Testing Your Understanding: The Dash, Slash, Ellipses & Brackets

Place the appropriate mark (selecting from the dash, slash, ellipses or brackets) where needed in the following sentences. Cross out any misplaced marks. If the sentence is correct as written, indicate with a “C.” An answer key follows.

1. “I’m excited about the wedding, yet—.”
2. “I had never met him [the victim] before last night when he came to the club,” the bartender explained.
3. Every one of the agents filled his / her briefcase with free merchandise from the various sales representatives.
4. I remember a time when everyone used to quote JFK’s famous appeal, “Ask not what your country can …..but what you can do for your country.”
5. Brett Waggoner—my first love, is the only man for me.
6. The disaster in South-East Asia /tsunami in December 2004/ was enormously devastating!
7. Adam hesitated at first, but then he said, “…well, you are welcome to stay in the guest room.”
8. All the children (six sisters (two half-sisters and four full sisters) and two brothers) were at their parents’ home for the celebration.
9. In fourth grade I learned a Wordsworth poem which began “I wander'd lonely as a cloud/That floats on high o'er vales and hills,/When all at once I saw a crowd,/A host, of golden daffodils;” however, I can’t remember the rest.
10. Since Wyatt appeared to be the leader of the “probies”—the less experienced, highly impressionable probationers—he was asked to represent them at the meeting.

Answers below:
Answer Key:

1. “I’m excited about the wedding, yet—“ (see Dash # 3)
2. “I had never met him [the victim] before last night when he came to the club,” the bartender explained. (see Brackets - # 1)
3. Every one of the agents filled his/her briefcase with free merchandise from the various sales representatives. (see Slash # 1)
4. I remember a time when everyone used to quote JFK’s famous appeal, “Ask not what your country can . . . but what you can do for your country.” (see Ellipses – 3 periods w/spaces between)
5. Brett Waggoner—my first love—is the only man for me. (the dash sets off the interruption on both sides of the word/phrase)
6. The disaster in South-East Asia [tsunami in December 2004] was enormously devastating! (see Brackets – clarifying information)
7. Adam hesitated at first, but then he said, “Well, you are welcome to stay in the guest room.” (Do not use ellipses to begin a quotation)
8. All the children (six sisters [two half-sisters and four full sisters] and two brothers) were at their parents’ home for the celebration. (see Brackets # 3)
9. In fourth grade I learned a Wordsworth poem which began, “I wander’d lonely as a cloud / That floats on high o’er vales and hills, / When all at once I saw a crowd, / A host, of golden daffodils;” however, I can’t remember the rest. (add a space before and after the slash)
10. Since Wyatt appeared to be the leader of the “probies”—the less experienced, highly impressionable probationers—he was asked to represent them at the meeting. (see Dash # 2)