

English: Choose the Best Word: Hard Practice Paper 3

Answers

Q#	Answer	Explanation
1	C	The that later in the line is the second half of a pair, and the half used in front of a noun phrase beginning with a is such : such a still evening that. So is the word for the same pattern when an adjective stands alone, as in so still that, which is why it is the trap here: the word evening after the gap decides it. Very and much never pair with that, and too would need to rather than that.
2	A	A question that is reported rather than quoted keeps the ordinary order of a statement, so the subject comes before the verb and no inversion is used: he asked how high the balloon would go . Would it go and did it go keep the question order that belongs inside quotation marks. Will it go and it will go are present tense and clash with asked, which is past.
3	B	A phrase added with together with does not change the number of the subject, which is still the single pilot, so the verb stays singular: the pilot was the last. Were is the trap, because his two assistants sits next to the gap and sounds plural. Have been and are are the wrong tense for a story told in the past, and being cannot serve as the verb of a sentence on its own.
4	E	An opening phrase such as Having cast off the last rope has no subject of its own, so it attaches itself to whatever the main part of the sentence begins with, and that must be somebody who could have cast the rope off. Only the crew can have done so. The ground, the balloon and the ropes did not cast anything off, and it refers to nobody at all, so each of those leaves the sentence saying something it does not mean.

5	D	When a sentence opens with Only when, the main part that follows must invert, putting the helping verb in front of the subject: did they realise . They realised and they did realise both keep the ordinary order that the opening forbids. Realised they moves the wrong word, since it is the helping verb did that goes first, and had they realised would push the realising back before the town lay below, which reverses the sense.
6	B	Neither means not one of them, taken one at a time, so it is singular however many follow it: neither of the two barometers was working. Were is tempting because the plural barometers sits right next to the gap, but of the two barometers only tells us which ones are meant. Are and have been are the wrong tense for a story told in the past, and being cannot stand as the verb.
7	E	Not so much is always completed by as , and the two halves must be built the same way, here in rising and in coming down. Than is the trap, because so many comparisons end with it, but not so much takes as. But would set the two halves against each other rather than weighing one against the other, and like and that cannot complete not so much at all.
8	C	This is the pattern that links two things changing together, and it needs the in front of both comparatives: the higher the balloon climbed, the thinner the air became. Thinner on its own is missing its the, which the first half has already set up. The thinnest is a superlative and picks one out rather than matching a change, and more thinner and the more thinner double the comparative, since thin already becomes thinner.
9	A	In is a preposition, and the verb after a preposition always takes the -ing form: they succeeded in opening the valve. To open is the form that follows verbs such as managed or tried, which is what makes it tempting, but succeeded is always followed by in and then an -ing form. To opening puts both patterns together, and open and opened cannot follow a preposition.

10	D	It is tempting to choose an object form because the word follows the preposition to, but the missing word belongs to the part of the sentence that comes after it, where it is the subject of stayed: whoever stayed aloft the longest. The whole of that part is what follows to. Whomever, whom and whomsoever are all object forms and cannot be the subject of stayed, and whose shows belonging and would need a noun after it.
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