

Sentence Correction

Read the following sentences and select the option that corrects the underlined sections. If the sentences sections are correct as written, choose option A.

1. If the books have been cataloged last week, why haven't they been placed on the shelf?

- A. have been cataloged
- B. would have been cataloged
- C. was cataloged
- D. were cataloged
- E. had been cataloged

2. Jessica Mitford wrote *The American Way of Death*, a best-selling book that led eventually to an official investigation of the funeral industry.

- A. that led eventually
- B. that had led eventually
- C. that eventually led
- D. which eventually led
- E. who eventually led

3. Sabotage came from the French saboter, which means "to clatter with wooden shoes (sabots)."

- A. which means "to
- B. which means, "to

- C. that means "to
- D. that means-"to
- E. that means, "to

4. When studying an assignment, it is wise to read it over quickly at first, than see the major points, and finally outline the material.

- A. first, than
- B. first: then
- C. first-then
- D. first, then
- E. first-than

5. To judge the Tidy City contest, we picked an uninterested party.

- A. picked an uninterested party.
- B. picked an interested party!
- C. picked a disinterested party.
- D. are in the process of picking an uninterested party.
- E. picked an disinterested party.

6. Linda decides they had better scam before the killers find them.

- A. had better scam
- B. had better leave
- C. should hurry and scam

D. could hurry and leave

E. had better get out

7. I really dug the character of Brutus.

A. dug

B. thought about

C. thought of

D. admired

E. gazed at

8. Once upon a point a time, a small person named Little Red Riding Hood initiated plans for the preparation, delivery and transportation of foodstuffs to her Grandmother.

A. and transportation of foodstuffs to her Grandmother.

B. and transportation of food stuffs to her Grandmother.

C. and transportation of food supplies to her Grandmother.

D. and transportation of foodstuffs to her grandmother.

E. and, transportation of food supplies to her grand mother.

9. The setting of a story effects the story's plot.

A. effects the story's plot.

B. effects the stories plot.

C. affect the story's plot.

D. affects the story's plot.

E. affects the story's plots.

10. Arctic trees are scrubbiest than trees in milder climates.

A. scrubbiest than trees

B. scrubbier then trees

C. scrubbiest than are trees

D. scrubbier than are trees

E. scrubbier than trees

11. Quebec rises in a magnificent way above the St. Lawrence River.

A. rises in a magnificent way above

B. rises in a magnificent way, way above

C. rises magnificently above

D. rises magnificently way above

E. is raised in a magnificent way above

12. Someone gives the school gerbils every year.

A. Someone gives the school gerbils

B. Some one gives the school gerbils

C. Some one gives the School gerbils

D. There is a person that gives the school gerbils

E. An individual gave gerbils

13. During colonial days, a school room looked rather empty.

A. colonial days, a school room looked

B. colonial days, a schoolroom looked

C. colonial days; a schoolroom looked

D. colonial days; a school room looked

E. colonial days-a schoolroom looked

14. The helium-filled balloon rose in the air.

A. rose in the air.

B. was rising in the air.

C. was in the air.

D. rose into the air.

E. would rise in the air.

15. If I had the address, I would have delivered the package myself.

A. had the address,

B. had the address;

C. had the address-

D. had had the address;

E. had had the address,

16. Do you know that these gloves have lay on the bureau all week?

- A. have lay on
- B. have laid on
- C. would lie on
- D. had laid on
- E. have lain on

17. If I would have known about the team tryouts, I would have signed up for them.

- A. had known
- B. would have known
- C. could of known
- D. had been told
- E. could have been told

18. If he would have revised his first draft, he would have received a better grade.

- A. would have revised
- B. had revised
- C. could of revised
- D. had of revised
- E. would revise

19. Valarie claims that cats made the best pets.

- A. made the best pets.
- B. could be the best pets.
- C. are the best pets.
- D. make of the best pets.
- E. make the best pets.

20. By next month, Ms. Jones will be Mayor of Tallahassee for two years.

- A. will be Mayor of Tallahassee
- B. will have been Mayor of Tallahassee
- C. will be mayor of Tallahassee
- D. will have been mayor of Tallahassee
- E. could have been mayor of Tallahassee

Answers and Explanations

1. D: "Last week" dictates simple past tense "were." Present perfect "have been" (A) refers to the status now of something already accomplished in the past-e.g. "have been cataloged since last week." Subjunctive present perfect "would have been" (B) is never used in a conditional "If" clause/phrase, only as its complement ("If..., then they would..."). Singular "was" (C) disagrees with plural "books." Past perfect "had been" (E) would require "why hadn't they been.../weren't they...?" to agree.

2. C: With an indirect object, the transitive verb and preposition should be a unit, i.e. "led to" here, like "take from," "give to," etc., uninterrupted by the modifying adverb "eventually." "Who" (E) only applies to people, not inanimate objects like books.

3. A: No punctuation should be placed between "means" and "to" here. Hence a comma [(B), (E)] or dash (D) is incorrect. A nonrestrictive relative clause introduces additional information, requiring a comma and "which"-not "that" [(C), (D), and (E)]. "That" is used without a comma and only with a restrictive relative clause, i.e. one that is necessary to understand the meaning of the noun it modifies.

