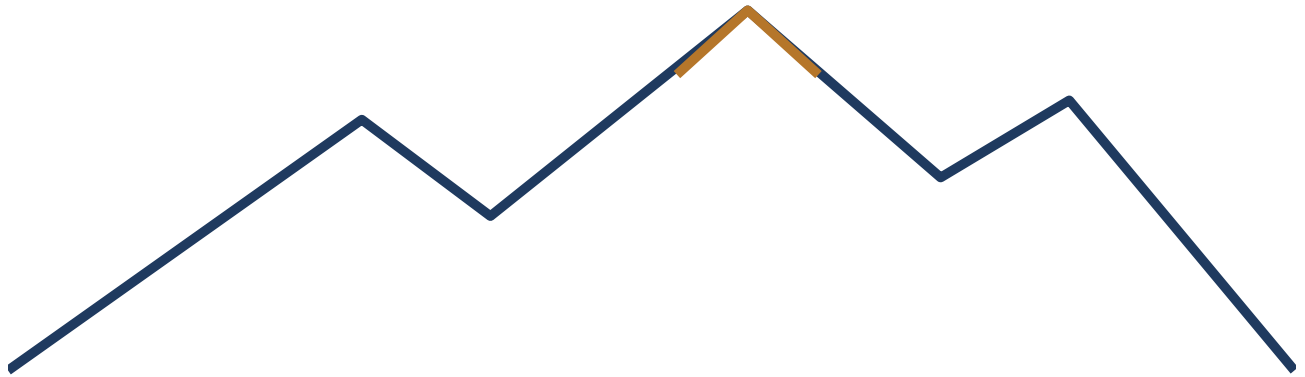




THE HSPT CHALLENGE 100

The 100 toughest trap questions in the HSPT Exam Prep system — and how to beat every one

20

Verbal Skills

20

Quantitative
Skills

20

Reading

20

Mathematics

20

Language

Summit Study Guides

A free bonus for owners of HSPT Exam Prep

How to use this

These 100 questions are built to be hard. Every one hides a trap: a choice designed to catch a smart student who moves a little too fast. Getting some wrong is the point. Each explanation names the trap so you can spot it next time.

- 1 Work one section at a time.** Use a timer and aim for real HSPT pace (times below). Don't look ahead at the answers.
- 2 Circle any question you're unsure of,** even if you pick an answer. A lucky guess is still a weak spot.
- 3 Check the answer page right after the section.** Read the explanation for every miss and every circled question, and learn the trap's name.
- 4 Use your score to decide what's next** with the bands below. Then try the questions you missed again a week later.

SECTION	QUESTIONS	TARGET TIME	BOOK CHAPTER
Verbal Skills	1–20	about 5.5 min	Ch. 5
Quantitative Skills	21–40	about 11.5 min	Ch. 6
Reading	41–60	about 8 min	Ch. 7
Mathematics	61–80	about 14 min	Ch. 8
Language	81–100	about 8.5 min	Ch. 9

17–20

Excellent. You see the traps coming.

13–16

Strong. Review each trap you fell for.

Under 13

Revisit that section's chapter in the book: Verbal Ch. 5, Quantitative Ch. 6, Reading Ch. 7, Mathematics Ch. 8, Language Ch. 9. For vocabulary misses, also see Ch. 4.

A note for parents. These questions are deliberately harder than a typical HSPT item; most strong students will miss several the first time through. The goal is not a perfect score but learning to recognize each trap by name, so that on test day it looks familiar instead of tempting. A missed question here is a skill found before the test, not after.

© 2026 Summit Study Guides. HSPT® is a registered trademark of Scholastic Testing Service, Inc., which is not affiliated with and does not endorse this material.

Trap Index

Every trap in this book, with the questions where it appears. When you miss a question, look up its trap here and try the others that use it.

The add-the-percents trap	72	The missing-corner trap	65
The 'and me' false alarm	84	The near-synonym trap	10
The answer to the wrong question	61, 73	The neutral default	45
The assumed connection	14	The NOT-question flip	55
The averaging-averages trap	71	The other-meaning trap	4, 42, 51
The averaging-the-speeds trap	75	The outside-knowledge trap	19
The backward proportion	80	The overstated inference	43, 47, 54
The capitalized season	85	The overstated tone	56
The comma splice that sounds fine	82	The part-for-whole trap	67
The complement/supplement mix-up	37, 74	The partial-pattern trap	27
The copycat answer	9	Percent of the wrong base	36, 62
The correct-but-odd-sounding trap	87, 89	The π -equals-3 shortcut	31
The dangling modifier	88	The plausible-but-unstated reason	52
The decimal-square slip	22	The plural-sounding subject	83
The decimal-time trap	39	The repeated-step trap	21, 30, 34, 38
The diameter-as-radius trap	70	The same-topic sentence	97
Dividing like multiplying	35	The 'some means not all' trap	17
The equally-likely sums trap	76	The sound-alike	1, 12, 57, 58, 59
The exponent-as-addition trap	68	Stopping one step early	29, 77
The exponent-as-multiplication trap	33	The surface-difference trap	13
The exponent-sign slip	63	The swap-looks-different trap	32
The extreme-word trap	44	The synonym in an antonym question	3, 5
The famous exception	11	The too-narrow answer	41, 48
The forgotten flip	64	The too-narrow topic sentence	99
The generic-moral trap	49	The tricky-but-correct decoy	91, 92, 93, 94, 95
The hidden negative	28	The two-halves trap	78
It's vs. its	86	The 'uncertain' trap	15, 16, 18, 20
The it's-in-the-passage-somewhere trap	46	The unclear pronoun	100
The 'less than' reversal	69	Who/whom	81
The lie/lay switch	90	The with-replacement trap	66
The literal-words trap	50	The word-part fake-out	2, 60
The location-for-material trap	8	Working forward instead of backward	26
The look-alike word	6	The wrong-connector combination	98
The mean-median mix-up	79	The wrong-degree trap	7
The median-for-mean swap	40	The wrong-direction transition	96
The missed 'not'	53	The wrong-order trap	23
The missing $\frac{1}{2}$	25	The wrong-strand trap	24

SECTION 1

Verbal Skills

Questions 1–20 Target time: about 5.5 minutes Book: Chapter 5

Choose the best answer for each question. For logic questions, decide whether the third statement is true, false, or uncertain if the first two statements are true.

1. Laudable most nearly means
(a) loud (b) praiseworthy
(c) laughable (d) noticeable
2. Equivocal most nearly means
(a) ambiguous (b) equal
(c) balanced (d) outspoken
3. Intransigent is the opposite of
(a) stubborn (b) intrusive
(c) temporary (d) flexible
4. Novel most nearly means
(a) fictional (b) lengthy
(c) original (d) printed
5. Ebullient is the opposite of
(a) enthusiastic (b) glum
(c) boiling (d) ebbing
6. Lexicographer is to dictionaries as choreographer is to
(a) dances (b) choirs
(c) maps (d) songs
7. Pleased is to ecstatic as tired is to
(a) sleepy (b) rested
(c) yawning (d) exhausted
8. Glacier is to ice as dune is to
(a) desert (b) wind
(c) sand (d) beach
9. Island is to water as oasis is to
(a) desert (b) water
(c) palm tree (d) camel
10. Thirst is to drink as fatigue is to
(a) exhaustion (b) yawn
(c) work (d) rest
11. Which word does not belong with the others?
(a) tomato (b) cucumber
(c) pumpkin (d) carrot
12. Which word does not belong with the others?
(a) lethargic (b) sluggish
(c) restive (d) listless
13. Which word does not belong with the others?
(a) ant (b) spider
(c) beetle (d) bee
14. All members of the robotics club are eighth graders.
Some eighth graders play in the band.
Some members of the robotics club play in the band.
If the first two statements are true, the third is
(a) true (b) false (c) uncertain
15. Only students with a signed permission slip went on the field trip.
Leo went on the field trip.
Leo had a signed permission slip.
If the first two statements are true, the third is
(a) true (b) false (c) uncertain

16. Jen has more stickers than Ola but fewer than Pia.
Ola has more stickers than Rae.
Rae has more stickers than Pia.
If the first two statements are true, the third is
(a) true (b) false (c) uncertain
17. Some of the paintings in the gallery are by Rivera.
All of Rivera's paintings are for sale.
Some of the paintings in the gallery are not for sale.
If the first two statements are true, the third is
(a) true (b) false (c) uncertain
18. All squirmels are glibs.
No glibs are torks.
Some torks are squirmels.
If the first two statements are true, the third is
(a) true (b) false (c) uncertain

19. Some members of the art club paint with watercolors.
Some members of the art club work with clay.
Some members of the art club both paint with watercolors and work with clay.
If the first two statements are true, the third is
(a) true (b) false (c) uncertain
20. No reptiles have fur.
Some pets have fur.
Some pets are not reptiles.
If the first two statements are true, the third is
(a) true (b) false (c) uncertain

STOP. CHECK YOUR ANSWERS ON THE NEXT PAGE.

