

Grammar Drill (Chapter 7)

- 1 B Looking at the answer choices, you might notice that there are two potential errors to check: pronoun agreement and tense. Why? Because the answers contained two different pronouns and two different verb tenses. Let's check pronouns first. In the original underlined portion of the sentence, "one" is a pronoun. Does it agree with the other pronouns in the same sentence? Not really. The author begins the passage by addressing "you." It is confusing and incorrect to change to "one" in the same sentence. Which answer choice uses "you" correctly? The correct answer is (B).
- 2 H Checking the answer choices, we see that the question seems to revolve around verb tense. The sentence is describing something that happened yesterday, so we can expect that the sentence should be in some form of the past tense. Two events take place in this sentence. The author woke up, and the alarm clock failed to go off. Which of these two events happened first, thus causing the other? If you said that the failure of the alarm clock took place before the author woke up, you were absolutely correct. When two events occur in the past, but one occurs before the other, the sentence requires the past perfect. The correct answer is (H).
- 3 D The answer choices here offer us the choice of the adverb "previously" or the adjective "previous." To decide which is correct, we need to know to what "previously" (or "previous") is referring. The word being modified here is "evening," which we all know is a noun. The correct modifier of a noun is an adjective. This eliminates (A) and (B). Now, does an adjective normally precede or follow the noun it modifies? The correct answer is (D).
- 4 G The answer choices here indicate that we have to consider either of two errors: tense or subject-verb agreement. Let's check subject-verb agreement first. Find the subject of the sentence. If you said the subject was "each," you were absolutely correct. "Of the first three taxis I saw" is modifying "each." Now check the verb. "Each...were." In our review, we said that the word *each* is always singular—but the verb in this case is plainly plural. Aha! We have found the error. Check the answer choices to see which ones are singular. Our only remaining choices are (G), "was," and (J), "is." In what general tense is this passage written? Check the tense of the verbs in surrounding sentences. The correct answer is (G).
- 5 A Clearly this question is testing our understanding of the "who/whom" issue. Remember that the difference between the pronouns "who," and "whom" lies in whether they are being used as subjects or objects in the clause or phrase that contains them. "Who finally picked me up" is a clause modifying the taxi driver. What is the subject of the clause? If you said "who" you are absolutely correct. Thus, "who" is fine just the way it is. We can eliminate (B) and (C), both of which contain "whom." Now let's see what the difference is between (A) and (D). Again, it comes down to tense. Is this passage being told in the present tense? No. The correct answer is (A).

- 6 J The answer choices are offering you a variety of options having to do with “and” or “but.” This is an idiom question. Try making up your own sentence using the idiomatic expression in question: *My sister Jane is not only stupid. . .* How would you finish this sentence? Or put it this way: What would be *the next word* in the sentence after “stupid”? *My sister Jane is not only stupid, but she is also a pain.* Choices (F) and (G) bite the dust. The answer is either (H) or (J). In the sentence you just made up, did you use “she” or “her” after the “but”? Chances are you used “she.” “But she is also a pain” is a clause. Because “she” is the subject of the clause, we have to use the subject form, “she,” instead of the object form, “her.” The same is true for the sentence in the passage. The correct answer is (J).
- 7 C This question is about the proper use of the superlative. The answer choices (including “worse” and “worst”) give you a pretty good indication that this is the case. If you are discussing two bad options, you would have to decide which of them was *worse*. If you are discussing three or more bad options, you would have to decide which of them was *the worst*. The correct answer is (C).

Rhetorical Skills Drill (Chapter 8)

- 1 C The underlined portion and the answer choices all contain sentence connectors. This is a transition question. Do we need an *also*, a *but*, or a *thus*? It seems pretty clear we need a *but*. The answer is (C).
- 2 F Several of the answer choices here seem to use similar words. We should consider redundancy immediately. Choices (G) and (H) are clearly redundant. Answer choice (J) (“famousness”) is not a word. Thus, the best answer is (F).
- 3 D The underlined portion and the answer choices all seem to contain similar words, so again we should consider redundancy. There is no need to say both “initially” and “for the first time” in the same sentence. Choices (B) and (D) are the only choices that avoid redundancies. Choice (B) is awkward and incorrectly phrased, so (D) is correct.
- 4 J At first this might strike you as an idiom question. In fact, style questions often resemble idiom questions. The metaphor of an actor sharpening his or her skills is effective, but how far do we want to take it? Is it necessary to say “to a knife edge” to get the point across? The answer is (J): OMIT the underlined portion.
- 5 D As with all organization questions, we should try to spot either the beginning sentence or any pair of sentences we can link together. There is a certain cause and effect visible between Sentence 1 and Sentence 4. Which of the answer choices puts them next to each other in that order? Two of them do. The answer would seem to have to be (C) or (D). Because both choices put Sentence 2 first, the question becomes “where does Sentence 3 belong?” Well, the paragraph begins by saying *Playhouse 90* was a training ground. It is most logical to put the list of future stars after the introductory sentence, so (D) is the best answer.