

Item Position	Rationale	
1	Option B is correct	In paragraphs 1 and 2, the author supports the key idea that email can be the cause of constant interruptions during the workday. In paragraph 1, the author states that “the constant interruptions can be frustrating and reduce our productivity.” To strengthen this idea, the author quotes a worker who was “ ‘frazzled—just keeping up’ with the constant flow of email” (paragraph 2).
	Option A is incorrect	Although the author points out that “email continues to be the primary workplace communication method” (paragraph 1), the author does not comment on whether it is a secure way to communicate with others.
	Option C is incorrect	The author explains that email is currently considered “the primary workplace communication method” (paragraph 1) but suggests that “companies should replace the urgent demands of the inbox” with advancing technologies (paragraph 2). However, the author does not provide any evidence that email is becoming obsolete yet.
	Option D is incorrect	The author begins the selection by providing an example of when an employee might start the workday: “by checking email, responding to email, and sending new email” (paragraph 1). However, the author describes email as “a never-ending stream” of distractions (paragraph 2) and does not suggest a specific time of the workday in which it is most useful.

Item Position	Rationale	
2	Option C is correct	The author uses a compare-and-contrast organizational structure in paragraphs 4 through 6 most likely to reveal the advantages that result from replacing email with more immediate, personal communication methods. The author shows how people prefer “ ‘easier and more convenient’ ” methods of communicating, such as texting (paragraph 5). Additionally, the author explains that “members of Generation Z . . . prefer using technology such as videoconferencing along with text and voice messaging” for being productive and collaborative (paragraph 4).
	Option A is incorrect	The author explains that email is losing popularity because employees feel that “email puts ‘all your stressors in one area’ ” and “interrupts the flow” of the workday (paragraph 5). Instead, employees now prefer multiple methods of communication, such as text and voice messaging, videoconferencing, and Google Docs.
	Option B is incorrect	Although the author highlights that communication tools are meant to make interactions simpler and timelier, the main purpose of paragraphs 4 through 6 is to compare different ways of communicating and show why switching from email has benefits. The author discusses how email creates stress for employees, suggesting that the most important aspect of communication is convenience and balance.
	Option D is incorrect	The author refers to several types of communication tools and the different contexts in which those tools are most appropriate. However, the author uses a compare-and-contrast structure in paragraphs 4 through 6 most likely to show the benefits of replacing email, such as that people finding it “ ‘easier and more convenient to send a text than compose an email’ ” (paragraph 5).

Item Position	Rationale	
3	Option A is correct	In paragraph 4, the author explains that Gen Z employees prefer alternate ways of communicating to email. They prefer “tools [that] make them more productive and balanced in their work and personal lives” (paragraph 4). The author mentions various technologies, such as videoconferencing, texting, instant messaging, and collaborative software. Technology and the use of communication tools are constantly changing based on the needs of those who are using them.
	Option B is incorrect	The author includes Simmons’s quotation in paragraph 5 most likely to show that email has lost favor among younger workers because of the stress associated with it. Although the author demonstrates a change in generational attitudes toward technology, the author does not include information in this quotation that supports the idea that technology itself is constantly changing.
	Option C is incorrect	In paragraph 5, the author quotes from a recent survey most likely to show that email has become a significant source of stress for employees. The author uses this quotation to strengthen the claim that email should be replaced but does not include information in this quotation that supports the idea that communication technology is constantly changing.
	Option D is incorrect	The author suggests in paragraph 6 that companies that are changing the communication technology their employees use are seeing improvements, but the author does not suggest in this quotation that technology is constantly changing.

Item Position	Rationale	
4	Option C is correct	The author uses the word <i>balanced</i> in paragraph 4 to indicate that employees are using technology for “maximum harmony or satisfaction”—in both their personal and their professional lives.
	Option A is incorrect	The author does not provide any content in paragraph 4 to support the use of <i>balanced</i> to mean “able to remain fixed in place without wobbling or falling.”
	Option B is incorrect	Although the author includes a variety of examples of communication methods that employees use, the word <i>balanced</i> in paragraph 4 indicates that employees prefer tools that help them feel more satisfied and in harmony with others, not those “containing a good variety of ingredients, views, or other elements.”
	Option D is incorrect	In paragraph 4, the author focuses on the benefits and satisfaction from using technology in the workplace. The author does not include context to support the idea that <i>balanced</i> means “showing enough income to meet expenses.”

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Item Position	Rationale
5	For SCR items, please refer to the scoring guide.

Item Position	Rationale	
6	Option A is correct	Throughout the selection, the author suggests that people depend on everyday communication tools to be productive. The author describes how email started off in the 1970s as a “groundbreaking business practice” (paragraph 1) but has transformed into “a never-ending stream of distracting and time-consuming” messages (paragraph 2). While people in a modern society must depend on communication tools, the author suggests that using a variety of methods may be a better approach.
	Option B is incorrect	The author briefly mentions that employees “don’t even have to be in the office anymore” (paragraph 2) because there are communication tools that allow workers to be productive remotely. However, the author does not express the idea that people are now finding large office buildings to be obsolete.
	Option C is incorrect	Although the author notes that employees are working in busy environments, some sending and receiving “over 100 email messages a day” (paragraph 2), the author does not provide enough evidence in the selection to support the idea that people are more productive in these busy work environments.
	Option D is incorrect	The author explains that email has been in use since the 1970s but states that Gen Z workers prefer newer and varied forms of technology. The author uses this information to suggest that technology needs to change for people rather than people needing time to adjust to technology.

Item Position	Rationale	
7	Option D is correct	The author uses the phrase “never-ending stream” to describe that employees feel inundated by the number of emails they receive. The author uses language such as “burden,” “painfully,” “frazzled,” “constant flow,” and “urgent demands” (paragraph 2) to underscore the sense of hopelessness that workers feel from the onslaught of messages.
	Option A is incorrect	Although the author’s use of the phrase “never-ending stream” does evoke a sense of a large quantity, the author uses the phrase most likely to emphasize the hopelessness that employees feel from the number of email messages they receive. The author refers to “over 100 email messages a day” (paragraph 2) but does not refer to the number of tasks that each worker must accomplish.
	Option B is incorrect	The author explains that the emails are “distracting and time-consuming” and quotes one worker who says, “ ‘I’m frazzled—just keeping up’ ” (paragraph 2). However, the author does not refer to any creative methods that employees use to try to stay on top of their email inbox.
	Option C is incorrect	The author emphasizes that workers feel overwhelmed by the number of messages they receive but does not indicate that the workers consider the messages to be unnecessary.

