



● Sentence Completion 16 *(high-advanced GRE level)*

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

1. At the end of the trial, the judge _____ an exhaustive list of various crimes; the jury responded by declaring that they found the defendant guilty of each one of them.

A. manifested
B. procured
C. orated
D. categorized
E. enumerated
2. Most motivational speakers simply spout off a series of _____ in a loud, energetic voice, and Rousing Rick was no exception; if anything, his speech was even more _____ than most.

A. banalities ... bromidic
B. mores ... galvanizing
C. vulgarities ... rousing
D. clichés ... enervating
E. compunctions ... platitudinous
3. Some have claimed that the biggest flaw in the design of the new bicycle was that it could only move forward; on the other hand, one wonders why anyone would ever need a bicycle to move in _____ motion.

A. progressive
B. antithetical
C. retrograde
D. centrifugal
E. astern
4. The snake oil salesman claimed the bottle contained a voodoo cure-all from New Orleans; however, the so-called _____ was really just tomato juice mixed with vinegar.

A. nostrum
B. elixir
C. placebo
D. panacea
E. antidote
5. The wolf in the fable devised a crafty plan to capture the sheep in the pen: he would return late at night wearing a wool coat and enter the _____ undetected.

A. mew
B. hutch
C. enclosure
D. bungalow
E. sty
6. The students had been raised in _____ society; as a result, they struggled to connect with their _____ professor, a relic who eschewed ubiquitous devices like computers and cell phones.

A. an autocratic ... esoteric
B. a high-tech ... Luddite
C. a plutocratic ... manual
D. a mechanized ... cybernated
E. an austere ... liberal

Answers and Explanations

1) 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 “an exhaustive list of various crimes.” The missing word describes what the judge did with this list that caused the jury to respond “by declaring” the defendant’s guilt. The missing word must therefore mean read or listed. The correct choice is, therefore, choice **(E)**, since *enumerated* means listed or itemized.

(A) is incorrect because *manifested* means proved or made evident. In a trial, the attorneys try to prove the guilt or innocence of a defendant, and the jury decides on his or her guilt or innocence. However, this prompt refers to “the judge,” who only oversees the trial and hands down a sentence. The judge does not prove anything. Even without this background knowledge, one can still conclude that this is not the best answer choice. “[T]he jury responded by declaring that they found the defendant guilty” only after the judge read the list of crimes, meaning that the jury, not the judge, declared the defendant guilty.

(B) is incorrect because *procured* means obtained by effort. Merely obtaining a list would not cause the jury to respond. The judge would first have to read the list in order to elicit a response. This is not the strongest answer choice.

(C) is incorrect because *orated* means spoke aloud or declaimed. While the judge did read the “various crimes” aloud, this is not the strongest answer choice. It does not relate to the “exhaustive list” described in the prompt. Orated merely means spoke, not listed.

(D) is incorrect because *categorized* means arranged in classes or classified. While the list of the defendant’s “various crimes” could have been sorted into different categories, the prompt does not give any indication that this was what happened. This is not the strongest answer choice.

2) A

To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their definitions by using key words from the prompt. In this prompt, the key words are “no exception,” a phrase that compares Rousing Rick to “most motivational speakers.” The missing words describe, respectively, what most speakers “spout off” and what Rousing Rick’s “speech was.” Since Rick was no exception to most speakers, their speeches must have been similar. Thus, the missing words must have similar meanings. Because *banalities* are trite expressions and *bromidic* means trite, choice **(A)** is correct.

(B) is incorrect because *mores* are customs. This does not form the proper relationship with *galvanizing*, which means stimulating.

(C) is incorrect because *vulgarity*s are instances of obscenity or indecency. This does not form the proper relationship with *rousing*, which means exciting or stirring.

(D) is incorrect because *clichés* are overused expressions. This does not form the proper relationship with *enervating*, which means sapping or weakening.

(E) is incorrect because *compunctions* are feelings of uneasiness brought on by guilt. This does not form the proper relationship with *platitudinous*, which means trite.

3) **C**

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using key words from the prompt. The key word in this prompt is “forward,” a word that describes the only direction the bicycle can move. The missing word describes the way the bicycle cannot move. The narrator of the prompt “wonders why anyone would ever need a bicycle to move” in a direction other than forward. Thus, the missing word must mean backward-moving. The correct choice is **(C)**, since *retrograde* means moving backward or having a backward-moving direction.

