



● Sentence Completion 13 (low-advanced SAT level)

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

1. Though the play was only two hours long, it was so _____ that it seemed to last eons.
A. erroneous
B. tedious
C. enthralling
D. enigmatic
E. tantalizing
2. Most people felt the punishment was far too _____ for the crime: what the culprit did was so despicable, even _____, as to warrant a far more severe reprimand.
A. permissive ... dormant
B. regal ... august
C. tolerant ... pompous
D. draconian ... nefarious
E. lenient ... heinous
3. All of the features added to the new model of the automobile seemed totally _____ and did not add anything of import or practicality to the car.
A. innocuous
B. superfluous
C. pretentious
D. mundane
E. prescient
4. Everything about Clyde Frazier both on and off the basketball court was _____: a flashy dresser, he always stood out wherever he went.
A. egregious
B. conspicuous
C. covert
D. embryonic
E. clandestine
5. It became abundantly clear that there was nothing more that could be done to save the _____ business, as years of irreversible and poor decisions had been contributing to its slow decay.
A. myopic
B. monumental
C. mutable
D. moribund
E. motley
6. One of the lessons of *The Great Gatsby* is not to give in to _____: if Gatsby had not sentimentalized the past, he would never have tried to repeat it.
A. nostalgia
B. irony
C. nirvana
D. mawkishness
E. pretext

Answers and Explanations

1) 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 “it seemed to last eons.” The prompt is constructed in such a way that the second clause is contradictory of the first one (because of the inclusion of “though”), and the missing word is the reason for the contradiction. Thus, since the sentence states that the play was relatively short but seemed to last a very long amount of time (as “eons” would imply), the missing word must mean something akin to dull, as a dull play would seem to be longer than it actually is. Therefore, choice **(B)** is correct, as *tedious* means boring.

(A) is incorrect because *erroneous* means mistaken and is, therefore, not a word that would explain why the play seemed to last longer than it actually did.

(C) is incorrect because *enthralling* means capturing or exciting. Therefore, it implies that the play was not boring at all. This means that the play would not seem to last a long time.

(D) is incorrect because *enigmatic* means mysterious. This is not a word that would explain why the play seemed to last longer than it actually did.

(E) is incorrect because *tantalizing* means exhibiting something that provokes interest or expectation. It is not a word that would explain why the play seemed to last longer than it actually did.

2) 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 found in the final clause of the sentence: “as to warrant a far more severe reprimand.” The construction of the prompt implies that the first missing word describes the original punishment, one that was not as severe as most thought it should be. The second word’s key word is “despicable,” and the inclusion of the modifier “even” before the missing word implies that the missing word must mean something similar to extremely despicable. Choice **(E)** is best, then, as *lenient* means mild or permissive, and *heinous* means atrocious or hatefully bad.

(A) is incorrect because only the first word works in context. *Permissive* means characteristically tolerant and would, therefore, work for the first missing word. However, *dormant* means sleeping or lethargic and therefore has nothing to do with “despicable.”

(B) is incorrect because neither word works in context. *Regal* means royal and *august* means majestic. Neither word refers to either the punishment in question or the “despicable” act.

(C) is incorrect because only the first word works in context. *Tolerant* means permissive or not punishing and would, therefore, work for the first missing word. However, *pompous* means arrogant and therefore has nothing to do with “despicable.”

(D) is incorrect because only the second word works in context. *Nefarious* means very wicked and would, therefore, work in context for the second word, a word that means very “despicable.” However, *draconian* means extremely severe and is, therefore, the opposite meaning of the first missing word, a word that must mean not severe enough.

3) **B**

The key words here are “did not add anything of import or practicality,” and the missing word must have a similar meaning, as the conjunction “and” suggests that both are descriptive of the car’s new features. Thus, the missing word must be one that means something akin to unnecessary. Choice **(B)** is the best choice, then, as *superfluous* means unnecessary.

(A) is incorrect because *innocuous* means harmless, though nothing in the prompt implies either that the automobile’s new features are harmless or harmful.

