



● Sentence Completion 14 *(low-advanced SAT level)*

Directions: Choose the best word(s) to complete each sentence.

1. In making the decision on whether to use the atomic bomb, President Truman attempted to _____ the weapon's _____ effects, ultimately deciding that ending World War II outweighed the harmful consequences he imagined.
 - A. foresee ... benevolent
 - B. presage ... deleterious
 - C. prognosticate ... salubrious
 - D. portend ... innocuous
 - E. refute ... noxious
2. Raymond Chandler was well known for his _____ style: his sentences were amazingly concise yet complex, creating remarkable aphorisms.
 - A. palaverous
 - B. insipid
 - C. inane
 - D. circumlocutory
 - E. sententious
3. The nineteenth-century novel is so _____ that most modern readers find it _____, but the novel's style was very popular in its day.
 - A. lofty ... debauched
 - B. saccharine ... cloying
 - C. anachronistic ... inexorable
 - D. infamous ... unkempt
 - E. sentimental ... lurid
4. Because his attitude was so volatile, the _____ manager was loved as much as he was feared: his players never knew if he'd be joyous or furious at their play on the field.
 - A. stagnant
 - B. provisional
 - C. mercurial
 - D. migratory
 - E. inert
5. The Spanish Inquisition was known for its ability to _____ people into confessing acts of heresy: inquisitors used many forms of torture to make the accused obey them.
 - A. squander
 - B. coerce
 - C. abjure
 - D. commandeer
 - E. alleviate
6. The culpability of Mr. Gleason became _____ when the detectives opened his desk drawer and found the murder weapon.
 - A. manifest
 - B. manifold
 - C. maudlin
 - D. maledicted
 - E. maladroit

Answers and Explanations

1) **B**

To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their definitions by using key words from the prompt. Here, each missing word has its own key words, and these key words are indicated by the construction of the prompt. The first half of the sentence lines up perfectly with the last part, meaning the phrase “the harmful consequences he imagined” has the exact same meaning as the missing words, as both are indicative of the negative aspects of using the bomb that Truman considered before “ultimately deciding” to drop the bomb because of it would end the war. The first missing word’s key word is “imagined,” then, as it is a verb describing what Truman attempted to do, while the second missing word’s key word is “harmful,” as both are adjective describing the negative effects of the bomb. Choice **(B)** is, therefore, the best choice, as *presage* means foretell or predict (implying, like “imagined,” that Truman did not yet know exactly what the effects would be), while *deleterious* means harmful.

(A) is incorrect because only the first word works in context. *Foresee* means predict and could work in context for the first word, as Truman is attempting to see the effects of something that has not yet happened. However, *benevolent* means charitable, and the effects of a bomb could not possibly be described as charitable.

(C) is incorrect because only the first word works in context. *Prognosticate* means predict and could work in context for the first word, as Truman was attempting to see the effects of something that has not yet happened. However, *salubrious* means healthful, the opposite meaning of the word needed for the second missing word.

(D) is incorrect because neither word works in context. *Portend* means foreshadow, though Truman “imagined” or was attempting to predict the effects of the bomb and was not himself an indicator of the effects. Likewise, *innocuous* means harmless, though the word needed for the second missing word must imply harmfulness, not harmlessness.

(E) is incorrect because only the second word works in context. *Noxious* means harmful and so logically works in place of the second missing word, but *refute* means disprove or argue against and would not make sense in the prompt.

2) **E**

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using key words from the prompt. Here, the key words are in the phrase “concise yet complex,” a phrase that comes after the colon in the sentence. Colons are used to separate explanatory information from the rest of the sentence, meaning that everything after the colon here elaborates on points made before it. Thus, the missing word must be an adjective that means “concise yet complex.” Choice **(E)**

is the correct answer, as *sententious* means terse or abounding in aphorisms, and aphorisms are short statements full of deep meaning.

(A) is incorrect because *palaverous* means long-winded, though the prompt implies that Chandler is the opposite of that, as he wrote “concise” sentences.

(B) is incorrect because *insipid* means dull. Nothing in the prompt indicates that Chandler’s writing was dull.

(C) is incorrect because *inane* means senseless, though the prompt implies that Chandler is the opposite of that, because he wrote “complex” sentences.

