask the question another way: what do people today get from Zombie films that they don't from Westerns?

3. Which of the following choices would offer the most effective transition between the paragraph and the current one?

A. NO CHANGE

B. these trends nonetheless invite us to try.

C. a lot of people don't even care about Zombie movies.

D. science has not yet shown that zombies exist.

[3]

Westerns dominated the 1920s. Zombie films have dominated the 1990s and 2000s. Beginning with these facts alone, we can start to see why these films might have been popular in different eras. 4The 1920s, for instance, was an American moment of crusade. 5Only a tough sheriff, the kind one might get in an old-west town, could find the perfect balance between justice and 6 brutality. Thus, if the world could not be contained by law and order, at least here was an imaginary space that could be in the West.

4. The writer is considering deleting the phrase in different eras and ending the sentence with a period after the word popular. Should the phrase be kept or deleted?

A. Kept, because the meaning of the sentence changes without the phrase.

B. Kept, because it is interesting to think about history and film together.

C. Deleted, because the essay is more concerned with the genres' popularity across time periods.

D. Deleted, because the essay is already dull and could stand to have some words removed.

5. At this point, the writer wants to insert an idea that will support the idea given in the previous sentence ("The 1920s...crusade"). Which of the following true statements would offer that support?

A. These were crusades altogether distinct from those conducted by the Catholic Church starting in 1095.

B. The U.S. is still interested in crusade today, so it's hard to see why they don't make as many Westerns anymore.

C. Led by Woodrow Wilson's plan for a U.S.-led League of Nations, the world, reeling from World War I, wanted justice among the outlaws.

D. The stock market wouldn't crash for another nine years, at which point people would really freak out.

6. Which of the following alternatives to the underlined portion would NOT be acceptable?

A. brutality, and if

B. brutality: if

C. brutality; thus, if

D. brutality, thus, if

[4]

It may seem that genre conventions never change. Because they never change, it probably seems like a Western today follows the same set of rules as a Western from 100 years ago. 7What the rise in Zombie films shows, however, is that the genres themselves change, and they provide different things to different eras. 8This is not to say that one genre is better than the other—that it's better, for instance, to watch a tough cowboy fight off a gang of cattle rustlers—but it is to say that these genres hold a lot more than their mere entertainment value.

7. Which of the following gives the most effective way to combine the previous two sentences, reproduced below?

It may seem that genre conventions never change. Because they never change, it probably seems like a Western today follows the same set of rules as a Western from 100 years ago.

A. (keep the sentences as they are)

B. It may seem that genre conventions never change; because of it, it could be argued that a Western today follows the same set of rules as a Western from 100 years ago.

C. It may seem that genre conventions never change, that a Western today follows the same set of rules as a Western from 100 years ago.

D. Because Westerns today follow the same set of rules as they did 100 years ago, it seems to most outside observers that genre conventions never change.

8. At this point, the author is considering adding the following true statement:

For what it's worth, my personal favorite is Jacques Tourneur's *I Married a Zombie*, which is based loosely on Jane Eyre.

Should the writer make this addition here?

- A. Yes, because the essay as a whole is filled with these kinds of examples and personal preferences.
- B. Yes, because the author's quirky choice shows that he has an off-beat perspective.
- C. No, because the author's strange choice disqualifies him from discussing popular taste.
- D. No, because the essay as a whole is not primarily focused on the author's personal preferences.

[5]

The 1990s and 2000s, dominated as they are by Zombie films, show that contemporary conflicts are not so far away. Although we now have the world at the click of a button, Zombie films show that we are not all that interested in that world. Instead, we are interested in and suspicious of the people around us. Whether coworkers or fellow students, the people around us, especially when viewed as a mass, can seem almost "dead." And the reasons for this are fairly obvious: our private or online personalities have become so robust that the "real world" outside cannot help but seem dull or claustrophobic by comparison.¹⁰

9. Which of the following alternatives to the underlined portion would be LEAST acceptable?

- A. taken
- B. espied
- C. seen
- D. regarded

10. The writer is considering replacing the word robust in the preceding sentence with the word healthy. Should the writer make the change or keep the sentence as it is?

- A. Make the change, because the word robust is not familiar to many readers.
- B. Make the change, because the word healthy provides a more accurate representation of people's medical conditions.
- C. Keep the sentence as it is, because the word healthy changes the meaning in a way inconsistent with the passage as a whole.
- D. Keep the sentence as it is, because the word robust keeps the level of vocabulary within the passage at an appropriately high level.

11. The best placement for paragraph 5 would be

- A. where it is now.
- B. before paragraph 1.
- C. after paragraph 2.
- D. after paragraph 3.

