



● **Sentence Completion 1** *(high-intermediate level)*

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

1. Despite the unfavorable attention brought on by the media, the press had a **positive** effect on the campaign.  
A. positive  
B. negative  
C. inert  
D. amplified  
E. equal
2. It is no secret that prison can be rather \_\_\_\_\_; grim conditions and severe treatment have been known to \_\_\_\_\_ even the most hardened criminals.  
A. cruel ... entertain  
B. harsh ... dishearten  
C. pleasant ... encourage  
D. strange ... prevent  
E. hard ... ridicule
3. Although Kate's report on her scientific findings was lengthy, the presentation she held was rather \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. brief  
B. neutral  
C. mundane  
D. straightforward  
E. elaborate
4. The new building was expansive; its \_\_\_\_\_ foundation allowed for wider hallways than the previous building.  
A. shallow  
B. small  
C. broad  
D. fancy  
E. thin
5. The famous pop singer tragically died at age fifty. This was an \_\_\_\_\_ event for his \_\_\_\_\_ fans.  
A. awful ... healthy  
B. amazing ... dubious  
C. unthinkable ... devoted  
D. amicable ... strange  
E. emotional ... heavy
6. Unlike the misleading television documentary, the biography was \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. interesting  
B. accurate  
C. fantastic  
D. phony  
E. false
7. The doctor takes note of any \_\_\_\_\_ blemishes on the patient's skin; such abnormalities are often \_\_\_\_\_ of skin cancer.  
A. irregular ... symptoms  
B. typical ... clues  
C. interesting ... signs  
D. small ... indications  
E. common ... causes
8. Psychopaths \_\_\_\_\_ inflict harm on others because they lack a moral compass.  
A. sympathetically  
B. desperately  
C. politely  
D. viciously  
E. carefully

## Answers and Explanations

1) **A**

The word “despite” means that two things are related in a negative or opposite way. The correct answer choice will set up an opposite relationship with “unfavorable attention.” The word “unfavorable” is a negative word, so the correct answer choice must be (A) positive. If unfavorable attention had a positive effect, this is the opposite of what is expected. The correct answer is (A).

The other answer choices do not set up opposite relationships. There is no positive connotation to the words (B) negative, (C) inert, (D) amplified, or (E) equal. We need a positive word to set up an opposite relationship, and the only positive word on the list is “positive” itself. Therefore, these answer choices are incorrect.

2) **B**

The semicolon ( ; ) is a punctuation mark that combines two independent clauses that are close in meaning and progress logically from one another. This means that there will be a logical or equal relationship between prison conditions and their effects on prisoners. We know from the question that prison is “grim” and “severe.” Both of these are negative words, so the answer choice will also contain a negative description of prison. (B) Harsh is a negative word that means “tough” or “strict.” Prison is a harsh place that can (B) dishearten hardened criminals. “Dishearten” is another negative word that means “discourage” or “make hopeless.” Prison can make anyone feel hopeless and discouraged. The correct answer is (B).

The other answer choices do not set up logical relationships. Prison can be (A) cruel, but it does not (A) entertain criminals. “Entertain” has a positive connotation, and prison is not entertaining. (C) Pleasant and (C) encourage also have positive connotations, so we can ignore answer choice (C). Prison is not necessarily (D) strange, and it does not (D) prevent criminals. It punishes criminals, but if someone is already a criminal, then prison will not necessarily prevent that person from committing more crimes. Prison life can be (E) hard, but it does not (E) ridicule prisoners. “Ridicule” means “make fun of.” Prison does not make fun of criminals. Therefore, these answer choices are incorrect.

3) **A**

The word “although” means that two things are related in a negative or opposite way. The correct answer choice will set up an opposite relationship between Kate’s lengthy report and her presentation. If her presentation was not lengthy, it must have been (A) brief. “Brief” is the opposite of “lengthy.” The correct answer is (A).

