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Topic: 1

Paragraph (1)

Refer to the following for questions 1—8:

(1) Could the future of crops include planting without soil? (2) The concept of hydroponics, or growing plants by directly exposing the roots to water and nutrients, both conserving resources such as water and stimulating extra growth and food production.

(3) While this concept sounds new and innovative—and in fact has been extensively studied by NASA in recent years—the idea is not original to the past decade, or even the past century. (4) Books were published, as early as the 17th century, discussing the idea of growing plants without the traditional concept of planting them in the earth. (5) The term "hydroponics" was first introduced in 1937 by William Gericke, who grew tomatoes in his back yard in a solution of minerals. (6) Since this time, numerous experiments have been conducted and some large hydroponics farms have even been constructed.

(7) Rather than soil, plants are grown in a variety of substitutes: such as rockwool, clay pellets, pumice, wood fiber, or even packing peanuts. (8) These allow the roots easy access to both the nutrient-rich water and to oxygen.

(9) There are many advantages to hydroponic farming. (10) Due to the controlled greenhouse environment, crops can be grown and no pesticides. (11) There is also less waste of water because of no run-off. (12) Furthermore, proponents of hydroponics claim that this method can lead to much greater yields. (13) This is due not only to the better nutrition but additionally to the protection from harsh weather conditions and pests. (14) Additionally, hydroponics farmers are not limited to a single crop during the normal growing season, they can produce year-round.

(15) In addition, hydroponics does have disadvantages. (16) Before beginning, a farmer must have a greenhouse with proper growing stations and temperature control. (17) Soil replacement, nutrients, and specialized lighting must also be purchased. (18) Finally, removing exposure to the outdoor environment means that the farmer must eliminate needs such as pollination. (19) The setup for growing without soil is costly.

(20) Despite the disadvantages, hydroponics is likely to become more popular in coming years. (21) Not only can crops be grown year-round, but plants can also be much closer together, or even grown vertically, allowing for a much greater yield per acre. (22) Additionally, hydroponics may have implications in other areas. (23) For example, NASA has done research with hydroponics to mimic a Martian environment. (24) So while the work and expense of soil-less gardening is significant this market, which is already in the hundreds of millions of dollars worldwide, may be a glimpse of the future of farming.

Question: 1

Consider the following excerpt from the passage:

Sentence 2: The concept of hydroponics, or growing plants by directly exposing the roots to water and nutrients, both conserving resources such as water and stimulating extra growth and food production. Select the best version of the underlined portion.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. allows farmers to both conserve resources
- C. aids in both conserving resources
- D. both conserves resources

Answer: C

Explanation:

This clause needs a present-tense verb for the sentence to be complete. Choice A is incorrect because it does not include a present-tense verb (conserving and stimulating are participles). Choices B and D are incorrect because they change the participle conserving to the present-tense verb conserve(s) without adjusting stimulating, so the parts of speech do not match. Choice C correctly adds a verb (aids) and leaves conserving to match stimulating.

Question: 2

Consider the following excerpt from the passage.

Sentence 3: While this concept sounds new and innovative—and extensively studied by NASA in recent years—the idea is not original to the past decade, or even the past century. Select the best version of the underlined portion.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. has been
- C. is been
- D. having been

Answer: B

Explanation:

The correct present perfect phrase is has been. To use being (A), the verb needs to be is instead of has (although this would not fit logically with the sentence, referring to past research rather than an ongoing process). The phrase is been (C) incorrectly combines present tense and present perfect. The phrase having been (D) is a correct pairing but does not flow logically with this clause because of the and before the underlined portion.

Question: 3

Consider the following excerpt from the passage.

Sentence 4: Books were published, as early as the 17th century, discussing the idea of growing plants without the traditional concept of planting them in the earth.

Select the best version of the underlined portion.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. Books, as early as the 17th century, were published:
- C. As early as the 17th century, books were published
- D. Books were published as early as the 17th century—

Answer: C

Explanation:

Choice C is both straightforward and clear. Choice A places the clauses in a less clear order and adds unnecessary commas. Choice B also creates an awkward order and adds an incorrect colon, since the part of the sentence after the colon does not define the first or give a list. Choice D removes the unnecessary commas but adds an incorrect em-dash, since it does not set off a parenthetical statement or provide a necessary pause.

Question: 4

Consider the following excerpt from the passage.

Sentence 10: Due to the controlled greenhouse environment, crops can be grown and no pesticides.

Select the best version of the underlined portion.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. grown without
- C. grown without no
- D. grown even with no

Answer: B

Explanation:

The phrase no pesticides refers to the manner in which crops are grown. It is not two separate actions, so and (A) is incorrect. Using without no (C) is a double negative, which is incorrect. Choice D could be correct without the word even.

Question: 5

Consider the following excerpt from the passage.

Sentence 22: Additionally, hydroponics farmers are not limited to a single crop during the normal growing season they can produce year-round.

Select the best version of the underlined portion.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. season, or they

- C. season. then they
- D. season; they

Answer: D

Explanation:

Both the part of the sentence before the punctuation and after it are independent clauses (stand-alone sentences). They can either be separated with a period or joined by a semicolon. Joining them with a comma (A) creates a comma-splice sentence. Using a conjunction such as and would be grammatically correct with a comma, but or (B) does not make sense. Adding then (C) creates another independent clause, which would require a semicolon or period rather than a comma.

Question: 6

Consider the following excerpt from the passage.

Sentence 18: Finally, removing exposure to the outdoor environment means that the farmer must eliminate needs such as pollination.

Select the best version of the underlined portion.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. track
- C. provide for
- D. remove

Answer: C

Explanation:

Because the plants are not exposed to the open air, they are not pollinated by insects (unless introduced by the farmer). It is the farmer's responsibility to provide for these needs. The farmer cannot eliminate (A) or remove (D) natural needs, and simply tracking them (B) is not sufficient.

Question: 7

What is the most logical place for sentence 19?

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. After sentence 15
- C. After sentence 16
- D. After sentence 17

Answer: B

Explanation:

This sentence gives an introduction to the subject of cost, which is discussed in sentences 16 and 17. So the best place for this sentence would be immediately preceding them. After sentence 16 or 17 (C, D)

would be awkward positioning. Finally, its current position (A) is incorrect because it does not summarize the entire set of disadvantages, but only some of them.

Question: 8

Consider the following excerpt from the passage.

Sentence 21: Not only can crops be grown year-round, but plants can also be much closer together, or even grown vertically, allowing for a much greater yield per acre.

Select the best version of the underlined portion.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. in a vertical manner
- C. vertical
- D. horizontal

Answer: A

Explanation:

The term is modifying the verb grown, so it must be an adverb. Although in a vertical manner (B) is technically correct, it is unnecessarily verbose and therefore not the best answer. Choices C and D are adjectives rather than adverbs.

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