



● Sentence Completion 14 *(high-advanced GRE level)*

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

1. Upon looking around campus and seeing only rose-cheeked blondes, Priscilla knew that the student body was too _____ for her; thus, she decided to apply instead to colleges that had more _____.
A. mongrel ... incongruity
B. homogeneous ... multiteity
C. xenophobic ... diversity
D. motley ... heterogeneity
E. variegated ... sameness
2. After a while, the _____ was too much for Kerouac; he loved the tranquility of Desolation Peak, but the routine nature of his life there grew frustrating for someone who thrived on spontaneity and adventure.
A. monotony
B. perturbations
C. elation
D. lugubriousness
E. inertia
3. In most of Horatio Alger's novels, a young boy starts out _____ only to become _____ from hard work and luck; however, Alger's own life had the opposite trajectory, as he was born rich, became richer, and then died poor.
A. affluent ... destitute
B. penurious ... miserly
C. impecunious ... prosperous
D. auspicious ... propitious
E. ostentatious ... opulent
4. Julius Caesar first _____ the lands all around Italy; the size of his empire continued to grow as he kept conquering more distant lands.
A. subdued
B. subverted
C. subjected
D. sublimated
E. subjugated
5. Because his expertly told stories were so enthralling, the _____ always seemed to capture the attention of everyone in the saloon.
A. fabulist
B. braggart
C. raconteur
D. allegorist
E. troubadour
6. A recovering alcoholic, Amy was seven years sober; conversely, her brother remained something of a lush and continued to frequent the _____ parties his sister eschewed.
A. debauched
B. nephalistic
C. inebriated
D. ascetic
E. bacchanalian

Answers and Explanations

1) B

To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their meanings by using key words in the prompt. Here, the key words for the first missing word are in the phrase “only rose-cheeked blondes,” a phrase that describes the uniformity of the “student body” on the “campus.” Thus, the first missing word must mean sameness. The second missing word is separated from the first missing word by being in a different clause. The second clause is linked to the first clause by the conclusion-introduction word “thus.” If one school was too uniform, Priscilla must have preferred a school that was opposite of that one. Therefore, the second missing word derives from the first one in that they are opposites. The second missing word must mean variation. *Homogeneous* means composed of identical parts and *multeity* means manifoldness or variation, so choice **(B)** is correct.

(A) is incorrect because *mongrel* means of mixed breed. This does not form the proper relationship with *incongruity*, which is something out of place or something that does not fit with another. These are not antonyms, and they do not work in the context of the prompt.

(C) is incorrect because *xenophobic* means afraid of strangers. This might seem to form the proper relationship with *diversity*, which is variety, but it does not work in context. Xenophobic does not necessarily describe a school where the students look similar. A school or work environment can lack diversity without being actively xenophobic.

(D) is incorrect because *motley* means composed of diverse parts. This does not form the proper relationship with *heterogeneity*, which is diversity or difference. These are not antonyms, and they do not work in the context of the prompt.

(E) is incorrect because *variegated* means varied, and *sameness* is uniformity. Thus, these words do have the proper relationship between them, but they do not work in the context of the prompt. The first word is supposed to suggest uniformity and the second one difference. These words could only work if their order (and parts of speech) were changed.

2) 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 “the routine nature of his life,” which the prompt states “grew frustrating.” The missing word likewise describes something that “was too much for” or grew frustrating for Kerouac. Thus, the missing word must likewise mean routine nature or the opposite of “spontaneity.” Thus, choice **(A)** is correct, since *monotony* is lack of variation.

(B) is incorrect because a *perturbation* is something that causes agitation. Though the prompt implies that something about Desolation Peak “was too much

for Kerouac,” it does not imply that something caused him agitation. Rather, something caused him boredom, since the “routine nature of his life there grew frustrating.”

(C) is incorrect because *elation* is exhilaration or joy, not something that would be described as “routine,” “frustrating,” or the opposite of “spontaneity and adventure.”

(D) is incorrect because *lugubriousness* is exaggerated gloominess or sadness. Though the prompt implies that Kerouac got bored on Desolation Peak, it does not imply that life on the mountain was necessarily sad or gloomy.

(E) is incorrect because *inertia* is inactivity or sluggishness. Though the prompt implies that life on Desolation Peak was “routine” and dull, it does not say that it was necessarily slow or inactive. Routine merely means that there was not much variation in the days, but a routine can include activity.