Verbal Skills

Your score: _____ / 20 • Under 13? Revisit Chapter 5 (and Chapter 4 for vocabulary).

1. (b) praiseworthy

THE SOUND-ALIKE

Laudable means deserving praise, as in “a laudable effort.”

The sound-alike: laudable starts like loud and ends like laughable, but it means neither. If you know the verb laud (to praise), the meaning follows.

2. (a) ambiguous

THE WORD-PART FAKE-OUT

An equivocal answer can be understood in more than one way, often on purpose, so it is ambiguous. **The word-part fake-out:** the root equi- (equal) pulls you toward equal and balanced, but the word’s meaning has moved far from that root. Outspoken is close to the opposite.

3. (d) flexible

THE SYNONYM IN AN ANTONYM QUESTION

Intransigent means refusing to change your position or compromise, so its opposite is flexible. **The synonym in an antonym question:** stubborn is the word most connected to intransigent, which is exactly why it is wrong; it means the same thing. Temporary is a sound-alike trap (intransigent looks like transient).

4. (c) original

THE OTHER-MEANING TRAP

As an adjective, novel means new and original, as in “a novel idea.” **The other-meaning trap:** most students know a novel as a long book of fiction, so fictional, lengthy, and printed all feel connected, but none of them means new. When a familiar word shows up in a synonym question, ask whether it has a second meaning.

5. (b) glum

THE SYNONYM IN AN ANTONYM QUESTION

Ebullient means bubbling over with cheerful excitement, so its opposite is glum. **The synonym in an antonym question:** enthusiastic means nearly the same as ebullient, not the opposite. Boiling is a root trap (ebullient comes from a Latin word for boil), and ebbing only looks similar.

6. (a) dances

THE LOOK-ALIKE WORD

A lexicographer creates dictionaries, and a choreographer creates dances. **The look-alike word:** choreographer starts with the same letters as choir and chorus, so choirs and songs feel musical and close, but a choreographer plans movement, not singing. Maps belong to a cartographer.

7. (d) exhausted

THE WRONG-DEGREE TRAP

Ecstatic is an extreme form of pleased, so the answer must be an extreme form of tired: exhausted. **The wrong-degree trap:** sleepy is about the same strength as tired, so it is a synonym, not a step up. Rested is the opposite, and yawning is just something tired people do.

8. (c) sand

THE LOCATION-FOR-MATERIAL TRAP

A glacier is made of ice, and a dune is made of sand. **The location-for-material trap:** dunes are found in deserts and on beaches, so those choices feel right, but the stem pair is about what something is made of, not where it is found. Wind shapes a dune, but a dune is not made of wind.

9. (a) desert

THE COPYCAT ANSWER

An island is land surrounded by water; an oasis is a green, watered spot surrounded by desert. **The copycat answer:** water appears in the stem, and an oasis does contain water, so it feels safe, but the relationship is “surrounded by,” not “contains.” Palm trees and camels are just things found near an oasis.

10. (d) rest

THE NEAR-SYNONYM TRAP

Thirst is relieved by a drink, and fatigue is relieved by rest. **The near-synonym trap:** exhaustion is a stronger word for fatigue, so it describes the problem, not the cure. Yawn is something fatigue causes, and work is what causes fatigue; both point the wrong way.

11. (d) carrot

THE FAMOUS EXCEPTION

Tomatoes, cucumbers, and pumpkins all grow from a flower and hold seeds inside, so a botanist calls all three fruits; a carrot is a root. **The famous exception:** many students pick tomato because it is the well-known “fruit people call a vegetable,” but cucumbers and pumpkins are fruits for the same reason. Find the group of three first, then the odd one out.

12. (c) restive

THE SOUND-ALIKE

Lethargic, sluggish, and listless all describe having little energy. Restive means restless and impatient, nearly the opposite. **The sound-alike:** restive sounds like rest, so it seems to fit with the low-energy words, but it means fidgety, not relaxed.

13. (b) spider

THE SURFACE-DIFFERENCE TRAP

An ant, a beetle, and a bee are insects with six legs; a spider is an arachnid with eight. **The surface-difference trap:** ant is tempting because most ants can't fly, but that is a surface detail (and spiders can't fly either). Look for the deepest category that three choices share.

14. (c) uncertain

THE ASSUMED CONNECTION

The eighth graders in the band might include robotics members, or they might all be other eighth graders; the statements don't say. Because it could go either way, the third statement is uncertain. **The assumed connection:** "true" feels right because both groups overlap with eighth graders, but sharing a big group does not prove the two smaller groups overlap each other.

15. (a) true

THE 'UNCERTAIN' TRAP

"Only students with a slip went" means anyone who went must have had a slip. Leo went, so the third statement is true. **The 'uncertain' trap:** students who treat "uncertain" as the safe answer pick it here, but "only" locks the conclusion in. (The reverse, "Leo had a slip, so he went," would be uncertain.)

16. (b) false

THE 'UNCERTAIN' TRAP

Put everyone in order from most to fewest: Pia, Jen, Ola, Rae. Rae has the fewest, so she cannot have more than Pia, and the third statement is false. **The 'uncertain' trap:** Rae and Pia never appear in the same sentence, so it feels like there isn't enough information, but a chain of comparisons connects them.

17. (c) uncertain

THE 'SOME MEANS NOT ALL' TRAP

The Rivera paintings in the gallery are for sale, but the statements say nothing about any other paintings; they might all be for sale too. So the third statement is uncertain. **The 'some means not all' trap:** in everyday talk, "some are by Rivera" hints that others are not, but in logic "some" only means "at least one," and even other paintings could be for sale.

18. (b) false

THE 'UNCERTAIN' TRAP

Every squirmel is a glib, and no glib is a tork, so no squirmel can be a tork. That makes "some torks are squirmels" false. **The 'uncertain' trap:** made-up words make students feel they can't know anything, but the logic works the same. Swap in real words: all robins are birds, no birds are fish, so no fish are robins.

19. (c) uncertain

THE OUTSIDE-KNOWLEDGE TRAP

The two groups could overlap, or they could be completely separate; nothing in the statements decides it. The third statement is uncertain. **The outside-knowledge trap:** "true" is tempting because in real life many art students try more than one medium, but the question asks only what the first two statements prove.

20. (a) true

THE 'UNCERTAIN' TRAP

The pets that have fur cannot be reptiles, because no reptile has fur. So at least some pets are not reptiles, and the third statement is true. **The 'uncertain' trap:** the statements never say which pets are reptiles, so "uncertain" feels safe, but the furry pets alone prove the conclusion.

SECTION 2

Quantitative Skills

Questions 21–40 Target time: about 11.5 minutes Book: Chapter 6

Choose the best answer for each question. Diagrams are not used; every figure is described in words.

21. Look at this series: 3, 6, 4, 8, 6, 12, _____. What number should come next?
(a) 24 (b) 14
(c) 10 (d) 8
22. Examine (A), (B), and (C) and find the best answer.
(A) 0.3^2
(B) 0.3×3
(C) 0.09
(a) (A) and (C) are equal, and both are less than (B).
(b) (A) and (B) are equal.
(c) (A) is greater than (C).
(d) (A), (B), and (C) are equal.
23. What number is 5 more than 40% of the product of 6 and 15?
(a) 38 (b) 41
(c) 13.4 (d) 54
24. Look at this series: 2, 30, 5, 26, 8, 22, _____. What number should come next?
(a) 18 (b) 14
(c) 20 (d) 11
25. Examine (A), (B), and (C) and find the best answer.
(A) the area of a square with sides of 6
(B) the area of a rectangle that is 4 wide and 9 long
(C) the area of a right triangle whose legs are 8 and 9
(a) (A) is greater than (B).
(b) (A) and (B) are equal, and (C) is greater than both.
(c) (A), (B), and (C) are equal.
(d) (B) is less than (C).
26. $\frac{3}{5}$ of what number is 4 less than 40?
(a) 60 (b) 21.6
(c) 24 (d) 56
27. Look at this series: 4, 9, ____, 39, 79. What number is missing?
(a) 24 (b) 19
(c) 29 (d) 14
28. Examine (A), (B), and (C) and find the best answer.
(A) $(-2)^4$
(B) -2^4
(C) 2^4
(a) (A), (B), and (C) are equal.
(b) (B) is greater than (A).
(c) (A) is greater than (C).
(d) (A) and (C) are equal, and (B) is less than both.
29. What number divided by 6 is 4 less than the square of 5?
(a) 126 (b) 3.5
(c) 21 (d) 114
30. Look at this series: 1, 2, 6, 24, 120, _____. What number should come next?
(a) 240 (b) 600
(c) 720 (d) 144

