

PASSAGE IV: Pinball and Chance

[1]

Doesn't anyone play pinball anymore? I was disappointed the other day when I took my kids to a game arcade. Afterwards, I went to the movies. ⁴⁶ Not one of the many colorful machines with flashing lights were a ⁴⁷ pinball machine. Video games filled the room.

[2]

[1] I can understand why video games might seem more attractive than pinball. [2] Video screens which have been ⁴⁸ populated by movie stars, monsters, and heroes. [3] You can blow up cities, escape from dungeons, and battle all sorts of villains. [4] Pinball machines, on the other hand, are essentially all the same. [5] Some machines are bigger and fancier than others, but the object of pinball never changes: you have to keep a steel ball in play long enough to rack up a high score and win a free game. ^[49]

[3]

The attractions of video games, however, are superficial and short-lived. As you guide your character through the game's challenges, you come to know exactly how the machine that's built to last ⁵⁰ will respond to your every move. He or she learns ⁵¹ where the hazards lurk and the special weapons are hidden. Pinball, though, ⁵² can't be predicted with such accuracy. You never know when the ball will drain straight down the middle, out of reach of both flippers. Then again, you can sometimes get lucky, and a ball you thought was lost, will ⁵³ inexplicably bounce back into play.

[4]

It is the element of chance that makes pinball more interesting than video games. ⁵⁴ Most video games are designed so that your main opponent in these video games ⁵⁵ is a predictable computer program. Once you have mastered a game, the challenge is gone, and you must look ⁵⁶ for a new game to conquer. After you learn the new game, you get bored again. The cycle keeps repeating. But in pinball, you have three factors to consider: you, the machine, and

chance, which is sometimes your enemy⁵⁷ sometimes your ally. No matter how many games you play on any pinball machine, the various times of each⁵⁸ game is different. That's what makes pinball a continually⁵⁹ challenge.

46.

F. NO CHANGE

G. I made my way to the movie theater after that.

H. (The movie theater was my next stop.)

J. OMIT the underlined portion.

47.

A. NO CHANGE

B. was a

C. were an actual

D. would have been an actual

48.

F. NO CHANGE

G. that are

H. are

J. OMIT the underlined portion.

49. For the sake of the logic and coherence of Paragraph 2, Sentence 4 should be:

A. placed where it is now.

B. placed after Sentence 1.

C. placed after Sentence 5.

D. OMITTED, because the paragraph focuses only on video games.

50.

F. NO CHANGE

G. machine, which is constructed durably,

H. machine, which is built to last,

J. machine

51.

A. NO CHANGE

B. We learn

C. You learn

D. People learned

52. Which of the following alternatives to the underlined portion would be LEAST acceptable?

F. therefore,

G. however,

H. by contrast,

J. on the contrary,

53.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. lost will
- C. lost, will,
- D. lost will,

54. Which choice would most effectively and appropriately lead the reader from the topic of Paragraph 3 to that of Paragraph 4?

- F. NO CHANGE
- G. Pinball does share certain similarities with video games.
- H. Pinball, although less challenging than video games, can still be fun to play.
- J. Video games do generally evolve into subsequent editions or enhanced versions.

55.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. during these video games
- C. in video games
- D. OMIT the underlined portion.

56.

- F. NO CHANGE
- G. you then looked
- H. one then looks
- J. one must look

57.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. enemy,
- C. enemy;
- D. enemy, and,

58.

- F. NO CHANGE
- G. each
- H. each single unique
- J. every single time, each

59.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. continuously
- C. continual
- D. continue

Question 60 asks about the preceding passage as a whole.

60. Suppose the writer had chosen to write an essay that indicates that pinball is superior to video games. Would this essay fulfill the writer's goal?

F. No, because the writer admits that video games have become more popular than pinball machines.

G. No, because the writer states that video games are designed to challenge the skills of the player.

H. Yes, because the writer claims that pinball games require luck and are more visually attractive than video games.

J. Yes, because the writer suggests that it is more difficult to become skilled at a pinball machine than at a video game.

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Question 46. The best answer is J because the paragraph is more focused when the underlined portion is omitted. Mentioning the writer's trip to the movies diverts the reader's attention from the focus of the paragraph, which is a description of the game arcade.

