



● Sentence Completion 11 *(low-advanced SAT level)*

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

1. The airplane manufacturer realized a flaw in its design when tests revealed that the cabin door required too much force to be _____ in an emergency; for safety purposes, the door needs to be difficult to open but not _____.
 - A. opened ... ajar
 - B. ejected ... viable
 - C. thrust ... ostensible
 - D. depressed ... insurmountable
 - E. extruded ... impossible
2. When the headlights shone on the raccoon that was foraging in the trash, the alarmed critter _____ away.
 - A. pilfered
 - B. scurried
 - C. dawdled
 - D. trespassed
 - E. sauntered
3. The three-legged race is _____ team-building activity: when two people are _____ together, they must communicate effectively in order to move forward.
 - A. a superb ... weaned
 - B. an excellent ... yoked
 - C. an obvious ... waffled
 - D. an ineffective ... cuffed
 - E. a sordid ... chained
4. Many voters were turned off by the mayoral candidate's reliance on _____; he seemed unable to answer a question in a straightforward, non-evasive manner.
 - A. circumlocution
 - B. eloquence
 - C. terseness
 - D. conciseness
 - E. animosity
5. Due to a conflict of interest, the judge was forced to _____ herself from hearing the case and _____ from voting in the decision.
 - A. remove ... pander
 - B. quell ... forgo
 - C. abjure ... afford
 - D. recuse ... abstain
 - E. indulge ... decline
6. Because of rumors that the ship's passengers were sick with a terrible plague, the port _____ the ship and refused to let it dock.
 - A. begrudged
 - B. nurtured
 - C. purported
 - D. sanctioned
 - E. quarantined

Answers and Explanations

1) E

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. The first missing word's key words are in the sentence's final clause: "the door needs to be difficult to open." This implies that the cabin door must not be easily opened, though the cabin door on the plane was too difficult to open, as it "required too much force." Therefore, the first missing word must mean something similar to "open." The second missing word is dependent on the first missing word, as the final clause sets up an explanation for why the information presented in the first clause was a problem, namely that a door should be "difficult to open" but not as difficult as the door in question is. Thus, the second word must mean something akin to extremely difficult. Choice **(E)** works, then, as *extruded* means pushed out, and *impossible* means not able to be completed, which would imply that the door is extremely difficult to open.

(A) is incorrect because only the first word works in context. *Opened* certainly works for the first missing word, but *ajar* means opened slightly. The prompt in no way suggests that the cabin door of the airplane was opened slightly.

(B) is incorrect because only the first word works in context. *Ejected* means expelled outward and could describe the act of opening the door, but *viable* means possible to complete which is the opposite of what the prompt wishes to say.

(C) is incorrect because only the first word works in context. *Thrust* means pushed forcefully and could describe the act of opening the door, but *ostensible* means supposed, which does not make any logical sense in the passage, as the opening of a door could not be supposed.

(D) is incorrect because only the second word works in context. *Insurmountable* means impossible and works for describing the difficulty of opening the door, but *depressed* means to lower in power. Something cannot logically require "too much force to" lower in power.

2) B

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 "alarmed," and the prompt hinges on a cause-and-effect relationship: because the raccoon was alarmed, it did the action described by the missing word. Of the answer choices, only **(B)** provides a word that could logically describe the effect of the raccoon being alarmed by the headlights: *scurried* means moved briskly, implying that the headlights caused the raccoon to run away.

(A) is incorrect because *pilfered* means stole, a verb that would not result from the raccoon being “alarmed.”

(C) is incorrect because *dawdled* means loitered or wasted time. If the raccoon were “alarmed,” it would not be likely to remain in the area and loiter.

(D) is incorrect because *trespassed* means entered someone’s property illegally. Raccoons do not have laws, so nothing they do could be described as illegal.

(E) is incorrect because *sauntered* means strolled slowly. If the raccoon were “alarmed,” it would not be likely to walk away slowly.

3) **B**

To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their definitions by using key words from the prompt. Each missing word has its own key words in this prompt. The first missing word’s key words are found in the last clause of the sentence: “they must communicate effectively.” Colons are used to separate explanatory information from the rest of the sentence, so everything after the colon here elaborates on what is stated in the first clause. Thus, the meaning of the first missing word is elaborated on by the key words previously cited. The race must therefore be a good “team-building activity,” since the act of learning to communicate effectively is essential for building a team. The second missing word’s key words are found in the first clause, as the second missing word elaborates upon that clause. The entire phrase “when two people are _____ together,” elaborates on what a “three-legged race” is and defines it. A three-legged race is a game in which two people’s legs are tied together, so the second missing word must be one that means something akin to tied. Choice (B) provides the best answer then, as *excellent* means extremely good and *yoked* means joined together.