Item Position	Rationale	
8	Option C is correct	In paragraph 7, the author uses emotional and bandwagon appeals to create a desire in readers to be like others who have embraced alternate communication methods. With phrases such as "Let us adopt" and "For our own well-being" (paragraph 7), the author appeals to readers' sense of belonging as well as their interest in living their best lives.
	Option A is incorrect	Although the author mentions that workers feel stressed and overwhelmed by the number of emails they receive, the author does not include any evidence that employers have too much control over employees' work lives. Instead, the author uses language such as "we should encourage" (paragraph 7) to suggest that workers have some power as well.
	Option B is incorrect	In paragraph 7, the author uses words such as "productivity" and "more efficient," which suggest that workers care about completing tasks quickly. However, the author uses words such as "Let us" and "our" and "we" (paragraph 7) to appeal to the reader's desire to be like others who have embraced new methods.
	Option D is incorrect	Even though the author urges readers to "encourage those who manage our work lives" to consider alternate communication tools, the author does not provide specific instructions about how to replace email with other forms of communication.

Item Position	Rationale	
9	Option B is correct	Throughout the article, the author demonstrates the ways in which email makes workers feel like they are falling behind. In paragraph 1, the author explains, "These notifications send a subliminal message to our brains that we had better stop what we're doing and check our email. The constant interruptions can be frustrating and reduce our productivity." When workers feel " 'an almost uncontrollable need' to stop work to check email" (paragraph 2), they feel stressed and as if they cannot keep up.
	Option A is incorrect	The author states many advantages of using email, including its speed: "It is easily accessible to everyone and inexpensive to use. Email reaches recipients immediately, and the same information can be sent to multiple people" (paragraph 3). However, the author does not mention how secure email is. Furthermore, the author's main claim is that, despite the convenience of email, people believe other "tools make them more productive and balanced in their work and personal lives" (paragraph 4).
	Option C is incorrect	Even though the author mentions the counterargument that email "provides the sender with a permanent record of transactions and communications that phone calls and video conferences may not," the author maintains that this "argument . . . fails to establish that [email] is better than newer technologies" (paragraph 3). Instead, the author argues that email causes people to feel like they are falling behind.
	Option D is incorrect	In paragraph 6, the author includes an example of one company that has made changes and is "seeing improvements in the workplace." The author's claim is strengthened by the idea that reducing emails can increase productivity, but the author does not suggest a widespread replacement of email.

Item Position	Rationale	
10	Option B is correct	In paragraphs 6 and 7 of the article “The Art and Practice of Mindfulness Meditation,” the author develops the key idea that mindfulness meditation can be helpful as part of an ongoing routine. The author explains, “People who meditate regularly are able to improve their stress-management skills . . . lower blood pressure, improve sleep quality, and aid in controlling a variety of medical conditions” (paragraph 6). The author cites a meditation expert who states, “ ‘The purpose of mindfulness meditation is to become mindful throughout all parts of our life’ ” (paragraph 7).
	Option A is incorrect	The author mentions how people “can practice mindfulness meditation on their own” (paragraph 7) but does not provide evidence to support the idea that meditating is most effective when done alone.
	Option C is incorrect	The author describes how meditation can increase people’s “imagination and creative abilities” (paragraph 6). However, the author does not include enough information to support the idea that meditation is often used for that purpose. The author suggests only that meditation can have that side effect. Furthermore, the author does not develop this idea in paragraphs 6 and 7.
	Option D is incorrect	In paragraph 6, the author explains that “meditation has been studied in many clinical trials.” Although the author cites the Mayo Clinic in paragraph 6, the author does not argue that more studies should be conducted on mindfulness meditation.

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Item Position	Rationale
11	For SCR items, please refer to the scoring guide.

Item Position	Rationale	
12	Option C is correct	A thesis statement is a statement that summarizes the overall idea of a piece of writing. The author of "The Art and Practice of Mindfulness Meditation" organizes the article into categories to explain how mindfulness meditation works and the positive results of practicing mindfulness meditation. The subheadings break the article into these two categories.
	Option A is incorrect	The author claims in paragraph 4 that "mindfulness meditation can be practiced anywhere, at any time." Even though this claim suggests that anyone can learn to meditate, the author does not provide any steps to follow. Instead, the author structures the information in the article into two categories: what mindfulness meditation is and what its benefits are.
	Option B is incorrect	In paragraph 4, the author explains that practitioners "must slow down enough to notice things around them and engage all of their senses—touch, sound, sight, smell, and taste." The author includes details in this section to show how mindfulness meditation can be done and the strong effects of mindfulness on emotions. However, the author does not provide information on even stronger effects of mindfulness on emotions to compare or contrast with the benefits of meditation in this nor a different section.
	Option D is incorrect	In the section "Benefits of Mindfulness Meditation," the author cites experts who have researched mindfulness meditation. Both the Mayo Clinic and expert Tara Brach suggest that mindfulness meditation can improve how people feel. However, the benefits of meditation are only one part of the article, along with ways to practice mindfulness meditation. The author uses a categorical structure to develop the thesis.

Item Position	Rationale	
13	Option D is correct	The author of “The Art and Practice of Mindfulness Meditation” includes details about how meditation spread most likely to develop the idea that many people throughout time have found mindfulness meditation to be beneficial.
	Option A is incorrect	The author includes historical information about meditation in paragraph 1, such as the facts that people have been practicing it “for thousands of years” and that “the oldest surviving images of meditation come from India and date from 5000 to 3500 BCE.” In paragraph 2, the author provides a quotation from the sixteenth century that relates to the benefits of meditation. This information helps the reader understand the historical context of meditation, but the author does not include details in these paragraphs about meditation’s continued existence or the ways in which people still find it useful.
	Option B is incorrect	The author provides information about the history of meditation from thousands of years ago but does not argue that this history is fascinating. Instead, the author points out that many people throughout time have found meditation to be useful.
	Option C is incorrect	Although the author includes information about how meditation has been practiced for centuries, the author does not demonstrate that meditation has changed a great deal over time. Instead, the author includes historical details to support the idea that people throughout time have found meditation to be useful.

