THE WRITING CENTER’S PUG DIAGNOSTIC KEY & EXPLANATIONS

1. Anita, as well as twenty other students, is beginning kindergarten today.
   Answer: A.
   Reason: Information contained within the phrase “as well as twenty other students” is ignored when matching the subject “Anita” with the verb “is.”
   Rule #1b (subject-verb agreement)

2. She is nervous.
   Answer: C
   Reason: “She is nervous” is a complete sentence, and so is “her family just moved to Dallas, Texas.” You can’t join two complete sentences (independent clauses) with a comma. You can join them with a semicolon, and that’s the answer.
   Rule #3 (comma splice) and rule #10a (semicolons)

3. her family has just moved to Dallas, Texas from Guatemala.
   Answer: C
   Reason: When using the city and the state, you place a comma after both.
   Rule #12c (comma)

4. None of her friends from back home is going (4) to be at her school.
   Answer: A
   Reason: “None” is the subject and an indefinite pronoun. “None” is singular, as in “not one.”
   Rule #1a (subject-verb agreement)

5. “Don’t worry, mi corazon”, her mother tells her, “I promise, you will have a wonderful time.”
   Answer: B
   Reason: The comma should go inside the quotation marks. Commas and periods always go inside quotation marks.
   Rule #13a (quotation marks)

6. With her backpack, lunchbox and her jacket in tow,
   Answer: C
Reason: When listing items, they must all match. Here we have “her backpack” and “her jacket,” which match, but also “lunchbox.” Because it’s more repetitive to include “her” each time, omit “her” before jacket.

Rule #7

7. she **feels badly**

Answer: B

Reason: “Feel” is a state-of-being verb, not an action verb. So, just as you feel good, you feel bad. (You do not feel “goodly,” so you do not feel “badly.”)

Rule #8 (adverb vs. adjective)

8. to leave her sister who is even **younger than her**.

Answer: D

Reason: The pronoun “her” needs to be in subjective case, not objective case: her sister is even younger than SHE is; SHE is even older than her sister.

Rule #5b (pronoun agreement: case)

9. After worrying for so long, her bus arrives.

Answer: B

Reason: As this is written, her bus has been worrying. Rephrase so that Anita is the one who has been worrying.

Rule #4 (dangling modifier)

10. Her stomach is in **knots, however; (10)** she climbs the steps and takes a seat.

Answer: C

Reason: “Her stomach is in knots” is a sentence, and “however, she climbs the steps and takes a seat” is a sentence,” so you need to join them with a semicolon. Once you’ve done that, you need to add a comma after “however.”

Rule #3 (comma splice) and rule #10a (semicolons)

11. High school **students graduation**

Answer: D
Reason: It is the graduation of the STUDENTS, so the word already ends with an “s.” Therefore, you add just an apostrophe: students’ graduation. Had it been the graduation of ONE STUDENT, you would have to add an apostrophe and an “s”: one student’s graduation.

Rule #9b (apostrophes)

12. requirements will change next year but school districts

Answer: D

Reason: When joining two whole sentences (independent clauses) with a coordinating conjunction (FANBOYS), you always add a comma before the conjunction. So, “requirements will change next year” is a sentence; “school districts are waiting for more clearly defined direction” is a sentence. Thus, you must place a comma before “but,” the coordinating conjunction here.

Rule #12a (commas)

13. are waiting for more clearly-defined direction before finalizing curriculum plans.

Answer: B

Reason: Hyphenate compound adjectives, but do not hyphenate an adverb-adjective combination. In this sentence, the direction is defined. How well? Clearly defined. The adverb “clearly” is modifying the adjective “defined,” which is modifying the noun “direction.” Each word is doing its job, so do not stick them together to form a new word.

Rule #13c (hyphens)

14. The House approved HB 5 in 2013 giving

Answer: B

Reason: “Giving high school students more flexibility” is a participial phrase that is modifying “The House,” so you have to set it off with a comma.

Rule #12e (commas)

15. high school students more flexibility in their career paths.

Answer: A

Reason: This is correct because “students” is plural, as is the pronoun “their” that is referring to students.

Rule #5a (pronoun agreement)
16. In **fall 2014** students will be able to choose the basic foundation program,

Answer: C

Reason: “In fall 2014” is an introductory prepositional phrase. Although this is only three words long and therefore does not demand a comma, if you do not include the comma, readers might think there are 2014 students.