(A) is incorrect because *progressive* means going forward or onward. This would describe the way the bicycle can move, not the way it cannot move.

(B) is incorrect because *antithetical* means contrasting or exact opposite. Though backward-moving is the opposite of forward-moving, this is not the best choice because antithetical does not necessarily mean backward-moving in all contexts. Choice (C) has a more precise application in this sentence.

(D) is incorrect because *centrifugal* means moving outward from the center and, as such, would not describe a backward or forward-motion.

(E) is incorrect because *astern* means moving in a backward direction but generally is used to refer to a direction aboard a ship or aircraft. It is not the best word to use in this prompt, since this prompt refers to the movements of a bicycle.

4) **D**

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 “cure-all,” something the “snake oil salesman claimed the bottle contained.” The missing word is used in place of cure-all in the second clause, since it is modified by “so-called.” Thus, the missing word must also mean cure-all. Therefore, choice **(D)** is the correct answer, since a *panacea* is a cure-all.

(A) is incorrect because a *nostrum* is a medicine sold with false or exaggerated claims. This word does correctly describe what the bottle actually contained. However, it does not work in place of the missing word because the missing word is modified by the adjectival “so-called.” This implies that the missing word must refer to what the “snake oil salesman” called the substance, not what the substance actually was.

(B) is incorrect because a *tonic* is a medicine that strengthens or invigorates, but not necessarily a “cure-all.”

(C) is incorrect because a *placebo* is a substance that has no medicinal effect but is given to a patient who thinks that it is medicinal. Thus, this word does correctly describe what the bottle actually contained. However, it does not work in place of the missing word because the missing word is modified by the adjectival “so-called.” This implies that the missing word must refer to what the “snake oil salesman” called the substance, not what the substance actually was.

(E) is incorrect because an *antidote* is a medicine, but not necessarily a “cure-all.”

5) **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 “pen.” The missing word is used in place of “pen” in the second clause, since the missing word describes something the wolf will “enter” to capture the sheep. Thus, the missing word means pen, and choice **(B)** is correct. A *hutch* is a pen or coop for animals.

(A) is incorrect because a *mew* is a pen or cage for birds. Thus, while it correctly describes a storage area for animals, it does not work in the context of this prompt, since the prompt specifically refers to sheep.

(C) is incorrect because an *enclosure* is any area that is cordoned off to keep thing inside. This word could correctly be used in place of “pen,” then, since both words refer to things that keep something inside of a certain area. However, enclosure is not the strongest answer choice. An enclosure is not necessarily something that keeps animals in, though the prompt specifically refers to a pen for storing sheep.

(D) is incorrect because a *bungalow* is a one-story cottage. This might refer to a place humans live, but not a “pen” for holding sheep.

(E) is incorrect because a *sty* is a pen for pigs or swine. Thus, while it correctly describes a storage area for animals, it does not work in the context of this prompt, since the prompt specifically refers to sheep.

6) **B**

To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their definitions by using key words from the prompt. Each missing word in this prompt has its own key words. The second missing word's key word is "eschewed even ubiquitous devices like computers and cell phones," a phrase that refers to the students' "professor." Thus, the second missing word must mean someone who despises technology. The first missing word's key words are "struggled to connect." The students struggled to connect with someone who despised technology, so they must have been raised in a society that was completely embraced technology. Therefore, the second missing word must mean embracing technology. Choice **(B)** is the correct answer, then, since *high-tech* means employing technological devices and electronics, while a *Luddite* is one who opposes technological change and new technologies.

(A) is incorrect because neither word works in context. *Autocratic* means dictatorial, while *esoteric* means understood by a learned few. Neither word relates to the "devices" or technology discussed in the prompt.

(C) is incorrect because only the second word works in context. *Manual* means non-automated, so it could describe a person who does not use "devices" such as computers and cell phones, but *plutocratic* means ruled by the wealthy. The second word does not relate to the prompt, so it does not work in context.

(D) is incorrect because only the first word works in context. *Mechanized* means made mechanical or machine-run. This would correctly describe a society that uses "devices like computers and cell phones." However, *cybernated* means run by computers and, as such, would not describe a person who "eschewed" these devices.

(E) is incorrect because neither word works in context. *Austere* means unadorned or strict, while *liberal* means favorable to progress or reform. The two words are somewhat antithetical, but neither word correctly relates to the technological "devices" mentioned later in the prompt.