

Name: _____ Date: _____

Answer Key: Sharpen Your Syntax: 9th Grade Mastery of the Mark

Navigate the nuances of standard English by resolving complex clause conflicts and fixing sophisticated grammatical glitches through direct application.

1. Which sentence correctly utilizes a semicolon to join two independent clauses regarding geopolitical history?

Answer: A) The Berlin Wall fell in 1989; however, the ideological shifts took much longer to solidify.

A semicolon is used to link two closely related independent clauses. When followed by a conjunctive adverb like 'however', a comma must follow that adverb.

2. Which of the following correctly completes the sentence regarding the plural possessive? 'The _____ demands for climate reform were heard by the UN General Assembly.'

Answer: C) protestors'

To show possession for a plural noun ending in 's' (protestors), you add only the apostrophe at the end.

3. True or False: In a list of complex items that already contain internal commas, semicolons should be used as the primary separators to avoid 'comma clutter.'

Answer: A) True

Semicolons act as 'super-commas' when a list contains items that already have internal punctuation, providing structural clarity for the reader.

4. Choose the sentence that correctly uses a colon to introduce a formal quotation.

Answer: A) In his 'Letter from Birmingham Jail,' King famously wrote: 'Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.'

A colon is used to introduce a formal quotation when the lead-in is a complete independent clause.

5. Identify the error in the following sentence: 'The physicist's theories—while revolutionary—were not widely accepted, until the solar eclipse of 1919.'

Answer: B) The comma after 'accepted' is unnecessary and creates a fragment error.

Name: _____ Date: _____

A comma should not separate a main clause from a 'until' subordinate clause that follows it, as it is an essential part of the sentence's logical timeframe.

6. Which option provides the correct punctuation for the parenthetical citation in an academic essay?

Answer: B) Fitzgerald describes the light as 'green' (Fitzgerald 92).

In MLA format, the period that ends the sentence must come after the closing parenthesis of the citation, not inside the quotation marks.

7. True or False: A colon can be used to separate two independent clauses if the second clause illustrates or explains the first.

Answer: A) True

Colons are effective stylistic tools for emphasis when the second clause provides a direct explanation or result of the first independent clause.

8. Identify the correct punctuation for the following appositive phrase: 'Marie Curie _____ the first woman to win a Nobel Prize _____ studied radioactivity.'

Answer: C) , / ,

Non-essential appositive phrases must be set off by commas to show that the information is supplementary to the subject.

9. Analyze the use of the Oxford comma in the following technical sentence. Which version is most clear?

Answer: D) The lab results tracked the growth of the mold, the temperature of the incubator, and the humidity.

Standard academic writing (including MLA and APA) prefers the Oxford comma before the coordinating conjunction in a series to ensure each item is distinct.

10. True or False: When a quotation is interrupted by a speaker tag, such as 'she argued,' the second half of the quotation should always begin with a capital letter.

Answer: B) False

If the second part of the quotation is a continuation of the same sentence, it should start with a lowercase letter (e.g., 'It is,' she argued, 'no longer relevant.')