- 31.** Examine (A), (B), and (C) and find the best answer.
- (A)** the circumference of a circle with a radius of 3
 - (B)** the area of a circle with a radius of 2
 - (C)** the perimeter of a square with sides of 4.5
 - (a) (B) is greater than (C).
 - (b) (A) is greater than (C), and (C) is greater than (B).
 - (c) (A) and (C) are equal.
 - (d) (C) is greater than (A).
- 32.** Examine (A), (B), and (C) and find the best answer.
- (A)** 25% of 80
 - (B)** 80% of 25
 - (C)** 30% of 60
 - (a) (A) is greater than (B).
 - (b) (C) is greater than (B).
 - (c) (A), (B), and (C) are equal.
 - (d) (A) and (B) are equal, and both are greater than (C).
- 33.** The cube of 3 is how much greater than the square of 4?
- (a) 11
 - (b) 1
 - (c) 43
 - (d) 7
- 34.** Look at this series: 64, 32, 48, 24, 36, _____. What number should come next?
- (a) 54
 - (b) 18
 - (c) 12
 - (d) 72
- 35.** Examine (A), (B), and (C) and find the best answer.
- (A)** $5/6 - 1/3$
 - (B)** $1/2$
 - (C)** $3/4 \div 1/2$
 - (a) (C) is less than (B).
 - (b) (A) is greater than (B).
 - (c) (A) and (B) are equal, and (C) is greater than both.
 - (d) (A), (B), and (C) are equal.
- 36.** What number is 25% greater than $3/4$ of 32?
- (a) 6
 - (b) 49
 - (c) 32
 - (d) 30
- 37.** Examine (A), (B), and (C) and find the best answer.
- (A)** the measure of angle R in triangle PQR, if angle P is 40° and angle Q is 75°
 - (B)** the measure of an angle supplementary to a 75° angle
 - (C)** the measure of an angle complementary to a 25° angle
 - (a) (A) and (C) are equal, and both are less than (B).
 - (b) (A) is greater than (B).
 - (c) (B) and (C) are equal.
 - (d) (C) is greater than (B).
- 38.** Look at this series: 5, 6, 8, 12, 20, _____. What number should come next?
- (a) 28
 - (b) 32
 - (c) 36
 - (d) 40
- 39.** Examine (A), (B), and (C) and find the best answer.
- (A)** 2 hours 15 minutes
 - (B)** 2.15 hours
 - (C)** 135 minutes
 - (a) (A), (B), and (C) are equal.
 - (b) (A) and (C) are equal, and both are greater than (B).
 - (c) (B) is greater than (C).
 - (d) (A) is less than (B).
- 40.** What is the average (arithmetic mean) of $1/2$, 0.75, and 125%?
- (a) $3/4$
 - (b) $2 1/2$
 - (c) 1
 - (d) $5/6$

STOP. CHECK YOUR ANSWERS ON THE NEXT PAGE.

Quantitative Skills

Your score: _____ / 20 • Under 13? Revisit Chapter 6.

21. (c) 10

THE REPEATED-STEP TRAP

The rule alternates: multiply by 2, then subtract 2 ($3 \times 2 = 6$, $6 - 2 = 4$, $4 \times 2 = 8$, $8 - 2 = 6$, $6 \times 2 = 12$). The next step is subtract 2: $12 - 2 = 10$. **The repeated-step trap:** 24 doubles twice in a row. Choice (b) adds 2 instead of subtracting it.

22. (a)

(A) and (C) are equal, and both are less than (B).

THE DECIMAL-SQUARE SLIP

(A) = $0.3 \times 0.3 = 0.09$, (B) = 0.9, and (C) = 0.09. So (A) and (C) are equal, and (B) is greater. **The decimal-square slip:** squaring the 3 but keeping only one decimal place gives 0.9 for (A), which leads to (b). A tenth times a tenth is a hundredth.

23. (b) 41

THE WRONG-ORDER TRAP

The product of 6 and 15 is 90, 40% of 90 is 36, and 5 more is 41. **The wrong-order trap:** choice (a) adds the 5 first (40% of 95 = 38). Choice (c) takes 40% of the sum, $6 + 15 = 21$, instead of the product. Work from the inside of the phrase outward.

24. (d) 11

THE WRONG-STRAND TRAP

Two series are woven together. The 1st, 3rd, and 5th numbers go 2, 5, 8 (add 3), and the 2nd, 4th, and 6th go 30, 26, 22 (subtract 4). The 7th number belongs to the first strand: $8 + 3 = 11$. **The wrong-strand trap:** 18 continues the subtract-4 strand, but that strand's turn comes after 11.

25. (c) (A), (B), and (C) are equal.

THE MISSING $\frac{1}{2}$

(A) = $6 \times 6 = 36$, (B) = $4 \times 9 = 36$, and (C) = $\frac{1}{2} \times 8 \times 9 = 36$. All three are equal. **The missing $\frac{1}{2}$:** forgetting that a triangle's area is half of base times height gives 72 for (C), which makes (b) and (d) look right.

26. (a) 60

WORKING FORWARD INSTEAD OF BACKWARD

4 less than 40 is 36, so $\frac{3}{5}$ of the number is 36. Divide: $36 \div \frac{3}{5} = 36 \times \frac{5}{3} = 60$. Check: $\frac{3}{5}$ of 60 is 36. **Working forward instead of backward:** (b) takes $\frac{3}{5}$ of 36 and (c) takes $\frac{3}{5}$ of 40, but the question asks for the number that $\frac{3}{5}$ is taken of.

27. (b) 19

THE PARTIAL-PATTERN TRAP

Each number is double the one before, plus 1: $4 \times 2 + 1 = 9$, $9 \times 2 + 1 = 19$, $19 \times 2 + 1 = 39$, and $39 \times 2 + 1 = 79$. **The partial-pattern trap:** 24 makes 9, 24, 39 go up by 15 each time, but the jump from 39 to 79 breaks that rule. A pattern must work for every number in the series.

28. (d) (A) and (C) are equal, and (B) is less than both.

THE HIDDEN NEGATIVE

(A) = $(-2)(-2)(-2)(-2) = 16$, and (C) = 16. In (B), the exponent applies only to the 2, so $-2^4 = -(2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2) = -16$. **The hidden negative:** reading -2^4 as $(-2)^4$ makes all three equal, which is choice (a). Parentheses decide whether the negative sign is raised to the power.

29. (a) 126

STOPPING ONE STEP EARLY

The square of 5 is 25, and 4 less is 21. So the number $\div 6 = 21$, and the number is $21 \times 6 = 126$. **Stopping one step early:** choice (c) is 21, the result after dividing, not the number itself. Choice (b) divides 21 by 6 instead of multiplying.

30. (c) 720

THE REPEATED-STEP TRAP

The multiplier grows by 1 each time: $\times 2$, $\times 3$, $\times 4$, $\times 5$, so next is $\times 6$: $120 \times 6 = 720$. **The repeated-step trap:** 600 multiplies by 5 again. Choice (a) doubles, and (d) adds the last two numbers.

31. (b)

(A) is greater than (C), and (C) is greater than (B).

THE π -EQUALS-3 SHORTCUT

(A) = $2\pi(3) = 6\pi \approx 18.84$, (B) = $\pi(2^2) = 4\pi \approx 12.56$, and (C) = $4 \times 4.5 = 18$. So (A) > (C) > (B). **The π -equals-3 shortcut:** rounding π to 3 makes (A) exactly 18, the same as (C), which leads to (c). When two values are close, use 3.14.

32. (d)

(A) and (B) are equal, and both are greater than (C).

THE SWAP-LOOKS-DIFFERENT TRAP

(A) = $0.25 \times 80 = 20$, (B) = $0.80 \times 25 = 20$, and (C) = $0.30 \times 60 = 18$. (A) and (B) are equal, and (C) is less. **The swap-looks-different trap:** $x\%$ of y always equals $y\%$ of x , so (A) and (B) must match, even though they look different. Estimating (C) as "about 20" leads to (c).

