English Grammar and Editing

Use this key to check answers and read the explanations.

1. Which line makes a complete standalone sentence in standard written English?
   A. The porch light flickered.
   B. While the porch light flickered.
   C. With a flicker from the porch light.
   D. The flickering porch light by the steps.
   Correct answer: A. The porch light flickered.
   The first line has a subject and a predicate and can stand alone. The other lines are dependent clauses or phrases.

2. Which verb completes this sentence in the present tense? The lanterns ___ above the path.
   A. glowing
   B. glows
   C. glow
   D. to glow
   Correct answer: C. glow
   The subject lanterns is plural, so the present-tense verb is glow. Glowing and to glow cannot act as the sentence's main verb on their own.

3. Which word completes the sentence? The turtle tucked ___ head into its shell.
   A. it's
   B. its
   C. its'
   D. it is
   Correct answer: B. its
   Its is the possessive form. It's contracts it is or it has.

4. Which sentence correctly punctuates the opening dependent clause?
   A. When the bus arrived the runners waved.
   B. When, the bus arrived the runners waved.
   C. When the bus arrived the runners, waved.
   D. When the bus arrived, the runners waved.
   Correct answer: D. When the bus arrived, the runners waved.
   A comma follows the full introductory clause When the bus arrived. The following main clause can stand on its own.

5. In standard U.S. punctuation, which line correctly prints the direct quote and its closing period?

A. Ari said, "The trail is clear".
B. Ari said, "The trail is clear."
C. Ari said, "The trail is clear,."
D. Ari said, "The trail is clear".,

Correct answer: B. Ari said, "The trail is clear."
In standard U.S. punctuation, the closing period goes inside the quotation marks.

6. Two captains share one locker. Which phrase identifies it correctly?

A. the captains' locker
B. the captain's locker
C. the captains locker
D. the captains's locker

Correct answer: A. the captains' locker
Captains is already plural and ends in s. Add an apostrophe after that s to show that the locker belongs to both.

7. Which phrase completes the sentence in formal written English? The coach saved two seats for ___.

A. I and Morgan
B. Morgan and I
C. Morgan and myself
D. Morgan and me

Correct answer: D. Morgan and me
The preposition for takes an object. Removing Morgan and leaves for me, which makes the required pronoun case easier to hear.

8. Rosa has one sister. Which sentence correctly sets off the sister's name as extra information?

A. My only sister, Nina lives nearby.
B. My only sister Nina, lives nearby.
C. My only sister, Nina, lives nearby.
D. My only sister Nina, lives, nearby.

Correct answer: C. My only sister, Nina, lives nearby.
My only sister already identifies the person. Nina adds information, so a comma belongs on each side of the name.

9. Which sentence uses parallel verb forms for all three duties?

A. Our duties included labeling boxes, filing receipts, and updating the log.
B. Our duties included labeling boxes, to file receipts, and updating the log.
C. Our duties included to label boxes, filing receipts, and the log was updated.
D. Our duties included labeling boxes, receipts to file, and the log.

Correct answer: A. Our duties included labeling boxes, filing receipts, and updating the log.
Labeling, filing, and updating are three matching forms that each name an activity.

10. The entire group stayed to help, but Elisa was the sole person who counted the cash. Which line puts only where it clearly expresses that contrast?

A. Elisa counted the only cash.
B. Elisa counted only the cash.
C. Elisa only counted the cash.
D. Only Elisa counted the cash.

Correct answer: D. Only Elisa counted the cash.
Only Elisa restricts who did the counting. Moving only can change whether it limits the person, the action, or the objects counted.

11. Which edit clearly makes Josie the person who opened the cabinet?

A. After opening the cabinet, the shelf held the missing keys for Josie.
B. After opening the cabinet, the missing keys were visible to Josie.
C. After opening the cabinet, Josie found the missing keys.
D. After opening the cabinet, there were keys for Josie to find.

Correct answer: C. After opening the cabinet, Josie found the missing keys.
The person who performs the opening action should be the subject of the main clause. Josie is the first sentence's subject.

12. A draft says, ‘Maya told Lena that her sketch had been chosen.’ The selected sketch belongs to Maya. Which edit preserves who told whom and makes ownership clear?

A. Lena told Maya that Maya's sketch had been chosen.
B. Maya told Lena that Maya's sketch had been chosen.
C. Maya told Lena that Lena's sketch had been chosen.
D. Maya told Lena that their joint sketch had been chosen.

Correct answer: B. Maya told Lena that Maya's sketch had been chosen.
Replacing her with Maya's names the owner. The sentence still presents Maya as the speaker and Lena as the listener.

13. Which version correctly joins two complete clauses in one sentence using however as a transition?

A. The library closed however; the courtyard stayed open.
B. The library closed, however, the courtyard stayed open.
C. The library closed; however the courtyard stayed open.
D. The library closed; however, the courtyard stayed open.

Correct answer: D. The library closed; however, the courtyard stayed open.
A semicolon separates the independent clauses, and a comma follows however at the start of the second clause.

14. Which edit keeps both present-tense verbs in agreement with their subjects?

A. The list of rooms changes every Monday, but the signs on each door stay in place.
B. The list of rooms change every Monday, but the signs on each door stay in place.
C. The list of rooms changes every Monday, but the signs on each door stays in place.
D. The list of rooms change every Monday, but the signs on each door stays in place.

Correct answer: A. The list of rooms changes every Monday, but the signs on each door stay in place.
The first subject is singular list, so it takes changes. The second subject is plural signs, so it takes stay.

15. Lena tested the microphone before the doors opened. Once they opened, she greeted guests and passed out programs. Which rewrite keeps the order and uses parallel past-tense verbs for the two later actions?

A. Lena tested the microphone before the doors opened and, once they opened, greeted guests and passes out programs.
B. Before the doors opened, Lena tested the microphone, greeted guests, and passed out programs.
C. Lena tested the microphone before the doors opened and, once they opened, greeted guests and passed out programs.
D. Once the doors opened, Lena tested the microphone, greeted guests, and passed out programs.

Correct answer: C. Lena tested the microphone before the doors opened and, once they opened, greeted guests and passed out programs.
The doors open between the first task and the next two. Greeted and passed out are matching past-tense verbs for the actions after the doors opened.