Rule #12b (commas)

17. with a **22-credit program.**

Answer: D

Reason: When listing items, if one or more items contains a comma, you separate the items themselves with semicolons. In this case, the items are

1) the basic foundation program, with a 22-credit program
2) the foundation plan with endorsements (the best bet for those who are not going to college)
3) the distinguished plan

Since #1 has a comma within it, you have to separate 1, 2, and 3 with semicolons.

Rule #10b (semicolons)

18. the foundation plan with endorsements (the best bet for those **who are not going to college**); and the distinguished plan.

Answer: A

Reason: “Those who” is the subject of “are.” You need “who” because “who” is in subjective case (“whom” is in objective case). You need “are” because “those” is plural.

Rule #5b (pronoun agreement) and #1 (subject-verb agreement)

19. Without more details **the state board** must take

Answer: C

Reason: You want to capitalize “State Board” because it is the title of a specific civic group.

Rule #16

20. a **wait and see approach** until they hear more.

Answer: B
Reason: You want to “glue” these words together to form one compound adjective: a wait-and-see approach. If the words making up the adjective cannot be rearranged, you need to hyphenate them to form one word.

Rule #14b (hyphens)

21. **Because at its December 10 meeting**

   Answer: D

   Reason: You need to omit “Because” because it is making this a sentence fragment. You need the comma after “meeting” because “at its December 10 meeting” is an introductory phrase.

   Rule #2 (Fragment) and #12b (commas)

22. **the commissioners court of Chartwell County**

   Answer: D

   Reason: Capitalize proper nouns, in this case the name of a civic organization. Also, there are multiple commissioners, so you need to place an apostrophe after the “s”: the Court of the Commissioners.

   Rule #16 (capitalization) and rule #9b

23. **discussed: approval of the annual report from the Office of the Constable, cancelling a subdivision**

   Answer: B

   Reason: To the left of a colon must be a complete sentence (independent clause).

   Rule #11 (colons)

24. **plat and accepting the plan to renovate the old hospital building as part of**

   Answer: A

   Reason: When listing items in a series, do not include the Oxford comma before the “and.”

   Rule #12h (commas)

25. **a two to three year plan to develop a county historical museum.**

   Answer: C

   Reason: Hyphenate compound adjectives, so “three-year” plan. However, you also need to hyphenate “two-” to show that you have abbreviated “two-year” plan.

   Rule #14b (hyphens)
26. Road and bridge supervisor, Herman Effinger, Jr., stated that

Answer: A

Reason: The individual’s name is not necessary here because there is only one road and bridge supervisor at the meeting, and this is not Mr. Effinger’s title.

Rule #12f (capitalization)

27. neither the commissioners nor Mayor Lee are qualified to manage

Answer: B

Reason: Whenever you have the construction “neither...nor...,” the verb matches the subject closest to it/the subject after “nor.” In this case, the subject has to match “Mayor Lee,” not the commissioners, and Mayor Lee IS qualified.

Rule #1d (subject-verb agreement)

28. his department.

Answer: C

Reason: Since you have mentioned two men, you cannot use the pronoun “his”; the reader will not know if you mean Mayor Lee’s department or Mr. Effinger’s department.

Rule #6 (pronoun reference)

29. According to Mr. Effinger, people, who do not even drive

Answer: D

Reason: You do not mean all people but only those who do not even drive their own cars. Consequently, “who do not even drive their own cars” cannot be placed inside commas. This information is essential; this information RESTRICTS which people in all the world you’re discussing.

Rule #12g

30. their own cars, because they have chauffeurs should not be telling him how to manage the

roadways.

Answer: B

Reason: “There” means “in that direction.” “Their” is the plural possessive pronoun. No need to include the comma for the reason stated in #29.
Rule #17 e (commonly confused words)

31. A friend recently asked me exactly what Kickstarter is and after I explained it as best

Answer: C

Reason: When joining two whole sentences (independent clauses) with a coordinating conjunction (FANBOYS), you always add a comma before the conjunction. Thus, you must place a comma before “and,” the coordinating conjunction here.

Rule #12a (commas)

32. I could he remarked

Answer: B

Reason: Because you’re quoting the friend, you have to include a comma after the “remarked” (and any synonym for said/thought/wrote) and before the quotation. “He remarked, “give them $50.”

Rule #12i (commas)

33. “So it’s like PBS—if I

Answer: A

Reason: Dashes function like parentheses and usually come in pairs—like parentheses. (Not coincidentally, dashes set of parenthetical—not essential—ideas.) However, if the sentence ends where the last dash would go, use only one dash, as in this case.