33. (a) 11**THE EXPONENT-AS-MULTIPLICATION TRAP**

$3^3 = 3 \times 3 \times 3 = 27$ and $4^2 = 4 \times 4 = 16$, so the difference is $27 - 16 = 11$. **The exponent-as-multiplication trap:** reading 3^3 as $3 \times 3 = 9$ and 4^2 as $4 \times 2 = 8$ gives 1, choice (b). Choice (c) adds instead of subtracting.

34. (b) 18**THE REPEATED-STEP TRAP**

The rule alternates: divide by 2, then multiply by 1.5 ($64 \div 2 = 32$, $32 \times 1.5 = 48$, $48 \div 2 = 24$, $24 \times 1.5 = 36$). Next is divide by 2: $36 \div 2 = 18$. **The repeated-step trap:** 54 multiplies by 1.5 twice in a row. Choice (c) subtracts 24, the size of the last change.

35. (c)

(A) and (B) are equal, and (C) is greater than both.

DIVIDING LIKE MULTIPLYING

(A) $= 5/6 - 2/6 = 3/6 = 1/2$, which equals (B).

(C) $= 3/4 \times 2/1 = 3/2$. So (A) = (B), and (C) is greater.

Dividing like multiplying: $3/4 \times 1/2 = 3/8$, which is less than $1/2$ and leads to (a). Dividing by $1/2$ doubles a number. Choice (b) comes from subtracting tops and bottoms: $(5 - 1)/(6 - 3) = 4/3$.

36. (d) 30**PERCENT OF THE WRONG BASE**

$3/4$ of 32 is 24. 25% of 24 is 6, so 25% greater is $24 + 6 = 30$. **Percent of the wrong base:** choice (c) takes 25% of 32 (which is 8) and adds it to 24. Choice (a) is only the increase, and (b) adds 25 instead of 25%.

37. (a)

(A) and (C) are equal, and both are less than (B).

THE COMPLEMENT/SUPPLEMENT MIX-UP

Angle R $= 180^\circ - 40^\circ - 75^\circ = 65^\circ$. The supplement of 75° is $180^\circ - 75^\circ = 105^\circ$. The complement of 25° is $90^\circ - 25^\circ = 65^\circ$. So (A) = (C), and both are less than (B). **The**

complement/supplement mix-up: using 180° for the complement gives 155° , making (C) the largest, which is choice (d). Complements add to 90° ; supplements add to 180° .

38. (c) 36**THE REPEATED-STEP TRAP**

The amount added doubles each time: +1, +2, +4, +8, so the next step is +16: $20 + 16 = 36$. **The repeated-step trap:** 28 adds 8 again. Choice (d) doubles the last number instead of the last gap.

39. (b)

(A) and (C) are equal, and both are greater than (B).

THE DECIMAL-TIME TRAP

(A) $= 120 + 15 = 135$ minutes, and (C) $= 135$ minutes. (B) $= 2$ hours $+ 0.15 \times 60$ minutes $= 2$ hours 9 minutes $= 129$ minutes. **The decimal-time trap:** an hour has 60 minutes, not 100, so 2.15 hours is not 2 hours 15 minutes. That mistake leads to (a).

40. (d) $5/6$ **THE MEDIAN-FOR-MEAN SWAP**

Change everything to decimals: $0.5 + 0.75 + 1.25 = 2.5$.

Divide by 3: $2.5 \div 3 = 5/6$ (about 0.83). **The median-for-mean swap:** $3/4$ is the middle value (the median), not the mean. Choice (b) is the sum; it forgets to divide by 3.

Reading

Questions 41–60 Target time: about 8 minutes Book: Chapter 7

Questions 41–48: Read the passage, then answer the questions that follow.

NONFICTION PASSAGE

- 1 Walk across almost any college campus or city park and you will find them: narrow ribbons of bare dirt cutting across the grass, often just a few feet from a perfectly good sidewalk. Planners call these trails “desire paths.” No one designs them. They appear because hundreds of people, one after another, decide that the official route is not the route they actually want.
- 2 For a long time, desire paths were treated as damage. Groundskeepers put up fences, planted thorny shrubs, or posted signs asking people to stay on the walkways. The results were usually disappointing. A fence might hold for a season, but walkers soon found a way around it, and a new path appeared a few yards away.
- 3 Some designers have begun to see these trails differently. Instead of fighting them, they study them. A few universities have opened new buildings without paving any walkways at all. For the first months, students crossed the lawns however they pleased. Then, once the grass had been worn into a clear pattern, crews paved the paths the students had already chosen. The result was a network of sidewalks that people actually used.
- 4 The idea has spread beyond campuses. In some cities, planners photograph parks from above after a snowfall, when every footprint shows. The tracks reveal shortcuts to bus stops, gaps in fences, and corners where a sidewalk ends too soon.
- 5 Not every desire path deserves a sidewalk, of course. Some cut through fragile wetlands or across busy streets, and paving them would only encourage danger. Still, the trails carry a message worth hearing. A plan drawn on paper is only a guess about how people will move. The footprints are the answer.

41. Which of the following best expresses the main idea of the passage?
 - (a) Desire paths ruin lawns, so groundskeepers should block them with fences and signs.
 - (b) Desire paths show how people really move, and some planners now use them to design better walkways.
 - (c) Universities should never pave sidewalks until students have used a new building for months.
 - (d) Most parks and campuses were designed poorly by planners who did not care about the people walking there.
42. As used in paragraph 2, the word *hold* most nearly means
 - (a) grip
 - (b) carry
 - (c) keep working
 - (d) wait
43. What can be inferred about the fences described in paragraph 2?
 - (a) They moved the problem instead of solving it.
 - (b) They protected the grass permanently.
 - (c) They were torn down by students who were angry about them.
 - (d) They cost more than paving the paths.

- 44.** The author most likely mentions “fragile wetlands” and “busy streets” in order to
- (a) prove that desire paths are always dangerous
 - (b) explain why photographs taken after a snowfall sometimes fail
 - (c) argue that planners should ignore desire paths
 - (d) admit that not every desire path should be paved
- 45.** The author’s attitude toward planners who pave desire paths is best described as
- (a) approving (b) mocking
 - (c) indifferent (d) doubtful
- 46.** According to the passage, groundskeepers tried all of the following to stop desire paths EXCEPT
- (a) putting up fences around lawns
 - (b) photographing lawns from above
 - (c) planting thorny shrubs
 - (d) posting signs
- 47.** The final sentence, “The footprints are the answer,” suggests that
- (a) planners should stop drawing plans altogether
 - (b) footprints matter more than safety
 - (c) the way people actually walk shows whether a plan works
 - (d) snow is the most useful tool a city planner could possibly have
- 48.** Which title best fits the passage?
- (a) “Keep Off the Grass!”
 - (b) “Snow Days in the City Park”
 - (c) “How Universities Build”
 - (d) “Following the Footprints”

FICTION PASSAGE

- 1 Marisol had been carrying the clipboard for three weeks, and she still did not like it.
- 2 When Coach Hendry broke his ankle in September, he had asked her (not one of the seniors, not the team captain) to keep the times at practice. “You notice things,” he had said, as if that settled it. Marisol was not sure it did. She was the slowest runner on the girls’ cross-country team, and everyone knew it.
- 3 That afternoon the team ran repeats up Cutler Hill. Marisol stood at the top with the stopwatch, calling out numbers as runners staggered past. Jenna, the captain, finished first, as she always did, and barely glanced at her time. Priya finished fourth and stopped, hands on her knees, staring at the ground.
- 4 “Forty-one seconds faster than last week,” Marisol said.
- 5 Priya looked up. “That can’t be right.”
- 6 “It is. You stopped swinging your arms across your body. You’re pumping them straight now.”
- 7 Priya frowned, as if checking the claim against her own memory, and then, slowly, she grinned.
- 8 By the end of practice, three more runners had come up to Marisol to ask about their splits. Not their times, which they could read for themselves on the sheet, but what she had seen. Had their stride changed? Were they leaning too far forward on the downhill?
- 9 Walking home, Marisol shifted the clipboard under her arm. It was still awkward to carry, its metal clip digging into her side. She thought about Coach Hendry’s words, and for the first time they did not sound like something a person says to be kind.

