Five questions, the same few traps

Each question has a wrong answer built to look right. Try the question, then read the trap and the fix.

The Familiar Meaning Ambush Reading and Writing

A late frost in April served as a natural check on the beetle population in the orchard, killing most of the larvae before they could mature. As used in the text, what does the word "check" most nearly mean?

A) review B) limit C) payment D) mark

The trap A) review is the everyday meaning of check. The frost did not inspect anything.

The fix The frost held the beetles down, so the answer is B) limit. Test the first meaning against the sentence before you trust it.

Trace the Referent Reading and Writing

The detailed sketches that botanist Lena Ortiz made of a single desert flower _____ now on display at a library in Tucson, where visitors can compare each stage of the bloom. Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

A) is B) are C) was D) has been

The trap A) is matches "flower," the nearest noun. But the subject is "sketches."

The fix Cross out what sits between the subject and the verb, then match them. The sketches are on display, so the answer is B) are.

Cover the Word Reading and Writing

Most of the town's early maps were drawn quickly and contain many errors. Ana Ruiz's 1852 survey, by contrast, was _____: every street and landmark on it matches modern satellite images to within a few meters. Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

A) ambitious B) meticulous C) hasty D) celebrated

The trap A) ambitious fits a big project. The sentence is about precision, not size.

The fix Before you read the choices, find the words that explain the blank: "within a few meters." Careful in every detail is B) meticulous.

The Half-Finished Move Math

A cylindrical water tank has a circumference of 10π feet and a height of 6 feet. What is the volume of the tank, in cubic feet?

A) 30π B) 60π C) 150π D) 600π

The trap D) 600π uses 10 as the radius: $\pi \times 10^2 \times 6$.

The fix A circumference of 10π means $2\pi r = 10\pi$, so $r = 5$. Then $\pi \times 5^2 \times 6 = 150\pi$, choice C. From a circumference, divide by 2π to get the radius before you square it.

Desmos By hand, Desmos adds nothing here: one division and one multiplication.

The Shape on Sight Math

$f(x) = 2x^2 - 12x + 23$. The function f is defined by the given equation. For what value of x does $f(x)$ reach its minimum?

A) -3 B) 3 C) 5 D) 6

The trap C) 5 is the lowest value of f. The question asks for the x where it happens.

The fix Write it as $2(x - 3)^2 + 5$. The squared part is 0 at $x = 3$, so the answer is B) 3. Read what the question asks for before you choose.

Desmos Type $f(x) = 2x^2 - 12x + 23$ and click the gray vertex point. It reads (3, 5). The x is 3.

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