



● Sentence Completion 5 (high-advanced GRE level)

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

1. The newspaper editor received public opprobrium for publishing a graphic account of the politician's sexual harassment scandal; however, in the editor's defense, she knew the public would want to know every \_\_\_\_\_ detail of the case.
  - A. erotic
  - B. lascivious
  - C. unsullied
  - D. salacious
  - E. prurient
2. Mr. Dixon was careless with his wealth; he saved and invested little and was \_\_\_\_\_ when it came to planning for his retirement.
  - A. myopic
  - B. provident
  - C. biased
  - D. clairvoyant
  - E. puerile
3. Among the most prevalent \_\_\_\_\_ in classical mythology is Tiresias; his prophecies appear in several Greek myths as well as the famous play *Oedipus Rex*.
  - A. warlocks
  - B. sibyls
  - C. augurs
  - D. haruspices
  - E. charlatans
4. Though Hutchinson was known for being a rebellious iconoclast, even he viewed the taboo as \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. assayable
  - B. relativistic
  - C. appealable
  - D. enigmatic
  - E. verboten
5. Overwhelming evidence has led \_\_\_\_\_ scientists to believe that climate change is a real phenomenon; however, some Americans still trust the few detractors in the scientific community.
  - A. multifarious
  - B. paltry
  - C. reputable
  - D. myriad
  - E. multiform
6. One of Enron's more damaging business practices was to buy energy in one market and sell it at a higher price elsewhere; however, despite being ethically questionable, this \_\_\_\_\_ was considered legal.
  - A. embezzlement
  - B. arbitrage
  - C. bamboozlement
  - D. hoodwinking
  - E. purloining

## Answers and Explanations

1) **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 word is “graphic,” a word that describes the “account” the editor published. The missing word likewise describes the account that was published, specifically referring to the “details” of the case. Thus, the missing word must also mean graphic or lurid. Choice **(D)** is therefore the strongest: *salacious* means obscene or indecent.

**(A)** is incorrect because *erotic* means related to or arousing sexual desire. Though the prompt makes it clear the account of the case was “graphic and lurid,” it does not say that it was arousing.

**(B)** is incorrect because *lascivious* means inclined to lustfulness. This cannot be used to describe the “details” of a case. It can only be used, logically, to describe a person (perhaps the politician in the prompt).

**(C)** is incorrect because *unsullied* means virginal or pure. This would not describe the “details” of a sexual harassment scandal or the “graphic and lurid account” of it that the newspaper published.

**(E)** is incorrect because *prurient* means arousing sexual desire or inviting sexual advances. Though the prompt makes it clear the account of the case was “graphic and lurid,” it does not say that it was arousing or inviting.

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 “careless with his wealth.” This means that Mr. Dixon did not save, invest, or spend his money wisely. He probably did not have enough money saved to support himself during “his retirement.” The missing word must reflect his inability to plan for his future “retirement.” Choice **(A)** is therefore correct: *myopic* means shortsighted or lacking foresight.

**(B)** is incorrect because *provident* means showing foresight. This would describe the very opposite of someone who is shortsighted in “planning for his retirement.”

**(C)** is incorrect because *biased* means showing favor to someone or something. Nothing in the prompt refers to Mr. Dixon’s biases. The prompt only talks about his carelessness with money.

**(D)** is incorrect because *clairvoyant* means psychic. A psychic would be able to predict the future and would therefore know how much money he or she would need in retirement. Mr. Dixon showed no such foresight.

**(E)** is incorrect because *puerile* means childishly immature. Though Mr. Dixon's carelessness with his wealth might reflect a certain immaturity, this choice is not as strong as choice (A). Immaturity and shortsightedness are not necessarily synonymous.

3) **C**

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 "prophecies," which the prompt states that Tiresias made "in several Greek myths." Tiresias must have been a prophet, so the missing word must also mean prophet. Choice **(C)** is therefore correct, since *augurs* are prophets or interpreters of omens.

**(A)** is incorrect because *warlocks* are men who use dark magic. Although prophesying could be considered a type of magic, there is not enough evidence in the prompt to suggest that Tiresias was any kind of evil magician. This is not the strongest answer choice.

**(B)** is incorrect because *sibyls* are female prophets. The prompt implies that Tiresias was male, as it refers to "his prophecies."