49. Which of the following best states a theme of the passage?
 - (a) You can help a team without being its best player.
 - (b) Hard work always leads to winning in the end.
 - (c) One injury can change the course of a whole team’s season.
 - (d) Team captains are usually the fastest runners.
50. Priya’s words “That can’t be right” suggest that she
 - (a) was annoyed that Marisol was timing her
 - (b) thought she had run slower than the week before
 - (c) wanted Marisol to time her again
 - (d) was surprised by how much she had improved
51. As used in paragraph 3, the word *staggered* most nearly means
 - (a) arranged at different times
 - (b) moved unsteadily
 - (c) amazed
 - (d) sprinted
52. Based on the passage, why did Coach Hendry most likely choose Marisol to keep the times?
 - (a) She was the slowest runner, so she had free time.
 - (b) None of the seniors wanted to do the job.
 - (c) She paid close attention to how others moved.
 - (d) She was a close friend of the team captain.

53. By the end of the passage, how has Marisol's view of Coach Hendry's words changed?
- (a) She now believes he meant them honestly.
 - (b) She now resents him for the clipboard job.
 - (c) She now wishes she were running instead.
 - (d) She now realizes he was only being kind.
54. The detail that the clipboard is "still awkward to carry" most likely shows that
- (a) Marisol plans to give the job back to the coach
 - (b) the clipboard is cheaply made and will soon break
 - (c) Marisol is not strong enough to run well
 - (d) her feelings changed even though her task did not
55. Which of the following does NOT happen in the passage?
- (a) Jenna finishes the hill repeat first.
 - (b) Priya improves on last week's time.
 - (c) Marisol runs a repeat up Cutler Hill.
 - (d) Several runners ask what Marisol saw.
56. The tone of the final paragraph is best described as
- (a) bitter
 - (b) quietly hopeful
 - (c) nervous and uneasy
 - (d) triumphant

Questions 57–60: Choose the word or phrase that means the same, or about the same, as the underlined word.

57. a spurious claim
- (a) sudden
 - (b) spirited
 - (c) important
 - (d) false
58. to corroborate the story
- (a) confirm
 - (b) cooperate with
 - (c) contradict
 - (d) decorate
59. a cursory glance
- (a) rude
 - (b) careful
 - (c) hasty
 - (d) curious
60. an inflammable liquid
- (a) fireproof
 - (b) easily set on fire
 - (c) poisonous
 - (d) slippery

STOP. CHECK YOUR ANSWERS ON THE NEXT PAGE.

Reading

Your score: _____ / 20 • Under 13? Revisit Chapter 7 (and Chapter 4 for vocabulary).

41. (b)

Desire paths show how people really move, and some planners now use them to design better walkways.

THE TOO-NARROW ANSWER

The passage moves from the old view of desire paths (damage) to the newer view (useful information) and ends by saying the footprints show what people want. Choice (b) covers that whole arc. **The too-narrow answer:** (c) describes only the university example and turns it into a rule the author never states. Choice (a) is the old view the author moves away from, and (d) is too broad and too harsh.

42. (c) keep working

THE OTHER-MEANING TRAP

“A fence might hold for a season, but walkers soon found a way around it” means the fence would keep working, or stay effective, for a while. **The other-meaning trap:** grip is the most common meaning of hold, but a fence is not gripping anything here. Always test your choice back in the sentence.

43. (a)

They moved the problem instead of solving it.

THE OVERSTATED INFERENCE

The passage says that once walkers got around a fence, “a new path appeared a few yards away,” so the fence only shifted where the grass got worn. **The overstated inference:** (b) stretches “hold for a season” into “permanently.” Nothing in the passage supports (c) or (d).

44. (d)

admit that not every desire path should be paved

THE EXTREME-WORD TRAP

The paragraph begins, “Not every desire path deserves a sidewalk,” and the wetlands and streets are examples of paths that should not be paved. That is a limit on the idea, not a rejection of it. **The extreme-word trap:** (a) says “always,” but the author says only that some paths are dangerous. Choice (c) contradicts the next sentence: “the trails carry a message worth hearing.”

45. (a) approving

THE NEUTRAL DEFAULT

The author says this approach produced “sidewalks that people actually used” and ends by calling the footprints “the answer,” so the attitude is approving. **The neutral default:** when unsure, many students choose a flat, neutral tone, but phrases like “actually used” and “a message worth hearing” show the author’s opinion. Doubtful misreads the last paragraph’s warning, which is about which paths to pave, not about the idea itself.

46. (b) photographing lawns from above

THE IT’S-IN-THE-PASSAGE-SOMEWHERE TRAP

Paragraph 2 lists the groundskeepers’ methods: fences, thorny shrubs, and signs. Photos from above do appear in the passage, but they are taken by city planners to study paths, not by groundskeepers to stop them. **The it’s-in-the-passage-somewhere trap:** on an EXCEPT question, students skip any choice they remember seeing, but the choice must also match who did it and why.

47. (c)

the way people actually walk shows whether a plan works

THE OVERSTATED INFERENCE

The sentence before it calls a plan “only a guess about how people will move,” so the footprints are the real-world evidence that checks the guess. **The overstated inference:** (a) goes too far; the author wants plans tested against footprints, not thrown away. Choice (b) ignores the warning about wetlands and busy streets.

48. (d) “Following the Footprints”

THE TOO-NARROW ANSWER

The passage is about learning from the routes people actually walk, which “Following the Footprints” captures. **The too-narrow answer:** “Keep Off the Grass!” fits only paragraph 2, the old approach the author moves away from. The other two titles name single examples.

49. (a)

You can help a team without being its best player.

THE GENERIC-MORAL TRAP

Marisol, the slowest runner, helps the team by noticing details in how others run, and by the end she believes she has something real to offer. **The generic-moral trap:** (b) sounds like the lesson of many sports stories, but no one wins a race here, and “always” is far too strong. The coach’s injury only sets up the situation, so (c) misses the point.

50. (d)

was surprised by how much she had improved

THE LITERAL-WORDS TRAP

Marisol has just told Priya she was 41 seconds faster, and Priya grins once she thinks it over, so her doubt was surprise at good news. **The literal-words trap:** “can’t be right” sounds like she thinks the time was bad, which leads to (b), but the time was better, not worse. Nothing in the passage shows annoyance (a).

51. (b) moved unsteadily

THE OTHER-MEANING TRAP

Runners reaching the top of a steep hill during repeats are worn out, so they staggered past: they moved unsteadily. **The other-meaning trap:** staggered can mean scheduled at different times (staggered start times), and a staggering fact is amazing, but neither meaning fits tired runners at the top of a hill.

52. (c)

She paid close attention to how others moved.

THE PLAUSIBLE-BUT-UNSTATED REASON

The coach told her, “You notice things,” and the rest of the passage proves it when she spots Priya’s arm swing. **The plausible-but-unstated reason:** (a) sounds realistic, and Marisol herself worries about being slow, but the passage never says the coach chose her for that. Choose what the text supports, not what could be true.

53. (a) She now believes he meant them honestly.

THE MISSED ‘NOT’

The last sentence says that “for the first time they did not sound like something a person says to be kind.” In other words, she now thinks he meant them. **The missed ‘not’:** (d) is the exact reverse of that sentence; it describes how she felt before. One small word can flip a meaning, so reread key sentences slowly.

54. (d)

her feelings changed even though her task did not

THE OVERSTATED INFERENCE

The clipboard itself has not changed (it still digs into her side), but the next sentence shows that her feelings about the coach’s words have. The detail keeps the ending realistic. **The overstated inference:** (a) reads “awkward” as a sign she will quit, but nothing in the passage suggests that, and the ending points the other way.

55. (c) Marisol runs a repeat up Cutler Hill.

THE NOT-QUESTION FLIP

Marisol stands at the top of the hill with the stopwatch the whole time; she never runs. Everything else is stated: Jenna finishes first, Priya is “forty-one seconds faster,” and “three more runners” ask what she saw. **The NOT-question flip:** halfway through the choices it is easy to start hunting for something that did happen. Mark each choice yes or no as you check it.

56. (b) quietly hopeful

THE OVERSTATED TONE

Marisol is walking home with the same awkward clipboard, but for the first time she believes the coach meant what he said. That is a small, private shift, so the tone is quietly hopeful. **The overstated tone:** triumphant is too big for a moment with no celebration, and bitter ignores the change in her thinking.

57. (d) false

THE SOUND-ALIKE

Spurious means false or fake, even if it looks real at first. **The sound-alike:** spurious starts like spur (as in “on the spur of the moment”), which pulls toward sudden, and spirited shares its first sounds. Important has nothing to do with the word.

