●Sentence Completion 9 *(high-advanced GRE level)*

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

1. Because the trumpeter hoped to cheer up the depressed crowd on the street, he blasted out _____ ditty that was certain to enliven all listeners.

   A. a cacophonous
   B. a dulcet
   C. a lugubrious
   D. a jocund
   E. an adagio

2. We thought the amethyst mine would be an exciting tourist spot; however, upon visiting, we were devastated to find out how _____ it actually was.

   A. jejune
   B. anemic
   C. plebeian
   D. enthralling
   E. anomalous

3. As a student, Napoleon was _____ by his noble classmates; many historians have suggested that this exclusion was the root of his fabled inferiority complex.

   A. expatriated
   B. venerated
   C. chastised
   D. lacerated
   E. ostracized

4. As a young man, Paul often _____ in his opinions; however, his beliefs showed signs of _____ later in his life.

   A. fluctuated ... wavering
   B. vacillated ... calcification
   C. retreated ... disengagement
   D. dwindled ... augmentation
   E. homogenized ... amalgamation

5. Joseph McCarthy never seemed to regret _____ anyone he called before the Un-American Activities Committee (UCC), even though many of the people he accused were undeserving of such public _____.

   A. condemning ... jubilation
   B. adjudicating ... humiliation
   C. pillorying ... derision
   D. impeaching ... renown
   E. proscribing ... flattery

6. On screen, John Wayne never shed a tear; nevertheless, one must assume that in his personal life he was occasionally _____.

   A. lachrymose
   B. doleful
   C. phlegmatic
   D. pensive
   E. disconsolate

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. The key words in this sentence are in the phrase "the trumpeter hoped to cheer up the depressed crowd." The word "because" indicates that this prompt hinges on cause-and-effect relationship. The clause containing the key words explains the cause of the effect in the second clause. The missing word is in that second clause, so it must result from the trumpeter's attempt to cheer up the crowd. To cheer up a crowd, a musician would play a cheery song, so the missing word must mean cheery. Thus, choice **(D)** is correct, since *jocund* means cheerful or merry.

(A) is incorrect because *cacophonous* means having a harsh or discordant sound. This does not work for describing a "ditty" designed to "cheer up" a "depressed crowd."

(B) is incorrect because *dulcet* means pleasant to the ear. While a song that is pleasing to the ear could cheer up a crowd, a melodious song is not necessarily uplifting or encouraging. Thus, this is not the best answer choice.

(C) is incorrect because *lugubrious* means exaggeratedly mournful. This would in no way describe music designed to "cheer up" a crowd.

(E) is incorrect because *adagio* means having a slow tempo. Music with a slower tempo would not necessarily "enliven all listeners." A faster tempo would be better to achieve this goal. This is not the strongest answer choice.

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 word is "exciting," an adjective that describes how the narrators assumed the mine would be. The missing word describes how the mine "actually was" and is separated from the first clause by the conjunction "however." This word implies contrast between the two clauses in the question. Thus, the mine must have actually been the opposite of exciting. The missing word must therefore mean unexciting. Choice **(A)** is the correct answer, then, since *jejune* means dull or boring.

(B) is incorrect because *anemic* means lacking power or vigor. This word would imply that the mine was not lively. However, being lively and not being "exciting" are two different things. Exciting implies that something causes people to feel lively, rather than being lively itself.

(C) is incorrect because *plebeian* means belonging to the common people. This does not work in context because the prompt gives no indication that the mine is owned by commoners.

(D) is incorrect because *enthralling* means captivating. This would describe what the prompt's narrators thought the mine would be, but not what it actually was.

(E) is incorrect because *anomalous* means atypical or unusual. The prompt gives no indication that the amethyst mine was in any way odd, as it merely implies that it was not as "exciting" as the narrators had hoped.

3) **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 "exclusion," a noun that is used in place of the missing word in the final clause of the sentence. Thus, the missing word must mean excluded. Therefore, choice **(E)** is the correct answer: *ostracized* means excluded from a society or group by general consent.

(A) is incorrect because *expatriated* means banished from one's native country. Although Napoleon was exiled from France at the end of his rule, the prompt does not make reference to this fact. The prompt refers to Napoleon's schooling as a young man, and it does not say he was exiled by his classmates at this time.

(B) is incorrect because *venerated* means honored or admired. If Napoleon's classmates had treated him in this way, he would not have suffered "exclusion" or developed an "inferiority complex." This word is the opposite of what the prompt implies.

(C) is incorrect because *chastised* means severely punished. This would only work in context if the prompt implied that Napoleon's "exclusion" was part of a punishment.

