



● Sentence Completion 15 *(high-advanced GRE level)*

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

1. The premise of the sitcom is simple: a hopeless romantic decides to leave his entire love life up to _____; as a result, he learns the hard way that true love cannot be found _____.
 - A. serendipity ... prudently
 - B. kismet ... adventitiously
 - C. premeditation ... fortuitously
 - D. fate ... assiduously
 - E. ablution ... extempore
2. The journalist alleged that Fort Knox, the largest gold reserve in the United States, actually houses a mere _____ of gold, though it is supposed to contain a plethora of bullion.
 - A. snippet
 - B. plenitude
 - C. scintilla
 - D. niggle
 - E. aggregation
3. The famously _____ anthropologist surprised no one when she lashed out at her graduate assistant; nevertheless, the graduate student had grown tired of her short temper and decided to quit.
 - A. mercurial
 - B. choleric
 - C. churlish
 - D. amiable
 - E. saturnine
4. Nearly all felines have a penchant for _____, exhibiting a remarkable ability to twist their bodies into any shape to get comfortable.
 - A. extortion
 - B. squirming
 - C. assuagement
 - D. torsion
 - E. curlicues
5. A magician is almost always able to explain another magician's trickery; however, many modern magicians are hitherto unable to demystify the _____ of Jacob Philadelphia.
 - A. rigmarole
 - B. chicanery
 - C. artifice
 - D. candor
 - E. legerdemain
6. In interviews, the director has repeatedly stated that the ending of the film _____ the possibility of a sequel; on the other hand, if a sequel would make millions in profits, nothing could completely _____ a studio from making another movie in the series.
 - A. forbends ... preclude
 - B. impedes ... presage
 - C. obstructs ... obliterate
 - D. occludes ... dissipate
 - E. hinders ... adumbrate

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, the key words are “as a result,” a phrase that explains the relationship between the missing words. Because the sitcom character leaves his love life up to one missing word, he learns that he cannot find love in the way described by the second missing word. Thus, the second missing word must be an adverb that derives its meaning from the first missing word, which must be a noun. Because *kismet* is luck or fate and *adventitiously* means accidentally or by chance, choice **(B)** is correct.

(A) is incorrect because *serendipity* is the habit of making fortunate discoveries by chance. This does not form the proper relationship with *prudently*, which means cautiously. Leaving one’s “entire love life up to” chance is not a cautious or prudent decision.

(C) is incorrect because *premeditation* is something planned or considered beforehand. This does not form the proper relationship with *fortuitously*, which means occurring because of luck. If the character purposely planned his love life, one would expect him to follow his plan, not to find love by chance.

(D) is incorrect because *fate* is a preordained course. Though this could work for the first missing word, this does not form the proper relationship with *assiduously*, which means diligently. In fact, there is no relationship whatsoever between the two words.

(E) is incorrect because *ablution* is cleansing or bathing. This does not form the proper relationship with *extempore*, which means on the spur of the moment or without premeditation. Though the second word could work in context, it has no relationship at all with the first word, which does not work in context.

2) C

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 “plethora,” a word that explains the amount of “gold” that “[Fort Knox] is supposed to contain.” The missing word describes the amount “the journalist alleged” it actually contained. The clause with the allegation is separated from the rest of the sentence by the word “though,” a word that implies contrast between the clauses. Thus, the missing word must mean scant amount, and so choice **(C)** is correct: a *scintilla* is a very small amount.

(A) is incorrect because a *snippet* is a small piece that has been cut off from a larger piece. While this word does correctly imply that the amount of gold at Fort Knox is small, it does not work in context. The prompt gives no indication that the amount of gold at Fort Knox has been cut off from a larger chunk of gold.

(B) is incorrect because *a plenitude* is an abundance. This would imply that the “journalist alleged” that Fort Knox had a lot of gold. This accusation would hardly need to be made, given that it is supposed to contain “a plethora of gold.” Plenitude does not work in context because it has the opposite meaning of the missing word.

(D) is incorrect because *a niggle* is a small complaint. While this word does correctly imply that the amount of gold at Fort Knox is small, it does not work in context because gold cannot complain.

(E) is incorrect because *an aggregation* is a group or mass of distinct or varied things. Thus, not only does it incorrectly imply that there is a lot of something at Fort Knox, but aggregation would also incorrectly suggest that there are substances other than gold collected and stored there.

3) **B**

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 “her short temper,” a phrase that explains a quality of the anthropologist. The missing word describes the anthropologist herself. Since all that is stated about her is that she had a short temper, the missing word must likewise mean short-tempered. Because of this, choice **(B)** is the correct answer, since *choleric* means easily angered.