The best answer is NOT:

F because adding information about the writer's trip to the movies is irrelevant to this paragraph and should be omitted. If you read the entire paragraph, you will see that this information does not belong.

G because it is incorrect in the same way that **F** is. It adds information that distracts the reader from the main focus of this introductory paragraph.

H because it is incorrect in the same way that **F** and **G** are. Even though this information is set off by parentheses, it still distracts the reader and is irrelevant.

Question 47. The best answer is B because the past tense (*was*) is consistent with the rest of the paragraph. In addition, the singular verb *was* is in agreement with the singular subject *one*.

The best answer is NOT:

A because the subject and verb do not agree in number. The subject *one* is singular and therefore requires a singular verb. The verb *were* is plural.

C because, again, the subject and verb do not agree. The subject *one* is singular, and the verb *were* is plural and therefore incorrect.

D because the past conditional tense (*would have been*) is inappropriate and confusing. In addition, adding the adjective *actual* would make the sentence unnecessarily wordy.

Question 48. The best answer is H because it provides the predicate *are*, which produces a complete sentence. A statement that has no predicate is a sentence fragment (an incomplete sentence).

The best answer is NOT:

F because placing the relative pronoun *which* between the subject ("Video screens") and predicate ("have been populated") creates a sentence fragment.

G because it is incorrect in the same way that **F** is. In this case, the relative pronoun *that* is placed between the subject and predicate.

J because it fails to provide a predicate, which creates another incomplete sentence.

Question 49. The best answer is A because it provides the most logical sequence of sentences for this paragraph. Sentence 4 provides a necessary link between the description of the video games in Sentences 1 through 3 and the description of the pinball machines in Sentence 5. In Sentence 4, the phrase "on the other hand" signals that this sentence is going to provide a contrasting point of view. In this case, the writer contrasts video games and pinball machines.

The best answer is NOT:

B because if Sentence 4 were placed right after Sentence 1, the paragraph would be incoherent, illogical, and confusing. Placing Sentence 4 here would interrupt the description of the video games with a comment about pinball machines.

C because placing Sentence 4 after Sentence 5 would confuse readers. They would not understand that the phrase "Some machines" in Sentence 5 actually refers to pinball machines. Also, the transitional phrase "on the other hand" in Sentence 4 does not logically follow the information in Sentence 5.

D because omitting Sentence 4 would confuse readers. The transition that Sentence 4 provides is a necessary link between the description of the video games in Sentences 1 through 3 and the description of the pinball machines in Sentence 5.

Question 50. The best answer is J because information about the durability of video games is not relevant to the writer's argument in this paragraph. The main point of the paragraph is that video games are more predictable than pinball machines. Adding information about how video games are "built to last" or are "constructed durably" distracts the reader.

The best answer is NOT:

F because, as stated above, information about how the machines have been "built to last" diverts the reader from the main focus of the paragraph.

G because it is incorrect in the same way that **F** is. Adding the irrelevant information that the machine "is constructed durably" is distracting to the reader.

H because it is incorrect in the same way that **G** and **F** are.

Question 51. The best answer is C because it maintains the second-person (*You*) perspective that is used throughout this paragraph. It is important to note that the writer is using the second-person point of view in this paragraph to speak directly to and draw in the reader. Consider the sentence preceding this one: "As *you* guide *your* character through the game's challenges, *you* come to know how the machine will respond to *your* every move."

The best answer is NOT:

A because it fails to maintain a consistent viewpoint. It makes an illogical shift from the second person (*You*) to the third person singular (*He or she*).

B because it makes an illogical shift from the second person (*You*) to the first person plural (*We*).

D because it not only shifts from second person (*You*) to third person (*People*), but it also illogically shifts from present tense (*learn*) to past tense (*learned*).

Question 52. The best answer is F. Notice that this question asks for the *least* acceptable answer. In other words, the best answer is the weakest choice. If you read the paragraph carefully, you will see that the idea presented in this sentence (pinball is unpredictable) is meant to contrast with the idea in the preceding sentence (video games are predictable). Given this context, using the transitional word *therefore* at this point is illogical and confusing.

The best answer is NOT:

G because it is an acceptable alternative to *though*, providing the same logical transition.

H because it also provides an acceptable alternative to *though*.