Rule #15 (dashes)

34. $50, they give me a tote bag.”

Answer: D

Reason: “They” is a plural pronoun, but its antecedent is “organization,” a singular noun. Thus, you have to use “it” to refer to “organization.” Commas go inside quotation marks.

Rule #5a (pronoun agreement) and #13a

35. This is a good analogy: after choosing a project you would like

Answer: A

Reason: This is correct because there is a complete sentence (independent clause) to the left of the colon.
Rule #11 (colons)

36. **back, you and a friend selects** the level of funding.

Answer: D

Reason: “You and a friend” equal two people, so you must use a plural verb. *They* select vs. *he/she* selects. Also, you need a comma after “back” because you’ve set up an introductory clause.

Rule #1c (subject-verb agreement) and 12b (commas)

37. Each person **who donates receive a gift**.

Answer: B

Reason: “Who donates” is modifying each person: each person donates. Also, “each person” is the subject, so you must use the singular verb “receives.”

Rule #12a (commas)

38. When we tried it, my husband was more ambitious **than me so my project required**

Answer: C

Reason: The pronoun “me” needs to be in subjective case, not objective case: my husband is more ambitious than I (am).

Rule #5b (pronoun agreement: case)

39. **fewer backers, which suited me fine. However, exceptions exist.**

Answer: A

Reason: This is correct because “less” refers to a proportion. “Fewer” refers to something you can count. You can count the backers.

Rule #17c (usage)

40. A charity, as well as **tobacco or alcohol is not fundable**.

Answer: C

Reason: “as well as tobacco or alcohol” is non-restrictive, so you frame it with commas on both sides. Ignore what is inside “as well as” constructions, so the subject is “charity,” and that’s a singular subject requiring a singular verb: “is.”

Rule #12f (commas) and 1b (subject-verb agreement)
41. Though her success story may seem like a fairytail Susie
Answer: D
Reason: The correct word is “tale,” as in story.
Rule #17 and #12b

42. Queue has seen more than her share of trauma, and frighteningly self destructive behavior in
Answer: D
Reason: Do not hyphenate an adverb-adjective combination, so do not hyphenate “frighteningly” and “self-destructive.” Do hyphenate compound adjectives: the behavior is self-destructive, not self and destructive. Do not put a comma before “and” when joining two nouns, only when joining two independent clauses.
Rule #14b & c (hyphens)

43. her twenty five years’ as an actress.
Answer: B
Reason: Use hyphens to spell out whole numbers from twenty-one to ninety-nine.
Rule #14a (hyphens)

44. “There’s no reason I should be so successful,” Queue says.
Answer: A
Reason: Use a comma to set off a quotation.
Rule #12i (commas)

45. “If I am honest—and we should all be honest, I owe much of my good fortune
Answer: B
Reason: Dashes usually come in pairs, like parentheses. In this case, the parenthetical information is “and we should all be honest,” so set it off on both sides with dashes.
Rule #15 (dashes)

46. to others talents
Answer: C
Reason: These are the talents of others. Since the “s” is already there, add only an apostrophe. In contrast, “another’s talents” means the talents of another with no final “s,” and thus you must add both an apostrophe and an “s.”

Rule #9b (apostrophes)

47. **not my own”!**

Answer: D

Reason: Since you’re quoting an exclamation, the exclamation point goes inside the quotation marks.

Rule #13c (quotation marks)

48. Speaking of **Queues good fortune**

Answer: C

Reason: It is the good fortune of Queue, so you must add an apostrophe and an “s”: Queue’s good fortune.

Rule #9b (apostrophes)

49. **her beagle Penny recently won**

Answer: B

Reason: “Penny” is not essential to understanding which beagle you’re discussing; Queue has only one beagle. The dog’s name is non-restrictive, so you frame it on both sides with commas, which is typical with names.

Rule #12f (commas)

50. **first place at the recently held Westminster dog show.**

Answer: A

Reason: You wouldn’t hyphenate “first” and “place” because they don’t function together as one adjective. Actually, “first” is an adjective modifying “place.” You don’t hyphenate “recently” and “held” because “recently” is an adverb modifying the adjective “held.”

Rule #14b (hyphens)

For more information about the PUG and for tutoring, contact the Writing Center, ASBN 101, 512.245.3018, writingcenter.txstate.edu.