(C) is incorrect because *pretentious* means pompous or assuming import. The prompt states only that the new features of the car don’t add anything to it, not that they assume importance.

(D) is incorrect because *mundane* means commonplace, though nothing in the prompt implies either that the automobile’s new features are typical or atypical. Rather, the prompt only states that they “did not add anything of import” to the car.

(E) is incorrect because *prescient* means having knowledge of things before they occur. The prompt states only that the new features of the car don’t add anything to it, not that they are glimpses of the future.

4) **B**

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using key words from the prompt. The key words here come in the final clause of the sentence: “he always stood out wherever he went.” This phrase comes after a colon, and colons are used to separate explanatory information from the rest of a sentence. Therefore, everything that comes after the colon here describes or even defines the missing word, meaning the missing word must be one that

means impossible not to notice. Choice **(B)** provides such a word: *conspicuous* means easily seen.

(A) is incorrect because *egregious* means notorious or bad in a really open way. Thus, it is close in meaning to the proper missing word, as the prompt states that Frazier “always stood out wherever he went,” but egregious goes beyond merely implying openness and instead implies a negative charge. Nothing in the prompt indicates that Frazier did anything bad in his life.

(C) is incorrect because *covert* means hidden or secretive. It is the exact opposite of a word that would be used to describe someone who “always stood out wherever he went.”

(D) is incorrect because *embryonic* means undeveloped or rudimentary. Nothing in the prompt indicates that Frazier was not fully developed, so this answer is completely out of left field.

(E) is incorrect because *clandestine* means hidden or secretive. It is the exact opposite of a word that would be used to describe someone who “always stood out wherever he went.”

5) **D**

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 noun clause “slow decay.” The prompt hinges on a cause-and-effect relationship with the first clause, including the missing word, being the effect of the “irreversible and poor decisions” of the second clause. Thus, the missing word must be one that means the effect of a “slow decay,” meaning the missing word must mean something akin to dying, as dying is the result of slow decay. Choice **(D)** is the best choice, as *moribund* means dying.

(A) is incorrect because *myopic* means near-sighted. Though the decisions the company made might have been near-sighted (though the prompt does not even imply this fully), the prompt makes it clear that the business itself is suffering the consequences of these decisions, meaning the missing word must be the effect of the decisions and not descriptive of the decisions themselves.

(B) is incorrect because *monumental* means massive. Nothing in the prompt indicates the size of the business, so choice **(B)** cannot be possible by right.

(C) is incorrect because *mutable* means adaptable or changeable. Nothing in the prompt indicates that the business is now or ever has been adaptable, so choice **(C)** is incorrect.

(E) is incorrect because *motley* means mixed. Nothing in the prompt indicates that the business was made up of diverse parts, so choice **(E)** cannot be correct.

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 words are “sentimentalized the past,” and the prompt indicates that this is what Gatsby did, though the lesson of the book is not to do so. Therefore, the missing word must be one that means sentimentalizing the past. Choice **(A)** is the best answer, then, as *nostalgia* means longing for an idealized past.

(B) is incorrect because *irony* means hidden sarcasm or an unexpected result. The prompt indicates only that Gatsby “sentimentalized the past,” not that he was sarcastic or that he behaved unexpectedly.

(C) is incorrect because *nirvana* is the Buddhist teaching of the ideal state of enlightenment. Gatsby was not a Buddhist, and the fact that he “sentimentalized the past” does not imply that he found enlightenment.

(D) is incorrect because *mawkishness* means extreme sentimentality. It is close in meaning to the missing word then, as the missing word does have to do with sentimentality, but avoiding mawkishness alone cannot be the lesson of the book, as the lesson has to hinge on Gatsby’s relationship to the past and attempts to “repeat it.”

(E) is incorrect because *pretext* means excuse. Nothing in the prompt indicates that Gatsby attempted to make excuses about his past, as all that is indicated is that he “sentimentalized” it.