J because, along with **G** and **H**, it provides an acceptable alternative to *though*.

Question 53. The best answer is B because the absence of a comma here creates the clearest and most understandable sentence.

The best answer is NOT:

A because it places an unnecessary and distracting comma between the subject clause ("a ball you thought was lost") and the predicate ("will ... bounce").

C because it sets off the auxiliary (helping) verb *will* for no logical reason.

D because it places an unnecessary and distracting comma between the auxiliary verb *will* from the main verb *bounce*.

Question 54. The best answer is F because it most effectively links the topic of Paragraph 3 (pinball is less predictable than video games) and the topic of Paragraph 4 (the element of chance makes pinball more interesting than video games).

The best answer is NOT:

G because it fails to provide an effective link between the topics of the two paragraphs, as described above. This choice undermines the writer's argument by saying that pinball games are similar to video games.

H because it, too, fails to provide an effective transition from Paragraph 3 to Paragraph 4. **H** also contradicts the writer's previously stated point that pinball is challenging.

J because, like **G** and **H**, it provides an ineffective transition between the ideas presented in the two paragraphs. In addition, if you inserted this sentence at the beginning of Paragraph 4, the next sentence would not logically follow.

Question 55. The best answer is D because it results in the clearest and most concise response. In other words, it avoids redundancy (repeating the same idea) and wordiness.

The best answer is NOT:

A because it is redundant. At this point in the sentence, it is already clear that the writer is referring to "these video games."

B because it is incorrect for the same reason that **A** is.

C because it is incorrect in the same way that **A** and **B** are.

Question 56. The best answer is F because it maintains the second-person (*you*), present tense perspective that is used in the surrounding text. Notice that the preceding sentence establishes the second-person point of view: "Once *you* have mastered a game." (This question is similar to question 51.)

The best answer is NOT:

G because it makes a confusing tense shift in this sentence from the present perfect tense ("you have mastered") to the past tense ("you then looked").

H because it makes an illogical shift from the second-person plural (*you*) to the third person (*one*).

J because it, too, makes an illogical shift from the second-person plural (*you*) to the third person (*one*).

Question 57. The best answer is B because the comma between these two noun phrases ("sometimes your enemy" and "sometimes your ally") provides clarity for this sentence.

The best answer is NOT:

A because without the comma there, the statement becomes ambiguous and confusing. It's hard to tell whether the second *sometimes* is modifying *your enemy* or *your ally*.

C because it improperly uses a semicolon between these two noun phrases. By the way, those phrases are called "predicate nouns" because they follow the linking verb *is*.

D because even though the conjunction *and* could be used between these two sentence elements, setting off the conjunction with commas is inappropriate and confusing.

Question 58. The best answer is G because it provides the most concise way to make the writer's point.

The best answer is NOT:

F because it is vague and unnecessarily wordy. In addition, it creates a clause that lacks subject-verb agreement. The subject *times* is plural and requires a plural verb, not the singular verb *is*.

H because it is redundant (it repeats the same idea). In this sentence, *each*, *single*, and *unique* all mean the same thing.

J because the phrases "every single time" and "each" make this sentence wordy and repetitive.

Question 59. The best answer is C because it provides an adjective (*continual*) for the noun that it precedes (*challenge*).

The best answer is NOT:

A because the adverb *continually* lacks a neighboring sentence element that it can modify (a verb or an adjective).

B because the adverb *continuously* faces the same problem of lacking something to modify.

D because the verb form *continue* is simply out of place here between the article *a* and the noun *challenge*.

Question 60. The best answer is J because throughout the essay, the writer suggests that "pinball is superior" by making the argument that pinball requires more skill and is more challenging than video games. It is reasonable to conclude, then, that this essay fulfilled the writer's goal.

The best answer is NOT:

F because the writer does suggest in this essay that video games "might seem more attractive than pinball," but this has nothing to do with the writer's goal of writing an essay that shows pinball as being superior to video games.

G because this choice can be ruled out for two reasons: first, the essay does fulfill the writer's goal, and second, the writer does not say that video games challenge the skills of the player.

H because this answer states that the essay does fulfill the writer's goal, but the reason given is not accurate. The writer never states that pinball games "are more visually attractive than video games."