The other answer choices do not set up opposite relationships. It is possible that both the report and the presentation were (B) neutral, (C) mundane, (D)

straightforward, or (E) elaborate. None of these words deal with length, so there is no contradiction between being lengthy and having any of these other characteristics. Therefore, these answer choices are incorrect.

4) **C**

The semicolon ( ; ) is a punctuation mark that combines two independent clauses that are close in meaning and progress logically from one another. This means that there will be a logical or equal relationship between the expansive hallways and the foundation. “Expansive” and (C) broad are very close in meaning. Both convey the idea that something is wide or large. If the foundation is broad, the hallways can be expansive. The correct answer is (C).

The other answer choices do not set up logical relationships. (A) Shallow, (B) small, and (D) thin all convey the idea that the foundation is too little or narrow to provide for expansive hallways. This is the opposite of what we are trying to convey. If the foundation is (E) fancy, this has no effect on whether or not expansive halls can be built on top of it. Therefore, these answer choices are incorrect.

5) **C**

The key word in this question is “tragically died.” This means that the pop singer’s death was a negative, upsetting event. The correct answer choice will also involve negative words. (C) Unthinkable often has a negative connotation; something is unthinkable when it is too terrible to be imagined. The singer’s (C) devoted fans would be very upset about his death, because they were the people who loved him most dearly. The correct answer is (C).

The other answer choices do not set up logical relationships. The singer’s death was probably an (A) awful and (E) emotional event, but it does not matter whether or not his fans were (A) healthy or (E) heavy. These characteristics do not affect how the fans felt about his death. His death certainly was not (B) amazing or (D) amicable, because both of these words have positive connotations. Something cannot be both tragic and positive at the same time. Therefore, these answer choices are incorrect.

6) **B**

The word “unlike” means that two things are related in a negative or opposite way. The correct answer choice will set up an opposite relationship with “misleading.” If something is not misleading, then it is (B) accurate, because these two words are opposites. A misleading documentary will trick viewers into believing falsehoods, but an accurate biography will lead readers to the truth. The correct answer is (B).

The other answer choices do not set up opposite relationships. (D) Phony and (E) false are both similar in meaning to “misleading,” because all of these words indicate that something is untrue. (C) Fantastic usually has a positive

connotation, but it can also mean that something is unbelievable (it is a “fantasy”). Even if we only look at the word “fantastic” with its positive connotation, there is not necessarily an opposite relationship between being misleading and being good. Similarly, there is no opposite relationship between being misleading and being (A) interesting. Therefore, these answer choices are incorrect.

7) **A**

Remember that the semicolon ( ; ) combines two independent clauses that logically progress from one another. This means that there is a relationship between the “abnormal” skin blemishes and skin cancer. Another way to say “abnormal” is (A) irregular. Both of these words mean that something is out of the ordinary. Furthermore, irregular skin blemishes are indeed (A) symptoms of skin cancer. A “symptom” is a sign that someone has a disease. If someone has skin cancer, it usually shows up as abnormal blemishes. The correct answer is (A).

(B) Typical or (E) common skin blemishes such as freckles or pimples do not indicate skin cancer. Only irregular blemishes sometimes indicate skin cancer. Blemishes that are (C) interesting or (D) small do not always indicate skin cancer, either, because these characteristics are not what doctors look for. Doctors only look for blemishes that are clearly out of the ordinary. Therefore, these answer choices are incorrect.

8) **D**

The key words in this question are “inflict pain on others” and “lack a moral compass.” Psychopaths are people who inflict pain on others because they do not recognize that what they are doing is wrong. Nevertheless, the pain they inflict can be quite intense and violent. This means that they inflict pain (D) viciously. The correct answer is (D).

The other answer choices do not set up logical relationships. You cannot (A) sympathetically or (C) politely inflict pain on someone, because inflicting pain is always a mean or evil thing to do. Psychopaths might inflict pain (B) desperately or (E) carefully, but not always. They do not *necessarily* inflict pain in these ways, so these are not the best answer choices.