(D) is incorrect because *circumlocutory* means roundabout in speech, but the prompt implies that Chandler is the opposite of that, since he wrote “concise” sentences.

3) B

To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their definitions by using key words from the prompt. Here, it is impossible to predict the missing words themselves, as the only keywords are found in the construction of the prompt, which implies a cause-and-effect relationship between the two missing words. The first word is an adjective that is the cause of the second missing word, the reaction “modern readers” have to the book. Of the answer choices, only choice (B) provides two words that could possibly have the cause-and-effect relationship the prompt requires. *Saccharine* means overly sweet, and *cloying* means excessively sweet; together, in context, these words would imply that the book is so sweet that readers find it excessively sweet, an idea that makes logical sense.

(A) is incorrect because there is no relationship between the two words. *Lofty* means very high, while *debauched* means corrupted. If anything, these words are opposites, not words that would complete a cause-and-effect relationship.

(C) is incorrect because there is no relationship between the two words. *Anachronistic* means out of place in time, and *inexorable* means relentless.

(D) is incorrect because there is no relationship between the two words. *Infamous* means notorious, and *unkempt* means disheveled.

(E) is incorrect because there is no relationship between the two words. *Sentimental* means tender or sweet, and *lurid* means sensational or wild. If anything, these words are opposites, not words that would complete a cause-and-effect relationship.

4) C

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using key words from the prompt. Here, the keyword is “volatile,” a word that describes the

manager in the same way the missing word does. Volatile means quick to change or explosive, and so the missing word must likewise mean quick to change. *Mercurial* means capricious or changing, and so choice **(C)** is the correct answer.

(A) is incorrect because *stagnant* means not moving or changing and is thus the opposite of the missing word.

(B) is incorrect because *provisional* means temporary, though nothing in the prompt implies that the manager was not a permanent fixture of the team.

(D) is incorrect because *migratory* means wandering. The prompt implies that the manager changes suddenly and frequently, but it does not imply that he moves around a lot.

(E) is incorrect because *inert* means not moving or changing and is thus the opposite of the missing word.

5) **B**

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using key words from the prompt. Here, the key words are found in the clause that follows the colon. Colons are used to separate explanatory information from the rest of the sentence, meaning that everything after the colon here elaborates on points made before it. Here, the missing word is a verb, and it is a verb that is defined by the verb phrase “used many forms of torture to make the accused obey,” and the missing word must be one that means tortures to get someone to obey. Choice **(B)** provides such a word: *coerce* means use force to get someone to obey.

(A) is incorrect because *squander* means waste. The prompt does not imply that the Inquisition wasted people, as that would not even make logical sense.

(C) is incorrect because *abjure* means renounce upon oath. The prompt does not imply that the Inquisition renounced people; all that is known is that the inquisitors tortured people.

(D) is incorrect because *commandeer* means draft for the military. The prompt does not imply that the Inquisition had any connection to the military, nor does it imply that the Inquisition conscripted people into military service.

(E) is incorrect because *alleviate* means soothe or lessen pain. In fact, the prompt implies that the Inquisition inflicted pain rather than relieved it, as the inquisitors tortured people.

6) **A**

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using key words from the prompt. Here, the key word is “culpability,” and the prompt hinges on a cause-and-effect relationship: because the murder weapon was found in his drawer, Mr. Gleason’s culpability became the adjective described by the missing word. “Culpability” means deserved guilt or blame, and the sentence implies the discovery of the weapon made Mr. Gleason’s guilt obvious or apparent, so the missing word must be one akin to apparent. *Manifest* means evident or visible, so choice **(A)** is the correct answer.

(B) is incorrect because *manifold* means numerous and varied, which is not something that would describe Mr. Gleason’s guilt after the murder weapon was found in his possession.

(C) is incorrect because *maudlin* means overly sentimental, which is not something that would describe Mr. Gleason’s guilt after the murder weapon was found in his possession.

(D) is incorrect because *maledicted* means cursed, which is not something that would describe Mr. Gleason’s guilt after the murder weapon was found in his possession.

(E) is incorrect because *maladroit* means clumsy, which is not something that would describe Mr. Gleason’s guilt after the murder weapon was found in his possession.