(A) is incorrect because only the first word works in context. *Superb* means outstanding, but *weaned* means gave up a cherished activity. Nothing in the prompt suggests that two people give up a cherished activity together during a three-legged race.

(C) is incorrect because only the first word works in context. *Obvious* means readily apparent and could work to describe the benefits a three-legged race has a team-building activity, but *waffled* means equivocated or went back and forth on a decision, not something that in any way relates to team-building or a “three-legged race.”

(D) is incorrect because only the second word works in context. *Cuffed* means linked, so it describes what happens during a three-legged race, but *ineffective* is an adjective that describes something that does not work. The sentence means to imply that the three-legged race is a good activity for team building, not an ineffective one.

(E) is incorrect because only the second word works in context. *Chained* means linked, so it describes what happens during a three-legged race, but *sordid* means vile, an adjective that in no way describes the team-building aspects of a three-legged race.

4) **A**

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 “straightforward, non-evasive manner,” and the prompt makes it clear that the candidate was unable to speak in such a way. Thus, the candidate must have relied on the opposite of straightforward speech, meaning the missing word is a noun that means indirect speech. Therefore, choice (A) is correct, because *circumlocution* means indirect or roundabout expression.

(B) is incorrect because *eloquence* means expressiveness or the ability to speak well. The prompt implies only that the candidate avoided straightforward answers to questions and does not imply either that he was or was not eloquent.

(C) is incorrect because *terseness* means pithiness or the ability to speak in a short and clear manner. It is, thus, the opposite of the missing word.

(D) is incorrect because *conciseness* means the ability to speak in a short and clear manner. It is, thus, the opposite of the missing word.

(E) is incorrect because *animosity* means active hatred. It in no way relates to a prompt about speech.

5) **D**

To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their definitions by using key words from the prompt. Here, the only key words are found in the opening modifying clause “due to a conflict of interest,” which sets up the cause for the effect described in the rest of the sentence. However, the missing words themselves do not really have key words, making them virtually impossible to predict. Instead, look for the relationship between them. Because both words result from the same cause and the conjunction “and” is used, implying that the words are equivalent, the correct answer choice would be a pair of synonyms that would result from the conflict of interest. Choice (D) provides such words: *recuse* means to remove from a court case, while *abstain* means to refrain from something. Both words, thus, would imply that the judge removed herself from hearing and voting in the case because of a conflict of interest.

(A) is incorrect because *remove* and *pander* are not synonymous. *Remove* means dismiss, while *pander* means appeal to others’ low desires or tastes.

(B) is incorrect because *quell* and *forgo* are not synonymous. *Quell* means put down, while *forgo* means do without. They are close but not quite the same thing.

(C) is incorrect because *abjure* and *afford* are not synonymous. *Abjure* means renounce, while *afford* means able to do.

(E) is incorrect because *indulge* and *decline* are antonyms, not synonyms. *Indulge* means allow to enjoy, while *decline* means turn down.

6) **E**

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using key words from the prompt. The key word here is “sick,” while the prompt hinges on a cause-and-effect relationship: because the people were sick, the port did the action described by the missing word, a word that must also relate to the fact that the ship was refused the right to dock. Thus, the missing word must mean some action resulting from illness (but not an action involving helping the sick). Choice **(E)** is the only choice that provides a word relating to disease, as *quarantined* means isolated to prevent the spread of disease.

(A) is incorrect because *begrudged* means resented. The prompt implies that the port did more than merely resent the ship, as it “refused to let the ship dock.”

(B) is incorrect because *nurtured* means nourished or educated. It, in other words, implies that the port helped the ship, though the passage states that the port did not do so, as it “refused to let the ship dock.”

(C) is incorrect because *purported* means alleged. While the rumor of illness might have been alleged, by the time the port did anything it had already heard the rumor, not created it.

(D) is incorrect because *sanctioned* means approved, though the prompt implies that the port did not approve of the ship, as it “refused to let the ship dock.”