Item Position	Rationale	
14	Option B is correct	A theme is a central message that conveys a universal idea about life. In the poem "Twilight," the speaker describes how the man finds it gratifying to sit in quiet reflection. In line 4, the speaker states, "There should be more time like this, to sit and dream," which demonstrates the theme that moments of quiet reflection can be enjoyable.
	Option A is incorrect	The speaker of the poem "Twilight" describes elements of nature as seen through the eyes of the man sitting at the window. The man sees "green things followed by golden things followed by whiteness—/abstractions from which come intense pleasures" (lines 10–11), but the poet uses these descriptions to reinforce how gratifying the man finds it to sit still and reflect. The speaker describes how beauty "falls away" and the man's attention shifts to other sensory delights, such as the sound of cicadas and the smell of lemon trees (lines 15–19). The poet develops the theme by showing how the man enjoys sitting in quiet reflection.
	Option C is incorrect	Although the speaker of the poem "Twilight" describes the seasons changing in lines 8 through 10, the poet includes these images to reinforce the idea that time passes while the man sits and enjoys quiet solitude. The poet does not include support for the idea that life is more meaningful when it includes variety.
	Option D is incorrect	Throughout the poem "Twilight," the speaker's use of imagery contributes to a relaxing, serene tone. However, the poet does not include evidence in the poem to support the idea that the man would rather relax than challenge himself. In the opening lines of the poem, the speaker suggests that the man works all day and uses the evenings to reflect quietly.

Item Position	Rationale	
15	Option D is correct	The poet uses a descriptive organizational structure in the first three stanzas of the poem "Twilight" to explain why the man finds satisfaction in sitting by the window. The poet describes the man sitting at the window at twilight, watching "green things followed by golden things followed by whiteness—/abstractions from which come intense pleasures" (lines 10–11).
	Option A is incorrect	In the opening stanza of the poem "Twilight," the poet describes the man's habit of sitting quietly: "when he gets home at night, he always sits at this one window" (line 2). Although it is evident that the man has developed a routine of sitting at the window, the poet does not provide information about when this routine began.
	Option B is incorrect	In the first stanza of the poem "Twilight," the poet describes the man sitting at his window each night and quotes that man's cousin, who tells him that "living takes you away from sitting" (line 6). This suggests that the man's cousin thinks that life responsibilities such as working - "living" - steals time away from "sitting and dreaming," but the poet does not indicate that the man feels the same way.
	Option C is incorrect	In stanza 3 of the poem "Twilight," the poet describes the colors of the seasons and how they bring the speaker happiness: "At dusk, the sun goes down in a haze of red fire between two poplars./It goes down late in summer—sometimes it's hard to stay awake." However, the most likely reason the poet includes this descriptive language is to explain why the man finds it so satisfying and pleasurable to sit at the window.

Item Position	Rationale	
16	Option B is correct	In the poem "Twilight," the speaker emphasizes an appreciation for time to sit and watch nature: "There should be more time like this, to sit and dream" (line 4). Based on lines 7 through 14, the reader can infer that the speaker observes nature closely and believes there should be more time to appreciate the beauty of what is outside the window.
	Option A is incorrect	Although the speaker of the poem uses the word "dream" in line 4, this line refers to the speaker's wish to have more time to sit idly dream. The speaker does not refer to the world of dreams anywhere else in the poem.
	Option C is incorrect	In the poem "Twilight," the speaker describes the seasons changing in lines 9 through 19; however, the speaker focuses on the beauty of these changes, not the order in which they occur.
	Option D is incorrect	The speaker and the man at the window do not interact in the poem "Twilight."

Item Position	Rationale	
17	Option A is correct	Mood in a text is when the author makes the reader feel a certain way through words or details. In lines 4 and 21 of the poem "Twilight," the poet creates a peaceful mood when the speaker expresses the desire for time to "sit and dream" and states that it is "easy to give things up."
	Option B is incorrect	In line 7 of the poem "Twilight," the poet uses the phrase "a squared-off landscape" to refer to the speaker's view of the world through a window. In line 20, "sleep takes this away also" refers to the brevity of the sights, sounds, and smells of nature at twilight. The poet does not use either phrase to create a forlorn, or lonely, mood.
	Option C is incorrect	In "Twilight" the poet states facts in lines 8 and 19. In line 8, the speaker reflects on how briefly the signs of a season are visible. In line 19, the speaker notes that scents can be experienced after twilight's darkness takes away nature's visible beauty. The poet does not create in either phrase a wistful, or longing, mood.
	Option D is incorrect	Although the speaker in the poem "Twilight" describes simple physical actions in lines 23 and 28, the poet's intended mood of the poem is emotional and reflective, not practical or concerned with the act of doing.

Item Position	Rationale	
18	Option B is correct	Both the author and the poet support the idea that paying attention to the senses is an effective way to enter a peaceful state. The author of the article "The Art and Practice of Mindfulness Meditation" explains that "when people are meditating in nature, their hearing feels sharper, their skin receptors feel more sensitive, and their perception of smell is enhanced" (paragraph 5). The senses the author describes are experienced when a person is feeling peaceful during meditation. The speaker of the poem "Twilight" describes the sounds of insects and the smells of trees and reflects that "sleep takes this away also" (line 20). The poet uses these details to support the idea that paying attention to one's senses is an effective way to reach a peaceful state of sleep.
	Option A is incorrect	The author of the article "The Art and Practice of Mindfulness Meditation" claims in paragraph 5 that "practicing mindfulness meditation outdoors provides an added bonus." The poet does not touch explicitly mention meditation at all - in the poem "Twilight."
	Option C is incorrect	The author of the article "The Art and Practice of Mindfulness Meditation" mentions heightened sensory awareness through meditation but does not indicate the need to focus on the senses in a specific order. Likewise, the poet of "Twilight" shows the speaker engaging in sights, sounds, and smells but does not suggest the speaker achieves mindfulness by attending to the senses in a prescribed order.
	Option D is incorrect	Although the author of the article "The Art and Practice of Mindfulness Meditation" states that "when meditating in nature, practitioners are aware of everything around them—sounds and smells, air and light—because their faculties of perception are elevated" (paragraph 5), the speaker of the poem "Twilight" does not suggest a heightened sense of smell and hearing when observing nature.

