

## Preparing for Standardized Tests with Chapter 4: Improving Paragraphs

The following passage is an early draft of an essay. Some parts of the passage need to be rewritten.

Read the passage and select the best answer for the questions that follow. Some questions are about particular sentences or parts of sentences and ask you to improve sentence structure or word choice. Other questions ask you to consider organization and development. In choosing answers, follow the requirements of standard written English.

(1) What is the secularization that Archbishop Timothy Dolan seeks to combat on page 145 of the textbook? (2) He argues that Catholic schools should remain open in order to combat widespread secularization. (3) “The secular” or worldly is often contrasted with “the sacred,” or holy as if it describes all that is not sacred. (4) The Church calls all people to a relationship with God, leaving out no person or aspect of life. (5) The “secular” sometimes refers to the worldview of the person who does not see God’s work in the world. (6) For example, a friend might say that a politician’s victory occurred because of heavy campaigning near election time. (7) Just because your friend views human efforts as the reason for the victory does not mean that you cannot perceive this election to be a blessing, see God’s hand in it, or know that prayer was a factor in the win. (8) The Archbishop’s concern is not that some people have a secular worldview, but rather that the sacred worldview is becoming discredited or diminished by many people who hold a secular worldview. (9) Do you ever, yourself, notice that you interpret events completely secularly?

1. What is the best way to deal with sentence 3 (reproduced below)?

*“The secular” or worldly is often contrasted with “the sacred,” or holy as if it describes all that is not sacred.*

- (A) Leave it as it is.
  - (B) Rephrase it to say, “People often contrast “the secular” or worldly with “the sacred” or holy.
  - (C) Rephrase it to say, “People often compare “the secular” or worldly to “the sacred” or holy.
  - (D) Rephrase it to say, “People often contrast “the secular” or worldly with “the sacred” or holy, implying that the presence of the former should describe all that cannot be categorized as “the sacred.”
  - (E) Omit it.
2. Which would be the best sentence to insert between sentences 3 and 4?
- (A) The Church teaches that the whole world is sacred.
  - (B) God intended for there to be a distinction between secular and sacred in the world.
  - (C) The Church believes that the idea of secularity is ridiculous.
  - (D) Church members like to think of themselves as sacred while other people are secular, or sinful.
  - (E) Keep the sentences as they are.

3. What is the best way to deal with sentence 5 (reproduced below)?

*The “secular” sometimes refers to the worldview of the person who does not see God’s work in the world.*

- (A) Leave it as is.
- (B) Rephrase it to say, “If a person does not see God’s work in the world, he or she likely has a completely secular worldview.”
- (C) Put this sentence after sentence 6.
- (D) Rephrase it to say “A secular person does not see God at work in the world but a sacred person does see God at work.”
- (E) Omit it.

Handout 4 continued

4. In context, what is the best way to deal with sentence 7 (reproduced below)?

*Just because your friend views human efforts as the reason for the victory does not mean that you cannot perceive this election to be a blessing, see God's hand in it, or know that prayer was a factor in the win.*

- (A) Leave it as is.
  - (B) Add a sentence between 6 and 7 saying, "This politician has a great respect for human dignity."
  - (C) Change sentence 6 to read, "For example, a friend might say that a just and compassionate politician's victory occurred because of heavy campaigning near election time."
  - (D) Change sentence 7 to read, "Just because your friend views human efforts as the reason for the victory of this kind and just politician does not mean that you cannot perceive this election to be a blessing, see God's hand in it, or to know that prayer was a factor in the win."
  - (E) Omit the sentence.
9. In context, which of the following is the best way to phrase the underlined portion of sentence 9 (reproduced below)?

*Do you ever, yourself, notice that you interpret events completely secularly?*

- (A) As it is now.
- (B) Do you, yourself,
- (C) Yourself, do you ever
- (D) Do you ever
- (E) Do you, yourself, ever

## Case Study: The Closing of American Catholic Schools

### Situation

Rice High School in Harlem, New York, closed in 2011. For seventy years, this Catholic school with an all-male, mostly African American student body was the pride of the neighborhood. Nearly every Rice graduate went on to graduate from college. Many of these students received full four-year college scholarships.

The usual reasons for closing the school were cited: declining enrollment, less money from parish or diocesan sources, fewer religious to serve as lower-paid administrators and teachers, expensive tuition, and so on. Unfortunately, the closing of Rice High School fit the pattern of many other Catholic school closings, before and since. A good number of Catholic schools that have closed are in urban and lower-economic areas.

### Assignment

In a small group, choose an urban location in the United States where an urban or inner-city school (or schools) has either been closed, is closing, or is in danger of closing for financial reasons. Find out the answers to these questions and then address the larger question listed below.