(A) is incorrect because *mercurial* means changeable or erratic. While someone with a “short temper” might be mercurial, since a short-tempered person would more quickly change moods than would an even-tempered person, mercurial is not the best choice. This word can refer to someone whose moods change often, but not necessarily someone who is easily angered. This word fails to directly imply a relationship with anger.

(C) is incorrect because *churlish* means rude or mean. While this word would correctly describe the anthropologist as someone who is unpleasant, it is not the best choice because churlish does not imply that she has a “short temper.” Having a short temper does not necessarily make someone rude or mean as a basic personality trait. A short temper merely implies the ability to become rude or mean very quickly.

(D) is incorrect because *amiable* means pleasant or affable and, as such, would not usually describe someone with a “short temper.”

(E) is incorrect because *saturnine* means gloomy or sluggish in temperament. Though depression, lethargy, and anger are all seen as negative emotions, this is not the strongest answer choice. This word fails to directly imply a relationship with anger.

4) **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 “twist [...] into any shape,” a phrase that describes what felines are able to do. The missing word describes something they “has a penchant for,” so the missing word must mean twisting. Choice **(D)** is the best answer, then, since *torsion* is the act of twisting.

(A) is incorrect because *extortion* is the illegal practice of obtaining things by force, intimidation, or authority. Though this word sounds similar to the correct answer choice when spoken aloud, it actually has no relationship to the rest of the prompt.

(B) is incorrect because *squirming* is wriggling, especially to express discomfort or anxiety. It would not be used to describe what the feline had a “penchant for,” given their “ability to twist their bodies [...] to get comfortable.” One does not usually squirm in order to get comfortable.

(C) is incorrect because *assuagement* is the act of allaying or calming. It might describe the way felines are able “to get comfortable,” but it is not the right choice. The missing word should directly refer to their “ability to twist.” Getting comfortable is merely used in this prompt to describe why felines twists, not their “propensity” for it.

(E) is incorrect because *curlicues* are ornamental, fancy twists. This word does correctly describe the idea that felines are able to “twist their bodies,” but it does not work in context. The prompt does not imply that there is anything ornamental or fancy about her twists.

5) **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 word is “trickery,” which the prompt explains that most magicians can detect and understand. However, the prompt implies that they are “unable to demystify” something that Philadelphia used or did. The missing word describes what exactly that something was. Thus, the missing word must mean trickery, given that the clue in the prompt relates to a magician’s ability to explain trickery. The correct choice is therefore choice **(E)**, since *legerdemain* is trickery or sleight of hand.

(A) is incorrect because *rigmarole* is an elaborate or complicated procedure. This word would correctly imply that Philadelphia used something too complicated for other magicians to figure out, but it is not the strongest answer choice. Rigmarole does not necessarily involve “trickery” of any kind.

(B) is incorrect because *chicanery* is trickery by sophistry or fallacious reasoning. Thus, this word would correctly imply that Philadelphia used “trickery,” but its

meaning is too limited to work in context. The prompt does not suggest that Philadelphia's trickery involved sophistry or fallacious reasoning.

(C) is incorrect because *artifice* is a cunning or crafty device. While this could refer to "trickery," the prompt does not imply that Philadelphia necessarily used cunning in his act. This is not the strongest answer choice.

(D) is incorrect because *candor* is openness or sincerity. This does not work because, according to the prompt, there is nothing a magician does that is open or sincere. The prompt only indicates that a magician can explain another's "trickery."

6) **A**

To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their meanings by using key words from the prompt. In this prompt, both missing words discuss the "possibility for a sequel" or of "making another movie in the series." The missing words are in separate clauses joined by the phrase "on the other hand," a phrase that implies contrast between the clauses. However, though there is contrast between the clauses, there is not contrast between the missing words. Both words describe the same thing: the possibility of making a sequel. Thus, the correct answer would be a pair of synonyms. Therefore, because *forfends* means prevents and *preclude* likewise means prevent, choice **(A)** is the correct answer.

(B) is incorrect because *impedes* means slows. This does not form the proper relationship with *presage*, which means foretell. These words are not synonyms, so they do not work in context.

(C) is incorrect because *obstructs* means blocks or makes difficult to pass. This does not form the proper relationship with *obliterate*, which means demolish completely. These words are not synonyms, so they do not work in context.

(D) is incorrect because *occludes* means blocks or shuts. This does not form the proper relationship with *dissipate*, which means scatter. These words are not synonyms, so they do not work in context.

(E) is incorrect because *hinders* means prevents. This does not form the proper relationship with *adumbrate*, which means foreshadow. These words are not synonyms, so they do not work in context.