58. (a) confirm

THE SOUND-ALIKE

To corroborate a story is to back it up with more evidence, so it means confirm. **The sound-alike:** cooperate shares the co- start and a similar rhythm, but it means to work together. Contradict is nearly the opposite of corroborate.

59. (c) hasty

THE SOUND-ALIKE

A cursory glance is quick and not thorough, so hasty is the match. **The sound-alike:** cursory looks like curse, which pulls toward rude, and curious also starts with cur-. Careful is the opposite.

60. (b) easily set on fire

THE WORD-PART FAKE-OUT

Inflammable means easily set on fire; it means the same thing as flammable. **The word-part fake-out:** in- usually means not (as in incorrect), so fireproof looks right, but here in- means into, as in “burst into flames.” This mix-up is why warning labels now say flammable.

SECTION 4

Mathematics

Questions 61–80 Target time: about 14 minutes Book: Chapter 8

Choose the best answer for each question.

61. Tickets to a school play cost \$8 for students and \$12 for adults. A group of 15 people paid \$148 in all. How many adults were in the group?
- (a) 8 (b) 6
(c) 9 (d) 7
62. The price of a video game rose from \$40 to \$50. A month later, it dropped back to \$40. By what percent did the price drop?
- (a) 20% (b) 25%
(c) 10% (d) 80%
63. What is $(6 \times 10^5) \div (3 \times 10^{-2})$?
- (a) 2×10^3 (b) 2×10^{-10}
(c) 2×10^7 (d) 3×10^7
64. Which of the following is the solution to $7 - 2x \geq 15$?
- (a) $x \geq -4$ (b) $x \leq -4$
(c) $x \geq 4$ (d) $x \leq 4$
65. A rectangular yard is 10 feet long and 8 feet wide. A 4-foot by 3-foot rectangle is removed from one corner, leaving an L-shaped garden. What is the perimeter of the garden?
- (a) 36 feet (b) 22 feet
(c) 68 feet (d) 50 feet
66. A bag holds 3 red, 5 blue, and 2 green marbles. Two marbles are drawn at random, one after the other, without replacement. What is the probability that both are blue?
- (a) $1/4$ (b) $1/2$
(c) $4/9$ (d) $2/9$
67. The ratio of boys to girls in a club is 4 to 5. There are 12 more girls than boys. How many students are in the club?
- (a) 60 (b) 108
(c) 96 (d) 48
68. If $2^x = 32$, what is the value of 2^{x+2} ?
- (a) 34 (b) 64
(c) 128 (d) 1,024
69. Five less than three times a number is equal to the number increased by 9. Which equation shows this?
- (a) $5 - 3n = n + 9$ (b) $3n - 5 = n + 9$
(c) $3(n - 5) = n + 9$ (d) $3n - 5 = 9n$
70. A circular garden has a circumference of 31.4 meters. Using $\pi = 3.14$, what is the area of the garden?
- (a) 78.5 square meters
(b) 314 square meters
(c) 31.4 square meters
(d) 15.7 square meters
71. The mean of five numbers is 18. When one of the numbers is removed, the mean of the remaining four numbers is 16. What number was removed?
- (a) 2 (b) 17
(c) 34 (d) 26
72. A store raises the price of an \$80 jacket by 25%. Later, it puts the jacket on sale for 20% off the new price. What is the sale price?
- (a) \$84 (b) \$76
(c) \$80 (d) \$100

73. If $3(x - 4) = 2x + 5$, what is the value of $x + 4$?

- (a) 21 (b) 17
(c) 13 (d) 9

74. Two angles are supplementary. The larger angle is 30° more than twice the smaller angle. What is the measure of the smaller angle?

- (a) 130° (b) 50°
(c) 20° (d) 75°

75. Maya biked 12 miles to the lake at 8 miles per hour and rode the same 12 miles home at 12 miles per hour. What was her average speed for the whole trip?

- (a) 10 mph (b) 9 mph
(c) 10.4 mph (d) 9.6 mph

76. Two standard number cubes, each numbered 1 to 6, are rolled. What is the probability that the sum is 4?

- (a) $1/11$ (b) $1/6$
(c) $1/12$ (d) $1/9$

77. A rectangle has a diagonal of 17 cm and a width of 8 cm. What is its perimeter?

- (a) 15 cm (b) 46 cm
(c) 50 cm (d) 120 cm

78. A running track has two straight sides, each 100 meters long. At each end, the straight sides are joined by a half-circle with a diameter of 40 meters. Using $\pi = 3.14$, how long is one lap around the track?

- (a) 325.6 meters (b) 451.2 meters
(c) 262.8 meters (d) 280 meters

79. Five test scores are 82, 95, 78, 90, and 88. If a sixth score of 100 is added, by how much does the median increase?

- (a) 0 (b) about 2.2
(c) 1 (d) 12

80. Four identical pumps can fill a tank in 6 hours. At the same rate, how long would it take 3 of these pumps to fill the tank?

- (a) 4.5 hours (b) 5 hours
(c) 7 hours (d) 8 hours

STOP. CHECK YOUR ANSWERS ON THE NEXT PAGE.

Mathematics

Your score: _____ / 20 • Under 13? Revisit Chapter 8.

61. (d) 7

THE ANSWER TO THE WRONG QUESTION

If all 15 were students, the cost would be $15 \times \$8 = \$120$. The extra \$28 comes from adults, who each cost \$4 more, so there are $28 \div 4 = 7$ adults. Check: $7 \times \$12 + 8 \times \$8 = \$84 + \$64 = \$148$. **The answer to the wrong question:** 8 is the number of students; the question asks for adults.

62. (a) 20%

PERCENT OF THE WRONG BASE

The drop is $\$50 - \$40 = \$10$, and a percent change compares to the starting value of that change, which is \$50: $10 \div 50 = 20\%$. **Percent of the wrong base:** (b) divides by \$40, the price before the rise. A rise and a fall of the same dollar amount are not the same percent.

63. (c) 2×10^7

THE EXPONENT-SIGN SLIP

Divide the numbers: $6 \div 3 = 2$. Divide the powers of 10 by subtracting exponents: $5 - (-2) = 7$. So the answer is 2×10^7 . **The exponent-sign slip:** (a) computes $5 + (-2) = 3$, and (b) multiplies the exponents. Subtracting a negative is the same as adding.

64. (b) $x \leq -4$

THE FORGOTTEN FLIP

Subtract 7 from both sides: $-2x \geq 8$. Dividing both sides by -2 flips the sign: $x \leq -4$. Check with $x = -5$: $7 - 2(-5) = 17$, and $17 \geq 15$. **The forgotten flip:** (a) divides by -2 without reversing the inequality sign. You can test any choice by plugging in a number.

65. (a) 36 feet

THE MISSING-CORNER TRAP

Cutting a rectangle out of a corner moves two edges inward but does not change their total length: the two new inside edges (4 ft and 3 ft) exactly replace the 4 ft and 3 ft that were removed. So the perimeter stays $2(10 + 8) = 36$ feet. **The missing-corner trap:** (b) subtracts the small rectangle's perimeter, which is how area works, not perimeter. Choice (c) is the garden's area.

66. (d) $2/9$

THE WITH-REPLACEMENT TRAP

First draw: $5/10$. One blue marble is now gone, so the second draw is $4/9$. Multiply: $5/10 \times 4/9 = 20/90 = 2/9$. **The with-replacement trap:** (a) uses $5/10$ twice, as if the first marble had been put back in the bag.

67. (b) 108

THE PART-FOR-WHOLE TRAP

The difference between 5 parts and 4 parts is 1 part, so 1 part = 12 students. The whole club is $4 + 5 = 9$ parts, or $9 \times 12 = 108$. **The part-for-whole trap:** (a) is the number of girls (5×12) and (d) is the number of boys (4×12); the question asks for everyone.

68. (c) 128

THE EXPONENT-AS-ADDITION TRAP

$2^{x+2} = 2^x \times 2^2 = 32 \times 4 = 128$. (Or: $x = 5$, and $2^7 = 128$.) **The exponent-as-addition trap:** (a) adds 2 to 32, but raising the exponent by 2 multiplies by 2 twice. Choice (b) multiplies by 2 only once.

69. (b) $3n - 5 = n + 9$

THE 'LESS THAN' REVERSAL

"Three times a number" is $3n$, and "five less than" that means subtract 5 from it: $3n - 5$. "The number increased by 9" is $n + 9$. **The 'less than' reversal:** (a) writes the parts in the order they appear in the sentence, but "five less than X" means $X - 5$, not $5 - X$. Choice (c) subtracts before multiplying.