3) C

To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their definitions by using key words from the prompt. In this prompt, the two missing words share the key words of “the opposite trajectory,” a phrase that describes the relationship between Alger’s characters and Alger himself. Alger, the prompt states, “was born rich” and “died poor.” The two missing words describe the opposite relationship, so the order of rich and poor must be flipped. Thus, the first missing word must mean poor, and the second missing word must mean rich. Choice **(C)** is the correct answer because *impecunious* means poor and *prosperous* means successful or wealthy.

(A) is incorrect because neither word works in context. *Affluent* means wealthy, while *destitute* means poor. The two words would only work if their order were reversed.

(B) is incorrect because only the first word works in context. *Penurious* means extremely impoverished. This could describe the starting conditions of any “young boy” in a Horatio Alger novel. However, *miserly* means extremely stingy and could not work in context. Being stingy is not necessarily the same as being rich. The second missing word must explicitly refer to riches or wealth in order to set up the required opposite relationship.

(D) is incorrect because neither word works in context. *Auspicious* means promising or lucky, while *propitious* means favorable. Thus, the two words are basically synonyms, but the prompt requires antonyms.

(E) is incorrect because only the second word works in context. *Opulent* means wealthy. This could correctly describe what any “young boy” in an Alger novel becomes. However, *ostentatious* means showy or flashy. This could not work in

context, since one cannot usually start off showy and “become” wealthy afterward.

4) **E**

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 “conquering.” This describes what Caesar “kept” doing after the “first” action described by the missing word. Thus, the missing word is a verb that refers to conquering a land and adding it to one’s “empire” or rule. The correct answer is choice **(E)**, since *subjugated* means conquered.

(A) is incorrect because *subdued* means suppressed. Though an army can suppress a people or an uprising, this word does not have a strong enough meaning to work in context here. Being suppressed is not the same thing as being conquered.

(B) is incorrect because *subverted* is undermined. The prompt states that Caesar did more than merely undermine the “lands all around Italy.” In fact, he turned them into another part of “his empire.”

(C) is incorrect because *subjected* means made obedient or dependent upon. This word does imply that Caesar dominated other lands, but it does not quite work in context. One can be conquered but not subjected, or subjected but not conquered.

(D) is incorrect because *sublimated* means repressed impulses. This word does not work in context to describe how Caesar turned the “lands all around Italy” into part of “his empire.”

5) **C**

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using key words from the prompt. The key words in this prompt are “his expertly told stories.” The missing word describes the main character of the prompt. Since all that is known about him is that he told stories well, the missing word must mean expert storyteller. The correct choice is **(C)**, then, as a *raconteur* is a skillful storyteller.

(A) is incorrect because a *fabulist* is a person who invents fables or lies. While a fabulist is a type of storyteller, this is not the strongest answer choice. The prompt does not specify that the main character told fables or lies.

(B) is incorrect because a *braggart* is a person who boasts a lot. While a braggart is a type of storyteller, this is not the strongest answer choice. The prompt does not specify that the main character told stories or boasted only about himself.

(D) is incorrect because an *allegorist* is one who writes or tells allegories, a type of symbolical narrative. While an allegorist is a type of storyteller, this word is not the strongest answer choice. The prompt does not specify that the main character told only allegories.

(E) is incorrect because a *troubadour* is a wandering singer or minstrel. However, the prompt gives no indication that the main character either wanders or sings. Rather, it only states that he “expertly told” “stories.”

6) **E**

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using key words from the prompt. In this prompt, the key words are “recovering alcoholic” and “seven years sober,” phrases that refers to Amy. The missing word describes the type of “parties” that her brother “continued to frequent” and that she “eschewed,” or avoided. Descriptions of Amy and her brother are in separate clauses that are joined using the word “conversely.” This word implies Amy and his brother are opposites. Thus, Amy’s brother must go to parties that feature lots of alcohol, since Amy avoids all alcohol. The missing word means alcohol-serving, then. Choice **(E)** is the best answer: *bacchanalian* means drunkenly festive and correctly implies that copious amounts of alcohol are served.

(A) is incorrect because *debauched* means corrupted or excessively indulged. While this word would correctly imply that Amy’s brother frequents a different type of party than does Amy, it does not capture the full meaning of the sentence. There is no direct relationship between debauchery and alcohol. A party can be debauched with or without alcohol.

(B) is incorrect because *nephalistic* means characteristic of one who abstains from alcohol. Thus, this word would describe the types of parties Amy would attend, but not the types of parties her brother would attend.

(C) is incorrect because *inebriated* means intoxicated. This word would be used to describe people who have had too many drinks, but not the “parties” at which alcohol was served. Parties themselves cannot be intoxicated.

(D) is incorrect because *ascetic* means resisting temptations. Thus, it would describe the types of parties Amy would attend but not the types of parties her brother would attend.