**(D)** is incorrect because *haruspices* are diviners from ancient Rome who prophesied by reading the entrails of sacrificed animals. Tiresias appears in "Greek myths," however, not Roman myths. Moreover, the prompt does not provide enough information about how Tiresias made "his prophecies" to support using this very specific term.

**(E)** is incorrect because *charlatans* are people who pretend to have more knowledge than they actually possess. The prompt does not suggest that Tiresias was unable to make accurate prophecies. This word is not supported by the information in the prompt.

4) **E**

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using key words from the prompt. The key words here are "rebellious iconoclast," a phrase that describes Hutchinson. The missing word is separated from these words by being in a different clause. These clauses have a contrasting relationship, given that they hinge on the word "though." Thus, the prompt means to say that even though Hutchinson usually disregarded rules and traditions, he didn't break rules involving "the taboo." A taboo is a forbidden action, so the missing word must mean forbidden. This means choice **(E)** is the correct choice: *verboten* means forbidden.

**(A)** is incorrect because *assayable* means able to be analyzed. However, nothing in the prompt directly relates to how Hutchinson thinks about or analyzes "the taboo." This answer choice is not supported by any evidence in the prompt.

**(B)** is incorrect because *relativistic* relates to the idea that morals and truth are subjective to individuals or cultures. If “the taboo” in question were subject to only one culture’s morals, then Hutchinson might not view it as forbidden. The taboo would not be absolutely wrong in all contexts, so Hutchinson could justify breaking this rule as well as others.

**(C)** is incorrect because *appealable* means able to be renegotiated, especially when discussed with a superior or lawmaker. If Hutchinson tried to negotiate whether or not an action would remain taboo, this would not run contrary to his nature as a “rebellious iconoclast.” He would merely be trying to make a taboo acceptable, rather than accepting or rejecting it as forbidden.

**(D)** is incorrect because *enigmatic* means perplexing or mysterious. Though taboos are often shrouded in mystery or superstition, there is no evidence in the prompt to support this directly. Mysterious things are not necessarily “taboo” and vice versa.

5) **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 “overwhelming evidence” and “few detractors.” The two clauses in the sentence hinge on the word “however” which sets up a contrasting relationship between the clauses. Thus, if there are only a few detractors, there must be a large number of “scientists” who believe in the reality of climate change. The “overwhelming evidence” in the first clause also sets up the idea of contrast between large and small numbers. “Overwhelming evidence” leads to a large number of believers, but a “few” detractors can lead to “some” skeptics. The missing word must mean large number. Choice **(D)** is, thus, correct, as *myriad* means an infinitely great number.

**(A)** is incorrect because *multifarious* means numerous but also varied. This does not work in context because the prompt only implies that there are very many scientists who support the idea of climate change, not that the scientists themselves are a diverse group.

**(B)** is incorrect because *paltry* means extremely low in number or amount. This would describe the number of “detractors” in the prompt, but not the number of scientists who have “proven that climate change is a real phenomenon.”

**(C)** is incorrect because *reputable* means respected or honorable. Thus, it could be used to describe “scientists,” who are experts on a topic. However, this word does not work in context because the prompt hinges on a quantitative (numerical) relationship, not a qualitative one.

**(E)** is incorrect because *multiform* means having many shapes or kinds. As such, this word does not work in context. The correct word would imply that there are

many scientists who “have proven” the reality of climate change, but it does not need to imply that the scientists themselves are a diverse group.

6) **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 the description of Enron’s business practices. Specifically, the key words here are “buy energy in one market and sell it a higher price elsewhere.” The missing word must mean to buy in one market and sell in another. Therefore, choice **(B)** provides the best word, since *arbitrage* is the simultaneous purchase and sale of the same financial product in different markets to take advantage of unequal exchange rates.

**(A)** is incorrect because *embezzlement* is the fraudulent use of money for private or personal usage. Though embezzlement is also “ethically questionable,” it is not the same thing as buying energy in one market while selling it at a higher price in another.

**(C)** is incorrect because *bamboozlement* is trickery or deception. Though Enron probably did deceive its customers, this is not as strong of a word to use in context as is choice (B).

**(D)** is incorrect because *hoodwinking* is trickery or deception. Though Enron probably did deceive its customers, this is not as strong of a word to use in context as is choice (B).

**(E)** is incorrect because *purloining* is stealing. Though stealing is also “ethically questionable,” it is not at all the same thing as buying energy in one market while selling it at a higher price in another.