70. (a) 78.5 square meters

THE DIAMETER-AS-RADIUS TRAP

Circumference = $\pi \times$ diameter, so the diameter is $31.4 \div 3.14 = 10$ m and the radius is 5 m. Area = $\pi r^2 = 3.14 \times 25 = 78.5$ square meters. **The diameter-as-radius trap:** (b) uses 10 as the radius (3.14×100). Choice (c) just repeats the circumference, and (d) is half of it.

71. (d) 26

THE AVERAGING-AVERAGES TRAP

Work with totals. Five numbers with a mean of 18 add up to 90, and four numbers with a mean of 16 add up to 64. The removed number is $90 - 64 = 26$. **The averaging-averages trap:** (a) subtracts the two means, which says nothing about the missing number, and (b) averages them. Turn each mean into a total first.

72. (c) \$80

THE ADD-THE-PERCENTS TRAP

25% of \$80 is \$20, so the new price is \$100. 20% of \$100 is \$20, so the sale price is \$80, exactly where it started. **The add-the-percents trap:** (a) combines +25% and -20% into +5% of \$80, but the 20% is taken from a different, larger base.

73. (a) 21

THE ANSWER TO THE WRONG QUESTION

Distribute: $3x - 12 = 2x + 5$. Subtract $2x$ and add 12: $x = 17$. The question asks for $x + 4$, so the answer is 21. **The answer to the wrong question:** (b) is x itself. Choice (d) comes from multiplying only the x by 3 ($3x - 4 = 2x + 5$).

74. (b) 50°

THE COMPLEMENT/SUPPLEMENT MIX-UP

Supplementary angles add to 180° : $x + (2x + 30) = 180$, so $3x = 150$ and $x = 50^\circ$. The larger angle is 130° , and $50 + 130 = 180$ checks. **The complement/supplement mix-up:** (c) uses 90° instead of 180° . Choice (a) is the larger angle, not the smaller one.

75. (d) 9.6 mph

THE AVERAGING-THE-SPEEDS TRAP

Average speed = total distance $\div$ total time. The trip out took $12 \div 8 = 1.5$ hours and the trip home took $12 \div 12 = 1$ hour, so $24 \text{ miles} \div 2.5 \text{ hours} = 9.6 \text{ mph}$. **The averaging-the-speeds trap:** (a) averages 8 and 12, but Maya spent more time at the slower speed, which pulls the average below 10.

76. (c) $1/12$

THE EQUALLY-LIKELY SUMS TRAP

There are $6 \times 6 = 36$ equally likely outcomes. A sum of 4 happens three ways: $1 + 3$, $2 + 2$, and $3 + 1$. So the probability is $3/36 = 1/12$. **The equally-likely sums trap:** (a) treats the 11 possible sums (2 through 12) as equally likely, but a sum of 7 can happen six ways and a sum of 2 only one way.

77. (b) 46 cm

STOPPING ONE STEP EARLY

Use the Pythagorean theorem: $8^2 + L^2 = 17^2$, so $L^2 = 289 - 64 = 225$ and $L = 15 \text{ cm}$. The perimeter is $2(15 + 8) = 46 \text{ cm}$. **Stopping one step early:** (a) is the length, not the perimeter. Choice (c) uses the diagonal as a side, and (d) is the area.

78. (a) 325.6 meters

THE TWO-HALVES TRAP

The two half-circles together make one full circle with a diameter of 40 m, so the curved parts total $3.14 \times 40 = 125.6 \text{ m}$. Add the straight sides: $200 + 125.6 = 325.6 \text{ m}$. **The two-halves trap:** (b) counts a full circle at each end. Choice (c) uses the radius, 20, in place of the diameter, and (d) adds the two 40-meter diameters, which are not part of the lap.

79. (c) 1

THE MEAN-MEDIAN MIX-UP

In order, the five scores are 78, 82, 88, 90, 95, so the median is 88. With 100 added, the two middle scores are 88 and 90, so the new median is $(88 + 90) \div 2 = 89$. It rises by 1. **The mean-median mix-up:** (b) is how much the mean rises (from 86.6 to about 88.8). Choice (d) is the difference between 100 and the old median.

80. (d) 8 hours

THE BACKWARD PROPORTION

Four pumps for 6 hours is $4 \times 6 = 24$ "pump-hours" of work. Three pumps need $24 \div 3 = 8$ hours. **The backward proportion:** (a) sets up $4/6 = 3/x$, as if fewer pumps would finish sooner. Fewer pumps means more time, so the answer must be more than 6 hours.

Language

Questions 81–100 Target time: about 8.5 minutes Book: Chapter 9

Questions 81–90: Choose the sentence that contains an error in punctuation, capitalization, or usage. If there are no mistakes, choose (d).

81. (a) The author whom we met at the book fair signed my copy.
(b) Whom should I say is calling?
(c) We wondered who the new coach would be.
(d) No mistakes.
82. (a) Although the museum was crowded, we found a quiet gallery upstairs.
(b) The museum was crowded; however, we found a quiet gallery upstairs.
(c) The museum was crowded, however, we found a quiet gallery upstairs.
(d) No mistakes.
83. (a) Everyone in the two classes have finished the test.
(b) Neither the coach nor the players were happy with the call.
(c) The teacher, along with her students, is planting a garden.
(d) No mistakes.
84. (a) My sister and I are going to the game tonight.
(b) The coach gave the awards to Jamal and me.
(c) Between you and me, the test was easier than I expected.
(d) No mistakes.
85. (a) We visited Aunt Rosa near Lake Superior.
(b) Last Spring, our family drove through the Badlands.
(c) We read a poem by Langston Hughes in English class.
(d) No mistakes.
86. (a) The Joneses' house is the blue one on the corner.
(b) We'll meet at Charles's house after school.
(c) The company announced that it's profits had doubled.
(d) No mistakes.
87. (a) If I were taller, I could reach the top shelf.
(b) Neither of the twins is going to the dance.
(c) She runs faster than I.
(d) No mistakes.
88. (a) Covered in mud from head to tail, my dad made me hose off the dog.
(b) After the storm passed, we walked down to the beach.
(c) The box of old records was heavier than it looked.
(d) No mistakes.
89. (a) "Did you finish the reading?" asked Ms. Patel.
(b) The recipe needs three things: flour, sugar, and butter.
(c) My brother, who lives in Denver, is visiting next week.
(d) No mistakes.
90. (a) Please lay the books on the table.
(b) Last night the cat lay on my pillow.
(c) The dog has laid in the sun all afternoon.
(d) No mistakes.

Questions 91–95: Choose the word that is misspelled. If there is no mistake, choose (d).

- | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| 91. (a) forty
(c) parallel | (b) ninety
(d) No mistake. | 92. (a) liaison
(c) persistant | (b) camouflage
(d) No mistake. |
| 93. (a) minuscule
(c) Fahrenheit | (b) playwright
(d) No mistake. | 94. (a) harass
(c) dilemma | (b) embarrassment
(d) No mistake. |
| 95. (a) inoculate
(c) withhold | (b) threshold
(d) No mistake. | | |

Questions 96–100: Composition. Choose the best answer for each question.

- 96.** Choose the word or words that best fill the blank.
- The new bridge was expected to ease traffic downtown. _____, rush-hour delays grew longer in the year after it opened, as more drivers chose to come downtown.
- (a) As a result (b) For example
(c) Instead (d) Likewise
- 97.** Which sentence does not belong in the paragraph?
- (1) Sea otters often wrap themselves in strands of kelp before they fall asleep. (2) The kelp works like an anchor, keeping them from drifting away on the current. (3) Kelp forests also shelter hundreds of kinds of fish and other sea creatures. (4) Otters resting in open water sometimes hold paws with a partner instead. (5) Either way, they wake up close to where they fell asleep.
- (a) Sentence 2 (b) Sentence 3
(c) Sentence 4 (d) Sentence 5
- 98.** Which of these best combines the sentences into one?
- The bridge was closed for repairs. Drivers had to take a longer route. The longer route added twenty minutes to their trip.
- (a) The bridge was closed for repairs, drivers took a longer route, it added twenty minutes to their trip.
(b) Drivers had to take a longer route that added twenty minutes to their trip, although the bridge was closed for repairs.
(c) The bridge was closed for repairs, and drivers had to take a longer route, and the longer route added twenty minutes to their trip.
(d) Because the bridge was closed for repairs, drivers had to take a longer route that added twenty minutes to their trip.

- 99.** Which sentence would be the best topic sentence for this paragraph?