Item Position	Rationale	
19	Option A is correct	The author of the article "The Art and Practice of Mindfulness Meditation" focuses on providing an informative overview by using an organizational structure that includes information about the history, methodology, and benefits of the practice of meditation. In contrast, the poet of "Twilight" focuses on describing the speaker's observations in detail to help the reader form an impression of a person experiencing a ritual, not necessarily informing the reader about how to experience it.
	Option B is incorrect	In paragraph 3 of the article "The Art and Practice of Mindfulness Meditation," the author states that "there are many forms of meditation: spiritual, focused, mantra, and progressive, to name just a few." However, the author does not compare these various types of meditation. Although the speaker of the poem "Twilight" shows an appreciation for nature, the poet does not include details to suggest that the speaker's life is enriched by this appreciation.
	Option C is incorrect	The author of the article "The Art and Practice of Mindfulness Meditation" provides many advantages of meditation but does not describe any disadvantages. Instead, the author includes details that give an overview of the history, practice, and benefits of meditation. The poet of "Twilight" uses descriptive language to evoke the speaker's observations and appreciation of nature rather than the speaker's thought process during the nightly meditation.
	Option D is incorrect	Although the author of the article "The Art and Practice of Mindfulness Meditation" states that meditation can "help lower blood pressure, improve sleep quality, and aid in controlling a variety of medical conditions" (paragraph 6), the author includes this information as a benefit of meditation, not as the focus of the article. The poet of "Twilight" does suggest that the speaker has a peaceful nightly routine—"he always sits at this one window" (line 2)—but the poet's main reason for writing the poem is likely to share the impressions of a person during an evening ritual, not to encourage the development of a routine.

Item Position	Rationale	
20	Option C is correct	The author of “The Art and Practice of Mindfulness Meditation” includes the quotation from paragraph 4 and the poet of “Twilight” includes line 15 to imply that meditation can help people set aside their daily concerns. In the quotation from paragraph 4, the author explains that the act of focusing on “their breathing and what they are doing in the moment” helps those who practice mindful meditation set aside their worries. In line 15 of the poem, “everything falls away” for the speaker after sitting and observing nature at twilight. Both the author’s and the poet’s emphasis on the benefits of meditation helps the reader infer that meditation can help people with daily concerns.
	Option A is incorrect	The quotation provided by the author in paragraph 4 of the article “The Art and Practice of Mindfulness Meditation” and line 15 provided by the poet of the poem “Twilight” helps the reader infer that meditation can help people set aside their worries. Neither the quotation provided by the author nor the line provided by the poet implies that it can be challenging to stay focused during meditation.
	Option B is incorrect	Both the quotation provided by the author of the article “The Art and Practice of Mindfulness Meditation” and the line provided by the poet of the poem “Twilight” help the reader make inferences about creating distance from thoughts, not on analyzing or understanding them. Therefore, the quotation and the line provided by the author and the poet do not imply that meditation helps people understand their problems more clearly.
	Option D is incorrect	Neither the author of the article “The Art and Practice of Mindfulness Meditation” nor the poet of “Twilight” references time. There is no suggestion from either the author or the poet that it takes only a few minutes for meditation to be effective.

Item Position	Rationale	
21	Option C is correct	Tone is the author's use of words or phrases to show the way he or she feels about the subject. The author of the article "The Art and Practice of Mindfulness Meditation" uses the word "lauded" in paragraph 6, which means praise. Therefore, the reader can infer that the author feels positive about the usefulness of meditation. The poet uses the word "aroma" in line 19 of the poem "Twilight" to evoke the reader's sense of smell. The poet creates an expressive and meaningful tone to help the reader imagine what the speaker is experiencing.
	Option A is incorrect	The author of the article "The Art and Practice of Mindfulness Meditation" includes the phrase "stems from the Latin term" in paragraph 1 to state a fact about the word <i>meditation</i> . The author conveys information, not admiration. In the poem "Twilight," the poet reveals the speaker's acceptance of the fleeting quality of nature in line 21. The speaker's tone is not critical, or judgmental, of nature.
	Option B is incorrect	The author of the article "The Art and Practice of Mindfulness Meditation" uses the word "must" in paragraph 4 to impart a sense of authority. However, while the poet's language is appreciative in the poem "Twilight," the poet does not convey regret or sadness.
	Option D is incorrect	Although the author of the article "The Art and Practice of Mindfulness Meditation" does provide evidence about the benefits of mindfulness by citing clinical trials, the author is focused not on being impartial but on showing the reader that mindfulness meditation has many benefits. The poet of "Twilight" uses the speaker to provide a perspective of appreciation for stillness. However, the poet does this to impart wisdom or insight, not to inform.

Item Position	Rationale	
22	Option B is correct	In paragraph 4, the author directly states that the wildlife “soon grew accustomed” to this presence. When animals grow accustomed to a person, this means that they have accepted this person as a part of their surroundings.
	Option A is incorrect	In this quotation, the author explains why he “returned to the hills,” not whether the environment accepted him. This quotation is based on the author’s feelings about the city and the hills, not the ‘response of the animals in the forest to the author’s presence.
	Option C is incorrect	In paragraph 14, the author explains there was “at least one other regular visitor” to the stream. The author uses this quotation to convey to the reader that a spotted forktail visited the stream alongside the author. The author includes context for this statement: “though it did not fly away at my approach, it became restless if I stayed too long, and then it would move from boulder to boulder uttering a long complaining cry.” Through the additional context, the reader can understand that this quotation indicates that the animal did not accept the author’s presence.
	Option D is incorrect	The author explains that he decorated himself “with bracken fronds” to disguise himself in order to observe a bird. Therefore, this quotation suggests the opposite of acceptance, because the author indicates that he felt the need to hide or disguise himself because the bird did not accept his presence.