- Describe the school or schools you are researching. Is the school a high school or grade school? How many students attend? Are the students' families well off financially or struggling?
- What are the factors that have caused this school or these schools to be in financial difficulty? List and describe.
- What are the ways that this school raises funds? Are there donors who try to help them? Does the diocese step in to assist them?
- Is there a diocesan fund for Catholic schools that financially supports schools?
- What types of resources does the surrounding area have? For example, are there any large corporations located nearby that might support schools? Are there any Catholic groups who could lend support? Do you come upon any individuals who have stepped forward to help the schools?
- What sorts of "solutions" have been proposed? For example, has there been the suggestion that schools merge together or work together as a system to save costs? Are there people suggesting that the school become a charter school?
- Is there any sort of legislation in the state legislature that could benefit this school and keep it open? Ideas include school vouchers or tax relief for corporations that provide scholarships.

In closing, what else do you think can be done to save this Catholic school?

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Handout 4-B

## Diversity and the Church: The Case of the Orange Mass

In 2010, the Dutch men's soccer team made it to the finals against Spain in the World Cup. The people of the Netherlands were ecstatic about their team's success to that point and hoped for a victory in the finals. Orange, the color of the Netherlands' team, was very popular.

Fr. Paul Vlaar was one of these fans. In support of his team, Fr. Vlaar wore an orange chasuble at Sunday Mass and decorated the Eucharist and the church with orange flags and orange candles. Parishioners wore orange to the Mass. In addition, Fr. Vlaar had a soccer goal up at the front of the church and actually "played goalie" when a parishioner kicked a soccer ball up the aisle during Mass. Of course the pastor also prayed for a Dutch victory over Spain.

Bishop Jozef Punt of the local diocese felt that Fr. Vlaar "did not do justice to the sacred nature of the Eucharist." Further actions against the priest were taken.

### Questions

1. What is your reaction to this story?
2. How do you think Catholics inside and outside of this parish reacted when they heard of the "orange Mass"?
3. How do you think that the bishop responded?
4. How is this Mass an example of the careful balance the bishop must maintain between lifeless uniformity and excessive diversity?

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Handout 4-C

## Reading the Bulletin

Choose a parish either from your own neighborhood or well beyond where you live. Go online and locate its most recent parish bulletins from the past four weeks. Use the information in these bulletins to complete the information.

Church Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Church City: \_\_\_\_\_

Archdiocese or Diocese: \_\_\_\_\_

Church Website: \_\_\_\_\_

How many parishioners are enrolled in this parish? (Is this a large, medium, or small parish?)

How many Masses does the Church hold each weekend?

Find two activities in the parish for each group, if you can. Do not use an activity more than once.

- Children

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

- Junior High

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

- Senior High

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

- College

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

- Young Adults

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

- Married Couples

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

- Retired People

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

- Non-Catholics

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

#### Handout 4-C continued

- Activities for People Who are Struggling

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

Examples of Service:

If the bulletin lists the amount that the parish collected the past week, write it down. Is this a financially strong parish or one that is struggling? (Note the bulletin itself, the number of people on staff, the presence or lack of ads on the back page, for example.)

From your study of this parish's bulletin, did you find evidence of these types of diversity in:

- Age?
- Economics?
- Racial or Cultural Backgrounds?
- Differing Abilities?

## Relativism

*Relativism* refers to a false understanding that “there are no objective facts outside of what I think and feel.” Concurrently, relativism often holds that science alone can discover objective facts and that every other belief outside of science is relative.

### Why is relativism a problem?

1. Relativism takes meaning out of life.

A new adage has taken hold: “Do whatever works for you.”

2. Relativism makes morality a matter of personal taste.

There is less focus on teaching virtues and more on personal values clarification. This shift seems like freedom but really leads people to be locked in their own egos.

3. Relativism makes people easy to manipulate.

If there is no objective truth, then who grants people rights? The state? The most powerful group? Can government leaders vote about what human rights are?

Relativism takes meaning out of Faith because people make up a god for themselves. Are these people simply projecting qualities on to God? Is it true Faith or make-believe?

### Why is relativism wrong?

1. Relativism denies our finite nature.

We are not God. Who are we to dismiss or “create” God?

2. Relativism does not work in real life.

Relativists are inevitably only selective in what they believe. They are slow to accept the beliefs of anyone who disagrees with them.

3. Relativism is self-contradicting.

Relativism holds that anything scientific is true but anything philosophical is relative. Relativists who call religious people intolerant are more frequently intolerant themselves.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Handout 4-E

## The Council of Jerusalem

Read and summarize the issue, debate, and decision involving the Council of Jerusalem.

- Issue (Acts 15:1–5)
- Debate (Acts 15:6–18)
- Decision (Acts 15:19–35)