



● Sentence Completion 18 *(high-advanced GRE level)*

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

1. The weary hikers decided to take a brief _____; when they finished resting, they set out on the last leg of their journey.
A. recess
B. prolongation
C. circumbendibus
D. moratorium
E. respite
2. The ovenbird's call is _____; in fact, it's among the most discordant of birdsongs.
A. blatant
B. jangling
C. strident
D. euphonious
E. mellifluous
3. Edgar's wife _____ him for losing his job; however, the layoffs at the plant were not his fault, so he really did not deserve to be _____.
A. aggrandized ... extolled
B. disparaged ... appeased
C. abashed ... reproved
D. berated ... rebuked
E. inveighed ... exacerbated
4. The author suggests that most modern political manifestos are actually _____, since they tend to lament an imagined past rather than glimpse an imagined future.
A. litanies
B. jeremiads
C. philippics
D. diatribes
E. commendations
5. On most television shows, episodes are joined together by a continuous storyline; similarly, the stories in the series of novels were _____ by a romantic arch.
A. concatenated
B. coalesced
C. sequestered
D. incorporated
E. dichotomized
6. Relations between the Hatfields and McCoys were _____ during the Civil War and only grew more _____ with the death of Asa Harmon McCoy in 1865.
A. amiable ... caustic
B. hostile ... acrimonious
C. rancorous ... morose
D. reparable ... irreconcilable
E. blithe ... begrudging

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 the prompt, the key word is “resting,” something the prompt says the “weary hikers” did. The missing word describes something the hikers “decided to take,” so it must mean a rest or break. Choice **(E)** is the best choice, then, as a *respite* is an interval of relief or relaxation.

(A) is incorrect because a *recess* is a temporary withdrawal from usual activity. This word would imply that the hikers quit hiking, but not that they were necessarily “resting.” Moreover, a recess usually refers to a break from routine, and there is no indication given in the prompt that the hikers routinely go on hikes. Thus, this word does not work as well as does choice (E).

(B) is incorrect because a *prolongation* is a continuance or an increase in time. This would not be used to describe a time of “resting.”

(C) is incorrect because a *circumbendibus* is a detour or roundabout path. While this word could refer to something “hikers” would take, it does not work in context, because the prompt makes clear the hikers were “resting,” not detouring.

(D) is incorrect because a *moratorium* is a suspension of activity. This word would imply that the hikers quit hiking, but not that they were necessarily temporarily “resting.” Thus, this word does not work as well as does choice (E).

2) 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 “discordant,” an adjective used to describe the sound of “the ovenbird’s call.” The missing word likewise describes the call. Since the call of the bird is “discordant,” the missing word must also mean discordant or unpleasant-sounding. Thus, choice **(C)** is correct, since *strident* means harsh or unpleasantly noisy.

(A) is incorrect because *blatant* means offensively vulgar or brazen, implying that the “ovenbird’s call” is irritating. However, it does not mean “discordant.” This word does not specifically refer to the sound or tone of the bird’s call, so it is not the best answer choice.

(B) is incorrect because *jangling* means making a ringing, metallic sound. While this word would correctly describe a “discordant” sound, the prompt does not imply that the “ovenbird’s call” is metallic in any way.

(D) is incorrect because *euphonious* means pleasant-sounding. This would not be used to describe a sound that is “discordant.”

(E) is incorrect because *mellifluous* means sweet-sounding. This would not be used to describe a sound that is “discordant.”

3) **D**

To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their definitions by using key words from the prompt. Here, each missing word refers to something Edgar’s wife did to him, so the two words must have similar meanings. Since *berated* means scolded harshly and *rebuked* means scolded, choice (D) is correct.

(A) is incorrect because *aggrandized* means made larger. This does not form the proper relationship with *extolled*, which means lauded or celebrated.

(B) is incorrect because *disparaged* means belittled. This does not form the proper relationship with *appeased*, which means calmed or pacified.

(C) is incorrect because *abashed* means embarrassed. This does not form the proper relationship with *reproved*, which means criticized.

(E) is incorrect because *inveighed* means protested strongly. This does not form the proper relationship with *exacerbated*, which means aggravated or worsened.

4) **B**

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using key words from the prompt. The prompt implies that “political manifestos” should usually “glimpse an imagined future.” The key words for the missing word are in the phrase “lament an imagined past.” This phrase is used to explain why “political manifestos are actually” what the missing word describes. Thus, the phrase gives the definition of the missing word, so the missing word means lamentations. This means choice (B) is correct, since *jeremiads* are prolonged lamentations or mournful complaints.

(A) is incorrect because *litanies* are repetitive lists. The prompt gives no indication that any lists are recited in “most modern political manifestos.”

(C) is incorrect because *philippics* are speeches of bitter denunciation. Though the prompt implies that the missing word refers to negative speeches, this does not work in context. A philippic is not necessarily a lamentation of the past.

(D) is incorrect because *diatribes* are bitter verbal attacks. Though the prompt implies that the missing word refers to negative speeches, this does not work in context. A diatribe is not necessarily a lamentation of the past, since it can refer to any verbal attack or complaint.

(E) is incorrect because *commendations* are praises or recommendations. This word would not work in context, then, since nothing in the prompt implies that

“modern political manifestos” actually praise anything. Instead, the prompt implies that they “bitterly lament” the past.

5) **E**

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 sentence are “joined together,” a verb phrase that explains how television storylines relate to each other. The missing word describes how a series of books operates “similarly,” so the missing word must likewise mean joined together. Thus, choice **(A)** is the right answer, since *concatenated* means linked together.

(B) is incorrect because *coalesced* means grown together into one body. While this would correctly describe something “joined together,” it does not work in this context. The prompt means to imply that each book in the “series of novels” is still a separate entity even though there is continuity from book to book.

(C) is incorrect because *sequestered* means set apart or isolated. This has the opposite meaning of the word required by the prompt. The prompt refers to storylines that are “joined together,” not separated apart.

(D) is incorrect because *incorporated* means combined into one body. While this would correctly describe something “joined together,” it does not work in this context. The prompt means to imply that each book in the “series of novels” is still a separate entity even though there is continuity from book to book.

(E) is incorrect because *dichotomized* means divided or separated into two parts. This would be nearly the opposite of something “joined together.”

6) **B**

To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their definitions by using key words in the prompt. In this prompt, the key words are “and only grew more.” This phrase separates the missing words, implying that they must have similar meanings. “Relations between the Hatfields and McCoys” were one way and grew to be stronger in that same way. Because *hostile* means antagonistic and *acrimonious* means stinging or bitter, choice **(B)** is correct.

(A) is incorrect because *amiable* means friendly. This does not form the proper relationship with *caustic*, which means biting.

(C) is incorrect because *rancorous* means full of bitter hatred. This does not form the proper relationship with *morose*, which means gloomy.

(D) is incorrect because *reparable* means can be fixed. This does not form the proper relationship with *irreconcilable*, which means impossible to bring into harmony.

(E) is incorrect because *blithe* means joyful. This does not form the proper relationship with *begrudging*, which means resenting the good fortune of another.