Item Position	Rationale	
23	Option C is correct	Imagery is the use of vivid language to represent objects, actions, or ideas. The author uses peaceful and positive imagery in paragraphs 11 and 12, including such details as “cool and green near the stream,” “ferns and maidenhair and long grasses continued to thrive,” and “water spangled gold and silver in the shafts of sunlight.” The author includes these details to describe the forest as beautiful and life-giving and to express admiration. Therefore, the reader can infer that the author felt in harmony with the forest and appreciated its beauty and worth.
	Option A is incorrect	The author uses imagery in paragraphs 11 and 12 that suggests an appreciation for the forest, not the belief that it should be used for practical purposes. Although the detail “Downstream I found a small pool where I could bathe” describes a practical use for the forest resources, this is not the focus of the imagery in these paragraphs.
	Option B is incorrect	The author’s descriptions evoke images of calm, peace, and beauty. The author does not include any details that would indicate that he felt overwhelmed. Instead, he felt the opposite.
	Option D is incorrect	The author does not mention writing or artistic inspiration in paragraphs 11 and 12.

Item Position	Rationale	
24	Option B is correct	Throughout the excerpt, the author describes how he “returned to the hills to renew [himself]” (paragraph 2). In paragraphs 17 and 18, he describes the patience and calm required to observe the forktail, showing that the natural setting allowed him to relax. The author also says that he “was beginning to feel that the place belonged to [him],” showing a sense of connection with nature (paragraph 13).
	Option A is incorrect	The author does not include any details in the excerpt that indicates he struggled to survive. Instead, he enjoyed his time in nature by exploring and observing wildlife.
	Option C is incorrect	Although the author recalls brief moments of fear, such as when he encountered the leopard (paragraphs 7–9), these moments do not define his overall experience in the forest. Instead, he recounts the experience as peaceful.
	Option D is incorrect	The author focuses on his experiences with the forest and animals, not on himself. He does not focus on his self-awareness. Instead, he became more aware of his surroundings.

Item Position	Rationale	
25	Option D is correct	The inclusion of the photograph helps the reader understand what the spotted forktail looks like and gain a deeper understanding of the author’s description of encountering the bird, in paragraphs 14 through 19.
	Option A is incorrect	The photograph of the forktail does not show the bird in a situation in which the reader might feel empathy for it. Instead, the photograph is included to convey what the spotted forktail looks like.
	Option B is incorrect	Although the caption included with the photograph states that the “spotted forktail is found in the Himalayas and in the hills of northeast India,” the bird’s natural habitat is not in the photograph. Only an image of the bird is shown.
	Option C is incorrect	Although the reader might find the spotted forktail beautiful based on the photograph provided, this is a subjective response and not something the reader could infer from the image and caption.

Item Position	Rationale	
26	Row 1, "Not Important to Include" is correct	A summary of the excerpt would not include this idea, because this is a detail about one specific animal instead of an idea that the author conveys throughout the excerpt.
	Row 2, "Important to Include" is correct	A summary of the excerpt would include this idea, because it provides an overall sense of the author's feelings about his experience.
	Row 3, "Not Important to Include" is correct	A summary of the excerpt would not include this idea, because this is a detail about one specific animal instead of an idea that the author conveys throughout the excerpt.
	Row 4, "Not Important to Include" is correct	A summary of the excerpt would not include this idea, because this is a detail about one specific animal instead of an idea that the author conveys throughout the excerpt.
	Row 5, "Important to Include" is correct	A summary of the excerpt would include this idea, because it describes a result produced by the author's actions and demeanor during his experience in the forest.

Item Position	Rationale	
27	Option D is correct	The word <i>sinewy</i> means lean, strong, and muscular. The author provides context for this word by describing the leopard's physical appearance on the rock. Leopards are known for their strength and muscular build. The author also describes the leopard springing away silently (paragraph 8), leading the reader to infer that the animal is strong and athletic.
	Option A is incorrect	In paragraph 6, the author does not include any character trait references that would show the leopard as "dignified and impressive." Instead, his perception of the leopard is focused on physical characteristics. The author does not observe the leopard with admiration.
	Option B is incorrect	The author does not use the word <i>sinewy</i> to describe the leopard's attitude, emotions, or behavior.
	Option C is incorrect	Although the leopard might be "apprehensive and tense," the author does not use the word <i>sinewy</i> to describe how the leopard might have felt emotionally. The author describes how the leopard looked physically.

Item Position	Rationale	
28	Option B is correct	In paragraphs 14 through 18, the author observed the forktail closely and noticed its behavior, noting that it was “restless” and made a “long complaining cry” (paragraph 14). He also tried to locate the forktail’s nest and “decorated [himself] with bracken fronds” (paragraph 16) to hide so that he could watch the bird. The author relates these actions in order to convey his strong curiosity and a desire to understand the forktail’s life.
	Option A is incorrect	The author does not include any details in the excerpt about conflict. The forktail did “object strongly” to the author’s presence (paragraph 17), but the author was observing the bird, not engaging in conflict with it. The author states, “I had no intention of robbing the bird: I was simply curious to see its home” (paragraph 16).
	Option C is incorrect	The author does not state that he wished to protect wildlife. Instead, he expresses a strong desire to observe the animals.
	Option D is incorrect	In paragraph 2, the author states that his reason for living in the hills was to renew himself, not to study birds. The author explains in paragraphs 14 through 18 what he experienced when he was in the forest, but he does not state that gaining these experiences was his purpose for spending time in the wilderness.

Item Position	Rationale	
29	Option D is correct	In paragraph 13, the author states, "The hill station's summer visitors had not discovered this haven of wild and green things. I was beginning to feel that the place belonged to me, that this dominion was mine." The author's description of the place as a "haven," or place of safety and refuge, creates an image of solitude. The author says that the lack of summer visitors allowed the place to belong to him, suggesting that he valued this solitude.
	Option A is incorrect	In this detail from paragraph 1, the author describes the setting and what was growing there, but through it he does not make any reference to being alone or valuing his solitude.
	Option B is incorrect	Although the author is alone while he observed the animals, his description of "the sunlit hillside" (paragraph 5) does not create an image of a person who valued being alone.
	Option C is incorrect	Although the reader might perceive "brown and dry" hills as deserted, the author does not include this detail to convey that he valued solitude.

