

Writing and Language Drill 4

Time: 10 minutes. Check your answers in Part IV.

Screen Time Woes

1 In the 1980s and 1990s, cultural critics had begun to express concern that Americans watched too much television. The numbers varied, but it was widely touted that Americans spent anywhere from three to five hours a day in front of the tube.

2 Whether this was true, it certainly did present a startling finding, especially to those who were interested in promoting other media and activities.

1

Which of the following choices would best introduce the essay by identifying a way that a historical period understood a particular medium?

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) If you don't own a TV today, it's not considered that weird anymore.
- C) It's very possible that the only thing you listen to on the radio is music.
- D) The old cathode-ray-tube TVs are relics of the past by this point.

2

The writer is considering deleting the phrase *in front of the tube* and ending the sentence with a period after the word *day*. Should the phrase be kept or deleted?

- A) Kept, because the meaning of the sentence is unclear without the phrase.
- B) Kept, because it shows what the viewers of television find so compelling.
- C) Deleted, because it does not clarify whether the number was closer to three or five.
- D) Deleted, because this kind of slangy language should be avoided at all costs.

3 All the while, TV is as good now as it has ever been in its 60-year history. Political theorists warned that too much time in front of the television would dampen people's political awareness. Nutrition activists feared that such a sedentary activity would spur an obesity epidemic. **4** Movie-theater owners cautioned that the lower-quality television could destroy the high-end film industry. Lovers of literature fretted that people no longer had the time or attention span to read the great works.

3

Which of the following choices would offer the most effective introduction to this paragraph?

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) Concerns about the increase in television-watching came from all corners.
- C) The first televised presidential debate came during the 1960 election.
- D) The technology of new TVs has improved by leaps and bounds even in the last ten years.

4

At this point, the author is considering adding the following true statement:

A 2015 study showed that over two-thirds of American adults are overweight or obese.

Should the writer make this addition here?

- A) Yes, because the essay as a whole has very little hard statistical data like this.
- B) Yes, because the obesity rate shows that TV was truly a destructive medium.
- C) No, because the mention of these statistics is cruel to those who are overweight.
- D) No, because the essay as a whole is focused on a different subject.

5 These criticisms are particularly apt because television has been proven to have negative effects on children's attention spans. Movies were controversial in the 1920s. The National Association of Librarians wrote a report in the **6** 1940s. In this report, radio was excoriated for distracting children from life's real pursuits. The criticisms went even further back. The printing press, even early in its history as mainly a printer of Bibles, was thought to give religious messages to too many who couldn't properly **7** get the messages. Even newspapers, now a mainstay of the serious American consumer, were once considered politically subversive.

5

Which choice provides the most effective introduction to the paragraph?

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) While each of these criticisms certainly has its merits, each was in a way following in a long path of conservative skepticism at new media developments.
- C) Unlike television, other forms of media were readily accepted when they were introduced, with little criticism from experts.
- D) Criticism of television is rare today because this form of media has become so commonplace that few remember life before it.

6

Which choice most effectively combines the sentences at the underlined portion?

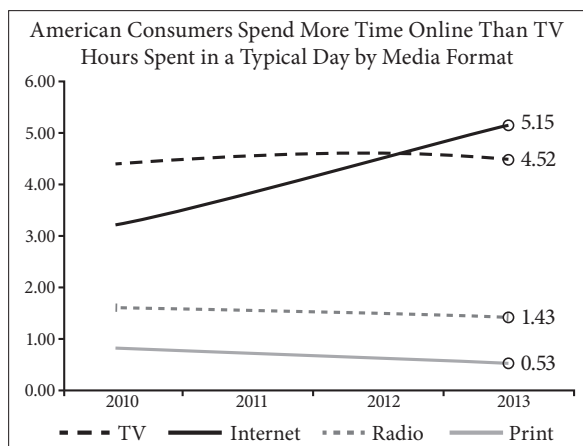
- A) 1940s; in this report,
- B) 1940s, and in this report,
- C) 1940s, in which
- D) 1940s that gave information in which

7

Which choice is most consistent with the style and tone of the passage?

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) dig
- C) take in a lot of
- D) understand

Therefore, in today's world, where the Internet seems to be the new medium of choice, we should not be so quick to criticize it in these terms. Still, as a recent survey has shown, American consumers spend more time online than they have on any other media platform in the last five years. **8** Spending more time on the Internet as of 2012, **9** American consumers in 2013 spent an average of over 5 hours a day on the Internet.



8

The writer is considering replacing the word *spend* in the preceding sentence with the phrase *pay out*. Should the writer make the change or keep the sentence as it is?

- A) Make the change, because the words *pay out* are more relatable to readers.
- B) Make the change, because the words *pay out* provide a more direct indication of the action of the sentence.
- C) Keep the sentence as it is, because the words *pay out* change the meaning in a way inconsistent with the passage as a whole.
- D) Keep the sentence as it is, because the word *spend* hides the fact that the use of media platforms varies widely by socioeconomic status.

9

Which of the following gives information consistent with the graph?

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) the world's consumers in 2013 spent an average of over 3 hours a day on the Internet.
- C) American consumers only a year earlier spent an average of as few as 2 hours a day on the Internet.
- D) American consumers decided that the Internet was a better place to watch shows than was the television.

Is this increase in Internet usage a troubling change? Well, history would seem to say that it's not. **10** After all, the Internet has the advantage of being significantly more active than all those other media. In short, effective use of the Internet requires your participation in a way that TV does not. Even so, upward of six hours a day is a tremendous amount. There must at least be some kind of change, even if it's not necessarily for the worse. **11** Some of the criticisms historically associated with television are frequently applied to Internet usage.

10

At this point, the writer wants to insert an idea that will support the idea given in the previous sentence. Which of the following true statements would offer that support?

- A) The rate of literacy remains at an all-time high, despite the introduction of the radio in the 1930s.
- B) The number of creative-writing majors may soon eclipse the number of English majors, which will lead to an odd imbalance.
- C) Then-candidate Richard Nixon looked really bad on TV in 1960, and how else would people have known his big scandal was coming?
- D) The printing press, the newspapers, the radio, and even the television have all been integrated effectively into American culture.

11

The writer wants to end the paragraph with a future-oriented statement that reinforces the main idea of the passage. Which choice best accomplishes this goal?

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) Some researchers have suggested that human bodies will eventually exhibit physical changes as a result of all of this time spent viewing screens.
- C) Rather than simply reacting negatively to a new form of media, society will need to look closely at the long-term risks and benefits associated with significant time spent online.
- D) Some people actually experience Internet addiction and spend almost all of their waking hours online.