4. D: "Then" is an adverb indicating time or sequence here. "Than" [(A), (E)] is a conjunction indicating comparison, e.g. "He is taller than I am" or "We would rather go now than later." When listing three sequential steps as in this sentence, the comma after the first and second steps is correct punctuation; a colon (B) or hyphen [(C), (E)] is incorrect.

5. C: The correct word choice for this sentence is "disinterested," meaning not personally involved or invested and (presumably) impartial. "Uninterested" means literally not interested, i.e. oblivious or not caring. In this context, they would not pick an "interested" party to judge a contest, and the exclamation mark (B) is inappropriate punctuation. "An" (E) is incorrect preceding a consonant.

6. B: "Scram" is a slang word meaning "leave," a more acceptable choice when writing (excepting intentional slang like Mark Twain used in dialogue, narrative, etc.). "Could" (D) means they can leave, whereas "had better" and "should" means they ought to leave. "Get out" (E), similarly to "scram," is less acceptable than "leave."

7. D: "Admired" is an acceptable word in writing for the desired meaning, whereas "dug" (A) is slang. "Thought about" (B), "thought of" (C), and "gazed at" (E) do not convey the same meaning at all.

8. D: When used as a noun rather than a name (proper noun), "grandmother" is not capitalized. Used either way, it is still one word, not two (E); the same is true of "foodstuffs" (B).

9. D: To affect means to influence. This meaning, and hence this spelling, apply here. To effect [(A), (B)] means to cause, initiate, create, implement, or accomplish. "Stories" (B) is plural, not possessive. "Affect" (C) goes with a plural, not singular, subject. "Plots" (E) is plural, not singular.

10. E: When comparing two things, the comparative "-er" is used rather than the superlative "-est," which is only used when comparing more than two things. The adverb "than" is used with the

comparative, not the conjunction "then" (B), which indicates time sequence (e.g. "and then..."), cause and effect (e.g. "If...,then..."). Adding "are" (D) is unnecessary.

11. C: The adverb "magnificently" modifies the verb "rises" and reads more appropriately and concisely than the phrase "in a magnificent way." "Way above" [(B), (C)] is slangy and does not express the intended meaning. If it did, "far above" would be more correct. Passive-voice "is raised" (E) connotes a different meaning (i.e. is set higher) than active-voice "rises" (i.e. appears) in this sentence.

12. A: "Someone" is one word, not two [(B), (C)]. "There is a person that" (D) differs semantically and grammatically, meaning someone exists who gives the school gerbils rather than someone gives the school gerbils; also, "who" is preferable over "that" when referring to people. The meaning is changed by past tense "gave" (E); i.e. an individual/someone gave the school gerbils every year but no longer does, vs. someone still gives the school gerbils every year.

13. B: "Schoolroom" is one word, not two [(A), (D)]. A semicolon separates independent clauses or phrases containing internal commas, but is incorrect between a phrase and a clause [(C), (D)]. A comma, not a dash (E), is used between the introductory prepositional phrase and the independent clause it modifies.

14. D: The correct preposition with verbs expressing movement or placement is "into," not "in" [(A), (B), (C), (E)], a common error. We place something into a container, not in it; things move into the air, not in it. "In" denotes something is already there rather than moving/being moved there.

15. E: Since this entire conditional-subjunctive sentence construction is in the past, the correct conditional form is past perfect "If I had had" rather than present perfect "if I had" [(A), (B), (C)] with the present perfect subjunctive "I would have." The correct punctuation between conditional "if" and subjunctive "would" parts is always a comma, never a semicolon [(B), (D)] or a dash (C).

16. E: The present perfect intransitive "to lie" is "have lain," not "have lay" (A), "have laid" (B), or "had laid" (D), which latter two are only transitive, e.g. "She has laid the gloves on the bureau every day" or "I saw a pair of gloves she had laid on the bureau." The conditional "would lie" (C) is only grammatical with a conditional, e.g. "...would lie on the bureau all week unless you moved them," also conveying a different meaning.

17. A: Conditional-subjunctive ("If...then") constructions set in the past use past perfect ("If I had known") for the conditional, and present perfect ("I would have signed up") for the subjunctive, because "If" comes earlier and "then" later. Adding the subjunctive "would"/"could" to the conditional as well (B) is incorrect. Substituting the preposition "of" for the auxiliary verb "have" (C) is always incorrect. "Had been/could have been told" [(C), (D)] differs in meaning from "had known."

18. B: With conditional-subjunctive constructions, never add the subjunctive auxiliary verb (would/could/would have/could have) to the conditional (If) half [(A), (C), (E)]; it is only used in the subjunctive half. It is never correct to substitute the preposition "of" for the auxiliary verb "have" [(C), (D)].

19. E: To agree with the present-tense predicate "claims," the dependent clause must also be present-tense "make," not "made" (A). "Could be" (B) and "are" (C) alter the sentence meaning. "Make of" (D) is not a valid construction in this sentence structure, makes no sense, and means nothing.

20. D: "By next month" used together with "for two years" indicates something that will be completed in the future, so future perfect "will have been" is the correct tense. "Will be" [(A), (C)] means she will be mayor for two years beginning in the future. Moreover, "Mayor" [(A), (B)] is incorrectly capitalized: it is not used as a title/name here (like "Mayor Jones"). "Could have been" (E) changes the meaning.