

FREE PREVIEW



Test Prep

Writing & Language Tips & Strategies



1. Grammar/Punctuation

Semi-Colon (;)

On the SAT, a semi-colon can only be used to separate 2 independent clauses. Remember that an independent clause can be its own sentence.

- John went to the mall; he bought a pair of Jordans.

Colon (:)

For a colon to be correct on the SAT, the 1st part must be an independent clause and the 2nd part must be anything that describes the 1st part.

- John went to the one place where he felt comfortable: the mall.
- Amy handed out three crayons: red, blue, and yellow.

Long Dash (-)

The long dash can be used in one of two ways on the SAT. One long dash is identical to a colon, and two long dashes function the same way as a set of parentheses.

- There was only one thing Scooby could do— run!
- John – who had an extensive collection of classic Air Jordans – went to the mall looking for a new pair.

Run-On Sentence (aka Comma Splice)

A run-on sentence (or comma splice) occurs when 2 independent clauses are separated only by a comma. This is a grammatical error and will always signal a wrong answer choice on the SAT. Make sure you are aware of run-ons on the SAT.



- John went to the mall, he bought Jordans. **RUN-ON/COMMA SPLICE**

Clauses

The SAT will never explicitly ask about clauses, however having knowledge of them is essential if you want to correctly apply the rules listed here.

In basic terms, a clause has a subject and a verb, and an independent clause can be its own sentence.

A dependent clause, on the other hand, cannot stand alone as its own sentence. We can usually identify a dependent clause by the presence of a subordinating or “weak” conjunction (e.g. *after, although, because, since, unless, when, whenever, while, etc.*) at the start of it.

- Independent: John went to the mall.
- Dependent: *Since* John went to the mall.
- Independent: Amy ate some fries.
- Dependent: *Because* Amy ate some fries.
- Independent: Jim bought a car.
- Dependent: *When* Jim bought a car.

Modifiers

A modifier is a clause that is missing the subject, the verb, or both. Here are 4 things you need to know about modifiers that will help you identify them on the SAT:

1. The information contained within a modifier is just extra and optional.
2. If we delete a modifier from a sentence, what we have left is still a complete sentence and makes sense.
3. Modifiers are surrounded by commas.
4. When a modifier is placed at the beginning or end of a sentence, we omit the first or last comma, respectively.



- John, who dates Tina, went to the mall.
- Sad about Tina, John went to the mall.
- John went to the mall, thinking about Tina.

(*modifiers)

Commas

Here are the 6 reasons for comma usage on the SAT:

1. Modifier

- My friend Tina, who is really funny, lives in Minnesota.

2. When a dependent clause is followed by an independent clause

- Once he got a dog, John needed dog food.

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