_____. Some lend gardening tools and sewing machines. Others let members check out musical instruments for a few weeks at a time. A few even lend telescopes so families can study the night sky.

- (a) Many public libraries now lend much more than books.
- (b) Libraries have existed for thousands of years.
- (c) Telescopes can be expensive for families to buy.
- (d) Learning an instrument takes patience and time.

- 100.** Which sentence expresses the idea most clearly?

- (a) When Maya handed Ellie the trophy, she smiled.
- (b) Ellie smiled when Maya handed her the trophy.
- (c) Maya handed Ellie the trophy, she smiled.
- (d) Handing the trophy to Ellie, a smile appeared.

STOP. CHECK YOUR ANSWERS ON THE NEXT PAGE.

Language

Your score: _____ / 20 • Under 13? Revisit Chapter 9.

81. (b) Whom should I say is calling?

WHO/WHOM

In (b), the pronoun is the subject of “is calling,” so it must be who: “Who should I say is calling?” The words “should I say” just interrupt. **Who/whom:** (a) looks suspicious, but whom is correct there because it is the object of met (we met him). Swap in he or him: he → who, him → whom.

82. (c)

The museum was crowded, however, we found a quiet gallery upstairs.

THE COMMA SPLICE THAT SOUNDS FINE

Choice (c) joins two complete sentences with only a comma. However is not a joining word like and or but, so it needs a semicolon before it, as in (b). **The comma splice that sounds fine:** read aloud, (b) and (c) sound exactly the same, so check whether each side of the comma could stand alone as a sentence.

83. (a)

Everyone in the two classes have finished the test.

THE PLURAL-SOUNDING SUBJECT

Everyone is singular even when it refers to many people, so the sentence should read “Everyone ... has finished.” **The plural-sounding subject:** “the two classes” makes the subject feel plural. Meanwhile (b) and (c) look wrong but are correct: with neither/nor, the verb matches the nearer subject (players were), and “along with her students” does not change the singular subject, teacher.

84. (d) No mistakes.

THE ‘AND ME’ FALSE ALARM

All three sentences are correct. I is a subject in (a); me is the object of the prepositions to and between in (b) and (c). **The ‘and me’ false alarm:** many students learned to always say “___ and I,” so (b) and (c) sound wrong to them. Cover up the other person: “gave the awards to me” is clearly right.

85. (b)

Last Spring, our family drove through the Badlands.

THE CAPITALIZED SEASON

Seasons are not capitalized unless they start a sentence or are part of a name, so (b) should say “Last spring.” **The capitalized season:** (a) may look suspicious, but Aunt is capitalized when it is used as part of a name (Aunt Rosa), and English is always capitalized because it comes from a proper noun.

86. (c)

The company announced that it’s profits had doubled.

IT’S VS. ITS

It’s always means “it is” or “it has.” The company’s profits need the possessive its, with no apostrophe. **It’s vs. its:** (a) and (b) are decoys that look odd but are correct: Joneses’ is the possessive of the plural Joneses, and Charles’s is an accepted possessive of a name ending in s.

87. (d) No mistakes.

THE CORRECT-BUT-ODD-SOUNDING TRAP

All three sentences are correct. “If I were” is the right form for something that is not true; neither is singular, so is fits; and “faster than I” is short for “faster than I do.” **The correct-but-odd-sounding trap:** formal grammar can sound stiff, but stiff is not the same as wrong. Check every sentence, then trust (d).

88. (a)

Covered in mud from head to tail, my dad made me hose off the dog.

THE DANGLING MODIFIER

In (a), the opening phrase “Covered in mud from head to tail” describes whatever comes right after the comma, so the sentence says Dad was covered in mud. Fix: “My dad made me hose off the dog, which was covered in mud from head to tail.” **The dangling modifier:** the sentence sounds natural because you know what it means, but the grammar says otherwise. Choice (c) is correct because the subject is box, not records.

89. (d) No mistakes.

THE CORRECT-BUT-ODD-SOUNDING TRAP

All three are correct. In (a), the question mark belongs inside the quotation marks and takes the place of a comma. In (b), a colon introduces a list after a complete sentence. In (c), commas set off the extra information about the brother. **The correct-but-odd-sounding trap:** (a) looks strange with a question mark in the middle of a sentence, but that is the right way to punctuate a quoted question.

90. (c) The dog has laid in the sun all afternoon.

THE LIE/LAY SWITCH

Lie (to rest) goes lie, lay, has lain; lay (to put something down) goes lay, laid, has laid. The dog is resting, so (c) should say “has lain.” **The lie/lay switch:** (b) looks wrong, but lay is the correct past tense of lie. Choice (a) is right because you lay something (the books) down.

91. (a) forty

THE TRICKY-BUT-CORRECT DECOY

The correct spelling is forty: four keeps its u, but forty drops it. **The tricky-but-correct decoy:** ninety keeps the e from nine, which makes it look like the odd one, and parallel (two l's, then one) looks wrong to many students, but both are spelled correctly.

92. (c) persistant

THE TRICKY-BUT-CORRECT DECOY

The correct spelling is persistent, with -ent at the end. **The tricky-but-correct decoy:** liaison (with i on both sides of the a) and camouflage look strange, so students hunt for an error there, but both are correct.

93. (d) No mistake.

THE TRICKY-BUT-CORRECT DECOY

All three are spelled correctly: minuscule (think minus), playwright (a wright is a maker, as in wheelwright), and Fahrenheit. **The tricky-but-correct decoy:** each word looks wrong because it does not match how it sounds, and students often feel they must find an error. On spelling items, "No mistake" is a real answer.

94. (b) embarrassment

THE TRICKY-BUT-CORRECT DECOY

The correct spelling is embarrassment, with two r's and two s's. **The tricky-but-correct decoy:** harass has only one r, which makes it look like the misspelled one, but it is correct. Dilemma, with its double m, is correct too.

95. (a) inoculate

THE TRICKY-BUT-CORRECT DECOY

The correct spelling is inoculate, with one n and one c. **The tricky-but-correct decoy:** withhold really does have two h's in a row (with + hold), while threshold has only one. Students who know one of those rules often apply it to the other.

96. (c) Instead

THE WRONG-DIRECTION TRANSITION

The second sentence reports the opposite of what was expected, so the blank needs a contrast word. Instead does that. **The wrong-direction transition:** as a result signals cause and effect, which would mean the expectation itself caused the delays. For example and likewise both signal that the next idea agrees with the first.

97. (b) Sentence 3

THE SAME-TOPIC SENTENCE

The paragraph is about how sea otters keep from drifting while they sleep. Sentence 3 is about kelp forests in general, so it breaks the focus. **The same-topic sentence:** it mentions kelp, so it feels on topic, but a paragraph's focus is narrower than the words it shares. Sentence 4 is the decoy: it seems to change subjects, but holding paws is another way to stay in place, and "Either way" in sentence 5 depends on it.

98. (d)

Because the bridge was closed for repairs, drivers had to take a longer route that added twenty minutes to their trip.

THE WRONG-CONNECTOR COMBINATION

Choice (d) shows the cause (the closed bridge) and the effect (the longer route) and tucks in the extra detail with "that added." **The wrong-connector combination:** (b) sounds polished, but although signals a contrast, and the closed bridge is the reason for the detour, not something in conflict with it. Choice (a) is a run-on, and (c) strings clauses together with and.

99. (a)

Many public libraries now lend much more than books.

THE TOO-NARROW TOPIC SENTENCE

A topic sentence must cover every detail that follows: tools, sewing machines, instruments, and telescopes are all things libraries lend besides books. **The too-narrow topic sentence:** (c) and (d) each match only one detail. Choice (b) is on the general subject of libraries but misses the paragraph's point, which is what they lend today.

100. (b)

Ellie smiled when Maya handed her the trophy.

THE UNCLEAR PRONOUN

In (b), it is clear that Ellie smiled and that Maya handed her the trophy. **The unclear pronoun:** (a) is grammatical and sounds smooth, but she could mean Maya or Ellie. Choice (c) is a comma splice with the same unclear she, and (d) is a dangling modifier (a smile cannot hand anyone a trophy).

Keep going

You've now seen the hardest traps the HSPT can throw at you. The best way to make them automatic is steady, timed practice.

summitstudyguides.com/hspt

The online HSPT simulator that goes with your book:

- 7 full-length timed practice tests
- 29 skill drills
- 1,000 flashcards

Found an error? Email **info@summitstudyguides.com**.

© 2026 Summit Study Guides. HSPT® is a registered trademark of Scholastic Testing Service, Inc., which is not affiliated with and does not endorse this material.