Item Position	Rationale	
30	Option A is correct	A motif is a distinctive, recurring, and meaningful image, idea, or symbol that reflects, develops, or explains a theme in a literary work. Throughout the excerpt, the author uses sound and silence to emphasize the animals' feelings of alarm or comfort. The author describes the langoors' "grunting and chattering" when they sensed danger (paragraph 6) and the "shower of pebbles . . . rattling down the steep hillside" (paragraph 6) just before the author saw the leopard. In paragraph 18, the forktail "quietened down" when the author sat patiently and quietly. The motifs highlight how the animals responded to sound and silence and how the narrator read those signals.
	Option B is incorrect	Although the author comments that he "had lived in cities too long" (paragraph 2), this is the only time that he mentions any contrast between cities and nature.
	Option C is incorrect	The main purpose of the motifs of sound and silence is to express the safety and comfort of the animals, not the author. Although the author did have some encounters that caused concern for his safety in the wilderness, the sounds that happened during these times are included to show the reader that the animals showed him when a situation might be dangerous.
	Option D is incorrect	Although the sounds in paragraph 6 and the silence of the leopard's movements in paragraph 8 emphasize the leopard's intimidating presence, the author does not present the animal as aggressive. Instead, the leopard "seemed a little puzzled" on first encountering the author and "melted into the shadows" (paragraph 8).

Item Position	Rationale
31	The student response below has been identified by Texas educators as meeting the requirements for a 10-point (maximum score) response based on the rubric criteria. For additional information, refer to the English II scoring guide available on the STAAR Reading Language Arts Resources webpage. Language is an extremely powerful tool. When used to describe, words and their tone can sway one's perception about any subject. In this excerpt from "The Leopard" by Ruskin Bond, the author uses curiously observant and suspenseful language to build up to the encounter with the leopard in paragraph 19. Although the main encounter with the leopard is in paragraph 19, it is not the first one. In paragraph 6, after hearing the "[animals] chattering in the trees" and knowing that "[the author] was not the cause of their excitement", the leopard makes its first appearance. While the build up to this meeting was suspenseful, there is even more afterwards. The leopard "sprang away ... making absolutely no sound as it melted into the shadows", leaving the reader wondering where the leopard has gone and what its intentions were. The author does not see the leopard for weeks, but describes how they are aware of its presence. This further makes the reader think about the leopard's intentions and what it will do on their next meeting. Because the author guaranteed another encounter with the leopard after its first off-putting appearance, it is clear that suspenseful language is used throughout the excerpt to build up to the final encounter. To pair with the suspenseful language, the author is also curiously observant during the entire excerpt. Since the first paragraphs, the author describes the animals they see and how they react. An example of this is right before the author's second meeting with the leopard- what the build up has been leading to. While attempting to discover a certain bird's nest, the author says their intentions themselves- " ... I was simply curious to see its home." Their intentions match up with their actions as they "[sit] perfectly still for about ten minutes" in hopes to see the bird's home. The author is dedicated to observing the bird's home, so much so that they summoned their reserves of patience to sit still for longer than they usually would. Right after this, the leopard encounter ensues, and the author's curiosity remains apparent. Through the author's curiosity and suspenseful language, the build up to the final encounter with the leopard becomes satisfying. The reader has been left to wonder about the leopard's location and intentions since the beginning of the excerpt, and the author's curious dedication to find the bird's home leads straight into it. With different words and tone, readers could have been afraid of the second encounter with the leopard and not want it to happen- but with the author's build up strategy, the reader craves to see it.

Item Position	Rationale	
32	Option A is correct	By adding this sentence, the writer connects the dictionary definition of sport (given in sentence 3) with the activity of dance. This strengthens her introduction since it further explains the reasoning behind her claim that the dictionary supports the idea that dance is a sport.
	Option B is incorrect	Knowing that there are cave drawings that depict ancient Egyptians dancing is not relevant to the writer's argument in this paper. Adding this sentence would not improve the introduction.
	Option C is incorrect	This claim about expressing emotions through dance is not related to the definition of "sport" mentioned in sentence 3, so it would not provide support for the writer's main claim in this opening paragraph.
	Option D is incorrect	While this statement about sports may be true, it is not directly relevant to the writer's purpose of arguing that dance should be considered a sport.

Item Position	Rationale	
33	Option D is correct	Sentence 9 is a clear and effective sentence. It does not need to be revised.
	Option A is incorrect	By using "soccer players and dancers" as the subject of the first clause, the writer claims that both groups "run up and down the field." This is an inaccurate statement, and it is not what the writer intends in sentence 9.
	Option B is incorrect	This revision changes the meaning of sentence 9. The clause "and some dancers do too" mistakenly implies that like soccer players, some dancers "run up and down the field for 90 minutes."
	Option C is incorrect	Here the writer misplaces the original reference to "90 minutes or longer," thus creating an awkward and confusing revision of sentence 9.

Item Position	Rationale	
34	Option B is correct	A transition is a word, phrase, or sentence that connects topics or ideas. The phrase "In fact" is the most effective transition to use in connecting sentence 12 to sentence 11. It indicates that the writer now intends to present a fact that supports and expands her claim in sentence 11 concerning the athletic traits and training required of dancers.
	Option A is incorrect	The transition word "Likewise" does not capture the exact relation between sentences 11 and 12. In sentence 12, the writer is not just making another, independent claim about dancers. Instead, she is adding a supporting detail about how dancers undergo serious physical training.
	Option C is incorrect	Using this option as a transition into sentence 12 would misrepresent the sentence's relation to sentence 11. "Meanwhile" has the same meaning as "at the same time," which is not what the writer intends here.
	Option D is correct	The phrase "To summarize" would be appropriate as the transition into a sentence in which the writer sums up, or brings together, her previous claims or reasons. However, it would not be a good fit in this context, where the writer is presenting a new detail to support her claim in sentence 11.