(D) is incorrect because *lacerated* means wounded or injured. While the prompt implies that Napoleon was emotionally wounded as a result of his "exclusion," the missing word must refer to the exclusion and not the results of his exclusion. Therefore, lacerated does not work in place of the missing word.

4) **B**
To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their definitions by using key words from the prompt. In this prompt, it is not possible to predict the definitions of the words, but their relationship can be predicted because of the word "however." This word sets up a contrasting or opposite relationship between the two clauses. The first clause describes Paul's "opinions" as "a young man." The second clause describes what happened to his "beliefs" later in his life. The correct answer should give a pair of antonyms. Choice **(B)** is the correct answer, then, since *vacillated* means wavered or changed and *calcification* involves the process of becoming hardened or rigid.

(A) is incorrect because *fluctuated* and *wavering* both imply a sway or change. This does not set up the contrasting relationship required by the word "however."

(C) is incorrect because *retreated* means turned back or receded, and *disengagement* is a disconnection or withdraw. These words are near-synonyms, not the antonyms required by the prompt.

(D) is incorrect because *dwindled* means shrank or decreased, and *augmentation* is the process of becoming greater in size. Although these two words are opposite in meaning, "opinions" do not have a size and therefore cannot be shrunken or enlarged.

(E) is incorrect because *homogenized* and *amalgamation* both connote a the combination of separate things into a uniform mixture. These two words are synonymous, and lack the contrast in meaning required by the prompt.

5) **C**

To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their definitions by using key words from the prompt. In this prompt, it is not possible to predict the definitions of the words, but their relationship can be predicted because of the phrase "even though." This phrase indicates a contrasting or opposite relationship. The first clause implies that should have regretted calling people "before the [...] Committee" but did not. The second clause explains why he should have felt this "regret." The prompt explains that McCarthy "accused" people who "were undeserving" of how he treated them. Thus, the first missing word must refer to McCarthy's abusive actions toward those he accused, and the second missing word must refer to the negative "public" attention that resulted from his accusations. This means choice **(C)** is the correct answer: *pillorying* means exposing to public derision or ridicule, and *derision* is the use of ridicule or scorn to show disapproval or contempt.

(A) is incorrect because *condemning* means expressing complete disapproval and *jubilation* is celebration or cheer. The first word could describe what McCarthy may have done to those he "called before the [...] Committee," but the second word has no logical connection to the rest of the prompt. Being accused of a crime would lead to negative attention, not public celebration or cheer.

(B) is incorrect because *adjudicating* means acting as a formal judge and *humiliation* is embarrassment or a lowering of position. Though the second word could work in context, the prompt does not provide any indication that McCarthy was a judge. The prompt only implies that he "accused" people.

(D) is incorrect because *impeaching* means charging with misconduct and *renown* is fame or honor. The prompt does not suggest that McCarthy formally charged anyone with misconduct. He merely "accused" people of wrongdoing. Furthermore, McCarthy's accusations subjected innocent people to notoriety, but

not necessarily fame. Renown has too positive of a connotation to work in this context.

(E) is incorrect because *proscribing* means denouncing or condemning and *flattery* is insincere or excessive praise. While the first word could describe what McCarthy may have done to those he "called before the [...] Committee," the second word does not work in context. Being accused of a crime would lead to negative attention, not public praise or flattery.

6) **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 in the phrase "never shed a tear." This phrase is used to describe Wayne "on screen," while the missing word describes how Wayne might have been in real-life. Because the two clauses in this sentence are linked by the word "nevertheless," the two sentences must present somewhat contradictory information. Thus, the second clause must imply that the narrator assumes Wayne did cry in real life, despite the fact that he never cried on screen. Therefore, the missing word must mean sorrowful or full of tears. Thus, choice **(A)** is the right answer, since *lachrymose* means given to shedding tears or mournful.

(B) is incorrect because *doleful* means expressing sorrow. It could therefore express how Wayne may have been "in his personal life," namely the opposite of one who "never shed a tear." However, because of its connection to tears and crying, lachrymose is a stronger word to use in context.

(C) is incorrect because *phlegmatic* means stoic or unemotional. It would therefore correctly describe how Wayne appeared "on screen," but not how he might have been "in his personal life."

(D) is incorrect because *pensive* means very thoughtful or contemplative. This does not work in context because being contemplative is not necessarily the opposite of never shedding a tear. One can be reflective with or without being sad.

(E) is incorrect because *disconsolate* means hopelessly unhappy. This word is too extreme to work in context. The prompt implies that Wayne occasionally cried "in his personal life," but it does not give enough evidence to prove that Wayne was miserable or hopelessly unhappy.