

SAT Writing and Language Sample Paper 6

Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?

Although printed cheaply and for quick consumption, 1 today's experience of culture is largely shaped by dime novels. For much of the nineteenth century, Americans consumed fiction, poetry, and non-fiction by way of literary periodicals. Some of our best-known authors from this period, 2 though there were also some notable exceptions, published something close to their complete works between the pages of countless periodicals.

Things started to change around the Civil War. Harriet Beecher Stowe's great 3 novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had been an enormously popular serial novel in the abolitionist periodical *The National Era*. By the time the novel's forty-week run had concluded, however, publishers were clamoring for an actual book. That book went on to become the first American bestseller. 4 And it showed that Americans were willing to pay for books, which had, to that point, been too expensive to print and subsequently to buy. 5

In 1860, Irwin and Erastus Beadle published the first in a long series of what 6 would become known as Beadle's Dime Novels. The first was called *Malaeska, The Indian Wife of the White Hunter*. By the turn of the nineteenth century, dime novels were everywhere.

The 7 affects are difficult to chart, but we can actually see the influence of these dime novels everywhere. Much of the mythology of the Old West, for example, was concretized in these dime novels, and William Bonney and James Butler Hickok became the folk heroes Billy the Kid and Wild Bill Hickok as the dime novels charted their (largely imagined) adventures. 8

The new media of the twentieth-century—film, radio, and comic books—may have replaced the dime novel, but they did so with much they had 9 been taught from the dime novel's popularity. All three media, for instance, borrowed characters that had become popular in dime novels—characters such as Frank Reade and Nick Carter, Master Detective. Then, in comic books and radio, a new generation of superheroes—The Shadow, Superman, and Popeye—was created in the mold of the old swashbuckling romancers of the dime-novel era.

So today, as we enjoy superhero action films or boy-wizard series of novels, we should be aware that there is nothing new under the sun. Indeed, 10 for our hopelessly mass-media universe, this now forgotten form laid the foundation, pushing the same books onto countless readers. Such a feat may be commonplace as films gross many billions of dollars at the box office, but in the nineteenth century, the dime novel brought a new 11 frame of reference and a belief that the small world was getting larger bit by bit.

1.

A. NO CHANGE

B. we experience culture the way we do because of dime novels.

C. dime novels have shaped the way we experience culture today.

D. the shape of dime novels influences of cultural experiences.

2. Which of the following true phrases gives the most specific information in the context?

A. NO CHANGE

B. some of the best-known authors of all time,

C. and some who were not so well-known,

D. especially Edgar Allan Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne,

3.

A. NO CHANGE

B. novel, Uncle Tom's Cabin,

C. novel Uncle Tom's Cabin,

D. novel Uncle Tom's Cabin

4. If the author were to remove the phrase "for an actual book" (ending the sentence at the word clamoring), the sentence would lose

A. specific information that clarifies the subject of the next sentence.

B. a description of the greed of publishers in the nineteenth century.

C. details that show how Stowe's work came to be so popular.

D. nothing, because this information is implied in the word "clamoring."

5. At this point, the writer is considering adding the following true statement:

The average annual income for men in New England from 1820-1850 was a mere \$323.25.

Should the writer make this addition here?

A. Yes, because it makes clear how expensive books must have been in the period.

B. Yes, because it shows that even those in New England could not afford books printed there.

C. No, because it strays from the paragraph's focus on the changes in book publishing.

D. No, because it suggests that people in New England were not wealthy enough to read.

6.

A. NO CHANGE

B. becomes

C. is

D. would have become

7.

A. NO CHANGE

B. effects

C. effect's

D. affect's

8. The author is considering deleting the names "Billy the Kid and Wild Bill Hickok" from the preceding sentence. Should the names be kept or deleted?

- A. Kept, because they are specific names in a sentence that speaks in generalities.
 - B. Kept, because they demonstrate the transformation described in the sentence.
 - C. Deleted, because they are nicknames of people whose true names are already listed in the sentence.
 - D. Deleted, because they encourage the frontier behavior that made the Wild West such a violent place.
- 9.

A. NO CHANGE

B. got

C. learned

D. brought

10. If the punctuation is adjusted accordingly, the best placement for the underlined portion would be

A. where it is now.

B. after the word form.

C. after the word foundation.

D. at the end of the sentence.

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

A. paradigm

B. integration

C. framework

D. context

Question	Correct Answer
1	C
2	D
3	D
4	A
5	C
6	A
7	B
8	B
9	C
10	C
11	B