Item Position	Rationale	
35	Option D is correct	Sentence 20 should be removed. This biographical information about Stecklein is not relevant to the writer's argument in the paragraph or the paper as a whole.
	Option A is incorrect	Sentence 16 should be kept since it serves as the fourth paragraph's topic sentence, a sentence that should capture the subject of the entire paragraph.
	Option B is incorrect	In sentence 18, the writer gives the reason why dancers must often give up their "other activities and interests" (sentence 17). This is a key point that supports the writer's claim that dance, like other sports, requires "diligence and sacrifice" (sentence 16).
	Option C is incorrect	The writer makes important use of the quotation in sentence 19 to emphasize how frequently dancers must work out and practice. This supports the main idea of the paragraph, so sentence 19 should not be deleted.

Item Position	Rationale	
36	Option B is correct	The adjective “aspiring” properly applies to someone who hopes to get or become something. In sentence 22, the people who try out for a place on the Rangerettes team can best be described as hopeful, or aspiring, dancers.
	Option A is incorrect	An imposing figure is someone who is quite large, impressive, or intimidating. There is no support in the paper for the idea that dancers who try out to become Rangerettes are especially imposing.
	Option C is incorrect	To ponder something is to think deeply about it, perhaps weighing out its pros and cons. The word “pondering” cannot be used to accurately describe these dancers who are focused on trying to join the dance team.
	Option D is incorrect	Since the word “ascending” means “rising” or “going up,” it does not capture the writer’s intention in sentence 22. As she points out in this paragraph, not every dancer who tries out will succeed in making the team.

Item Position	Rationale	
37	Option C is correct	The closing sentence of a paragraph should capture the overall idea of the paragraph or emphasize an important point in the storyline. The third paragraph in this story gives more details about Jonah's search for a job. This new sentence improves the closing of the paragraph because it describes how Jonah feels about his job search thus far.
	Option A is incorrect	In this sentence, the writer merely repeats information about Jonah that has already been conveyed clearly in the story's opening paragraph. Thus, this option does not capture or emphasize anything related specifically to the topic of the third paragraph.
	Option B is incorrect	This claim about Jonah's hopes of becoming a better swimmer does not capture the overall idea of the paragraph, so this cannot be an appropriate closing sentence.
	Option D is incorrect	Adding this detail about Jonah's background as a swimmer does not sum up the details presented in this paragraph, so it is not an effective closing sentence.

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Item Position	Rationale
38	For SCR items, please refer to the scoring guide.

Item Position	Rationale	
39	Option B is correct	As the writer made clear in sentences 13–16, Jonah’s first reaction to the idea of working at the bookstore is to think of reasons why this job wouldn’t fit him. In this context, it makes good sense to state in sentence 21 that Jonah is “still a bit skeptical,” since the word “skeptical” means “filled with doubts.”
	Option A is incorrect	The adjective “irritable” applies to someone who is easily irritated or prone to angry outbursts. There is no support in the story for the idea that Jonah ever displays this sort of behavior.
	Option C is incorrect	To be passionate about something is to have strong, abiding feelings and commitment toward that thing. The context surrounding sentence 21 provides no evidence that the word “passionate” applies to Jonah and his attitude toward working at a bookstore.
	Option D is incorrect	People are said to be “impulsive” when they make quick, unreasoned decisions or actions. This adjective does not fit the context here, where Jonah is reconsidering the benefits of applying for a job at the bookstore.

Item Position	Rationale	
40	Option B is correct	This new sentence reports something important that Jonah discovers in his online research about the bookstore. The best place to add this sentence is directly after sentence 19, in which he is described as going to his computer "to find out more."
	Option A is incorrect	In sentence 18, Jonah has not yet begun to look further into the job at the bookstore. It would not make good sense to insert a sentence about what he finds out before he has even started to look for information.
	Option C is incorrect	Sentence 20 is used to signal a change in Jonah's outlook toward working at the store, based on his love of animals. But this change must follow, not precede, his learning that the bookstore allows people to bring their pets. The new sentence should not be placed after sentence 20.
	Option D is incorrect	Placing the new sentence after sentence 22 would not properly represent the sequence of events in the fifth paragraph. By this point in the story, Jonah has already applied for and gotten the job.

Item Position	Rationale	
41	Option C is correct	In sentence 27, the writer repeats a point that has already been made in sentence 26—that the manager wants Jonah to get “to know the layout of the store.” Daniela should remove sentence 27 from this paragraph.
	Option A is incorrect	The writer uses sentence 23 to introduce the action in the sixth paragraph by mentioning Jonah’s initial nervousness on his first day at the new job. This information is essential to understanding the impact of the events that follow.
	Option B is incorrect	Sentence 24 serves to describe how the store manager puts Jonah at ease with her kindness and patience. This is a crucial follow-up to the description of Jonah’s nervousness in sentence 23.
	Option D is incorrect	The reader learns in sentence 28 that the bookstore sells a variety of books, some of which Jonah finds interesting, and also has a cafe that helps brighten his outlook. This sentence advances the story and should not be removed.

Item Position	Rationale	
42	Option D is correct	There is no need to revise sentence 33. It is clearly and effectively written as it stands.
	Option A is incorrect	Here the writer’s misplacement of the phrase “working at a bookstore” makes it unclear what the phrase “there is a lot more” applies to. The result is a confusing sentence.
	Option B is incorrect	By introducing the phrase “that was more,” the writer has produced an awkward and wordy revision that is less effective than the original sentence.
	Option C is incorrect	This revision is an awkward and misleading sentence that does not express what the writer means to convey in sentence 33.

Item Position	Rationale	
43	Option C is correct	In writing the phrase "European country," it is correct to capitalize "European" since that word derives from the name "Europe," which refers to a specific continent. The word "country," however, should not be capitalized since it is not being used as a proper noun that refers to a specific person, place, idea, or event.
	Option A is incorrect	The subject of sentence 4 is the singular noun phrase "this small European country." Therefore, the singular verb phrase "does have" is correct here. Changing "does" to "do" would create a subject-verb agreement error.
	Option B is incorrect	Inserting a comma after "small" would separate this adjective from the noun phrase ("European country") that it applies to. This would introduce a punctuation error into sentence 4.
	Option D is incorrect	Since sentence 4 includes a capitalization error, that error needs to be corrected.

Item Position	Rationale	
44	Option D is correct	Sentence 7 contains a comma splice error, an error in which two or more main clauses are joined incorrectly. In this option, the writer corrects the comma splice by separating sentence 7 into two independent clauses, each of which now stands alone as a complete sentence.
	Option A is incorrect	Here the first punctuated phrase is a sentence fragment, or an incomplete sentence. This is not an acceptable way to rewrite sentence 7.
	Option B is incorrect	Here too, the first punctuated phrase is a sentence fragment that cannot stand alone as a complete sentence.
	Option C is incorrect	In this option, the second punctuated phrase ("Always are in motion") lacks a subject, which makes it another sentence fragment.

Item Position	Rationale	
45	Option A is correct	Using the preposition “into” in sentence 8 does not make good sense. Using the preposition “alongside” better expresses the location of the tectonic plates in relation to the area that is now Iceland.
	Option B is incorrect	In sentence 8, the phrase “what is now Iceland” is used to refer to a single place in the ocean. Changing the singular verb “is” to its plural form (“are”) would produce a subject–verb agreement error in the phrase.
	Option C is incorrect	There is no good reason to insert a comma after “Iceland” in this sentence.
	Option D is incorrect	As stated in sentence 8, the writer is describing what happened “many years ago.” Thus, the past-tense verb “started” is used correctly in this context, and the present-tense “start” would be incorrect.

Item Position	Rationale	
46	Option D is correct	In this option, the writer combines sentences 9 and 10 to form a single independent clause that can stand alone as a complete and effective sentence.
	Option A is incorrect	Here the second punctuated phrase is a fragment (a group of words that is not a complete sentence). It has no verb, so this phrase cannot be used to make a statement.
	Option B is incorrect	This option features a comma-splice error, which occurs when two independent clauses (each of which can stand alone as a complete sentence) are joined only with a comma.
	Option C is incorrect	The phrase “Which formed the island of Iceland” is punctuated as if it were a sentence, but it is not. It is a sentence fragment, an incomplete sentence. Therefore, this cannot be the correct answer.

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Item Position	Rationale	
47	Option B is correct	By replacing "erruptions" with "eruptions," the writer corrects the spelling error in sentence 3.
	Option A is incorrect	"Erruptions" is a misspelling of the word the writer intends to use in this sentence.
	Option C is incorrect	The proper spelling of "eruptions" is not "erupptions."
	Option D is incorrect	This option is another misspelling of the word "eruptions."

Item Position	Rationale	
48	Option B is correct	The clause "Glimpsing a big white house at the end of a long, winding driveway" is a subordinate clause, a clause that cannot stand alone as a complete sentence. A comma is required after a subordinate clause at the beginning of a sentence, so the writer needs to insert a comma after "driveway."
	Option A is incorrect	Replacing "Glimpsing" with "She glimpses" would create a comma splice error, an error that occurs when two independent clauses are connected only with a comma.
	Option C is incorrect	The writer narrates the story by using past-tense verbs such as "reached" and "jumped." Changing "began to drive" (past tense) to "begins to drive" (present tense) would not be consistent with this context.
	Option D is incorrect	The word "toward" is spelled correctly in this sentence and should not be replaced by the incorrect "toword."

Item Position	Rationale	
49	Option B is correct	By changing “decides” to “decided,” the writer corrects the verb-tense error in sentence 5. The writer uses past-tense verbs throughout this story to describe Carla’s actions, so the present-tense verb “decides” is out of place.
	Option A is incorrect	Substituting “So” for “She” would turn sentence 5 into a sentence fragment, an incomplete sentence that cannot stand on its own to make a statement.
	Option C is incorrect	The adverb “slowly” is correct in this sentence since the word is being used to describe how Carla will back down the driveway. The word “slower” is an adjective that cannot be applied to the verb “back.”
	Option D is incorrect	Inserting a comma here would create a punctuation error in this sentence. The comma would separate the adjective (“S-shaped”) from the noun it modifies (“driveway”).

Item Position	Rationale	
50	Option A is correct	The writer reports in sentence 6 how difficult it was to back down the driveway, compared with how difficult Carla had expected it to be. The correct way to express this comparison is to use the conjunction “than” after a comparative adverb such as “harder.” The adverb “then” cannot play this role.
	Option B is incorrect	Shifting to the future-tense verb “will expect” makes no sense in the context of this story in which the writer consistently uses past-tense verbs.
	Option C is incorrect	The singular pronoun “it” is used correctly to refer to the (singular) act of navigating backward down the driveway. The plural pronoun “them” cannot take the place of “it.”
	Option D is incorrect	Since the word “then” is misused in place of “than,” sentence 6 does need to be changed.

Item Position	Rationale	
51	Option D is correct	In sentence 7, two independent clauses (clauses that can stand alone as complete sentences) are connected only with a comma, which creates a run-on sentence. In this option, the writer corrects the error by inserting the conjunction “so” to combine the two clauses properly.
	Option A is incorrect	Here the second punctuated phrase lacks a main verb and is therefore a sentence fragment, or incomplete sentence.
	Option B is incorrect	In this option, the second punctuated phrase is another sentence fragment, this time in the form of a long prepositional phrase. It cannot stand alone as a complete sentence.
	Option C is incorrect	In this attempt to rewrite sentence 7, the writer has constructed another run-on sentence, so this is not a successful correction of the error.

Item Position	Rationale	
52	Option C is correct	It is clear from the context that the writer intends to refer here to Carla. For this purpose, the plural pronoun "they" must be replaced by the singular pronoun "she."
	Option A is incorrect	"Hesitently" is not the correct way to spell the word "hesitantly." This change should not be made.
	Option B is incorrect	The adverb "around" is used effectively in the phrase "around to the back of the car," where the writer indicates where Carla walked. Replacing "around" with "about" might mislead the reader by suggesting that she didn't quite get to where she was going.
	Option D is incorrect	Changing "had done" to "had did" would introduce an incorrect past-perfect form of the irregular verb "do."